

## Wordtrade Reviews: The New Laws of Intelligence

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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. <>



**LOUIS KAHN: THE IMPORTANCE OF A DRAWING** edited by Michael Merrill, [Lars Müller Publishers, 9783037786444] 24 × 30 cm, 9 ½ × 11 ¾ in, 512 pages, 919 illustrations

With contributions by Michael Benedikt, Michael Cadwell, David Leatherbarrow, Louis Kahn, Nathaniel Kahn, Sue Ann Kahn, Michael J. Lewis, Robert McCarter, Michael Merrill, Marshall Meyers, Jane Murphy, Gina Pollara, Harriet Pattison, Colin Rowe, David Van Zanten, Richard Wesley, William Whitaker

"The importance of a drawing is immense, because it's the architect's language." — Louis Kahn to his masterclass, 1967

Louis I. Kahn (1901–1974) was one of the most significant architects of the twentieth century and his influence is present today in ways both profound and subtle. Unlike previous publications on Kahn, which have focused on his built work and which considered the drawings foremost as illustrations of these, this is the first in-depth study of drawings as primary sources of insight into Kahn's architecture and creative imagination.

By offering a spectrum of close readings of drawings by Kahn and his associates in a series of incisive and richly illustrated essays, this book is at once an intimate artistic portrait of this important architect and a provocative and timely contribution to the current discourse on representation in architecture. For architects and students of architecture, Kahn's lasting significance is not only in the buildings he built, but in how he designed them.

Based on unprecedented archival research, engagingly presented by a group of eminent scholars and architects, and lavishly illustrated with over 900 highest quality reproductions, *The Importance of a Drawing* is destined to become a standard work in the literature on Louis Kahn.

Preface: Louis Kahn and the Importance of (a) Drawing by Michael Merrill  
Getting Lost with Louis Kahn: A Lesson from the Archives by Michael Merrill  
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BEGINNING TO DRAW, DRAWING TO BEGIN  
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The Gift of Being Able to Draw by Louis Kahn  
Louis Kahn on Beaux-Arts Training by Louis Kahn with William Jordy (1974)  
The More One Looks, the More One Comes to See: Louis I. Kahn's "The Value and Aim in Sketching" by Michael Merrill  
Drawing Inward, Projecting Outward: Further Thoughts on the Value and Aim in Sketching by Michael Merrill  
The Beginning of the Beginning: Louis I. Kahn's Site Sketches at the Salk Institute by David Leatherbarrow  
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The Plan, a Society of Rooms: The Houses by Michael Merrill

The Plan, a Society of Rooms: The Meeting House of the Salk Institute by Michael Merrill

The Plan, a Society of Rooms: The Dominican Motherhouse by Michael Merrill

Louis Kahn and the Anatomy of the Architectural Section by Michael Merrill

The Primacy of the Section: The Kimbell Art Museum by Michael Merrill

Place, Occasion, and the Section: The Hurva Synagogue by Michael Merrill

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Louis Kahn in his office, around 1956, Marilyn Silverstone, photographer, Magnum /Agentur Focus

## Louis Kahn and the Importance of (a) Drawing by Michael Merrill

Louis Kahn sits in the drafting room of his office on the corner of 20th Street and Walnut in Philadelphia, lost in thought amid the detritus of work. Spread out on the table in front of him are

sketches of a house for Norman and Doris Fisher, together with the essential tools of his craft: roll of tracing paper, triangular architect's scale, drafting tape. He holds a charcoal stick gently in his hand. Kahn must know that the photographer George Pohl is afoot, but he appears so oblivious to him that Pohl's photos [not shown here] let us, too, if only for a moment, become eyewitnesses in the room.' Kahn's posture, with his head bowed and his weight distributed between the edges of the drafting stool and the table, is a picture of focus. (As is that of his associate Marie Kuo.) Scattered cardboard scraps, used paper coffee cups, skewed drafting lamps, and a desk buried in blueprints tell of the office's create-now-and-clean-later work ethic. Any one of us who has studied architecture knows a space like this one.

And so, we might be tempted by these photographs to project ourselves into the tiny segment of the design process they have captured, which, we might imagine, goes something like this: Kahn thinks about the house he wants to build. Then he pauses for second thoughts. Then he draws the image that he has just conceived in his mind. So far, so good. But wait: although this may at first seem the obvious sequence of events, experience and reflection will soon remind us that it is equally probable that Pohl took his photos in precisely the opposite order. That is, Kahn draws lines on his paper; After which he pauses to consider if more are needed; then he reflects upon what his hand has drawn.

We can study the photos again, and this time more closely, but will find nothing in them that reveals in which of these two sequences they were actually taken. Further reflection, though, will remind us that what is taking place at the drafting table follows a path that is more elliptical or branch-shaped than it is linear. Kahn is at work on something that he can see only dimly in its final form. Although he has an idea, he is repeatedly confronted with its insufficiency, because what he draws on his paper is repeatedly at odds with that idea. And so, he is repeatedly compelled to either change his drawing or to change his idea. In other words, Kahn's drawings continually reshape his idea, while Kahn's idea continually reshapes his drawings. In this, the uncertainty of the photos' sequence reminds us of something so fundamental that it is often left unexamined: in the making of architecture, idea and drawing are ultimately inseparable, and by the time a design is completed it is often impossible to say which—if either—of the two has been primary.

This is a book about Louis Kahn, about drawing, and about architecture—and about their interrelationships. Two simple premises sparked the research that led to the work before you. The first of these is that Kahn's drawings afford us privileged insights into his built and theoretical work, revealing much that would remain hidden without them. The second is that those same drawings make powerful tools for reflection on our own evolving means of thinking and representing architecture. That both premises are worthy of pursuit seems, at this late date, to be beyond question. Kahn's central importance for modern architecture has long been established, and by now we also know that his architecture, to a degree shared by few others, was inseparably intertwined with a rich culture of drawing and representation. And yet, while there are numerous monographs and studies of Kahn's built work and projects, there have been only few explicit and extended attempts to explore the relationships between his drawing and his architecture. This book attempts to partially remedy that lack while projecting its findings both as answers and questions into our own present. Because for students

of architecture ("students" in the largest sense), the long-

in order to allow for multiple viewpoints. The reciprocal relationship between drawing and design means that the drawings have sometimes served to discuss technique and method, and other times as inroads to better understanding the results of the design process. I, for my own part, have been just as interested in what drawing did with Kahn as with what Kahn did with drawings.

The resulting book, echoing the process of its making, resembles a logbook of an expedition across a large continent. While it was deemed necessary to linger and survey certain major features of the landscape (orthographic drawings and the embodied imagination, the theme of composition, the influences of Kahn's Beaux-Arts education, for example), serendipitous detours along the way revealed unexpected yet telling insights (such as a set of tiny survey sketches of the Salk Institute's site, full-scale drawings for a drinking fountain at the Kimbell Art Museum, a drawn/written letter from Colin Rowe). Limits of time and space meant that a number of fertile landscapes had to be passed swiftly and sketched from a distance, in the hope of animating others to return to them (perspective drawings, diagrams, the vitally important question of scale, etcetera). Since our exploration was dedicated to Kahn's drawings, his use of other representational means—including models, photography, texts, and print media—can only be referenced here.

The book has been divided into eight sections to structure our findings. Beginning with Kahn's first steps in drawing, we progress: First, over Kahn's use of drawings as an active tool for seeing and discovery. Two sections are then dedicated to the uses of the various drawing types as tools for inquiry in design. Drawings are then used to reveal aspects of Kahn's culture of collaboration. Next, the perennial theme of "composition" is explored through drawings. A section then focuses on a number of special themes in drawing. Redrawing is then shown as a means of understanding Kahn's intentions. Finally, our expedition concludes with thoughts on the relevance of what we have seen for future teaching and practice. Although the essays are arranged to form a narrative or an "epistemological arc," they may be read in any order. They are both analytic and synthetic, alternating between attempts to break Kahn's work into its parts and to gain sight of it as a whole. The essays are self-explanatory, so rather than attempting to summarize them here I would hasten you onward to explore them.

### Some Thoughts on How to Use This Book

Although this book includes works from all phases of Kahn's career, it is neither a "complete works" nor a monographic survey. To maximize the area dedicated to Kahn's iterative and exploratory drawings means to minimize those photographs and print-ready images that are the conventional means of presenting architecture. The texts, too, by focusing on drawing and representation, omit much contextual information that belongs in more general project descriptions. And yet, architectural drawings such as those reproduced here work best in the space between what we see and what we know. Those readers who know Kahn's work well will hopefully recognize in this lack of photos and conventional descriptions an invitation: to dwell in that space between seeing and knowing, and so to participate more intimately with Kahn and his associates in their acts of creation. Those who are less familiar with Kahn's work will profit greatly from photos and general descriptions of the buildings. I encourage you to have one or more of the monographs listed in the bibliography at hand.

By ordering the material thematically rather than by project, drawings made in close concert have been separated here for study. So, for example, the floor plans of the Exeter Library are to be found under the theme of "composition," while the library's vertical sections, elevations, and perspectives are studied in essays devoted to each of the respective drawing types. Other projects are distributed in a similar

manner. While there is something admittedly violent—and intellectually risky—in doing this, there are good reasons for taking this path. On the one hand, we wish to highlight the particular propensities and virtues (and pitfalls) of the various drawing media and types, and to reflect on some of the ways that Kahn's imagination animated—and was animated by—the innate intelligence of each.' We follow an unhidden agenda here. Although no type of architectural drawing is superior per se (only superior toward certain ends), there currently exists a dogma—at least in large parts of the profession—that holds simulation and three-dimensional modeling to be the measure of all things, usurping the multifarious tools of architectural representation.' Kahn's masterful use of the various drawing types will hopefully give cause to reconsider their respective virtues, while his broad and expansive repertoire of tools will hopefully give cause for emulation. On the other hand, we hope that the book's presentation of its subject matter, by counting on you, dear reader, to actively reassemble the drawings in your imagination, allows you to at least partially reenact our own explorations in Kahn's archives. While my coauthors and I have made all efforts to present our research in a verifiable manner as a basis for further academic study, it has been our primary intention to make this a creative study book in the spirit of Louis Kahn, that most nonacademic and active reader of history. <>

## **FICINO AND FANTASY: IMAGINATION IN RENAISSANCE ART AND THEORY FROM BOTTICELLI TO MICHELANGELO** by Marieke J.E. van den Doel [Series: Aries Book Series, 9789004459670]

Did the Florentine philosopher Marsilio Ficino (1433-99) influence the art of his time? Art historians have been fiercely debating this question for decades. This book starts with Ficino's views on the imagination as a faculty of the soul, and shows how these ideas were part of a long philosophical tradition and inspired fresh insights. This approach, combined with little known historical material, offers a new understanding of whether, how and why Ficino's Platonic conceptions of the imagination may have been received in the art of the Italian Renaissance. The discussion explores Ficino's possible influence on the work of Botticelli and Michelangelo, and examines the appropriation of Ficino's ideas by early modern art theorists.

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Ficino's influence on Renaissance art and art theory has long been the subject of a heated scholarly debate. At the beginning of this book the goal was set to discuss Ficino's ideas concerning inspiration and imagination and furthermore to reinvestigate the possible reception of these ideas in Renaissance art and art theory. This supposed connection was examined in a number of limited case studies, which involved comparing and contrasting textual material to a selection of artworks, charting possible routes for the transfer of Ficino's ideas and considering the context in which they were produced.

Ficino seems to have played an important part in the development of theories concerning the imagination. At least, the modern cliché of (the poet and) artist as an inspired visionary burdened with a difficult character appears to have originated (at least in part) in Ficino's thinking, as he contributed substantially to further developing the original Aristotelian notion on the melancholic disposition. Ficino's writings, which enjoyed immediate reception in Florentine circles of humanists and artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, were widely emulated and appropriated, and spread via diverse routes of transmission up to the late seventeenth century. Ficino's specific interpretation of the imagination and the survival of his ideas among readers of various backgrounds contributed to Early Modern interest in the power of this faculty, particularly in discussions about art among painters and their public. In addition, this study reveals interrelations between theories on, for example, the various powers or faculties of the soul, mental states such as frenzy and melancholy, the mediating role played by *spiritus*, and the position of vision among the senses.

Within Ficino's philosophical system his writings on the power of imagination are wide-ranging and diverse; there is no unequivocal development within his ideas on this subject. Since his works were distributed widely and remained popular for a long time, they may be considered a focal point that sparked great interest in this subject among many later authors.

The first part of this book is dedicated to a discussion of Ficino's sources, his own works and the writings of those who read his work, charting the origin of ideas about the power of imagination in philosophical, religious and literary texts from Classical Antiquity onwards. Theories about the imagination are studied as part of a complex tradition in which psycho-physiological ideas are interwoven with religious and philosophical notions.

In this context, three main currents may be discerned: Aristotelianism, Galenism and (Neo)platonism. The Aristotelian tradition in particular, in which imagination is seen as a mediating faculty situated between the senses and the intellect, found the most adherents. According to this tradition, the imagination transforms sensory perceptions into mental images called *phantasmata*, which are transported by means of *spiritus*, a partly material and partly immaterial substance, through the various faculties of the soul. The Galenic tradition adds to this that the imagination is influenced by changes in the balance of different bodily fluids; for example, an abundance of black bile in the body supposedly increases the acuity of the imagination, but an excess results in hallucinations.



Ficino's interest in the imagination can be situated within the context of (Neo-)platonism which, based on Plato's *Timaeus*, considers man capable of using this faculty of the soul to access the divine. Inspiration is seen as a possible side effect of a specific state of madness; in *Phaedrus* the mental state of frenzy is also connected to love and the perception of beauty. Within the framework of a religious system, Neoplatonists attributed to the imagination a mediating role between the material and the divine. As a result, the imagination was viewed in an ambivalent way. On the one hand, it connects the human soul to matter; on the other hand, it enables the soul to ascend to the divine. In this context, Neoplatonists theorised about inspiration, prophecies, visions and divination through dreams.

Some texts, including those originating in Arabic science and philosophy, present the imagination as an instrument used by the soul to exercise influence over the subordinate realm of matter. Throughout the Middle Ages, the imagination was a recurring theme within Scholasticism. The wide range of discussions on this issue also had an effect on literature, especially texts on love. This even resulted in a new literary genre, the *trattato d'amore*.

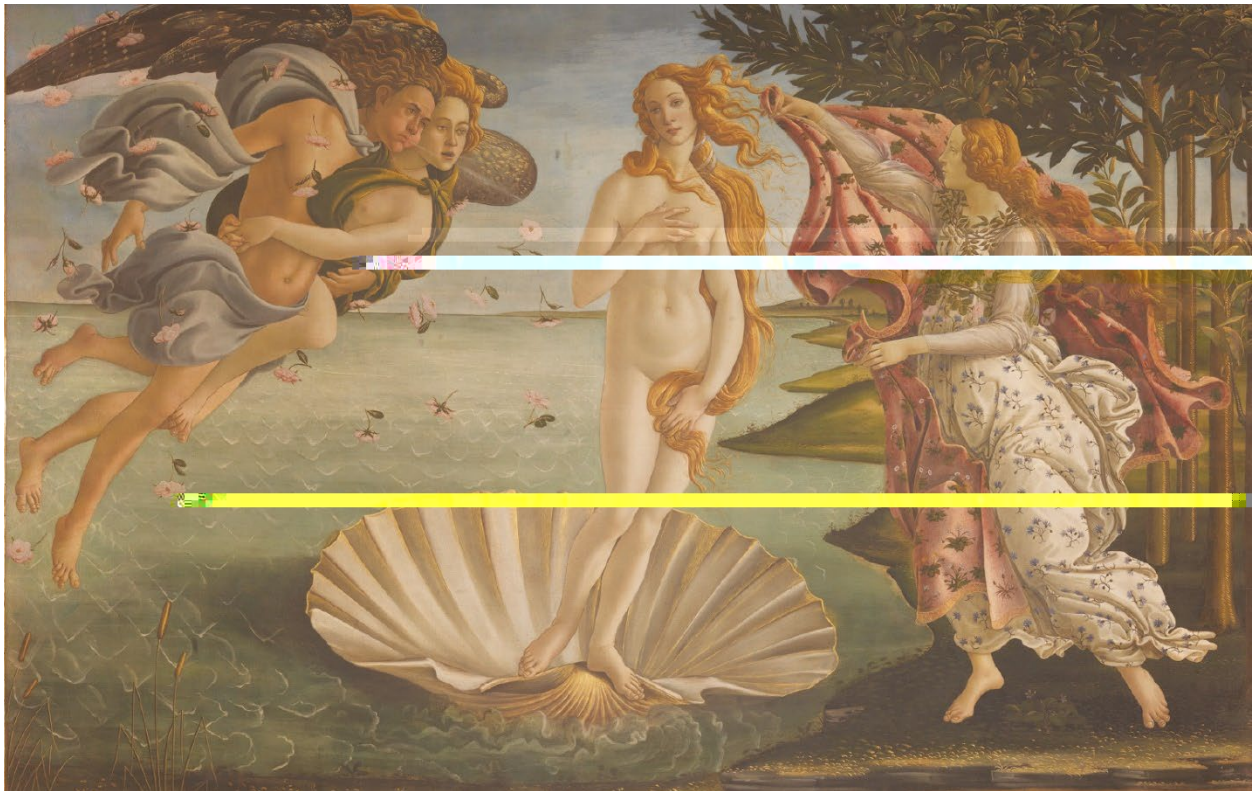
Ficino's *De amore*, a commentary on Plato's *Symposium*, was an influential example of this genre. In this text, Ficino discusses how man can be reminded of his divine origin when beholding (earthly) beauty. This visual (or auditive) stimulus could activate the memory of the beauty of the ideas imprinted in man's soul, which could trigger a state of frenzy, and make man's soul receptive for inspiration. Ficino's treatment of themes such as love and beauty in *De amore* was emulated widely in literary writings, especially in texts about love, and also made a mark on art theory and the visual arts.

Furthermore, in *De vita libri tres* Ficino postulates that melancholic people possess a vivid imagination and are therefore best disposed to attain states of frenzy and inspiration. As said, this model of the melancholic is an important basis for thinking about the artist's temperament among later authors. Moreover, in the third part of *De vita* Ficino explains how forces from the World Soul can be manipulated, channeled and attracted by means of the omnipresent *spiritus* in order to favourably influence earthly objects. This power of attraction can be exerted through images, food, odours and music, and in each case the power of the imagination can play an significant supporting role.

In *Theologia Platonica* in particular, Ficino devotes pages and pages to the extraordinary effects that the imagination can have on body and soul, but ultimately concludes that reason and intellect must be valued more highly. The original Neoplatonic ambivalence towards the imagination thus manifests itself in Ficino's philosophy. These ideas were also imitated and contradicted by scholars in the context of 'natural magic' (*magia naturalis*). Agrippa von Nettesheim and Paracelsus, for example, studied Ficino's theories in order to place them within their own world views. As said earlier, Ficino's interest in the power of imagination has functioned as a prism for traditional ideas, whereby his works engendered both a continuation and a transformation of his predecessors' ideas.

The second part of this book introduces various case studies in order to examine how the philosophical ideas formulated by Ficino were received in artistic contexts. It was mentioned earlier that the response

of Ficino's thought in Renaissance art has been the topic of a long art-historical controversy. Cultural historians, mainly active in the first half of the twentieth century, saw connections between developments in Renaissance literature and philosophy and innovations in contemporary art, and Ficino was considered a key figure in a transfer of ideas. This resulted in a fashion for demonstrating Ficino's influence on Early Modern artists and artworks that sparked numerous publications. As a reaction to this, from the 1980s onwards, Ficino's influence on art became considered by post-modernist researchers a metanarrative that needed deconstruction, and the art-historical literature from this time on shows a clear tendency to relativize, or deny entirely the existence of Platonist influences in Renaissance art. Some of the formulated criticism was justified; nevertheless, the tone of the discussion became so polarized that it actually came to a dead end and a taboo emerged on the whole topic.



**SANDRO BOTTICELLI, SPRING, CA. 1481–1482, TEMPERA ON WOOD PANEL, 203 × 314 CM, GALLERIA DEGLI UFFIZI, FLORENCE**

This study aims at reopening a deadlocked debate and to reassess the possible reception and active appropriation of Ficino's ideas by artists within the context of the production of specific works of art or patronage situations. Here, I have tried to be precise and exhaustive in reconstructing lines and connections between the supposed influencer – Ficino – and the 'recipient'. Where this was not possible to trace, for example with regard to eventual textual references to Ficino's works in Renaissance art theoretical treatises, I hope to have been transparent about this. After all, within historical research, we have to deal with uncertain factors and untraceable facts; we try to reconstruct a no longer existent tree, on the basis of some remained leaves.

The first case study under investigation consists of an analysis of the iconography (and function) of Botticelli's *Primavera*. Gombrich and Wind explained the iconographical program of the painting in relation to Ficino's letters to one of his pupils, for whom the painting (most likely) was commissioned, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici. Gombrich's article was attacked particularly vehemently when an inventory of Medici property revealed that the dating of the painting used by Gombrich (1477 or 1478) and therefore the context of the patronage (inheriting and furnishing a country house) was incorrect. Other interpretations have focused on a relation to contemporary poetry and public celebrations or have even led to a reductionist view centred exclusively on the painting's function as a decorative object.

A key to the interpretation put forward here is another date of the painting and its relation to the engagement or marriage of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco – respectively 1481 or 1482 –, as a result of which it is possible to discuss the painting within the context of Ficino's correspondence of these years with this scion of the Medici family, and to relate it to important texts such as *De amore* and (in retrospect) *De vita libri tres*. As a refined love-gift the painting probably visualized the Ficinian dichotomy between heavenly and earthly love, which Wind had already linked to the painting's iconography; the figures depicted are interpreted as the senses, or the powers of the soul as defined by Ficino, and placed in a hierarchical order corresponding to the soul's journey towards the divine. In Ficino's correspondence with Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco from 1481–82, figures such as Flora or the three Graces are connected to Ficino's theory of the hierarchy of the senses. Ficino names the three Graces as the higher powers of the soul: hearing, vision and reason. Venus acts as a mediating force between the higher and lower senses; Mercury, as a representative of the intellect, points the way to more elevated planes.

*De vita longa*, which Ficino wrote a few years later than the *Primavera* is to be dated, repeats the ideas formulated in his earlier work and introduces Mercury and Venus in a comparable context: the dialogue between them suggests that readers should not focus on the 'lower' senses (touch, taste and smell), or on concomitant urges such as lust and procreation, belonging to Venus' domain, but should devote themselves to the higher powers of the soul, such as imagination and reason, connected to Mercury.

The *Primavera's* iconography thus represents how perceiving (looking at, hearing, contemplating) beauty may result in the soul's ascent. The hierarchical order of the powers of the soul, as depicted on the painting, appears to attribute the greatest value to the intellect – represented by Mercury – and to the intellectual contemplation of beauty. When looking at the *Primavera*, the beholder is supposed to be attracted to the exquisite colours and the idealized visual language, but finally completely forget the material aspects of the artwork and, instead, contemplate divine beauty itself. The *Primavera* is therefore a painting that helps viewers to contemplate the virtues of contemplation.

Accordingly, Ficino's philosophy offers a subtle framework for the notion that images are useful as objects of contemplation. On the one hand, properly made images may channel the World Soul and the planetary influences derived from it, a process facilitated by the power of imagination; on the other hand, images are deemed to exert a positive influence on the power of imagination. The question as to whether the viewers for whom the *Primavera* was painted truly believed in the planetary powers of the pagan gods is less relevant than the concrete observation that material objects were used in religious practices in which the powers of these gods were regarded as self-evident. The key tenet of this interpretation – the quest for higher (or divine) love through the contemplation of beauty – provides additional support for the hypothesis that the painting was intended as a refined marriage gift.

Other gifts of love that may have been intended as aids for contemplation are Michelangelo's *Presentation Drawings*. Like some of Botticelli's works, Michelangelo's oeuvre has often been the centre of debate concerning the question whether it contained Platonist references or not. Art-historical literature hardly considers the possibility of Michelangelo choosing to appropriate such concepts or not, for example depending on whether he was working on public commissions or developing private iconographies. His interest in literary, philosophical or religious subject matter has evidently shifted in the course of his long life. I have therefore not argued that Michelangelo's whole oeuvre was permeated with Neoplatonic concepts, but solely focused on the interpretation of this set of drawings and the context for which they were made.

In this study, it is argued that two texts which summarise and simplify Ficino's ideas on love and the imagination, Diacceto's *I tre libri d'amore* and *Panegirico all'amore*, served as sources for the drawings' iconographies. In this context, the role of the *Accademia Sacra dei Medici* is also highlighted. Since Michelangelo and Diacceto were both members of this academy, it may have provided the institutional setting for discussions on the themes expressed in the drawings.

The iconographies developed in the drawings of *Ganymede*, *Tityus* and *Phaeton* refer in a generic way to Platonic ideas about love. The interpretation put forward here states that the *Ganymede* drawing represents the soul's intellectual journey as inspired by the sight of corporeal beauty. In the Ficinian context, the drawings of *Tityus* and *Phaeton* appear to contain an admonition: *Tityus* demonstrates the danger of addiction to bodily pleasures; the protagonist's torment, whose liver is devoured, symbolises how man is subjected to the 'confusions that plague the realm of the senses'. The *Phaeton* drawing may represent the fall of man as occasioned by an inability to deal with supreme beauty, as Diacceto described it in his summary of Ficino's ideas.

The *Children's Bacchanal* may visualise the theory described by Ficino and Diacceto about the influence of the spirit. This suggests that the drawing is primarily concerned with the 'vital' kind of *spiritus*, which is not only responsible for bodily functions such as nourishment and procreation, but is also the cause of deceitful phantoms in the imagination. The *spiritelli* represented in the drawing symbolise how man, whose reason has become stultified and who has become enslaved by the senses, ends life in a sleep 'constantly plagued by dreams'.

In addition, the elaborate allegories of *The Dream* and *Archers* contain detailed references to the sixth oration from Ficino's *De amore* – or to Diacceto's summary of this work. *The Dream* depicts a young man, who symbolises the melancholic temperament or the artist, and who is surrounded by references to the negative aspects of this temperament: gluttony, dipsomania, lust, anger and sloth. However, a positive side of the melancholic temperament is represented as well: the state of frenzied inspiration which is sparked by the vision of corporeal beauty or the experience of love. The 'genius' depicted on the drawing may thus be identified as a personification of love, which in the sixth oration of *De amore* is called 'a great demon' who 'inspires by divine goodness, awake or during sleep'. *The dream* may be interpreted as a complex visual construct that combines the themes of beauty, love, inspiration and divinely inspired artistry.

The *Archers* provides a stage for the negative aspects of earthly love, in precisely the same way as they are explained allegorically in the sixth oration of *De amore*. This oration describes how love is born from abundance and poverty, as a result of which it is 'poor', 'dull', 'unarmed' and 'humble'. Ficino explains

Plato's Greek term for 'humble', *chamaipetes*, as 'low-flying'. The dynamic position of the archers in Michelangelo's drawing, who appear to be flying just above the ground, may be a reference to this explanation. The archers are also 'unarmed' due to their being 'susceptible to shameful desires', as Ficino put it. This is represented in the drawing by the archers lacking bows and arrows. What is more, Ficino calls lovers who give in to the baser kinds of desire 'dull', because they are 'so stupid that they do not know where love is leading them, and they remain on the road, and do not arrive at the goal': this also appears to be true of the archers.

In his *Presentation Drawings*, Michelangelo attempted to represent the themes of Platonic love and the sight of corporeal beauty in various ways. This view corresponds to their function as courtly and refined gifts of love. The complex subject matter of the iconography and the detailed and refined draughtsmanship of these works of art make them worthy of contemplation. The drawings may be seen as almost uniquely literal and detailed visualizations of Ficinian themes. Diacceto's work may have served as a textual way station. Moreover, the drawings exemplify how Early Modern artistic theory was strongly influenced by general ideas about love and beauty.

The last chapter of this study traces the discussion about love and beauty, and the role that imagination plays in it, in a number of texts on art theory: it relates Ficino's ideas about the power of imagination directly to discussions about the visual arts. Apart from the explicit references to Ficino's writings by authors such as Lomazzo and Comanini, Ficino's influence on sixteenth-century art theory may be primarily discerned in the evident way in which a well-developed imagination is presented as an essential faculty for artists, and with which the concepts of melancholy and frenzy are associated. Biographies from Vasari to Baldinucci describe melancholy as the proverbial artists' illness, which goes in hand with a sharp or an overactive imagination. A highly receptive imagination may result in moments of extraordinary artistic inspiration and rapid inventions. An overdeveloped imagination leads to 'unnatural' works of art, but also to melancholy and the total consummation of *spiritus*, which brings about self-neglect and may ultimately lead to death. Because some texts do not refer to Ficino's writings directly, it is not always possible to demonstrate a direct literary correlation to them.

Be that as it may, the cultural policies adopted by archduke Cosimo I ensured that, within the context of art and art literature, Ficino's name was increasingly and explicitly connected to the study of Plato. As far as the iconography of love is concerned, Ficino was also seen as an authority, as references by Comanini and Ripa suggest. Traces of Ficino's ideas may be found in artists' studios up to the seventeenth century: one example is the sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini's copy of *De amore*; another, from the Netherlands,<sup>1</sup> is Rembrandt's pupil Samuel van Hoogstraten, who, in 1678, referred directly to *De vita* as a source that was recognised by, and known to his readers.

Considering this in conjunction with the Ficinian connotations in artistic iconography as developed by artists such as Botticelli and Michelangelo, the findings of this final chapter suggest that in the course of the sixteenth century it became a commonplace to ascribe an extraordinarily powerful imagination to artists and their putatively melancholic temperaments. In this context, the Platonic duality was applied to art theory: on the one hand, imagination was deemed to have the power to enable painters to rise to great artistic heights; on the other hand, it could also turn them into eccentric, socially isolated outcasts. Another view, which persisted in the background, was the Hermetic notion that man is able to occupy the border between the earthly and the divine through his ability to make lifelike images and recreate his likeness. These Ficinian concepts have clearly become rooted in art literature and developed into

commonplaces. What is more, Ficino's ideas on inspiration and genius also played a role in emancipating the art of painting in the Early Modern period, when art theory had yet to prove that painting was a subject worthy of discussion.

This study does not aim to provide a comprehensive or incontrovertible discussion of Ficino's importance for the visual arts and for art theory of the Renaissance and after. However, it does try to bring new clarity in historiographical debates about the significance of Platonism for Early Modern painting, which emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, which formed an extremely popular topic from the 1950s until the 1970s, and was characterized by a strong counterreaction from the 1980s onwards. A close reading of relevant texts from Ficino's varied and voluminous work, combined with detailed iconographical analyses and with research into contextual factors, brings new material to the fore that sheds new light on old debates.

There are many uncharted paths to be explored by investigating the thinking and writing about the locus where we form our thoughts and visions, and how this thought place is imagined and represented: 'The Imagination which Liveth for Ever', as formulated by William Blake. We have seen that giving form to ideas concerning phantasy and imagination and the visualization of these ideas has been the cause and starting-point of much creativity itself – and this continuing process has a history in its own right. As historians, it is also our imagination that helps us to reach out for the past, and armed by facts and sources, makes us envisage 'how it really was', or how it could have been. <>

## **TERROR IN THE WESTERN MIND: CULTURAL RESPONSES TO 9/11 BY DAVID MARTIN JONES AND M. L. R. SMITH [ACADEMICA PRESS, 9781680532852]**

Twenty years after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, we can now see that the War on Terror profoundly affected Western self-understanding and the secular liberal image it sought to project onto a global canvas at what was widely assumed to be the end of history. The dramatic change in awareness that 9/11 brought about was particularly vivid, this book maintains, in the media that sustained and displayed the West's self-image. In particular, fiction, film, drama, the visual arts, and popular music have all struggled to come to grips with the phenomena of terror, asymmetrical warfare, home grown jihadist activism, and the moral and political dilemmas they evoke. The book further argues that the evolving progressive response to 9/11 assumed an increasingly ideological character via the critical and normative international relations theories that came to dominate Western campuses after 2001. These perspectives gave substance to an increasingly critical depiction of the West's War on Terror and its popular promotion through works of literature, film, music, and the visual arts. Promoted through these popular genres, it combined the ingredients that formed "woke" ideology in an accessible formula that subsequently dominated both the mainstream media, academia, and, in time, government agencies.

### **Review**

A provocative and disturbing account of how terrorism has shaped our cultural landscape over the past two decades exposing the West's deeply unsettling moral crisis. A dazzling, intelligent, and thought-provoking read. -- Joanna Williams

A provocative but vital and sharply observed study of how the artistic establishment has reacted to the past two decades of the War on Terror. -- Professor Bruce Hoffman

Not many scholars can write authoritatively and accessibly about Clint Eastwood, Grayson Perry, Foucault, Tony Blair, Zero Dark Thirty, and Islamism, let alone make sense of the links among them in this magisterial overview of the impact of 9/11. But Jones and Smith do – and they pull it off with style. -- Tim Williams

A highly provocative and engaging thesis about the ways popular culture responded to 9/11 from two authors always keen to challenge established orthodoxies -- Shiraz Maher

A gripping, ruthless analysis of how terrorists, their apologists, and moral relativists – motivated by malignity, stupidity, or naivety – are full of passionate intensity in their struggle to destroy our magnificent civilisation. -- Ruth Dudley Edwards

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This volume seeks to explore these themes and assess how the various modes of Western cultural expression sought to absorb and express the impact of events over the duration of what has become the era of the War on Terror. The phrase “War on Terror” arose in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. In his address to Congress on 20 September 2001, U.S. President George W. Bush declared that the American administration would go after “terrorist groups with global reach.” President Bush did not use the actual phrase “war on terror,” or “global war on terrorism.” The mainstream news networks coined these phrases afterwards, and they came to dominate public discourse. Media pundits, politicians, and analysts would henceforth habitually refer to a protean but nevertheless ubiquitous “terrorist threat.”

The amorphous threat, however, was rarely given specificity. In practice, the expression “war on terror” obscured the actual threat being confronted, namely, fanatical Islamist jihadist groups like al-Qaeda, as well as its various affiliates and later offshoots around the world, that had declared war on secular Western modernity via acts of violence, often of a catastrophic and megalomaniacal character. Significantly, this study will show that euphemism and equivocation about the threat became recurring themes in the artistic representation of 9/11 and its aftermath in the West.

As a political phenomenon, the War on Terror would affect Western liberal democratic conduct both internally and externally. Internally, it found expression in legislation that curbed civil liberties and enhanced security and surveillance, from intrusive security checks at airports to concrete barriers on bridges or outside public buildings to prevent suicide attacks. These measures would invariably be taken in the aftermath of “home-grown” jihadist attacks on civilian targets. They soon occurred routinely across North America, Western Europe, and Australasia. Externally, the War on Terror manifested itself in Western military interventions undertaken to degrade, undermine, and replace regimes deemed to be colluding with or harboring terrorist groups with global reach. The invasions of Afghanistan in October 2001 and Iraq in March 2003 were the most prominent examples of the post-9/11 enthusiasm for ousting “rogue state” regimes. Yet Western-sponsored intervention would also assume a proactive role in other parts of the globe, from Libya and Pakistan, to Mali and Yemen. As we shall see, in the following chapters, these manifestations were featured, at best, only sporadically and incoherently within the artistic response.

The central focus of this analysis is how the cultural reaction to the post-9/11 epoch evolved in the Western mind. In this context, we assume the “West” to encompass the established liberal democracies of North America, Europe, and Australasia. The concept of the “Western mind” assumes an essentially secular, or Enlightenment and rational, understanding that is at least nominally open to a plurality of viewpoints, and willing to interrogate facts and events from different perspectives, and to express the understanding gleaned in a variety of genres: art, film, music and literature, among others.

From these premises, the first chapter thus explores the somewhat obscure critical thinking about the project of progressive universalism that had become increasingly influential on Western campuses after 1991. This critical and relativist interpretation of 9/11 increasingly shaped the cultural response to terrorism. Before 9/11, post-Cold War academia had already evolved into a network condemning the iniquities of capitalism and Western imperialism, often in the idiom of “critical theory” evolved by pro-communist Western intellectuals. Long before 9/11, the Anglo-Australian philosopher, Kenneth Minogue observed that this mentality thought of itself “as the innocent part of a guilty whole.” As the progressive mind “came to dominate western culture” he wrote, “it turned out to be marvellously fertile in discovering more and more people whom ‘we’ had treated badly.” The oppressed included not only the

poor, but, over time, indigenous peoples, women, gays, people of color, and any culture or group, to use the progressive participle of choice, “othered” by the West. It was almost inevitable that this progressive intellectual mentality translated into the arts and the mainstream media would come to view the othered terrorist as yet another species of victim to add to its critical bestiary. And this, as we shall show, is what occurred.

Critical and progressive theories were not the only perspectives that informed the polymorphously perverse artistic reactions to the War on Terror. Chapter Two on the novel and 9/11 evaluates a range of literary responses to the jihadism that threatened to unravel the open, political societies of the West. Ambivalence, anxiety, regret, guilt, and anomie by turns dominated the mood of the urbane liberals that inhabited post-9/11 literature. By contrast, only the committed jihadist intent on destroying this urban secular order possesses the will for decisive action. The 9/11 novels seem, this chapter argues, only dimly aware that it was in the lived experience of the bourgeois city that modern political life and a shared public morality, as a contingent response to the problem of rule, evolved. Instead, the protagonists in the 9/11 novels are politically agnostic, obsessed with the pursuit of wealth and status for their own sake.

Somewhat differently, the rise of “Dark Americana,” the third chapter, explores Hollywood’s War on Terror. More particularly, by evaluating the cinematic treatment of both the Iraq War and the problem of surveillance, rendition, and homeland security, this chapter explores what the distinctive on-screen genre tells us about how the U.S. cultural mainstream has dealt with the challenge global jihadism poses to Western values. The analysis suggests that post-9/11 filmmaking, while sometimes bleak and often clichéd, was to some extent cognizant of the gray areas of morality inherent in fighting the War on Terror and, to that extent, was able to offer some possibilities for intelligent reflection without offering any enduring solutions.

By contrast, popular music, the subject of the fourth chapter, has demonstrated that music offered the most immediate way in which the cultural response to 9/11 manifested itself in benefit concerts, live performances, and songs that spoke to the shock and amazement generated by the bombings. This initial reaction saw American popular music functioning as group therapy, a means of uniting the community as it came to terms with grief and loss. However, after the United States and its coalition partners embarked on the invasion of Iraq, popular music struck a more strident note. Music reflected the deep divisions in society that the long war generated between those patriot-artists who supported the invasion, most notably in the country music idiom, and protest-artists who articulated more hostile anti-war attitudes in other popular performance modes.

Chapter Five examines visual art in the age of terror, from the dramatic events of 11 September 2001 to the longer-term reactions generated by the two-decade long encounter with the War on Terrorism, primarily via the Imperial War Museum’s Age of Terror/Art Since 9/11 exhibition of 2017-2018. It shows how visual art moved from initial amazement at the destruction of the Twin Towers, through satirical caricature of the terrorist persona, to a critical predictability that mirrored official ambiguity about the threat posed by violent jihadist activism.

Artistic endeavor on this subject became notable only for its moral temporizing and complicity in self-censorship rather than contributing to the creation of artwork of enduring value.

The conclusion will show how the internal cultural war that the War on Terror launched has actually proved far more effective than the bombings, beheadings, and recourse to asymmetric violence in exposing what the prophet of jihad Sayyid Qutb termed “the hideous schizophrenia of modern life.”<sup>18</sup> The evolving cultural response to 9/11 assumed its ideological shape via the critical theories that came to dominate American, European, and Australian campuses after 2001. This perspective gave substance to an increasingly captious view of the War on Terror and its popular promotion in works of literature, film, music, and the visual arts. Promoted through these popular genres, it brought together the ingredients that formed “woke” ideology in an accessible formula that subsequently permeated both the mainstream media and government agencies after 2016. The 9/11 events and War on Terror, we conclude, culminated in a curious homegrown ideology informed by an all-consuming hatred of the West, and its historic legacies of colonialism, racism, and imperialism. The paradoxical outcome of two decades of cultural and theoretical endeavor to come to grips with 9/11 resulted in a fragile and increasingly deracinated West incapable of defending its deconstructed values, let alone promoting them.

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## **HARLEM RENAISSANCE NOVELS: THE LIBRARY OF AMERICA COLLECTION: (TWO-VOLUME BOXED SET)** edited by Rafia Zafar [Library of America, 9781598531060]

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### Review

"To have all these novels in one place is the best gift any reader could ever ask for."—Junot Di'az

- **CANE**, Jean Toomer
- **HOME TO HARLEM**, Claude McKay
- **QUICKSAND**, Nella Larsen
- **PLUM BUN**, Jessie Redmon Fauset
- **THE BLACKER THE BERRY**, Wallace Thurman
- **NOT WITHOUT LAUGHTER**, Langston Hughes
- **BLACK NO MORE**, George Schuyler
- **THE CONJURE-MAN DIES**, Rudolph Fisher
- **BLACK THUNDER**, Arna Bontemps

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### **CANE, Jean Toomer**

Cane is a 1923 novel by African-American novelist and poet Jean Toomer, an author of the Harlem

boundaries between individuals, illuminating the inner plurality of American subjectivity. Set back in the rural South, it interrogates, through its eponymous protagonist, whether any real selfhood can exist without community. Kabnis desires to create “a bridge between himself and the universe, all by himself,” but ultimately feels broken and incomplete when he neglects the many people who have helped shape him. The ending of *Cane* mirrors Toomer’s demonstrated anxiety about his race and role in the world. More than anything else, the novel illuminates how the vestigial dichotomy of the North and South, and their deep legacy of racism, can tear a subject apart.

## HOME TO HARLEM, Claude McKay

### Finding Home

Claude McKay wrote a compelling story about a young soldier's search for 'home', that feeling of fitting in and belonging to a community. *Home to Harlem* allows the reader to follow the life of Jake Brown, a young African American U.S. Army deserter. The entire novel is about Jake trying to find a place where he feels at home; the reader may ask if he is looking to feel comfortable with himself as much as with his surroundings.

Set during and immediately after World War I, *Home to Harlem* gives a glimpse of how difficult life was in the New York City borough of Harlem. Jake is on a journey that continuously leads him back to Harlem, where he feels like he belongs to the African American community.

### Looking Back

The novel opens with Jake working as a chef on a boat. He is already on his way back to Harlem, but the first portion of the book focuses on catching the reader up as Jake tells the story of how he found himself traveling from London to New York.

Jake had joined the U.S. Army to help with the war effort during World War I. He wanted to be needed, to feel important and part of something big. Instead of an exciting combat position, he was given menial work that did not help him to feel like he was a true part of the effort. He deserted the Army and found himself living with a white woman in London.

His time in London ended after a horrific racial protest during which he saw that racial prejudice in London would never allow him to fit in. He longed for a partner more like himself. He fantasizes about brown women and their ability to make him feel good. Thus, we find him working on a freight ship as a chef for passage from London to New York and back to Harlem.

### Harlem

Even though Jake is not originally from Harlem (he is actually from Virginia) he sees Harlem as his home. When he arrives in Harlem, he has two experiences that impact the trajectory of his life's journey. First, he spends a night with a prostitute whom he develops real feelings for; then he bumps into an old Army buddy, Zeddy, who can identify him as a deserter. Both of these experiences play a role in his future.

Jake's buddy is, at first helpful. They party together and Zeddy even gets Jake a job working on the docks. Jake, however, quits the job after finding out that he is a strikebreaker (working against the strike goes against his own desire to fit in and belong).

After losing track of the first girl he met (and fell in love with), Jake eventually connects with Rose, an entertainer at a local club. He moves in with her, but never feels like he loves her. She also does not treat him with love and affection, having multiple lovers during their time together. Things escalate to a physical altercation between the two and in disgust with himself, Jake leaves the relationship and Harlem.

### QUICKSAND, Nella Larsen

Helga Crane is a teacher in the South, a short time after the First World War. She has a mixed racial background; her mother was from Denmark and her father was West Indian. She is light skinned with dark hair. Throughout the book, Helga is often materialistic and focuses on gaining attention from her peers. She is in her second year of teaching at the Negro School in Naxon when she decides that she can no longer support the school's efforts. She doesn't like the education system in the South and she wants to return to Chicago, even before the school year is finished. She finds the principal, Dr. Anderson, enchanting, but because of a clumsy remark, he fails to talk her into staying. She breaks off her engagement to a colleague and returns to Chicago.

Helga's initial plan was to have her Uncle Peter support her. He is the only relative on the white side of her family who has been kind to her over the years. She visits his home and finds that he has married. His new wife is rude to Helga and tells her never to return. She tries to find work but has difficulty, since she doesn't have references or many skills other than teaching. An employment agency within the Young Women's Christian Association finds her a job as an assistant to Mrs. Hayes-Rore, who is going to travel and give lectures on racial problems.

Helga and Mrs. Hayes-Rore like each other and travel to New York. In Harlem, Mrs. Hayes-Rore introduces Helga to Anne Grey, who gives her a place to stay. Helga finds work and is initially happy with her life in Harlem, attending parties and other society functions. Eventually, she becomes irritated by Anne's fight for equal rights and social justice, because Anne imitates the fashion and mannerisms of white society while disliking white people. Helga runs into Dr. Anderson in New York, but she mostly ignores his desire to spend time with her. Helga receives a letter from her Uncle Peter. He apologizes for having to cease communication and encloses a check for five thousand dollars. He reminds Helga that she has an aunt in Denmark that always liked her. Helga leaves for Denmark, feeling that she cannot live with Black society and how it is treated in America.

Once in Denmark, Helga is pleased with how she is treated. Her family there, Herr and Fru Dahl, are wealthy and very welcoming. They dress her in colorful clothes, and the Danish people regard her as an exotic treasure. She is introduced to an eccentric artist, Herr Olsen, at a party. She learns that he will be painting her portrait. She spends more and more time with him and feels that they should be married. Helga receives a letter that Anne is marrying Dr. Anderson, and Helga feels conflicted. When Herr Olsen finally proposes, she refuses and tells him that she cannot be in an interracial marriage. Helga again feels unrest and decides that she must return to America where she can reconnect with Black society, planning to eventually return to Denmark.

Helga returns to Harlem and stays in a hotel, instead of with Anne. She sees Dr. Anderson at a party, and when they are alone, he kisses her. She embraces him and feels a strong connection. Later, they plan to meet to talk about the kiss. She is excited at what will happen when they meet. Dr. Anderson visits her in the lobby of her hotel and apologizes for what happened, showing no interest in pursuing the relationship, since he is married. Helga becomes angry and slaps him. The next night, Helga goes out. It

is windy and raining, so she takes refuge in a building that is having a religious meeting. She is swept up in the spiritual celebration and is escorted home by Reverend Green.

Helga decides to marry Reverend Green and become religious. They live in a small town in Alabama. She is initially pleased by the importance of her role as the preacher's wife. She no longer has any of the glamour of her previous life. After having three children, and pregnant with a fourth, she begins to despair. Her fourth child is born and she reflects on her life, realizing that she doesn't believe in religion and hates Reverend Green. Her fourth child dies within a week and she lies in bed for a long time. When she finally recovers, she decides that she should leave Reverend Green, but she doesn't want to abandon her children. The book ends with her pregnant with a fifth child.

### PLUM BUN, Jessie Redmon Fauset

Jessie Redmon Fauset's *Plum Bun: A Novel Without a Moral* recounts the story of a young Black woman in the 1920s who decides to pass as white. Ostensibly a coming-of-age story, the novel features a complex treatment of racial barriers and gender inequalities. While the trajectory of the novel is straightforward and relatively typical for the bildungsroman—young woman leaves home, discovers herself through a series of obstacles she must overcome, and finally learns how to live happily—the narrative is fraught with tensions about what it means to be Black and a woman in early 20th century America. Originally published in 1928, the novel is considered Fauset's most important work, a notable entry in the extensive body of work produced by Black artists during the Harlem Renaissance.

Angela Murray, who lives on an ordinary street in Philadelphia, is a member of the growing Black middle class, with the potential to rise above her circumstances as her parents had done before her. Unlike her dark-skinned father and sister, Angela and her mother Mattie Murray are light-skinned Blacks who can pass for white. Throughout Angela's youth, Mattie takes her on shopping and dining outings in white establishments where her father and sister would not be welcome. While Mattie sees these outings as fun larks of no real consequence, Angela glimpses something more meaningful and more troublesome in their excursions: Whiteness, for Angela, comes to signify freedom of movement and power over circumstances. Racial identity is the central conflict in Angela's life.

After the death of her parents, Angela decides to move to New York—not to the bustling center of Black cultural revival that is 1920s Harlem, but to Manhattan. Here she will attend art school, make friends with several bohemian artists, and pursue romantic relationships, all while passing as white. Unlike her sister, Virginia, who is proud of her Black heritage, Angela sees her race as an obstacle to what she desires in life, the aforementioned freedom and power.

After changing her name to Angèle Mory to distance herself further from her family and background, Angela meets a wealthy young white man, Roger Fielding, through art school acquaintances. He courts her lavishly, and while she doesn't have particularly strong feelings for him, she finds his wealth and status attractive, a means to the end results of financial security and social prestige. She determines to marry him, rather than the lovesick Anthony Cross who has committed himself to the role of starving artist.

Angela's courtship with Roger is punctuated by Roger's racist diatribes against Black people, whom he sees as sub-human. When her sister Virginia comes to town, Angela snubs her, lest she risk revealing her true racial identity.



After many months, Angela is convinced that Roger is ready to propose—however, he proposes not marriage, but a sexual affair, keeping Angela in a love-nest and plying her with material goods that are beyond her means. After her initial shock and refusal, she ultimately gives in to Roger’s desires. She craves security more than respectability, which she reasons isn’t as important as the freedom she thinks she finds in Roger’s wealth and social standing.

After a few months, however, the relationship sours as Angela becomes more possessive of Roger. He breaks it off, leaving her lonely, but clear-eyed about the fact that she hadn’t really loved him. Despite a new job and new friendships, she cannot quite escape the anxieties of financial insecurity and lack of love. She remembers Anthony and decides that she has been foolish to deny her feelings for him. The two reconnect, and she falls more deeply in love with him upon learning his tragic back story: His father was killed in a lynching because, as it turns out, Anthony is also Black. Anthony denies that he is passing as white. He just chooses not to overtly identify as Black unless the situation warrants it. Angela decides to reveal her own secret to him, hoping that they will be happy together in their struggle to become artists.

However, Anthony reveals that he is, alas, already engaged—to Angela’s sister, Virginia, who is actually still in love with their childhood friend, Matthew. The cruel irony of the situation is inescapable, but Angela decides to throw herself into her art with the hopes of winning a scholarship to study in France, leaving her troubles behind.

She is successful in her endeavor, as is another (openly) Black student, Miss Powell. When the sponsors revoke Miss Powell’s scholarship because she is Black, Angela finally admits publicly that she is Black, too. Despite losing her scholarship and returning to Philadelphia, Angela is less restless than before and surer of her own true identity. She visits Matthew, who reveals that he, too, is in love with Virginia. Angela, wanting to make amends to how she previously treated her beloved sister, urges Matthew to confess his love for Virginia.

After her brief sojourn in Philadelphia, Angela travels to France despite being denied her scholarship, using donations from sympathetic white friends and proceeds from the sale of her parents’ house. In France, she paints and pines for Anthony. In the interim, Matthew reveals his love for Virginia, and Virginia breaks off her engagement to Anthony, knowing that his true love is Angela. The novel ends on Christmas Eve in Paris with Angela reading a note from her sister saying she has sent a wonderful present: it turns out to be Anthony, of course, and Angela is assured a happy ending.

### THE BLACKER THE BERRY, Wallace Thurman

Wallace Thurman's first novel, *The Blacker the Berry: A Novel of Negro Life* (1929) takes its title from an old folk saying, “the blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice.” It is an autobiographical satire whose neurotic, dark-skinned protagonist, Emma Lou Morgan, internalizes biases against dark-complexioned people after a midwestern upbringing by colorstruck relatives mimicking racist societal values. Like Thurman, Emma Lou goes to the University of Southern California and then to Harlem. Unlike Thurman, who was primarily drawn to the artistic renaissance blooming there, Emma Lou hopes Harlem will enable her to escape finally the harsh intraracial prejudice that is exacerbated by her sex and egocentrism.

Among the mundane settings of Harlem tenement buildings, employment agencies, public dance halls, rent parties, cabarets, and movie houses, Emma Lou has numerous opportunities to overcome her

obsession with color and class consciousness. She is, indeed, discriminated against by both blacks and whites, but not to the degree that she believes. In a crowded oneroom apartment filled with liquor-gorging intellectuals resembling Langston Hughes (Tony Crews), Zora Neale Hurston (Cora Thurston), and Richard Bruce Nugent (Paul), Truman (Thurman himself) explains intraracial discrimination by examining the parasitic nature of humankind. He argues that “people have to feel superior to something... [other than] domestic animals or steel machines... It is much more pleasing to pick some individual or group... on the same plane.” Thus, he suggests that mulattoes who ostracize darker-skinned African Americans merely follow a hierarchy of discrimination set by materially powerful white people. Truman's anatomy of racism, however, is ignored by Emma Lou.

The *Blacker* the Berry received reviews that, while mixed, praised Thurman for his ironic depiction of original settings, characters, and themes then considered off limits for African American literary examination. Many others also criticized him for emphasizing the seamier side of Harlem life. But Thurman was never pleased with *Blacker*, and his caricature of the female protagonist shows why. Emma Lou behaves unlike traditional African American females who tend to revise rather than accept the values of both African American and white men. After she is repeatedly degraded by light-skinned Alva, Emma Lou's spiritual liberation begins only when she acknowledges the Thurmanian and Emersonian ideal that salvation rests with the individual, first expressed by white Campbell Kitchen (Carl Van Vechten). In other words, Thurman becomes trapped in the alien body of Emma Lou and does not have the creative imagination to break her racial fixation by summoning up a female perspective. Instead, Emma Lou trades an obsession with skin color for one that is viewed by a patriarchal society as being even more perverse. When she catches Alva embracing the homosexual Bobbie, Emma Lou finally gathers the strength to leave him. Herein lies an example of the dominant literary problem exhibited by the Harlem Renaissance old guard and avant garde alike. Their art is consumed by the paradox in creating liberated African American male and female voices while mouthing the ethics of the American patriarchy.

## Volume Two

### NOT WITHOUT LAUGHTER, Langston Hughes

How Langston Hughes Brought His Radical Vision to the Novel by Angela Flournoy

Jan. 2, 2018 *New York Times*

For a writer like Langston Hughes, who made a name for himself as a poet before the age of 21, his debut novel, “Not Without Laughter,” feels like an effort to stake out a bigger claim on his abilities, to create artistic and thematic breathing room. Arna Bontemps, celebrated poet and friend to Hughes, described “Not Without Laughter” as the novel that both Hughes and his readers knew he had to write, coming as it did on the heels of Hughes's two well-received poetry collections, “The Weary Blues” (1926) and “Fine Clothes to the Jew” (1927). Hughes published these collections while a student at Lincoln University, and he released “Not Without Laughter” in 1930, shortly after graduating. “By the date of his first book of prose Hughes had become for many a symbol of the black renaissance,” Bontemps writes. The stakes were high, then, for the young man born in Joplin, Mo. He had to deliver.

“Not Without Laughter” crystallizes some of the themes introduced in Hughes's first two poetry collections and examines in detail subjects he would return to throughout his decades-long career, among them the experiences of working-class and poor blacks, the importance of black music to black

life, the beauty of black language and the trap of respectability. It begins as a tale of family life, following the Williamses — the matriarch, Aunt Hager; her daughters, Harriet, Annjee (Annjelica) and Tempy; and Annjee’s husband, Jimboy — in the small Kansas town of Stanton. After establishing the conflicts and desires of the adults, the narrative becomes a bildungsroman. Here it finds its true purpose: chronicling the upbringing of Sandy, the son of Jimboy and Annjee, as he struggles to forge an identity outside of the boxes the white and black worlds have put him in, and tries to find stability within his increasingly unstable home.

Each family member provides an example of how Sandy might navigate his world. Sandy’s father is a blues man, a guitar picker with an itch for traveling, who leaves his wife and his son for months on end. Sandy’s mother works long hours as a domestic for an exacting white woman and comes home so exhausted and lovesick that she doesn’t have much attention to spare for her young son. Soon enough she leaves Stanton for good, determined to stay by Jimboy’s side and find happiness in their reunion.

Aunt Hager is Sandy’s primary caretaker, and it is her grandson in whom she invests all her hopes for her family line: “I’s gwine raise one chile right yet, if de Lawd lets me live — just one chile right!” In an unkind light Hager can be read as a Mammy, a former slave who chose to stay by her mistress’s side for several years after emancipation rather than “scatter like buckshot,” as most freed people did, and who now washes the clothes of white people and tends to their illnesses when called. Hughes takes care to flesh out Hager’s motivations, which prove to be more complicated than unblinking servitude. Hager finds sanity and solace in forgiveness, in assuming the best in people who are too ignorant to reciprocate that courtesy. Her benevolence is her own existential armor. Hate “closes up de sweet door to life an’ makes ever’thing small an’ mean an’ dirty,” Hager insists. Her beliefs stand in stark contrast to those of many other negroes, including her own children.

Hager’s youngest daughter, Harriet, is beautiful, and has a voice made to sing the blues. She gives her mother and Annjee’s way of life a chance — working at a country club where old white men make passes at her — but ultimately opts out, hoping to escape Stanton altogether. She runs away with the carnival, then returns to town and dabbles in sex work before finally getting a break as a singer. Her story begins as one of classic teenage rebellion but ends as an example of fierce determination.

In his famous essay “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” Hughes expresses fondness for “the low-down folks, the so-called common element.” Poor African-Americans made up a majority of the black population but were rarely depicted as fully realized characters in the serious literature of the day. “They furnish a wealth of colorful, distinctive material for any artist because they still hold their own individuality in the face of American standardizations,” Hughes writes. A writer who extols the virtues of a group of people based on any demographic denominator runs the risk of flattening or essentializing his characters, but in the face of popular novels centered on middle- and upper-class black experiences, such as those by his contemporary Jessie Redmon Fauset, Hughes’s call for nuanced consideration of working-class (and even out-of-work) black people was noteworthy. The early decades of the 20th century were also a period when “color mania” was part of day-to-day black social and professional life, with lighter skin seen as correlating with increased romantic prospects and more opportunities for upward mobility. Hughes’s focus on main characters with darker skin tones — something we are

reminded of throughout the novel — seems like a conscious statement against racial assimilation and conformity.

In reviewing Hughes's first autobiography, "The Big Sea" (1940), Richard Wright recalls Hughes's first two poetry collections being greeted with shock by the black reading public. "Since then the realistic position assumed by Hughes has become the dominant outlook of all those Negro writers who have something to say," Wright observes. Indeed what stays with the reader longer than the overall narrative arc of "Not Without Laughter" is the frequent, unexpected uses of imagery and language that make the characters and their lives feel real. Sandy recalls Aunt Hager, a woman who frowns on secular dancing — even if that dancing takes place in her own yard — whirling round and round at a revival in religious ecstasy. With the same amount of fondness he recalls his aunt Harriet "balling-the-jack" to Jimboy's guitar music in the yard. Both Aunt Hager and Sister Johnson tend to pronounce the word "idea" as "idee," a subtle nod to what the historian Henry Louis Gates Jr. calls "the linguistic legacy of slavery." During conversations between black characters, the word "nigger" rolls off their tongues often — sometimes pejoratively, sometimes humorously, but more often as a general descriptor — and it's a testament to Hughes's ear for black language that we are never in doubt about the intended tone. This focus on rendering realistically how black folks behave among themselves, whether or not such behavior would be considered proper in other contexts, is one of the novel's greatest achievements.

Like his one-time collaborator and contemporary Zora Neale Hurston, Hughes takes an anthropological approach to setting and character development. The town of Stanton where "Not Without Laughter" is set is similar to Lawrence, the small Kansas town where Hughes grew up with his maternal grandmother while his father worked in Mexico and his mother lived in Topeka. It was the sort of place where blacks and whites might live in close proximity to one another, but where a black boy would avoid walking by his white neighbor's front lawn for fear of having insults and slurs — or worse — hurled at him. Like the novel's hero, Sandy, Hughes grew up with a largely absent father and an interest in books. Already a budding public figure by the time of the novel's release, Hughes likely saw his own life pulling him farther and farther away from the small-town Midwestern world that raised him. Reading "Not Without Laughter," one can't help feeling as if Hughes had a desperate need to get all of his early cultural memories down on paper, from the "sooty gray-green light" that turns to blackness before a tornado touches down, to the possum, peach preserves and yams that make up a humble Thanksgiving dinner.

Sandy is an ideal protagonist for a novel so interested in place and culture — an observant boy with a penchant for finding the extraordinary in the ordinary. He listens intently during warm nights spent on the porch with Aunt Hager, with an occasional visit from Sister Johnson or the speechifying Madam de Carter. He overhears grown black folks parsing out the psychology of whites who want to keep blacks close to them — nursing their children, preparing their meals — but always beneath them, and withholds his own judgment, already wise enough to know he doesn't yet know enough. As a teenager Sandy sweeps up at a neighborhood barbershop, a place "filled with loud man-talk and smoke and laughter," and gets a crude sexual education from the conversations of the shop's day laborer customers and barbers, as well as plenty of lessons in playing the dozens — "the protective art of turning back a joke." He inhabits this new space the same way he inhabits every other one, simultaneously attuned to its peculiarities and somewhat set apart.

In "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," Hughes addresses the issue of respectability, the belief that promoting only the best, brightest and most palatable forms of blackness might somehow temper

white bigotry. “‘Oh, be respectable, write about nice people, show how good we are,’ say the Negroes,” he laments. The respectability argument is so attractive to some that nearly eight decades later it still rears its head with regard to black art and representation. For Sandy, the pressure to be respectable comes from Aunt Tempy, Aunt Hager’s oldest child, who avoids visiting her washerwoman mother in an effort to preserve the illusion of her middle-class upbringing. After Hager’s death, Sandy moves in with Tempy, and with his usual levelheadedness is able to see the futility of her and her husband’s way of thinking: They look down on the Baptist church for its “nigger music” but are still made to use the servant’s entrance at some of the town’s finer white establishments. Sandy is nobody’s fool, though: He sees the benefits their lifestyle affords him, like his own room and the freedom to read as much as he wants.

“Not Without Laughter” is an early Great Migration novel. Many blacks in Kansas arrived from the South after emancipation, and with the advent of automation and the decline of agricultural work, blacks kept traveling north and west in search of opportunities. A migration narrative is necessarily a story of change. The author’s task is to replicate the nostalgia and hope his characters feel as they set out for new futures, or the fear, resentment and loneliness of those left behind. Jimboy, the novel’s most frequent migrant, sings a song that encapsulates both sides of the experience:

He begins:

*I got a mule to ride. I got a mule to ride. Down in the South somewhere. I got a mule to ride.*

His sister-in-law, Harriet, responds:

*O, don't you leave me here. Babe, don't you leave me here. Dog-gone yo' comin' back! Said don't you leave me here.*

As a depiction of a period of transition, the migration novel often makes a priority of capturing life as it is led in its very moment, since there’s no telling what might change when characters find themselves in new landscapes. The changing way of life between one generation and the next is a persistent point of tension in “Not Without Laughter.” Aunt Hager pumps water for her laundry washing, as well as for the cooking and cleaning, yet a few miles away Tempy lives with electric lights and indoor plumbing. Hager sees hotels as breeding grounds for vice and sin, but both Harriet and Sandy jump at the chance to work at one, motivated by a paycheck. Hughes uses the songs and dances of Jimboy and Harriet as well as the church revival culture of Hager and Annjee — in scenes taking place on the same night, less than a half mile apart — to depict the crossroads between the traditions that have given expression to the community in the past and those that might fill that role in the future.

Sandy’s father, Jimboy, is caught in a cycle of desiring to be on the road to find better work (and freedom from responsibility) and of nostalgia for the culture and familiarity of the South. Jimboy’s wanderlust is offensive to Hager, but Sandy idolizes his father, begging him to teach him how to box and fish and play guitar. The scene of Jimboy about to cut out for the road once again — this time for good — is one of the most poignant in the book. Sandy discovers his father “sitting dejectedly on the well-stoop in the sunshine, with his head in his hands,” his posture conveying the sort of defeat only a man intending to abandon his family feels. The father takes his son in his arms and kisses him awkwardly. He does not say goodbye. Later that afternoon Sandy discovers Jimboy has left town.

What prevents Hughes's characters from being mere archetypes of working-class black folks, or of the Great Migration, is their ability to change and respond to one another. "Not Without Laughter" is a novel not without forgiveness. Its characters ultimately prize family over their own ideological resolve, though it takes some longer than others to get there. After hearing news of Harriet's arrest for streetwalking, Hager doesn't speak her daughter's name for some time, but she does not disown her; Hager's dying wish is for Harriet to be happy. Even Tempy's taking in of Sandy can be seen as an attempt to pull her family close again after keeping her distance for so long. The one exception is Jimboy, who remains elusive throughout the novel, a father figure always out of reach.

A poet who writes fiction can imbue his prose with a considerable amount of magic. For Hughes, his magic is an appreciation for the lyrics and rhythms of jazz and blues. It's one thing to appreciate the cultural aspects of these musical forms, yet another to home in on the lyrics, the power of the repetition employed therein, the subtle turns of phrase and uses of wit.

"Not Without Laughter" includes lyrics to songs that are mournful, bawdy, vengeful and downright silly. They underscore the importance Hughes felt they played in black life and consciousness. One gets the sense that Sandy's upbringing has been shaped just as much by overhearing these songs as by Aunt Hager's teachings. As the novel progresses, Sandy's thoughts are rendered in musical streams of consciousness, quickly turning from anticipation to curiosity to anger to desire. The result is a realistic portrayal of the rhythms of a young man's inner life: Sandy lies in bed at night and riffs on his own past and future.

In perhaps the most peculiar scene of the novel, Sandy is pursued by a solicitous older man, a "yellow man with a womanish kind of voice," on the streets of Chicago. Sandy quickly ascertains that the man is one of the "queer fellows" who try to convince boys to come up to their rooms. The scene ends with Sandy running away, but Hughes writes that Sandy wondered what such men did with the boys they seduced. "Curious, he'd like to find out — but he was afraid." For the time period, to acknowledge homosexual activity, and to allow that it might pique one's interest, was quite rare. The scene would remain one of Hughes's more direct engagements with the topic of homosexuality in his prose until the 1961 short story "Blessed Assurance." The tragedy and senselessness of racism is felt throughout "Not Without Laughter," and Hughes takes care to show how it manifests itself in ways small and large. Sandy cries after he overhears Annjee's boss, Mrs. Rice, berate his mother as she packs up leftovers for him. When Sandy and his friends are turned away from the Children's Day Party at the theme park, the other kids talk loudly about the injustice of it, and Sandy just keeps muttering, "I suppose they didn't mean colored kids," a feeble attempt to make sense of a surprising and hurtful situation. His friend Buster plans to pass as white and tells the gang that if one day they should run into him in a big city, to act like they don't know him. Colorism seeps down to every aspect of life, even those moments made for pleasure, as at Benbow's dance: "'High yallers, draw nigh! Brown-skins, come near!' somebody squalled. 'But black gals, stay where you are!'"

Hughes would not write another novel for nearly 30 years, until 1958, but four years after the publication of "Not Without Laughter" he released the story collection "The Ways of White Folks," a series of vignettes about the interaction between white and black people, often with grim, moralistic endings. By this time he had parted ways with his white benefactor Charlotte Mason; his resentment over the split might explain why these stories reach for concrete conclusions that do not similarly burden his novel.

“Not Without Laughter” is a debut in the best of ways: It covers uncharted territory, it compels its readers to see part of the world anew, and it prizes exploration over pat conclusion. Hughes accesses the universal — how all of us love and learn and laugh and cry — by staying faithful to the particulars of his characters and their way of life. With this book the young poet from Joplin, Mo., manages to deliver something more valuable than simply an admirable debut — he gives his readers and contemporaries a guide for careful consideration of the lives of everyday black people. Such a guide is still useful to readers and writers today. Perhaps now more than ever.

### **BLACK NO MORE, George Schuyler**

On New Year’s Eve in 1933, Max Disher and his friend Bunny Brown go to the popular Honky Tonk Club in New York City. Max tries to ask a beautiful blonde girl from Atlanta to dance, but she cruelly rebuffs him because he is Black. The next day, Bunny tells him about an old friend of theirs, Dr. Crookman, who has discovered a treatment to turn Black Americans white. The treatment, called “Black-No-More,” changes a Black person’s skin, hair, and features in three days to make them indistinguishable from white people—though it will not change the features of any babies the person might have. Max resolves to be one of the first people to get the treatment, particularly because he can then go seek out the beautiful blonde woman.

After undergoing the treatment, Max is excited by his newfound freedom and assurance as a white man, though he soon realizes that white society is quite dull. But with thousands of people lining up for the treatment, society is changing. Black businesses are starting to worry about losing customers, and people are leaving Harlem in droves now that they no longer face housing discrimination like they did when they were Black. Max tells Bunny that he’s going back to Atlanta to find the blonde girl and tells Bunny to meet him there.

Meanwhile, Black and white elites are both trying to shut down Black-No-More: white people are trying to maintain what they consider to be their racial purity and white supremacy. Black activists preach racial solidarity, and they are also worried about losing support for the Back-to-Africa movement or the money white people donate to their organizations when Black people face discrimination or violence. At the same time, Black-No-More has made Crookman and his associates, Charles Foster and Hank Johnson, incredibly wealthy, and they bribe politicians to prevent them from passing any legislation that would close their sanitariums.

Max Disher (who has now changed his name to Matthew Fisher), arrives in Atlanta but can’t find the blonde girl. Recognizing white people’s growing alarm at African Americans joining their ranks, Matthew realizes he can profit off of this hatred. He gets involved with a white supremacist group called the Knights of Nordica, founded by the Reverend Henry Givens, by convincing Givens that he is an anthropologist from New York and by giving impassioned speeches on white people’s biological superiority. He quickly earns Givens’s trust and becomes his second-in-command, growing their membership and their treasury. Matthew also learns that Givens’s daughter, Helen, is the beautiful blonde girl from the Honky Tonk, and Matthew quickly courts and marries her.

A few weeks after the wedding, Bunny arrives in Atlanta and finds Matthew—Bunny has recently become white, too. Matthew immediately hires Bunny as his assistant, and they conspire to stop political progress in either direction. The longer they can draw out a fight between those in favor of and those

against Black-No-More, the more members the Knights of Nordica can gain—and the more money Matthew can make.

Soon, white women start having Black babies because either they or their husbands used to be Black, unbeknownst to their partners. As a result, Crookman opens lying-in hospitals (i.e., maternity hospitals) where women can give birth and then turn the infant white immediately after birth. As a result, alarm spreads throughout the country and people pour into Knights of Nordica meetings, aiming to preserve racial purity.

Soon after, Matthew faces a new challenge: now that white workers (many of whom are Knights) do not fear companies firing them in favor of hiring cheaper Black laborers, they start to organize. Matthew uses this to his advantage, taking bribes from factory managers to stop white workers from organizing. Matthew then starts rumors among the workers that there are Black people among them, leading to infighting that prevents them from unionizing and raising their wages.

A presidential election looms. Because so many of the formerly Black people have better access to voting as white people, the conservative Democrats worry that the Republicans might carry the South and win in a landslide. Matthew comes up with a plan to prevent this, teaming up with the wealthy Anglo-Saxon Association (headed by Arthur Snobbcraft) to raise funds for the campaign while the Knights of Nordica bring in the votes. After some political maneuvering, Matthew convinces the delegates at the Democratic National Convention to nominate Rev. Givens for president and Snobbcraft for vice president; they run on a platform of using genealogical tests to determine who can vote. Meanwhile, the Republicans re-nominate the current president, Harold Goosie.

The political campaign is long and bitter: on the Democratic side are “pure” white people, while Republican supporters are those who either suspect or know for sure that they are “impure.” Snobbcraft comes up with a plan to help sway people to their side, asking statistician Samuel Buggerie to make a report on people’s ancestry that would be so shocking that people would have to vote for the Democrats to adopt their plank of using genealogical examinations to determine the right to vote. Buggerie aims to release the report just a few days before the election. Meanwhile, Crookman and his men donate money to the Republican cause.

About a month before the election, Matthew reveals to Bunny that Helen is pregnant and due in three weeks, and he doesn’t know what to do because she wants to have the baby at home—but it will almost certainly be Black. Bunny counsels him to get a plane and some money ready and to tell Helen the truth—if she doesn’t take it well, Matthew can flee, and if she does, then all is well.

Soon the Knights of Nordica grow violent, setting fire to one of Crookman’s lying-in hospitals and killing 12 babies. Many of the women who flee the burning hospital are socially prominent, and this fact scandalizes the nation, prompting even more support for the Democrats. Desperate for a plan of attack, the Republicans learn about Buggerie’s ancestry project and plan to steal the research so that he can’t publish it. But two days before the election, Buggerie reveals to Snobbcraft that his research shows many of the most prominent politicians have Black ancestry—including Givens and Snobbcraft themselves. Heading to the vault where they are keeping the research, Snobbcraft and Buggerie soon discover that someone has stolen Buggerie’s research and his summary showing the list of politicians that have Black ancestry.



The day before the election, Helen gives birth to a Black baby. But before Matthew can explain himself, Givens comes in with a paper, which has published a story about his and Snobbcraft's ancestry. He tells them that an angry mob chased him home and that they are all in danger. Helen begs Matthew to stick by her, thinking that her ancestry is the reason the baby is Black, and Matthew forgives her. He reveals that he was formerly Black and that he is actually the reason for their baby's skin color. He is relieved to tell the truth, and he, Helen, Bunny, and Givens all resolve to take his plane out of the country.

Meanwhile, Snobbcraft and Buggerie attempt to do the same thing, hiring a man to fly them to Mexico to avoid an angry mob. But the plane doesn't have enough gas and crashes in Mississippi, and Snobbcraft and Buggerie decide that their best course of action is to use shoe polish to blacken their faces and arms so that people don't recognize them from the newspapers.

However, the first town they come upon, Happy Hill, Mississippi, is notorious for lynching, and a pastor named Alex McPhule has taken over the town and convinced the townspeople that God is going to send them a sign on Election Day. On that day, when Snobbcraft and Buggerie approach the town, the townspeople (thinking they are Black) attack the two men until they pull off the men's clothes and see that they are actually white. However, after Snobbcraft and Buggerie clean up, the townspeople recognize them from the papers and because they have Black ancestry, the people brutally mutilate them, shoot them, and burn them alive.

The Republicans are elected in a landslide. Soon after, Crookman publishes a paper explaining that his treatment actually turned African Americans a few shades whiter than "pure" white people. As a result, makeup products spring up to darken people's complexion to prove that they are white, a trend which now makes most people look Black. In the book's final scene, Crookman sees a picture of the Givens and Fisher family vacationing in Cannes—all of them looking as dark as Matthew Fisher Jr.

### THE CONJURE-MAN DIES, Rudolph Fisher

This 1932 novel should help Fisher (1897–1934) get the wider acclaim he merits for writing the first mystery novel populated solely by Black characters. NYPD police detective Perry Dart is drawn into a baffling homicide case after N'Gana Frimbo, a Harvard graduate who worked as a psychic, is found dead with a bloody head wound in his Harlem home by two prospective clients. They become suspects, along with several others who were waiting for appointments with Frimbo, including drug addict Doty Hicks. Dart discovers the unusual murder weapon, a club made from a human femur, and is intrigued by Hicks's apparent motive—the belief that Frimbo put a spell on his brother, Oliver, that's slowly killing Oliver and can only be broken by Frimbo's death. Fisher tosses in plenty of red herrings and subtly planted clues, along with self-referential humor. (At one point, Dart notes that in books, "It's always the least likely person.") The clever plot will resonate with golden age fans.

The Conjure-Man Dies is the first known mystery novel written by an African-American. Rudolph Fisher, one of the principal writers of the Harlem Renaissance, weaves an intricate story of a native African king, who, after receiving a degree from Harvard University, settles into Harlem in the 1930s. He becomes a "conjure-man," a fortune-teller, a mysterious figure who remains shrouded in darkness while his clients sit directly across from him, singly bathed in light. It is in this configuration that one of these seekers of the revelation of fate discovers he is speaking to a dead man. Thus a complex mystery begins, involving suspects and characters who are vividly and richly portrayed, and who dramatically

illuminate for the reader a time, a place, and a people that have been sadly neglected in American literature.

Fisher presented a mystery and detective story, again set in Harlem and featuring an all-Black cast. It was Fisher's attempt to tap into a popular audience with a tale of African rituals, a mysterious murder, and hidden identities. It is also the first Black detective novel not originally published in serial periodical form.

Throughout the Harlem Renaissance, Fisher pursued an active career as a physician in private practice, a roentgenologist, and an X-ray technician. He died of a mysterious stomach ailment that some scholars suspect was caused by radiation exposure.

### **BLACK THUNDER, Arna Bontemps**

Arna Bontemps's novel *Black Thunder: Gabriel's Revolt: Virginia 1800* was published in 1936. This conflation of history and imagination is based on an actual slave rebellion reported in contemporary newspapers and recorded in the *Calendar of Virginia State Papers* (vol. 9, 1890). The chronicle begins in the great house of old Moseley Sheppard whose dependence on old Ben Woodfolk, his faithful house servant, has developed over the years into veiled companionship. Old Bundy, Ben's work-worn counterpart, once a fieldhand on the neighboring plantation but now reduced to scavenging throughout the neighborhood, intrudes on Ben's peace to beg for rum and surreptitiously to invite him to join the slave Gabriel's scheme for insurrection. It is old Bundy's misfortune to be observed with his jug of rum by Thomas Prosser, his merciless master, who uses the excuse to beat him to death.

Bundy's murder adds fresh resolve to Gabriel's plans and subverts the comfort of reluctant individuals like old Ben. Indeed, Gabriel had chosen the occasion of Bundy's funeral to elaborate his strategy to amass some eleven hundred men and one woman to take the city of Richmond in their first step toward freedom. The remarkable funeral seems to emerge from a collective preliterate tradition whose origins are African and whose inspiration to freedom arises from the natural world. Under these conditions, old Ben swears allegiance to the conspiracy in the presence of the principal plotters, at first with apprehension and then with deep trepidation.

Gabriel, the strapping six-foot two-inch coachman for Thomas Prosser, had earned the respect of slaves and "free" blacks throughout Henrico County, Virginia, about a year earlier by winning a titan's battle with Ditcher, the brutal driver of slaves from another plantation. Gabriel wins fealty for his resoluteness and a generosity of spirit, which appeals to persons as diverse as Mingo, the literate freeman, and the tempestuous Juba, Gabriel's woman; he finds personal inspiration in the proclamation of General Toussaint L'Ouverture, the Haitian liberator, who still lived, and in biblical text read aloud by Mingo.

At the appointed hour of insurrection, a relentless, unprecedented downpour transforms Henrico County into a flood plain; Gabriel's insurgents find it impossible to execute their grand design and are forced to pull back in favor of a more propitious time. The delay, however, is sufficient to uncover the treachery of Pharoah, who immediately snatches the opportunity to turn informant. Out of loyalty to Moseley Sheppard, old Ben confesses his role and names leaders.

Across the nation amazement accompanies alarm, for it is inconceivable that illiterate chattel are capable of conceiving such a scheme on their own. Every literate white person who is not native to the region is suspect, as Scotsman John Callender, friend of Thomas Jefferson, rudely learns. Frenchman M. Creuzot,

printer, is particularly imperiled and flees north for his safety. Before long all the major figures in the conspiracy, including Gabriel, are captured and hung. Pharoah, meanwhile, literally loses his mind, but perfidious old Ben endures, however uneasily.

Richard Wright generously noted in his 1936 review that *Black Thunder* broke new ground in African American fiction by addressing concerns not previously touched upon in African American novels. Most critics readily concur that given its myriad voices and many points of view, the controlling idea of the novel is its universal determination toward freedom, a principle that warrants their generous attention to its political purpose. Others, however, noting its contribution to the vernacular tradition, cite meaningful distinctions between literacy and orality as racial and cultural markers. <>

## **NEVER FORGET YOUR NAME: THE CHILDREN OF AUSCHWITZ** by Alwin Meyern translated by Nick Somers [Polity, 9781509545506]

The children of Auschwitz is the darkest spot in the ocean of suffering that was the Holocaust. They were deported to the concentration camp with their families, with most being murdered in the gas chambers upon their arrival or were born there under unimaginable circumstances. While 232,000 children and juveniles were deported to Auschwitz, only 750 were liberated in the death camp at the end of January 1945. Most of them were under 15 years of age. Alwin Meyea33.7 ( 1)-l'(ea)l3 ( o)-3. ( w)0. (g)2.1 (t)5.8

Preface  
Life Before  
'That's When My Childhood Ended'  
'The Hunt For Jews Began'  
Gateway to Death  
'As If in A Coffin'  
O wi cim – Oshpitzin – Auschwitz  
Children of Many Languages  
Small Children, Mothers and Grandmothers  
'Di 600 Inglekh' And Other Manuscripts Found In Auschwitz  
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'Twins! Where Are The Twins?'  
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Transports, Death Marches And Other Camps  
Dying? What's That?  
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Who Am I?  
[...] The Other Train Is Always There

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Excerpt: Children in Auschwitz: the darkest spot on an ocean of suffering, criminality, and death with a thousand faces — humiliation; contempt; harassment; persecution; fanatical racism; transports; lice; rats; diseases; epidemics; beatings; Mengele; experiments; smoking crematorium chimneys; abominable stench; starvation; selections; brutal separation from mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles and friends; gas ...

In 1940, a first camp by the name of Auschwitz, later to be known as the Main Camp or Auschwitz I, was erected by the Nazis on the outskirts of the Polish town of Oswiecim (65 kilometres west of Krakow). The first transport of Polish inmates arrived from German-occupied Poland in mid-1940. In 1941, the Nazis planned and built the killing centre (extermination camp) Auschwitz-Birkenau, also known as Auschwitz II, on the site of the destroyed village of Brzezinka.

From March 1942, Jewish children and their families were transported to Auschwitz from almost all German-occupied countries, for the sole reason that they were Jews. There were already a large number of Jewish boys and girls in the first transports to Auschwitz from Slovakia. Well over 200,000 children were to follow, and almost all of them were murdered.

The Auschwitz complex consisted of forty-eight concentration and extermination camps. Auschwitz-Birkenau has become the unmatched symbol of contempt for humanity, and a unique synonym for the mass murder of European Jewry. It was the site of the largest killing centre conceived, built and operated by the Germans, and played a central role in the Nazi 'Final Solution', the systematic extermination of Europe's Jewish inhabitants.

By far the largest group of children deported to Auschwitz were thus Jewish girls and boys (see also page oo). Most of them were transported with their families in packed, closed and sealed freight cars,

mercilessly women alike. Pregnant women from other concentration camps were also transferred to Auschwitz exclusively to be gassed.

A stay of execution was granted only to those condemned to heavy physical slave labour inside and outside the camp. These men and women were physically and psychologically exploited in road building, agriculture or industrial and armaments factories, in which inmates from the satellite camps in particular were forced into slave labour.

Sometimes children aged between 13 and 15 were also 'selected for work' and allowed to live, usually only for a short time. For example, a large group of children and juveniles were assigned to the 'Rollwagen-Kommando', where they pulled heavy carts in place of horses, transporting blankets, wood or the ashes of incinerated children, women and men from the crematoria. They were highly mobile and had plenty of opportunity to see the atrocities taking place in the camp.

Some sets of twins up to the age of 16 were also kept alive for a time. SS Doctor Mengele exploited and misused both Jewish and Sinti and Roma twins for pseudo-medical experiments. They were selected, measured, X-rayed, infected with viruses or had their eyes cauterized, and then killed, dissected and burned.

Throughout the five years of its existence — from the first to the last — however, the main purpose and primary aim of the killing centre was extermination. All other aims by the Nazis — such as exploitation of the children, women and men as slave labourers, or the criminal, so-called 'medical', experiments by SS doctors — were of secondary importance.

- The children and juveniles transferred temporarily to the camp soon became acquainted with the reality of Auschwitz. They didn't know whether they would still be alive from one day to the next. No one could foresee how the same situation would be dealt with by the SS the next day, the next hour or the next minute. Any act could mean immediate death. Apart from extermination, nothing in Auschwitz was predictable. The children were permanently confronted with death and knew that they had to be on their guard at all times.
- More than 1.3 million people were deported to Auschwitz between 1940 and 1945. Among them were at least 1 million Jews. They came from Hungary, Poland, France, the Netherlands, Greece, Czechoslovakia, exposed to the summer heat and freezing winters. They had to relieve themselves in buckets that were soon full. Because the wagons were so packed, many couldn't even reach the buckets in time and the floors were swimming in urine and excrement. The stench was overwhelming. In many cases, the deportees had little or nothing to eat or drink. Although especially the small children begged constantly for water, their entreaties went unheard. Many — particularly infants, young children and elderly persons — died during the journeys, which often lasted for days.
- The Jews were deliberately kept in the dark about the real intentions of the Nazis. Before the deportations, they were told that they were being resettled in labour camps in the East, where they could start a new life.
- The opposite was true. The Jewish children, women and men were destined to be murdered. They were 'welcomed at the ramp in Auschwitz with the bellowed order: "Everyone out! Leave your luggage where it is!" The few people who were initially kept alive never again saw the possessions they had been allowed to bring with them.

- Selections began sporadically from April 1942, and then regularly from July of that year. They were carried out on the railway ramp, usually by SS doctors but also by pharmacists, medical orderlies and dentists. Young, healthy and strong women and men whom they considered 'fit for work' were temporarily allowed to live and were separated from the old and invalid, pregnant women and children. Germans randomly classed around 80 per cent of the Jews — often also entire transports — as 'unfit for work', particularly during the deportations to the Auschwitz-Birkenau killing centre of 438,000 Hungarian Jewish children, women and men from May 1944. These people were marched under guard or transported in trucks by the SS to one of the crematoria, where they were ordered to undress. Under the pretext that they were to be showered, the SS herded them into the gas chambers disguised to look like showers. The poisonous gas Zyklon B was then introduced, and those inside suffered an agonizing death by suffocation. It took 10 to 20 minutes for them all to die.
- Small children in Auschwitz were almost all killed on arrival. If a mother was carrying her child during the initial selection, they were both gassed, however healthy and 'fit for work' the young mother might be. This was irrelevant. Pregnant woman also suffered a terrible fate in Auschwitz. They were 'automatically' killed by phenol injection, gassed or beaten to death. This applied initially to Jewish and non-Jewish Romanians, the Soviet Union (especially Byelorussia, Ukraine and Russia, Yugoslavia, Italy, Norway, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Latvia, Austria, Germany and elsewhere.
- The Auschwitz Complex complex consisted of three main units. The Main Camp Auschwitz I, held up to 20,000 people. The killing centre Birkenau, or Auschwitz II, was the largest unit of the camp complex, containing as many as 90,000 children, women and men. Birkenau was divided into ten sections separated by electrified barbed-wire fences. For example, there was the Women's Camp, the Theresienstadt Family Camp, the Men's Camp and the Gypsy Family Camp, where Sinti and Roma were interned. In Auschwitz III (Monowitz), IG Farbenindustrie AG (headquarters Frankfurt am Main) employed Auschwitz concentration camp inmates as slave labour to make synthetic rubber ('Tuna') and fuel. There were also forty-five satellite camps of various sizes, such as Blechhammer, Kattowitz or Rajsko.
- At least 1 million Jewish babies, children, juveniles, women and men, mostly in Auschwitz-Birkenau, were starved to death, killed by injections into the heart, murdered in criminal pseudo-medical experiments, shot, beaten to death or gassed.
- Between 70,000 and 75,000 Poles, 21,000 Roma and Sinti, 14,000 Soviet prisoners of war and 10-15,000 inmates speaking many languages were murdered in Auschwitz.'
- At least 232,000 infants, children and juveniles, aged from 1 day old to 17 years, were deported to Auschwitz, including 216,000 Jews and 11,000 Roma and Sinti. At least 3,000 were Poles, more than 1,000 Byelorussians, Russians and Ukrainians, and a number from other nations.
- On 27 January 1945, only 750 children and youths aged under 18 years were liberated; only 521 boys and girls aged 14 and under,' including around 60 new-born babies, were still alive, and many of them died shortly afterwards.

Very few of the children deported to Auschwitz remained alive. To some extent, the survival of every child was an anomaly unforeseen by the Nazis, a type of resistance to the only fate that Germans had planned for the children — namely, extermination. Very many of the children and juveniles in this book are fully aware that their survival was a matter of pure luck.

In some cases, comradeship and solidarity among the camp inmates helped them to stay alive. For example, some women relate how their pregnancy remained undetected because of the starvation rations in the camp, enabling them to give birth in secret. Once the child was born, it had practically no chance of survival. SS doctors, medical orderlies and their assistants took the mother and child and killed them. Sometimes, however, the mother managed, with the aid of other women inmates, to hide and feed her baby for a while. This was particularly true of the infants born in the last weeks and days before Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated.'

Others are convinced that they survived through their belief in God. Otto Klein, who, at the age of 11, was claimed with his twin brother Ferenc by Mengele for pseudo-medical experiments, for example, never dared to doubt in God. 'That would have been the end. Deep down in my heart, I always remained a Jew. No one and nothing could beat that out of me. Not even Auschwitz.'

For the few children who were liberated, the pain is always there: before breakfast, during the day, in the evening, at night. The memory of mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, the grandparents, girlfriends, boyfriends, aunts and uncles, killed in the camps. For a lifetime and beyond, the pain is ever present, not only in their lives but also in those of their own children and grandchildren.

Even if the number tattooed on the forearm, thigh or buttocks is often the only outward sign that they were in Auschwitz, they bear the traces of suffering on their bodies and in their souls.

The older liberated children of Auschwitz talk about their happy childhoods at home, about school, life in a Jewish community, the relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish children, the arrival of the Germans, the growing apprehension, the refugees, the chaos prior to deportation, the end of playing, the transport in cattle wagons, the arrival in Auschwitz, the mortal fear.

The children remember the gnawing hunger; the experiments carried out on them; the cold that pierced to the bone; the constant selections by the SS; the fear that their number would be called out; the longing for their parents, a good meal, an eiderdown, warmth. They were torn between despair and hope. They wanted to see their mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters again. They wanted to go home. They wanted their old and happy lives back. They wanted to be able to be children again.

Only a few survived Auschwitz and the other camps where they were interned. The children rescued from the camps were just skin and bone. The people caring for them feared that they would not live. They looked like skeletons, with bite wounds from the dogs, bodies covered in sores, eyes stuck together with pus; for a long time, anything they ate went in one end and straight out the other; they had tuberculosis, pneumonia and encephalitis.

Some had no idea where they were from. Practically all of them were orphans. The smaller children in particular were marked by their life in the camp. They spoke a mixture of languages. For a long time, the girls and boys lived in fear that something — particularly food and clothing — would be snatched away from them. Hiding food was part of their survival strategy. They defended it with their lives, because in the camp even the smallest possession had had inestimable value. Every small piece of bread meant survival for one or two days or more. Even spoiled food was not thrown away. When adults who had not been in the camp suggested this, they would look at them incredulously and think to themselves: 'You have no idea what life is really like!'

The small children were incapable of playing. When they were presented with playthings, they gave them a cursory glance or threw them away. They didn't know what they were or what to do with them. These children had first to learn how to play. They were irritable and mistrustful. Dogs, rats and uniforms caused indescribable anxiety. When someone left them, some of the smaller children assumed they were dead. Others couldn't believe at first that people could die of natural causes.

The children of Auschwitz were free, but how could they live after what they had been through? It took them years of painstaking work to learn to see life from a perspective other than that of the camp. They had to learn to survive the camp emotionally. They had to learn to be young again so as to be able to grow old like others.

As they grew older, those children of Auschwitz were increasingly motivated to find out where they came from. In searching for their parents, the number tattooed on their arm often helped, because their numbers were tattooed at the same time — first the mother, then the daughter with serial numbers from the Women's Camp; or the father, then the son, from the Men's Camp.

Only a few were reunited, years later, with their parents. They were soon conflicted as to who their real mothers and fathers were. In the experience of the author of this book, the answer was always the adoptive parents. They went back to the place where they had experienced most warmth in their lives. For the biological parents, this was a bitter disappointment, losing a son or a daughter for a second time. The others never stopped asking whether their families had been killed in the gas chambers, or had perhaps survived somewhere. They continued to look for their parents, siblings, grandparents and friends — at least in their dreams.

Those who survived Auschwitz as children or juveniles continued to wonder whether their families had really died in the gas chambers. They would come across newspaper articles reporting on the return of people thought dead. Hope made it possible for them to continue living. It was just a dream that they would wake from. Then everything would be fine again. But no one came back.

The survivors' children and grandchildren can sense how their parents and grandparents suffer. They often know much more than their parents and grandparents think — despite their having done everything possible to protect them from the consequences of Auschwitz.

The children of Auschwitz had to show supreme resolve to make their way in the world. They sought and found new lives, went to school, studied, married, had children, pursued careers and created new homes. But as they got older and no longer had to concern themselves as much with their own families, the memories of Auschwitz returned with a vengeance. Every day, every hour, the pain is there: the memory of their mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters, all murdered. Many can still remember them quite clearly. How they would love to hear their voices again. How they would love once again to speak to their parents and siblings, or to hug them.

The ancestors and descendants of the children of Auschwitz who tell their stories in this book lived and live among us in Będzin, Békéscsaba, Berlin, Bilk, Budapest, Csepel, Czaniec, Davos, Delvin, Dimona, El Paso, Esslingen, Frankfurt am Main, Gdynia, Geneva, Givat Haviva, Haifa, Hajdúboszormény, Hartford, Herzliya, Hronov, Jerusalem, Kansas City, Kaunas, Konstanz, Krakow, Kutná Hora, London, Los Angeles, Lubin, Miskolc, Montreal, Mukachevo, Naples, New York, Odolice, Orsha, Oslo, Ostrava, Paris, Prague,



Providence, Sárospatak, Thessaloniki, Topol'cany, Toronto, Turany nad Ondavou, Vel'ky Meder, Vienna, Vilnius, Vitebsk, Warsaw, Yad Hanna, Yalta, Yenakieve, Zabrze, Zurich.

When the persecutions by Nazi Germany began throughout Europe, the children of Auschwitz featured in this book were babies, toddlers and children up to 14 years old. When they were forced to work as slaves or were interned for the first time in ghettos or camps, they were all children. When they were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, four were juveniles, none of the others older than 15. Four of the children were born in Auschwitz.

The children of Auschwitz interviewed for this book are among the very last survivors. Herbert Adler, Yehuda Bacon, Halina Birenbaum, Robert Buehler, Gabor Hirsch, Lydia Holznerová, Krzysztof J., Otto Klein, Kola Klimczyk, Josif Konvoj, Eduard Kornfeld, Heinz Salvator Kounio, Géza Kozma, Ewa Krcz-Siezka, Vera Kriegel, Dagmar Lieblová, Dasha Lewin, Channa Loewenstein, Israel Loewenstein, Mirjam M., Jack Mandelbaum, Angela Orosz-Richt, Lidia Rydzikowska, Olga Solomon, Jiri Steiner, William Wermuth, Barbara Wesolowska and other children of Auschwitz were willing to tell the story of their survival, and life afterwards.

The life stories of the children of Auschwitz are based above all on numerous lengthy interviews with them, their families and friends. This book could never have been written without the willingness of the children of Auschwitz to provide information, without their hospitality, their openness and their trust. It is their book first and foremost. It contains the life stories of people who know more than others what life means. <>

## **MAKING MONSTERS: THE UNCANNY POWER OF DEHUMANIZATION** by David Livingstone Smith [Harvard University Press, 9780674545564]

A leading scholar explores what it means to dehumanize others—and how and why we do it.

“I wouldn’t have accepted that they were human beings. You would see an infant who’s just learning to smile, and it smiles at you, but you still kill it.” So a Hutu man explained to an incredulous researcher, when asked to recall how he felt slaughtering Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994. Such statements are shocking, yet we recognize them; we hear their echoes in accounts of genocides, massacres, and pogroms throughout history. How do some people come to believe that their enemies are monsters, and therefore easy to kill?

In **MAKING MONSTERS** David Livingstone Smith offers a poignant meditation on the philosophical and psychological roots of dehumanization. Drawing on harrowing accounts of lynchings, Smith establishes what dehumanization is and what it isn’t. When we dehumanize our enemy, we hold two incongruous beliefs at the same time: we believe our enemy is at once subhuman and fully human. To call someone a monster, then, is not merely a resort to metaphor—dehumanization really does happen in our minds. Turning to an abundance of historical examples, Smith explores the relationship between dehumanization and racism, the psychology of hierarchy, what it means to regard others as human beings, and why dehumanizing others transforms them into something so terrifying that they must be

destroyed.

Meticulous but highly readable, **MAKING MONSTERS** suggests that the process of dehumanization is deeply seated in our psychology. It is precisely because we are all human that we are vulnerable to the manipulations of those trading in the politics of demonization and violence.

## Review

“No one is doing better work on the psychology of dehumanization than David Livingstone Smith, and he brings to bear an impressive depth and breadth of knowledge in psychology, philosophy, history, and anthropology. *Making Monsters* is a landmark achievement which will frame all future work on the psychology of dehumanization.”—**Eric Schwitzgebel, author of *Exekias***

*i i i a e a le IMP l d*

“A fascinating and rich book that combines philosophical and historical sophistication. Even—indeed especially—those who disagree markedly with Smith’s views about dehumanization, like me, will benefit from wrestling with his lucid, important arguments.”—**Kate Manne, author of *Waste***

*W i i e e e H I P*

“*Making Monsters* is a wonderful book in so many ways. It is thoughtful, scholarly, and accessible, comprehensive and compelling—a tremendous accomplishment that will enrich our understanding of some of the darker part of our human condition.”—**Lori Gruen, author of *Emotion***

*e a E a E I*

“*Making Monsters* is a historically informed and theoretically rich exploration of how and why we dehumanize one another. Scientifically sophisticated and interdisciplinary in scope, Smith’s vivid use of examples transforms his book from a valuable scholarly treatise into an urgent and timely manifesto.”—**Charlotte Witt, author of *Emotion***

*e e i a e h h G f d*

“If you’ve ever wondered “How could they?” David Livingstone Smith’s brilliant *Making Monsters* will help you understand the callous brutality of race crimes and the psychology of dehumanization. With a steady hand, Smith leads us through a wide swath of the worst of human crimes and distills into his own insightful account the research explaining the social and psychological mechanisms that enable ordinary people to do monstrous deeds. This illuminating book is a major contribution to the urgent project of understanding the psychology of dehumanization in the hope of preventing future atrocities.”—**Lynne Tirrell, University of Connecticut**

“Illuminating...It is cutting insights...along with thoughtful speculations on how dehumanization is nurtured—through racism, ideology, and the power of hierarchical structures—that makes this such an invaluable study, particularly at this time.”—**Bill Marx, *Author***

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## Something Like a Darkness

“They did not know that the [Tutsi] were human beings, because if they had thought about that they wouldn’t have killed them. Let me include myself as someone who accepted it. I wouldn’t have accepted that they are human beings.” I Elie Ngarambe, a Hutu man, spoke these words to US political scientist Daniel Jonah Goldhagen in 2008. Ngarambe was talking about his role in the 1994 Rwanda genocide, during which he bludgeoned and hacked Tutsi women, men, and children to death.

Goldhagen confessed his perplexity at how anyone could perform the horrendous acts that were everyday occurrences during the Rwanda genocide. “I find it hard to understand,” he said, “and I want to understand, how people could approach other people who are begging for their lives, and screaming in pain, and chop them.” In doing so, he expressed some sort of mute incomprehension that many of us experience when reading about these events, or about the horrors of the Nazi extermination camps, or about any of the all-too-frequent episodes of collective brutality that deface human history.

Struggling to adequately describe the state of mind that allowed him to butcher his neighbors, Ngarambe responded, “That is a hard question to answer. Because even though you did it, you know they had the same flesh as you.” He then added,

It was very sad when a baby would cry. I did not kill children, but at some point you felt guilty. You would see an infant who’s just learning to smile, and it smiles at you, but you still kill it. It was a cloud that came into people’s hearts and covered them, and every thing became dark. You are holding a machete over someone who is weak and saying, “Please, I will give you money. Please forgive me.” Or a woman would say, “I am a beautiful woman. Please take care of me.” But instead, you kill them. This genocide, when we look back and think about it, it is beyond our ability to understand. I cannot explain it. The only answer I can give is that it was like being in a fog, something like a darkness.

In the first statement, Elie Ngarambe claimed that he did not think of those that he killed as human beings. This may sound strange. How can one human being regard another human being as not really human? Was he insane? There is no reason to think Ngarambe was suffering from schizophrenic delusions that compromised his grasp of reality. He was, in all likelihood, a psychologically normal man, albeit one who participated in one of the most hideous bloodlettings of the twentieth century.

The claim that Elie Ngarambe really believed that fellow Rwandans were subhuman creatures may strike you as preposterous—so preposterous that you might jump to the conclusion that his testimony was just a pathetic alibi that was intended to excuse the inexcusable. Or you might think that he meant it to

be taken metaphorically, perhaps as meaning that he did not have empathy for the people that he butchered, rather than literally. But I am going to argue in the chapters to follow that both of these alternatives are mistaken. Instead, I submit that Elie Ngarambe, like so many others who have acted similarly, meant his words to be taken literally as a true description of his state of mind.

The act of conceiving of other human beings as subhuman creatures is not limited to a single culture or just one historical period. It can be traced across thousands of years of human history and found in many far-flung regions of the globe. The evidence is overwhelming that we human beings periodically view other members of our species as not really people at all, but rather as less- than-human beings that it is morally permissible, or even obligatory, to harm or to kill.

It is because dehumanization is so entangled with and implicated in the worst atrocities that human beings have ever perpetrated upon one another that investigating it is an important— indeed, an urgent— task. But strangely enough, there has not been much research into the nature of dehumanization. Most academic disciplines have all but ignored it and have treated dehumanization as though it were already well understood. Only social psychology can boast of anything like a substantial research literature dealing with what goes on in people’s heads when they think of other people as less than human.

It was the paucity of research into dehumanization, conjoined with its great importance, that inspired me to write my 2011 book *Less Than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others*, which remains the only interdisciplinary study of the subject in the English language (or, to the best of my knowledge, any other language). Writing it, I worked my way through relevant literatures in a number of disciplines— history, philosophy, anthropology, and psychology, among others—to pull together, order, and analyze all the information I could find about this disturbing phenomenon. In *Less Than Human* I sought to answer three fundamental questions (as well as a number of important but less weighty ones) about dehumanization. First, I wanted to figure out exactly what dehumanization is, and to distinguish it from related phenomena such as objectification, racism, and xenophobia. Second, I wanted to develop a theory of how dehumanization works, using the best psychological tools currently available. And third, I wanted to establish why dehumanization occurs, by determining what if any function it has.

I believe that I made considerable headway in answering all three of these questions, and I continue to stand by much of what I wrote in *Less Than Human*. However, over the intervening years I became dissatisfied with certain aspects of the analysis and decided that my story was both incomplete and, in some respects, misleading. The book that you are reading now rectifies these deficits and presents an account of dehumanization that is far more powerful and subtle, one that captures the peculiar phenomenology of dehumanization far more effectively than its predecessor did.

In *Less Than Human*, I argued that when we dehumanize others, we conceive of them as appearing human when they are really subhuman. I now think that this story is not exactly right. What actually occurs when we dehumanize others is much stranger and more toxic. I now believe that when we dehumanize others, we conceive of them as being both human and subhuman— that is, wholly human and wholly subhuman—at the same time. I am aware that this statement may sound bizarre or nonsensical. Logically speaking, it is no more possible for a being to be wholly human and wholly subhuman than it is for an object to be completely red and completely green at the same time. But forcing human psychology into the procrustean bed of logic is a fool’s errand. A logician may tell you

that contradictions are always false, but human experience is no stranger to contradiction, and contradiction lies at the core of dehumanization. One need only revisit Elie Ngarambe's words to see this weird contradiction at work. He insists, in the first quotation, that he did not think of his victims as human, but also states, in the second quotation, that those whom he murdered "had the same flesh"—that is, were beings of the same kind—as himself.

The tension between conceiving of the other as human and conceiving of them as less than human is a very important feature of dehumanization, and understanding this unlocks many of its otherwise puzzling characteristics. It explains why dehumanized people are so often represented as monsters, demons, or predators, why they are so often regarded as uncanny affronts to the natural order, and why they are so often treated with a particular kind of gratuitous cruelty and degradation. Understanding the paradoxical character of dehumanization also gives us purchase on a pair of crucial methodological problems. It casts light on the vexing problem of how to distinguish genuine dehumanization from superficially similar phenomena, such as the use of animalistic slurs, and it also suggests a way to track the "silent" forms of dehumanization that do not involve explicitly labeling others as subhuman beings.

It was already beginning to dawn on me when writing *Less Than Human* that to understand dehumanization one needs to understand a lot more than just dehumanization. Since then I have come to appreciate this insight much more fully. It is impossible to really grasp how and why we are able to dehumanize others without considering the function of the concept of the human, the evolutionary background to human ultra-sociality, the cognitive psychology of the uncanny, and theories of belief formation, to name just a few. And because dehumanization stands at the interface between the political and the personal, to address it fully requires one to explore the interface between political processes and human behavior, and in particular it requires one to address the nature of propaganda and ideology. I discuss all of these topics and more in *Making Monsters*, with the aim of fashioning a deep, rich, and subtle account of dehumanization. <>

## **HUMANS ON THE RUN: OF EXILES AND ASYLUMS** by Kumar M. Tiku [Oxford University Press, 9780199484812]

**HUMANS ON THE RUN** is an attempt to preserve memories of several microscopic journeys embarked upon by humans, in time and space, often under conditions of utter and complete hopelessness. A collection of 24 stories that narrate first-person accounts of migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers affected by multiple displacements due to political or sectarian strife across several countries: India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tibet, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Ukraine, Eritrea, and South Sudan.

Individuals in flight, long disconnected from the certitudes of a settled, anchored existence, map their journeys when moving to the next village, town, city, country, or continent, in the hope of beating certain death, sustained denigration, and systematic abuse. The stories take the reader to the heart of human existence, capturing a sliver of the textured human experiences encapsulated in each person on the run as a result of raging conflict in her or his backyard.

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Excerpt: Large swathes of Asia, the Middle East, and Africa are in the grip of religion, radical jihad, and an undying fealty to martyrdom. Where this will take us and how long it will be before violent political conflicts end are questions that no pundit would wager his money on. For years, conflicts have been the staple of the hourly news that we consume in print, on air, and online. the Twitterati and other inveterate instant messengers thrive on manufacturing dissent and mobilizing street anger. Somewhere

in that space, every once in a while, we hear and see the homeless hordes. I belong to the multitude which comprises the conflict nomads of our times.

Well over a dozen countries today are steeped in race, class, and religious revolutions that, sooner or later, erupt in violent conflict, creating conditions for mass abandonment and homelessness, with millions forced to move multiple times within and outside their countries of origin in search of a semblance of peace, order, and stability. This book is not an attempt at making sense of the conflicts that have convulsed the world with increasing force, fury, and frequency, particularly in the last three decades or so. Nor does it strive to look behind the scenes for possible clues about international intrigues, and domestic class or power struggles.

This is a book of stories, pure and simple. In laying it out as it is, through a mosaic of mostly first-person accounts, the book provides clues into human lives that pass through the many and variegated tests of sustained conflict, migration, and multiple physical displacement. Through the stories, we begin to see the metamorphosis of once calm and orderly lives and the hard choices migrants face when they decide in favour of survival and self-preservation over threats to their lives, honour, and that most primeval of all human needs—freedom. We begin to see what happens to a person uprooted from the ecosystem called home.

The stories that you find in the pages that follow are an attempt at preserving memories of several microscopic journeys embarked upon by people, often under conditions of utter and complete hopelessness. In their own voice, individuals in flight, long disconnected from the certitudes of a settled, anchored existence, map their journeys when moving to the next village, town, city, country, or continent, in the hope of beating certain death, sustained denigration, and systemic abuse.

Serendipity, passion, and planning have all played a role in helping me listen to and narrate these stories. When I first felt the itch to make sense of conflict-scarred lives lived in perpetual homelessness, I had in my sights my own experience as an unrecognized, and not very recognizably displaced, Kashmiri person in India. For though forced into a lifetime of shaming homelessness, I was not living in a so-called `camp, nor was I a recipient of the government dole, be that in the form of measly financial relief or any subsidized food stamps. Clearly, I did not fit into the archetype. Nevertheless, living amidst a family whose very existence in its years away from home was shaped and defined by the searing memories of sudden and forced migration during those dark and apocalyptic months in 1990, there indeed was material for not one but several stories from just my family alone. For thousands of Kashmiri Hindu families such as mine, the last quarter century has passed in juggling the demands of survival with the trauma of rejection and apathy that the community has faced in its splendid isolation as a castaway minority of a professedly secular republic.

My first United Nations (UN) assignment outside India took me to Afghanistan, where I spent just under five years, listening to myriad broken men and women who had lived to tell the stories of their shattered and scattered lives, and their constant search for a place safe enough to bring up their children. The stories that got to me more than others, I pursued to the very end, tailing those characters like a shadow through all their journeys, observing and processing changes in their psychosocial lives as perpetual journeymen with each setback and triumph. Some of those stories are a part of the collection in your hands.

Afghanistan was the first real pit stop en route to my ten-year-long professional journey through several conflict zones. Here, I made some lasting friendships with fellow UN travellers from conflict-affected Sri Lanka. I came face-to-face with Sri Lankan Tamil doctors and other aid workers who had harrowing tales to tell. I hope the two stories in this volume do justice to their remarkably resilient and textured lives.

Sudan was next. Depredations in Darfur, arising from differences among the Arab and non-Arab ethnicities, have left a whole people asunder and hundreds of thousands in a state of pitiful homelessness. By far, the bigger story during my time in Sudan was the impending referendum when the predominantly Christian South would take a call on staying with Sudan or having a country of their own. On 15 January 2011, the South Sudanese people spoke as one in favour of an independent nation.

I was there when Sudan split in two and the world's newest country, South Sudan, was born in the name of seemingly unreconciled religious and cultural differences. The euphoria of independence proved extremely short-lived. The lust for power among leaders of the two dominant ethnic strands of South Sudan, the Dinka and the Nuer tribes, has led to a civil war that has already claimed a heavy toll of life and forced millions to seek refuge in neighbouring Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. Ethiopia, in particular, despite its own endemic poverty, has shown uncommon compassion and statesmanship in opening its borders to millions of people from more than one distressed country in its neighbourhood.

When I visited Ethiopia in the summer of 2015 to see first-hand this magic of a poor country with a rich humanitarian record, the streets of Addis Ababa were teeming with refugees not just from South Sudan, but also with people fleeing conflicts in Yemen, Eritrea, and the Congo. You will read about many of them in this book, as they speak about their current conditions and past lives.

After a second assignment in Afghanistan came the opportunity to serve the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Syria. More than a third and close to half of the population here is without a home. The sheer scale of human tragedy that has visited this once beautiful and historically rich land is beyond all human imagination. For fifteen months, I travelled across the length and breadth of Syria as part of the UNICEF effort to deliver humanitarian aid—potable drinking water, basic supplemental nutrition, vaccination kits, school bags and textbooks, and medicines—to locals, many of whom were held in siege as human shields. I met and spent time with children and their parents in Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo, once neat and orderly cities that, for six years now, have been visited by war, bombs, and damnation, and resemble vast ruins. I met countless mothers of the hapless children in these cities who were living in refugee camps and unfinished buildings, trying to soothe the frayed nerves of their little ones and stay sane in the face of relentless, heavy bombardments, and, of course, getting used to a life of perpetual migration, from one neighbourhood to the next, often one city to the next, and in so many cases, one country to the next. Small wonder then that Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey host close to half the Syrian population between them today.

In the northern part of Iraq, in the valley of the Dohuk governorate that falls in the historically charged semi-autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan, I chanced upon camps upon camps of the Yazidi community. A small religious minority with its own distinct cultural practices and way of life, the Yazidis mostly inhabit the area of Mount Sinjar of Nineveh province. Radical extremists that had declared a caliphate from Mosul in Iraq to Al-Raqqa in northern Syria (and which now is close to unravelling, what with major Iraqi advances in Mosul and more determined air and land effort to beat the group into



submission in Syria) made Yazidis their early prey, committing unspeakable atrocities and hounding them out of their habitat and forcing themselves upon countless Yazidi women. The savagery that this beleaguered minority has endured has been captured on primetime global news shows and in the press. Accompanied by Sarwa Qadir, a highly sensitive Kurdish colleague, I sat down with one middle-aged Yazidi woman to make sense of her life and experiences at the hands of the terrorists and her journey to a refugee camp, as a young, vulnerable woman, mother of a small brood of children, and homemaker.

What motivated those journeys made by people across multiple geographies, cultures, and time zones? What kind of memories of a place that an individual calls 'home' refuse to disappear and define the idea of identity long after the person was forced to abandon it? And what is at the heart of the undying and near-universal yearning to 'go back' to the place that is home—a metaphysical counterpoint to the daily ravages and indignities of forced nomadic life of sorts?

The stories, covering a wide cross-section of humanity and nearly every part of the world in conflict, attempt to answer those questions. Together, the stories paint a picture of the human as a homeless creature on the run. The stories largely conform to a template of storytelling that I designed at the start of this documentation project. For places and case studies that I could not directly visit, I relied on some brave and exceptionally gifted storytellers. These fellow collaborators in this project agreed to follow my story template and contribute their original writings for this collection.

The tapestry of individual voices within the pages of this book shines the spotlight on migrant lives, encompassing a *mélange* of human experiences through multiple migrations, experiences that range from the tragic to the sublime, with many shades of grey in between. When all options for safe survival are exhausted within their own homes, people move to the next neighbourhood, then the next proximate village, town, or city, and as we have seen with alarming frequency in South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, to the next country that holds out a promise of calming the storm in their lives, the storm borne of brutal, barbaric, violent events that threaten to rip apart nation-states and their social fabric built over a millennia and more of settled existence.

In my neck of the woods, by the time the last Soviet soldier pulled out of Afghanistan in February 1989, over 3 million Afghan men, women, and children had come to make peace with a refugee life, mostly in Pakistan and Iran, with all its attendant deprivations and indignities. The refugees were followers of the same religion, inhabitants of the same land, and raised in its manifold blessings, separated and cleaved by a conflict that fed on ethnic differences among the various stocks of people that comprise the great rugged landmass of Afghanistan.

Egged on by their respective allies in the Muslim world, the Pashtun, the Tajik, the Hazara, the Uzbek, the Aimak, and the Turkmen Afghans unleashed a civil war on each other and their land of birth; it went on for decades, resulting in the most monumental population displacement in history at the time. Young boys of all ethnicities were given to war as fat to fire. The seemingly never-ending wave of slash-and-burn methods has taken the country back to an age of anarchy and left most of its public infrastructure pillaged and destroyed. Not a single family in Afghanistan, whatever its ethnicity, has been untouched by the brutality of war.

The war has trundled on, albeit with added ferocity and different methods and objectives. Children continue to pay the price in terms of a stolen childhood. Reconciliation projects, gently initiated by the

international community, have for the most part been dead on arrival. Lack of trust in each other and in the state in Afghanistan is as apparent today as it was when I first set foot on its soil a decade ago.

Kashmir, the conflict-affected part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in India, was to follow Afghanistan in its manic urge for self-destruction. By 1990, an uprising, violent in its methods and decidedly communal in its tone and tenor, had convulsed the length and breadth of Kashmir. The state and civilian authorities, missing in action at the best of times, capitulated as the frenzy overtook the street. Azadi, the stock-in-trade of the largely educated and jobless youth who led the loose, rag-tag guerilla movement for change, seemed just a push and a heave away. The movement targeted flags and other totems of state authority, unfurling its own flags in busy market squares. This was accompanied by targeted killings in cold blood of prominent persons from the minority Kashmiri Pandit community. The killings met with their intended objective as fear, cold and unspoken, ran through the relatively minuscule community. As local media reported on the killings, the question in every Pandit home was, who next?

Anyone who has been a minority of any form or typology would know well how fear breeds panic. One by one, in the dead of the cold winter nights, the Pandit families left their homes in a panicked rush. What was at stake was not just the life, limb, and liberty of the men but also the honour of their women. I belong to the Kashmiri Pandit community whose origins in Kashmir date back to several millennia before the advent of Islam in the Valley. Mine was among the nearly hundred thousand families that caved in to the fear and somehow made it to the safer, though many times more uncertain and unfamiliar, parts of India. This book of stories stems from my own tattered identity as a Kashmiri.

Among the first crop of boys to initiate a paradigmatic shift in civil resistance in Kashmir was Ashfaq Majeed Wani, a fearless young soul oozing bravado. Wani was only 21 when he was picked by Syed Mohammed Yusuf Shah, the Pakistan-based chief of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, to be his polling agent in the 1987 elections to the Jammu and Kashmir state assembly. The elections were said to have been blatantly rigged, as Shah, now better known as Syed Salahudeen (ostensibly after the 12th-century first sultan of Syria and Egypt who led a military campaign against the crusader states in the Levant) found himself on the losing side against a leading light of the then ruling dispensation. Soon thereafter, young Wani decided to take to armed methods to vacate purported Indian misrule in Kashmir. In leading a crusade of sorts, Wani was asserting his right to a home that was undefiled by the hands of what he perceived as an 'external' occupier.

A leading light of militancy in Kashmir, Wani was a year junior to me in college in the early 1980s. I knew him up close as a rakish young teen often surrounded by slightly brazen teenyboppers who were never above making a racket in the college canteen and were usually spoiling for a fight with fellow baddies on the campus. In my term as the president of the students' union at the Gandhi Memorial College in downtown Srinagar, on more than one occasion, I had to use my traction with the college management to have a rustication memo against Wani annulled. We became close and even joined forces as one team to compete in an inter-college athletics event held in the University of Kashmir, where à la Milkha Singh, he ran barefoot and won the race hands down.

In time, Wani found his machismo, athleticism, and fearlessness getting harnessed for the cause of liberating Kashmir from the so-called occupation by India. His naturally subversive instincts, always in full display during our college days, became the stock-in-trade of the militant creed as he took on the

mantle of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), the first among the pro-independence insurgency movements that caught popular imagination in the early 1990s in Kashmir. He galvanized large sections of Kashmiri youth for the cause of azadi. A symbol of freedom and courage for the younger generation, his daring attacks received fulsome coverage in the Srinagar-based Urdu media. Local legend had it that Wani had crossed over to Pakistan and returned fully trained in the use of small firearms and motivated to lead an armed struggle for independence of Kashmir from India. He was part of the dreaded HAJY quartet of the JKLF that also comprised Hamid Shaikh, Javed Nalka, and Yasin Malik. Ashfaq Majeed Wani was killed by security forces in March 1990, at the age of 23. Millions turned up on the streets of Srinagar to eulogize him and mourn his death.

Two-and-a-half decades later, Burhan Muzaffar Wani, another young Kashmiri boy from the rural outbacks of the southern part of Kashmir valley who embraced the militant cult, captured the imagination of the world, as his namesake predecessor had done. His death at the hands of the security forces became a nonpareil symbol of popular resistance in Kashmir. Burhan Wani rose to be a leading light of the pro-Pakistan militant organization Hizbul Mujahideen. A product of his times, he harnessed social media to the hilt to re-unify the new generation of Kashmiri youth in its civil resistance methods against the Indian state. A common thread that ran through these two lives was their uncommon youthful zeal and a pious determination to lead the march of Kashmiris from perceived Indian oppression into an idyll of freedom and dignity. Even as thousands of young lives have been snuffed out in the violence in Kashmir over the years, these boys were among just a handful to receive public adulation of such magnitude.

This book is a compendium of human displacement caused by conflicts in the last 25 years or so. These have been the years during which I have moved from being a man with a home to an uprooted, upended, homeless person of the world. During these years, I have grown from being a young, green, and full-of-beans individual to a grey, middle-aged person, displaced, dispossessed, and weary from the daily gripes of dystopia. This book has mined a sliver of that memory from many different parts of the globe where conflicts have boiled over and resulted in a mega-scale movement of ordinary citizens, living a once-normal life, to conditions of progressive dehumanization.

This has been a time during which I have raised a family and sired a child who, at 23 years of age, is a made-in-Delhi, second-generation-homeless adult, blissfully disconnected from her roots, the same rootlessness that is a source of abiding helplessness for her anguished parents. Disconnected from home and its essential moorings, they often wonder aloud about how their daughter and future generations of this exiled tribe might describe themselves in the years and generations to follow.

The loss of the land into which my forebears and I were born is a stab whose pain refuses to be dulled even after a full quarter century in displacement. During all these years, our dinner-table discourse has unfailingly centred around how it was back home, and inevitably led to opening each night the gnawing wounds of memory as the mind reels back into that shaming experience of being kicked out of my own home by frenzied zealots who implemented with clinical precision the project of setting man against man, and splicing our shared land and heritage.

The Constitution of India, that ultimate arbiter of my destiny as the citizen of a free, secular, and democratic republic, in that part of the country at that point in history, stood like a mute witness to the forces of division, unable to stop the rage and fury of a mass hysteria of separation that was in the air,

much less, able to show the light towards a future of mutual coexistence. So many years on, what has changed?

Home was not just the house that I grew up in or the street that I played on. Nor the hills that stood like silent sentinels, watching over my beautiful vale and its inhabitants in almost divine care. Nor the scintillating and many-splendoured lakes, springs, and rivers and their calming waters that would flow by unhurried, but sustained the whole ecosystem and imbued the Kashmiri character with a certain composure and a poetic heart. Nor even the majestic chinars that had for ages embalmed innocent lovers and lent leafy shade to travellers and vagrants alike.

Home was not any one of those attributes of the space called Kashmir. Home was the person that I became when these elements came together to shape and make me. Away from Kashmir, my home, I mourn the loss of that person inside that deserted me bit by bit as survival and adaptation in distant lands and alien cultures took centre stage. Now while the conscious self may have moved on, as indeed may be the case with the Kashmir of my youth, the home that I left behind, the search for an elusive habitat that I can truly call home continues to shape my dreams even after a full score and seven years in exile.

While the days are spent in the lethal grind of humanitarian jobs, some of which took me to the most conflict-ridden hotspots of the world, the nights have almost perennially been occupied by a decidedly different landscape. My nights are consumed with dreams of the land I was banished from, for no reason other than being on the wrong side of the religious and political divide. The impact on my senses has been at once calming and unsettling as I battle the juxtapositions of a daily life in displacement with my nightly life in a calming, imaginary homeland. It is a barely concealed psychological disturbance that's perhaps a fit case for some much-needed psycho-social help.

The émigrés, who accounted for but a minuscule 3 per cent of the population of the Kashmir Valley that is predominantly populated by the Sunni Muslims, testify to succumbing to fear triggered by a handful of targeted and spectacular killings, and radical intimidation in the form of incendiary communal slogans emanating from mosques, particularly so in neighbourhoods with Hindu presence.

In the city of Srinagar, for centuries we lived in clenched proximity with our Muslim neighbours across countless localities. Vichar Nag, Raina Wari, Sathu Barbarshah, Nai Sadak, Badyar, Habba Kadal, Bana Mohalla, Chinkral Mohalla, Fateh Kadal, Ali Kadal, Nawa Kadal, Safa Kadal, Chatta Bal, Kak Sarai, Karan Nagar, Bal Garden, Jawahar Nagar, Raj Bagh, Indira Nagar, and Shiv Pora were some of the neighbourhoods in Srinagar that the Pandits inhabited in visible and, in some cases, sizeable numbers.

In those three brutal months of 1990, however, these neighbourhoods were emptied of their presence almost completely. The killings of a handful of notable members of the community in the Valley, among them an elderly judge and a senior political party worker of the Bharatiya Janata Party—a leading political party that is in power in India since the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, and a partner in the current governing dispensation in the state of Jammu and Kashmir—and a notable youth worker, had already hit the mark in injecting a deep sense of uncertainty, fear, and a sense of 'who next?' among the minuscule Pandit community.

The killings were complemented by a targeted campaign by the ideologically driven toughies that made use of the loudspeakers in the neighbourhood mosques—the same amplifiers that the muezzin used to

call the faithful to prayer—for blaring out manifestly provocative slogans calling upon Hindus to participate in the project of ushering in Nizame-Mustafa (the rule of Allah). It is instructive and no less ironic to recall that even in those heady days of azadi—a sentiment that professedly represents the pure desire for liberation of Kashmir at once from the clutches of India and the embrace of Pakistan—the movement fell back on religious bigotry to advance their message among the masses.

This became a regular feature of those cold winter months. As the loudspeaker threats grew in force and frequency, they served their intended purpose in sowing a deep sense of fear among the Pandits across all 10 districts that make the Kashmir part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Unable to cope with the sweeping radicalization of the Muslim mind and a rising crescendo of secessionism that had taken over the Kashmir Valley, in a matter of months, Kashmir witnessed the exodus of the Pandits from their homes across the Valley.

The scale of intimidation targeting the Pandits recalled the depredations unleashed by Sultan Sikandar Butshikan, the seventh Muslim ruler of Kashmir, by most historical accounts a rabid iconoclast who ruled in the late 14th century and presided over the massive desecration of Hindu temples in Kashmir. The ruler is known to have ordered mass conversion of the Pandits to Islam as well as caused large-scale migration of the Pandits to the plains of the northern mainland of India.

Just imagine: the Pandits who represent the warp and weft of a distinct tapestry of the life of Kashmir were scared out of their wits and forced to run away to safety while their neighbours and their countrymen alike merely looked on, or simply looked away. The Kashmiri Pandits—with no Kashmir for a home any more—in a bit of a hyperbole, use words like exodus and ethnic cleansing to draw attention to the wholesale forced flight from their homes and centuries-old habitat. Today, barring an odd family that bucked the tide of migration, the Pandits are practically written off from the Valley. With no real initiatives of genuine reconciliation forthcoming, their prospect of returning to their home seems bleaker than ever.

The Muslims among whom I was born and raised are among the finest specimens of the human species. We drank from the same rivers and shared a social camaraderie and togetherness that only the uniquely syncretic culture of Kashmir could nurture. The best that can be said about the perceived Muslim betrayal of the Pandits in the days leading to their mass flight out of Kashmir was that the ordinary Muslim approved of the militant creed almost willingly, to express, as it were, his strong disenchantment with a prolonged period of inept 'elected' rule that, in effect, was a travesty of good governance in every way.

For the motivated young militants of the time, turning the tables on Delhi, the Indian capital that is perceived in Kashmir as the seat of all intrigue, meant support for 'independence' from the puppet rule in the state, even if that came with the price of dispensing with the Pandit community that was integral to the Kashmiri way of life. The seeds of an Islamic enclave within the borders of a secular republic were well and truly sown. Twenty-seven years went by in a trice, without anyone so much as noticing either the flight of a whole people or indeed the progressive communalization of a political conflict. In this time, Pandit homes got pillaged, torched, or sold, and bit-by-bit all traces of the Pandit way of life in Kashmir became nothing more than a memory.

After several false starts and stops trying to find our moorings in Jammu, the nearest town that promised a respite from the haunting fear of terrorism that had overtaken my valley, we dropped anchor on the outskirts of Delhi, an ever-expansive city of hope, opportunity, and freedom, where work was easier to come by, and with the perspective that only time and distance provide, memories of fear and the flight from our homes in Kashmir would hurt less, giving way to the cut and thrust of everyday existence of an average metropolitan life.

In the fullness of time, my work with the UN took me to some of the conflict hotspots of our times that grabbed global attention—Afghanistan, Sudan, Syria, and Iraq. I spent a decade of my life in these countries, my ear to the ground, making sense of the lives of people who had experienced and survived the many ravages of displacement and lived through several false starts to their lives that often never got going. Millions of forced migrants around the globe nurture the very same dream that I dream—of returning to their home one day, when injustice, violence, and terror will give way to reason, sobriety, and fair play. For many the dream never materialized. Others returned from years of escape and exile only to find ashes where once their homes stood. Through those years in the field, I stood witness to the depths of human misery, impoverishment, and helplessness, but also to countless stories of resilience, triumph, and hope against all odds.

Back in the winter of 2014, during my visit to Aleppo in northern Syria as an aid worker, I visited a large shelter hosting children and families displaced by the ongoing conflict. The conversations turned inevitably to their worries about winter. Like young Ibrahim, who I met in a temporary shelter in western Aleppo, hundreds of thousands of conflict-affected children and families in Syria were bracing themselves for the descent into freezing winter temperatures. With more than 6.4 million people—including 3 million children—displaced from their homes at the time, many lived in temporary shelters that could provide scant protection from the cold and limited heating and availability of hot water for bathing.

Often these shelters were no more than open, unfinished buildings, without doors or windows, and sometimes lacking even external walls. Families made do with polythene sheets to cover holes and stave off icy winds. Up to eight people would be squeezed into one or two rooms. In the northern regions of Syria, temperatures regularly plummet to sub-zero levels, exposing children to the risk of respiratory infections and other communicable diseases. With health services in the country stretched to the limits, the risk for sick children of being left unattended during the long winter months was present and clear.

Approximately 4,000 families were living in the shelter I visited in western Aleppo and many were already beginning to experience the harsh realities of winter. With night temperatures having dropped appreciably across northern Syria, these families were ill-prepared to protect their children from falling sick—or worse. Most families, having migrated from the eastern side of the city, were in desperate economic straits and coping with the worst living conditions imaginable.

One family living in an incomplete building whose sides were open to the elements were dreading what lay ahead.

‘This winter is going to be unimaginable; said Monaf, a father of three children aged between 7 and 11. ‘I shudder to think how my children will survive this winter:’

Lina, who lives with her three children at the shelter I visited, had limited means to prepare for the winter ahead: 'Being prepared means winter clothes for my children, warm bedding, and heating in the house,' she said. 'This is how we used to prepare before the war forced us to leave our homes. As a single mother, and without work, I cannot afford to look after the needs of my children. I worry all the time if my children will survive this winter:

In Afghanistan, over a five-year horizon, I travelled across a dozen provinces and made connections with returnees making sense of their existence and contemplating the future of their children with a gnawing sense of concern and hopelessness as war raged on in the country. In the world's youngest nation, South Sudan, I saw how a people that fought for and won their freedom from the Muslim-majority Sudan found their dreams turned to dust as power-hungry satraps of the newly independent country stoked ethnic fires that resulted in an epic displacement of the newly free citizens who have now run away in droves to neighbouring Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. A calamitous famine has made a tragic situation worse and a continuing civil war in the country borders on genocide.

In place after place, I became aware of how the triple whammy of a travesty of justice, severe exploitation, and terrorism of one kind or another leaves ordinary people with no option but to move. The familiar scenario of the sway of radicalized armed thugs, either from shadowy militant organizations or belonging to the state machinery, got repeated in different places. People got displaced, moved back, and then moved all over again. In the harshest of settings imaginable for survival, children and women survived—often by selling their bodies or through labour—in the absence of male members who were either consumed by conflict, passed from this world way before their time, or were enlisted in their countries' armies. Sustained threats of physical assault hastened the movement of people in most cases. Weak and failing states largely stood by without being able to make a material positive difference to the lives of their displaced and abandoned citizens and state subjects.

The stories birthed by conflicts and forcible displacement are too vast and too many to be packed into one book. As conflicts grow in numbers, force, and intensity, so does homelessness.

What you now hold in your hands or see on your screens is a book of stories by people done in by wars and protracted conflicts. Taken together, the stories should help us understand what it means and takes for a person to be on the run and live and still hope for elusive calm and peace when war comes to our land, increasingly without notice.

In speaking to me and my fellow contributors, a total of 25 exiles, refugees, and asylum seekers across more than 10 countries have opened up and shared a sliver of their lives. Each story is a microcosm of the gargantuan homelessness and displacement challenge of the country that the person represents.

As you soldier on through the pages of this book, it is my hope that the stories will leave you richer in understanding the experience of homelessness and stronger in your resolve to be a part of the solution.

Because, as the cliché goes, tomorrow might be too late. <>

## **RELIGION AND VIOLENCE: PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES FROM KANT TO DERRIDA** by Hent de Vries [Johns Hopkins University Press, 9781421437538] Open Access

Originally published in 2002. Does violence inevitably shadow our ethico-political engagements and decisions, including our understandings of identity, whether collective or individual? Questions that touch upon ethics and politics can greatly benefit from being rephrased in terms borrowed from the arsenal of religious and theological figures, because the association of such figures with a certain violence keeps moralism, whether in the form of fideism or humanism, at bay. *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida's* careful posing of such questions and rearticulations pioneers new modalities for systematic engagement with religion and philosophy alike.

### Review

"One cannot but be impressed by the acumen and erudition of Hent de Vries' *Religion and Violence*, which is a very fine addition to contemporary continental European philosophy of religion... It is a book well worth reading." — (Brian Schroeder *Ars Disputandi*)

"*Religion and Violence* continues de Vries's reexamination of the place of philosophical theology and the philosophy of religion in the major texts of continental philosophy. Both subjects are transformed as de Vries meticulously unpacks the major texts of the post-Kantian philosophical tradition, unfolding in effect a new history of the afterlife of theology." — (*Choice*)

"A rich text with many insightful readings... Hent de Vries is an excellent philosopher and scholar." — (Lasse Thomassen *Philosophy in Review/Comptes rendus philosophiques*)

"Demonstrates with rich erudition how the Derridian programmatic can shed light on the 'religious' dimension of philosophical and ethical strategies that seek to address violence." — (Thomas E. Reynolds *Journal of Religion*)

"One of a number of first-rate monographs published in the field of philosophy this year." — (Arthur Bradley *Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory*)

"Here Hent de Vries deals with some of the most difficult authors—Kant, Kierkegaard, Benjamin, Levinas, and—throughout—Jacques Derrida, as well as with some of the most difficult issues in philosophy (not to say in political and personal life) there are, and the result is a rich, rewarding, and extremely important book." — (Hilary Putnam, Harvard University)

"Hent de Vries counters the reductions of ethics to morality (and to moralism) by offering a capacious understanding of error as essential to the ethical turn. This book reverberates with intellectual complexity and intensity." — (Judith Butler, University of California, Berkeley)



"With outstanding skill and remarkable insight, de Vries interrogates a range of texts from Kant to Derrida and challenges us to rethink the received picture of 'the secular Enlightenment.'" — (Talal Asad, City University of New York Graduate Center)

## Contents

Preface and Acknowledgments

Abbreviations

Introduction: Horror Religiosus

1 State, Academy, Censorship:

The Question of Religious Tolerance

The Institution of Philosophy, / Modernity and the Question of Religious Tolerance: Rereading Kant's Conflict of the Faculties, / The Triple Sign: Signum rememorativum, demonstrativum, prognostikon, / The Voice from Nowhere: Philosophy and the Paradoxical Topography of the University, / Paganism, Religion Proper, and the Politics of Theology: Kant's Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason, / Multiculturalism Reconsidered, / Concentricity and Monocentrism, / Ineradicable Evil, / The Academic Contract: Old and New,

2 Violence and Testimony:

Kierkegaardian Meditations

Rereading Fear and Trembling, / The Modality of Persecuted Truth, / The "Possibility of the Offense": Kierkegaard on Martyrdom, / Tautology and Heterology: Tout autre est tout autre, / À dieu, adieu, a-dieu, / Doubling "God" and God's Double, / Beyond Sacrifice,

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4 Hospitable Thought:

Before and beyond Cosmopolitanism

Turning Around Religion: The Conditions of Responsibility, / Two Concepts of Hospitality, / Hospitality as "Culture Itself," / The Torah before and beyond Revelation, / Complementary Alternatives, / Hospitality qua Friendship, / The Theologico-Political Once More: Absolute Hostility, / The Christianization of the Political, / A Black Swan: Friendship from a Metaphysical and a Pragmatic Point of View, / Final Considerations: Cosmopolitanism and the Institution of Philosophy,

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This book asks whether and to what extent the notion of violence inevitably illumines or shadows our ethico-political engagements and decisions, including, more broadly, our understandings of our identities, historical and in the present, collective and individual. The concept of violence is both empirical and, in ways I shall determine, transcendental or metaphysical, belonging to the realm traditionally ascribed to the a priori, to the intelligible or the noumenal (as Kant would say), in short, to ideality and idealization as such. Violence, in both the widest possible and the most elementary senses of the word, entails any cause, any justified or illegitimate force, that is exerted—physically or otherwise—by one thing (event or instance, group or person, and, perhaps, word and object) on another. Violence thus defined finds its prime model—its source, force, and counterforce—in key elements of the tradition called the religious.

It can be seen as the very element of religion. No violence without (some) religion; no religion without (some) violence.

One way to put this is as follows: “religion” is the relation between the self (or some selves) and the other—some Other—a relation that, as Levinas has suggested, does not close itself off in a conceptual totality (or does so only arbitrarily, i.e., violently) and thus at least in part escapes human autonomy, voluntary decision, and so on. By the same token, “religion” also stands for the other—the Other—of violence. It evokes its counter-image, its opposite, redemption, and critique. There is no contradiction here (or, if so, it is unavoidable), since this other (or Other) of violence is violence or violent still, in yet another meaning of the word.

To address violence in its relation to religion and in all the further complexity of its origins, mediations, and effects seems a topical project for many reasons. A cursory comparative philosophical analysis of the different conceptions of ethics and politics in recent debates concerning multiculturalism, citizenship, immigration, and democracy reveals the unspoken assumption that the modern genesis and contemporary transformation of the public sphere are related to—and signaled by—the changing sociopolitical and cultural role played by religion. Religion, these debates demonstrate, can no longer be—and perhaps never truly was—relegated to the sphere of privacy and individual conscience. Yet with few exceptions protagonists of the central positions in these debates—whether they place themselves in the traditions of critical theory, liberalism, communitarianism, neo-Aristotelianism, neo-pragmatism, or post-structuralism—seem unwilling to allow religion more than a marginal function in the constitution, definition, and redefinition of the public sphere. All involved in these debates, however, agree that the public sphere articulates itself in modernity by engaging with the definition and practice of censorship and free speech, especially in view of the question of religious tolerance.

One of my main concerns will be to offer a philosophical analysis of the modern emergence and conceptualization of the public sphere as it is inaugurated in Kant’s writings on religion (especially its relation to the sovereignty and the institutions of the modern state, notably the university). Not only is this the context in which Kant develops his thoughts on radical evil, but here, in the “General Observations” that conclude each of the four sections of *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (*Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*), one can find, as Stanley Cavell points out in *The Claim of Reason*, “a general theory of irrationality, a systematic account of what turn out, on this theory, to be a whole class of phenomena, each of them involving a particular distortion of human reason.” Cavell continues: “Kant calls the four members of this class fanaticism, superstition, delusion, and sorcery. Not the least of the illuminations of his theory is its implied proposal that, as one may frame it, the cure for Faustianism [in Cavell’s words: “the wish to escape the human conditions of knowing”] and for skepticism are the same.”

Yet things are even more complicated. On the one hand, Kant’s phenomenology of the elementary forms of religious life takes a decisive step beyond the parameters set by the earlier three Critiques. More skeptically, Kant now starts out from the problem of radical evil and successively demonstrates this evil to be ineradicable and increasingly capable of compromising not only each individual but all collective attempts to correct or contain it. The history of humankind is thus portrayed as a series of unsuccessful and ever more irrational sociopolitical means to further the good and establish the “kingdom of ends.” The visible churches (the empirical forms of historical, revealed or positive, religion) and their opposing sects never come to reflect the invisible church (the form of forms, religion, and

morality proper) without caricature. What is more, their exponential growth pushes the coming of this kingdom further and further away, into an ever more distant and insecure future. The more it approaches, the more it is deferred; the more it is obeyed, the more it is betrayed, as if the principle of intelligibility and that of empiricity were continuously and even progressively at odds and, indeed, at war.

On the other hand, for Kant religion does provide the critical correction (in a sense, the antidote) for the very distortion and intoxication that it might seem to bring into existence. Religion—more precisely, the pure and formal or transcendental concept of a moral religion as well as a rational theology—is pitted against a religiosity that in virtually all of its historical forms (including the ones determining Christianity) is tainted and infected by what Kant, in a remarkable formulation, calls an “admixture of paganism [Beimischung von Heidentum].” This expression captures what for Kant, at least in the writings that deal with religion and biblical and dogmatic theology explicitly, namely, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* and *Der Streit der Fakultäten* (*The Conflict of the Faculties*), forms the limit, but also the very element and the medium or mediation of the philosophical, the rational, the general—indeed, of truth. Religion, not merely rational religion (or what comes down to the same, morality: a synonym for the philosophical and truly universal in the realm of human action), but religion in its historical, political, in short, empirical formation and, as Kant says, revelation both resists the “kingdom of ends” yet also, paradoxically, helps bring it into existence and into its own.

Thus Kant already sees that modernity does not, in a single stroke, render obsolete all religious categories (all figures of thought, rhetorical devices, concepts and forms of obligation, ritual practices, and so on). On the contrary, even where the “religious” can no longer be identified as an integral and compelling system of belief or, more indirectly, as a narratively constructed way of life, it provides critical terms, argumentative resources, and a bold imagery necessary for analyzing contemporary culture successfully. In other words, beyond its appeal to the latest findings of the empirical social sciences or to the most advanced conceptual tools provided by philosophical analysis and by literary and cultural studies, the comparative study of contemporary religion must recast these critical terms and the concrete phenomena to which they refer in light of the historical and lived tradition they seek to comprehend.

This double task becomes nowhere clearer than in attempts to understand the political and institutional arrangements with which modern liberal democratic societies regulate the interaction between their citizens, as well as between these citizens and “others” (legal aliens, citizens of other nations, immigrants, refugees, *sans papiers*, etc.). This variable practice of regulation extends to the relationship between living human beings and other others as well: the dead, the not yet living, the living of a nonhuman nature. Of course, artificial, virtual, or technologically construed others— or, for that matter, others that fit none of these categories—might someday pose a challenge to these demarcations, as they already have done in the imagination and thought experiments of philosophers, writers, and filmmakers. Here, Kant’s thoughts on hospitality and cosmopolitanism could point the way. In principle, his philosophy of history and the endless emancipation from ineradicable evil it entails must involve all— thus also all nonhuman—moral agents: angels, automata, and the like. But why, then, does Kant hesitate to draw the full consequences from his observations?

To further concretize and amplify the turn to religion, this book seeks to demarcate and rigorously circumscribe the motif of a certain horror religiosus. Kierkegaard introduces the term in *Fear and Trembling*, in a remarkable analysis of how the ethical and the political—modeled after their Kantian

(and Hegelian) interpretations—are exposed to the figure of the religious. By this he means the sovereign, absolute, and (from our finite and human point of view) absolutely arbitrary act of divine will, of a figure and instance, that is, which—in the world of appearance—seem inseparable from their no less absolute defiguration. I suggest that it is this other Other, this other of the Other, of which Kierkegaard writes with so much vehemence when he addresses the demonic, in *Fear and Trembling*. The same motif also appears when, more generally, he speaks of anxiety and despair in *The Concept of Anxiety* and *The Sickness unto Death*, both of which will enable us to radicalize the Kantian perspective.

We are not far here, I argue, from the divine wrath of which Walter Benjamin and Michel de Certeau speak with so much force. Moreover, these motifs have found their way into Jacques Derrida's *Force de loi: Le "Fondement mystique de l'autorité"* ("Force of Law: 'The Mystical Foundation of Authority'"). As we will verify, they have also left their trace in his expositions of the relationship between hospitality and hostility (in the wake, once more, of Kant, Levinas, and Schmitt). Derrida—whose writings on the authors mentioned before will form my point of departure, even though I take elements of his analyses in directions he might not approve—speaks of the necessity and the imperative to be aware of "a history of radical evil, of its figures that are never simply figures and that— this is the whole evil—are always inventing a new evil" (FK 9/i8). This passage comes from "Foi et savoir: Les Deux Sources de la 'religion' aux limites de la simple raison" ("Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Mere Reason"), a text that contains Derrida's most explicit discussion of religion to date.

In a different context, I have teased out some implications of Derrida's hypothesis, also introduced in this essay, that the "return of the religious" is intrinsically linked to the rise and the performative modalities perceived in and by the new teletechnologies. Here I want to circle back to this text once more to pick up its central motif of radical evil (*das radikal Böse*), whose conceptual and practical possibility, Derrida argues, is not unrelated to the abstraction or denaturalization often ascribed to religion (especially in its apophatic—i.e., negative theological—modes and expressions), as well as to the deterritorialization attributed to the new media. The motif of radical evil necessitates beginning with a discussion of this topos in Kant's *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, not least because of the explicit reference in the subtitle of Derrida's essay.

But what could a "history" of "radical"—meaning also nonempirical, transcendental, and even absolute—"evil" mean? How, exactly, does it relate to the history of religion, of divine wrath no less than its ultimate resolution, of theodicies and eschatologies, of apocalypics and salvation? At one point in *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà l'essence* (*Otherwise Than Being or beyond Essence*), Levinas speaks of the task of construing a "history of the face." Times have changed, and there is no longer any real opposition between writing the history of the face (as Levinas more than anyone else attempted) and that of the worst violence (as Levinas did at one and the same stroke). Perhaps there never was. In fact, the apparent possibility, if not the empirical reality, of violence and its interruption go hand in hand. The modalities of its emergence and its containment are two sides of one and the same coin.

My first chapter carefully retraces some of Derrida's steps in his monumental *Du droit à la philosophie* (*Of the Right to Philosophy, or From Right to Philosophy, or Right to Philosophy*), which concerns the theoretical and practical deconstructibility of the modern institution, especially the academic institution, the university as it defines itself as the expression of a philosophical or, more particularly, Kantian idea of reason. It seeks to illuminate the difficulties one encounters when posing the question of the institution, of institutionalization, of the common ground of institutions, of their foundation or founding,

of their rationale and their telos. The central essays in Derrida's volume introduce his reading of *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* and *The Conflict of the Faculties*, works that have not received the same attention as the three Critiques in modern scholarship. While the Critiques are generally held to contain the most systematic and mature account of Kant's philosophical project, supplemented perhaps only by the set of smaller essays on history that some scholars have sought to interpret as a "fourth critique" of sorts, the writings on religion have not yet been granted their full theoretical weight. These texts elaborate and refine the concept of moral religion in its formality, as introduced by the critical writings and presupposed by the essays on the philosophy of history. They concentrate on its intricate, aporetic relation to the empirical forms of historically "revealed" religions, that is to say, to society, the political, the state, the church, the people, sects, movements, elites, and so on.

*The Conflict of the Faculties* engages this matter in discussing the inevitably conflictual relationship between the "lower" philosophical faculty in the modern university and the "higher" faculties (most significantly theology, but also law and medicine), which reflect the immediate interests of the national state. I argue that more than a defense of the independence or purity of the discipline of philosophy and hence of reason is at issue here: in fact, Kant elaborates a complex, and ultimately aporetic, theory of toleration and censorship under modern conditions. The conflict echoes and produces the instable balance between the dictates of sovereignty and of reason, the necessities of the political and freedoms of thought and of speech. It also allows us to conceptualize—and formalize—the space of their provisional and partial negotiation.

*Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*—a text that is only broached in *Right to Philosophy* but centrally informs "Faith and Knowledge"—expands on the "conflict" by situating it in a larger context: that of the development of the moral principle and of moral religion in the history of humankind as a whole. Here the discussion of radical evil finds its place. I will argue that this notion can be interpreted with the help of Derrida's concept of absolute pervertibility, itself a retranslation of his earlier understanding of monstrosity, of the ever-looming possibility of the worst (*le pire*), the threat that shadows and, it would seem, conditions any promise. Since the structure of the promise underlies all events associated with human action—that is to say, the founding of states, the making and interpreting of laws, and every single decision made by individuals and groups—it similarly underlies contemporary theories of the speech act, performativity, and rule following, which incessantly refer to the legal realm and to juridical judgment. J. L. Austin, John Rawls, Stanley Cavell, and Judith Butler are just a few examples, who, to be sure, take these notions in very different directions indeed.<sup>6</sup> Derrida, I claim, adds a fundamentally Kierkegaardian concern—in a word, the anxiety brought about by the horror *religiosus*—to this problematic.

Mutatis mutandis, this problematic had already been put forward in Derrida's "Déclarations d'Indépendance" ("Declarations of Independence"). I trace the development undergone by this first formalization of the law of reiterated institution qua foundation (of nations, states, and, indeed, institutions) and concentrate on its subsequent rearticulation in what seems a quasi-theological register in "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority.'" What exactly, in this transition or transposition, if it is one (or just one), is gained or, for that matter, lost?

My opening chapter argues that, while Kant's *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* and *The Conflict of the Faculties* have often been read as further expositions and illustrations of his moral and

transcendental theology, they have not received the attention they deserve as one of the first explicit—and still most powerful—philosophical conceptualizations of the relationships between religion, nation, community, and the public sphere. Although the Kantian heritage has often been reduced to an exploration of the nature of political legitimacy in light of a merely formal and procedural rationality, the philosophical relevance of these writings consists at least as much in interrogating arguments that seem to anticipate current debates over the implications of the concept and the practice of “multicultural citizenship” and the “law of peoples.” Moreover, while Kant’s delimitations of the freedom of public speech form part and parcel of a critique of institutions—as is clear from his treatment of censorship, the idea of the university, and religious tolerance—his philosophical analysis of different types of statements and utterances has a direct bearing on the contemporary deployment of speech act theory in the analysis of cultural conflicts or the performativity of constructed cultural identities.

Kant’s work helps spell out why there can be no ultimate neutrality, homogeneity—or, for that matter, secularism—of the public sphere and, more importantly, why this insight by no means implies that the formal critical task of reason has become obsolete. Where every other is totally other, following Derrida’s puzzling and provocative phrase *tout autre est tout autre*, a genuine or responsible politics of difference comes into sight. Such a politics should not be confused with the politics of identity, nor with the communitarian discourses that have been pitted against the supposed formalism of modern liberal political theories. What is to count as different or other, let alone totally other, is by no means certain or given. No one could possibly identify with it or make it one’s own.

Apart from exploring the concept of the public sphere with reference to Kant and his recent interpreters, notably Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas, my first chapter therefore also indirectly addresses contemporary debates on political liberalism, communitarianism, and neopragmatism. Charles Taylor’s essay “The Politics of Recognition,” in particular, has inspired a new round of discussion concerning the philosophical dimensions of multiculturalism, its implied concept of citizenship, the consequences for liberal education, the academic curriculum, and so on. The present project shares Taylor’s concentration on the philosophical merit of concepts and issues whose discussion has too often been marred by political and academic controversy. My different angle lies in examining the multiple ways in which religion, censorship, and tolerance in their Kantian and post-Kantian determination not only shape our experience of the tensions between collective and personal cultural identities, but also affect our understanding of the conditions under which public dissension and cultural separatism can be resolved to a certain point.

In my second chapter, I explore an intricate logic of responsibility and irresponsibility that corresponds to the earlier—Kantian—considerations concerning radical evil and the tension between philosophical and biblical theology, as well as between moral and revealed (historical or positive) religion. Here my point of departure will be Kierkegaard’s riposte to the Kantian paradigm, as I have reconstructed it by elaborating—and extrapolating—some of Derrida’s suggestions in *Right to Philosophy* and “Faith and Knowledge.” My frame of reference in this chapter will be Derrida’s reading of Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling*, which responds in part to earlier interpretations by Levinas and, often obliquely, by Eric Weil and Jean Wahl. In *Donner la mort* (*The Gift of Death*), Derrida, following these authors, reads the testimony of Abraham’s sacrifice, the “instant of Abrahamic renunciation,” and the violence that comes with it as the paradigm for what is at stake in every genuine ethico-political decision. I ask how we are to understand the disturbing fact—yet another “fact of reason,” to use Kant’s formulation—that only in

the interruption of the ethical can responsibility, both practical and intellectual, be thought and exercised at all.

According to the paradoxical logic of responsibility and irresponsibility, the ethical becomes possible precisely in the disturbing possibility of its suspension—the possibility of violence and monstrosity, of the revenant, the specter, and the anonymous *ily a*—without, however, being able to affirm or assert itself with full force or as such, in its purity. Whatever force the ethical might have—a violence in its own right—is always tempered and countered, not only by the powers that be, but also by the structure of its own success. Its own excessiveness disrupts in advance all compliance—if not our respect for, then our conformity with the moral law, with justice. The ethical forbids, indeed precludes, all “good conscience.”

This chapter takes its point of departure in a discussion of central concepts introduced by Eric Weil in *Logique de la philosophie* (Logics of Philosophy), concepts that have found their way into the texts of Levinas and into Derrida’s reading of Levinas in “Violence et métaphysique” (“Violence and Metaphysics”). I begin by reviewing discussions by Derrida, Levinas, and Weil concerning whether violence is endemic to discourse and to the advent of being. If violence is in effect universal and universalizing is violent, I ask, does this not trivialize the concept of violence, vitiating the intensity of any ethico-political response to it? Through a reading of Derrida’s account of the sacrifice of Abraham in *The Gift of Death*, I demonstrate that this is not necessarily so. Examining the figures of sacrifice and of obligation, one can show that the prerequisite of any genuine ethico-political act is a singular and secret decision, an act of testimony that passionately resists the traditional concepts of the ethical, the political, and even the “act.” As such, it involves a relation that either touches upon violence or is touched by it: a *horror religiosus*. To be wakeful to this proximity of the best and the worst is to rediscover Mount Moriah, to which Abraham was called to sacrifice his son, as the everyday locus of our relation to everybody—and, indeed, to everything. To invoke this example and everything for which it stands is not to advocate a return to religion *per se*. Rather, it means embarking on an ongoing project that, as Derrida has convincingly argued, entails a “doubling” of God that is neither theistic nor atheistic, but lies at the source of all responsible discourse on responsibility.

I also raise an issue first broached in *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*, the question of whether the concept and presupposition of the “possible”—of possibilization, of possibilism, and thereby of all inquiries into the conditions of possibility termed transcendental—is adequate to articulate this exposition and exposure of the ethical to its other. I argue that it is not. This chapter, though it starts out from a discussion of the concept of violence as developed by Levinas and Weil, revolves around Derrida’s analysis of the “impossibility” of the ultimate “possibility” that Heidegger, in *Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time), equates with death—one’s own death—alone. At this point I return to the conclusions of my earlier discussions of *Sauf le nom* and *Apories* (Aporias). Derrida introduces this motif also in the context of a discussion of Benjamin’s “Zur Kritik der Gewalt” (“Critique of Violence”) to which I will turn in Chapter 3: “The most rigorous deconstructions have never claimed to be ... possible. And I would say that deconstruction loses nothing from admitting that it is impossible.... For a deconstructive operation possibility would rather be the danger, the danger of becoming an available set of rule-governed procedures, methods, accessible approaches. The interest of deconstruction ... is a certain experience of the impossible”(FL 981).

What should, perhaps, also be maintained against all possibilism is what Kierkegaard, in *The Sickness unto Death*—a text that in other respects deeply influenced Heidegger’s earliest thinking, in the 1920–21 lectures introducing the phenomenology of religion—calls “necessity.” Kierkegaard writes: “Possibility and necessity are equally essential to becoming (and the self has the task of becoming itself in freedom).... A self that has no possibility is in despair, and likewise a self that has no necessity.”

Mutatis mutandis, the same could be said of the necessity of *Anankë*, of *la Nécessité*, of a certain phenomenality (in Kant’s sense of the word), of mechanicity, of technicity, of a certain immanentism, naturalism, and so on. Perhaps repetition, *Wiederholung*, verification, and authentication should be located not only in the reaffirmation of the utmost possibility of the self (of freedom and autonomy, of self-determination, of one’s own-most, nonsubstitutable, being toward one’s own death), but also in the relation to the other and the Other, to cite the most relevant *topoi* that preoccupy Kant, Heidegger, and Levinas. Perhaps it consists at least as much—indeed, of necessity—in the weight of the already there, that is to say, of slippage, subreption, contamination, some admixture of paganism, derailment, in short, of what is other than the other—or Other—and nonetheless belongs essentially (inevitably, necessarily) to it and forms part and parcel of the very experience, the experiment and the trial, of freedom. This double acquiescence—or double affirmation—is implicit in the texts of Kant, Heidegger, and Levinas; I take its consistent elucidation to be the main thread running through Derrida’s entire oeuvre.

In the third chapter, I discuss the notion of mystic speech as conceptualized by Michel de Certeau in *La Fable mystique* (*The Mystic Fable*), an interdisciplinary study of some major characteristics of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century mysticism. Only its first volume, published in 1982, was completed. I argue that this text should be read as a foil to Derrida’s rearticulation of the mystical postulate in Montaigne, Pascal, and Benjamin. Doing so reveals the full force of Derrida’s argument, but—in a sense to be determined—also highlights its unexpected reassessment of a certain interpretive and ethico-political violence, a *horror religiosus*, expressed, for example, in the citation from Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* on which Derrida dwells extensively in *Ulysse gramophone* (*Ulysses Gramophone*): “He war.”

The interpretation of this motif of an ineluctable divine wrath against the backdrop of de Certeau’s work on mysticism and the political confirms the hidden correspondence between Derrida’s writings on the institution, the university, the media, and performativity, and the question of violence in all of its multiple ramifications. This impression is reinforced by the in part posthumous publication of de Certeau’s *La Culture au pluriel* (*Culture in the Plural*) and *La Prise de parole, et autres écrits politiques* (*The Capture of Speech and Other Political Writings*). The former book contains “The Language of Violence,” as well as essays on the university; the translator’s afterword rightly characterizes it as “a founding charter for culture studies.”<sup>13</sup> At the center of the latter collection stands a reevaluation of the meaning and import of religion in transition from a specialized system of belief to a powerful—violently nonviolent—performance of speech, a “mystic speech” whose political and cultural implications we are only now beginning to fathom. To call the model proposed by these writings a “heterology” captures only part of the movement at issue. Equally central to this performative and mystic speech is an almost tautological element. After establishing the unmistakable influence of de Certeau on Derrida’s invocation of the mystical postulate, I bring Derrida’s phrase *tout autre est tout autre*, analyzed in the previous chapter, to bear upon the historical and systematic analyses of *The Mystic Fable*. In order to do so, however, we



will need to backtrack for a detour through an author whose work is of great importance to our understanding of the theologico-political, in particular of the relationship between religion and violence.

Chapter 3, therefore, starts out by focusing on elements in the writings of Carl Schmitt that are necessary for an understanding of the work of Benjamin. This excursus will help us to return briefly to Kant. After revisiting Schmitt's conception of the political and the evil in human nature, of sovereignty and the miracle, I concentrate on two of Benjamin's major early essays, devoted to the problem of translation in relation to the sacred: "Über die Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen" ("On Language as Such and on the Language of Man") and "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers" ("The Task of the Translator").

Translation, we shall see, forms the very act of interpretation, invention, and negotiation—rather than, say, mediation or application, terms too dialectical and hermeneutic for Benjamin's and Derrida's taste—of the infinity and excessiveness of the law in the concrete contexts of the many, necessarily limited and limiting laws. Respect for cultural difference and the need (for lack of a better word) for integration meet here in a question of incarnation, instantiation, and hence translation. The construction of the tower of Babel, discussed in Derrida's "Des tours de Babel" and elsewhere in his writings, would seem to form the most appropriate image of the perils involved in this undertaking.

My examination of these texts prepares for an interpretation of another curious religious motif adopted by Derrida: the mystical postulate as what paradoxically or, rather, aporetically founds and undermines or interrupts the authority of the juridical law. This notion is not unrelated to the emphatic notion of justice elaborated by Levinas. Drawing on de Certeau's pivotal work on the mystic fable, I argue that in its very structure this postulate is not so much an epistemological or axiological premise as something resembling an absolute performative, like the structure of address that marks all genuine prayer or like the promise, the attestation, or the gift. This gift, the gift of the gift—the giving of the gift as well as the gift's giving—exceeds and traverses all economic exchange in the broadest sense. Neither a merely theoretical construct nor a hypothesis, the notion of a mystical postulate thus touches upon central ethico-political questions, as Derrida makes clear in his hesitant rejoinder to Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" in "Force of Law," as well as in his interrogation of Marcel Mauss in *Donner le temps* (Given Time), a text that in its final pages circles back to the problem of radical evil in Kant.

The motifs of the mystical postulate and the gift underscore that Derrida's reassessment of the philosophical tradition—and his turn to religion in order to tease out this tradition's unthought or unsaid—rests on a singular practice or act of affirmation and reaffirmation. Any plausible analysis of the affinity between the thought of *différance* and the thought embarked upon by the traditional *via negativa* demands that we reconsider the interrogation of dialectical and nondialectical negativity throughout Derrida's texts. Such an analysis must discuss what, in his most recent writings, precedes, resituates, and renegotiates the negative in obliquely or, more often than not, explicitly religious terms. This is not the negation of the negative—that is to say, affirmation in the common, classical, and formal logical sense of the word. Instead, here we are dealing with a far more original or originary "af-firmation," that is to say, with a non-thetic postulation that knows no fixity, firmness, or closure (all connotations that Derrida brings to bear upon the French affirmation, loosely associating it with the undoing of *fermeté* and *fermeture*).

Examples of this, Derrida suggests in “Comment ne pas parler” (“How to Avoid Speaking”) and *De l’esprit* (*Of Spirit*), may be found in several heterodox forms of Judeo-Christian and Arabic mysticism, as well as in Heidegger’s thought on the “nothing” in *Was ist Metaphysik?* (*What Is Metaphysics?*) and on the essence of language in *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (*On the Way towards Language*). In both these writings, Heidegger prepares a gesture of *Gelassenheit*, a letting go of (or release from) the tradition of representational thought, of metaphysics in its onto-theological constitution. This gesture, I argue in *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*, already announces itself in Heidegger’s early lectures on St. Paul and St. Augustine. But Heidegger almost immediately translates this motif and motivation into a “logic of presupposition” (to cite Derrida’s *Aporias*) that fixates the original gesture’s impetus and disruption and inscribes it into a fundamentally ontological—metaphysical—possibilism whose architectonics (that of classical and modern transcendental thought) can be deconstructed in more than one way.

In the final chapter of this book, I discuss Derrida’s thoughts on hospitality and friendship in the writings of Levinas and, again, Kant. Drawing on the arguments presented in *Adieu à Emmanuel Levinas* (*Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*) and in *Politiques de l’amitié* (*Politics of Friendship*), I suggest that both notions are nonsynonymous substitutions for openness to the other. In the present historical and political constellation—and, presumably, for some time still to come—religion, in the precise sense of this term sketched above, is, remains, or has once more become the privileged example of such openness, a welcoming that is inevitably an openness to the best and the worst. This actuality of religion does not express some metaphysical truth concerning the notions of hospitality and friendship, as if they were in essence—or even in their original and proper meaning—to be understood religiously or theologically. On the contrary, their association is above all pragmatic, based on a historical elective affinity and structural resemblance, one that may one day outlive itself (again).

This prominence of the religious will emerge once more in discussing a few striking passages from Kant’s work, here the *Metaphysik der Sitten* (*Metaphysics of Morals*) and *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*). Derrida takes up these two, in Kant’s own words, “material” and “dogmatic” supplements to the *Critiques* and gives them an important place in his discussions of friendship, in conjunction with the actual and as yet unexplored politics of cosmopolitanism and the democracy still—and forever—to come (*à venir*). These final motifs will permit us to circle back to central themes in Chapter 1: the question of the institution, not least the institution—or, rather, institutions—of philosophy, in the university and, happily, elsewhere.

Faithful to the question that guides us throughout, we will ask what it means that the theme and practice of hospitality (friendship, cosmopolitanism, democracy, and their functional equivalents), in Derrida’s reading of these texts, goes hand in hand with the motif of and concern with hostility. In other words, the very idea and experience of friendship would seem to co-exist with a certain conceptual and factual violence that philosophy, freed from all moralism and idealism, should take pains not to obscure and gloss over.

Here the most important threads of Derrida’s argument, I argue, are distilled from a renewed reading of Levinas’s *Totalité et infini* (*Totality and Infinity*), of a structure of intentionality reoriented in the direction of religion—a formally indicated religion defined as the relation to the other that does not close itself off in a totality—and further explored in the analyses devoted to the logic of hospitality in *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*. Inherent in the structure of any welcome, Derrida demonstrates, is a second welcoming of what threatens the possibility of the first welcome. This perversion or, rather,

“pervertibility”—since its actual, factual, or empirical occurrence is not what matters most here—is no mere accident, but belongs to the essence of the phenomenon and to the structure of phenomenality and its intelligibility as such. The possibility of the worst is once more the condition of the best.

Paradoxically, this is why there can be no such thing as experience or meaning as such or *kath’auto*. Levinas still attempts to maintain the contrary in *Totality and Infinity*, though later he severely revises his views, partly in response to Derrida’s pressing questions in “Violence and Metaphysics.” Nor can there be a simple, nonaporetic, and unilinear process of the founding, conditioning, or possibilization of any such experience. The structure of possibilization (i.e., of revealability, *Offenbarkeit*, but also of messianicity and Christianicity) remains contingent upon—and is thus somehow made possible by—the event (the revelation, *Offenbarung*, messianisms, the *kairos*, etc.) that it seemed to make possible in the first place. What supposedly came first, comes in fact and *de iure* later and vice versa.

Not only will the complex of questions discussed in this chapter allow us to circle back to a decisive influence on Benjamin introduced earlier—namely, Carl Schmitt’s studies in *Political Theology*—it will also permit us to revisit some central moments passed over in silence in the first chapter’s discussion of Kant. I will conclude by asking how, in particular, the Kantian theme of cosmopolitanism (and, at the societal microlevel, once again of friendship) takes shape in light of the premises and arguments from which I have taken my lead. What does cosmopolitanism mean against the backdrop of the proposed and observed turn to religion and its intrinsic relationship to (the problem of) violence, to the horror *religiosus* whose structure and pertinence forms our theme?

The concluding section of the book wraps up the argument and draws out some implications for the task of philosophy at the intersection of contemporary comparative religious studies, political theory, and cultural analysis. Addressing violence in relation to testimony requires nothing less than a sustained interrogation of the concepts, argumentative strategies, rhetorical devices, and central intuitions at the crossroads of the institutional disciplines that contribute to understanding these phenomena. The present work can aspire no more than to lay out some of the hypotheses and guiding assumptions that could direct and inspire such an inquiry. In that sense, the following exposition, in spite of its length and detail, remains programmatic in many respects and concludes nothing but the prolegomena inaugurating work still to be done. <>

## **THE NEW LAWS OF LOVE: ONLINE DATING AT THE PRIVATIZATION OF INTIMACY by Marie Bergström [Polity, 9781509543519]**

Online dating has become a widespread feature of modern social life. In less than two decades, seeking partners through commercial intermediaries went from being a marginal and stigmatized practice to being a common activity. How can we explain this rapid change and what does it tell us about the changing nature of love and sexuality?

In contrast to those who praise online dating as a democratization of love and those who condemn it as a commodification of intimacy, this book tells a different story about how and why online dating became big. The key to understanding the growing prevalence of digital dating lies in what Marie Bergström calls “the privatization of intimacy.” Online dating takes courtship from the public to the private sphere and

makes it a domestic and individual practice. Unlike courtship in traditional settings such as school, work, and gatherings of family and friends, online dating makes a clear distinction between social and sexual sociability and renders dating much more discrete. Apparently banal, this privatizing feature is fundamental for understanding both the success and the nature of digital matchmaking. Bergström also sheds light on the persisting inequalities of intimate life, showing that online dating is neither free nor fair: it has its winners and losers and it differs significantly according to gender, age and social class.

Drawing on a wide range of empirical material, this book challenges what we think we know about online dating and gives us a new understanding of who, why, and how people go online to seek sex and love.

## Review

“A refreshing lack of hysteria about the impact the internet has had on our sex lives.” — *e i a a G h*

“*The New Laws of Love* is an insightful deep dive into the world of digitally mediated dating. Bergström eloquently and convincingly navigates a nuanced path between moral decline theses on the one side and uncritical celebrations of online dating on the other, to reach evidence-based conclusions and analyses.”

— **Brady Roberts, Monash University**

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Excerpt: Match, Meetic, OkCupid, Grindr, LoveScout, Tinder, Happn, Bumble... These are just a few of the thousands of dating platforms available online today. The first website to specialize in matchmaking appeared in the United States in the mid-1990s and was soon to be imitated. As the internet expanded internationally, competing sites rolled out at a quick pace across North America and Europe. They were joined some twenty years later by mobile phone applications that immediately became immensely popular, especially among the young. In the past two decades, these platforms have remapped the landscape of dating across much of the western world and beyond, changing the way people meet partners, but also challenging our ideas about sex and love.

The change is remarkable. Since at least the nineteenth century, personal ads, marriage brokers, and other "lonely hearts" networks have offered their services to bring single people together and match prospective partners. Today's dating sites and apps are the direct descendants of those earlier forms of mediated dating; in fact they have inherited many features from their ancestors. What is fundamentally new, however, is their popularity. Until the advent of the internet, the use of commercial matchmaking remained a marginal and marginalized practice. In the 1980s and 1990s, surveys carried out in the United States and in France showed that approximately fewer than 1 in 100 people had met their spouse through a matrimonial ad or agency, for example (Bozon and Heran, 1989; Laumann et al., 1994). In the ranks of the heterosexual population, to resort to such services was taboo; the companies were generally distrusted and users consisted predominantly of divorced and widowed individuals. Mediated dating was considered something of an outcast behavior in the world of dating.

Digital platforms have brought about a major shift. Dating sites and apps have become a common way of meeting partners, and this behavior has lost most of its former social stigma. Users come from all social milieus and background; and, unlike older forms of matchmaking, these new ones appeal primarily to young people. The most recent survey carried out in the United States — the birthland of online dating — showed that 30% of American adults had already used a dating site or app in 2019. Among 18- to 29-year-olds, the percentage rose to 48% (Pew Research Center, 2020c). As online dating became commonplace, commercial matchmaking finally emerged from the shade, to reach a broad general public.

What made this change possible? How do we explain this unprecedented success of online dating, and what are the implications? To answer these questions is to draw a portrait of modern love and contemporary sexuality. This is the aim of the present book. By looking at dating and how it changes online, this book tells a new story of the transformation of intimacy, a story that differs considerably from what is currently said about this phenomenon.

### Dominant discourses on online dating

The spread of online dating has not gone unnoticed. From the outset, the use of online platforms has commanded considerable attention from the media, essayists, and social scientists. One reason is interest in the phenomenon itself; but an even stronger reason is that online dating is considered to be a mirror of contemporary society. In it we tend to see reflected our hopes, and more often our fears, about the time we live in, about the new sexual norms and the future of social ties. The image that current writings on online dating projects is often an ugly one. It emerges from two main discourses that largely came to frame popular understandings of online dating.

First, online dating is said to have profoundly changed sexuality by favoring short-term sexual connections at the expense of stable relationships. The term "hookup culture" is often used to describe the new paradigm (Wade, 2017). Although coined initially with reference to American campus culture, today it is used in broader sense. The term has no exact translation in other languages, yet it resonates strongly with debates on online dating in many European countries. The core idea is that new sexual norms, together with the new technology, have made young people — sometimes referred to as the "Tinder generation" — unwilling to commit or incapable of commitment; they cast aside love and embrace casual sex instead. In particular, online dating would be responsible for the "banalization" of sex, its becoming as mundane as any leisure activity. According to French sociologist Jean-Claude

Kaufmann, "a hook-up (nuit chaude) can now be scheduled as easily as going to the movies" (Kaufmann, 2010, p. 140). This familiar claim is based on the idea that sex is trivialized on the Internet. Sometimes presented as sexual liberation, this development is more often depicted as the decay of love (Sessions Stepp, 2007; Freitas, 2013). Authors argue that romantic long-term relationships have been sapped by endless online opportunities of easy and uncommitted sex.

A second dominant discourse presents digital dating as a commodification of intimate relationships. Apps and sites are viewed as a Trojan horse that brings economic logic into the sphere of intimacy. Because dating platforms are supposedly structured as a market — governed by competition, self-marketing, and choice strategies — the outcome, it is argued, is an unprecedented rationalization of romantic and sexual behavior. This thesis is central to the work of Eva Illouz, whose incisive analysis has been highly influential. In her critical analysis of modernity, Illouz denounces the penetration of the "capitalist cultural grammar" into heterosexual romantic relationships (Illouz, 2012, p. 9). Dating websites, she argues, have played a key role in this historical movement: "Internet dating has introduced to the realm of romantic encounters the principles of mass consumption based on an economy of abundance, endless choice, efficiency, rationalization, selective targeting, and standardization" (Illouz, 2007, p. 90). Illouz also stresses the emergence of new sexual norms, to which she refers as a broader trend of "de-structuration of the romantic will" (p. 197). The Internet, in combination with other cultural forces such as the rise of feminism and reliance on psychology, causes a loss of belief in love and a fear of commitment. If online dating indeed operates as a marketplace, then it is a "free market of sexual encounters" (p. 10).

These powerful arguments have commanded a vast audience. The idea that online dating revolves around commodification and intense sexualization is widespread, especially in Europe, and has largely dominated the debate in the social sciences (Salecl, 2010; Droge and Voirol, 2011; Bauman, 2013; Lardellier, 2015). But, while identifying salient features of online dating — such as the standardized platforms, the often transient nature of online relationships, and the selection mechanisms that work in partner choice — these theses fail to tell the entire story. They pave the way for a harsh criticism of online dating, but fall short of capturing its specificity and explaining its success — explaining how and why people use these platforms. Besides, many empirical elements do not support these arguments.

The first such element is the fact that contemporary societies are still structured by a strong couple norm. Although young people have delayed their first union in a couple, a vast majority of them end up forming romantic relationships (Manning et al., 2014; Bellani et al., 2017; Roseneil et al., 2020). A significant proportion of today's couples meet through online dating (Cacioppo et al., 2013; Rosenfeld et al., 2019; Potârcă, 2020) and, while these platforms stand accused of turning users into consumers incapable of committing to one person and settling down, surveys tend to show that partners who meet online actually commit more quickly than those whose encounter stems from other settings (Rosenfeld et al., 2019). The risk of breakup is not necessarily higher for these relationships; in the United States, for online couples, the risk of separation is the same as, or even lower than, for couples who meet in physical settings (Cacioppo et al., 2013; Rosenfeld, 2017). Moreover, the transformations of sexuality cannot easily be reduced to, or explained by, a theory of free markets. Online dating may indeed favor casual relationships, but that's a far cry from being a trivialization and deregulation of sex. These platforms are permeated by powerful social norms, and notably by a gendered double standard that pervades the online world and leads men and women to engage in intimate relationships on very different terms (Bergstrom, 2012; Pinsky, 2019; Lamont, 2020).

The commodification thesis also poses problems theoretically, as it is either too vague or too extreme. If the argument assumes or implies that our behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs are affected by market economy and by our capitalist society, that is of course true. As social agents, we are inherently formed by the institutions and the means of production of our time. Having said that, we haven't said much. But if commodification means that, with online dating, choosing a partner is essentially the same thing as choosing a yogurt in a supermarket or ordering a sweater from an online catalogue, the assertion is a pleasant trope, but it is wrong, too. The social process of couple formation, or casual dating, is significantly different from consumer behaviour; it obeys specific norms and follows patterns of its own. As Viviana Zelizer (2005, p. 29) points out, the true relationship between intimacy and economy cannot be accounted for by theories that reason in terms of "nothing but" — as in partner choice is nothing but a market, or online dating is nothing but consumption. The way intimacy is influenced by the economy, as well as by other social forces, is a more complex process. It is a fine-grained investigation of this a process that the present book sets out to write.

Such an aim requires attention to both historical change and continuity. Whenever a new phenomenon is examined, there is a danger of referring to a past that is mostly mythical, in other words of depicting a time when love was blind, pure, and authentic, far removed from our contemporary experiences. Criticisms of online dating often stem from nostalgia for a past that never existed, fueled by fears of technological change, sexual transformations, and the ever-tightening grip of economic forces.

In steering a course between the fears of some and the enthusiasm of others, the book sets out to write another story. It relies on a vast empirical investigation and comes to very different conclusions about what online platforms do to intimacy. The major change lies in a privatization of dating. As I will show throughout the book, this feature is fundamental for understanding the popularity of dating platforms, the way people use sites and apps, and the type of relationships that stem from them. The book shows how dating has become a private matter, and reveals the implications of this shift for both intimate and social life. In doing so, it focuses on the heterosexual population. Rather than offering a general overview, which inevitably does injustice to LGBT experiences, it puts the majority group under the spotlight in order to better understand its specificity.

### The privatization of dating

There is something dazzling and almost blinding about online dating. By focusing on the most spectacular features of the phenomenon, such as the mass of registered users, ostentatious self-presentations, and profile swiping, one may fail to detect another, seemingly minor characteristic, which is no less important: the social insularity of dating platforms. Online dating is detached from other social activities; it occurs outside an individual's ordinary social circles and possibly without their knowledge.

This is surely the most important difference from earlier ways of meeting potential partners. Historically, heterosexual courtship has always been intimately tied to ordinary social settings, for example the neighborhood, the workplace, the church, the school, community activities, and leisure (Bozon and Heran, 1989; Laumann et al., 1994). This means that meeting venues have very much corresponded to the geography of social life. In the nineteenth century, young people in the countryside often met and courted in the fields; a hundred years later, they tended to meet at school or university. Of course, some settings have always been more propitious for seeking and meeting a spouse than others. Today's bars, for instance, are certainly more conducive in this regard than supermarkets. But,

with the notable exception of prostitution and swinging, there has never been a place allotted specifically and exclusively to heterosexual courtship. This is all the more the case as, at least from the nineteenth century on, finding love in the course of one's everyday life has been an integral part of the romantic script: the initial encounter is expected to be a matter of fate, not something you seek out actively (Corbin, 1990; Bergstrom, 2013).

Today's platforms, explicitly and wholly dedicated to dating, mark a radical break from this historical pattern. Meeting partners is now a specific social practice, with its own platforms, clearly delineated in space and time, and with an explicit purpose. The real novelty lies here, in the disembedding of dating from other social spheres and in its resulting privatization.

### Disembedded matchmaking

To feed and to clothe ourselves, to clean our homes, to nurse our kids and take care of our elderly parents... Over the past decades, we have become accustomed to resorting to private companies for the most intimate activities. When it comes to meeting partners, however, the idea of commercial intermediation was met with aversion for a long time. The dissemination of dating platforms from the 1990s onward corresponds to a progressive "disembedding" of dating. I borrow the term from Karl Polanyi (1944): it refers to a process whereby a series of activities that have previously been embedded in ordinary social relations become detached from society and form an autonomous market sphere.

This extension of capitalism, through the transformation of objects and activities into new products and services, has accelerated remarkably with the new technology. Critics of commodification are correct to point out the growing interconnections between economy and intimacy. The diversification of technology and the intensification of its uses, which have penetrated so many areas of daily life, have opened up new areas for investment, and private companies are more present than ever in our private lives. Tech entrepreneurs now serve as intermediaries for our social interactions, including the most private ones, for instance communicating with friends and family, sharing photos, coordinating shopping lists and wedding lists, and getting to know people, make new friends, and meet partners and lovers. At the same time, the symbolic boundaries between what is "marketable" and what is "non-marketable" are constantly shifting and spur controversy. As the sociologist Viviana Zelizer observed, economic activity and intimate relations are often thought of as "separate spheres and hostile worlds" with radically different logics, involving rationality on the one hand and emotion on the other, "with inevitable contamination and disorder resulting when the two spheres come into contact with each other" (Zelizer, 2005, pp. 20-21). The expansion of the market into the private sphere has aroused strong fears and is accused of corrupting and "inexorably erod[ing] intimate social ties" (p. 25). The reactions to online dating provide a striking example of these tensions caused by the incursion of private actors into the sphere of intimacy.

Before jumping to the conclusion that intimate relations have somehow been taken over by commodification and rationalization, a key distinction must be made between online dating as an industry — which involves private companies trying to sell their services — and online dating as a practice — that is, how the platforms are used. The market mechanisms ruling the industry does not necessarily and automatically carry over into user practices. Conflating the two would, on the one hand lead to a mechanical and deterministic reading of social behavior and, on the other hand, fail to recognize the autonomy of the market. To avoid these pitfalls, I have devoted a specific analysis to the



economy of online dating. Despite growing concerns over the role of capitalist market forces in our private lives, there has been surprisingly little academic interest in the companies that operate in the sphere of privacy. This is the case with online dating, where the "market" metaphor, used to describe romantic and sexual interactions, has drawn attention away from the actual marketplace — the actors who create these products, their work, and the norms governing their business (Wilken et al., 2019; Pidoux et al., 2021). The first aim of the book is therefore to pry open the black box of the online dating industry.

The main goal is, nonetheless, to investigate consequences for users. The disembedding of dating means bypassing ordinary social relations in the search for a partner. With digital platforms, dating becomes a private matter.

### The transformation of social life

From its earliest days, the internet has raised questions about social ties. Theories and inquiries have differed over time, going often from enthusiasm to severe criticism, as we can see in the work of internet specialist Sherry Turkle. Known to many for her pioneering work on digital communities and identities, Turkle described the internet, in her first books, as a horizontal and fundamentally democratic universe, reflecting an era when computer users were a socially homogeneous and tech-savvy group and when the enthusiasm about networking was huge (Turkle, 1995). Her last books strike a very different tone. In *Alone Together*, published in 2017, the internet is no longer liberating but alienating. Turkle raises the alarm on how social media negatively affect our possibility to create real, authentic, and meaningful relationships, especially among young adults, leaving us constantly connected but more alone than ever (Turkle, 2017).

The idea that social relations are breaking down under the impact of new technology is not new (Hampton and Wellman, 2018). At the very start of the century, Robert D. Putnam outlined this process in his best-selling book *Bowling Alone*, in which he predicted the decline of community in the United States under the influence of new media and technologies, among other factors (Putnam, 2000). Surveys, however, tend to show that exactly the opposite has occurred. A survey by the Pew Research Institute in 2011 showed that individuals who were the most connected were also the ones with the largest and most diverse networks; they had more and closer friends than individuals with less internet activity, and they declared more often to have social support. These results are consistent with those of other studies, carried out in both North America and Europe (Wang and Wellman, 2010; Mercklé, 2011). In France, for instance, social life (e.g. social visits, entertainment, and meals with friends and family) tends to have increased over time (Dumontier and Pan Ké Shon, 1999), and the most digitally connected people have been found to frequent more people in the physical world, and more often (Mercklé, 2011). These empirical observations will surely disappoint the prophets of social disintegration: social life is not in decline but is undergoing a transformation.

I believe the major change to be a privatization of social life. By this term I refer on the one hand to a shift from outdoor to indoor activities, as many practices that previously occurred in public space have migrated to the domestic sphere, and on the other hand to a tightening of social networks, which have become more centered around close intimate relationships. This means that mingling with strangers in public settings has become rarer, while domestic and private socializing has expanded. This evolution is palpable among adults, who spend less time with neighbors and more time with close kin and friends at

home, for example (Wellman, 1999), but also in youth culture, where the advent of computers and digital leisure has contributed to a switch from "street culture" to a genuine "bedroom culture" (Bovill and Livingstone, 2001; Livingstone, 2002).

Online dating takes this privatization into the realms of love and sex and accentuates it. This may come as a surprise to observers, who surmise, from the large numbers of users and their public profiles, that these platforms are a new form of public space. Online dating, however, is radically different from meeting at a club, in a bar, or in any other type of public venue. First, the platforms are accessible from home, and hence they turn meeting a partner into a domestic activity. Second, far from having a public setting, interactions are strictly dyadic, being based on one-to-one conversations that cannot be seen or overheard by a third party. Third and most importantly, online dating operates a clear separation between social networks and sexual networks. Whereas previously people met partners in ordinary social settings and often through people they knew, online dating involves circumventing one's social circles.

As Michael Rosenfeld and his colleagues have stressed, this means "disintermediating your friends" in dating (Rosenfeld et al., 2019). But the historical movement at work here is much broader. More than just circumventing family and friends, these platforms operate a sharp distinction between dating and all forms of sociability, turning the former into a specific social activity, with its own space and time. This is not a mere displacement of other meeting venues, it is a radical shift in the way we approach intimate relationships and organize social life.

This shift from public to private dating was first observed in the LGBT community. Gay and lesbian populations in the western world have seen a decline in community spaces, which earlier were important meeting venues, in favor of online encounters. In Europe the trend is particularly clear among gay men, for whom "the emergence of the Internet coincides with lower attendance in spaces that combine sociability and meeting partners" (Velter, 2007, p. 82). This online migration has been harshly criticized by scholars such as Timothy James Dean, who sees it as a "troubling privatization" in which real-life face-to-face encounters have been replaced by solitary sex in front of a computer (Dean, 2009, p. 177). Others, such as Kane, have criticized this nostalgic viewpoint, stressing that gay hookup apps are "a significant source of pleasure, connection, eroticism and intimacy" (Race, 2015, p. 256). In any case, online dating participates in a general trend of individualization of homosexual experiences. As many scholars have pointed out, the greater acceptance of homosexuality has weakened the ties of community experience and has made some, often young lesbians and gays, distance themselves from what is sometimes called "the gay scene" (Adam, 1999; Rivière et al., 2015). Sex has become more private, as people meet more often outside collective community structures.

A similar transformation is now underway in the heterosexual population. With the expansion of online dating, the search for romantic and sexual partners is no longer within the bounds of ordinary life. The social surrounding is stripped not only of its matchmaking function but also of control over nascent relationships. This privatization of dating has two major implications: it plays a crucial, though often overlooked role in the success of online dating; and it creates an environment where external control is loosened. The present book will take a close look at these changes; in consequence it will tell a different story of how dating platforms grown so big and what they are doing to intimacy.

## Dating under the microscope

There is today an important body of scientific literature on online dating, although it seldom reaches the audience it deserves, as research is often published in academic journals that remain rather confidential. With some notable exceptions (Schmitz, 2016; Vaughan Curington et al., 2021), most books on the topic are written by journalists and essayists who draw very little on empirical observation. These books often start with an already given story: a hard-cut vision of online dating and its social impact. Although there can be references to scientific findings, and even some fieldwork, the empirical analysis is not as thorough as the theoretical framework may be. Proof is read into theory, and there is consequently very little room for contradicting facts, or even for scientific discovery and surprise. My starting point is different and I draw on extensive empirical research. This leads me to other conclusions about the nature and novelty of online dating.

### Empirical sources and methods

This book is based on research conducted between 2007 and 2020. The project started when dating websites were still a fairly new phenomenon; then it followed the emergence and diffusion of mobile apps later on. The depth of this historical layering helped me avoid overinterpretation and presentism. The empirical material comes mainly from three different sources, which articulate both a quantitative and a qualitative approach. Swedish historian Brita Planck, whose research theme is marriage in the Swedish aristocracy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, gives a good illustration of the importance of such mixed methods. If she were to use only statistical data, Planck says, she would be tempted to say that marriage is no more than a matter of money and social status, as couples were strictly matched on these criteria at the time. However, if she were to rely solely on qualitative material such as the large body of letters analyzed in her research, she would conclude that, 200 years ago, marriage was all about love and desire. By combining both types of source, she can show that love, as a feeling, is homogamous and strongly linked to class. Studying online dating requires more than ever a dual approach of this sort, as user narratives are full of feelings of excitement, distrust, enthusiasm, frustration, and deception and convey an image of online dating that is sometimes contradicted by statistical analysis, revealing trends that users do not see (or do not want to see). For these reasons, I attempt to deal systematically with both qualitative and quantitative sources.

First, I use several large-scale scientific surveys in order to measure and characterize the use of online dating. Surveys on the topic are scarce and prompt me to focus on three countries where data are available and fairly recent: the United States, Germany, and France. The data come from questionnaire surveys, with representative population samples, on couple formation, sexual health, or digital technology (see List of Surveys). Analyzing this type of macro data is essential for establishing usage rate, the characteristics of users, and the type of relationships formed online.

Alongside these traditional surveys, I also gathered "big data" from several online dating platforms. This was made possible by a scientific collaboration with the company Meetic Group, owner of several dating services such as DatingDirect, OurTime, French Meetic, Dutch Lexa, German LoveScout and Neu. Meetic Group is also the owner of the European activities of Match, which has a large user base in many countries. Access to anonymized and censored data from these seven international platforms permitted me to observe global trends in self-presentation and contact behavior. My analysis was carried out in strict observance of user privacy. This means that I was never able to identify users, track their usage, or access any of their communications. Only metadata were analyzed, as I did not have access to actual

profiles or messages. But these data are precious for understanding how users of different backgrounds (age, gender, education, country, region, etc.) use the platforms and what groups interact with whom.

A qualitative study complements this quantitative approach and is based on interviews with 82 French users of dating sites and applications, aged between 18 and 68 years and coming from diverse social backgrounds. Almost all respondents identified as heterosexual; two identified as bisexual. I conducted the majority of the interviews myself; some were conducted by sociologist Rébecca Lévy-Guillain, who participated in the last stage of this project. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and subjected to an in-depth analysis. The interviews had a biographical character in order to permit me to follow the trajectories of the interviewees. Thus I was able not only to situate the moments at which my respondents used online dating, but also to compare their online experiences with those that took place "offline," in person. The following chapters present many excerpts from these interviews. Names and certain information have been changed in order to protect the anonymity of the interviewees. Readers should be warned that all my respondents lived in France, and experience can of course differ in other countries.

In addition to these interviews with users, I also conducted a series of interviews with founders of dating sites and apps, mainly French but also North American. These interviews aimed to help me understand how founders conceive of their own dating platforms and what visions of the industry they entertain. Because many of them were careful to protect the image of their company and I didn't want them to censure their speech for fear of bad press, their names have been changed and the names of their platforms are not revealed.

### Book outline

The book is divided into seven chapters, each focusing on a specific topic related to online dating and the transformation of heterosexual relationships. The first part of the book looks at the process of privatization, which is approached from different vantage points: a historical perspective, an analysis of the dating economy, an explanation of the success of online dating, and an analysis of the changes that this form of dating brings about in terms of sex and love.

Chapter 1 opens up the archives, looking for the origins of online dating. Matching services have a long history in both Europe and the United States. The first matrimonial agencies and personal ads appeared in the nineteenth century, and forms of "computer dating" were experienced in the 1950s; the first network of matchmaking systems followed a few decades later. This genealogy establishes a strong filiation between earlier services and today's digital platforms. It also reveals a common criticism that targeted them from the start: as early as in the nineteenth century, matchmaking services were accused of corrupting intimate relationships by introducing economic standards. The commodification of intimacy appears as a long-running fear of commercial intermediaries rather than as a feature of late capitalism.

Chapter 2 pursues this historical analysis by looking at the emergence of today's online dating market. Drawing on interviews with the founders of a series of dating sites and apps, it shows the social and professional norms that inform these platforms and govern their creation. Whereas the features of dating platforms are commonly scrutinized for what they supposedly say about modern love, this chapter shows that the products primarily reflect economic concerns. The making of dating platforms obeys contemporary market phenomena, namely isomorphism, segmentation, and stereotyping.

Unlike older forms of mediated dating that never made it into the mainstream, online dating has become a common practice and an important meeting venue in the western world. However, the phenomenon has also been exaggerated, both in the press and by scientific scholars. Using national surveys from different countries, chapter 3 gives an overview of number of users and the proportion of couples that meet online. It also provides a new explanation for the popularity of online dating — namely that online dating owes its success to the separation it operates between the sexual and the social sphere. This feature is fundamental to why and how people use online dating, although the reasons differ between young adults, people in their thirties, and separated individuals in mid-life.

Online dating is primarily casual dating. This common perception, largely conveyed by the media, is also a scientific fact. Chapter 4 shows that relationships initiated online rapidly become sexual and are often short-term; but it also challenges the common interpretations of this trend. Where authors often see a radical shift in norms, the book insists on a change in context. The sexual nature of online dating must, once again, be understood in the light of privatization; individuals more easily engage with and disengage from partners with whom they do not share a social setting. What is more, online dating does not hinder couple formation, nor does it imply some commitment phobia. In fact, the couple norm is as strong as ever, but the ways of committing are changing.

The second part of book looks at the inequalities in dating; we are not all equal before the laws of love. Online dating has not changed this, but it lays bare the discriminations, prejudices, and injustices that characterize the intimate sphere.

Chapter 5 investigates the mechanisms of assortative matching in online dating. The hyper-standardized platforms do not obstruct social differences in user behavior, nor do they prevent online relations from being homogamous. Users tend to interact with people from a social milieu similar to their own. This social selection is not due only to algorithms or predefined preference; it is rather the result of class dispositions and cultural prerequisites. Precisely because online dating takes away some of the most formal obstacles to social diversity, it reveals the strength and the modus operandi of today's social hierarchies.

Although specifically designed to match people as partners, dating platforms have their winners and losers. Not everyone manages to initiate contacts, meet partners, or form a relationship. These inequalities are not only individual but follow strong regularities of gender and age. Chapter 6 shows that young men are often rejected by their female peers who seek contact with more mature men. At older ages, this sexual disqualification turns against female users who, after a separation, show interest in men of their own age, who then turn to younger women. Dating platforms reveal this machinery of matching and those excluded from the process.

The #MeToo movement gave a striking illustration both of the gender inequalities that characterize sexuality and of a change in attitudes that makes these inequalities less and less acceptable. Online dating bears witness to this complex nature of contemporary sexual norms. Dating services are a site for sexual exploration both for women and for men, but Internet interactions are also profoundly gendered. This is clear from surveys, big data, and interviews that disclose a dual norm of male initiative and female sexual reserve. The last chapter looks at these traditional gender roles, which are reproduced online. It highlights the persistent double standard in sexual behaviour and the different ways in which women and men are authorized to express desire. Although explicit consent is on the political agenda, the

observation of actual dating behaviour shows that it is rarely expressed as such. On the contrary, sexual ambiguity remains the norm in heterosexual relations. The grey areas between consent and abuse are widening, especially online, where sexual desire is acted out but rarely pronounced.

The conclusion develops the main thesis of this book and puts it in a historical perspective. Online dating is both a cause and a consequence of a larger privatization of social life. As public socializing has decreased and, with it, also the opportunities for meeting new people, dating platforms attract users who wish to find partners outside their immediate surrounding. However, rather than installing a new public meeting venue — like the balls in the early twentieth century —online dating makes meeting partners more private than ever, turning it into a solitary and deeply personal matter. <>

## **SEEDS OF SILENCE: ESSAYS IN QUAKER SPIRITUALITY AND PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY** by Melvin Keiser [Christian Alternative, John Hunt Publishing, 9781789045499]

How Quakers live and think drawing on Silence: early Friends resonating with some modern philosophers

R. Melvin Keiser delves into the depths of Quaker spirituality and their philosophy, showing us that we require silence to unlock our relationship with God. *Seeds of Silence: Essays in Quaker Spirituality and Philosophical Theology* questions the modern world's addiction to distractions and instant gratification, and leads us toward a semi-forgotten Christian tradition of contemplative thinking.

### Reviews

This book is destined to be a classic of Quaker theology and spirituality. A deep dive into the roots, coherence, and originality of Quaker living, this text is a stunning articulation of what and how Quakers believe. Keiser draws on recent philosophers and early Quaker authors to articulate the contemporary vitality of Quaker insights regarding issues such as equality, interrelation, and mending creation. However, the brilliance of the book is not ultimately educational but invitational. Every page emerges from the depths of Keiser's own mature spirituality, shaped by a lifetime of Quaker commitment, experience, and practice. The reader is carried into a particularly Quaker way of being in the world. Like the works of Kelly or Thurman, the book leaves one both satisfied and longing, comforted and unsettled, encouraged and challenged to live more deeply in this strange and sacred world.' —Rev. Dr. Shannon Craig-Snell, Professor of Theology Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, author of *Silence, Love, and Death: Saying Yes to God in the Theology of Karl Rahner*

This is the fruit of a life's work reflecting on the basic questions of life and death. Such directness and honesty as we find here is not usual, even among philosophers and theologians. These basic questions are raw and imponderable. But Keiser is not trying to think his way through them, as many would expect a philosopher to, but is opening himself up to the experience of wonder and puzzlement that made him ask these questions in the first place. This leads into exploration of silence. This is not to say that he gives up thinking. Finding commonalities with the philosophies of Wittgenstein, Polanyi, and Merleau-Ponty, and the poetry of T.S. Eliot and Wallace Stevens, Keiser discovers how attending to silence yields a sense of reality which opens the possibility of us moderns perceiving answers to questions that most concern us. Much of the book is devoted to recovering the vision of early Quakers

who articulated this response to the mysteries of life. — Rex Ambler, Senior Lecturer in Theology, Birmingham University, author of *The Quaker Way: A Rediscovery*; *Truth of the Heart: An Anthology of George Fox 1624-1691*; *Light To Live By: An Exploration in Quaker Spirituality*

Mel Keiser's work draws deeply on Quaker tradition and experience to bring fresh perspectives on contemporary philosophical, theological spiritual and ethical questions. His essays — accessible, scholarly and profound — reveal the richness of Quaker theology, and invite the reader into further dialogue and reflection. — Rachel Muers, Professor of Theology, School of Philosophy, Religion and the History of Science, University of Leeds, author of *Keeping God's Silence: Towards a Theological Ethics of Communication*; *Testimony: Quakerism and Theological Ethics*

In this book Mel Keiser has gathered the distilled results of several decades of deep theological and philosophical study and probing reflection on some issues long held to be basic for Quaker religious thought and witness. For those with ears to hear, there is much to be gained from these pages. — Chuck Fager, Quaker writer and retired activist; editor of the journal *Quaker Theology*; author of *Indiana Trainwreck: the Schism in Indiana Yearly Meeting over Abuse of Church Governance and Exclusion of LGBT Persons*; *Passing the Torch: When Quaker Elders' Lives Speak* (Co-author with Steve Angell); member of Spring Friends Meeting, Snow Camp, North Carolina; lives in Durham, North Carolina

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I have been seeking throughout my life to make sense of my and our existence in this world of ours. I am exploring how to live with and to respond to the deeper questions about my being in the world—Who am I; What is death and is there eternal life; Why is there something rather than nothing; How should I relate to suffering and oppression; What is it that matters most? My life is a Friends journey: raised in a Quaker Meeting, attending Quaker schools, teaching in a Quaker college, writing in Quaker thought. Throughout, Silence has been the undergirding reality. As I began to write Quaker essays, wanting to get at the essence of the Quaker Way in my experience and in my understanding of the beginnings of Quakerism, Silence became a conscious theme. What I have written over many years about Quaker spirituality and the philosophical and theological insights engendered within it, I am gathering here.

Silence is the basis of the Quaker way of being—underlying, sustaining, creating our many ways of relating in word and act to the world, other persons, our own selves, and our efforts at mending the world. By waiting in silence, alone and in communal worship, we receive insight into our condition and the condition of the world, guidance into action that is justice-seeking and whole-making, a sense of divine presence in daily living and worship, and a taste of the love that engenders and pervades being.

We find arising from the Silence, as well, words that bear meaning of our lives, and thoughts that seek to say what is ultimately unsayable about the Silence in which we dwell. These essays explore spiritual, theological, and philosophical aspects in the Quaker way.

I draw upon writings of some leading Friends in its beginnings in England in the latter half of the seventeenth century as they arise from and manifest the encompassing Silence. You will meet various early Friends—George Fox, Robert Barclay, Isaac and Mary Pennington, James Nayler, Margaret Fell, Thomas Lurting.

My search for understanding the reality I, and we, inhabit—what sense the world makes, and how to dwell responsibly in it—and how Quaker spirituality and thought engage and express it has taken me, as well, into many areas outside of traditional Quaker thought. In the philosophical writings of major twentieth-century thinkers —Michael Polanyi, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Ludwig Wittgenstein—and theological writings—of H. Richard Niebuhr, Stanley Romaine Hopper, Paul Tillich—I find explorations of the creative dimension in our being beneath words, reason, and explicit consciousness. No doubt expressed in very different words from Quaker language, and from each other, they have been important, because of their insights and differences, in broadening and deepening my understanding of meaning in our Silence-encompassed life. Through them I see more of the richness of my own Quaker tradition and its relevance to our contemporary situation.

My underlying theme is the nature and practice of Silence at the roots of our living, thinking, and speaking. I explore how they are related to Silence; how they emerge from or defend against Silence. The inquiry takes us into questions of how words work in relation to Silence. The faith and practice of Friends, especially in its inaugural period, is a densely woven fabric of metaphor and symbol. How do Friends relate to modernity's dualisms of self/world, mind/body, subject/object, established at the same time as Quakerism's divergent beginnings? What difference, what new insight and relatedness, can come



using the lens of Silence — a Quaker perspective on self, world, language, meaning—on traditional theological issues such as Christ and God language, the historical Jesus, the resurrection, and release from oppression?

I am particularly interested to sketch out what I see as the distinctive nature of Quaker thinking. What is Quaker theology embedded as it is in a mesh of metaphor? For this I use Hopper's word "theopoetic" to distinguish Friends' creative use of figural language and participation in experience of divinity they evoke, from theology as usual devoted to making logical connections between concepts which define divinity. How then do we speak as Friends in the intertwinings of metaphors, symbols, and ideas emergent from the depths of Silence? How does such experiential thought handle philosophical issues, and therefore what is Quaker philosophical theology? How does it relate to ethics, historical meaning, and scriptural interpretation? How do we seek to live in the world and deal with oppressions?

I have been exploring from my adolescence the meaning of Silence in my own life and thought, in my Quaker communities of Germantown (Coulter Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Friendship Friends Meeting (Greensboro, North Carolina), and Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting (Black Mountain, North Carolina), as a student at Westtown Friends Boarding School (West Chester, Pennsylvania) and Earlham College (Richmond, Indiana), as a teacher of Religious and Interdisciplinary Studies at Guilford College (Greensboro, North Carolina), and as Co-Director of Common Light Meetingplace in Black Mountain at the beginning of our retirement after Guilford. <>

## **THE PARADOX OF AUTHENTICITY by Eric E Hall [Religion in Philosophy and Theology, Mohr Siebeck, 9783161538636]**

In this book, Eric E. Hall takes up the question of the meaning of a vigorously used concept in the liberal west: authenticity and the pursuit of personal originality. By uncovering this idea's uses within three deepening contexts - the ethical, the ontological, and the theological - the author unfolds authenticity's origins and implications. To the degree that authenticity seeks in all contexts freedom from social horizons, the conclusion renders attempts to embody this ideal secularly impossible. The goal requires a total transcendence that only the divine could fulfill. Human authenticity thus emerges in creatively imitating God's self-sacrificial expression on the cross, which both transcends and revalues the horizons of this world.

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## Basic Synopsis

"When philosophers use a word...and try to grasp the essence of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language in which it is at home?" I can honestly say that I have never intended to achieve this Wittgensteinian goal with any word. Arguably, however, such is what I have tried to accomplish in this dissertation with the term 'authenticity' and its application to human life and human personality. The question is how?

The quest for personal authenticity seems to be a quest as old as Western philosophy in some ways: it is the quest for the true self whatever (if anything) may constitute the truth of that self. Whereas the quest begins with Socrates' attempt to align himself with the cosmic Good, the quest for authenticity becomes altered by some of the late 18th and 19th century's Romantic categories, categories that place a premium on the aesthetics of individuality and uniqueness (see Chapter I, B.III). To predicate the word 'authenticity' to an individual presumes that somehow that individual is performing on the world's stage as the one whom this individual is in his truest and most unique sense. He has absolved himself from the poorly conceived social definitions and pre-prescribed personal possibilities, becoming truly that expressive individual whom he already always is deep 'inside' himself. The authentic person becomes himself.

My basic conclusion concerning authenticity as we mean it today is that only God could be authentic in the strictest sense of the term in post-romantic thought: as original and self-speaking. Human authenticity (with which this dissertation is presumably concerned) only emerges in creatively imitating

God's self-expropriation, which takes an act of approach by God to achieve in the first place. This conclusion is certainly a strange one, for, at the very least, it takes the power of becoming personally authentic largely out of human hands. The conclusion, however, follows a definitive logic based on a

choice made in this dissertation concerning the structure of human authenticity as a constitutive and appealing social ideal. I will give a brief foretaste of what I mean.

Throughout this book, I will argue that authenticity signifies a desire to become oneself such that one exists in, for, and, to some degree, from oneself. This claim, however, is a contentious one. Charles Taylor wants to argue that authenticity is not constituted by a desire to overcome completely one's social horizon but to somehow meaningfully contribute to that horizon in one's personally unique standing within that horizon (see Chapter 1, sections E and F). Taylor denies that the ideal could signify a desire to free oneself completely from one's social horizons on the grounds that such an ideal contains a factual impossibility: we are always already factually related to and constituted by our social relations.

This purported understanding of authenticity has much truth to it that I do not want to outrightly deny. However, as I will argue explicitly in Chapter 1, section 7, this understanding of authenticity does not properly allow the ideal of authenticity to expose itself in the fullness of its intention, despite how impossible such an intention may seem. Further, this socially derived and oriented understanding of authenticity turns the concept into a self-contradictory one: one must want the freedom to find one's true self apart from one's social horizon, only one must want that freedom and find it in and through one's social horizon.

Heidegger's understanding of authenticity verifies this critique precisely to the degree that Heidegger offers an understanding of authenticity whereby the person, Dasein, comes to exist in, for, and from itself by existing as care. That is, Dasein exists toward death and from conscience — points developed, respectively, in Chapter 2, C.IV, Chapter 3, III.C.2, and Chapter 3, D.III.1-2. Based on this Heideggerian conceptualization of authenticity, one will find that the ideal is caught up with two co-equal ideas of freedom and transcendence. That is, whether this drive to be oneself in, for, and from oneself stands as a possibility depends precisely on a person's ability to transcend its world. In Chapter 3, F.II, I critique Heidegger's attempt at transcendence and argue that no such transcendence is possible, at least not in purely philosophical terms.

Accordingly, in the last two chapters of this dissertation, I reconstruct the basic theological premises and conclusions of Eberhard Jüngel for the purposes of further exploring the possibilities of freedom and transcendence as related to this notion of authenticity. I focus my main line of thought in these two chapters on Ringer's characterization of God as the one who, through an original, completely free and transcendent, self-speaking Word, loves 'us' (something of a technical term to be explicated in Chapter 5, B) out of God's self. In this love, God alone is completely and sincerely authentic, for God alone has the capacity to love not only the world and its inhabitants into existence, but also God's very identity in God's Trinitarian being. God's being is a product of God's ungrounded love, which is itself and, in turn, synonymous with God's being.

As love, then, God is that which is only and truly authentic in the sense of 'existing' in, for, and from himself. In turn, this means that the terms 'love' — especially the freedom to love — and 'authenticity' become synonymous with one another such that God's active loving grounds God's authenticity. From these developments, however, I can conclude that the ideal of human and personal authenticity is not an end toward which human persons can actively strive. To actively strive for such ends in these precise terms may, in fact, be what Christians tend to call original sin (see Chapter 5, E.I). Rather, human persons are initially passive partners in God's loving approach to them and can only love in imitation of

God's original and self-grounding love. To the degree that human person can and do love, however, they are also authentic, albeit derivatively so, for authenticity always derives itself in its full meaning from God's being, which we can only at best imitate through God's self-expropriative power. <>

## **DOCTRINE IN SHADES OF GREEN: THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS** by Andrew J. Spencer [Wipf & Stock Publishers, 9781666702262]

How we come to our conclusions about ethical issues matters as much as the specific policies or practices we commend. This book argues that four key doctrines form a theological perspective for environmental ethics. They are the key ideas upon which people build their ethics of the environment. By looking at the doctrines of revelation, creation, anthropology, and eschatology, we can find points of contact to work together more effectively for the common good and have more meaningful debates when our positions differ. This book uses examples from four different theological positions--ecotheology, theological liberalism, fundamentalism, and evangelicalism--to show that a creation-positive ethic is possible from all of these positions, and it explores why people who stand within various theological streams may engage in environmental issues in diverse ways.

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Excerpt: i didn't choose environmental ethics; environmental ethics chose me. This is at least partially true. My interest in questions of the environment stems from growing up too close to the cleanup site from a nuclear fuel rod reprocessing plant (In high school we used to cheer, "Heck no, we don't glow," in response to jibes from other teams) and a still-questionable decision get on a bus one chilly morning in the autumn of 2000. The rest, as they say, is history.

The nuclear site was in West Valley, New York, which is about as rural as you can get without heading to Big Sky country. The nuclear fuel rod reprocessing plant had been shut down by Jimmy Carter's SALT

ll treaty, which left the local economy somewhere between depressed and desperate. I got sucked into the local resistance movement against putting a low-level radioactive waste storage facility on the land that was now basically vacant and pretty much clean, except where a certain amount of nuclear waste was awaiting storage for shipment to permanent storage at Yucca Mountain, which was still a hope on the horizon. Westinghouse had the contract to run the facility—the West Valley Demonstration Project—that led to decent funding for STEM curriculum in a town that could have served as a backdrop to October Sky except without the coal mine to provide even a decent hope of a living.

I made it to the United States Naval Academy with every intention of becoming an engineer, but I got lured into the humanities and developed a love for literature. However, even my degree in English led to a Bachelor of Science, so I found myself pacing outside a bus one day, knowing that if I got on it and if I passed my interviews at Naval Reactors, I would have to become an officer on a nuclear submarine. About a year later I found myself in Nuclear Power School learning the deep mysteries of what makes a reactor work. Later, after I left the Navy, I took a job as an instructor at a commercial nuclear power plant, teaching operators how to operate a large, commercial plant. It was not a bad way to work your way through seminary.

Environmental ethics chose me because I had developed an abiding interest in technology, an insider's understanding about electricity generation, and was immersed in a religious tradition that had powerful tools to engage in environmental ethics but seemed to have political reasons not to. Thankfully, my seminary ran a special colloquium on the environment, which further developed my interest. That same seminary also included a recurring elective on environmental ethics in the MDiv curriculum, which was where I first began to see the wide range of positions on creation care among professing Christians and to explore the theological ideas that drive ethicists toward sometimes radically different ethical proposals.

Critics tend to blame politics for the division among Christians, particularly among the theologically conservative US Christians with whom I am most familiar. I have no doubt that certain issues have been clustered together in an unhelpful manner. Thus, support for abortion is often associated with environmentalism, and advocacy for nuclear power is typically associated with corporate cronyism. It is tempting to lump these issues into the Left-Right divide in US politics and walk away, but when the scope of research expands beyond the borders of the US, there are still radical differences in the way environmentalists approach various issues. After years of reading religious perspectives on environmental ethics, I began to see certain patterns of theology that coincided with specific approaches to the environment.

My dissertation topic and thesis crystalized after I read an article by David Horrell, Cheryl Hunt, and Christopher Southgate that analyzed the use of Scripture in environmental ethics across three basic theological streams. The sense that my own position had not been precisely analyzed led me to think more on the approach, as I sought to distance my own conservative evangelical hermeneutic from that of Hal Lindsey's approach in *The Late Great Planet Earth* which led me to think through the range of literature I had and was reading. The article is largely correct about the typology of hermeneutics, each type relying upon a particular understanding of revelation, but there are also divisions among theological perspectives in several other key doctrines. As I continued to explore the literature of the field, I noticed a recurring pattern of four doctrines that mark points of difference between distinct types of Christian environmentalism. Thus, a thesis was born.

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In the flood of green messages that surround us in Western culture every day there are basic assumptions that people make as they classify each other. “Ecofriendly” means politically and theologically liberal. “Conservative” means denying climate change, driving a big SUV (but let’s be honest, a lot of liberals drive these, too), and trying to own the libs by not recycling. That is, at least, the messaging that we get bombarded with.

The problem with consistent messaging is that eventually people start to believe it, even if it requires denying the logical results of one’s core beliefs. The stereotype sometimes becomes a reality and things that are “off normal” strike us as odd. As a result, people are sometimes surprised to find out that I go to the small Baptist church down the road that holds to the inerrancy of Scripture, but I also have solar panels on my roof and pollinator gardens in my yard. Just to confirm that I’m weird, I usually let people know that I keep my house at about the recommended 63°F in the winter and 78°F in the summer. My theological convictions drive my environmental ethics and lead me to invest time, money, and energy into choices that tend to be much more popular on the other side of the political and religious divide.

This book wrestles with the theological underpinnings of environmental ethics from four distinct theological perspectives along the spectrum of Christian belief. One goal of this book is to show that a wide range of Christian theology can support an earth-positive environmental ethics. Therefore, there is little need for people to change their doctrines to suit the demands of ecology. At the same time, though many people from different forms of Christianity may arrive at similar ecological practices, we should not gloss over the real theological differences, which explain some of the divergences in policy preferences between, say, a theological liberal and an evangelical. A second goal of this book is to provide some points of contact between theological streams that can lead to better cooperation where possible and better dialogue where differences remain.

## THESIS

In this book, I seek to show that divergences between Christian environmental ethics are largely explained by responses to four particular theological questions. Together, these four questions form a theological perspective for environmental ethics. The contents of a theological perspective provide a structure for analysis, which can simplify complexity and illuminate obscurity in the ongoing debate over the appropriate Christian approach to environmental ethics. This book examines the theological perspective for environmental ethics of four different theological streams that diverge along a theological spectrum. The object is to provide a common framework for engagement between theological streams rather than to critique any particular perspective.

There has already been enough blame-throwing to last a few millennia. For example, division among Christians on the issue of the environment has been exacerbated by Lynn White’s historic essay that blames a Christian worldview for ecological degradation. Since “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis” was published in 1967, the Christian environmental debate has been framed as a response to White’s thesis. Some scholars are coming to recognize how stultifying that approach has become to meaningful dialogue on environmentalism. Among orthodox Christians, a great deal of ink has been spilt in defending Christianity against the attack levied by White. This defense has undermined positive efforts on environmental ethics, so that positive theological statements have lagged behind. The constant battling over whether Christianity is good for the environment means that little attention has been paid



to the specific theological methods used to develop Christian environmental ethics and few attempts have been made to understand the theological structures in place beneath those environmental ethics. Lately, battles over the so-called Green New Deal have made it even more difficult to even begin about environmental ethics because of emotionally charged divisions within the culture.

A survey of theological perspectives of Christian environmentalists is an important pursuit at this point in Christian history because of the growing distance between the ethical formulations, driven by diverse theological methods, of various streams of Christianity. Paul Allen notes this divergence of theological method, arguing,

Twentieth-century Christian theology has moved decisively yet sporadically in a number of contradictory directions. The sporadic character of theology is most deeply felt in terms of theological method. As theological scholarship widened to include a global scope of cultures and traditions to which the academy and churches were previously indifferent, theology took on a vastly more pluralistic tone.

According to Allen, “Twentieth-century theology has, by and large, adapted the theological developments of the nineteenth century to a culture that is no longer habitually Christian.” At this point, early in the twenty-first century, these sentiments indicate a need for an examination of the theological methods that support various environmental ethics.

An examination of theological methods used by diverse environmental ethicists, with due consideration of theological foundations, will enrich the understanding of environmental ethics among Christians. But full-scale analyses for each interlocutor in such a widespread debate will not be done here for two reasons. First, because many of those who write about environmental ethics from a Christian viewpoint have not written sufficiently to substantiate thorough analysis of their theological methods. Second, even if there were sufficient material to analyze, a complete assessment of each writer’s theological method goes beyond what this project requires. Instead of complete analysis, theological perspective offers a tool for an abbreviated theological assessment, tailored to the subject matter, which can form a structure for diagnosis and dialogue.

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## PROJECT OVERVIEW

At the end of the day, the purpose of this book is to find a way to communicate about environmental ethics between theological tribes. The topic is too important to our day to give up on meaningful communication, because that will just result in the continued escalation of the conflict. There is certainly a lot to disagree about. There is little chance in this life that there will be broad agreement on a wide range of issues. But there can be a degree of cooperation even amidst disagreement. One of my main goals in this book is to frame the shared points of contact in environmental ethics, with the hopes that it will increase the ability to talk to people with differing viewpoints. At the end of the day, everyone wants clean water, clear air, and a future for humanity on this earth. However, to have a conversation, there has to be a shared vocabulary.

The book is divided into five parts. Part One consists of this introduction and one other chapter. Chapter Two will explain in more detail the four doctrinal questions that form a theological perspective for environmental ethics. Those are the common points of contact for a discussion of environmental ethics. Part Two includes with an overview of ecotheology in Chapter Three and a deeper exploration

of Ernst Conradie's theology for the environment in Chapter Four. In Part Three I outline a liberal environmental ethics and then flesh out the specific ideas of Joseph Sittler's theological perspective for environmental ethics. Part Four has but a single chapter on a fundamentalist environmental ethics, which is a composite built from sources that self-identify or are commonly used by fundamentalists. There was no clear example of a fundamentalist environmental ethics to draw on. Part Five outlines an evangelical theological perspective for environment ethics in Chapter Eight and then digs deeper in the theology of Francis Schaeffer in Chapter Nine. This book closes with a brief conclusion and hopeful exhortation to make progress in this important discussion. <>

## **EXPANDING SCRIPTURES: LOST AND FOUND: THE WISDOM SERIES BOOK 2** by Don MacGregor [Christian Alternative, John Hunt Publishing, 9781789048667]

**EXPANDING SCRIPTURES: LOST AND FOUND** is the second book in the Wisdom Series. Don MacGregor considers what could be added to the Bible from rediscoveries of recent years, supports a new role for Mary Magdalene and looks at how it can all be reframed within the Perennial Wisdom teachings.

## **CHRISTIANITY EXPANDING: INTO UNIVERSAL SPIRITUALITY: THE WISDOM SERIES BOOK 1** by Don MacGregor [Christian Alternative, John Hunt Publishing, 9781789044225]

"All religions evolve, and Christianity is evolving rapidly today. Don MacGregor's book is a lucid and thoughtful guide to this process, and shows how the essential core teachings of Christianity can be disentangled from unhelpful interpretations that stand in the way of a living Christian faith in the twenty-first century. I found this book stimulating and inspiring. It is also admirably brief and clear." — Dr Rupert Sheldrake, biologist and author of *A New Science of Life*

*Christianity Expanding - Into Universal Spirituality* takes us on a whistle-stop tour of the areas that need updating if Christianity is to flourish in the 21st Century. New science, ecological concern and the need for new theology are all converging into a maelstrom of change. With broad brushstrokes on a big canvas, a path of personal transformation is charted, drawing on the mysterious Perennial Wisdom teachings that have survived down the ages. Pulling no punches, Don MacGregor delves into typically taboo subjects such as reincarnation, drawing a distinction between Jesus and the Christ. This dynamic first volume of *The Wisdom Series* is an initial outline of areas that demand ongoing exploration.

### Reviews

#### **EXPANDING SCRIPTURES: LOST AND FOUND**

Don MacGregor's little book, **EXPANDING SCRIPTURES: LOST AND FOUND**, is a beauty. In a compact way, he covers an accurate history of the Bible, a wise and helpful understanding of biblical

interpretation, a comprehensive look at “lost” gospels, and a well-researched understanding of the Bible for today’s world. Highly recommended for personal study and group discussion. Revd. Paul Smith, co-founder of the Integral Christian Network, and author of *Integral Christianity: The Spirit’s Call to Evolve* and *Is Your God Big Enough? Close Enough? You Enough? Jesus and the Three Faces of God*

By exploring Christianity as a path of personal transformation rather than a transactional relationship with the divine and a reward of salvation, *Expanding Scriptures: Lost and Found* accomplishes a wonderful and extremely timely service to spiritual seekers, whether Christian or otherwise. Its invitation, to live questions of the deeper meaning of life as way-showers leading eventually to the unfolding of answers, is the basis of all perennial wisdom teachings. Whilst the paths are myriad, as this profoundly insightful book shows, the destination is constant; the discerning and eventual experience of unity and oneness as the true state of the world’s and our meaning and existence. — Dr Jude Currivan. Cosmologist, author of *The Cosmic Hologram* and co-founder *WholeWorld-View*, [www.wholeworldview.org](http://www.wholeworldview.org)

**EXPANDING SCRIPTURES: LOST AND FOUND: THE WISDOM SERIES BOOK 2** is packed with direct, realistic spiritual wisdom, much needed for our modern world. Don MacGregor’s words shine a bright light through the dark confusion of outdated thinking. This is cutting edge theology and a brilliant introduction to Biblical history, including the lost gospels of the New Testament, the real Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Every Christian minister and Bible Study Group should read it. I promise the journey will be one of transformation and enlightenment. — Pam Evans MBE, Founder of the multi award winning Peace Mala educational charity for Global Citizenship and World Peace, and author of *Sharing the Light: Walking for World Peace with the Celtic Saints of Gower* and *How the Wisdom of the Ages is Reflected in Many World Faiths*

As Christianity loses its ground and finds itself in a crisis, a return to the original message of Christ becomes an existential need for its future evolution. Don MacGregor has done a wonderful work by pointing out this essential truth in his second book of “The Wisdom Series” *Expanding Scriptures: Lost and Found*. I recommend this book to all those who seek the original, universal and transforming message of Christ. I am sure it will satisfy their intellectual quest and longing of the heart. — Br. John Martin Sahajananda, spiritual director of the Shantivanam Ashram in India, author of *You Are The Light*, *Hindu Christ*, *The Four O’Clock Talks*, *Mission Without Conversion* and others

Wisdom is a gift of ages past, but also a resource forever inviting us into expanded horizons of meaning. Don MacGregor situates his exploration of Christian scripture between these two strands. While honouring the past his goal is to facilitate movement into the expanding horizons of faith that engage us today. A valuable and useful guide for spiritual seekers of our time. — Fr. Diarmuid O’Murchu, author of *Quantum Theology: Spiritual Implications of the New Physics* and *Incarnation: A New Evolutionary Threshold* plus many others

I recommend **EXPANDING SCRIPTURES: LOST AND FOUND: THE WISDOM SERIES BOOK 2** to anyone who is ready to consider and understand the next step in the evolution of Christian thought and the expansion of human consciousness. The book explores the true origins of the New Testament, and includes an enriching overview of some of the lost codices of early Christianity. Dedicated to the idea that religious thought must evolve to meet the times, the author weaves together the Christian teachings with the truths found within science, psychology and the Perennial Philosophy. — William

Meader, International speaker and author of Shine Forth: The Soul's Magical Destiny, Portland, Oregon, USA

Don MacGregor offers a profound and practical understanding of the history and essence of the Bible as relevant and related to the Ageless Wisdom at the heart of all the world's religions. **EXPANDING SCRIPTURES: LOST AND FOUND: THE WISDOM SERIES BOOK 2** is a timely presentation and provides a sacred, informative and reflective journey for all those seeking to realize the beauty of the differentiation of Truth from one source, one unity of purpose, and grasp the meaning of the language within Christianity. We are held in the Divine Presence; it flows through everything; and our recognition of the depth and breadth of our interconnectedness with all Life, and with Mother Nature ushers us into a New Day, one that yields right relationship throughout the manifest world. We are offered the opportunity to question, reflect and realize that our worldview is shifting once again and it is the essence of life that is perennial. This is a book you will be glad you opened! — Dr. Dot Maver, educator and peacebuilder, founder of Global Silent Minute and co-author of Conscious Education: The Bridge to Freedom

This is a fascinating and brilliant book for anyone who wants to acquaint themselves with the transformational teachings that Jesus really taught and which we learn about in the recently discovered Nag Hammadi gospels (especially in the Gospels of Thomas and of Mary). Don reminds us that the bible needs to be seen through fresh eyes. It must not be interpreted literally, as it is a selection of different genres written by many different people for different reasons, over centuries. Consequently it is a product of the worldview or cultures of those differing times, and needs reinterpreting in the complex world which we face in 2021. He reveals how outmoded our current theology is, steeped as it is in violent tribalism and patriarchy. He shows how the real and deep mystical, esoteric teachings can be found in the recently discovered Nag Hammadi texts, especially the Gospel of Thomas, where Jesus talks much more like a Zen Master or Master Shaman. After every chapter, Don gives us further resources and important questions to ask ourselves. This important book is an absolute must read for all Christians interested in asking themselves new questions about their religion and who are truly committed to using Christianity as a direct path to God. — Dr. Serge Beddington-Behrens, PhD. Psychotherapist, Spiritual Guide and author of Gateways to the Soul and Awakening the Universal Heart

#### **EXPANDING SCRIPTURES: LOST AND FOUND:**

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This is the second book in “The Wisdom Series” the aim of which is twofold, firstly to recognise that Christianity is a path of transformation as taught by Jesus, and was never meant to be a transaction between the individual and a distant God, in order to be “saved”. The path of transformation is there in the Bible and Christian theology as we know it, but is not the main emphasis of Church teachings. It is also there in many of the “lost Christianities” that were ruled out as the church gained in power and control. These alternative scriptures are now coming to the fore as a result of rediscoveries in the last seventy years or so, challenging mainstream theological viewpoints.

The second aim is to link this path of transformation with the Esoteric Philosophy or Perennial Wisdom teachings, thus giving a suitable and more expansive framework for Christianity in the twenty-first century. This philosophy really sees the spiritual path in terms of consciousness and energy, containing many different levels of being which overlap with each other. A key point is that each human being is made up of a personality and a Soul. The personality has a mental, an emotional and a physical nature, all of which keep us grounded in this physical reality of space and time – and so we live out a single life with all its struggles and suffering, its pain and heartache, and its joys and delights. This life is also a “vale of soul-making”, an idea developed by both Origen and Irenaeus, early Christian theologians.

Esoteric philosophy takes it further, seeing the Soul as the eternal aspect of the human being, our true nature. The evolving Soul undertakes successive incarnations as it gradually attains higher levels of consciousness, until the stage of a “Soul-filled personality” is reached. This is the stage in which the personality has relinquished its self-centred control and has allowed the eternal Soul to be fully expressed in the world. Thus the path of transformation is extended into a much greater sphere of

being, a much longer path than just the one short life in which we pass or fail to end up in heaven or hell.

The existing theology of Christianity in the West contains the idea of sanctification, being “made holy”, which is fine as far as it goes – but it does not go far enough to my mind. It falls short when we ask what happens to those who are not “sanctified” by the time they die, whereas the bigger framework of many lives gives opportunity for further evolution of consciousness, and sanctification over a much larger timescale. This evolution in consciousness is something which happens not just to individuals, but to the human race as a whole in its progression through the ages.

How we understand scriptures is an important part of this journey, which is the focus of this short book. We shall cover how the Bible came about, what was once lost but is now found and should be included (particularly a more central role for the Gospel of Thomas Aand Mary Magdalene), how interpretations vary and why, what reinterpretations can be helpful, and the strangeness and importance of numerology.

Book 2 is designed to be suitable for both study groups and individuals and each chapter has questions for reflection and further resources to follow up.

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### The Old Testament in a nutshell

In my evangelical charismatic days, I was coached in the Bible by a dear friend who encouraged me to learn a programme of Bible verses, and also to read through the good book in a year’s worth of daily readings. I did that, and was very grateful for it. I got a picture of the broad sweep of scripture, and in later years I put that to good use in a sermon in which I tried to capture the story of the Old Testament. Here it is.

(Note: as this is a sermon given in 2012, I have left in place the original term Old Testament rather than the Hebrew Scriptures.)

In the beginning, back in the mists and myths of time, there was God, who created. God created light, and from that light came everything else. I don’t picture God as an old man with a beard, I see God as the ground of being, more like the cosmic consciousness from which everything emerged. A good nine billion years later, the earth formed, and a few billion years after that, Homo sapiens came along. This all happened in the first six “days” of creation.

After this creation, during which we are told that “God saw that it was good”, we find a theme in which humanity kept getting it wrong. We first hear of Adam and Eve, who got it wrong. They listened to the wrong advice from the serpent and were sent out of the Garden of Eden on their own. They had two sons Cain and Abel, the two brothers who didn’t get on. They got it very wrong – Cain killed Abel. Cain was cast out of the family.

So Adam and Eve had another son Seth. From Seth, there were many others, who all lived a very long time – Methuselah was the longest at 969 years – and then there was Noah, who built an ark because everyone else got it wrong, but not him – humankind had become wicked and evil. God sorted it out with the flood. And so God started again with Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth – and their nameless

wives! (Noah was a mere 500 years old when they were born.) Then another long time passed. It is obviously a mythological story up to this point – it conveys truth but is not to be taken literally.

## Abraham

The Hebrew lineage begins properly with Abraham (about 1900 BCE). Abraham (first known as Abram) came from Haran, a place thought to be in Turkey, near the border with Syria. God said that Abraham would be the father of “many nations” and that Abraham and his descendants should circumcise the male babies on the eighth day after birth to seal the contract. Following God’s instructions, he travelled to Canaan.

From Abraham came Isaac, then Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel), who had twelve sons, giving rise to the twelve “tribes” of Israel. One of Jacob’s sons, Joseph, was sold into slavery by his brothers, who got it wrong, and was taken to Egypt. Eventually, because Joseph could interpret dreams, he rose through the ranks to become the Pharaoh’s right-hand man. That led to Jacob and his family coming to Egypt during a great famine and later their many descendants become slaves in Egypt (we don’t know how, but presumably they got it wrong). And the Israelites suffered through the harsh treatment of the Pharaoh. Along came Moses, the baby in the rush basket, brought up in the royal court, who also got it wrong and killed an Egyptian and was cast out of Egypt for forty years. Then came his godly call at the burning bush to free the Israelites, followed by the plagues. Moses led the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, freeing them from bondage and the Covenant of God with the Hebrew nation was made in the Passover of the Angel of death.

It took them forty years of wandering in the wilderness and a lot of soul-searching to get to Canaan, the promised land. On the way, at Mount Sinai, God gave the Ten Commandments for the people of Israel to obey in order that He was to be their God.

There were constant problems with the Jewish people believing in idols and other “gods”. They kept getting it wrong.

## The Promised Land

Finally the people reached the Promised Land and settled there after Moses’ death. Canaan was divided up into areas for the twelve tribes, named after the twelve sons of Jacob, or Israel as he was renamed. So the twelve areas of the nation of Israel were established, mostly through the warring leadership of Joshua. They appointed “Judges” who led the people until about 1000 BCE. But the people wanted a king, and the last Judge, Samuel, anointed Saul as king – until Saul got it wrong. Samuel then anointed David as king. David was a warrior king and subdued the surrounding tribes, the Canaanites, Hittites, Philistines, Phoenicians, Moabites, Ammonites, etc. King David and his son King Solomon then led a united, strong country. Solomon’s Israel was big – but after Solomon’s death, it all fell apart in family disputes. They got it wrong again. And so the divided kingdom was formed.

Northern Kingdom – still called Israel, consisted of 10 “tribes”; this group included what eventually became Samaria.

Southern Kingdom – called Judah, though consisting of both the “tribes” of Judah and Benjamin; this group included the city of Jerusalem.



The Northern Kingdom fell to the Assyrians around 722 BCE. The Assyrians moved the leaders to other places in their empire, never to return. Those that were left intermarried and became of mixed race. Hence the Samaritans were detested by the Judeans when it came to the New Testament times.

The Southern Kingdom fell to the Babylonians in 586 BCE. All the leaders of the nation were taken off to Babylon, and were in exile there for seventy years. It is thought that this is when the first five books of the Old Testament were written down, to remind the Israelites of where they had come from, and to give them hope in the God who had given them the promised land. Then along came the Persians, who were much more lenient, and repatriated all those who had been taken from their homeland by the Babylonians. Nehemiah and Ezra led the Israelites from their seventy-year exile in Babylon, back to Israel to rebuild the temple. Although the Hebrews rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem in 515 BCE, they never regained strength and were conquered by the Greek empire of Alexander the Great, and eventually by the Romans.

The Hebrew people explained their struggles with the Assyrians and the Babylonians and their exile from their country in terms of their disobedience to God. They kept getting it wrong. They kept going back to a belief in idols and heathen “gods” (mostly resulting from their marrying non-Jews who brought in outside religions). The prophets, people like Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel were spokesmen for God to the people and to their leaders. They often disagreed with the men in power and had no fear of expressing their messages from God – generally directing against the idolatry and “false gods”. All this was written about in the various books at the beginning of the Old Testament. Then comes all the rest, a mixture of story, sayings, poetry, songs and prophecy.

In the later prophetic writings, there was a general belief that they would be rescued by a Messiah who would lead them back to being their own nation again, and that the “Day of the Lord” would come, when all things come to a conclusion. Which, of course, leads us up to the New Testament and the time of Jesus the Messiah.

So there we are, the Old Testament in a nutshell, about as condensed as you can get. They are more often called the Hebrew Scriptures these days, the story of the Hebrew people, their beliefs, their struggles and their growing understanding that the God they followed was not just the God of their tribe, not just the God of their region, but the only God, the one God, whose name, as was revealed to Moses, as “I am that I am”, Yahweh, I am Being. This is the God of life, the One God, in whom we live and move and have our being. <>

## **INTERPRETING AND EXPLAINING TRANSCENDENCE: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO THE BEYOND** edited by Robert A. Yelle and Jenny Ponzio [Religion and Reason, De Gruyter, 9783110688221]

In this volume, an interdisciplinary group of scholars uses history, sociology, anthropology, and semiotics to approach Transcendence as a human phenomenon, and shows the unavoidability of thinking with and through the Beyond. Religious experience has often been defined as an encounter with a transcendent God. Yet humans arguably have always tried to get outside or beyond themselves and society. The drive

to exceed some limit or condition of finitude is an enduring aspect of culture, even in a "disenchanted" society that may have cut off most paths of access to the Beyond. The contributors to this volume demonstrate the humanity of Transcendence in various ways: as an effort to get beyond our crass physical materiality; as spiritual entrepreneurship; as the ecstasy of rituals of possession; and as a literary, aesthetic, and semiotic event. These efforts build from a shared conviction that Transcendence is thoroughly human, and accordingly avoid purely confessional and parochial approaches while taking seriously the various claims and behavioral expressions of traditions in which Transcendence has been understood in theological terms.

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## Introduction: How to talk about Transcendence

### Rationale for this volume

Why another volume on Transcendence? Hasn't the term been abused and, potentially, rendered useless for a study of religion that aspires to be anthropocentric and properly scientific? Indeed, a volume such as this one bears a special responsibility to give an account of itself, at a time when the study of religion appears to many close to reaching its aim of becoming empirical, or at least critical. Neither those approaches based on the natural and social sciences, nor those that may be grouped loosely under the rubric of "critical theory," would appear to have much use for the category of Transcendence, which smacks of antiquated, crypto-theological God talk. More than a century after Nietzsche declared the "death of God," and demonstrated (again) the all-too-human origins of that which we call religion, it would appear indeed untimely (although not in a good sense) to return to speak again in such terms—would it not?

The gamble taken by this volume is that such skepticism regarding the category of Transcendence is mistaken. It is not only possible but necessary to recuperate this category for a properly anthropocentric study of religion and culture. Indeed, without some such category as Transcendence,

we declare that it would be impossible to account for the dimensions of human experience, expression, and behavior that are commonly labeled as religious. Far from being an antiquated and suspect category, Transcendence is arguably an enduring as well as urgent aspect of culture.

To be sure, the vast majority of discussions of Transcendence in the scholarly (as well as popular) literature do appear to restate the emic or confessional perspectives of particular theological systems. These generally do not attempt even to justify the use of the category with reference to any empirically observable phenomenon. Transcendence—paired with its standard complement, Immanence—is taken for granted as a descriptor for whatever is lofty, spiritual, or divine; as such, it is practically used as a synonym for the Christian (or at least biblical) God. This locates Transcendence as a near-synonym of the Holy or Sacred, which names what lies beyond and must be kept apart from the Profane, as in Rudolf Otto's (1959 [1917]: 40) concept of the numinous as "wholly other" (see also De Nys 2009: 17). The great historian of religion of the last generation, Mircea Eliade (1959: 11-12), argued that Transcendence was a human constant or at least a perennial possibility, as evidenced through the experience of a hierophany—a 'showing of the sacred'—that ruptures profane existence. Hence his naming of our species as *Homo religiosus*. As much as we would like to think of ourselves as fully secular or profane, we are, according to this view, never more than a few steps removed from an encounter with Transcendence. Eliade spoke frequently of peak experiences in religious traditions: e. g., of Hindu yoga as the quest for "immortality and freedom" (1969), meaning a transcendence of the ordinary limits of the human condition, especially of our limited lifespan. Eliade (1969: 326 — 30) viewed such experiences as parallels of shamanic techniques of 'ecstasy'—a term that means literally 'standing outside' one's self—as represented by magical flight. Going above or beyond—as in the case of the otherworldly journeys commonly reported by shamans and similar figures—is an obvious metaphor for (self-)transcendence.

An entire generation (or more) has passed since Eliade's day, and scholars of religion have grown increasingly skeptical of the idea that there may be any universals such as Transcendence that define a common human religious experience. Such approaches as Eliade's have been dismissed as phenomenological, crypto-theological, or at any rate insufficiently critical, and have largely been abandoned by more forward-looking theorists. And indeed, we offer a skeptical appraisal of such approaches below. However, after all the critiques have been addressed, we do not think that the category of Transcendence vanishes into nothingness. Like the smoke from the altar upon which a burnt offering ('olah) has been consumed, it rises into the air, marking a passage between the Here-and-Now and the Beyond (or Above). Something remains. The metaphor, which is based in the concrete world of materiality, points beyond itself to Something (or Somewhere) Else, and thereby figures a relation to something conceived or imagined as Transcendent. This remains true whether or not there is any God in heaven to receive such an offering. One of the shared convictions of the contributors to this volume—as different as their respective positions might be—is that Transcendence is above all a category of relation, rather than a thing-in-itself. There is no going back to the claim that Transcendence (or the Sacred, or God) is *sui generis*, utterly unique and incomparable. The very definition of Transcendence in relational terms, as for example the opposite of the Immanent, underscores this interdependence. Transcendence is always figurative, never realized or actual. Its full realization would even be a disappointment, since part of what Charles Taylor calls the "fullness" of Transcendence (see below) is the tang or sting of its absence in the Here-and-Now.

The God of monotheism has been identified as the paragon of the most radical form of Transcendence. This is the God of miracles, and of divine commands, who may be approached only on a mountaintop, and only by Moses, under pain of death. Iconoclasm, or the prohibition against the representation of the divine, may be partly a corollary of God's Transcendence. Even speaking His proper name became taboo. However, this happened gradually, given the traces of anthropomorphism that remain in the Bible. Furthermore, the ban on representation, or at least on relation, cannot be total. Otherwise God would be purely a *deus absconditus* or 'hidden god,' and there would be no further story to tell. Even when Transcendence is defined in purely negative terms—as in the Upanisadic refrain concerning Brahman, which is described as "neither this nor that" (*neti, neti*)—it retains some relation to the world. The same is true of the Buddhist equivalent, *nirvana*. We are in the domain of apophatic mysticism, as in the case of Pseudo-Dionysius (discussed briefly by Gustavo Benavides in his contribution), as well as, potentially, of the Hebrew Bible when describing the same God much earlier.

Etymology is far from diapositive. However, in this case it can help to reinforce the point.

'Transcendence' is a word with a long history, which is used today in many contexts and with many meanings. Originally from a Latin root, *trans-* + *scandare*, meaning 'to climb above or beyond,' the word has been applied far beyond its original etymological context and usages (see Ugo Volli's essay in this volume). O'Rourke (2010: 2) notes that "The dictionary translates the Latin verb *transcendo* with a variety of related terms such as 'to climb,' 'pass,' 'cross,' 'step over,' 'overstep,' 'surmount,' 'excel,' 'exceed,' 'surpass.' Basic to its meaning are the notions of 'crossing over' or 'going beyond' [...]."

'Transcendence' is used in many ways, and with many shades of meaning, in the present volume. As a first attempt at definition, however, we may note here that what most of these meanings share is the gesture or movement of 'going beyond' some limitation, definite border, or condition of finitude. In this most general and abstract sense, Transcendence plays a structural role in many systems, as figuring what exceeds such limit, border, or finite condition (and which therefore may be limitless or infinite). The gesture of stepping beyond or outside characterizes prophetic critique, holy ground, or the desert that the Israelites crossed during the Exodus. Although many of its meanings are hardly religious, Transcendence appears to be bound closely with certain characteristically 'religious' ideas: the idea of the Infinite, of a High God (or *deus absconditus*), of immortality, of the ineffable: the list goes on and on. In- deed, without such a category, it would be difficult if not impossible to imagine religion at all.

As one of us pleaded earlier, it is high time we scholars of religion reckoned again with Transcendence, including the irruptive or antinomian aspects of religion:

[T]he data of religious studies is replete with an almost infinite set of exceptional occurrences, ruptures, outbursts, and deviations. Religion includes not only the institutions that are part of and reinforce the broader social order, but also individual and collective acts that protest, dissent from, or attack that order. [...] Indeed, the history of religions could be written in terms of such acts of transgression: the starving Buddha, crucified Christ, paralyzed Socrates (possessed by his *daimon*); Tantric libertines, orgiastic rites, Bacchantes, the self-mutilated devotees of Cybele, the bloody sacrifice of the *taurobolium*; various movements of iconoclasm (Egyptian [Akhenaten], Jewish, Islamic, Byzantine, Protestant); a host of millennial and apocalyptic movements; festivals such as Carnival, etc. (Yelle 2010: 193-19; see also Yelle 2019: 13)

The foregoing observations suggest the need to take seriously the category of Transcendence as a rubric for cross-cultural analysis, not only of religion but of society more broadly. Recognizing this need, the contributors to this volume have engaged in an interdisciplinary and exploratory approach to

Transcendence and applied a variety of sociological, semiotic, historical, anthropological, and philosophical methods. The following is a true experiment in the sense that no claim of final success nor completeness is implied. Rather the idea has been to review some of the numerous notions and phenomena that have been gathered under the rubric of Transcendence with the goal of understanding these a little better. In the course of this effort, various new groupings, some of them perhaps quite unexpected, are tried out, as are different terminological approaches that may, in the future, eventually contribute to a more adequate metalanguage for Transcendence. All of these efforts build from a common acknowledgment that Transcendence is a human phenomenon, and accordingly reject purely confessional and parochial approaches while taking seriously the various claims and behavioral expressions of traditions in which Transcendence may have been understood in theological terms.

### This volume

"Going above or beyond" (something, but what, precisely?) is, as noted above, a common denominator of the various uses of Transcendence in this volume. But if we think we know already where this "Great Chain of Being" ends—with the beatific vision of God, as depicted at the end of Dante's *Commedia*—where, precisely, does it begin? In the longest chapter of this volume, Gustavo Benavides offers a sweeping account of Transcendence that connects this phenomenon to the material and biological bases of human development. Benavides traces the various ways in which Transcendence is anchored in the very physiology of the human condition—from chewing, ruminating, digesting, cooking, and otherwise laboring and waiting, as well as growing, preparing, and processing our food (also internally)—all of which enabled the emergence of biologically modern *Homo sapiens* as opposed to our more ape-like ancestors. Unlike other hominids, whose physiology condemns them to an almost ceaseless quest for sustenance, *Homo sapiens* evolved beyond such need, which is nevertheless always present in the form of a fleshly substratum of eating and excreting. Perfecting a jujitsu move pioneered by Nietzsche in his *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887), Benavides illustrates how genealogical connections bind us inexorably to our materiality, which we attempt to surpass and overcome. With tremendous erudition, he narrates a guided tour of the history of religions across time and space, showing in case after case how what we call Transcendence is best understood as an attempt to escape the limits of the human condition, including labor and scarcity; and how, in any society, this role is assigned to or usurped by a particular category of religious specialists who resemble or are even identical with the nobles or socioeconomic elite. The human condition is, then, stratified, as the number of individuals who can raise themselves above the mud to any significant height is always only a fraction of the whole: a fact that leads to resentment, as well as to emulation and the aspiration to share in such Transcendence. The dialectic between Transcendence and Immanence is an embodied one, as Benavides reveals, extending Marx's critique of capital and dialectical materialism in a manner that suggests a radically new perspective on religion.

Seth Abrutyn attempts to identify more precisely how Transcendence emerged during the Axial Age. Key to this development were the centralization of power, urbanization, and the rise of entrepreneurship, which enabled a relatively robust institutional differentiation of religion from more embedded and local arrangements, and which contributed ultimately to the birth of several major religions, including ancient Israelite monotheism. As Abrutyn argues, the rise of something like a concept of Transcendence during what has been called the "Axial Age" was dependent on the prior emergence, not only of larger states or imperial formations, but also of a class of spiritual entrepreneurs that arose in direct and critical response to such polities. The prophetic tradition in ancient Israelite religion is a

key example for such a sociology of religion. Broadening his analysis to other instances of reaction to the rise of kingdoms and empires, Abrutyn suggests that Transcendence may in some instances be understood as a corollary of the progressively more centralized yet internally complex organization of ancient civilizations.

Our next chapters delve into greater detail concerning two Axial traditions: namely, ancient Israelite religion and Buddhism. Before turning to the Hebrew Bible, Ugo Volli surveys the historical development of the usage of 'Transcendence' that is common today, tracing this primarily to Plato and the Neo-Platonists, as well as to medieval Christian theologians. Although this usage may not map onto ancient Israelite religion, Volli identifies some analogues in that tradition, for example the progressively developing idea of God's separateness, which was closely connected with His inapproachability, unnameability, and omnipotence. But the Hebrew God is not the ineffable and abstract One of Plotinus; He engages with His people, who in turn argue with Him. The personal, and relational, aspect of divinity continues into later Judaism. Volli stresses that the radically transcendent God of the Neo-Platonists or of later Christian theologians is not the God of the Hebrew Bible, with whom humans, including Abraham, are seen to quarrel, bargain, contract, etc.

Martin Lehnert shows how Buddhist philosophers affirmed the relationality of all thought, the identity-within-difference expressed in the Perfection of Wisdom sutras and Madhyamaka philosophy. Lehnert relies on Niklas Luhmann, in whom he finds a key to interpret the distinction between nirvana (the Ultimate) and samsara (the mundane round of rebirth). This distinction is coeval with the founding of Buddhism, but the Mahayana philosophers radicalized it by arguing that nirvana and samsara were, in fact, one and the same. They relativized absolutely everything, including nirvana itself, in the name of bringing liberation down to earth (and thus within reach). The paradoxical formulations of this stage of Buddhist thought illustrate the ultimately recursive nature of all such figurations of Transcendence, which must be depicted, if at all, through and in terms of particular signs, which are necessarily limited, unlike the Ultimate itself.

Katharina Wilkens focuses on the rituals of spirit possession and exorcism in the kibuki tradition of Madagascar, an African island that is predominantly Muslim. Borrowing Thomas Luckmann's idea of "great transcendences" such as ecstatic experiences, she connects these with the sphere of ritual, in which a special place and time is marked, in the case of kibuki, by female performers who manifest an entirely different, and divine, personality. As the possessed person learns to channel and control this spirit through the ritual performance, her feat of role-playing illustrates the close connection of religion—of ecstasy and effervescence—with imagination. Transcendence may be just this capacity to live within the liminal, the "as if."

The next several chapters focus on Transcendence as a semiotic phenomenon. Affirming a fundamental link between Transcendence and semiosis, Massimo Leone strips signification down to its bare bones. Offering, à la Malevich, a "Suprematist" semiotics abstracted from all material considerations and referring only to the processes of semiosis (and abstraction) themselves—namely, to Transcendence, Intransigence, Transparency, Transit, etc., all the way back to Tradition, which serves as the necessary foundation for all efforts at further elaboration, as well as for escape or exit—Leone traces the manner in which religion performs a series of translations between this world and the next, between human and divine.

Volkhard Krech develops Charles S. Peirce's account of semiosis as a tripartite relationship among an object, a representamen (or sign), and an interpretant. He elaborates Peirce's notion of 'thirdness' in a systematic manner and applies this to the Apostles' Creed and the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Krech's argument is built also on the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann's argument that Transcendence becomes accessible precisely when the distinction between Transcendence and Immanence 're-enters' on the side of Immanence, i.e. on our side of the veil, such that it can be made present through visible forms of signification and institutionalization (on re-entry.) Krech develops several metaphysical implications of Peirce's own thought while demonstrating the humanity of religious conceptions of divine Transcendence, which illustrate features that are basic to all forms of communication.

Jenny Ponzo focuses on the transformation and translation of older Catholic modes of Transcendence in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, which emphasized the idea of *aggiornamento* as a means of being up-to-date in the transmission of church teachings. Part of the mandate of the modern Roman Catholic Church was to open up to the everyday, to express in vernacular and lay terms what had formerly been veiled by the mysteries of the Latin language. Now Transcendence can be found even in ostensibly 'secular' genres of literature, such as Italian novels. In the case of some authors of fictional novels this translated to innovative and even heterodox ways of expressing traditional theological ideas of Transcendence, such as salvation, which were earlier conveyed in hagiographic narratives. Ponzo focuses attention on a novel by Dante Troisi in which three brothers attempt to hasten the apocalypse and Parousia through transgressive actions. The idea of a fulfillment, indeed a redemption of time, is a trope that connects religious with secular narratives.

Our biological nature, which has enabled us to walk upright, and granted us larger brains than our hominid ancestors, has already separated us from our evolutionary past. In cities, beginning with the rise of the great urban centers in the ancient world, we found, perhaps for the first time, the ability to lose ourselves, to become (relatively) anonymous. The first wave of urbanization was perhaps the material condition for religious entrepreneurs and prophets; but also for those who, like the Buddha, chose to depart from the world entirely. When too much togetherness brings us down, we depart to seek isolation and solitude. But this may leave us thirsting again for those moments of communion, or collective effervescence, when we once more lose ourselves, at least temporarily, in the crowd. Even and especially once material needs are satisfied, the products of imagination—literature, art, and (of course) religion—illustrate the desire to exceed our humdrum existence or the limits of the individual lifespan. Human beings may be limited, but they seek to extend or exceed these limits; this indeed may be the function of religion, to deliver inaccessible goods such as salvation, which is often imagined precisely as a form of immortality. To be human means to aspire to be divine: in other words, to wish to be transcendent. <>

## **MULTIPLITISM: SET THEORY AND SOCIOLOGY by Eliran Bar-El [Palgrave Macmillan, 9783030870515]**

This book presents a set theoretical approach to sociological research. It performs this presentation by revisiting existing sociological approaches and discussing their limitations, before suggesting an alternative. While the existing canonical approaches of Positivism, Conflictualism

and Pragmatism are based on biology, history and physics, respectively, the set theoretical approach is based on mathematics. Utilising its philosophical exploration delineated by Alain Badiou, the book further translates his work into the field of social science. The result of this translation is termed Multiplritism, which evades the limiting contradictions of existing approaches. Drawing on the mathematical notion of 'set' and relating it to recent sociological turns such as the relational and the ontological, the book proposes a scale-relativity through which researcher (as subject) and researched (as object) are integrated. This dialectical approach diagonally cuts across the analytic/continental divide by combining science (and formalism) with critique (and values), thus resolving common conceptual and methodological issues such as the qualitative/quantitative, subjective/objective and universal/particular divides.

## Reviews

"Deploying the work of Badiou and Greimas, Bar-El advances a new approach to the reconciliation of objective and subjective orientations in social scientific enquiry. This is an important contribution to the resolution of an ongoing problem." - **Derek Robbins**, Emeritus Professor, University of East London, UK and author of *The Bourdieu Paradigm* (2019).

"*Multiplritism* is an important intervention into contemporary sociological theory. I see it as contributing to the development of a new paradigm. We will need to see more scholarship in this area -- scholarship that opens sociology up to other perspectives such as this one -- in the coming years if sociology is to remain relevant." --**Duane Rousselle**, Professor, School of Advanced Studies, University of Tyumen, Russia

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## Excerpt:

With each epoch-making discovery, even in the sphere of natural science, materialism has to change its form. ~ Friedrich Engels, 1886

At the very end of the nineteenth century, soon before his death, French sociologist Gabriel Tarde opened his book *The Social Laws* with an intriguing reflection. According to him, when the first herdsmen looked up at the sky and wondered upon the stars' movements and positions, the idea that all that vastness and complexity could be explained with a small number of laws—nowadays called astronomy—would have seemed to them as utter farcical. Tarde felt that his fellowmen treated the



social world, no less complex or irregular than the natural world, with the same herdsman-bewilderment that precluded any rational attempt to generalise sociological laws.

From Tarde's perspective, it seems that we have not made much progress. Many of today's sociologists and socially informed individuals still deny that the social world can be explained by a small number of laws; 'It's just too complex', the postmodern-herdsmen would say. Alternatively, opposing such common defeatist tendency this short and trans-disciplinary book is based on a simple affirmation: Georg Cantor's invention (also from the late nineteenth century), his mathematical 'transfinite' revolution of the pure multiple and its very few laws, was an epoch-making discovery after which materialist sociology must change its form.

Admittedly, this affirmation is far from being self-evident. Other inventions compete over the status of 'epoch-making'; chief among them are physical quantum mechanics and neuro-biological theories of the mind. While prominent scholars such as Slavoj Žižek and Adrian Johnston opted for these theories, respectively, I decide to follow philosopher Alain Badiou in opting for the mathematical set theory and to consider it as the proper ground for current materialist scientific thought. The underlying reason is that mathematics has the highest level of abstraction, making it the basis for all other more concrete sciences such as physics, biology and, indeed, sociology.

Two immediate (elitist) objections could be raised here: firstly, that mathematics has nothing to do with 'matter' (i.e. against grounding materialism on the most abstract mathematics); and secondly, that mathematics has nothing to do with 'the social' (i.e. against drawing social and political conclusions from mathematics). As for the former, the response is empirical. Some argue that materialism—thinking reality at the level of vulgar, robust 'matter'—should be based on the concrete, and what can be more concrete than physics? However, paradoxically, it is precisely the current advent in the sub-atomic study of quantum physics that facilitates the most effective 'deconstruction' of matter, without any linguistic sophistries. 'Matter' today is not raw and tangible as we used to think. Rather, it turns out to be formalistic, compositional and, hence, mathematical.

As for the second objection, regarding drawing real-world conclusions from mathematics, the response is decisional. Once we see that any description of reality essentially rests on an axiomatic decision rather than on any empirically or linguistically given, the question becomes how to make such a decision most consistently with the given? This question is all the more burning in light of Susan Buck-Morss' claim (from her 2011 lecture on Communist Ethics):

Today's philosophically naïve social sciences purport to be objective as they splinter reality into self-referential, academic disciplines that argue from present-day 'givens' as a quasi-natural base (rather than dynamic, unstable structures that depend on human action). Both approaches—thought without empirical understanding and empirical understanding without thought, without critical reflection—are extremely susceptible to reification.

Here, I argue, it is only the mathematical rigour itself that can guide us all the way from the abstractness of concepts to the concreteness of things, and actually reveal that, as put by Badiou, the concrete is more abstract than the abstract. As he explained in his 1988 magnum opus *Being and Event*: "We must always bear in mind that the ontological foundations can never be disclosed by subsequent hypotheses derived from empirical material, but that they are always "there" already, even when that empirical

material simply gets collected'. Therefore, this book is about the consequences of deciding upon set theory, and mathematics more broadly to be the epoch-making discovery that re-forms the materialist thinking of reality and society.

In doing so, this book sets out against both contemporary idealist tendencies: the religious infinity of God on the one hand, and the capitalist, secular infinity of Money on the other hand. These two tendencies are the most prevalent orientations to social life, shared worldwide by professionals and laypersons alike. What they share is the defeatist approach to real, actual and material infinity. Believing that infinity can be either religious or secular keeps thought idealist and prohibits it from really, actively, thinking the infinite. It is also why we experience the contemporary hegemony of cultural relativism, by which any kind of absolutism immediately sounds oppressive. Contrarily, a materialist thought that begins with an absolute decision on what matters, seems like the proper place from which to launch our inquiry into a new approach to sociology; one that is all about pure multiplicity in its irreducibility to any One. \*\*\*

## The four approaches to sociology

	Positivism	Conflictualism	Pragmatism	Multiplicitism
Main thinkers	Martineau, Spencer, Saint-Simone, Comte, Durkheim	Marx, Weber, Deleuze, Simmel	James, Dewey, Cooley, Mead, Goffman,	Bourdieu, Zizek, Latour
Sociological imagination	Positive: society as organic body striving for homeostasis	Negative: society as battle-ring wherein different groups struggling over (im/material) resources	Society as stage and there is no society as such beyond symbolic construction and interpretation	Society as multiple multiplicity (of multiples), a set with parts and subsets with no set of all sets
Level of analysis Focus of interest	Macro Universal functional patterns	Macro Universal, social and structural relations	Micro Particular interactions and encounters	Scale-relativity Topological relations, within and between subsets: between empty set and power set, infinite set and generic set
Main research question	For what? What is the social function? Is the phenomenon functional or dysfunctional for society?	For whom? Qui bono? Which groups benefit?	How does it work? What is the performance, stage, audience etc.	Part of what? What are the relations of inclusion and belonging (presentation and re-presentation) between the subsets of the set?
Conception of history and change	History is a natural evolutionary process; change is to be avoided for it destabilises the social body	History is a product of inter-groups struggles; change is affirmative and imperative	No real universal history; change is context-dependent	History is a relative transformation of count-as-One of multiples; change is either regular or singular
Methodology	Dualist, deductive (statistics)	Triadic, historical materialism	Dualist, inductive (interviews)	Quadruple, retroductive (set and topos theory)

**Introduction and Retroduction: The Logic of the Social** explores the current formation of modern science and the relations between its various disciplines. It focuses on sociology and mathematics and explains how these disciplines were developed into opposing positions: the former being considered as least scientific, while the latter is considered its pinnacle. However, a closer look reveals that this tension between science and social science is redoubled from within sociology itself, in the form of methodological divides such as the (in)famous qualitative (inductive logic) and quantitative (deductive logic). Retroduction is a method of conceptualising which requires the researcher to identify the circumstances without which something (the concept) cannot exist. Used in conjunction, these forms of inference can lead to the formation of a new conceptual framework or theory. Retroduction is the kind of reasoning involved in discovery and invention. We could not get along without it. The Syllogistic Model: In a retroduction the minor premise is an OBSERVATION, usually of a surprising fact, i.e. something that catches our attention and demands an explanation. It is here that retroductive logic mediates the tensed relations between sociology (or words) and mathematics (or numbers) demonstrating the multiple as the shared, intuitive basis for both.

**The Antinomies of the Social: Self-reference, Identity and Society** identifies the main theme that has distinguished natural science from social science, namely self-reference. It shows how self-reference has been a foundational scientific antinomy, and how the notion of 'identity' was used to resolve it. Nonetheless, in social science the notion of identity only aggravated the (self-referential) problem. Thus, a new way of sociological thinking is needed, one that accommodates the fact that every individual, including scientists, belong to and interact with the societies they study.

**Problems Abound: Multiplicities—Beyond the One and the Many** expands on how sociology's existing ways of dealing with self-reference have varied, depending on the paradigm used. It claims that although innovative ways were developed to deal with self-reference, problems remain. The reason for this is shown to be a conceptual misuse of 'multiplicity'. Since existing sociological paradigms are based on other sciences, their utilisation of multiplicities is still confined to the restricting duality of the One and the Many (ones). The mathematical notion of 'set', as pure multiple (of multiples), illuminates a new avenue for research, which goes beyond both One and Many.

**1 → 2: From Science to Social Science—Positivism** In order to reach the proposed fourth approach, this chapter begins the (ordinal and cardinal) count at the beginning of social science, as an offshoot of natural science. It shows that this beginning of social science is found in the paradigm of Positivism. The chapter details how Positivism drew from biology and relied heavily on its functionalist-organist nature, maintained through boundary-work. Philosophically, such a base for sociology is dualistic and dichotomist and counters the very multiple essence of the social.

**2 ^ 3: From Kant to Hegel—Conflictualism** follows the positivist, biological and dualistic basis of sociology, this chapter explores the reactions against it from the second sociological paradigm of Conflictualism. Although its beginning with Marx preceded Positivism, it was only linked to sociology as a reaction against the latter and an attempt to revive the negative, critical reasoning of social science. Unlike Positivism's relation with Kantian philosophy and biological science, the diverse conflictual paradigm is based on history and therefore appeals to Hegel. While Marx is the most identified with this

paradigm, he is accompanied by surprising thinkers such as French structuralists given their shared adherence to triadic logic.

**3 ^ 2: American Interlude—From James (Back) to Kant: Pragmatism** looks at what was happening sociologically in the US rather than in Europe. It shows how the American tendency in the early twentieth century was to distance itself from both positive-functional and negative-conflictual paradigms and to establish its own. Found in the form of Pragmatism, this third paradigm was novel in its micro- perspective, which refreshingly took on the old battle of previous macro-paradigms. The chapter shows that the rise of Pragmatism was, dialectically, a return to the dualistic logic of the Two, based this time on physics instead of biology. While this third paradigm developed novel methodologies such as symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology, it left behind the macro-ontological questions regarding society at large.

**3 ^ 4: From Hegel to Badiou—Ontology of the Void** articulates the contours of a fourth approach to sociology, Multiplritism. In doing so, it traces the shift from Hegelian and Marxist, but also Structuralist triadism, to the quadruple or squared logic of Badiou. The chapter explains how Badiou's translation of the mathematical set theory includes all other scientific bases such as those of previous sociological paradigms, and grounds a new direction to sociology of multiplicities based on the notion of the void. This evasion of the One (and the other, Two), as anti-social foundation that pervades previous social paradigms and approaches, leads to the new materialist, scientific and critical thinking of the social.

**Four Examples of Squared Analysis** turns to the practical aspects of the fourth approach of Multiplritism, by examining the Greimasian Semiotic Square as a conceptual and methodological tool of constructing infinities around a void. This tool's application is exemplified with regard to four scientific disciplines: philosophy, mathematics, epistemology and sociology. Their examination reveals that, counter-intuitively, a materialist thought of the social must go through a specific, infinitesimal abstraction in order to unearth its dialectical, open-ended and multiple natures.

**Societies, Multiplicities, Sets: From Typology to Topology** traces the attempts made in recent decades to incorporate mathematical thinking into sociology. Anticipating Multiplritism, social thinkers such as Pierre Bourdieu and Annemarie Mol have tried, with varying levels of success, to apply spatial and relational mathematical concepts to sociological and anthropological inquiries. While contributing much to the advance of social theory beyond dualisms such as structure and subject their attempts nonetheless remain partial. They do not include the broader, ontological and mathematical contexts of these concepts, thus leading to further inconsistencies. The chapter argues that incorporating mathematics means drawing ontological consequences for the very being, and, distinctively, the appearance of social phenomena. It suggests a topological thinking, now grounded on mathematical ontology of multiplicities, in order to transcend the linguistic limitation and materialistically think the infinitely diverse spaces, positions and relations of the social.

**Multiplritism and the Singular** concludes the several means and ends of Multiplritism by comparing it with the existing approaches to sociological research. Paradoxically, it locates the aim of Multiplritism in the notion of the singular, which stands outside the universal-particular dualist division. The chapter argues that only an ontological conception of multiplicities can include the empty-place of a 'generic' as singular, indiscernible set by constructible representational mechanisms such as the dominant language.

It shows that the act of including the singular unifies theory and practice, and in doing so reconciles the observer, objective position of the scientific researcher with the participant, subjective and critical position of the researched. \*\*\*

In his famous lecture from 1918, *Science as a Vocation*, Weber rhetorically raised the following question: ‘how should a devoted Catholic, on the one hand, and a Freemason, on the other, in a course on the forms of church and state or on religious history ever be brought to evaluate these subjects alike?’ His answer was, ‘this is out of the question’. On this point I differ from Weber, and insist that through the dialectical—not rhetorical—way delineated thus far, all the way to the Four, social scientists are no longer obligated to assume that some values are beyond factual change.

Only through a shared subtraction of such values and facts, stemming from every particular perspective whatsoever, will it ever be possible to share experiences with regard to our common existence founded on the void. If both the Catholic and the Freemason were to subtract their own systems of thought, subtracting their self with the knowledge and language of the represented situation, they were to find, as scientists sometimes do, the generic of the situation which is also its truth. This way the particular questions themselves are inverted to the universal and absolute extent that they are related to all.

Multiplritism is a retroductive way to explore and change the count-as-one of every phenomenon by moving from its appearance to its being. To fully appreciate this way, we must clarify the road taken from the inception of sociology through its pendulum movement between being and appearance. Prior sociological approaches, namely the Positivist, Conflictualist and Pragmatist, rely on linguistic definitions, such as the self, class, structure or society. In this they remain confined to the dominant knowledge/power which forbids the production of new knowledge and novel hypotheses. This is why they employ deductive or inductive logics, rather than retroductive. Based on their respective philosophies and scientific disciplines, they inherited the formers’ antinomies such as dualist separation on the one hand and triadic negativity on the other.

Unlike Positivism and Pragmatism that identify with Kant’s ontological separationist and correlational thesis, and unlike the Marxist inverted fidelity to Hegel, the Fourth approach of Multiplritism is based on the mathematical philosophy of Alain Badiou, and in that allows for transitional sociology of multi-scaled compositions or countings of any phenomenon. Thus, it merges individual, group and societal levels of analysis, with diverse methodologies organised along the semiotic square of the Four. This approach does not rely, as the prior ones do, on biology, history or physics, but on mathematics and specifically set theory and topology, which Badiou translated to philosophy.

Consequently, I proposed to go further in this translation from philosophy to social science and sociology. In accordance with Badiou’s philosophical system, I focused on one truth-procedure, the scientific, in addition to the other three of love, art and politics. This inquiry concentrated in the a-mystical and non-religious relations between the sciences and their objects and disciplines, as well as the implications on social sciences in general and specifically for sociology.

The social sciences have been torn by the dualistic, Kantian and religious tendency of the German philosopher Wilhelm Windelband. His distinction between the nomothetic and universal law and the particular or idiosyncratic case has laid the foundations for the qualitative versus quantitative quarrel, which still persists today. Opting for the general side of the law, early sociologists adopted a functional

and positivist perspective of society and the social. But to express the multiplicity of the social this dual insufficiently remains within the confining framework of the Two. Thus Marxism and Structuralism challenged this form of thought, and replaced it with their use of triadic logic. Pragmatism, with its withdrawal from the formers' universality and an emphasised empiricist and particularistic approach, did not bring the general question of society to its end.

The suggested approach of the Four differs dramatically from its predecessors in its fidelity to actual infinity, the being-multiple as such. Its anchoring point is the common ground for all beings: if they are, they are multiples. It is thus claimed that universality (as validity) and particularity (as taking-sides) are not mutually exclusive, on the contrary: only from an engaged and subtractive position can one arrive at a universal truth of the situation. Responding to all four core issues in the heart of social reason, this fourth approach, or approach of the Four as in quadruple dialectic, envisions society as a multiple multiplicity, a set with subsets and elements. The sociological imagination in Multiplritism is that of connections and unions composing reality as such, which makes any reality social. The level of analysis is multi-scaled, and encompasses both macro- and micro-levels. Scale-relative and multi-dimensional, any society is in becoming as an infinite world, with, on the one hand, an internal order of appearance and relations between its objects (sets) and things (subsets), and on the other an external relation of belonging to something else, another (set as) situation, world, or universe.

These relations are the focus of interest, operative in localising, ordering and identifying counted subsets. As a set, the relations in every society are between the subsets and their social order, between the empty set and the power set and between the generic set and the infinite. The main question for analysis is the relations of belonging and inclusion, presentation and re-presentation, between the elements and the subsets. Laws of repetition, appearance and construction must be traced for any phenomenon, to explore its internal and external variations. This should be accomplished through relational approximations and distanciations, differences and similarities, along diversely changing borderings.

The summation of these sociological approaches, questions and parameters, as explained thus far, is given in Table 10.1. It shows that the common three approaches are based on entities or identities, and exclude either the logic of appearance or the logic of being. In the Fourth paradigm, the paradigmatic question regarding the studied phenomenon is what is it a part of? This is always what lies in front of set-oriented researcher. For him or her, history is a relative change to a world and a situation. Accordingly, change is in-itself beyond good and evil, and could be regular as change in location within the same situational order, or, as in singular change which exposes the void of the situation—a change of the law and order of world itself.

Badiou, in his *Being and Event* (2005), discusses rigorously the possibility of translating set theory to philosophy. Every axiom of the theory has an immediate analogy in ontology, the study of being-as-being. In this work he explains further the consistent ontology of set theory and its formulated axioms. Ontology is important for it enables sociologists to engage more productively with other scientific disciplines and also to enrich its own thinking with regard to methodological consistency of social beings. Yet, this consistency is built and constructed, not given. It is actually counted and re-counted, and then accounted (for), often by policing and more rarely by forcing. This re/count is internally split because:

In set-theoretic ontology, the determination of the One (this multiple, such that it can unequivocally receive a proper name) is strictly immanent, because a set is identified by its elements, by the sets that belong to it. Such is the foundational character of the sign of belonging,  $\in$ , which is the veritable index of being qua being. On the other hand, being-in, as general form of immanence (i.e. the modalities according to which one multiple can be said to 'in' another) is radically split:

1. There is the foundational relationship of belonging, which states, for example by writing  $e \in E$ , that the multiple  $e$  is an elementary constituent of the multiple  $E$ .
2. There is the derived relation of inclusion, which states, by writing  $A \subseteq E$ , that  $A$  is a part or a subset of  $E$ .

Between these two relations through which being-in is formalised there is a crucial disjunction, which is like the real of being qua being. The second in fact exceeds the first in an errant or immeasurable way. Because the power (the pure multiple-quantity) of the set of its parts surpasses in a properly unnamable way the power of the set of elements, which in effect constitutes the initial set itself as One. (2014, p. 55)

According to Badiou, this 'disjunction' is constitutive to any situation, be it political, scientific, economic, familial or technological. We find in this expositional activation of set theory, its ontologisation, a response to all four core issues relevant for social sciences: 'every element of a set is itself a set' (2005, p. 46). But this self-reference is only terminological relation. The real one is that of the event. These are events of self-presentation, and are thus rare moments of social action. The event occurs when being is presented and not re-presented by its appearance. As such, the event breaks the laws of representation. In science it may introduce a new theory whereas in politics a revolution; in both cases a new truth is forced onto the situation and affects all its inhabitants.

In Badiou's mathematical definition of the event ( $ex = \{x \in X, ex\}$ ), the response of this sociological approach to the problem of self-reference is clearly shown. For the event is a set which includes, or is composed of, itself and its site-elements. This process of forcing the situation to change through self-presentation amounts to the suspended breaking of the Axiom of Foundation, in order to impose another situational foundation, or minimally included and previously not included element. This is the operation of vanished-causality. The process of forcing (a generic set) is what creates novelty that was undetected prior to the event of research, an indiscernible part of the researched situation, as its unknown or repressed (and voided) Other. Also, by designating itself with a 'name', the event conditions being and calls its own existence and appearance in the world where it occurred (and dis-appeared with a trace). This is the existence of what will have taken place, as the event's own re-mark of the historical situation that will, according to its truth, have just been decided and transformed. As Badiou puts it in his *Mathematics of the Transcendental*, 'existence names exactly that which, ontologically, is not: a degree of being. Nor does this degree affect in any way the being of being. It is an index of its appearance (in a situation)' (2014, p. 166). Without the overconcretisation of the additive conventional methodologies, the nonobservables are revealed in the actual subtraction of any predicate of existing knowledge and language of the situation, while going through them point-by-point. Jason Barker elaborates on that disjunctive relationship, in a political framework, and claims that:

The dialectic [of algebra and topology] is the venue for submitting logic— since there is no One—to the test of concrete situations, or to de-totalisation. In the case of algebra first, the



requisite condition is one of ‘belonging’, or set membership, where  $e \in E$ . Here we encounter a universe structured by its elements. On the other hand, in the case of topology, the requisite condition is one of ‘inclusion’, where  $P \supset E$ . Here we encounter a universe structured by its subsets, or parts, such that what belongs to the subset will also belong to the initial set, thus:  $e \in P \supset e \in E$ . The insurmountable ‘paradox’ of set theory emerges from the precise point of non-correlation of the two universes, which in this case states there will always be an excess of subsets over elements. Cantor’s ‘heavenly’ discovery of multiple infinities means that there is no set of sets, no one universe within which all parts are parts can belong. (Barker, 2003, pp. 62–64)

It is in these conditions that the ambiguities of language should be analysed. This ‘excess’ of representation (of subsets, or part) is also immeasurable in infinite sets, and hence language or any symbolic mechanism reveals its limit point. Together with the axioms of the infinite, the empty and the power-set (full or definable), the knot of language and being (qua multiplicity) is dealt with in Zermelo’s Axiom of Separation. Generally, it states that ‘with regard to the multiple whose existence is affirmed, language has the power to discern a subset, or a part’ (Badiou, 2014, p. 85). This separation of existence in a given domain is ontological, for it exposes the (algebra of) set theoretical ontic to the topological. Language inserts differences, order and (some) coherence into situations, which are, ontologically in-themselves, indifferent inconsistent multiplicities. According to Badiou, ‘this is why it is so important to hold steadfastly to the multiple as such—the inconsistent composition of multiples-without-oneness—which identifies the singularity from within, in its strict actuality, stretching thought to the point at which there is no difference between difference and identity. A point where there is singularity because both difference and identity are indifferent to it’ (2005, p. 79). It is thus possible to bring together Durkheim and his rival Tarde and overcome their substantial rivalry (society as a body vs. a body as a society) by way of the generic as singular. In order to understand and undermine their rivalry, it is important to note the neo-Kantian background of Durkheim against Tarde’s Leibnizian one (Tarde, 2012). While Durkheim only treated ever-growing particulars and Tarde opted for singularities, what they both neglected is the actual possibility of universal singularity, ultimately excluding the void in their dualist or atomist reasoning.

First, let us claim with Badiou that ‘every universal is singular, or is a singularity. It is not of the order of being, but of the order of a sudden emergence’ (Badiou, 2005, pp. 144–145). Universal claims are rare these days precisely because of the rejection of the multiple as such. Unlike particularity, which is anything that can be discerned by knowledge and its descriptive, linguistic predicates, universality is ‘both what determines its own points as subjects-thoughts and the virtual recollection of these points’ (Badiou, 2009, p. 29). Universality refers to the entire elements of a set, to the entire field; but the set or field, in themselves, is singular. Hence, ‘universality is nothing other than the faithful construction of an infinite generic multiple’ (Badiou, 2005, p. 151).

The generic is that which Durkheim aspired to describe, and Tarde was all too familiar. As the singular is that which is subtracted from all describable means of the being-multiple, it is still sensible and operative in a situation. For example, while ‘the cultural traits of populations are particular, that which traverse these traits and deactivating every registered description, universally summons a thought-subject, is singular’ (Badiou, 2009, p. 28). This is how subtraction is operative in sociological reason. With the deactivation of ‘registered descriptions’ the remains are generic and the act of their re-construction is forcing it onto the situation and its encyclopaedic knowledge. In fact, this act of forcing realises the

universal singularity. This is the act in which a subject (-thought) bound up as part of the procedure radically modifies the topological being of every-thing around it. It is an event that changes the rules of appearance, the measure of identity and the evaluative functions operative in any social situation.

Akin to Goffman's changing definition of the situation and the set theoretical Axiom of Foundation, an eventual, singular change establishes a novel foundation to the situation with the insertion of non-existing elements, previously undefined from the objective perspective of the situation. An event, amorous, political but also scientific, thus suspends the situational known foundation and installs a new one instead, as 'maximal' element: the new body of the couple, society or theory. This way social theory can trace singularities and sustain the existential gap that tore sociology three-way with every separatist approach. In this sense Zizek posed the question of why count to four?

The Particular is always deficient and/or in excess with regard to its Universal: in excess, since it eludes the Universal; since the universal—in so far as it is 'abstract'—cannot encompass it; deficient, since—and this is the reverse of the same predicament—there is never enough of the Particular to 'fill out' the Universal frame. (1999, p. 43)

Following Hegel's triads but transgressing them with Lacan's Foursomes, it is possible to locate this gap within the thing-in-itself, not only between it and its phenomenological appearance. This means challenging Aristotle's identity principle and touching upon self-difference. By way of subtraction, the thing in-itself is exposed. No matter how much more information and data will be collected regarding it, the researcher will not break its conceptual walls of seclusion, as semantic and illocutionary actions. This is why, in effect, 'the point of subtraction is to reduce the overall complex structure to its antagonistic minimal difference' (Zizek, 2012, p. 33).

Sociology of the multiple aims at these singularities subtracted from any situation, which as such are constitutive of it. Along this line of questioning and reasoning, Thatcher's proclamation can be completed dialectically. While society as a whole may not exist, neither do any individuals nor families. Set theory reveals the crucially immanent and dialectical relationships regarding any appearance of some being in a situation: society, individuals or families. Any part of such sets is also a set, and there is no whole. But there is a hole, an empty set, a void which on its edge we find the minimal existence.

This mathematical thinking enables sociology to enrich its explications of multi-scaled phenomena, as it could be, through the investigated situation, included in many worlds. In Plotnitsky's words:

One might, accordingly, want to rethink the political and the spaces of the politics, or the politics (plural) of space, on the model, [that] defines any spatiality or ontology sociologically and hence when it comes to cultural spaces, politically by relations of a given space or ontology with other spaces or ontologies. At stake is a new, experimental onto-topology and thus, also, geo-topology, which defines the architecture of these relations, rather than only geo-geography, which conventionally maps these spaces, although such mappings, too, have their place in this geo-topology of culture. An intrinsic structure—set-theoretical or other, say, topological, as the number of holes in a given space—is then derived from this 'sociology'. (2012, pp. 357, 367)

Only by retroductively tracing the composition of any situation, along its homo- and isomorphisms, where action meets structure, could the relations of inclusion and belonging be fully explored. This process also leads to revealing the operations of measurements according to which decisions are taken in 'real-life'. It adds a solid theoretical basis for sociological research with ontological 'glue' for diverse

methods, thus turning their competition to cooperation. That is the role of this multiple ontological grounding provided by set theory and topos theory. Thus Plotnitsky concludes that:

The working slogan is ‘points come later’, that is, after the architecture of space is socio-logically defined via a topos of other spaces over a given space. From this viewpoint, rather than a given point’s point-like nature according to the conventional topology (which makes all points the same), it is the mathematical architecture that can be associated with a given point that defines it, which no longer makes all points the same. It is not unlike the situation in geography when the meaning of a physically spatial point depends on what kind of map (physical, economic, political, or other) or, closer to a topos, atlas of maps is associated with it. (ibid., p. 358)

Now, then, it is time to decide. Despite the scientific conventional wisdom according to which science is only about experiments and not decisions, if we choose not to decide on positions and possibilities, on axioms and presumptions, we simply let the decisions be made for us by the ideological configuration of (scientific) space to which we belong. That is what happens if social scientists become technicians of the social and nothing more than experts for politico-economical hire.

The a-subjective scientists are considered as separated from reality and their objects of study. Alas, the sociology of the multiple admits the dialectic of the ontological and not only the epistemological; in science it affirms with mathematics (not physics, biology or history) the foundations of set theory; in itself, it adopts a courageous position of the subtractive, in the continuous search and re-search for the undecided, the indiscernible, the unnameable and (hence) the generic of every investigated situation. Each of these is a dynamically and intrinsically comparative operation, including to itself with internal variation and inner-context. Multiplritism is both historically educated and synchronically motivated. It does confirm some parts (or rather, elements) of reality which are unknown in any given situation and are covered or represented, not counted and presented. It presents a sociological approach that is not fixed on the universal, as in the cases of Positivism and Conflictualism, but also not on the particular as with Pragmatism. Multiplritism is always attentive to its unobservable and multi-scaled surroundings, including empirical, theoretical and conceptual ones.

The suggested approach radicalises, not contradicts Positivism, in order for the latter to stretch its borders and include also the void of any real situation, making it detectable. Appealing also to the conflictual Marxism, ‘it’s remarkable that what will serve to sustain negation in the order of appearance is the first consequence of the transcendental operations, and in no sense represents an initial parameter. Negation, in the extended and ‘positive’ form of the existence of the reverse of a being, is a result’ (Badiou, 2005, pp. 214–5). This kind of borderless Positivism can be useful even for critical analysis, against the positivistic original institutional affiliation with the status-quo. Multiplritism haunts the rule of repetition and its reoccurring exceptional transgressions. It is precisely the relations between these two modes of sociability that lies at the centre of the de-totalised infinite social.

Whether statistics, interviews, newspapers, blogs, movies and TV shows, internet networks and so on—this question, in itself, does not matter. What matters is the singular aggregation of this or that multiple data which transforms it into the one-corpus, in the form of a meaningfully consistent and logical system such as the semiotic square. This operation first examines a certain antagonism along a quadruple matrix of positive and negative, universal and particular. If this system is able to include, and make part of every element of this or that situation, then it is evaluated as being true (and itself as part of forcing this truth).

That is, of course, until another universal singularity is found, forced and proved to be generic in including the previous one in its ever-growing comprehension of novel situations and their intelligent apprehensions. <>

## **PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE OBJECT AND HUMAN POSITIONING: HUMAN, NON-HUMAN AND POSTHUMAN** edited by Calley A. Hornbuckle, Jadwiga S. Smith, William S. Smith [Analecta Husserliana: The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research, Springer, 9783030664367]

This edited volume explores the intersections of the human, nonhuman, transhuman, and posthuman from a phenomenological perspective. Representing perspectives from several disciplines, these investigations take a closer look at the relationship between the phenomenology of life, creative Event: 'We must always bear in mind that the ontological foundations can never be disclosed by subsequent hypotheses derived from empirical material, but that they are always "there" already, even when that empirical material simply gets collected'. Therefore, this book is about the consequences of deciding upon set theory, and mathematics more broadly to be the epoch-making discovery that re-forms the materialist thinking of reality and society.

In doing so, this book sets out against both contemporary idealist tendencies: the religious infinity of God on the one hand, and the capitalist, secular infinity of Money on the other hand. These two tendencies are the most prevalent orientations to social life, shared worldwide by professionals and laypersons alike Introduction and Retroduction: The Logic of the Social explores the current formation of modern science and the relations between its various disciplines. It focuses on sociology and mathematics and explains how these disciplines were developed into opposing positions: the former being considered as least scientific, while the latter is considered its pinnacle. However, a closer look reveals that this tension between science and social science is redoubled from within sociology itself, in the form of methodological divides such as the (in)famous qualitative (inductive logic) and quantitative (deductive logic). It is here that retroductive logic mediates the tensed relations between sociology (or words) and mathematics (or numbers) demonstrating the multiple as the shared, intuitive basis for both.

What they share is the defeatist approach to real, actual and material infinity. Believing that infinity can be either religious or secular keeps thought idealist and prohibits it from really, actively, thinking the infinite. It is also why we experience the contemporary hegemony of cultural relativism, by which any kind of absolutism immediately sounds oppressive. Contrarily, a materialist thought that begins with an absolute decision on what matters, seems like the proper place from which to launch our inquiry into a new approach to sociology; one that is all about pure multiplicity in its irreducibility to any One. ontopoiesis, and otherness; technology and the human; art and the question of humanity; nonhumans, animals, and intentionality; and transhumanism. Ontological positioning of the human is reconsidered with regard to the nonhuman, transhuman, and posthuman within the cosmos. Further examination of the artificial and object in the lifeworld is also explored. This volume also pays tribute to Anna-Teresa

Tymieniecka and her methodical contributions to phenomenology. This text appeals to students and researchers of phenomenology worldwide.

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## Part I Homage to Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka:

### The Subject/Object Relationship According to the Phenomenology of Life of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka: Discovering the Metamorphic Logos of the Ontopoiesis of Life by Daniela Verducci

Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka did not limit herself to extending the field of phenomenological inquiry to the phenomenology of life. Her phenomenology of life opens a new horizon of meaning for facing the serious problems of our times, connected with the dis-communication between subject and object, such as the questions related to environmental sustainability and post-humanism. Practicing the phenomenology of life, A.-T. Tymieniecka discovered both, life as the objective interweaving between human condition and nature, and the auto-individualizing logos of life as the formative and propulsive force, which is intrinsic to becoming in all its forms. This logos is creative and po(i)etic, according to the terminology of Aristotle's *Poetics* (1996), or better, it is onto-poietic, because it gives rise to the creation-of-being, activating the dynamics of self-individualization of being itself at every level. In the perspective of life, the subject-object dualism appears recomposed, as we can phenomenologically show that there is a unique auto-individualizing logos/force, which leads the becoming in every its forms. The logos of life as sentient and metamorphic is different from the modern rationalistic logos, which, on the contrary, is fixed and extrinsic to life, limited to imposing reduced frameworks to cage the infinitely faceted fluidity of living. However, the logos of life is equally capable to weave that web of meaning that "saves" the new phenomena that appear before our eyes from the dispersion and senselessness to which they are condemned by postmodern deconstructionism and nihilism. Effectively, Tymieniecka, focusing the onto-poietic logos of life, was able to exhibit a real—not only logic—poietic continuity between the constructivism of natural life and the creative evolution of human life. But, despite having achieved such a metaphysical maturity of the logos, a further dualism between nature and super-nature challenged the phenomenology of life. At this point, the metamorphic quality of the logos of life played a decisive role, because it allowed the unique logos to vary its own form according to the vectors that support its enaction, be they the laws of physics, the animal instinct or man's creative imagination and will. It was precisely by assuming the human will as its new vehicle that the onto-poietic logos of life was able to advance from the vital/ onto-poietic round of significance into two new dominions of sense: that of the creative/spiritual and that of the sacred. Herefrom, the onto-poiesis of life opened to the transformative advance of the Great Metamorphosis, that completes life's meaning in a transition from temporal life to hyper-temporality, combining every residual dualism. The path of a New Enlightenment opens out before us and the metaphysical enterprise is once again within our grasp.

## Part II Transcendental Idealism: Investigation Continues

### Puzzles in Phenomenology by Lucian Delescu:

The challenge phenomenology must overcome is the integration of conscious intentional experiences within a scientific framework. In order to do that, two painfully entangled aspects must be clarified. The first is the epistemological aspect which is concerned with setting out a proper theoretical framework. The second is the ontological aspect and is concerned with the explanation of conscious intentional experiences. Ideally, one should begin with the ontological aspect. However, one becomes aware of conscious experiences when noticing the ontological implications of the "peculiar pattern of combination of the concepts, and truths which form the ideal unity of a particular science" (Husserl, 2001a, 2001b, 115). To be sure, higher-order propositions are not to be taken as sole hints to the

existence of consciousness. One is also right if arguing that consciousness can be inferred from the pattern of the simplest propositions such as “I am” or even from the pronoun “I.” In other words, consciousness is involved in generating propositions with lower and higher epistemic values and anything in between at the same time. This is to say that, in order to explain consciousness, it is required to set out the proper epistemic conditions. By that, I mean conditions for unraveling the ontological implications of lower and higher-order propositions beneath which runs the conscious stream. In the last decades, there was a lot a debate regarding this matter. The result is a growing number of phenomenologists attempting to explain consciousness from an emotivist perspective. By “emotivism,” a term first coined by A. J. Ayer, I mean the view according to which all mental activities arise at the intersection between senses and the external reality. The quest of emotivism is to realistically solve the problem of consciousness. But in doing away with cognitive processes, emotivism ends up from an ontological point of view by denying a fundamental feature of mind without accounting for sense-making (traditional emotivism) or by redefining it from a sense-interactivist perspective (phenomenological emotivism) which is the same. From an epistemological point of view, emotivism (re)commits itself to subjectivism which goes against its own realist claims. My claim is that reason is “the key feature of conscious life” (Husserl, 1970, 338). It is by explaining reasoning, no matter how difficult that might be, that we can begin to unravel the mystery of consciousness. In what follows, I deal with some differences between reason and emotion within phenomenology and argue for the need to reinstate reason as a key feature of consciousness.

### Part III Politics/Social Issues/Question of Universality

#### Brave New World: A Confinement Between Mythical and Behaviourist World-Views by Aydan Turanli

Progresses in computer science and biotechnology pave the way for the construction of developed robots and enhanced human beings. In the transitional epoch we live in, we talk about not only the possibility of universal Turing Machine in the near future, but also the possibility of enhanced and super-intelligent human beings. These thoughts, in turn, lead a discussion about how we are going to interact with non-human but “intelligent” machines on the one hand, and enhanced post-human beings on the other hand.

As is well known, these issues are also thoroughly discussed in science-fiction books and films. Isaac Asimov’s book *I Robot* and the film *Gattaca* are chief examples examining these issues. The first one primarily focuses on what kind of relations we will develop with non-human, but “intelligent” entities, the second one, on the other hand, concentrates on post-humans, perfect in health and appearance, with high IQ and long life-span, created through genetic engineering in the test tube. In the brave new world of the film *Gattaca*, there is the clash between biologically formed post-human beings, who are selected and reserved for superior jobs and naturally born human beings, who are assigned to carry out unqualified jobs.

These reflections on issues related to human, non-human and post-human of the future lead us to think about Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* because it is also a science-fiction novel referring to the problems, which will be created in the future through the developments in biotechnology. The book is, on the one hand, critical of modern societies through allegorical associations and on the other hand, it draws our attention to a new world, which would be created through the developments in technology in the future. One of the problems considered in the book is related to the interaction between, human

and post-human. The second problem is linked to the issue whether rational means are adequate to overcome clashes between different points of view, depending on different forms of life. In this article, I discuss these problems especially by focusing on the second problem within the context of *Brave New World* and *Island*.

As is well known, *Brave New World* is a futuristic novel, which describes a dystopian World State in the sixth century A.F (after Ford) in which genetic engineering and biotechnology are highly developed. Most of the human beings living in the state are born from human eggs; human eggs are treated by scientists and made clever, stupid, and average. There is a eugenically stratified caste-system of the society in which there are five divisions: Alphas are at the top, and then there are Betas, Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons. There is no family, there are no ancestors, and the primary motto of the World State is epitomized in three simple words: “Community, Identity and Stability.” The first one implies that people should be at peace with one another and serve the state. The second one is that everyone in one social group should be exactly like everyone else and should not try to be different, and thanks to the conditioning systems they have, they cannot be different. The third one, on the other hand, requires citizens in the World State to be content and do not try to change society in any way. Because “History is bunk,” there is no appeal to history, literature, art or even science. Hence, citizens of the World State are illiterate of the past cultures.

The principles of the State are inculcated into citizens by conditioning, which is a significant part of training. There is a wide-range of training methods, extending from sleep-teaching conditioning to even electro-shock conditioning.

On the other side of the coin, we see another part of the World State, in which there are savage Reservations isolated from the rest, surrounded by electric fences. Savages living there are at the bottom of the hierarchical caste system and there is no escape from a savage reservation. People, who are born there, have to die there. As they are different from genetically designed human beings, savages in the old world have ancestors. They keep their habits and customs such as marriage, religion, rituals, diseases, and wild animals.

The clash between the “civilized world” and the old world comes to the fore especially when John the Savage is taken to the civilized world and exhibited as if he is a cage-animal. The Savage’s emotionality, beliefs, traditions, and rituals are in discord with the pragmatist, utilitarian and behaviorist way of living of the inhabitants of the New World. The conflict between the two different world-views reaches its peak when Mustapha Mond explained to John the Savage the reasons why the civilized world is designed in the way it is. This disagreement ended with a tragedy. Is this inevitable?

Along with other novels such as George Orwell’s *1984*, *Brave New World* parodies, in Martin Heidegger’s term “enframing” that is created in modern societies. Even the characters’ names in the novel are inspired by 1900s world: “Ford,” “Mond” have reference to actual industrialists of the time.

The New World is based on a form of life, in which human beings are insensitive, pragmatically driven and free of emotions. This reminds us of the material culture of modern societies in which one-dimensionality eliminates creativity, art, values, beliefs, sensitivities, and even science.



## Part IV Art and the Question of Humanity

### Paul Klee's *Ad Parnassum* and the Reworking of Consciousness by Bruce Ross

The tumult in modern art at the beginning of the twentieth century centrally incorporated redefinitions of painterly treatment of form and color and, moreover, subject matter. It could easily be stated that a new form of consciousness was being expressed, most likely because of the undermining of the established empires by World War I, resulting in the phenomenological experience of an almost inhuman transformation. More than a simple reaction to long standing points of focus, including structural arrangements, in cityscape, landscape, or portraiture, some deep phenomenological connection to the nature of art was being uncovered. Explorations of primitive art, metaphysical understanding of time and space, and spiritual concepts like the aura were supporting Pointillism, Cubism, and “pure painting.” The result was a repudiation of mental or painterly stasis as the nexus of art, with perhaps a reconsideration, in some cases, of the aesthetic idea of the sublime, as in Paul Klee's *Ad Parnassum* (1932) (Partsch, 2003, 65). The importance of these directions in Klee's art, and specifically, this painting, is examined in Hajo Düchting's study of Klee's understanding of music: “Klee saw polyphonic painting as superior to all other arts, because he felt that spatial and temporal dimensions can be given visual expression in a two-dimensional representation as two intersecting planes. His masterpiece *Ad Parnassum* constitutes the great synthesis of this endeavor” (Düchting, 2002, 78).

This paper examines Klee's use of structure, color, language as language, North African visits, and symbolism of the sun and moon as a project to reorient consciousness and the nature of painting itself as it impinges upon *Ad Parnassum* to reveal an unstated relation to prehistoric art, the shamanic trance state, pre-Socratic issues of flux and stasis, a neo-Platonic interest in pulsing energy, and Orphism's understanding of natural form, all to the emphasis in Klee of a lyrical use of color and form to evoke an affect, in this painting, of metaphysical sublime.

Part of this revolution was making painting a vehicle of its own aesthetic intentions as opposed to being a subject to pre-modern orientations to so-called objective reality. Structure as structure and color as color became a central focus. Klee's early *Dogmatic Composition* (1918) gives us a re-thought cityscape dominated by vertical patches of color and a density of x's and some asterisks within squares and rectangles, and a few arches, all in a richer color hue to designate buildings, a red roof at the lower left, a pale yellow moon or sun in the upper right gives a spatial orientation. Humor is introduced with a bright red heart, the name Maria in capital letters, and an abstract drawing of a woman below the name. The later *Individualized Altimetry of Layers* (1930), with its horizontal arrangement of different blocks of color in darker and lighter hues and its humorous title referring to measuring elevation, here to reflect an internal emotion, prefigures as “pure painting” modern abstract expressionist art.

Klee was a member of The Blue Four group (1923) and probably learned from group member Wassily Kandinsky abstract form technique and from Lyonel Feininger abstract architectural form. Klee was also probably influenced by Robert Delaunay's approaches to Cubism which revolutionized form, color, and subject. Klee would learn to create abstract structures and to illuminate such structures through color. Düchting notes: “Klee used the musical term ‘polyphonic’ (many-voiced) in titles to draw attention to the simultaneous sounds created by the various pictorial elements and stylistic devices in his painting” (Düchting, 2002, 48). Düchting noted Klee used the term in relation to Delaunay's paintings and quotes Klee on one of these paintings: “Polyphonic painting is superior to music in so far as the temporal

element has more of a spatial quality. The sense of simultaneity emerges in an enriched form. With his choice of an over-sized horizontal format, Delaunay endeavored to accentuate the temporal dimension of the picture in the manner of a fugue” (Düchting, 2002, 27–28).

The proposed metaphoric relation of music and painting, the subject of Düchting’s study, gives some purchase to one of the aims of Cubism. Not unrelated, Edmund Husserl somewhere noted the way to look at a plant was to look at it from all directions, a kind of polyphony of natural entities. So, out of a breaking down of structure, there may be an illumination of a given painterly subject, as in the metaphoric music structure equivalent, supported by the emotional effect of color and form. Certainly there is an evident rhythm to be seen in Cubist paintings, including Klee’s. Many of Klee’s paintings have apparent connections to representational subjects. For example, in *Mountain Village* (1934), there is verticality offered by the painting’s orientation and hints of the mountain forest in the upper left quarter with light green openings beyond the many shapes and bright colors of the village itself, both producing a kind of rhythm. *Revolution of the Viaducts* (1937) presents a cartoonish rhythmic procession of brightly colored viaducts. *Park near Lucerne* (1938) is dreamlike with abstract black plants, trees, and, perhaps, paths, each surrounded by different pale colors, possibly a kind of aura. These objects are seemingly floating in a pale blue backdrop of sky or perhaps consciousness itself. *Highways and Byways* (1929) is a construction of a countryside, an abstract landscape of delicate colors and various small rectangular shapes organized projecting a subtle rhythmic quality through form and color. Approaching modern abstract art in its forthright use of bright color (here crayon on burlap) and rhythmically grouped, variously sized, squares and rectangles, *Glass Façade* (1940), with its façade whimsically backed by slight sections of the chartreuse element, perhaps the true self, behind the façade, has an upbeat feel.

Klee developed several distinct approaches to color and form, usually extensions of other painters’ work. He had his own theory of complementary colors and their emotional qualities as color. *Blossoming* (1934) is constructed entirely of squares and rectangles. The larger ones in more somber hues surround a section of brightly colored small forms, creating an expression of burgeoning life. *Harmony of rectangles with red, yellow, blue, white and black* (1923) also offers various shaped squares and rectangles on a black background. All the colors are in dull hues and overall produce a somber painting. Such patterns of brightly colored checkerboard and simple geometric patterns occur in prehistoric cave art, such as the colored squares at Lascaux or the engraved grid at Grotte de Bara-Bahau and in Southwest pictographs of Native North America suggesting a tantalizing commonality of discovery. *The Day in the Forest* (1935) prefigures *Park near Lucerne* with stark black trees and some of their shadows lodged near boulders of pastel colors or overhanging an open area in pale orange, perhaps a huge boulder, pond, or open earth, and perhaps a lake in pale blue at the painting’s top, the rhythm here created by color. The approach of blocks of non-representational color on representational form here is indebted to *The Blue Rider* (1911) approaches of Kandinsky and Franz Marc, such as Marc’s blue horse paintings. Klee was also influenced by Pointillism which he renamed “divisionist painting.” Düchting describes the process: “A coloured ground is applied either in a cloud pattern or divided into rectangles and covered by a grid of dense dots of contrasting colours, giving the image depth and transparency. In these pictures the contrast between the coloured ground and the pattern of dots results in an intense luminosity” (Düchting, 2002, 68–69).

In *Palace Garden* (1931), the abstract spires, roofs, and supporting structures are highlighted in such clouds and rectangles of pale pink and dark brown dots within the overall mosaic-like pattern of dots.

The interaction of these elements produce a sparkling effect, as if patches of light flicker in, perhaps, a night scene here. DÜchting cites Klee's own understanding of this process: "this work was created by placing a highly dynamic, individual element based on colour on a tonally-dynamic structural rhythm" (DÜchting, 2002, 70). In *Tendrils* (1932), the pastel pink and blue cloudlike patches of dots provide the dynamic background for the static abstract black or blue forms reminiscent of rock art geometric shapes and a bright sun made up of minute yellow dots, almost pulsing energy to the tendril below it. This kind of construction is the central building block of *Ad Parnassum* and produces the mesmerizing effect in the painting. Painted 3 years after this work, *Light and Sharpness* (1935) is a compressed version of the key aspects of *Ad Parnassum*, as if Klee wanted to point to the centrality of "divisionist painting" in his masterwork...

## Part V Human/Beast/Object

### The Situation of Human Being in Nature According to Fedor Dostoyevsky, Thomas Mann, and Robert Musil: A Paradoxical Builder, Self-Enhancing Being and Speaking-Animal by Michel Dion

We should be very cautious, when exploiting natural resources since we cannot weight up natural phenomena. Although we cannot presuppose that some natural laws are undecipherable, we cannot be ensured that we will know enough about natural processes to prevent disasters (Dostoyevski, 1972, 375). Abused nature impose much more severe punishment than human justice. Human justice could release people (particularly criminals) from despair. However, it partially releases humankind from the atonement of Nature (Dostoyevski, 1973, 883). Dostoyevsky interpreted human rebelling against Nature as an existential fight against death itself (Lamblé, 2001, 113). As a ghastly phenomenon, death is contradicting the beauty of Nature. An anthropocentric attitude toward Nature implies that the whole Nature has been created for the sake of humankind. Is human being the measure of everything (Mann, 2010, 451–455, 763)? Such anthropocentrism has been originally asserted by Protagoras (*Theaetetus*, 152a; Plato, 2011, 1904). Plato's philosophy was focusing on God-knowledge rather than the knowledge of Nature and of natural processes.

What is the situation of human being in Nature? From the midst of the nineteenth century to the mid of the twentieth century, three well-known novelists have deepened their philosophical questioning and adopted very different approach of human-Nature relationships. Questioning the place of human and non-human beings in Nature inevitably unveils the relationships between humans and their gods. Fedor Dostoyevsky used two meanings for God's existence. Firstly, God's existence could refer to Divine Life. Secondly, God's existence could be reduced to the idea of the Infinite as it is present in human mind and society. If the Infinite overcomes the finite, while being present in the finite, then the Infinite should be transhistorically rooted. Overcoming the finite makes impossible for the Infinite to have any historical situation. Otherwise, being-historical would be meaningless. Can we really know the Divine Life? I cannot know what it means to live for a mouse. I cannot seize how a mouse actually feels its own life processes. I will always be unable to grasp to what extent a mouse perceives its own life. In the same way, I cannot understand how God feels its Divine Life, and if God gives any meaning to Divine existence. Some believers claim that in their after-life, dead people will know what the Divine Life is all about. But this belief would imply that knowledge processes are still going on, after one's death. As dead people, do we still have memory, imagination, desires and needs? Nobody knows if dead people are able to know anything in their after-life, and thus if they are able to know the Divine Life. The only thing I

know is what it means to live, as human being. And even that remains unclear. I could believe that my own existence is meaningful, while later on I could perceive it as being meaningless. Human existence gives birth to multiple interpretations. According to Dostoyevsky, human being cannot be perfect, and thus infinite. Only transhistorical beings which do not live (like gods) could be perfect and infinite. Referring to the first meaning of God's existence, we could say that God does not live at all, or at least, that we cannot perceive it. If God is a transhistorical being, then God must not be subjected to life processes. Being-historical is required to exist. God cannot be subjected to existential predicament. If there is any Divine Life, then we will never know to what extent it could be compared to life processes in the whole Universe. But we could certainly say that life processes are not expressing perfection at all. Dostoyevsky explained how human being could be the builder who has the power to destroy everything-that-is (the paradoxical character of the builder). Dostoyevsky was not deeply convinced that human being could love Nature, except if he/she looks at it as the Divine Creation. In his *Notes from the Underground* (1864), Dostoyevsky addressed the issue of the paradoxical builder. In a godly-focused perspective, Dostoyevsky asked the following question: Can a paradoxical builder love natural beings?

Thomas Mann unveiled the deep influence of the unconscious as well as the subconscious, especially in *The Magic Mountain* (1924) and *The Doktor Faustus* (1947): both components of human psyche must be taken into account, when exploring the mystery of human being. Human psyche is self-enhancing. In a psychologically- focused perspective, Mann asked the following question: How could a self-enhancing being be champion of life processes?

Robert Musil's literary works (particularly *The Man Without Qualities*, 1930–1933) focused on commonalities between animals and human beings, that is, their similar instincts. Musil adopted a naturally-focused perspective, although human being is defined as the speaking-animal (Aristotle *Politics*, 1253a10: Aristotle, 1943, 54). Musil was promoting a new morals, as it is grounded on instinctive life. Can a speaking-animal overcome its natural instincts?

Fedor Dostoyevsky was confronted to the ideal of the pure builder, that is, the homo faber who could use natural resources in a very productive/creative way. Only human being could live mystical experiences. Human being is the homo religiosus, that is, the being who has created the idea of God. Human being is also the builder who has the power to destroy everything-that-is. Human being can curse everything. Human being can love natural beings, but in a paradoxical way. Human being can love animals and plants, while exploiting them for his/her own self-interest. Human being is the paradoxical lover of Nature. Dostoyevsky made the ideal of a pure builder totally disappear.

Thomas Mann was dealing with the Nietzschean ideal of a Champion of life processes. Human will to live is deeply influenced by the unconscious as well as the subconscious. Insofar as he/she is led by unconscious/subconscious processes, human being is a self-enhancing being. Could self-enhancing being be a champion of life processes? Not at all. A self-enhancing being is focusing on its self-interest. Being a champion of life processes would imply to radically criticize the situation of human being in Nature, and to get rid of anthropocentric/anthropometric attitudes. Mann unveiled the vicious trend of a self-enhancing being. Any ideal notion of Champion of life processes is disconnected from human existential predicament.

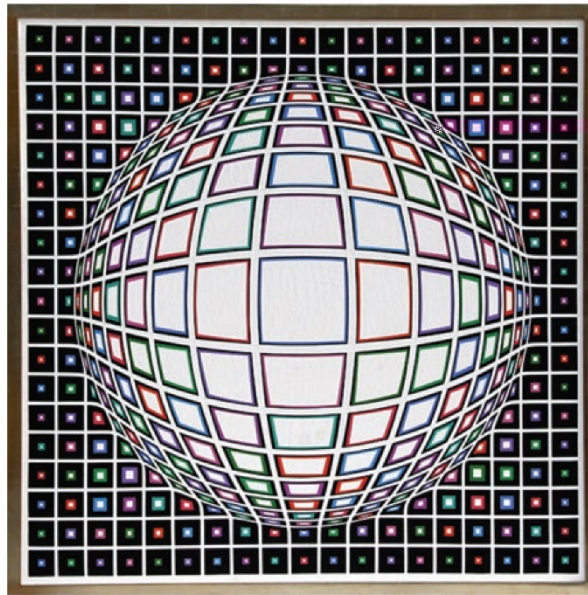
Robert Musil analyzed the ideal self-perception of a speaking-animal. Musil was dreaming about personal ethics that has nothing to do with rationalized and static morality (Dahan-Gaida, 1994, 125–126). Musil

was not convinced that evil could be inherently linked to human nature (Vatan, 2000, 68–70). The existential task is not to identify any natural goodness, or maliciousness. Rather, we must understand why human being could be as much good as malicious. Animals and human beings share same instincts. However, unlike animals, human beings actually speak. Human being is a being who is in-language. He/she is the speaking-animal. Musil was promoting a new morals, grounded on instinctive life. Can a speaking-animal exploit its natural instincts to deeply understand every natural being? Not at all. The ideal self-perception of speaking-animal could give birth to a new morals. However, unlike animals, human being is the speaking-animal, so that he/she cannot avoid the multiple interpretations of natural instincts. The gap between human existential predicament and the situation of non-human beings in Nature cannot be overcome.

Dostoyevsky, Mann and Musil agreed that human being is prone to consider himself/herself as an infinite being. Firstly, human being destroys Nature and justifies himself/herself through technocratic and anthropometric/anthropocentric worldviews (Nietzsche, 1966, 215–221). Secondly, human beings forget the situation of nonhuman beings and put the emphasis on their privileged position in the Cosmos. Thirdly, human being looks at language as the supreme quality of living beings and makes human language the ultimate parameter for any other form of language. The way those three aspects of human being and existence are idolized strengthens a mindset focusing on the infinite character of humankind, when compared with the situation of nonhuman beings.

## Part VI Human/Nature/Cosmos

**Apeiron Civilization: The Irruption of Infinity in Science and the Universe** by Ion Soteropoulos



THE EXPANDING SPHERE. (COURTESY OF VASSARELY)

### Human Progress: The Infnitization of Our Nearby Finite World

We conceive the progression of our human civilization as an infinitization process that consists of expanding the finite sphere of our surrounding observable world to the farthest point in the infinite

universe. The infinitization of our nearby finite world—which we take to be coextensive with our local biological and terrestrial worlds hierarchically ordered by Euclidean time—had already begun in the fifteenth century with the work of the great rationalist philosopher Nicolas of Cusa. He was followed by the philosophers Giordano Bruno (sixteenth century), René Descartes (seventeenth century), Henry More (seventeenth century), Baruch Spinoza (seventeenth century), Isaac Newton (seventeenth to eighteenth century), and Pierre-Simon de Laplace (eighteenth to nineteenth century).

Regardless of the different conceptions of infinity held by these rationalist thinkers—that infinity is reduced into a finite world varying indefinitely with time (Nicolas of Cusa, Bruno, Descartes) or that infinity is the maximum or infinite universe that has the ontological properties of the Divine Being and is given at once to our infinite reason (More, Spinoza, Newton, Laplace)—they had the following common aim: to open and extend the hermetically closed frontiers of the narrow sphere of the familiar world of our finite particular senses via the expansive and creative power of the apeiron.

Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the infinitization process of our finite world forces us to enter its second phase: the decline of the finite analytic paradigm on which our finite civilization (including our positivist science, hierarchical society, and finite neuronal brain) is based and its gradual replacement with the infinite synthetic paradigm conceived by our infinite mind (the Greek nous, νοῦς) and its faculty of infinite synthetic reason.

By extending our finite world to the farthest point, which is the limiting boundary of the infinite universe, human existence aims to reach the level of completeness (reXet6rqra) the infinite universe principally has without losing its human individuality. The term we use to designate this cosmic end of completeness via the infinitization process is the Pythagorean project of human development. However, insofar as human progression takes place within the Euclidean finite analytic paradigm, it is an indefinite progression deprived of the capacity to reach the limiting boundary of the infinite universe. Despite the successive infinitization of our finite world, we are still inside our indefinitely expanding finite world and at an infinite distance from the limiting boundary of the infinite physical universe.

To break free of the incompleteness of our indefinitely progressing finite world and effectively reach the completeness of the infinite universe, we must transform the Euclidean finite analytic paradigm of our finite civilization into its antithesis, the non-Euclidean infinite synthetic paradigm on which the emerging apeiron civilization will be based. <>

## **PHILOSOPHISCHE NOTIZBÜCHER / PHILOSOPHICAL NOTEBOOKS** by Kurt Gödel, translated by Merlin Carl, edited by Eva-Maria Engelen [De Gruyter]

- First complete, historical-critical, bilingual edition of Kurt Gödel's philosophical notebooks
- Each volume includes a carefully edited German text with annotations, also an English translation with abbreviated editorial notes and commentary
- An as yet unknown philosophical account of one of the greatest thinkers of the 20th century
- For everyone interested in philosophy this series releases a volume annually until completed.

## **BAND I PHILOSOPHIE I MAXIMEN 0 / PHILOSOPHY I MAXIMS 0** by Kurt Gödel, edited by Eva-Maria Engelen, English translation from the German by Merlin Carl [De Gruyter, 9783110583748]

Over a period of 22 years (1934-1955), the mathematician Kurt Gödel wrote down a series of philosophical reflections, the so-called Philosophical Remarks (Max Phil). They have been handed down in 15 notebooks written in Gabelsberg shorthand. The first notebook contains general philosophical reflections. Notebooks two and three consist of Gödel's individual ethics. The notebooks that follow clearly show that Gödel had designed a philosophy of science in which he placed his discussions of physics, psychology, biology, mathematics, language, theology, and history within the context of a particular metaphysics. For the first time, the Kurt Gödel Research Center of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences is preparing a complete, historical-critical edition of Gödel's philosophical notebooks. A volume will be published each year as a part of this edition. Volume I, which Gödel entitled "Philosophy I Max 0," covers Gödel's own philosophical reflections as well as those of other authors that were important to him. These were placed by Gödel at the beginning of his overall philosophical project. The introduction of the editor Eva-Maria Engelen provides an overview of this particular body of work.

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#### **KURT GÖDEL – PHILOSOPHICAL NOTEBOOKS**

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### **Editorial Notes**

The present transcription is a reconstruction of the text written in the German shorthand Gabelsberger. This requires grammatical and other additions, which are pointed out for the interested reader in a way that does not impede the reading experience.

The present volume contains an extensive bibliography of works that Gödel read and used for his notes. Details are provided in the bibliography, while brief information is given in the comments. As a rule, I

refer to the first edition of the work in question, except when it is apparent which edition Gödel himself used, in which case that edition is given. The literature referenced in the introduction is given separately at the end of the introduction, but does not appear again in the references.

Detailed information on the persons to whom Gödel refers directly or indirectly can be found in the index of persons and occasionally in the comments.

In the translation, logical symbols are given in modern notation, whereas in the German original text, Gödel's notation is preserved for the benefit of research on the history of logical notation.

The English translation is typographically similar to the German text. The following are omitted, however: Uncertain readings/the distinction between longhand and shorthand/the optical highlighting of added words and parts of words/the marking of illegible text/the marking of insertions/all non-explanatory comments in the critical apparatus...

### Editorial Principles for the Translation of Gödel's Notebooks

In contrast to the German version, multiple underscores are reproduced as single underscores throughout. Words and passages that were crossed out by Gödel are mostly omitted, as are the editorial comments from the German version concerning alternative readings of certain passages.

Gödel's pagination of the manuscript pages is reproduced in square brackets. When editorial reference is made to specific places in the notebook, this pagination is used...

## Kurt Gödel's philosophical notebooks and the tradition of notebook writing

### Notebook Writing

One will not be able to categorize and understand Gödel's philosophical notebooks unless one considers them in the context of the tradition of notebook writing. This tradition produced a type of text with specific characteristics. For an appropriate reading of the notes, one should keep in mind those characteristics as well as the function of notebooks for an author's thinking and for their creative process. This helps to avoid misinterpretations as well as rash (mis)judgments and (mis)readings.

A notebook allows the writer to develop his or her own tentative perspective by addressing the positions of other writers: In a notebook, it is easy to take up or discard other people's thoughts.' Hence, philosophical and scientific notebooks often have an exploratory character. Ideas are tried out and developed, repeated and observed from a different perspective, or simply crossed out and considered no further. In private, it becomes possible to develop ideas at length on and investigate new connections. The thoughts of other authors can be picked up or unscrupulously critiqued. One can drop one's own approaches or come up with counter-positions in a playful manner.

Clearly, this is not a method of writing that leads to a systematically argued work. Nevertheless, Gödel enumerated his philosophical notebooks, and arranged them subsequently in a wellthought order, which suggests that he based his philosophical notebooks on a conception that he considered to have a guiding and enduring significance. This last point is further supported by the fact that his philosophical remarks come first in a list by which he ordered his unpublished notes written between 1940 and 1970 (My notes 1940-70) and thereby also evaluates them.



## The tentative character of notebooks

The repetitions that are typical of notebooks point further to the essentially tentative character of this medium of reflection. Of course, these are not mere repetitions by an author who is forgetful or given to insisting, but rather different facets and perspectives with respect to one and the same train of thoughts. The various perspectives that result from orbiting one's intended meaning open up new lines of thought and associations and can likewise lead to new problems and their formulation, as well as to new strategies for solving these or older questions.

It is hard to find a "through-line" in these cases. Only by putting the various topics together can one determine the author's positions and organize the different aspects into a thematic complex. The author circles around a subject as if there were many theories about it, each with a different standpoint. This practice is inherent to the notebook as medium, and it enables the writer to record philosophical thoughts for reflective consideration. Circling around philosophical questions and problems helps to sharpen the view on

them and to prepare a fruitful way of dealing with them.

The entries in Gödel's philosophical notebooks should not, therefore, be read as if they represented his respective standpoint. Sometimes indeed they present the opposite of his aims. A reading based on the assumption that one is dealing with a systematically argumentative text would be rash and would only lead to a dead end. Gödel's remarks will appear merely self-contradictory if one fails to appreciate the tentative, meandering character of this form of writing and to trust in the fruitfulness of its characteristic approach. The goal is a slow and steady development of thoughts. A reading that insists on systematic closure and results that have further theoretical use will be unable to appreciate an intellectual quest whose purpose is the manifold exploration of trains of thought.

## The notebook as a thinking space

Notebooks offer an open space that invites us both to record a quick idea and to return to it over and over again, to approach it and to distance ourselves from it, to absorb it and to objectify it. By opposing contrasting points, the writer allows them to have an effect on his or her own thinking, and by evaluating them afterwards, it becomes clear that thinking takes time. The open space offered by a notebook thus fuses two different temporal forms of thinking, namely: the thought that appears suddenly, and the extensive quest for an adequate expression and a convincing solution. Hence a notebook can comprise aphorisms as well as dialogical thinking. Its use thus depends heavily on the personality of the thinker using it. The thinking space thereby offered is an open space.

It is thus by no means the only or primary goal of notebook writing to record one's thoughts. The focus often lies much more on a process of transmission aimed at the contemplation of citations and the development of one's own thinking. In this way, keeping a notebook — a scholarly technique for producing knowledge and strengthening one's intellect — can become a tool of philosophical and scientific research. Gödel opens up a thinking space with the help of his notebooks by opposing different systematic positions concerning a question and by taking up different disciplinary perspectives.

## The notebook as an archive

Such a space can be shaped and reshaped. For the writing subject, it functions additionally as an archive, since keeping a notebook allows the writer to comprehend his or her own intellectual development in

its genesis.<sup>5</sup> This is another sense in which taking notes is a cultural technique as well as a technique of self-fashioning that can be used to develop one's own thinking and personality as a researcher. Entries and references in Gödel's notebooks show that he indeed used them in this way...

### Development of the thinking process

Similarly illuminating is the reference, in the notebook Max V, to independent thinking without recourse to what one has read. Here, Gödel explicitly distinguishes the engagement with other authors from his ideas that arose without such a stimulation and that thus exclusively reflect his own thinking.

Nevertheless, considerations issuing from the occupation with and depending upon the thinking of others are highly relevant for his thinking. The remark points out, however, an important goal of notebook writing, namely, that of developing and organizing one's own philosophical thinking...

### The tradition of writing notebooks

Taking a look at the tradition of notebook writing, it becomes clear that numerous characteristics of the form have remained the same over centuries. The notebooks of the loth century show patterns of memory, note-taking and collecting with the same frequency that is known from the older tradition of notebooks, such as the antique hypomnemata or the modern commonplace books. These patterns also occur in Gödel's notebooks, even though no continuous line of tradition from antiquity to the loth century is known to exist. This suggests that keeping a notebook is a form of writing that advances processes and reflection processes in a specific way.

Hence notebooks are a means of orientation for thinking. They offer this possibility spatially, as one can take them up over and over again and use dates and headings to find the pages dedicated to a specific question. This also holds true temporally, as one can find aspects with equal or similar topics at different times of writing.

This orientation role in thinking may well have been the reason why the writing of notebooks emerged in the first place. One takes notes concerning one's reading, sets down personal memoranda, and inscribes one's duties and obligations. An antique notebook, for example is called hypomnema', which means record, memory, but also admonition. In a hypomnema, citations and material from the work of other authors are written down as a memory aid, as well as thoughts, and ideas and duties, so that these may be referred back to in carrying out self-imposed obligations. It includes the habit — already widespread in antiquity — of making lists: of tasks, but also of names or of books. It is well-known that Pierre Hadot referred to the hypomnemata as spiritual notebooks because they keep the notes present for the thinking of the writer.' This also aptly describes what Gödel notes for himself in a maxim in the notebook Time Management (Max) I: "Whatever one thinks about, be it a mathematical problem or what one should do the next day, it is always better to think 'with the help of something', either a book or something that one wrote or thought about it at an earlier time. Particularly when one is dealing with an enumeration, as this supports one's own memory (and ide significantly)".

Gödel's first philosophical notebook (Philosophie I Max 0), moreover, contains lists of books and authors as well as other considerations for a program of philosophical studies; not atypical for scientific and philosophical notebooks, Time Management (Max) I and Time Management (Max) II contain lists of errands and tasks (for scientific work as well as practical affairs), work schedules and, again, lists of readings as well as concrete time-tables for work, breaks, walks. Gödel's reading is then reflected in excerpts and systematized aphorisms, which leads to original philosophical remarks on various subjects.

Lists, programs and maxims are less present in notebook Max III, and from there on Gödel is increasingly and, at some point, exclusively concerned with philosophical remarks and foundational considerations.

In antique hypomnemata, the ethical conception of the Stoa is frequently put into practice. Notebooks are used to develop a personal set of guidelines for one's own conduct of life. This ethical self-assessment needs to be distinguished from justified, normative, moral imperatives. In notebooks, commandments are often directed towards oneself in the form of admonitions or prescriptions rather than being stated as generally valid for everyone. Thus, notebooks are often a place of self-formation, where one seeks to cultivate an ethical access to oneself and a guiding principle for the personal conduct of life. This program of self-admonition, self-commitment and self-perfection follows the Socratic maxim not to live an 'unexamined', i.e. unreflected life. Such an ethically oriented form of notebook writing is also to be found in Gödel, particularly in the notebooks Time Management (Max) I and II, where he struggles for a guiding principle for his conduct of life as well as for self-admonition and self-perfection."

In contrast, the title of Gödel's Philosophy I Max o already indicates what kinds of entries are to be expected here: No maxims or admonitions directed at himself, for to these the following notebooks (in particular Time Management (Max) I and Time Management Max II, and partly also Max III) are dedicated. That Gödel purposely integrated this facet of notebook writing into his philosophical notebooks is demonstrated by the concluding remarks from Time Management (Max) II which were inserted subsequently and then crossed out: "Time Management (Max) II --(Phil II) This originally was the first maxim-notebook in addition to philosophy-notebook. Later on combined maxims and philosophy."

Though the time of writing shows that Time Management (Max) II was not the first notebook about the conduct of life (see below). This is probably why Gödel has erased the addition. It is likely that the first notebook was Time Management (Max) I. The remark still shows that Gödel simultaneously worked on the notebooks about the conduct of life and on the philosophical notebooks that do not emphasize the aspect of ethical self-perfection. The decision to combine them makes apparent Gödel's approach to a point of view in which ethics in the form of self-perfection and self-admonition are regarded as parts of a comprehensive concept of philosophy that have to be integrated accordingly...

## Sample text simplified sans number and notes

What is knowledge?

Any knowledge is expressed in a sentence.<sup>2</sup> Knowledge is explained by its purpose: To determine behaviour via prediction.\* (Via signs that represent the objects). This is itself a very important insight. It is the function of knowledge to find order in the world and to prepare us for it. To find this order is the task of pure science. (The sentence\* does not contain a weltanschauung yet (existence of a

world, etc.), but holds independently of every weltanschauung, viz. it has to fit in any.)

Knowledge is a picture of reality, since it is only by "pictures" that we can prepare ourselves. Turn the encounter with the unknown into an encounter with the known. Overcome unfamiliarity or moderate it.

The substance of signs is irrelevant.<sup>8</sup> From this it follows that [there must be something different from the signs to perform the function of indicating, and this has been called the 'concept' (Plato's 'idea') —

now the question arises what such a concept is? It can't be the mere word, the sound, the notch — hence one assumes that it is a kind of something behind it, something not sensually perceivable (as Plato has especially emphasized). Thus Plato came to create a 'realm of concepts'. More contemporary logicians have accepted this realm of concepts (though in a less mystical way), and so one talks of a 'realm of ideal being', 'realm of consciousness' etc., i.e. the view is held that, besides reality, there is a realm of concepts.]

Platonic problem (realism, idealism).

For example, Bolzano speaks of the "sentence in itself".

Schlick says: There must be something besides the signs to carry out the function of "indicating". Recently, a certain answer was given to this question, the psychologistic answer (the other signs are arbitrary, but "thoughts" are distinguished) - for example: B. Erdmann develops the theory of "abstraction", this means the formation of "general ideas". The refutation of psychologism consists in the fact that one can only imagine a horse either as being black or brown.

Solution of the Platonic problem: The question of what a concept is misleading, and the problem arises through the belief that every noun must correspond to an object. This is a purely linguistic mistake (one doesn't believe that this might perhaps correspond to an object). It suffices to state which purpose the sign serves (conceptual purpose). It is often impossible to (explicitly) define a word, but it suffices to state the rules for its use. Bolzano is to thank for the overcoming of psychologism; this caused the regress to Platonism.

Getting to know something new with the old words of language is possible by combining the words in ever new contexts. The means for describing something new is a new combination of signs.

The essential point in the knowledge of singular facts is classification... <>

## **BAND 2 ZEITEINTEILUNG (MAXIMEN) I UND II / TIME MANAGEMENT (MAXIMS) I AND II** by Kurt Gödel, edited by Eva-Maria Engelen, English translation from the German by Merlin Carl [De Gruyter, 9783110674095]

Volume 2 contains both notebooks of "Time Management (Max) I and II" and thereby Gödel's applied individual ethics, which he received among others through his teacher Heinrich Gomperz. Gödel thus incorporates the ethical ideal of self-perfection into his opus. The volume is prefaced by an introduction to relevant considerations from the ethics of the Stoics as well as ancient dietetics, which provide the philosophical background to understand Gödel's approach. In addition, editor Eva-Maria Engelen presents how this fits into the context of Gödel's Philosophical Notebooks.

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## The meaning of the concept of perfection for the Maximen Philosophie

Self-perfection is, as we have seen, a form of practice that falls within the realm of individual ethics. Furthermore, in the Stoic tradition, it also serves a therapeutic purpose. By contrast, the perfection of reason, of thinking and of the sciences is intended to serve the good of all humanity and to lead to improved living conditions for everyone. This aspect of the concept of perfection goes beyond the framework of individual ethics.

A prominent representative of the concept of the perfection of thinking for the good of all is Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who sought to perfect reason and the sciences by developing and implementing what he called a *scientia generalis*.

Gödel's Maximen Philosophie embody an attempt to realize both ideas of perfection: 1) in Time Management (Max) I and II, the individual-ethical idea of self-perfection with its therapeutic implications; and 2) in the totality of the Max-Phil notebooks, the idea of the perfection of thinking in the writing subject, of reason and of the sciences.

### Self-perfection and individual ethics: Time Management (Max) I and II

In both notebooks that bear the title Time Management, we thus find Gödel's individual ethics, the purpose of which lies in the self-perfection for which he strove in his professional and personal life. In the notebooks, he formulates the relevant maxims (admonitions) carefully and deliberately and sets himself - as was also customary in the Stoic tradition - the task of reading them again and again (which the evidence shows he in fact did). He writes out the maxims that are of special importance to him repeatedly and undertakes to read them for the purposes of collecting his thoughts and intensifying his concentration before turning to his actual academic work.

The practices and habituations by which Gödel conducted his life are a means of self-reflection, and thus their motivation is entirely philosophical. He hoped with their help to give his life a stable, clearly arranged and orderly form, which in turn would furnish him with security, peace of mind and equanimity in matters both personal and professional. This is the therapeutic effect. Beyond this, however, the orientation toward self-determined maxims and admonitions was also intended to help him advance his academic work itself. One can see this clearly in the numerous maxims related to improving his mathematics lectures and talks, in which he reflects upon what a lecture in mathematics ought to achieve, what it ought to offer students, and what assumptions it ought to make about its audience's knowledge.

Alongside these concerns, numerous maxims deal with the possibility of obtaining an academic position in mathematics or in the non-academic sector in order to earn a living. These maxims attest to Gödel's anxieties about the future, even in the late 1930s, a time when he was already counted among the greatest mathematicians of his generation. They also demonstrate the degree of acuity he brought to bear on these questions, along with his not inconsiderable sociological talent. Gödel was well aware of the fact that achievement alone is not sufficient to obtain an academic position; he therefore listed factors that have nothing to do with achievement but that nevertheless play a role in academic employment, such as nepotism and the consolidation of schools of thought.

The notebooks that are oriented toward individual ethics are not merely of interest to readers concerned with Gödel as a thinker, nor even to those who are eager to gain a perspective on a modern

form of Stoic admonition and practice as lived ethics. The significance of this approach goes much further, extending over the entire corpus of the *Maximen Philosophie*. It is therefore necessary to consider each of the aforementioned aspects of the concept of perfection more closely: the ethical aspect of self-perfection, as well as the aspect of the perfection of reason and the sciences.

### The perfection of reason through the *scientia generalis*

Leibniz's *scientia generalis* is intended to serve not only the renewal, growth and expansion of the sciences, but also the perfection of the mind and the general felicity of humankind.<sup>o</sup> Although the concepts of perfection and felicity are also relevant to Gödel's individual-ethical approach, they have a different meaning in the framework of the *scientia generalis*. Among other functions, and by working out the common fundamental principles (*initia*) of the various individual sciences (*specimina*), the *scientia generalis* offers them a common foundation and a common structure, thus making collaboration between the disciplines possible. Among the *specimina* are grouped all of the natural sciences, mathematics and the value-oriented sciences, such as jurisprudence and theology. By contrast, the *initia* include, for example, the *grammatica rationalis* and logic. In order to elaborate the common fundamental principles of the *specimina*, the task in the *scientia generalis* is to discover the simple concepts, namely, the basic elements of thinking. Admittedly, it was clear even to Leibniz that this was a goal that human beings would never fully achieve.

It has been shown that Gödel dealt intensively with this aspect of Leibniz's philosophy. In box *boa*, series V, folder 35 of the Gödel Nachlass, we find, right on the first page, unambiguous references to this. Here Gödel notes which chapters in Volume VII of the Gerhard edition of Leibniz's philosophical writings contain the *scientia generalis* and which contain the *characteristica*. Subsequently, he records which of the respective sections he has read. On the *scientia generalis*, he read everything but sections VI and IX.

What does this mean for the question of the degree to which the *Maximen Philosophie* function not only as an ethical but simultaneously as an intellectual instrument of perfection? Leibniz's *scientia generalis* is an encyclopedic universal or unified science, in which all sciences have their place. Through the perfection of reason, it is to serve the happiness of mankind. Reason is to be so perfected that it recognizes and realizes the good. It is the purpose of the human faculties to contribute to the attainment of happiness, and wisdom is nothing other than the science of happiness.

For personal happiness and wellbeing, the individual must look to himself. When it comes to the happiness of all, however, according to Leibniz, one must labor toward the perfection of reason, i.e., of the sciences within the framework of a *scientia generalis*. The *scientia generalis* contributes to the advancement of the sciences and thus to the wellbeing and happiness of all of humanity. The happiness of the individual and the common happiness are further distinguishable in that the individual experiences this happiness the moment he achieves it, whereas the happiness of all is dependent on the progress of science and thus on whether the sciences serve all of humanity.

For Gödel, the *scientia generalis* could have been a model for bringing the diverse disciplines under one roof. The manner in which he relates the various discipline-specific remarks to each other (often by analogy) suggests that he had in mind a *scientia generalis* for the perfection of the sciences. The idea of perfection relates in this case to the perfection of thinking.

The success of the individual-ethical approach is independent of whether the unity of the sciences has been achieved, since within the individual-ethical approach even the effort involved in the perfection of the self has meaning. The success of the perfection of thinking in the sciences, by contrast, depends upon whether the *scientia generalis* has been successfully founded.

The extent to which Leibniz's *scientia generalis* represents a model for Godel's *Maximen Philosophie* will become evident in the forthcoming volumes. Godel did not encounter this theme in Leibniz alone, however, but equally within the Vienna Circle, since Leibniz's *scientia generalis* is at the very least comparable to the *Einheitswissenschaft* ("Unified Science") of the Vienna Circle. The title of a well-known series of publications by the Vienna Circle from 1933 to 1939, *Einheitswissenschaft*, was later changed to *Library of Unified Science*; there was also the *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*. The parallels go beyond purely linguistic similarity, however, for the *Einheitswissenschaft* of the Vienna Circle, very much like Leibniz's *scientia generalis*, was to be an encyclopedic universal or unified science.

While the idea of self-perfection held no special significance for the Vienna Circle, the idea of progress, and thus of the happiness of all of humanity — achievable not least by means of an encyclopedic foundation for the sciences — certainly did. At the same time, knowledge is of central importance not only to the idea of the perfection of a unified science or *scientia generalis* but also to an individual ethics based on the Stoic model...

### Excerpt simplified text.

Question 1.: Should I: I. spend whole morning 9:30-12:30 (3 h), 2-6 h) at the University Library, National Library, mathematics department or II. only pick up and return orders?

Question 2.: Are there other libraries that are more user-friendly with respect to things that are also there or that have things that are not there? For which subjects?

ad 1: Answer to question 1. needs to be drawn from the treatment of the separate subjects. Namely, if it turns out that I need to read certain books more carefully or have to use them (for looking something up) for a longer time, then I. holds. When it turns out that I first need to choose between many or have to inform myself about the literature, then II. holds. Further, if there are many periodicals to read, then I. holds, as these are special cases (they need to be looked through, and one needs to roughly estimate their content and quality, and only in special cases should they be read carefully and borrowed).

Question 3.: Which books should I buy for myself? — 1. Those that are never available and that are interesting, 2. reference works (directories, i.e., what can be bound in the catalogue room), 3. foundational work of the special topics, foundational works in general.

If only 3 1/2 h per week for one topic, then just 14h (-20% for interruptions) = ii h. During this time, a book can hardly be finished, especially when several books are borrowed at the same time.

A book is foundational if it treats a comparably large area (not a special question) while containing as many facts as possible but only important ones, if it presents the area in as little space as possible and provides an overview of the literature. 4. Periodicals, daily newspapers, official gazettes," *Zentralblätter*.

ad 2: Offers a common library for *belles lettres* and in part also for philosophical literature. Otherwise specialist libraries of the departments (e.g. physical, medical library, library of the Chamber of



Commerce, library of the social sciences in the Town Hall, also in the other universities: technical, commercial college; for academic publications the Academy of Sciences and Humanities, [...]).

One of the main reasons for wasting time and not being able to get many things done is that I want to do things too accurately. When I borrow a book to look something up, I already start looking through it and maybe even reading it. When I want to merely skim through something, I read it carefully. Ultimate reason: Not holding on to my decisions.\* The decision is the limitation of something (blinker); it may mean that something is lost, but on the other hand, that what was planned is done.

Question 4: Should one decide to do the following?: Every book that I pick up so as to read something specific in it (to look up or read a particular treatise, a certain chapter) should at least be skimmed through: Preface, table of contents, spot check, opinion, whether good or bad. [A book is good when the objective given by the title, the subtitle and possibly the preface is achieved well. In this respect, the readership for which it is meant according to the above criteria needs to be taken into account as well, or at least whether some objective or readership given by a different title or preface is satisfied.] And should one write a synopsis, however short, for each book that one picks up?

I think yes.

Remark: Transition to the next type, psychological: 0. Type: I study physics (read books, reflect).

1. Type: I reflect on the question or read something about "how I should organize my studies in physics" (or what different authors said about physics).

2. Type: I reflect on the question of how to learn quickest and how to most effectively organize my studies in physics.

It is advantageous to start with as high a type as possible.

Question 5: Should one invest more time in the activity itself (type 0) or in reflecting on it (type I and higher) when occupied with an activity?\* The time used for this is saved when carrying out the activity itself because it will be carried out more effectively and quicker. The more time the reflection takes, the more methodically (rationally) one acts (to draw a line under it).

In the above time management, the activity and the reflection on the activity (etc.) usually belong to the same category, except: 15, which is the lowest type, as these activities are not forms of reflection at all. 13, 13' are of type co (because they can have arbitrary iterations of reflection as their object). It is a general characteristic of the lowest type that it is no longer reflection (reading, speaking, writing, shopping, walking)... <>

## **BAND 3 MAXIMEN III / MAXIMS III PHILOSOPHICAL NOTEBOOKS – VOLUME 3: MAXIMS III** by Kurt Gödel, edited by Eva-Maria Engelen, English translation from the German by Merlin Carl [De Gruyter, 9783110753257]

With the notebook "Maxims III," a new section of Gödel's philosophical notebooks begins. This notebook sheds light on the relationship between various disciplines – in particular psychology, mathematics (specifically logic), and theology – and their respective significance for both the thinking and working scholar and for the knowledge system. It also contains considerations on heuristics and scholarly methods. The role of fundamental or simple concepts in thinking also becomes apparent.

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Excerpt: ... ..The division into foundational principles (initia) and individual sciences (specimina) shows up again in Gödel, but only indirectly. The Philosophical Notebooks contain remarks on questions of logic and first principles, mnemonics, and individual scientific disciplines such as mathematics, physics, psychology, philology, sociology, jurisprudence, history, theology and philosophy.' Thus the enumerations under the headings initia and specimina in Leibniz and Gödel do not overlap. This is hardly surprising, however, given that the catalogue of disciplines had changed since Leibniz's time, and even Leibniz himself hints at the possibility of new specimina arising in the course of history. Nevertheless, Leibniz's fundamental conception of the scientia generalis, as summed up by Arnaud Pelletier, turns out to be a useful framework for understanding Gödel's overall approach:

The distinction between the initia and the specimina thus reveals that the Scientia Generalis cannot be understood as a universal science in the sense of a calculus or a single method that could be applied to all sciences. Its unity is not given by the uniqueness of an organon [...] but by the plurality of elements and principles whose domains of validity are to be determined through the collective progress of the sciences. A remarkable feature of the structure of the Scientia Generalis is that it does not presuppose a priori first principles but, on the contrary, intends to discover progressively the first principles that would "open the way to the ultimate causes of things" and [...] to wisdom.'

The distinguishing features of a scientia generalis that Pelletier zeroes in on here in the context of Leibniz also dovetail to a certain extent with Gödel's remarks. Gödel divides his remarks into two

groups: those that address fundamental principles, and those that address individual academic disciplines. The scientism general' is not coterminous with and does not exhaust itself in a general calculus or a characteristic lying at the basis of all academic disciplines. Instead of definitively postulating a method that would connect all disciplines, Gödel draws analogies between the central concepts and (methodological) principles of various disciplines. The unity of scientific thought — and thus of the sciences (with respect to the academic disciplines) — is in this view founded upon common methodological elements.. Gödel mentally runs through the possibilities of taking the concepts and principles that have been successfully applied in one discipline and transferring them to others. In this way, he surveys the realm of possible objects to which these concepts can be applied. We can see that through such a procedure Gödel hopes gradually to discover the first principles that "open the way to the final causes of things" and hence to wisdom.

## Heuristics

One of the focuses of the remarks and maxims in Maxims III is heuristics in mathematics,' for which concrete examples are often listed under the heading "important activities of the mathematician".

Alongside these, Gödel considers the idea of a general heuristics and of methods for other scientific areas, such as psychology. Because heuristics is an *ars inveniendi*, or a doctrine of methods for discovering evidence and counter-evidence in scientific research, it belongs in the Leibnizian sense among the scientism generalis and in today's sense among the fundamental disciplines within a given science!' We also find in this context a number of thoughts on theory formation and on the comparison of methods in various disciplines, on methods of argumentation, and on the usefulness of theories. A further theme in Maxims III is knowledge I [Erkenntnis]. Gödel comments on both the significance of formal concepts for knowledge and the extent to which one can gain knowledge by relating specific sub-disciplines of a given science to each other.

Questions that arise about working practice in the sciences, including such things as how best to answer letters, do not traditionally belong to heuristics any more than general study habits do. In Maxims III, the latter include both the perfection of the individual learning subject and the acquisition and access to subject knowledge of the academic disciplines. Gödel's views on teaching should also be considered against the background of this context. We often find him yearning to be more confident as a teacher, more able to meet the learners' demands and to provide an orderly and consistent presentation of the subject matter. His thoughts on how one best becomes a mathematician, beginning, namely, with the study of applied physics, are to be viewed under this heading as well.

## Mathematics and Psychology

In adds thinking about the connections between the academic disciplines, the relation between mathematics and psychology plays a special role. Gödel considers whether and in what way the psychology of mortal beings and their capacity for mathematical knowledge ought to be investigated, and whether it is even possible for human beings, given their entire psychology, to handle innumerable concepts. In any case, he sees human thinking as an inextricable knot of form and content. His thoughts on accepting a formal system likewise belong here, since according to Gödel such acceptance means not only having acknowledged the system's consistency, but also having set it as the point of departure for one's own actions and assumptions.

The discipline of psychology also stands in the foreground of this notebook. Gödel was convinced that basic concepts of psychology could be put to appropriate use as fundamental to all academic disciplines (see below). The concepts that Gödel presents in Maxims III as those that characterize psychology as a discipline - in particular *actus*, *passio* and *finis* - admittedly originate in the Aristotelean-Scholastic tradition of psychology, which includes the writings of Franz von Brentano. But Gödel was also at least somewhat familiar with the psychology of his time and its methods as an academic discipline. This can be observed in Philosophy I Maxims 0, where he adds the works of Karl Bahler to his bibliography; in the Protocol Notebook, where it becomes clear that he considered pursuing training in psychoanalysis; in his conversations with the psychologist Else Frankel, parts of which he likewise wrote down in the Protocol Notebook; and in the bibliographical lists on psychology and psychiatry.

### Psychology and Theology

A connection between psychology and theology is established in Maxims III, particularly on the concept of sin. In the *Allgemeines Wörterbuch der Heiligen Schrift*, Joseph Franz Allioli discusses the theological concept of sin, namely as the willing transgression of a divine commandment, the causes of which are the free will of the human being and the devil. Moreover, according to Allioli, sin blinds the understanding. In his *Biblisches Wörterbuch*, Allioli adds that the inducement to sin is often human weakness and ignorance. No less informative is Matthias Joseph Scheeben's *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik*, in which a distinction is drawn between a theological and a philosophical concept of sin — and consequently among the uses of the term in various disciplines. In contrast to the theological sense, sin in the philosophical sense is not a knowing transgression of one of God's commandments but an action against one's own conscience, a renunciation of what the agent's own reason has recognized as their personal dignity. For his part, Gödel uses the concept in remarks on theology and psychology. In general, he maintains that sin consists in error, weakness and malevolence. Understood theologically with reference to original sin, it is impossible for the human being not to sin, and psychologically, one must

Remark (Psychology): Knowledge is a kind of perception (cognition), which by its nature implies correctness. (But can one also know that one knows something?) Can one know anything at all?

Maxim: You should immediately register an idea, but [1.] only when there is a danger of forgetting]; 2. only think about it as much as is necessary for registering it, and perhaps reserve a certain hour for registering nocturnal ideas.

Remark: Praying makes our annihilation less "just". Praying to a just God is justice; praying to an unjust God is injustice, even though passion works in the same way in both cases [fear of the power to destroy me and make me suffer].

Remark: A war breaks out when there are many people who need it (some in order to be killed, others in order to get positions, others in order to improve through suffering). Those who do not need it do not feel any of that.

Remark (Psychology): In order to realize one's sins, the interest in having no sin (and the desire for it) must vanish first. Is it not a kind of great madness to want to be completely without sin, and does Christ not show us that the consequences are all the worse? Can one commit sins out of this humility?

Remark: To impute to oneself as a sin that which is not a sin can often serve to prevent one from viewing one's actual sins as sins (killing off the right instinct).

Remark Psychology: The fact that we do not know our own sins (those of our past life) is probably due not to the fact that we make trivial combinatorial blunders but to the fact that we see everything "in the wrong light". This means that we make a fundamental mistake right at the start of forming ideas about our self, psychology, right and wrong.

Remark Theology: Augustine claims in Confessions X, 4.0,396 that it is not at all the power of the mind that leads us to any truth but God himself. Perhaps this should be taken to mean that the devil<sup>397</sup> has already corrupted our mind too much and that a replacement is offered to us in the idea of 'God', which leads not to "knowledge" (like the mind) but to recognition of the truth. (This is what came from outside the world after the Fall but is still preformed in this world, even in the realm of ideas.) And in spite of our sins, these ideas lead us to where the power of our mind would have led us, and this even better. [This is reason in opposition to the mind.] [102] The start of this is probably ethical knowledge (good and evil).

Remark: There is a kind of purely linguistic connection that resembles puns but is still somehow right (although it appears stupid). For example: when comparing the foundation of set theory via functions with the "function-theoretic approach to mathematics" and the foundation of mathematical classes with the "algebraic" foundation (algebra of classes and relations). Or, another example, which letter precedes 'A'? No letter (thus, 'a' comes before `a' in alphabetical ordering).

Remark: One reason for the non-implementation of decisions is: It appears to be superfluous (e.g. reading the work maxims every day).

Remark Foundations: It is the sense of an assumption that is to be destroyed when it has fulfilled its purpose.

Maxim: If, while wanting to achieve A, it occurs to you how to achieve something weaker than A (in particular, weaker with respect to constructivity) [103], then be on guard against leaving it aside because it is "too little". If something shows up during work that is not immediately necessary for the goal (even if it makes the achievability more elegant, etc.) but is interesting in itself, then note it in the program without following it right away.

Remark Foundations: There are two ways to weakening a result:

1. with respect to the actual content [possibly down to finitely many examples of a general theorem];
2. with respect to constructivity. However, a pure existence proof seems to be the upper limit in this respect, and one can only become increasingly constructive by going further downwards. Which weakening is fruitful for research (i.e., gradually leads to the desired results)?

Strangely enough, a weakening of the desired result in the sense of 2.) is always provable as well, namely when one wants to decide the proposition A. For example, the proposition:

$(\sum n) [(n = 1 \wedge A) \vee (n = 0 \wedge \neg A)]$  (extensional and intensional weakening).

Remark (Foundations): Weakening of the construction of a number:398 indication of how it can be constructed [e.g., by calculating the ordinal399 of the scheme of the expression that defines the number or by a proof that there is such an ordinal (for a certain reduction procedure)]. Perhaps one can assign a "solution procedure" to each problem in this way (but not in a computable way).

Remark (Foundations): Different weakening of the construction of a number: = construction of an ordinal number. When does an ordinal count as "calculated"?

Remark (Foundations): In order to give objective meaning to the "truth order" of a number-theoretical expression (in the sense of the existence of a realization for the negation of a, but not one of a smaller order) [independent of the constructibility of a], one needs to write the expression differently, namely in such a way that infinitely many quantifiers are nested on top of each other (i.e., write "correctly"). This is because it holds for finite n-fold nestings that the truth order is at most con (presumably).

Remark: The seven virtues have the property that each higher one is the fruit of the lower ones. Moreover, they are different when applied to a different object (different goal). In particular, the three highest (knowledge, understanding, wisdom) are, when applied to theology, fides, sees, caritas. Question: For example, what is wisdom applied to mathematics?

Remark: It is theoretically possible to do nothing without considering it beforehand. Namely, if the first decision is not to do anything without consideration (that is, to follow reason) and every further decision is a means of the preceding one (i.e., every goal is chosen with respect to one chosen earlier on)... <>

## **HAJNAL ANDRÉKA AND ISTVÁN NÉMETI ON UNITY OF SCIENCE: FROM COMPUTING TO RELATIVITY THEORY THROUGH ALGEBRAIC LOGIC** edited by Judit Madarász and Gergely Székely [Outstanding Contributions to Logic, Springer, 9783030641863]

This book features more than 20 papers that celebrate the work of Hajnal Andr ka and Istv n N meti. It illustrates an interaction between developing and applying mathematical logic. The papers offer new results as well as surveys in areas influenced by these two outstanding researchers. They also provide details on the after-life of some of their initiatives.

Computer science connects the papers in the first part of the book. The second part concentrates on algebraic logic. It features a range of papers that hint at the intricate many-way connections between logic, algebra, and geometry. The third part explores novel applications of logic in relativity theory, philosophy of logic, philosophy of physics and spacetime, and methodology of science. They include such exciting subjects as time travelling in emergent spacetime.

The short autobiographies of Hajnal Andr ka and Istv n N meti at the end of the book describe an adventurous journey from electric engineering and Maxwell's equations to a complex system of computer programs for designing Hungary's electric power system, to exploring and contributing deep results to Tarskian algebraic logic as the deepest core theory of such questions, then on to applications of the results in such exciting new areas as relativity theory in order to rejuvenate logic itself.

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Appendix B: Joint Annotated Bibliography of Hajnal Andr eka and Istv an N emeti

Outstanding Contributions to Logic puts focus on important advances in modern logical research. Each volume is devoted to a major contribution by an eminent logician. The series will cover contributions to logic broadly conceived, including philosophical and mathematical logic, logic in computer science, and the application of logic in linguistics, economics, psychology, and other specialized areas of study.

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- A short scientific autobiography by the logician to whom the volume is devoted
- The volume editor's introduction. This is a survey that puts the logician's contributions in context, discusses its importance and shows how it connects with related work by other scholars
- The main part of the book will consist of a series of chapters by different scholars that analyze, develop or constructively criticize the logician's work
- Response to the comments, by the logician to whom the volume is devoted
- A bibliography of the logician's publications Outstanding Contributions to Logic is published by Springer as part of the Studia Logica Library.

This book series, is also a sister series to Trends in Logic and Logic in Asia: Studia Logica Library. All books are published simultaneously in print and online. This book series is indexed in SCOPUS.

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This volume has been prepared in appreciation of the truly outstanding contributions of Hajnal Andr eka and Istv an N emeti to logic. One who does not know them or their joint careers and working style may wonder why this is a joint volume, but for anyone who knows them well or who reads in their joint autobiography how their careers have been closely intertwined since at least as far back as 1971, it should be clear that having one volume is a natural choice.

Not only do they write most of their publications jointly, but they also give conference talks and university lectures together. Their talks are like a kind of dance. They frequently switch roles spontaneously while speaking, even during the course of a single talk, flawlessly and smoothly complementing each other's trains of thought. They are almost always together. One rarely sees one of



them without the other. Somebody once said about them that “they are like a single soul in two bodies” and we have to admit it is quite an accurate description!

We are both collaborators and former students of Hajnal and István. However, they are more than mere teachers and collaborators for us. They took us under their wings as undergraduate students and continued advising and supervising us during graduate school and even as postgraduates. They treated us, just like all of their students, like family members. They often invited us to their home to work and discuss ideas sitting at the round table in their living room. These were round-table discussions in every sense, in which everyone was treated equally and ideas were welcomed from every participant. For us, they are also mentors and good friends: preparing this volume has been a great honor for us. We are truly grateful to them for their continuous support and the so many seeds of insight they have planted in our minds.

For Hajnal and István, looking for deeper understandings and connecting different research areas has always played a central role. Therefore, we have invited researchers working in various areas related to logic to write chapters of this book representing the research-area-integrating and insight-seeking spirit of Hajnal and István’s work.

This volume contains 19 invited chapters organized into 3 parts: Computing, Algebraic Logic, and Relativity Theory, corresponding, in chronological order, to the 3 main areas of research where Hajnal and István have contributed the most. In the autobiography of Hajnal and István at the end of this volume, one can find how these areas are interconnected in their research.

## Part I Computing

### 1 Algebraic Logic and Knowledge Bases by Elena Aladova, Boris Plotkin, and Tatjana Plotkin

Knowledge bases theory provides an important example of the field where applications of universal algebra and algebraic logic look very natural, and their interaction with practical problems arising in computer science might be very productive. In this paper we study the equivalence problem for knowledge bases. Our interest is to find out how the informational equivalence is related to the logical description of knowledge. The main objectives of this paper are logically-geometrically equivalent and LG-isotypic knowledge bases. We will see that these notions give us a good characterization of knowledge bases.

### 2 Guarded Ontology-Mediated Queries by Pablo Barceló, Gerald Berger, Georg Gottlob, and Andreas Pieris

We concentrate on ontology-mediated queries (OMQs) expressed using guarded Datalog<sub>3</sub> and conjunctive queries. Guarded Datalog<sub>3</sub> is a rule-based knowledge representation formalism inspired by the guarded fragment of first-order logic, while conjunctive queries represent a prominent database query language that lies at the core of relational calculus (i.e., first-order queries). For such guarded OMQs we discuss three main algorithmic tasks: query evaluation, query containment, and first-order rewritability. The first one is the task of computing the answer to an OMQ over an input database. The second one is the task of checking whether the answer to an OMQ is contained in the answer of some other OMQ on every input database. The third one asks whether an OMQ can be equivalently rewritten as a first-order query. For query evaluation, we explain how classical results on the

satisfiability problem for the guarded fragment of first-order logic can be applied. For query containment, we discuss how tree automata techniques can be used. Finally, for first-order rewritability, we explain how techniques based on a more sophisticated automata model, known as cost automata, can be exploited.

### 3 Semiring Provenance for Guarded Logics by Katrin M. Dannert and Erich Grädel

Provenance analysis aims at understanding how the result of a computational process with a complex input, consisting of multiple items, depends on the various parts of this input. Here we investigate this for the model checking problem of guarded logics on finite relational structures. Semiring provenance was originally developed for positive database query languages, to understand which combinations of the atomic facts in a database can be used for computing the result of a given query. Based on interpretations of the atomic facts not just by true or false, but by values in an appropriate semiring, one can then answer questions such as the minimal cost of a query evaluation, the confidence one can have that the result is true, or the clearance level that is required for obtaining the output. Semiring provenance was recently extended by Grädel and Tannen to logics with negation, notably first-order logic, dealing with negation by transformation into negation normal form and by semirings of polynomials with a duality on the indeterminates. Here we develop this approach further for the guarded fragment (GF), introduced by Andr eka, van Benthem and N emeti, based on an analysis of the associated model checking games. Guarded quantification permits to control the complexity of the semiring computations since one has to take sums or products only over those tuples of elements that appear in the guards. Finally, we extend our provenance analysis to the more powerful guarded negation fragment of first-order logics.

### 4 Implicit Partiality of Signature Morphisms in Institution Theory by Razvan Diaconescu

We develop an extension of institution theory that accommodates implicitly the partiality of the signature morphisms and its syntactic and semantic effects. This is driven primarily by applications to conceptual blending, but other application domains are possible (such as software evolution). The particularity of this extension is a reliance on ordered-enriched categorical structures. This work is dedicated to Hajnal Andr eka and Istv an N emeti whose early work played an important role in shaping the abstract model theory dream of the author.

### 5 The Four Essential Aristotelian Syllogisms, via Substitution and Symmetry by Vaughan R. Pratt

There being no limit to the number of categories, there is no limit to the number of Aristotelian syllogisms. Aristotle showed that this potential infinity of syllogisms could be obtained as substitution instances of finitely many syllogistic forms, further reduced by exploiting symmetry, in particular the premises' independence of their order. A consensus subsequently emerged that there were 24 valid assertoric syllogistic forms. A more modern concern, completeness, showed that there could be no more. Using no additional principles beyond substitution and symmetry, we further reduce these 24 to four forms. A third principle, contraposition, allows a further reduction to two forms, namely the unconditional form and the conditional form, conditioned on one of the terms being inhabited. We

achieve these reductions via a regularly organized proof system in the form of a graph with 24 vertices and three kinds of edges corresponding to the three principles.

## 6 Adding Guarded Constructions to the Syllogistic by Ian Pratt-Hartmann

The relational syllogistic extends the classical syllogistic by allowing predicate phrases of the forms “rs every q”, “rs some q” and their negations, where q is a common (count) noun and r a transitive verb. It is known that both the classical and relational syllogistic admit a finite set of syllogism-like rules whose associated derivation relation is sound and complete (the latter only when reductio ad absurdum is allowed). In this article, we extend the classical and relational syllogistic by allowing ‘guarded’ predicate phrases of the form “rs only qs”, and their negations. We show that, in both cases, the resulting logic is PSPACE-complete. It follows, on the assumption that  $\text{NPTIME} \approx \text{PSPACE}$ , that neither extension admits a finite set of syllogism-like rules whose associated derivation relation is sound and complete, even when reductio ad absurdum is allowed. We also show that further extending these systems with noun-complementation in sentence-subjects results in logics which are ExPTIME-complete.

## 7 The Significance of Relativistic Computation for the Philosophy of Mathematics by Krzysztof Wójtowicz

In the paper I discuss the importance of relativistic hypercomputation for the philosophy of mathematics, in particular for our understanding of mathematical knowledge. I also discuss the problem of the explanatory role of mathematics in physics and argue that relativistic computation fits very well into the so-called programming account. Relativistic computation reveals an interesting interplay between the empirical realm and the realm of very abstract mathematical principles that even exceed standard mathematics and suggests, that such principles might play an explanatory role. I also argue that relativistic computation does not have some of the weaknesses of other hypercomputational models, thus it is particularly attractive for the philosophy of mathematics.

## Part II Algebraic Logic

## 8 Generalized Quantifiers Meet Modal Neighborhood Semantics by Johan van Benthem and Dag Westerståhl

In a mathematical perspective, neighborhood models for modal logic are generalized quantifiers, parametrized to points in the domain of objects/worlds. We explore this analogy further, connecting generalized quantifier theory and modal neighborhood logic. In particular, we find interesting analogies between conservativity for linguistic quantifiers and the locality of modal logic, and between the role of invariances in both fields. Moreover, we present some new completeness results for modal neighborhood logics of linguistically motivated classes of generalized quantifiers, and raise new types of open problem. With the bridges established here, many further analogies might be explored between the two fields to mutual benefit.

## 9 On the Semilattice of Modal Operators and Decompositions of the Discriminator by Ivo Düntsch, Wojciech Dzik, and Ewa Orłowska

We investigate the join semilattice of modal operators on a Boolean algebra  $B$ . Furthermore, we consider pairs  $(f, g)$  of modal operators whose supremum is the unary discriminator on  $B$ , and study the associated bi-modal algebras.

## 10 Modal Logics that Bound the Circumference of Transitive Frames by Robert Goldblatt

For each natural number  $n$  we study the modal logic determined by the class of transitive Kripke frames in which there are no cycles of length greater than  $n$  and no strictly ascending chains. The case  $n = 0$  is the Gödel-Löb provability logic. Each logic is axiomatised by adding a single axiom to  $K4$ , and is shown to have the finite model property and be decidable. We then consider a number of extensions of these logics, including restricting to reflexive frames to obtain a corresponding sequence of extensions of  $S4$ . When  $n = 1$ , this gives the famous logic of Grzegorzczuk, known as  $S4Grz$ , which is the strongest modal companion to intuitionistic propositional logic. A topological semantic analysis shows that the  $n$ -th member of the sequence of extensions of  $S4$  is the logic of hereditarily  $n + 1$ -irresolvable spaces when the modality  $\bullet$  is interpreted as the topological closure operation. We also study the definability of this class of spaces under the interpretation of  $\bullet$  as the derived set (of limit points) operation. The variety of modal algebras validating the  $n$ -th logic is shown to be generated by the powerset algebras of the finite frames with cycle length bounded by  $n$ . Moreover each algebra in the variety is a model of the universal theory of the finite ones, and so is embeddable into an ultraproduct of them.

## 11 Undecidability of Algebras of Binary Relations by Robin Hirsch, Ian Hodkinson, and Marcel Jackson

Let  $S$  be a signature of operations and relations definable in relation algebra (e.g. converse, composition, containment, union, identity, etc.), let  $R(S)$  be the class of all  $S$ -structures isomorphic to concrete algebras of binary relations with concrete interpretations for symbols in  $S$ , and let  $F(S)$  be the class of  $S$ -structures isomorphic to concrete algebras of binary relations over a finite base. To prove that membership of  $R(S)$  or  $F(S)$  for finite  $S$ -structures is undecidable, we reduce from a known undecidable problem—here we use the tiling problem, the partial group embedding problem and the partial group finite embedding problem to prove undecidability of finite membership of  $R(S)$  or  $F(S)$  for various signatures  $S$ . It follows that the equational theory of  $R(S)$  is undecidable whenever  $S$  includes the boolean operators and composition. We give an exposition of the reduction from the tiling problem and the reduction from the group embedding problem, and summarize what we know about the undecidability of finite membership of  $R(S)$  and of  $F(S)$  for different signatures  $S$ .

## 12 On the Representation of Boolean Magmas and Boolean Semilattices by Peter Jipsen, M. Eyad Kurd-Misto, and James Wimberley

A magma is an algebra with a binary operation  $\cdot$ ; and a Boolean magma is a Boolean algebra with an additional binary operation  $\cdot$  that distributes over all finite Boolean joins. We prove that all square-increasing ( $x \wedge x^2$ ) Boolean magmas are embedded in complex algebras of idempotent ( $x = x^2$ ) magmas. This solves a problem in a recent paper [3] by C. Bergman. Similar results are shown to hold for

commutative Boolean magmas with an identity element and a unary inverse operation, or with any combination of these properties. A Boolean semilattice is a Boolean magma where  $\cdot$  is associative, commutative, and square-increasing. Let  $SL$  be the class of semilattices and let  $S(SL+)$  be all subalgebras of complex algebras of semilattices. All members of  $S(SL+)$  are Boolean semilattices and we investigate the question which Boolean semilattices are representable, i.e., members of  $S(SL+)$ . There are 79 eight-element integral Boolean semilattices that satisfy a list of currently known axioms of  $S(SL+)$ . We show that 72 of them are indeed members of  $S(SL+)$ , leaving the remaining 7 as open problems.

### 13 Canonical Relativized Cylindric Set Algebras and Weak Associativity by Roger D. Maddux

Canonical relativized cylindric set algebras are used to sharpen the relative representation theorem for weakly associative relation algebras, that every complete atomic weakly associative relation algebra is isomorphic with the relativization of a set relation algebra to a symmetric and reflexive binary relation, by insuring that the atoms of the set relation algebra and its relativization are orbits of single sequences under a group of permutations of the underlying set. This sharpening of the relative representation theorem was first proved for the Resek-Thompson Theorem in 1989.

### 14 Blow Up and Blur Constructions in Algebraic Logic by Tarek Sayed Ahmed

Fix  $2 < n < \aleph$  and let  $CA_n$  denote the class of cylindric algebras of dimension  $n$ . Roughly,  $CA_n$  is the algebraic counterpart of the proof theory of first order logic restricted to the first  $n$  variables which we denote by  $Ln$ . The variety  $RCA_n$  of representable  $CA_n$ s reflects algebraically the semantics of  $Ln$ . We show using a so-called blow up and blur construction that several varieties (in fact infinitely many) containing and including the variety  $RCA_n$  are not atom-canonical. A variety  $V$  of Boolean algebras with operators is atom-canonical, if whenever  $A \wedge V$  is atomic, then its Dedekind–MacNeille completion, sometimes referred to as its minimal completion, is also in  $V$ . From our hitherto obtained algebraic results, we show, employing the powerful machinery of algebraic logic, that the celebrated Henkin–Orey omitting types theorem fails dramatically for  $Ln$  even if we allow certain generalized models that are only locally classical.

## Part III Relativity Theory

### 15 Freeing Structural Realism from Model Theory by Neil Dewar

Structural realists contend that the properties and relations in the world are more fundamental than the individuals. However, the standard model theory used to analyse the structure of logical theories can make it difficult to see how such an idea could be coherent or workable: for in that theory, properties and relations are constructed as sets of (tuples of) individuals. In this paper, I look at three ways in which structuralists might hope for an alternative: by appealing to predicate-functor logic, Tractarian geometry, or cylindric algebras. I argue that the first two are problematic, but that the third is promising.

### 16 In the Footsteps of Hilbert: The Andr eka-N emeti Group’s Logical Foundations of Theories in Physics by Giambattista Formica and Mich ele Friend

Hilbert’s axiomatic approach to the sciences was characterized by a dynamic methodology tied to scientific and mathematical fields under investigation. In particular, it is an analytic art for choosing axioms but, at the same time, it has to include dynamically synthetic procedures and meta-theoretical reflections. Axioms have to be useful, or capture something, or help as part of explanations. The Andr eka-N emeti group use several formal axiomatic theories together to re-capture, predict, recover

or explain the phenomena of special relativity, general relativity and classical kinematics. Their scientific methodology is close to Hilbert's conceptions of how science should be done ideally. In this paper, we compare Formica's reading of Hilbert's axiomatic method to the method used by the Andr eka-N emeti group.

### 17 General Relativity as a Collection of Collections of Models by JB Manchak

One usually identifies a particular collection of geometric objects with the models of general relativity. But within this standard collection lurk 'physically unreasonable' models of spacetime. If such models are ruled out, attention can be restricted to some sub-collection of 'physically reasonable' models which can be considered a (non-standard) variant theory of general relativity. Since we have yet to identify a privileged sub-collection of 'physically reasonable' models, it is helpful to think of 'general relativity' in a pluralistic way; we can study a collection of such 'physically reasonable' collections of models.

### 18 Why Not Categorical Equivalence? by James Owen Weatherall

In recent years, philosophers of science have explored categorical equivalence as a promising criterion for when two (physical) theories are equivalent. On the one hand, philosophers have presented several examples of theories whose relationships seem to be clarified using these categorical methods. On the other hand, philosophers and logicians have studied the relationships, particularly in the first order case, between categorical equivalence and other notions of equivalence of theories, including definitional equivalence and generalized definitional (aka Morita) equivalence. In this article, I will express some skepticism about categorical equivalence as a criterion of physical equivalence, both on technical grounds and conceptual ones. I will argue that "category structure" (alone) likely does not capture the structure of a theory, and discuss some recent work in light of this claim.

### 19 Time Travelling in Emergent Spacetime by Christian W uthrich

Most approaches to quantum gravity suggest that relativistic spacetime is not fundamental, but instead emerges from some non-spatiotemporal structure. This paper investigates the implications of this suggestion for the possibility of time travel in the sense of the existence of closed timelike curves in some relativistic spacetimes. In short, will quantum gravity reverse or strengthen general relativity's verdict that time travel is possible? <>

## SPINOZA'S RELIGION: A NEW READING OF THE ETHICS by Clare Carlisle [Princeton University Pres, 978-0691176598]

A bold reevaluation of Spinoza that reveals his powerful, inclusive vision of religion for the modern age

Spinoza is widely regarded as either a God-forsaking atheist or a God-intoxicated pantheist, but Clare Carlisle says that he was neither. In *Spinoza's Religion*, she sets out a bold interpretation of Spinoza through a lucid new reading of his masterpiece, the *Ethics*. Putting the question of religion centre-stage but refusing to convert Spinozism to Christianity, Carlisle reveals that "being in God" unites Spinoza's metaphysics and ethics. *Spinoza's Religion* unfolds a powerful, inclusive philosophical vision for the modern age—one that is grounded in a profound questioning of how to live a joyful, fully human life.

Like Spinoza himself, the *Ethics* doesn't fit into any ready-made religious category. But Carlisle shows how it wrestles with the question of religion in strikingly original ways, responding both critically and constructively to the diverse, broadly Christian context in which Spinoza lived and worked. Philosophy itself, as Spinoza practiced it, became a spiritual endeavor that expressed his devotion to a truthful, virtuous way of life. Offering startling new insights into Spinoza's famously enigmatic ideas about eternal life and the intellectual love of God, Carlisle uncovers a Spinozist religion that integrates self-knowledge, desire, practice, and embodied ethical life to reach toward our "highest happiness"—to rest in God.

Seen through Carlisle's eyes, the *Ethics* prompts us to rethink not only Spinoza but also religion itself.

## Reviews

"Carlisle's book is a finely written and thoughtful introduction to Spinoza's philosophy for anyone who is curious as to why this thinker, dead for almost 350 years, remains vitally relevant today"—Steven Nadler, *Literary Review*

"A wonderful contribution to the growing literature on Spinoza as a moral and religious thinker. With scholarly acumen and graceful writing, Carlisle, rightly focusing on the *Ethics*, asks us to rethink Spinoza's relationship to religion and to modernity, as well as those very notions themselves."—Steven Nadler, author of *Think Least of Death: Spinoza on How to Live and How to Die*

"Clare Carlisle's outstanding *Spinoza's Religion* makes a compelling case for the importance of religion for Spinoza's vision of human self-fulfilment. Artfully written and meticulously researched, it provides a fresh perspective on a crucial aspect of Spinoza's philosophy. This is cutting-edge scholarship that is likely to reshape the field."—Yitzhak Y. Melamed, author of *Spinoza's Metaphysics: Substance and Thought*

"Rigorous, creative, and sympathetic, this magisterial book opens up a neglected tradition and resource: a nondualistic, nondogmatic, and life-affirming spiritual philosophy. Placing Spinoza in a rich dialogue with Christian theology, Clare Carlisle shows that thinking alongside Spinoza reveals new approaches to ethics, freedom, transcendence, and participation in God. This is a landmark book that offers new vistas for philosophers and theologians and that future Spinoza scholars will need to reckon with."—Christopher J. Insole, Durham University

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## The Question of Religion

Benedict de Spinoza did not have a religion—at least not in the usual sense of the word. He was brought up and educated within Amsterdam's Jewish community, from which he was cast out in 1656, at the age of twenty-three. As far as we know, he made no effort to reconcile with this community: leaving it was, it seems, a welcome intellectual liberation.<sup>1</sup> For the remaining twenty years of his life he pursued his philosophical enquiries in conversation with Christians of various sorts, while refusing to convert to Christianity. In the seventeenth century Spinoza was unusual, perhaps even unique, in engaging closely and deeply with theological questions as a free thinker, deliberately occupying a perspective outside any religious tradition. His masterpiece the *Ethics* (1677) shines out even amongst the philosophical works of his most original contemporaries—Descartes and Leibniz, for example—as a metaphysical and ethical vision unconstrained by the demands of doctrinal orthodoxy.

About a year before his death, while he was completing the *Ethics*, Spinoza wrote a letter to Albert Burgh, a young man who had just converted from Calvinism to Catholicism. Here Spinoza discussed Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and made plain his rejection of dogmatic, sectarian religion. He explained that he knew the truth of his own philosophy 'in the same way you know that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles . . . for the true is the indicator both of itself and of the false'. He asked Burgh, who naturally thought his religion superior to any other,

How do you know that [your teachers] are the best among those who have ever taught other Religions, still teach them, or will teach them in the future? Have you examined all those religions, both ancient and modern, which are taught here, and in India, and everywhere throughout the globe? And even if you had examined them properly, how do you know you have chosen the best?

These are good questions, and they are only partly rhetorical. Mocking the pride and competitiveness that often characterise religious sectarianism, Spinoza granted that 'the organization of the Roman Church . . . is well-designed politically, and profitable for many. I do not believe there is any order more suitable for deceiving ordinary people and controlling men's minds, unless it would be the order of the Mahomedan Church.' Yet his irreverence towards sectarian claims to spiritual pre-eminence also went in more tolerant, more conciliatory directions. 'In every Church there are many very honourable men, who worship God with justice and loving kindness, he reminded Burgh, 'for we know many men of this kind among the Lutherans, the Reformed, the Mennonites, and the Enthusiasts. So you ought to concede that holiness of life is not peculiar to the Roman Church, but is common to all: Spinoza closed his letter by counselling the eager young convert to 'recognize the reason God has given you, and cultivate it'. In his *Theologico-Political Treatise* (1670), he had made similar arguments about Judaism, challenging the idea that the Hebrews were God's chosen people. 'God is equally beneficent, compassionate, etc. to all,' Spinoza argued, adding that as far as 'intellect and true virtue' are concerned, 'no nation is distinguished from any other'.

Given Spinoza's resistance to what commonly passes for religion, the title of this book contains an irony, and perhaps for some a provocation. At the same time, it is entirely in earnest. The book offers a new interpretation of Spinoza's *Ethics* which takes seriously the question of its religious and theological import. At the same time—as I argue in detail in my final chapter—it suggests that understanding Spinoza's religion forces us to rethink the concept of religion itself. And this is no coincidence, since our



modern category of religion, structured by notions of belief and belonging, ideology and identity, rose to prominence during Spinoza's century. Thanks in part to Jonathan Israel's pioneering history of the 'Radical Enlightenment, Spinoza is now recognised as an architect of modernity—but was his vision of human beings and their place in the cosmos radically secular, or radically religious?? And does this very distinction between 'religious' and 'secular' rest on a distinctively modern concept of religion, which Spinoza challenged in its infancy? How might the Ethics lead us to rethink our assumptions about what religion is, and what it means to be religious?

Raising these questions leads to a new appreciation of Spinoza's significance. He is rightly seen as a decisively modern thinker: like other forward-looking philosophers of his century, he turned his back on medieval cosmology and scholastic theology in favour of a more streamlined metaphysics, and took a keen interest in new scientific discoveries. He criticised superstitious religion, and sought to liberate philosophy from the still-powerful churches. Yet look a little closer, and we see that Spinoza challenged some of the defining features of modernity. In place of the increasing separation of God from nature, he argued that everything is in God, and even proposed 'Nature' as an alternative name for God. In place of modern individualism, with its ideals of autonomy and free choice, he regarded human beings as entirely dependent on God, interdependent on one another, and embedded in a complex ecosystem of causes: he understood the self to be deeply impressionable and porous, constituted by its relations with other things, and he rejected the idea of free choice as a kind of superstition, akin to belief in miracles. While an ethic of restless striving and relentless industry shaped, from Francis Bacon onwards, the modern pursuit of scientific knowledge, Spinoza balanced his own emphasis on effort and activity with an ideal of intellectual rest—an intuitive knowing that brings peace of mind—which echoes the ideal of contemplation cherished by pre-modern philosophers, monks and scholars. Indeed, he argued that resting in God is the highest human good. And while modern capitalist culture spurs a race for productivity and profit, fuelled by anxieties which, as Max Weber argued in 1905, can be traced to the sixteenth century's Protestant theologies, Spinoza insisted that our deepest happiness is found not in production, wealth or competitive success, but in knowledge. A wise person, he writes at the end of the Ethics, is 'conscious of himself, and of God, and of things, and always possesses true peace of mind' (E5p42s). His own way of life bears witness to this ideal: he lived humbly and modestly, devoted to his philosophical enquiries.

Spinoza thus resisted deep tendencies of modern thought, which had begun to shape his own century and would produce the world we inhabit today. He did so not by drifting back into pre-modern science and religion, but by forging an alternative modernity that preserved or developed some of the profound insights of his ancient and medieval forebears, by setting them on new philosophical foundations. For example, the Ethics affirms the traditional theological view that we are thoroughly dependent beings, not by appealing to a Jewish or Christian doctrine of creation, but by arguing that we are modes, which are by definition 'in another, rather than substances, which are self-sufficient, 'in themselves. To offer just one further example (as we shall see, there are more), Spinoza echoes Plato's insistence that virtue is synonymous with inner happiness—a view challenged first by superstitious beliefs in posthumous rewards and punishments, and later by the means—end thinking of utilitarianism. Yet his defence of virtue's intrinsic value dismantles the idea of final causes that had structured medieval thought.

As its title indicates, the Ethics is primarily a book about how to live a good human life. Like a stripped-down *Summa Theologiae*, it begins and ends with God. For Spinoza, we work out how to live well by

understanding our relation to God, to other people, and also, crucially, to ourselves. The core principle of his philosophy, governing his ontology and epistemology as well as his ethics, is that 'whatever is, is in God' (E1p15). I call this principle 'being-in-God, and regard it as Spinoza's deepest thought. He argues that the highest, most truthful kind of human life is fully conscious of being-in-God--and conscious, too, that every other creature and thing is also a being-in-God. We will be able to say much more about what Spinoza's religion consists in once we have considered what it means, both conceptually and existentially, to 'be in God.

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## AFTERWORD

### 'The path to these things'

In the Ethics Spinoza proposes both a speculative theology and a philosophy of religious life. The first concerns our being, while the second concerns our becoming. These two aspects of the Ethics—the ontological or metaphysical, on the one hand, and the ethical or existential, on the other—are intimately connected. In Part One, Spinoza argues that God, a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, necessarily exists, and that whatever is, is in God. For each individual mode this entails causal and conceptual dependence, which can give the impression that we are trapped in a rigid determinist system. As we move through the Ethics, however, Spinoza's metaphysics of human being-in-God unfolds: we see that we can be more or less, that we are continually passing between various degrees of being—and that our fluctuating existence, with its striving to persist and increase, opens up a path to follow in pursuit of the highest good. This ethical journey, way or path (*via*) expresses our nature, yet it involves effort, emendation, learning, growth in virtue and self-understanding.

Religious life consists in keeping to this demanding path, or, perhaps more realistically, in returning to it again and again. Its task is to appropriate, live out and remain faithful to the truth of our being-in-God—the truth that constitutes the core of Spinoza's theology. This is the meaning of 'human freedom, as the title of Ethics V suggests.

Spinoza ends Part Five with a word of encouragement to follow his difficult path of freedom: 'If the path [*via*] I have shown to lead to these things now seems very hard [*per ardua videatur*], still, it can be found' (E5p42s). In fact, he suggests, the path only seems arduous. When it is found and followed, even if only for a short time, it turns out to be a place of rest.

Religio joins a number of concepts in the Ethics—being-in-God, *scientia intuitiva*, participation, *acquiescentia*, *amor Dei intellectualis* and eternity—which are gathered in this book under the title Spinoza's Religion. These concepts touch one another, illuminate one another, and each might be placed at the heart of the gathering. Whichever concept takes centre-stage, the Ethics discloses ways of being, knowing, desiring, feeling and acting that are entirely natural to human beings, yet also high ideals which inspire strivings of devotion and cultivation. We considered, in Chapter 2, how the text itself exemplifies and guides these strivings. The Ethics addresses readers with mixed minds, and seeks to train their imaginations as well as model the clear, orderly thinking of ratio and the immediate, penetrating insight of *scientia intuitiva*.

Spinoza is often described as a rationalist—and he is certainly committed to the intelligibility of being. Yet his conception of knowledge seems much broader than the epistemologies that dominate

contemporary philosophy. He understands human cognition to be intimately tied to our embodiment, our affective experience, our duration. His use of the verb *cognoscere* throughout the passages in the Ethics dealing with our knowledge of God suggests a process of getting to know God, which requires sustained attention. Similarly, he chooses the verb *noscere*—meaning to recognise, to become acquainted—to describe a process of getting to know ourselves: 'it is necessary to know [*noscere*] both the power and the weakness of our nature' (Eons). This suggests that we should seek to know, by intimate acquaintance, both our sadness and our joy: though Spinoza celebrates joy, and criticises the idea that forms of sadness should be cultivated as spiritual virtues, this does not mean we should resist or refuse sadness when it arises—for how else can we come to know 'the power and the weakness of our nature, except by feeling its fluctuations? *Sentire* denotes the mind's feeling of its own eternity, while *scientia intuitiva* likewise conveys the immediacy and simplicity of sensation: a capacity to see, in one glance, the being-in-God of singular things. Spinoza suggests that our minds can connect to God in all these ways, and he shows why this connection naturally, necessarily, brings us joy and peace—our highest activity, and our deepest repose.

We are not autonomous beings, and we do not strive for these goods alone. We seek like-minded companions, and the more we taste the immanent rewards of consciously being-in-God, the more we wish to share them with others. This is precisely what Spinoza himself desired—and what he did. The very fact that he spent many years writing the Ethics, without extrinsic reward, is, I think, an extraordinary demonstration of his own virtue of *religio*.

In my Introduction, I suggested that the Ethics may be ambiguous on the question of religion. This is partly because Spinoza approaches this question neither in terms of orthodoxy, nor in terms of orthopraxy; both these alternatives belong to the modern objectification of religion, which he sought to resist. More fundamentally, the religious ambiguity of the Ethics contributes to this resistance. It is possible to interpret the text so that the concept of God becomes a theoretical vanishing-point, evacuated of recognisably religious significance—and many people have read it this way. I find it remarkable that Spinoza's philosophy accommodates twenty-first-century atheism along with the simple piety of his landlady. This profound inclusivity is a great strength at a time when there are deep sectarian divisions not only between different 'religions, but between what we have become accustomed to call 'religious' and 'secular' perspectives. Unlike many other religious philosophies, Spinoza does not alienate nonreligious readers.

Nevertheless, if we exclude the insights I have considered under the heading 'Spinoza's Religion', we miss much of the richness and depth of the Ethics. We also miss the opportunity to allow Spinoza to challenge the dogmatism of the secular view that now dominates our culture, just as he challenged Christian and Jewish dogmatisms in his own time. If we insist on Spinoza's atheism, we cannot appreciate his core principle of being-in\*God, and have little choice but to dismiss much of Part Five of the Ethics. If we assume that *Deus sive Natura* simply reduces God to a familiar modern notion of nature, stripped of any theological meaning, then we lose the conception of God (or *Natura naturans*) as ontological ground which is so integral to Spinoza's metaphysics, with its deep commitment to the intelligibility of being.

Spinoza offers us the freedom to name this ontological ground 'God' or 'Nature, YHWH' or 'substance, or perhaps something else. Any name can only gesture to a plenitude of being that eludes us—although we cannot exist, or conceive ourselves, apart from it. Yet how we gesture to the ground of our being

matters a great deal, since this gesture is a fundamental way of making, or disclosing, meaning in our world. Since 'God' names this excessive, elusive, omnipresent fullness of being in a manner that draws human beings into communities of devotion and enquiry, equipped with long histories and rich philosophical, contemplative and poetic traditions to draw upon, this is both a good name and a risky one. In the seventeenth century it had a very broad appeal, and offered a promising basis for universality as well as enormous potential for theological discord. Perhaps this is why Spinoza retained it in the Ethics as well as in the Theologico-Political Treatise, while addressing, in both texts, the misunderstandings and conflicts generated by dogmatic 'belief in God'.

To speak personally for a moment, I feel ambivalent towards the word 'God', but one of the things I like about it is that it places us in what Etienne Souriau called 'a questioning situation'. I find that this word opens up, rather than circumscribes, the Kierkegaardian 'question of existence'—What does it mean to be a human being?—that guides my philosophical work and what I hesitatingly call my spiritual life. The Catholic theologian Karl Rahner wrote that the word 'God' (or equivalent words in other languages) 'is so very much without contour, and for this reason is 'obviously quite appropriate for what it refers to. Using the word 'mystery' in a sense similar to Souriau's 'questioning situation, Rahner suggests that 'the concept "God" is not a grasp of God by which a person masters the mystery, but it is letting oneself be grasped by the mystery which is present and yet ever distant'.

The name of God, spoken with due care, has a remarkable power to hold open the question of religion. Since Spinoza retains the classical conception of religio as the virtue of giving honour to God, his decision to name God as the ground of being in Part One of the Ethics raises the question: what does it mean to give honour to God? This prompts theoretical, theological questions—What is God? Where is God? How am I connected to God? — and while the Ethics does offer compelling answers to these questions, it also suggests that pursuing them will cultivate a sense of our own epistemic limitations. Such questions flow from, and are intimately connected to, the practical religious question of how we might give honour to God. Spinoza refuses to answer this question in terms of religious belief or religious practice. In place of orthodoxy or orthopraxy, he holds open the ethical, existential or spiritual question of religion: 'How ...?' This is a working question, a guiding question, a question that is genuinely asked only insofar as it is lived.

One clear answer that emerges from Spinoza's works is the kind of devotion I discussed in Chapter 1: a willingness to spend time, to pay attention, to offer these resources of one's life—as Foucault put it, 'the price that must be paid for access to the truth. Paying this 'spiritual' price is what it means to honour God, and perhaps, as Latour suggests, 'learning to redirect attention is religion itself'. Yet precisely how we spend our time, precisely where we direct our attention, may remain open—for devotion can be expressed through philosophical and theological enquiry; through contemplation and meditation; through rituals and liturgies; or simply through ethical life. Religio might take the form of seeking God, or giving praise and thanks to a God already given through a cultural tradition. It might be cultivated and communicated in hymns and mantras, in speech and writing, in works of love or in silence.

Spinoza's conception of God as ontological ground not only secures the intelligibility of being, but also provides a resting-place for desire. In other words, this grounding is affective and experiential, as well as metaphysical. If we were not consciously grounded in God, we could not feel, or 'know by experience, that we are eternal—not even for a moment. The Ethics suggests that we do have this knowledge, and that we can rest in it, regardless of religious belief or belonging. Without God, our hearts would remain

restless; our desire and love would be drawn only to mutable, perishable things. Spinoza's writings give philosophical expression to an eternal desire and love, which has been articulated in many ways, in many traditions, throughout human history. We can trace the stakes of this issue to the beginning of the *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, where Spinoza describes how our minds, or souls, are disturbed and diminished by 'the love of those things that can perish'—whereas 'love [amor] toward the eternal and infinite thing feeds the mind [animism] with a joy entirely exempt from sadness. This is greatly to be desired [desiderandum], and to be sought with all our strength:

This affirmation of eternity does not make Spinozism a dualistic, life-denying, other-worldly philosophy. On the contrary: all the things of this world have some share in God's eternity, and deserve to be seen and loved as beings-in-God. When things express themselves most truly, they participate most fully in God's nature. For a Spinozist, it would be poetic, but not untrue, to call their being-in-God 'glory, and to say that every creature on the earth sings its own peculiarly glorious song in praise of its creator. <>

## **SPINOZA'S ETHICS, BY BENEDICTUS DE SPINOZA, TRANSLATED BY GEORGE ELIOT, edited by Clare Carlisle [Princeton University Press, 9780691193236]**

An authoritative edition of George Eliot's elegant translation of Spinoza's greatest philosophical work

In 1856, Marian Evans completed her translation of Benedict de Spinoza's *Ethics* while living in Berlin with the philosopher and critic George Henry Lewes. This would have become the first edition of Spinoza's controversial masterpiece in English, but the translation remained unpublished because of a disagreement between Lewes and the publisher. Later that year, Evans turned to fiction writing, and by 1859 she had published her first novel under the pseudonym George Eliot. This splendid edition makes Eliot's translation of the *Ethics* available to today's readers while also tracing Eliot's deep engagement with Spinoza both before and after she wrote the novels that established her as one of English literature's greatest writers.

Clare Carlisle's introduction places the *Ethics* in its seventeenth-century context and explains its key philosophical claims. She discusses George Eliot's intellectual formation, her interest in Spinoza, the circumstances of her translation of the *Ethics*, and the influence of Spinoza's ideas on her literary work. Carlisle shows how Eliot drew on Spinoza's radical insights on religion, ethics, and human emotions, and brings to light surprising affinities between Spinoza's austere philosophy and the rich fictional worlds of Eliot's novels.

This authoritative edition demonstrates why George Eliot's translation remains one of the most compelling and philosophically astute renderings of Spinoza's Latin text. It includes notes that indicate Eliot's amendments to her manuscript and that discuss her translation decisions alongside more recent English editions.

## Review

"Carlisle has done a beautiful job editing George Eliot's translation and providing a scholarly apparatus. . . . This is the edition that George Eliot's translation of Spinoza's *Ethics* has long deserved, and that we have long needed."—Steven Nadler, *La Vie des Idées*

"This edition will be of most interest to scholars of Eliot seeking more insight into the influence of Spinoza's thought on her literary work."—*Choice*

"Readers and lovers of George Eliot owe a large debt of gratitude to Clare Carlisle and Princeton University Press for their fine new edition of Eliot's translation of Benedict de Spinoza's *Ethics* (1677)."—Thomas Albrecht, *Women's Writing*

"For this volume to be truly worthwhile, the significance of the translation must be revealed, and to do this, the biographical, literary, and philosophical context in which the translation came to be needs to be explored and analysed. And Carlisle succeeds splendidly in all these respects."—Michael Della Rocca, *Mind*

"A very distinguished scholarly edition by Clare Carlisle, valuable to readers of George Eliot as well as students of Spinoza."—Philip Davis, author of *The Transferred Life of George Eliot*

"This edition of George Eliot's translation of Spinoza's *Ethics* makes this important text accessible at last. Clare Carlisle provides a concise overview of Spinoza's philosophy and explores his ideas in connection to Eliot's fiction and intellectual life. This fine book will encourage extended analysis of Eliot's relationship to Spinoza's thought, a subject that has been undervalued and underexplored in the criticism."—Suzy Anger, University of British Columbia

"Carlisle has done a beautiful job editing George Eliot's translation and providing a scholarly apparatus. . . . This is the edition that George Eliot's translation of Spinoza's *Ethics* has long deserved, and that we have long needed."—Steven Nadler, *La Vie des Idées*

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## **THE NON-EXISTENCE OF THE REAL WORLD** by Jan Westerhoff [Oxford University Press 9780198847915]

Does the real world, defined as a world of objects that exist independent of human interests, concerns, and cognitive activities, really exist? Jan Westerhoff argues that we have good reason to believe it does not. His discussion considers four main facets of the idea of the real world,

ranging from the existence of a separate external and internal world (comprising various mental states congregated around a self), to the existence of an ontological foundation that grounds the existence of all the entities in the world, and the existence of an ultimately true theory that provides a

final account of all there is. As Westerhoff discusses the reasons for rejecting the postulation of an external world behind our representations, he asserts that the internal world is not as epistemically transparent as is usually assumed, and that there are good reasons for adopting an

anti-foundational account of ontological dependence. Drawing on conclusions from the ancient Indian philosophical system of Madhyamaka Buddhism, Westerhoff defends his stance in a purely Western philosophical framework, and affirms that ontology, and philosophy more generally, need not be conceived as providing an ultimately true theory of the world.

### **Review**

"...the flow of the book is smooth and logical; this is aided by compact, well-organized, self-contained sections with essential topic phrases on the margins. Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty." -- D. P. Prianti, Gannon University, *CHOICE*

"...a tightly defended view of Madhyamaka nonfoundationalism...this tour de force of analytic philosophy marshals the resources available in Western philosophy, cognitive science, psychology, mathematics, and other disciplines to push a sophisticated line of argumentation that explains why the "existence of the external and the internal world as ordinarily conceived" is unviable, and why a true theory of ontology is "an unobtainable mirage." -- Joie Szu-Chiao Chen , *Lion's Roar*

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The argument in the following pages will look at a series of challenges to increasingly more fundamental aspects of the notion of a real world. The discussion begins by an investigation of reasons for the presumed certainty of the existence of the external, mind-independent world around us, a world containing material objects such as shoes, and ships, and sealing-wax, biological organisms, such as cabbages, and persons, such as kings. In Chapter 1 I consider a selection of arguments directed against the existence of such an external world. The chapter focuses on the discussion of different theories of perception (naïve realism, disjunctivism, representationalism) and the ontologies they involve. I argue that ultimately a kind of brain-based representationalism works best as a theory of perception but that

this, somewhat surprisingly, also undermines the justification of a mind-independent world of material objects.

A natural place of retreat once the reality of the mind-independent world has been challenged is that of the certainty of our inner world, a world which, we assume, is perfectly transparent to us and over which we have complete control, which provides a sharp contrast with an external world of which we have limited knowledge, and which frequently resists our attempts to influence it. Many of the arguments against the existence of the external world presented in this chapter are extremely well-known, and in many cases as old as the discipline of philosophy itself. In Chapter 2 I consider a set of somewhat less familiar arguments against the existence of the kind of internal world we have just described. Amongst other things I look at various arguments critical of introspective certainty and conclude that a foundation in the internal world remains elusive: our introspective capacities do not give us any more of a secure grasp of the world than the theories of perception discussed in the first chapter.

Supposing these arguments are successful, or at least challenge our belief in the existence of a world inside, where would we retreat from here? If both the external and the internal world turn out to be less solid than we initially thought, one thing we can still hold on to is the certainty that something is real, even if the external world is not, and even if we and our internal world are not. This, of course, is the belief in the existence of an ultimate foundation that grounds all existence. We will consider a series of challenges to this idea in Chapter 3, evaluating possible arguments for the existence of such a foundation, and describing attempts to establish its opposite, a non-foundational view of reality.

If the anti-foundationalist turns out to have the better arguments on his side it looks as if we can close the debate here, and conclude that at the end of the day the world has a non-well-founded structure. We could do this, if it didn't turn out that there are substantial problems with the idea of a final, ultimately true theory of the world. In the last, fourth chapter I look at a variety of arguments (connected with the coherence theory of truth, semantic contextualism, and the denial of absolutely general quantification) that suggest that the idea of a foundational theory of the world is as problematic as that of an ontological foundation. From this it follows that if there cannot be an ultimately true theory then it also cannot be ultimately true that the world has a non-well-founded structure.

We are now left with an interesting problem, for it appears as if the theory of the non-existence of the real world we defend here cannot be a final theory either. The chapter closes with a discussion of this final problem, together with some reflection on the implications of the denial of ultimately true theories for the ontological or philosophical enterprise more generally.

Another way of contextualizing the discussion in this book is by considering

it as a reaction to various claims of metaphysical realism. Hilary Putnam characterizes metaphysical realism as a conjunction of three claims:

1. a mind-independence claim ('the world consists of some fixed totality of mind-independent objects');
2. a unique true theory claim ('there is exactly one true and complete description of "the way the world is"');

3. a correspondence claim ('truth involves some sort of correspondence relation between words or thought-signs and external things and sets of things').

This book considers arguments that challenge all three claims. Chapter 1 looks at reasons that try to undermine the ontological assumption of an external world. Our purpose is not epistemological; we are not trying to find out whether there might be reasons to doubt the existence of an external world, reasons that undermine our claim that we can have any knowledge of such a world. We are interested in examining reasons why there may not be such a world.

The question of the ultimately true theory of the world is raised in the final chapter (Chapter 4). We consider a variety of reasons that appear to show that the assumption of such a theory may be more problematic than we are usually happy to assume.

The issue of correspondence is raised in Chapter 3. In fact we are looking at a more general form of this claim. Instead of considering the issue whether there needs to be any correspondence between words and things, we investigate whether there is any necessity for representational theories to be grounded in the non-representational. Such necessity is expressed by the claim that for linguistic items to be meaningful at all it is necessary that following down the route of 'means that' will not continue to lead us from definitions to definitions, but will at some level terminate in something that is part of the world, not simply part of its description. This claim is obviously weaker than the correspondence claim; the correspondence claim needs to establish that there is a specific relation between words and things (a kind of structural similarity or some such), while the weaker thesis of semantic foundation we are looking at here just needs to make sure that there is some way in which the words link up with the things. We first set out to argue that semantic non-foundationalism is a consistent position (i.e. that there is no contradiction entailed in assuming that representations only refer to other representations), and then consider reasons for why one might consider this view in fact to be true.

The one dimension of metaphysical realism that Putnam's three conjuncts do not cover is realism about the inner world, the claim that looking inside our own mind acquaints us with certain knowledge of an inner world and its inhabitants, a collection consisting of our thoughts, beliefs, memories, as well as the central point around which all of these revolve, our self. This is a natural point of refuge in response to challenges of claims concerning the existence of an external world. What is rarely realized in the debates between realism and the various forms of idealism that some of its critics espouse is that the claims about the existence of an internal world do not rest on a more secure basis than those about the outer objects they are supposed to replace. Chapter 2 looks at various arguments for the claim that any trust we may place in an inner realm of certainty is in all likelihood without foundation.

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At the end of the movie *The Truman Show* the hero gets on a boat and travels to the end of the world. This end is a wall bounding the ocean that is painted like the sky. Truman gets off the boat and, like the man in the famous Flammarion engraving manages to break through the wall to see what is behind it. In the case of the Truman show this world is relatively similar to the one from which Truman has just emerged, but there are variations on the same scenario where this is not the case. Flammarion's clockwork universe of moving spheres is a case in point, as is the nightmarish body-farm of the *Matrix*. These are illustrations of two very different ways of interpreting the way the world is presented to us. We can either consider it to be more or less faithfully represented, conforming to the accuracy

requirement discussed in Chapter 1 (as a TV camera records its surroundings more or less correctly), or we can consider it to be seriously distorted (like a TV camera that inverts colours, lets straight lines look wavy and so on). These distortions can be very severe, for example, when we look at something that looks like a chair but is in fact a random combination of pieces of wood that only looks like a chair from one specific point. In addition to our appearances being similar to or very dissimilar from the world behind the world we need to consider the possibility that there is no such world behind the appearances at all.

Jean Baudrillard distinguishes four ways in which appearance and reality can be related. The first, which he terms 'good appearance', is one in which reality is faithfully represented, the second, 'evil appearance', 'of the order of maleficence' is one where appearances represent reality in a distorted way, the third, 'of the order of sorcery', contains appearances that merely give the impression of representing reality, though there is no reality to represent, and finally, the fourth, pure simulation, which 'is no longer of the order of appearance at all', here there is not even the presumption that a reality is represented. Baudrillard considers these four ways to form a kind of chronological sequence, placing the 'good appearance' in the pre-modern period and the pure simulation in the present. Moreover, this sequence is a story of decline; for Baudrillard living in a world of pure simulation is clearly a bad thing. These additional complications need not concern us here. What interests us in the present context is the common feature of the last two of the four ways. They restrict the reality/appearance distinction to its second member: there are only the appearances.

After the preceding discussion it does not seem to be controversial that such a position is consistent; appearances can be grounded in further appearances, structuralist can distinguish structure from non-structure, even though all that exists is structure.

Consider the following example. Assume you are sitting in a baroque theatre before the performance of a play. A formal garden is visible on stage, with clipped hedges, statues, topiaries, and shape of a maison de plaisir in the background. While admiring all this your friend tells you that you are not actually looking at the stage at all. What you are looking at is a skillfully painted trompe d'oeil screen between curtain and stage. You may now wonder whether this screen is a faithful or unfaithful representation of what is happening on the stage behind it. Once the screen goes up you may realize that there is a formal garden exactly like the painted one behind it. Or there may be something entirely different behind it. But now consider that you also find out that you are sitting in a fake theatre as well. For some reason the nobleman who built it ran out of funds and decided just to build the auditorium. While the seats, curtains, boxes, and so on are all there, there is no stage. Behind the painted screen is just a brick wall, and behind that is the backyard of the ducal kitchen. You now realize that your initial pondering of whether the representation on the screen truly represented the setup on the stage behind it is without an object, for there is no stage behind it. But learning that there is no stage does not put you back into the state you were in when you first sat down in the theatre—then you thought that there was a three-dimensional array set up on the stage. Your views of what you now have in front of you are very different. Even though your former and your present self both reject the idea of a setup behind a screen (the former because you did not think there was a screen, the latter because you think there is nothing but the screen), you have very different ideas of what the theatre is like. In the same way the naïve realist and the irrealist have different views of what the world is like. The former believes there to be a comprehensive theory of the world as it is in its most basic features, the latter can offer only local



theories that describe specific aspects of the world (and needs to assert that the claim 'there are no comprehensive theories' is not itself part of a comprehensive theory).

It might seem that the upshot of the discussion we have just presented is that ontology, and metaphysics more generally, are hopeless enterprises. Ontology not only aims at determining 'what there is', but aims at doing so in ultimately general and exhaustive terms. But if the arguments presented above have any force, such a theory is an unobtainable mirage, unobtainable because there are no absolutely general quantifications such a theory would need, and because there is no context-independent notion of truth such a theory would want to express. Nevertheless, even though the universal and global theories remain unobtainable, this does not mean that we cannot obtain what is relative and dependent. That our ontological theories cannot encompass everything does not mean we cannot have restricted theories of something (such as causation, probability, properties, and so on). And that the truth of its statements can only be understood relative to a body of background assumptions outside of the theory does not mean that the statements are pointless. The things we have to hold fixed in a given case may well be uncontroversial and universally accepted, or at least deemed to be such. In this case it is not detrimental to our theory that it does not provide an account of these background assumptions as well. Intersubjective truths that hold relative to a sufficiently large body of subjects seem to be a reasonable substitute for objective truths.

A point that is sometimes made in support of Berkeleyan idealism is that it makes no difference for our scientific endeavours whether or not we are Berkeleyans. The idealist will simply understand a physical theory as a theory about the relation between different kinds of mental entities, while the materialist will consider the objects involved to be material. Up to a point the same applies when we replace idealism by irrealism, and physics by metaphysics. In order to develop a workable theory of, say, causal pre-emption it is largely irrelevant whether you think causation is only an appearance, or whether there really are objective causal facts. If our intuitions about grounding do not spring from contact with particular metaphysical grounding facts, but are simply appearances resulting from certain (hard-wired, evolved, sub-personal) psychological mechanisms<sup>109</sup> this does not render the question what grounding structures are best suited for systematizing these intuitions obsolete. And if we try to decide between trope theory and universalism we look at the same data whether we are an irrealist or not: we attempt to come up with a reliable systematic account of how the instantiation relation seems to work.

There are of course cases where this does not hold. If we develop a philosophical account of mathematics a Platonist understanding would not cohere well with irrealism. We could of course say that the best way in which we can make sense of our mathematical practices is by assuming that there are non-spatio-temporal, necessarily existent objects that constitute the subject-matter of mathematics. Yet the Platonist will want to say something more, namely that therefore there are mathematical objects, and that this is a statement that forms part of the ultimate theory of what there is. But if there is no such theory no such statement can be made. All we can do is assert the somewhat weakened form of Platonism just mentioned. But this also shows that the above account is far from describing all philosophical theorizing as defective. Philosophical theories, like scientific theories, are still useful to have at the level of appearance. What we cannot do is ascribe to any of them the status of a complete theory of the ultimate structure of the world. But perhaps this is a price that is not too high to pay. <>

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# THE ORIGINS OF PHILOSOPHY IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ANCIENT INDIA: A HISTORICAL COMPARISON by Richard Seaford [Cambridge University Press, 9781108499552]

Why did Greek philosophy begin in the sixth century BCE? Why did Indian philosophy begin at about the same time? Why did the earliest philosophy take the form that it did? Why was this form so similar in Greece and India? And how do we explain the differences between them? These questions can only be answered by locating the philosophical intellect within its entire societal context, ignoring neither ritual nor economy. The cities of Greece and northern India were in this period distinctive also by virtue of being pervasively monetised. The metaphysics of both cultures is marked by the projection (onto the cosmos) and the introjection (into the inner self) of the abstract, all-pervasive, quasi-omnipotent, impersonal substance embodied in money (especially coinage). And in both cultures this development accompanied the interiorisation of the cosmic rite of passage (in India sacrifice, in Greece mystic initiation).

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This book is devoted to a unitary argument, but over such a wide range of material that I offer the reader preliminary guidance in this chapter, beginning with an overview.

The next chapter (concluding Part A) presents explanations of the similarity between the earliest philosophy in India and Greece. Part B describes the polytheist reciprocity that, among an elite, was replaced in both cultures by monism. Part C centres on the main factors behind this replacement in India: the individual interiorisation of what I call the cosmic rite of passage, and monetisation. Part D describes the similar factors behind the similar development of ideas in Greece. The conclusion (Part E) summarises and explores the variety of factors behind the new imagining of universe and inner self.

Although Part C focuses mainly on India and Part D mainly on Greece, I have made frequent attempts throughout the book to explain the similarities and differences between the intellectual transformations in the two cultures. Some references to the Greek material in Part C will be fully appreciated only after the analogy between the Greek and the Indian intellectual transformations has become clear in Part D. Possible early misgivings about my position on monetisation as an important factor behind the intellectual transformations are addressed in Part E.

There follows a brief summary of each chapter.

Chapter 2 describes the set of metaphysical ideas that, roughly speaking, arose at about the same time in India and Greece and nowhere else (2§A). For the sake of clarity, right from the start I expose the weaknesses of several kinds of explanation, in particular the widely popular assumption of 'influence' (2§C), while also setting out the evidence for the socio-economic transformations that I regard as the most important but relatively neglected factor (2§E).

In Part B, Chapter 3 describes how there is in the earliest texts of both cultures (Ri gveda, Homer, Hesiod) a variety of anthropomorphic deities whose goodwill is to be elicited by offerings and praise, against a background combination of pastoralism and agriculture, with no money and very little commerce.

Chapter 4 concerns the construction of the inner self in the Rigveda and in Homer. The comprehensive, bounded inner self with which we are familiar, but which is in fact given to us not by nature but as a construction in some societies but not in others (4§A), is found neither in Homer (4§B) nor in the Rigveda (4§C). Its absence can be correlated with polytheist reciprocity (4§D), whereas its subsequent development (i.e. of atman and psuche) can be correlated with various kinds of monism, of which there are a very few slight occurrences in the latest section of the Rigveda (4§E). The explanation I will give of these developments requires a preliminary description here of the phenomena of cosmisation (cosmic projection) and interiorisation (introjection) (4§F).

In Part C, Chapter 5 begins with similarities and differences between Vedic and Greek sacrifice, notably the centrality to Greek sacrifice of the communal meal that was absent from Vedic sacrifice (5§A), in which the cycle of nature, the payment of metaphysical debt and the rite of passage to heaven and back each forms a cosmic cycle driven by necessity (5§B). The individualisation of the Vedic sacrifice, along with its interiorisation and automatisisation (5§C), cannot be explained without taking into account the factor of monetisation (5§D). Individualisation in India and Greece has different cultural consequences (5§E).

Chapter 6 describes the construction of the unified inner self and its relation to the universe. A movement from diversity (inner, cosmic and political) to wholeness is found in the mythic-ritual complex of both cultures, notably in the strikingly similar myths of Prajapati and Dionysos (6§A). The wholeness of the inner self correlates with the wholeness of the world obtained by sacrifice (6§B). The formation of the unified inner self (atman) as cosmogony is described in the opening of the Brhaddranyaka Upanisad (6§C). The relation of atman to other candidates for the role of unified inner self, prana and manas, is described (6§D).

Chapter 7 describes a distinctively Indian phenomenon. The participation of individual autocrats (Kshatriyas) in the dialogues of the early Upanishads is associated with new metaphysical doctrines that will be shown to reflect monetisation (7§A). The social power that is interiorised in the construction of the unified inner self is in India (mainly) autocracy, whereas in Greece — where kingship is in decline — it is (mainly) monetary value (7§B).

The first three chapters of Part C have focused on the inner self. The remaining three focus on cosmology.

Chapter 8 describes the development of the various forms of monism (material, personal, mental, abstract) after the Rigveda (8§A). The traditional correspondences, between ritual and what ritual controls, tend to collapse into a single identification, of subject with object (8§B), making for the prominence and coalescence of mental monism and abstract monism in the early Upanishads —under the influence of universal abstract value (8§C). Awareness of the unity of all things (monism) is associated with immortality (8§D). The monistic tendency is illustrated by focus on a single passage (CU 6: 8§E).

Chapter 9 describes the earliest extant Indian beliefs about the afterlife (9§A), which were superseded by the idea of individually accumulated metaphysical merit accompanied by the danger of repeated death (9§C) and develops into the idea of subjection in the hereafter to a repeated cosmic cycle (9§D). All this prefigures the combination of individually accumulated karma with the universal cycle of reincarnation

(samara), from which escape was sought by various forms of renunciation (9§E). An important factor in these developments was the individual accumulation and universal circulation of money (9§F).

Chapter 10 begins with a critique of the best existing attempt (by Obeyesekere) to explain the origins of what I call ethicised indiscriminate reincarnation (EIR) in India and in Greece. But in my view any successful explanation cannot exclude monetisation (10§A), which also contributes to the importance of cyclicity in reincarnation (10§B), and to the advent of the widespread and persistent idea of individually accumulated karma (10§C). This requires reflection on the different roles of kinship in Greece and India (10§D).

In Part D the main focus moves from India to Greece. Chapter 11 compares the interiorisation of the cosmic rite of passage in India (sacrifice) and Greece (mystic initiation) (11§A), identifies the importance of the soul (psuche) in mystic initiation (11§B), which is interiorised in Herakleitos (12§B), in Parmenides (11§C) and in Plato (11§D). This Greek interiorisation promoted ideas akin to the coalescence of mental with abstract monism promoted by the interiorisation of the cosmic rite of passage in India.

Chapter 12 classifies Greek monism with the same four categories as used for India (12§A), and describes the transition — also found in India — from reciprocity to monism (12§B), which is closely associated with the new inner self (12§C). The element of fire in universe and inner self allows cross-cultural comparison that includes Zoroastrianism and Buddhism (12§D).

Chapter 13 describes the projection (13§A) and interiorisation (introjection) of abstract value. The idea of the comprehensive inner self as constituting a person's identity is first indicated in the Homeric Achilles' evaluation, in a crisis of reciprocity, of his psuche (13§B), which is also the first of many passages in which death is envisaged as an economic transaction (13§C), for instance in Herakleitos, who is also the first to focus on the nature of the living psuche (14§D) and who also exemplifies the Greek interiorisation of unifying abstract value (13§E).

Chapter 14 describes the opposition within early Greek metaphysics between the ontological privileging of (communal) circulation and of (individually owned) abstract value (14§A). Our three key processes of abstraction, monetisation and ritual are assessed as factors in the production of Parmenidean 'reason' (14§B), a combination facilitated by the similarities between money and ritual (14§C), both of which contribute to the Greek doctrine of reincarnation, which was taught in mystic initiation and involved a cosmic projection (cosmisation) of monetised circulation (14§D).

Chapter 15 discusses the various features of the Platonic inner self (soul, psuche), in particular its interiorisation of controlling abstract value and of the master-slave relationship (15§A). We then take a detour through linguistics, the history of reflexivity in Greek and Sanskrit, to provide independent evidence for our view of monetisation as a factor in the emergence of the unitary inner self (15§B), which is then related to the influence of monetised self-sufficiency on a continuous passage of the Chandogya Upanisad (15§C).

In the concluding section (Part E), Chapter 16 emphasises the complex diversity of factors that shaped the Greek and Indian intellectual revolutions (16§A), describes the metaphysical consequences of a variety of perspectives on money (16§B) and accounts for the differences between brahman and the Parmenidean One (16§C). Chapter 17 sets out the historical factors behind the differing conceptions in

India and Greece of the interrelation of universe with inner self (17§A) and the absence from Greece of karma (17§B).

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### Why Did the Greeks Not Have Karma?

Part of the explanation for the absence of karma from Greece is that in Greece EIR was supplemented and then marginalised by other forms of compensatory metaphysics. Punishment in the hereafter" and inherited guile became more prominent in Greece than in India, reflecting the greater strength and ideological importance of the Greek state with its comprehensive judicial function."

Another part of the answer is the importance of the individual Vedic sacrificer: we have seen that the power of his action contributes to the development of the concept of brahman, and that the power of his action and of the wealth that he thereby transfers to the divine sphere contributes to the development of the concept of karma. There is nothing corresponding to this in Greek ritual. Both terms are, in being reified, abstracted from the practice of ritual, and yet retain the autonomous power, specific but imperceptible, that derives from ritual — in metaphysical synthesis with the imperceptible universality of monetary power-substance. This development produces on the one hand brahman, whose imperceptible universality is unchanging, and on the other karma, which is a metaphysical synthesis of (ritual) action with the power of individually accumulated monetary substance to drive circulation. Brahman and karma polarise, corresponding respectively with Parmenidean Being and Herakleitean logos-embodying fire.

The latter resembles karma as a cosmisation of the universal impersonal power of money creating ordered cosmic circulation that includes the inner self, with ethical implications (karma as intention, logos as calculation or understanding). Moreover, karma ensures ultimate justice, and so perhaps does the logos. This makes the logos-embodying fire the closest early Greek idea to karma.

But it is not very close. At the centre of the Vedic cosmic rite of passage, and so of metaphysics, is the irreducible self, which even grows in importance by interiorising the world controlled by sacrifice. Karma, emerging from this process, is a power (in contrast to Parmenidean Being) and (in contrast to Herakleitean fire) imperceptible and untransformable into other things. At the centre of the Greek cosmic rite of passage, by contrast, is the absorption of the individual into the group, and at the centre of Greek sacrifice is the communal meal, which in its division into equal portions contributed to the genesis of coinage. Greek sacrifice conspicuously legitimated the absolute ownership by individuals of equal portions (on spits, which gave their name to coins) of sanctified communal wealth. And so, the metaphysical power-substance of Greek monism derives — in part and indirectly (via money) — from the communal substance (spits with meat) distributed in the sacrifice. Karma, on the other hand, originates in the individual's correct performance of the sacrifice, by which he could accumulate *istapurta* and *sukrta* (9§BC), which karma eventually surpassed as what could be accumulated by non-sacrificial action. And so individual accumulation distinguishes karma from Herakleitean fire (as well as from brahman).

Especially illuminating of the absence of karma in Greece is the account of EIR in Plato. Whereas in India the relation between the individual and EIR is mediated by karma, in Plato there is no such mediation. How do we explain this difference?

Plato cosmises both unchanging abstract Being (like Parmenides) and monetised circulation (like Herakleitos): it is the absorption of the philosopher in self-sufficient abstract Being (abstracted from circulation) that allows him to escape from the attachment to corporeality and so from the cycle of rebirth, just as in everyday life it is possession of abstract, seemingly self-sufficient ousia (money, Being) that promotes and permits his lofty detachment from the cycle of money. In imagining the permanent abstract self-sufficiency of monetary value, Plato unconsciously provides himself with a model for the escape of the philosopher from the cycle of rebirth." Of the two opposed and complementary essences of money, the unchanging abstraction attained by philosophy is ontologically privileged over circulation, and this structure is also projected on to the afterlife, in which escape from the cycle of reincarnation to permanent well-being is attained by philosophy.

Whereas the first step of Upanishadic thought is 'who am I really?', the first step of early Greek philosophy is 'what really exists?' But the latter cannot be simply explained as somehow the natural first step of philosophy. It is rather the basis for the cosmisation of the abstract power-substance by which the prized self-sufficiency of philosophers and other privileged citizens is constituted. Reality turns out to have at its heart the single abstract power-substance from which they live. True, money is in Plato both projected and ethicised (as is karma), for the projected abstract power-substance is identified as the 'form of the good': But whereas karma arises from the interaction of ritual karman with money in circulation, the abstract form of the good arises from the cosmisation of unchanging monetary value.

The Indian renouncer, in contrast to Plato, rejects the world as a whole. What we know of the Indian sages in the period before and during the emergence of Buddhism suggests a withdrawal from the monetary cycle in the opposite direction, not into the self-sufficiency conferred on the Greek aristocrat by his possession of abstract value but rather into homeless renunciation, into release from the cycle of monetised relations as analogous to release from the cycle of rebirth, as preparation for the world that knows neither debtors nor creditors (10&A).

Buddhism arose in a commercial milieu: there is evidence for early Buddhist monks associating with merchants, and the reinvestment of income and commercial intelligence are praised in early Buddhist texts. And yet it seems that from the earliest times the monks refused to accept money and to buy or sell." Accordingly, the rise of Buddhism has been interpreted by some as legitimating, and by others as rejecting, the commercial values of the new society. Gombrich appositely observes that 'having it both ways is precisely what religions excel at'. Satisfying very different needs may promote success." We may add, more specifically, that Buddhism rejects the new monetary cycle in this world while ethicising it in the next. Buddhist metaphysics provides an ethicised cosmisation of the commercial milieu in which Buddhism originated and flourished: monetisation creates not only the problems (isolation, injustice) but also a metaphysical model for their solution. The early Buddhist conception of the inner self is formed neither within the Vedic sacrificial tradition (whatever it may have taken from it) nor — like the Greek inner self — through introjection of money. Rather it rejects not only the practice both of sacrifice and of monetised relations but also — with the doctrine of anatta (no self) — the irreducible unitary inner self promoted by both kinds of practice. And yet Buddhism is also influenced by the new all-pervasive circulation of money, which it metaphysically ethicises and interiorises. A monk removing an inner hindrance is compared to a businessman paying off a debt.'

Platonic metaphysics is constructed from ontologically prioritising one of the opposed essences of money over the other (an intramundane opposition). The unchanging abstract Being of money provides



a model for detachment from all that attends monetary circulation in this world and from the miserable cycle of reincarnation in the hereafter. But the Indian renouncer, in rejecting this world as a whole, adopts an extramundane perspective." And so what he ontologically privileges is an imagined world that corrects this one, an ethicised version of this (monetised) world as a whole, including the power of money to drive and determine circulation. The cycle of reincarnation is — as it is for Plato — as miserable as the monetary cycle, and escape from both is desirable. But because the circulatory power of money is not (as it is for Plato) rejected in favour of abstract Being, it is in the invisible world ethicised, synthesised with the autonomous power-substance that derives from the power of sacrificial ritual (karman), and endowed with features of money that include being accumulated so as to improve well-being within the cycle and to facilitate escape from it.

In India the two fundamental powers that seem to determine the fate of the individual — lineage (expressed in family and caste) and money — are cosmised as reincarnation and karma. This invisible symbiosis holds in place the same symbiosis in this world, by providing (a) ethical and metaphysical justification for the vast differences that developed in our period between the status and wealth of individuals and of lineages (including castes), and (b) the hope of return (through good action) to this world in a better individual position or a better lineage (including caste). The traditional structure of caste lineage is protected — by the ethicised cosmisation of money — against the dissolving and atomising power of money in this world. A result of all this is that the Indian solution differs sharply from the Greek not only by virtue of karma but also by virtue of the lasting centrality of the idea of reincarnation. <>

## **PLATO'S CRATYLUS: PROCEEDINGS OF THE ELEVENTH SYMPOSIUM PLATONICUM PRAGENSE** edited by Vladimír Mikeš [Series: Brill's Plato Studies Series, Brill, 9789004473010]

The present volume offers a collection of papers on one of Plato's most intriguing dialogues. Although not a running commentary, the book covers the majority of difficult questions raised by the dialogue in which the subjects of language and ontology are tied closely together. It shows why Plato's Cratylus has been highly regarded among readers interested in ancient philosophy and those concerned with modern semantics and theory of language. This collection also presents original views on the position of the dialogue in the whole Plato's oeuvre and in the context of Plato's contemporaries and successors.

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## Making Sense of the Cratylus

This volume is a collection of papers originally presented at the Eleventh Symposium Platonicum Pragense, held in Prague in November 9th and 10th, 2017.

Some dialogues in the corpus of Plato's works have a straightforward importance, position and overall role. The Cratylus is not one of them. In this dialogue Plato touches on questions of longstanding importance to him – as we can conclude from other dialogues – and raises new questions which, given the space dedicated to them, should be worth asking when one is dealing with “correctness of names”. And yet there has been wide disagreement about the dialogue's meaning. It contains queries about speech and its parts, about things having their own natures versus consisting in mere appearances, about general flux versus the good and beautiful remaining always the same. There are examinations of semantics and of Forms behind names, and a famously lengthy exploration of etymology. Although for some of these questions we see where Plato's leaning is, we cannot be sure about his views of almost anything that is explicitly stated. And scholars indeed differ so much in saying what Plato's opinions are in this dialogue that it is almost without parallel in the whole corpus. Is Plato conventionalist or rather non-conventionalist in what concerns names? Is he giving any genuine answer to the initial question of the correctness of names? Are his etymologies to be taken seriously? Is he entirely sceptical about words and language as means to achieve knowledge or does he rather make distinctions with a purpose to show the way forward? Is the dialogue aporetic in its nature or does it convey some positive message we should retain? These are the main questions which have been raised. Most of them have not only received different answers from different scholars – which would not be exceptional – but to an unusual extent these answers are directly opposite. This controversial status of the dialogue has not escaped anyone's attention. It is therefore not surprising that there is something like a golden thread that can be observed going through many different interpretations. Very often interpreters have not taken their task to be to merely explain this or that particular theory or problem of the Cratylus, but to make sense of the dialogue as a whole, to defend its overall meaning, or to propose the way it should be understood in the collection of other dialogues, even in cases when they seek to interpret only a part of the text. We can observe this with a higher than usual frequency in the interpretations adopting an approach which can be seen as the most traditional, offering a closer scrutiny of chosen passage or passages. Very often the question of what makes the Cratylus worth reading is recognizable in the background. But there are also other approaches which are more directly related to its puzzling nature like larger summarising overviews of its arguments and different attempts to show how the dialogue appears in the context – the context of Plato's other dialogues, of ancient thought more generally or, last but not least, of distinctions made by modern semantics and philosophy of language.

All the aforementioned approaches are represented in the present volume. This may be taken as one of the features making it a worthy contribution to the debate. In relatively little space, it displays the

controversial standing of the dialogue by exemplifying the variety of interpretations and approaches it allows for – and yet it does this without falling into repetition or stalemate. The texts offered here either propose new points of view or build upon preceding literature to make further steps in directions which have already been advocated. On the whole the volume proves that the *Cratylus* is an inevitable starting point for anyone who wants to learn about Plato's views on speech – logos – and the ontology related to it. It also makes clearer that it is a very complex dialogue that does not offer straightforward answers but necessitates a careful reading and evaluation of individual arguments against other arguments. This is an important achievement in that it shows a general way to approach a highly literary author whose style of thought and expression is everything but simple. Moreover, the *Cratylus* is probably the dialogue most resistant to the simplifying either/or kind of interpretation, as this volume makes sufficiently plain. For all these reasons, this collection of papers is readable as a single book from beginning to end. It might be also of some interest that it is the first collective monograph on this dialogue.

The volume starts with Steffen Lund Jørgensen's contribution advocating a new way to look at Socrates' interlocutor Hermogenes as a means to better understand certain puzzling claims of the first part of the dialogue. It is followed by Francesco Ademollo's paper in which the author of the only modern commentary on the dialogue expands his views and provides a helpful comparison with modern semantics of Kripke, Russell and Frege, thereby giving a fine example of the context- widening interpretation as mentioned above. A not- dissimilar approach – taking an overview of central passages against a background of modern notions of referentiality and intentionality – is offered by Francesco Aronadio. In the same vein, the author of this introduction offers summary of the first part of the dialogue in order to make a case that even without bringing in modern concepts we can distinguish here a valuable insight into the nature of language. The paper by Anna Pavani is then a natural follow- up, defending the view that a key conceptual distinction is made in one of the arguments of the first part, namely the argument of the Forms of names.

The paper by Jakub Jinek revisits a much-debated etymological part of the dialogue, in particular the etymologies of divine names, offering a new look at the combination of metaphysics and irony implied in them. Starting from Socrates' etymological analysis of Hermogenes' name, the paper by Olof Pettersson leads us to the second part of the dialogue and towards its conclusion about the relation of names and knowledge of things behind names, where the author sees a thoroughly sceptical stance on this point on Plato's part.

The three following papers have in common the emphasis on the wider contextualisation which is necessary, according to them, for the correct understanding of the dialogue. Thus Mariapaola Bergomi gives a very new impulse by arguing that Gorgias, though not mentioned in the dialogue, is present behind, and targeted by, some of its central arguments. Frédérique Ildefonse then proceeds in the previously suggested but insufficiently explored direction of reading the dialogue in connection with later dialogues, like the *Sophist*, and later philosophers, the Stoics, in her case. Filip Karfík makes yet further important steps on this ground, advancing arguments for a sceptical reading of the *Cratylus*, advocated already by Pettersson, in which the dialogue mainly shows impossibilities and is therefore Plato's preparation for the *Sophist* and the claims made there about different relations between language and reality. *Forms and Names: On Cratylus 389a5–390a10* by Anna Pavani

In discussing the way “the artisan of names” works, Socrates introduces the puzzling notion of the “pephykos onoma” (Crat. 389d4–5). What is usually downgraded to a “ghostly name” (R. Robinson) is to be understood within its argumentative context. Within the framework of the “tool analogy”, Socrates defines both the kerkis (a weaving tool to be identified not with a “shuttle”, but rather, as I argue, with a kind of comb) and the name as instruments whose specific function is to differentiate. As the structural and terminological parallels testify, producing a name is presented as strictly analogous to producing a kerkis. To refute Hermogenes’ conventionalism as unfolded in the first part of the dialogue, Socrates shows that producing a name, just as producing a kerkis, entails two non- arbitrary components. There is room for arbitrariness when it comes to the actual choice of the phonetic material and this is the reason why lawgivers from different places can produce names that are equally correct. By contrast, there is no room for arbitrariness for the Ideal Name, which the artisan has to look at, and for the pephykos onoma, which the artisan has to put into sounds and syllables. What different concrete names share, if they are to be equally correct, is the same pephykos onoma. This does not correspond to a “Platonic Form” nor to a “linguistic type” nor to a “meaning”, but rather, as I argue, to a concept.

### Commerce, Theft and Deception: The Etymology of Hermes in Plato’s Cratylus by Olof Pettersson

In the light of Socrates’ largely neglected etymological account of the name Hermes, this article reexamines the dialogue’s perplexing conclusion that reality should not be sought through names, but through itself. By a close scrutiny of three claims made in this etymology – that language is commercial, thievish and deceptive – it argues that Socrates’ discussion about the relation between names and reality cannot only be meaningfully understood in terms of his characterization of language as deceptive and therefore tragic, but that this point is also confirmed by the dialogue’s larger comedic structure and by Cratylus’ framing joke about Hermogenes’ name. As a consequence, the article also suggests that a closer examination of the etymology of Hermes can both help to assess a certain unwarranted optimism common in contemporary scholarship and the claim that the dialogue’s overarching purpose, rather than being an explanation of how human language grants access to the truth about the existing things, is a critical examination of such a project and of its hubristic assumptions. <>

## PTOLEMY'S PHILOSOPHY: MATHEMATICS AS A WAY OF LIFE by Jacqueline Feke [Princeton University Press, 9780691179582]

The Greco-Roman mathematician Claudius Ptolemy is one of the most significant figures in the history of science. He is remembered today for his astronomy, but his philosophy is almost entirely lost to history. This groundbreaking book is the first to reconstruct Ptolemy’s general philosophical system—including his metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics—and to explore its relationship to astronomy, harmonics, element theory, astrology, cosmology, psychology, and theology.

In this stimulating intellectual history, Jacqueline Feke uncovers references to a complex and sophisticated philosophical agenda scattered among Ptolemy’s technical studies in the physical and mathematical sciences. She shows how he developed a philosophy that was radical and even subversive,

appropriating ideas and turning them against the very philosophers from whom he drew influence. Feke reveals how Ptolemy's unique system is at once a critique of prevailing philosophical trends and a conception of the world in which mathematics reigns supreme.

A compelling work of scholarship, **PTOLEMY'S PHILOSOPHY** demonstrates how Ptolemy situated mathematics at the very foundation of all philosophy—theoretical and practical—and advanced the mathematical way of life as the true path to human perfection.

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Excerpt: Claudius Ptolemy is one of the most significant figures in the history of science. Living in or around Alexandria in the second century CE, he is remembered most of all for his contributions in astronomy. His *Almagest*, a thirteen-book astronomical treatise,<sup>1</sup> was authoritative until natural philosophers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries repudiated the geocentric hypothesis and appropriated Nicolaus Copernicus's heliostatic system of *De revolutionibus*. Ptolemy also composed texts on harmonics, geography, optics, and astrology that influenced the study of these sciences through the Renaissance.

Ptolemy's contributions in philosophy, on the other hand, have been all but forgotten. His philosophical claims lie scattered across his corpus and intermixed with technical studies in the exact sciences. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' development of discrete academic disciplines let the study of Ptolemy's philosophy fall through the cracks. When scholars do make reference to it, they tend to portray Ptolemy as either a practical scientist—mostly unconcerned with philosophical matters, as if he were a forerunner to the modern-day scientist—or a scholastic thinker who simply adopted the philosophical ideas of authoritative philosophers, especially Aristotle. This latter portrayal no doubt evolved in part because Ptolemy cites Aristotle in the first chapter of the *Almagest*. Liba Taub proved that the philosophical claims in *Almagest* 1.1, as well as in Ptolemy's cosmological text, the Planetary Hypotheses, are not Aristotle's, and with this debunking of the assumed view Taub opened the door for my own analysis of Ptolemy's philosophy, including how it manifests throughout his corpus and how it relates to several ancient philosophical traditions.<sup>1</sup> This monograph is the first ever reconstruction and intellectual history of Ptolemy's general philosophical system.

Concerning Ptolemy's life we know nothing beyond approximately when and where he lived. In the *Almagest*, he includes thirty-six astronomical observations that he reports he made in Alexandria from 127 to 141 CE. Another unaccredited observation from 125 CE may be his as well.<sup>1</sup> The Canobic Inscription, a list of astronomical parameters that Ptolemy erected at Canopus, Egypt, provides a slightly later date: 146/147 CE. Because the Canobic Inscription contains numerical values that Ptolemy corrects in the *Almagest*, it must predate the *Almagest*. Therefore, Ptolemy completed the *Almagest* sometime after 146/147 CE. In addition, Ptolemy makes reference to the *Almagest* in several of his later texts. The life span that this chronology requires is consistent with a scholion attached to the *Tetrabiblos*, Ptolemy's astrological text, indicating that he flourished during Hadrian's reign and lived until the reign of Marcus Aurelius, who became Roman emperor in 161 CE but ruled jointly with Lucius Verus until 169 CE. Thus, we can estimate that Ptolemy lived from approximately 100 to 170 CE.

Concerning any philosophical allegiance, Ptolemy says nothing. In his texts, he does not align himself with a philosophical school. He does not state who his teacher was. He does not indicate in what his

education consisted or even what philosophical books he read. In order to discern where his philosophical ideas came from, one must mine his corpus, extract the philosophical content, and, with philological attention, relate his ideas to concepts presented in texts that are contemporary with his own or that were authoritative in the second century. Unfortunately, what survives of the ancient Greek corpus is but a fraction of what was written and we have very little from Ptolemy's time. It is impossible to determine what exactly he read or even where he read it, as it is dubious that the great Alexandrian library was still in existence. At best we can place Ptolemy's thought in relation to prevailing ancient philosophical traditions.

The first century BCE to the second century CE is distinguished by the eclectic practice of philosophy. The Greek verb *eklegein* means to pick or choose, and the philosophers of this period selected and combined concepts that traditionally were the intellectual property of distinct schools of thought. Mostly, these philosophers blended the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, but they also appropriated ideas from the Stoics and Epicureans. The label "eclecticism" has long held a pejorative connotation in philosophy, as if eclectic philosophers were not sufficiently innovative to contribute their own ideas, and the philosophy of the periods before and after this seemingly intermediate chapter in ancient philosophy were comparatively inventive, with the development of the Hellenistic movements, including the Stoic, Epicurean, and Skeptic, and the rise of Neoplatonism, respectively. Nevertheless, John Dillon and A. A. Long revitalized the study of eclectic philosophy. So-called middle Platonism and the early Aristotelian commentary tradition have received more attention in recent years, and their study has demonstrated that the manners in which these philosophers integrated authoritative ideas are themselves noteworthy.

I aim to prove that Ptolemy was very much a man of his time in that his philosophy is most similar to middle Platonism, the period in Platonic philosophy that extended from the first century BCE—with Antiochus of Ascalon, who was born near the end of the second century BCE and moved from Ascalon, in present-day Israel, to Athens to join the Academy—to the beginning of the third century CE, with Ammonius Saccas, the Alexandrian philosopher and teacher of Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism. Both Antiochus and Ammonius Saccas are known for their syncretic tendencies. In response to Academic skepticism, Antiochus argued not only that knowledge is possible but also that the old, pre-skeptical Academy was in broad agreement with the Aristotelian and Stoic schools. Centuries later, Ammonius Saccas argued that

Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies were in fundamental agreement. Middle Platonism manifested in a variety of literary forms, styles of argument, and attitudes toward authoritative figures, but a significant trend emerged in this period where philosophers asserted the harmony of previously distinct schools of thought. They drew concepts, theories, and arguments from philosophers attached to once competing schools. To be a Platonist at this time entailed not only clarifying the meaning of Plato's texts but also appropriating ideas from the Aristotelian and Stoic traditions in the course of developing Platonic philosophy. Epicurean philosophy had less of an impact, but several of its terms had by this time become common intellectual property. It is this harmonizing tendency of middle Platonism, coupled with its emphasis on certain key themes in Platonic philosophy, that fundamentally influenced Ptolemy's own contributions in philosophy.

Ptolemy's seamless blending of concepts from the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions and, to a lesser extent, the Stoic and Epicurean, is itself impressive, but its greater significance lies in its radical and even subversive character. Ptolemy adopted ideas from these many traditions but his integration of them

yielded a philosophical system that upended the entire edifice of ancient philosophy. In *Almagest 1.1*, Ptolemy denounces attempts by philosophers to answer some of the most central questions of philosophy, and he argues that the fields of inquiry that philosophers study are merely conjectural. Against the vast current of ancient Greek philosophy, Ptolemy maintains that theology and physics are essentially guesswork and that mathematics alone generates sure and incontrovertible knowledge. This epistemological position—that mathematics alone, and neither physics nor theology, yields knowledge—is unprecedented in the history of philosophy and would have been extraordinarily controversial. Moreover, Ptolemy's appropriation of ancient virtue ethics is equally subversive. He maintains that the best life is one where the human soul is in a virtuous, or excellent, condition, and in his adaptation of Platonic ethics he affirms that the highest goal of human life is to resemble the divine—to be, as much as humanly possible, like the gods—but, according to Ptolemy, the one and only path to the good life is through mathematics.

Ptolemy deems mathematics epistemologically and ethically superior to every other field of inquiry, but that is not to say that he eschewed philosophy. For Ptolemy, mathematics is philosophy or, rather, a part of philosophy. It is one of the three parts of theoretical philosophy, alongside physics and theology. In addition to these three theoretical sciences—where, in ancient Greek philosophy, a science is simply a branch of knowledge—there are the three practical parts of philosophy: ethics, domestics, and politics. Ptolemy argues in *Almagest 1.1* that the theoretical part of philosophy is more valuable than the practical, and that, of the three theoretical sciences, mathematics is the best in its abilities to render knowledge and transform the human soul into its most perfect condition. Mathematics reveals the objective of human life, to be like the heavenly divine, and it provides the means to achieve it. Ptolemy does not claim, however, that one should study only mathematics. He argues that mathematics contributes to physics and theology, and, furthermore, that it guides practical philosophy and even the ordinary affairs of life. Positioning mathematics at the foundation of every one of life's activities, Ptolemy advances the mathematical way of life.

Consistent with Plato's account of the philosopher's education in Book VII of the *Republic*, Platonists upheld mathematics as a useful means of training the soul, where mathematics is propaedeutic, preparing the way for other, higher, more valuable studies, such as dialectic or metaphysics. Yet, for Ptolemy, mathematics is not simply useful; it is not merely a path to another science. For Ptolemy, it is the highest science. Only mathematics yields knowledge. Through its study alone human beings achieve their highest objective, to become like the divine. Human beings come to comprehend, love, and resemble divinities through the study of astronomy and harmonics, which, according to Ptolemy, are both mathematical sciences. Astronomy is the study of the movements and configurations of the stars; harmonics is the study of the ratios that characterize the relations among musical pitches. Astronomical objects serve as ethical exemplars for human souls, and both astronomy and harmonics give rise to souls' virtuous transformation.

Ptolemy's texts testify to his additional interest in mathematics' application to theology and physics, especially. In the *Almagest*, Ptolemy's astronomy informs his theology, and his natural philosophical investigations are extensive. Just as he argues in *Almagest 1.1* that mathematics contributes significantly to physics, time and again Ptolemy studies bodies mathematically before investigating their physical properties. Mathematical study informs the analysis of bodies' physical qualities, and, though physics is conjectural, the application of mathematics affords the best guesses possible of bodies' physical natures.



In the chapters that follow, I examine Ptolemy's applications of geometry to element theory, harmonics to psychology, and astronomy to astrology and cosmology.

The only one of Ptolemy's texts devoid of mathematics is *On the Kritêrion and Hêgemonikon*, an epistemological study that examines the criterion of truth, the method by which a human being generates knowledge, as well as the physical nature and structure of the human soul, including the hêgemonikon, its chief part. More than any other text of Ptolemy, *On the Kritêrion* has provoked controversy concerning its authorship, no doubt in part because it contains no mathematics. Nevertheless, thematic, stylistic, and linguistic arguments support Ptolemy's authorship, and I argue that it is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of Ptolemy's extant texts.<sup>1</sup> In *On the Kritêrion*, Ptolemy proposes a dually rational and empirical criterion of truth, where the faculties of sense perception and thought cooperate in the production of knowledge. Ptolemy adheres to this criterion in the rest of his corpus, but when he wrote *On the Kritêrion* he had not yet mandated the application of mathematics to physics. After he composed it, he devised his mathematical-scientific method, which he employed in every one of his subsequent studies. Every other of Ptolemy's texts constitutes an inquiry into or an implementation of mathematics.

In addition to *On the Kritêrion*, the texts I analyze are those of Ptolemy that contain manifestly philosophical content.<sup>1</sup> Again, the *Almagest* is Ptolemy's most famous astronomical text. It comprises thirteen books—likely in homage to the thirteen books of Euclid's *Elements*—and it consists in the deduction of geometric models that, according to Ptolemy, truly describe the mathematical objects in the heavens, the combinations of rotating spheres that give rise to the movements of celestial bodies, the fixed and wandering stars. In the first book, Ptolemy situates astronomy in relation to the other parts of philosophy, he describes the structure of the ensuing text, and he establishes the fundamental hypotheses of his astronomical system, such as the heavens' sphericity and the earth's location at the center of the cosmos. In the latter part of Book 1 through Book 2, he presents the mathematics necessary for the mathematical deduction, including the "Table of Chords," used in the trigonometric calculations that follow. The remainder of the *Almagest*, Books 3 through 13, contains the deduction itself of the astronomical models, accounting for the movements of the sun, moon, fixed stars, and five planets. These models are both demonstrative and predictive, since by using the tables an astrologer would have been able to approximate the perceptible location of any celestial body on any given date.

The *Planetary Hypotheses* is Ptolemy's cosmological text. In the first of the two books, he presents astronomical models, mostly consistent with the *Almagest*'s models; he specifies the order and absolute distances of the celestial systems; and he determines the diameters of the celestial bodies. In Book 2, he presents his aethereal physics, describing the heavenly bodies in physical terms, and he discusses celestial souls, which, in Ptolemy's cosmology, control the aethereal bodies' movements. Only a portion of the first book of the *Planetary Hypotheses* exists in the original Greek. The second of the two books and the remainder of the first book exist only in a ninth-century Arabic translation as well as a Hebrew translation from the Arabic.

The *Tetrabiblos* delineates Ptolemy's astrological theory. In the introductory chapters, he defines astrology and defends this physical science's possibility and utility. Thereafter, he summarizes its principles, including the powers of celestial bodies, the rays by which stars transmit their powers, and the effects these powers have on sublunary bodies and souls. Book 2 examines the celestial powers'

large-scale effects on geographic regions and meteorological phenomena, and Books 3 and 4 address celestial influences on human beings and their individual lives.

In the *Harmonics*, Ptolemy elaborates on his criterion of truth and employs it in the analysis of the mathematical relations among musical pitches. The text contains three books, and, after completing his study of music theory in *Harmonics* 3.2, he examines the harmonic ratios that exist among psychological, astrological, and astronomical phenomena. Unfortunately, the last three chapters, 3.14-3.16, are no longer extant; only their titles remain. In the chapters that follow, I also make reference to Ptolemy's *Geography*, *Optics*, and two works—*On the Elements* and *On Weights*—that are entirely lost to us but which Simplicius, the sixth-century philosopher, attests to in his commentary on Aristotle's *De caelo*.

Ptolemy's texts offer few clues to their chronology. In the *Tetrabiblos* and *Planetary Hypotheses*, as well as in the *Geography*, he refers to his "syntaxis" or "mathematical composition", manifestly the *Almagest*. Consequently, Ptolemy must have completed these texts after the *Almagest*. Noel Swerdlow has argued that the *Harmonics* predates the *Almagest* because the titles of the three lost chapters indicate that they examined the relations between musical pitches and celestial bodies tabulated in the *Canobic Inscription*. Considering that Ptolemy must have written the *Canobic Inscription* before the *Almagest*, the *Harmonics* probably predates the *Almagest* as well, and I argue that Ptolemy completed *On the Kritêrion* before the *Harmonics*. Thus, one reasonably can conclude that Ptolemy composed the texts most relevant to this study in the following order: (1) *On the Kritêrion* and *Hêgemonikon*; (2) *Harmonics*; (3) *Almagest*; and (4) *Tetrabiblos* and *Planetary Hypotheses*, in an indeterminate order.

I take *Almagest* 1.1 as the starting point of this study, as it functions as an epitome of Ptolemy's general philosophical system. My chapters 2 through 4 are analyses and intellectual histories of the metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical statements of *Almagest* 1.1. In chapter 2, I argue that the metaphysics Ptolemy presents when differentiating the three theoretical sciences—physics, mathematics, and theology—is Aristotelian, though not Aristotle's, and that Ptolemy underlays his ontology with epistemology. In chapter 3, I show how Ptolemy blends an Aristotelian form of empiricism with a Platonic concern for distinguishing knowledge and opinion, and he thereby produces a new and subversive epistemology where mathematics is the only science that generates knowledge rather than conjecture. Moreover, I analyze Ptolemy's argument for the contribution of mathematics to physics and theology, and I examine the case studies of how astronomy informs his theology and geometry drives his element theory. In chapter 4, I demonstrate how Ptolemy's distinctly mathematical ethics emerges from his response to a contemporary debate over the relationship between theoretical and practical philosophy. Ptolemy argues that practical philosophy is dependent on theoretical philosophy and that mathematics, in particular, reveals the ultimate goal of all philosophy and even directs the ordinary affairs of life.

Thereafter, I address the philosophical statements Ptolemy propounds in the rest of his corpus. In chapter 5, I argue that Ptolemy's concept of *harmonia*, which he examines in the *Harmonics*, is crucial to his ethical system. *Harmonia* is a technical term whose meaning differs from our notion of harmony. I dissect the concept in detail and argue that it is because of *harmonia* that the human soul is able to resemble astronomical objects. In chapter 6, I analyze the relationship between harmonics and astrology, which Ptolemy portrays as complementary mathematical sciences, and I determine whether, when examining these sciences in the *Harmonics* and the remainder of the *Almagest*, Ptolemy maintains his

position in *Almagest 1.1* that mathematics yields sure and incontrovertible knowledge. In chapters 7 and 8, I turn to Ptolemy's application of mathematics to the physics of composite bodies. In the former, I argue for the development of his psychology from *On the Kritêrion* to the Harmonics, where he strives to improve his account of the human soul by mathematizing it. The development in his psychological theory, I contend, marks the maturation of his scientific method. In the latter chapter, I argue that Ptolemy maintains the epistemology and scientific method that he articulates in *Almagest 1.1* and applies in the Harmonics in his studies of astrology and cosmology in the *Tetrabiblos* and *Planetary Hypotheses*. Overall, Ptolemy's philosophy remains remarkably consistent across his corpus.

At the foundation of Ptolemy's complex philosophical system is his ethics. The explicit motivation for his study of the theoretical sciences is his objective to transform his soul into a condition that resembles the divine, mathematical objects of the heavens, the movements and configurations of the stars. That Ptolemy required such a motivation for his prodigious and influential scientific investigations may be surprising, but we must remember that in antiquity mathematicians were rare. In any one generation in the ancient Mediterranean, no more than a few dozen individuals studied high-level mathematics. Given the scarcity of advanced mathematical study, an individual who concentrated on it would have made a deliberate choice to disavow more dominant intellectual practices, including the conventions of philosophers, and assume an unconventional way of life. Mathematicians play a special role in the ancient philosophical landscape in that they studied philosophy to varying degrees but they were not philosophers. In Ptolemy's case, he was well versed in the philosophy of his time. He appropriated ideas from authoritative and contemporary philosophical traditions for his own philosophical system. What led him to set aside the nonmathematical study of philosophy and focus on mathematics? We know so little of Ptolemy's life that it is impossible to say for certain. It would be easiest to suppose that he simply found mathematics to be captivatingly interesting. Nevertheless, I aim to present a more complex portrait, where the clues lie in the philosophical claims scattered across his corpus, and I propose that it was Ptolemy's appropriation of Platonic ethics and the formulation of a radical philosophy—the mathematical way of life—that motivated him to devote his life to mathematics.

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*Almagest 1.1* functions as an epitome of Ptolemy's philosophical system. He structured it in such a way as to mimic the opening chapters of philosophical handbooks, a contemporary genre used to introduce the philosophical ideas of authoritative figures like Plato. Ptolemy employs this format to establish the authority of his own philosophy, where mathematics reigns supreme. Like so-called middle Platonists, Ptolemy appropriated concepts from the Aristotelian and Platonic traditions as well as, to a lesser extent, the Stoic and Epicurean, but the end product of this amalgamation is not a derivative philosophy or one of optimum agreement among schools of thought. Ptolemy's philosophy is subversive. He puts forward claims that would have been extraordinarily controversial at the time, and that discredit attempts by philosophers to answer the very questions of philosophy. According to Ptolemy, philosophers will never attain knowledge, they will never agree on the nature of theological and physical objects, because theology and physics are conjectural. Ptolemy argues that mathematics alone yields knowledge and that, furthermore, it is the only path to the good life.

Despite the singular status of mathematics in his philosophy, Ptolemy does not dispense with the other sciences. He improves them by means of mathematics. He argues that mathematics contributes to theology and physics and that, moreover, mathematics is foundational to practical philosophy and even

the ordinary affairs of life. Mathematics reveals the ultimate goal of human life: to be like the divine, mathematical objects of the heavens, the movements and configurations of the stars. The best life is one where everything an individual does is guided by and in the service of this mathematical-ethical objective. Positioning mathematics at the foundation of all philosophy, theoretical and practical, as well as each and every one of the ordinary activities of life, Ptolemy propounds the mathematical way of life.

Ptolemy's corpus suggests that he lived in accordance with this way of life. Every one of his extant texts is a study or an application of mathematics, *except On the Kritêrion and Hêgemonikon*, which I argue he composed first of all of his extant texts and before he formulated his mature scientific method, including the persistent and necessary application of mathematics to physics and theology. In his corpus, Ptolemy applies geometry to element theory; harmonics to psychology; and astronomy to astrology, cosmology, and theology. Besides *On the Kritêrion*, every one of his texts is an inquiry into or an implementation of mathematics. Yet, for Ptolemy mathematics is not propaedeutic; it is not preparatory to another, higher science. Mathematics is the highest science, and Ptolemy dedicated his life to it. If we take him at his word, he did so with the aim of transforming his soul into a condition that resembles divine, astronomical objects, which are constant, well ordered, commensurable, and calm. Ptolemy's ethics justifies his study of mathematics and provides the foundation for his many philosophical and scientific contributions.

Ptolemy defines mathematics alongside the other two theoretical sciences in *Almagest 1.1*. Although he cites Aristotle, Ptolemy's definitions of physics, mathematics, and theology are not Aristotle's. They are Aristotelian. Ptolemy distinguishes the sciences according to their objects of study, and he classifies the three fundamental types of objects in the cosmos according to epistemic criteria. In other words, he incorporates epistemology at a foundational level to his metaphysics. More specifically, whether and how an object is perceptible to human beings defines what type of object it is. The Prime Mover, the object of theology, is imperceptible; physical objects are special sensibles, meaning they are perceptible by only one of the five senses; mathematical objects are common sensibles, perceptible by more than one sense.

Ptolemy fuses an Aristotelian theory of perception with the Platonic concern for distinguishing knowledge from opinion, which he associates with conjecture. According to Ptolemy, whether a human being is able to construct knowledge or mere conjecture when studying one of the sciences depends entirely on the properties of the objects the science studies. Mathematics, on the other hand, are stable and clear. A human being can skillfully apprehend impressions of them and thereby create knowledge. Among the mathematical sciences, geometry and astronomy are complementary. Harmonics studies the relation among musical objects, which are perceptible only by the sense of hearing; astronomy studies the movements and

configurations of celestial bodies, which are perceptible only by sight. Moreover, harmonics and astronomy each employ an indisputable method, or instrument, of mathematics: arithmetic or geometry. Ptolemy indicates that harmonics generates sure and incontrovertible knowledge—as he claims all mathematics does in *Almagest 1.1*—but astronomy does so only inasmuch as it both employs Ptolemy's criterion of truth—the interplay of reason and perception—and relies on geometry, one of the indisputable instruments of mathematics. In the *Almagest*, Ptolemy takes the existence of eccentric and epicyclic spheres to be certain, but the quantitative aspects of his astronomical models are not exact. They are approximate rather than precise. The eccentric and epicyclic hypotheses follow from his criterion of truth and derive from geometry, but the spheres' parameters and periods of revolution do not follow from geometry and they depend solely on observation for their determination. Hence, Ptolemy concludes that mathematicians cannot know and should not claim that the quantitative features of astronomical models are true. They forever remain approximate.

Why, then, does Ptolemy even attempt to quantify his astronomical models? I suggest that he does so because astronomy, like astrology, is by definition a predictive science. Ptolemy defines astronomy in juxtaposition with astrology in the first chapter of the *Tetrabiblos*. Consistent with *Almagest 1.1*, he claims that the judgments of astronomy are sure, whereas astrology, like every other study of material quality, is conjectural. Yet, the claims of astrology are still possible, as opposed to impossible, and therefore they merit study. Astrology relies on the prior, complete study of astronomy, because it examines the effects the stars' movements and configurations have on sublunary bodies and souls. The stars' powers affect sublunary events by means of rays, which travel through the heavens and into the sublunary realm. Ptolemy also discusses the stars' powers and rays in the *Planetary Hypotheses*, and just as his astrology depends on astronomy, so, too, does his cosmology. In the *Planetary Hypotheses*, Ptolemy presents his astronomical models before he propounds his aethereal physics. According to Ptolemy, the heavens are animate. Celestial souls instigate and maintain the uniform circular motion of the spheres and parts of spheres that constitute their aethereal systems. Moreover, celestial souls cause these movements, I argue, as a result of their desire for the Prime Mover, which Ptolemy calls in *Almagest 1.1* "the first cause of the first motion of the universe?"

At the foundation of every one of Ptolemy's studies is his ethics. It is because mathematics furnishes the good life that Ptolemy pursues its study and application. I suggest that in Ptolemy's philosophical system both astronomy and harmonics produce the virtuous transformation of the human soul, just as in Plato's *Timaeus* the study of the heavens and harmony facilitate the ordering of the human soul's orbits.<sup>1</sup> For Ptolemy, it is because harmonia causes the existence of harmonic ratios among the constituent parts, movements, and configurations of the most complete and rational objects in the cosmos—human souls, musical systems, and heavenly bodies—that harmonic and astronomical objects serve as exemplars for human souls. As corruptible, human souls fall out of attunement. They require an exemplar, an instantiation of harmonic ratios in a body physically unlike themselves on which to model their formal configuration. By studying and practicing harmonics and/or astronomy, human beings attain good order in their souls. Through astronomy, they come to love the heavenly divine and transform their souls into the constant, well-ordered, commensurable, and calm condition of the stars' movements and configurations. Restoring the harmonic structure of their souls, they resemble the divine. They become godlike.

By late antiquity, Ptolemy was celebrated as an authoritative figure. He acquired the epithets "wonderful," "excellent," and even "divine." Both Simplicius and Philoponus call him "the wonderful Ptolemy" , John Lydus—the sixth-century CE bureaucrat and author of a compilation of celestial and meteorological omen literature—refers to "the most divine Ptolemy", and Synesius remarks on "the excellent Ptolemy and his divine company of successors." They use these epithets when discussing Ptolemy's contributions in astronomy, astrology, and physics, but did Ptolemy's reputation extend to his more traditionally philosophical contributions? Were his metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics influential?

I already have pointed toward some areas of possible influence. Similarly to how Ptolemy identifies mathematical objects with common sensibles, Philoponus and Sophonias, the late thirteenth- to early fourteenth-century Constantinopolitan monk, address the nature of mathematical objects in their studies of Aristotle's *De anima*. They define mathematical objects as forms, abstracted by thought from matter, that are common sensibles.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Syrianus, the fifth-century Neoplatonic philosopher, addresses the possibility that mathematical objects are common sensibles abstracted by thought from perceptible objects.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that Ptolemy's identification of mathematical objects with common sensibles influenced Syrianus, Philoponus, and thereafter Sophonias.

The influence of Ptolemy's epistemology was evidently long lasting. In the early fourteenth century, the statesman and scholar Theodorus Metochites examines mathematics in comparison to the other species of theoretical philosophy in the opening chapters of his *Stoicheiôsis astronomikê*, and he calls mathematical objects the only type of objects that are "really knowable" . Moreover, he describes mathematics as, with the exception of theology, superior to the other species of theoretical philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in the sixteenth century the French mathematician Oronce Fine characterizes mathematics, as well as its relationship to physics and metaphysics, in a manner that recalls *Almagest 1.1*: "Mathematics is intermediate between the natural or physical investigation and the supernatural or metaphysical investigation (which deserve to be called conjecture rather than knowledge), taking part, with the natural, in matter, and joining the supernatural in the fact that it considers the same things as if they were separated from matter"<sup>1</sup> Fine appropriates both Ptolemy's argument for the intermediate status of mathematics and his epistemological assessment of the three theoretical sciences. Albert the Great in the thirteenth century cites Ptolemy in his commentary on Euclid's *Elements*. He calls Ptolemy "great in all divisions of learning" and paraphrases the epistemological argument of *Almagest 1.1*, which judges physics and theology to be conjectural and mathematics alone as productive of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Albert's student, Thomas Aquinas repeatedly cites Ptolemy in his commentary on Boethius's *De trinitate*. When affirming the trichotomy of the theoretical sciences, he appeals to Aristotle and Ptolemy side by side, and he quotes Ptolemy not only with respect to the sciences' epistemological status, as knowledge or conjecture, but also with respect to the indisputability of mathematical demonstrations: "But as Ptolemy says in the beginning of the *Almagest*, 'Mathematics alone, if one applies himself diligently to it, will give the inquirer after knowledge firm and unshaken certitude by demonstrations carried out with unquestionable methods: "

Ptolemy's and Hero of Alexandria's claim that geometrical demonstration is indisputable echoes through the Greek corpus in the works of at least ten historical figures from the third to the fourteenth century. Notably, Proclus, in the fifth century, claims that Euclid improved on the work of his predecessors by reforming their propositions into irrefutable demonstrations, and he appropriates the geometrical style

of proof in his studies of theology and physics, the *Elements of Theology* and *Elements of Physics*, respectively. In a way, Proclus combines Ptolemy's characterization of geometrical demonstration as indisputable with his mandate to apply mathematics to theology and physics. For Ptolemy, this application means inferring the nature of the Prime Mover by way of an analogy with mathematical, specifically astronomical, objects and studying bodies mathematically before investigating their physical properties. For Proclus, mathematics' application entails composing discourses on nonmathematical objects in the style of geometry. It is the demonstration of theological propositions on the procession and characteristics of the various classes of gods as well as the demonstration from first principles of the existence of an unmoved cause of motion and change in the world. For Proclus, the irrefutability of geometrical demonstration extends to other fields of inquiry when their discourses are constructed in a geometrical style.

The appropriation of the geometrical style for nonmathematical studies flourished in the seventeenth century. Prompted by Mersenne, Descartes, for example, presents the central arguments of his *Meditations* in a geometrical form at the end of the *Second Replies*. He divides them into definitions, postulates, axioms or common notions, propositions and their demonstrations. Similarly, Spinoza employs the geometrical style in several works, most significantly in his *Ethics Demonstrated in Geometrical Order*. Thomas Hobbes embraces the geometrical style in his *Leviathan*. Contributing to the *Quaestio de certitudine mathematicarum*, the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century debate on the scientific status and certainty of mathematics, he calls geometry "the onely Science that it hath pleased God hitherto to bestow on mankind," and he observes, concerning philosophers, "For there is not one of them that begins his ratiocination from the Definitions, or Explications of the names they are to use; which is a method that hath been used onely in Geometry; whose Conclusions have thereby been made indisputable." Could the appropriation of the geometrical demonstration and the extension of its indisputability to nonmathematical studies have its roots in Ptolemy's epistemology?

The influence of Ptolemy's ethics likewise requires further study. Notably, in his commentary on the *Almagest* Theon of Alexandria proclaims that the overall message of *Almagest 1.1* is ethical. He paraphrases Ptolemy as claiming that the human being who lives well maintains the fine and well-ordered state. It is possible that the authors of commentaries on Ptolemy's *Almagest*, including Theon, adopted Ptolemy's ethical theory. At the very least, we know that later philosophers ascribed some ethical value to mathematics, as a type of mental or spiritual exercise. Matthew Jones has shown that Descartes, Pascal, and Leibniz considered mathematics to be avenues to the good life.<sup>1</sup> According to these philosophers, mathematics cultivates the mind. It exercises the intelligence and reveals the powers and limits of human reason. Yet, none of these philosophers took mathematics to be necessary or sufficient for the good life. For Ptolemy it is. Ptolemy's ethics is distinctly mathematical. It is only through mathematics that a human being achieves the good life.

Is Ptolemy alone in his devotion to the mathematical way of life? At the very least, we know that he was not alone in ascribing some ethical benefit to mathematics. Ptolemy's ethics is, after all, Platonic, and it resonates with mathematical practice well into the seventeenth century. What requires further study is why mathematicians throughout history chose to be mathematicians, or why individuals who concentrated their studies on mathematics did just that. In the modern world we ascribe a high value to mathematics and the mathematical sciences—particularly with respect to the economic rise of the so-called STEM fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—but a benefit supplemental to

this economic payout and the value in the liberal, economically independent, study of mathematics are not self-evident. To choose to devote one's studies and the better part of one's life

to mathematics, an individual requires some reason or purpose for doing so, and, according to Ptolemy, the benefits mathematics provides are epistemological and ethical. Mathematics is the only field of inquiry through which human beings can acquire knowledge, and it is the only path to the good life. In Ptolemy's philosophy, the best way an individual can live his life is to live the mathematical way of life.  
<>

**NEW SERIES: PHILOSOPHY AS A WAY OF LIFE: TEXTS AND STUDIES** Editors: Michael Chase, Eli Kramer, and Matthew Sharpe

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## **INTERCULTURAL MODES OF PHILOSOPHY, VOLUME ONE: PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE PHILOSOPHICAL COMMUNITY by Eli Kramer [PHILOSOPHY AS A WAY OF LIFE, Brill, 9789004468979]**

Until rather recently, philosophy, when practiced as a way of life, was, for most, a communal enterprise of mutually reinforced personal cultivation. In these times of social isolation, including in academic philosophy itself, it is time, yet again, to revitalize this lost, but vital, intercultural mode of philosophy. This volume characterizes a neglected communal mode of philosophy — the philosophical community — by describing the constellation of metaethical principles (general, axiological, cultural, and dialectical) that cultivates its values. The book draws on examples from across the globe and history, including interviews of adherents of living philosophical communities.



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In general, the idea of a completely contemplative life of studious leisure, whose pleasantness would be still further enhanced by the pure pleasure of the spiritual friendship, exerted on all of Antiquity a fascination which seemed to only increase at the end of the Roman Empire. One hundred years after Plotinus, Augustine, too, before his conversion, would dream of a phalanstery of philosophers, where, in leisure and complete communal ownership of possessions, he and his friends could “flee the noise and annoyances of human life.

As Hadot, suggests, this desire for philosophical community was influential across antiquity, and can be found in its most prominent figures, such as, for example, in Marcus Aurelius:

The main cause of Marcus’ lassitude, however, was his passionate love for moral good. A world in which this absolute value was not recognized seemed to him an empty world, in which life no longer had any meaning. As he grew old in such an enormous empire, in the huge crowds which surrounded and acclaimed him, in the atrocious Danubian war as well as in the triumphal parades of the city of Rome, he felt himself alone. Marcus felt a void around himself, since he could not realize his ideal (ix, 3,7): to live in community with others, in search of the only thing necessary.

This desire for community on the quest for wisdom, away from the noise, annoyance, and tragedy of the heart of society, was not only desired in the Western World. For example, in Korea, drawing on the legacy of Zhu Xi in China: “In particular, the Wuyi Study Hall [of Zhu Xi] captured the imagination of Korean scholars: it became the imagined ideal of a scholar’s paradise where the master sage speaks freely with his disciples, enjoys the beauty of nature, and devotes his time to moral cultivation and poetry.” It is no exaggeration to say that such longings have been felt across history and the globe.

But whatever happened to this hope of a shared philosophical life? Sure, present professional philosophers create small groups of friends during their graduate philosophical education. Yes, some of them may become lifelong friends. A few of them may even discuss dreams of a “better” institution,

where they could do “philosophy how it should be done.” But mostly these dreams come to naught, and the graduated professor of philosophy continues a journey to build “a solitary philosophical burrow.”

Despite the dominance of individualized modes of philosophy today, the conception of philosophy being solely an isolated enterprise is a rather new occurrence in the history of philosophical praxis:

The figure of the desert saint or the solitary philosopher is alien to the ways in which ancient philosophy was lived. The life was not conceived of as an exercise in introspection and isolation from others, unless for brief moments, as was the case with Democritus (9.38), the Academic Xenocrates (4.11), and Pyrrho (9.63). It was instead characterized by an interpersonal dimension, with interlocutors and auditors who were sometimes outside the school and not focused exclusively on adhering to its tenets.

There was (and still are in a few corners of the world) robust houses, societies, schools, monasteries, social movements, and other forms of associated philosophical living, in dialogue with their culture(s). In fact, for a long time, associated, community living was one of the identified “modes” of philosophical praxis, hence the deep desires for it in the ancient world; it was even understood as the central mode of doing philosophy. Today, most academics are only familiar with the individualized modes of philosophy. More radically, individualized philosophy is so pervasive that other modes of philosophy are treated as almost de facto non-existent, or at best superficial to the real business of philosophy.

Of course, there are important individualized modes of philosophy that have deep roots in the philosophical tradition. There are philosophical speculators who create and maintain philo-dynamic cosmic images for reconstructive contemplation (such as Kant and Peirce). There are also philosophical wanderers, who enact reflective life as the force that, as an exercise in being obnoxious, awakens culture out of its settled dogmatisms and onto new and more ethically rich routes in the wider world (such as Diogenes of Sinope and Cornel West). There is however another primary and largely neglected mode of philosophy which is mutually reinforced ethical praxis rooting in a shared cosmopolitan place. I call this mode of philosophy, philosophical community. Together, these three modes of philosophy can be thought of as the “three tripod legs” that support (ground) robust philosophical life within, and effective for, a culture.

In this volume, I characterize and defend the neglected mode of philosophy, philosophical community, by describing the constellation of metaethical principles – general, axiological, cultural, and dialectical – that cultivate its values. One can find the origins of this mode of philosophy in ancient philosophical schools and monasteries. In the Western and Middle-Eastern traditions, a pivotal philosophical community was Plato’s Academy, which integrated the Athenian higher education model of the Sophists, with Socratic philosophy and dialectics.

My philosophical methodology is radically empirical philosophy of culture. I take all experience, and especially the relationships we find in experience, as real and concrete. The principles will be drawn from an imaginative interpretation of the experiences of philosophical community, considered diachronically, or globally and historically, and which are then organized as a synchronic coordinate whole.

I take community as ever-overlapping personal relationships. These relationships are a “community of interpretation,” or the relationships that build increasing determinacy of meaning in the universe. A philosophical community, then, is not reducible to a collection of people but can be thought of as made of a special kind of community of interpretation as it shares some sort of place.

The “principles” of philosophical community, as I envision them, are indebted to Edgar Sheffield Brightman’s idea of “moral law,” and in certain aspects of Kant’s logic. Brightman defined a moral law as “a universal principle to which the will ought to conform in its choices.” Brightman saw these moral laws as ideal articulations of the principal values already presupposed in our actions. The “laws” were not supposed to articulate prescriptions for what one ought to do a priori, but rather were supposed to articulate the values we already have in our successful a posteriori self-regulated activity. While I recognize the insight of Brightman, I reject his rationalistic and transcendental tendencies in favor of a milder, radically empirical approach. I only postulate principles, without claiming these have any ontological necessity as the form of what we must value when we value. For our purposes, a principle, at the very least, is a postulated articulation of emergent practices that lead to predicable success at achieving our ends-in-view. These principles should articulate for us what philosophical communities have done to be successful, through refinement over generations, at cultivating and maintaining robust praxis. They are reflective aides on our own successful inquiry. Although the principles articulate certain kinds of means to successful inquiry, they do not bear ontological necessity unto themselves. When we think about principles, we super-add that mongrel breed of necessity which enables us to recognize the relation of such principles to our successes and failures. The principles carry no necessity save as practical aides to reflection on philosophical community life at its most intense and successful. Together, this constellation of principles can help us refine for ourselves a vision of what the shared places of philosophical life should look like, and further they should help us frame what a “brocard” for philosophical life should be in the twenty-first century. Despite my sometimes novel articulation of them, these principles are not new, but rather revitalize in us the tradition of praxis that has kept robust communal philosophical life alive through the last three millennia.

Although the principles are systematized through careful and reasoned philosophical reflection, this volume is not meant to be read like a typical contemporary philosophical essay or treatise. It is an artistic, philo-dynamic image, or a reflectively charged version of what Susanne Langer called a “presentation symbol.” For Langer, presentational symbols are what the arts give us, like dance, painting, and music. Symbolic reference (a concept) as an indexical function, is replaced by a field of connotative engagement (an art). Such presentational symbols offer a significant form, that can provide knowledge, but a kind of knowledge not reducible to serially related, referred, and exclusively classed, parts. Think of the way a painting, or a good novel, can be educative and enriching for us, and yet we cannot fully determine a discursive story that exhaustively captures the kind of knowledge it gives us. A good presentational symbol offers its own knowledge, and can be, but by no means has to be, a tremendous resource for reflection. A great piece of music can be very educative for us, without ever being brought to reflection or full discursive reasoning.

Unlike a presentational symbol, a phil-dynamic image needs to be charged to incite a reader, student, or audience, to new reflective and discursive engagement with the subject matter. Plato’s dialogues, Montaigne’s Essays, Emerson’s Nature, and Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit are examples of works written as phil-dynamic images. Unlike a Van Gogh painting, the whole purpose of their significant forms

was to incite our reflective life and discursive reasoning. Further, the great philosophical speculators offer, in their full philosophies (especially their metaphysics), dynamic images of cosmos.

In the American tradition of Emerson's *Nature and Essays*, instead of writing another interesting, but ultimately passive piece of academic writing, I have attempted to create an organized constellation of principles that helps provide a modest dynamic image, filled with resources for reflection, both discursive and non-discursive. It is an "existential," or "spiritual," exercise, in Pierre Hadot's sense of the term, as a technique of developing active habits of reflective, personal cultivation. Its aim is to lead to educative self-reflection. This will be discussed in further detail later in Part I of this work.

In the rest of Part I, I articulate what I mean by "modes of philosophy" and "philo-dynamic images." I then offer two essays, one that gives a brief sketch of some traditions of philosophical community across the globe, and another that explores its utter marginalization due to the rise of professional philosophy. We will find out that these are overlapping narratives. I then briefly summarize my site visits to a few exemplary philosophical communities (and related places) still in existence. Only afterwards will the need for the philosophical community in our current period be understood. Without the tripod leg of philosophical community, it will become apparent that philosophical speculators and philosophical wanderers, by themselves, are either too divorced from their broader culture, or belong to an all too transient mode of philosophy, to be sustainable and continually improve cultural life. Further, it will become apparent that the technical philosophical mode runs rampant without sustained places for philosophy as a way of life. In the last section of Part I, given the peculiar organization of this work, I will lay out the logic of "principles" for a radically empirical philosophy of culture. I will also discuss my research protocol. Why and how do principles "work," and what service do they provide in understanding and revitalizing philosophical community?

In Part 2, Chapter 1, I first elucidate the order of exhibition for the principles. I lay out the systema (the organic general phases, see below). Only then will I be able to explore the peculiar general principles of philosophical community. These principles are the most general structures of the form of life that is philosophical community. The other principles fill out the content of these general principles. In Chapter 2, I will explore the personal axiological principles of philosophical community. These principles fill in the more concrete qualities of the general principles, and each axiological principle shares an analogical relationship to one of the general principles. In Chapter 3, I will explore the concrete cultural principles of philosophical community. These principles are the most concrete in the sense that they illuminate the relationship philosophical community has with the meanings and practices of the larger culture. The concrete cultural principles further determinate (make further concrete) the meaning of philosophical community as part of a broader community of interpretation. Upon returning to these concrete principles from higher systema (phases of generality), the whole system will be further genetically specified. Within each section, several dialectical tensions will become apparent and will be "propitiated" (an appeasing gift). In other words, imminent principles will be illuminated at the heart of these tensions. In Chapter 4, the principles drawn from these series of dialectical transformations will be explored. Finally, in the conclusion, the role for philosophical community today will be addressed.

In Appendix 1, in order to clarify the variety of special categories and terminology I use in the volume, I lay out what I call the "Systemic Scheme," in the tradition of Alfred North Whitehead's "Categorical Scheme," which provides a summary and glossary of the systema, principles, and axioms of

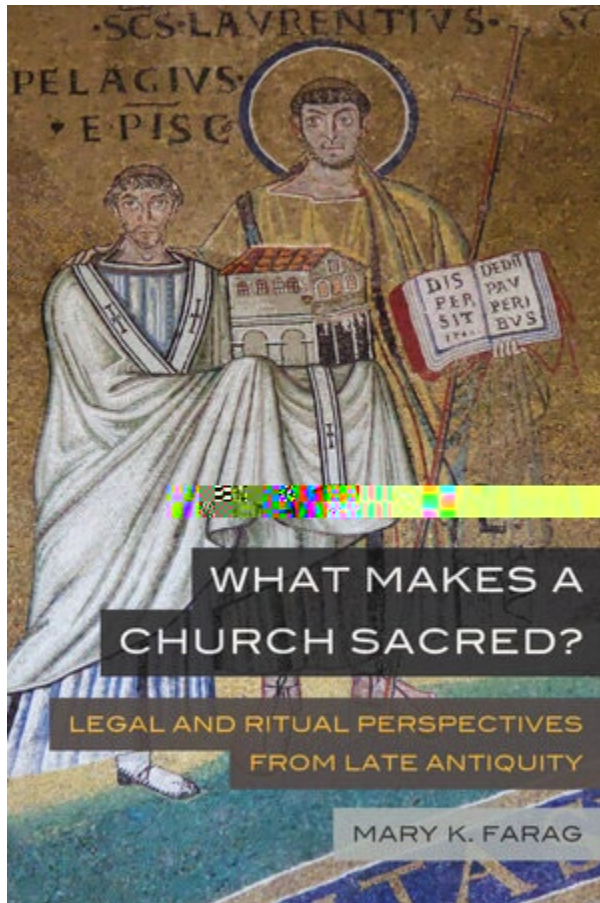
transformation of the coordinate whole. In Appendix 2, I discuss my primary site visit, research interview protocol. I also include two example interviews from site visits. <>

**WHAT MAKES A CHURCH SACRED? LEGAL AND RITUAL PERSPECTIVES FROM LATE ANTIQUITY** by Mary K. Farag [**TRANSFORMATION OF THE CLASSICAL HERITAGE**, University of California Press, 9780520382008] A free open access ebook is available upon publication. Learn more at [www.luminosoa.org](http://www.luminosoa.org).

### **Caught between Justice and Mercy: The Sacred in Late Antiquity**

What is the purpose of a church? Who owns a church? Mary K. Farag persuasively demonstrates that three groups in late antiquity were concerned with these questions: Christian leaders, wealthy laypersons, and lawmakers. Conflicting answers usually coexisted, but from time to time they clashed and caused significant tension. In these disputes, juridical regulations and opinions mattered more than has been traditionally recognized. Considering familiar Christian controversies in novel ways, Farag's investigation shows that scholarship has misunderstood well-known religious figures by ignoring the legal issues they faced. This seminal text nuances vital aspects of scholarly conversations on sacred space, gift giving, wealth, and poverty in the late antique Mediterranean world, making use not only of Latin and Greek sources but also Coptic and Arabic evidence.

St. Laurentius has been celebrated for his wit in a time of grave distress. In the mosaic featured on the front cover of my new book, **WHAT MAKES A CHURCH SACRED?**, he stands prominently, carrying an open volume. Next to him, Bishop Pelagius of Rome holds a miniature model of the church that he dedicated to St. Laurentius—the very church in which this mosaic once stood. By Bishop Pelagius's time, St. Laurentius was a figure of the distant past, but stories continued to be told and retold about the saint.



The cover photo shows part of the triumphal arch mosaic of San Lorenzo fuori le mura. Photo credit: Charles Barber.

This mosaic is a pictorial rendition of the cunning that costed St. Laurentius his life. It also succinctly captures the main subject of my book.

Laurentius was said to have rebuffed the government's attempt to seize the church treasury over which Laurentius served as steward. Laurentius did so by cleverly deceiving the city prefect. When the prefect summoned him to hand over "the treasure of the church," Laurentius brought forward lepers, the poor, and widows. Coming to collect the expected wealth, the prefect was instead confronted by the complaints and appeals of neglected members of society.

With this action, Laurentius deliberately interpreted "the treasure of the church" to mean the people. But the prefect had clearly intended on collecting material things. We see these two conflicting interpretations of the church's treasure within the cover image. Bishop Pelagius holds the miniature model of a church gleaming with gold and gems. St. Laurentius's book names the people, declaring "He

has distributed freely; he has given to the poor," and Laurentius's presence as a haloed saint evokes his legendary equivocation of the two meanings. In Bishop Pelagius's time, the connotative exchange had even made its way into the laws of the church, in which thieves of the church's wealth were labeled "murderers of the poor."

In **WHAT MAKES A CHURCH SACRED?**, I focus on these two concepts of the church as sacred treasure. The miniature model represents what I call a legal discourse, while the open book represents what I term a ritual discourse. These two perspectives on the church often clashed in late antiquity. The legal discourse favored the perpetual maintenance of material things. Legally speaking, dissolving church assets was tantamount to sacrilege. By contrast, the ritual discourse prioritized the people. As some church leaders argued, if churches were built for the sake of people, then the needs of the people should take precedence over the perpetual maintenance of church assets. With this rationale, bishops committed sacrilege to take care of the poor by illegally repurposing church treasures. Such pious acts of mercy were inescapably political, however, as they (un-)intentionally threatened the legacy of the donors who gave the treasures as gifts.

My book calls attention to the unease between these two perspectives. It does so by distinguishing and juxtaposing legal ways of preserving church property in late antiquity with ritual ways of celebrating it. What it meant for a church to be sacred depended on whether one's eyes focused on the miniature

church or the words of the open book in this image. It was hard to toggle one's eyes back and forth from one to the other, but that is exactly what good bishops in late antiquity were expected to do.

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Excerpt: “When I say ‘the church,’ I do not mean only a place.” John Chrysostom said these words in April 400. Rumor had it that the bishop refused to welcome a fugitive who sought protection in his church. It was said that a certain Count John got arrested because John Chrysostom denied him asylum. John Chrysostom delivered a homily in the church that day, telling his listeners not only what happened from his perspective but also what it meant for a church to be a church. He told them that a church was not just a special shelter, a place where people could expect that they would not be assaulted no matter what their crime. He told them that the church was “faith and life”. One should not just rest under the protective sacrality of the church. One should conform to the sacred “mindset” of the church; one should become the church.

John Chrysostom was one among many bishops who tried to define what it meant for a church to be sacred. In the homily cited above, he urges his listeners to see beyond the legal definition of a church as a *res sacra*, a “sacred thing.” I will return to the story of John Chrysostom at the end of part I, but until then the topic of this book will be the very legal definition that John Chrysostom sought to transcend—the legal definition that, for John Chrysostom, governed the church as though it were a mere body without a mindset guiding it. In part II, I will resume the theme of John Chrysostom’s “mindset” of the church or the ritual discourse concerning “the sacred.”

The making of churches into *res sacrae* occurred, legally and canonically, from Constantine to Justinian. But even though church property in many ways was already treated as a *res sacra* by Constantine and his successors, it was not until the time of Justinian that church buildings and their properties explicitly became *res sacrae*. Part I tells the story of how a definition of “the sacred” conceived for traditional Greco-Roman temples was applied to ecclesial property and expanded in scope in the process. I craft this story on the basis of two kinds of rules: the laws of emperors and the canons of bishops. A canon was an ecclesiastical statute usually promulgated as a result of a council. I use the term “law” in the broadest and most neutral sense to refer to emperors’ constitutions, rescripts, *leges*, and so on. Civil and ecclesiastical authorities in late antiquity differentiated between laws and canons, even though they were not hermetically sealed sets of rules.

Imperial chanceries and episcopal synods did not act independently of one another. Emperors convoked some episcopal synods, sent officials to oversee or even preside over proceedings, and enforced certain canons by issuing corresponding laws. Bishops petitioned emperors for legislation that supported their practices, resulting in the expansion of what the designation *res sacra* entailed. While both the imperial and episcopal bodies sought to synchronize their rules, they disagreed as to the direction in which the

synchronization should occur. At times, emperors refused episcopal petitions; at other times, bishops persisted in practices that civil authorities outlawed. The discursive construction of ecclesial property as a *res sacra* took place in the midst of such cooperation and tension.

Imperial and episcopal rule-making bodies from Constantine to Justinian granted ecclesial property the same characteristics that the emperor and his civil laws had. Church property became sacred things. That meant they were inviolable: they were protected by God, and in turn provided protection and safety. Just as the emperor and his laws were inviolable, divinely protected, and ensured protection and safety, so too were churches. Although emperors ceased to bear the title of *pontifex maximus* (“high priest”) by the end of the fourth century, they nevertheless continued to wield important control over sacred things. Such is the image of ecclesial property that laws and canons paint.

I will follow the contours of this image in part I and show that familiarity with it sheds a different light on well-known episodes of ecclesiastical history. Disputes commonly considered theological in nature had as much to do with the control and administration of ecclesial property as they did with knowledge of God. For one thing, church buildings and property played no small role in the deposition of bishops such as John Chrysostom and Ibas of Edessa, among others. For another, disputes created stigmas for centuries among Christians in North Africa on account of *res sacrae*. Rules regarding ecclesial property mattered. Rule-making bodies provided the blueprint for churches by setting conceptual parameters on what could and could not be done with sacred property.

In part I, the reader will encounter three distinct but interrelated structural components: analysis of juristic pedagogy, compilation of rules from various regions of the Roman Empire, and case study. The compilation of rules does not make for light reading. I have compiled and organized rulebooks in order to make a cumulative point. No matter where one looks—north or south, east or west, canon or law—one general principle appears again and again in the late antique Roman world: sacred things are divinely protected and protecting.

It is not because copies of rules from one region migrated to another that such a general principle can be found across the Mediterranean. Rather, it is because of pedagogical practices. Even after the last western emperor died, legal practice in both East and West continued to rely on classical jurisprudence produced in the second and third centuries. The general principles outlined in such jurisprudence were taught all across the Mediterranean.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, every locale applied the general principles in its own way. Therefore, I have also included many of the specific details of the rules cataloged in part I so as not to level out the granular texture of regional particularity. However, I do not place or analyze each rule in its specific context. To do so would detract from the main point: that classical juristic principles taught in Roman law schools surface again and again in the rules produced by both imperial consistories and ecclesiastical councils. Instead, I include select case studies at the end of each rulebook. The case studies make the significance of some rules come alive through reports of bishops’ trials and show how knowledge of the rules supplies us with a new reading lens by which to interpret well-known conciliar proceedings and other reports about the individuals at the highest level of ecclesiastical administration, the bishops.

It would require another book altogether to evaluate the enforcement (or lack thereof) of the rules amassed in part I. This book is not about how or to what extent prescriptive ideologies affected the real lives of human persons. This book is about naming those prescriptive ideologies and noting how

thoroughly they pervade the Roman Empire in late antiquity. The bottom line of part I is that, ideologically-speaking, the sacralization of things made them unowned and unownable. Scholars have sought in vain for individual or corporate owners of church property. In the late antique Roman juristic mindset, the concepts of “sacred” and “ownership” were mutually exclusive.

Whereas part I contributes to the legal turn in the study of the later Roman Empire,<sup>10</sup> offering a more or less comprehensive assessment of the legal status of church property, part II is not comprehensive in scope. Because jurisprudence specifies the ritual of consecration as the means by which “sacred things” are made, I turn in part II to the ritual context of the consecration of churches in order to evaluate what kind of relationship existed between the ritual discourse of consecration and the legal one. I examine select pieces of evidence: dedicatory images and inscriptions, homilies and hymns composed for church consecrations, and narratives composed to commemorate the anniversary of consecrations. I chose textual and material evidence pertaining to the ritual of consecration that a late antique audience could have likely interpreted with reference to juristic pedagogy.

I argue in part II that the discourse about church assets in dedicatory and consecratory ritual contexts is different from that of the legal one, yet not always mutually exclusive. To carve the contrast in high relief, I borrow language from social anthropologists. Legal protection of ecclesial property entailed limiting their exchangeability, a process anthropologists call “singularization.” Ritually, however, exchange of ecclesial property was the very means by which humans became living temples and were socialized into the celestial kingdom. In both legal and ritual contexts, ecclesial property was a “gift,” but the legal discourse restricted the possibilities for regifting it, whereas the ritual one celebrated such opportunities.

“Commodity,” of course, is a term foreign to the historical sources analyzed here. However, it is a useful term for describing how donors reacted to the ritual discourse. To donors, regifting amounted to the recommoditization of their singularized gifts. For this reason, when bishops prioritized the ritual understanding of how to use church assets over the legal one, donors could pursue them. Sometimes bishops did suffer the juridical consequences for their ritually sound but illegal repurposing of donations.

When Christian groups did not have the law on their side and were imperially repressed, they created a ritual discourse to push back against the regulatory one in another way. Such groups resorted to the composition of pseudepigraphy about consecratory rituals to claim for their churches the status of “sacred thing” that had been denied them legally. For the pseudepigraphers, the grantor of sacrality was Christ and his agents without the intermediary of the civil government.

I distinguish ritual from law in order to indicate how the former responded to the latter. In fact, however, the two are related. It is the juridical context that authorized the ritual of consecration, making the ritual a subsidiary aspect of the law. Indeed, it is this dependence that the pseudepigraphers discussed in chapter 6 sought to undo.

The purpose of part II is not to show that such ritual discourses were somehow unique. In fact, scholars of traditional Greco-Roman ritual practices, Christian monasticism, premodern gift-giving, and still other fields will notice innumerable similarities. The purpose of part II is to show how ritual practices responded to legal strictures. Imperially endorsed bishops generated a ritual discourse surrounding *res sacrae* that, when taken to its logical conclusion, turned the legal discourse on its head. Those bishops

who were not imperially endorsed created a ritual discourse that pulled the rug out from under the legal framework.

This book offers an account of how ecclesial property was socially constructed as sacred in late antiquity. It evaluates the relationship between legal and ritual views of what made church property sacred. Like tectonic plates, the perspectives “fit,” but events on their colliding boundary “shook” late antique societies in discernable ways.

Chapter 1 identifies the way in which a “thing” (*res*) became “sacred” (*sacra*), by whom and how such “things” were administrated, and how others’ “sacred things” were delegitimized. A case study of a dispute that Synesius of Cyrene reports shows one way by which the legal making of churches could be abused for the purpose of usurping territory outside one’s jurisdiction. A case study on the trial of Crispinus of Calama demonstrates how bishops in North Africa petitioned for laws against their rival bishops in order to delegitimize them and their sacred places.

Chapters 2 and 3 examine what it meant for a thing to be sacred. Chapter 2 shows that the sacred was protected by God, while chapter 3 demonstrates that the sacred was protecting of those in need. Chapter 2 explains that ecclesial property was protected from alienation and damage. A case study on a contested early sixth-century episcopal election in Rome (the so-called “Laurentian schism”) shows how the matter of churches’ protection could be employed to question the validity of an election and become an opportunity for the relationship between church and state to be worked out. A case study on the problem of interests of bishops’ kin demonstrates that issues of financial misconduct were as important as problems of blasphemy or heresy in trials of bishops.

Chapter 3 draws a picture of how protected places became protecting sanctuaries by analyzing three legally regulated ways in which sacred places offered protection to those in need: manumission of slaves, asylum of refugees, and ransom of captives. Although textbooks of Roman law did not teach that *res sacrae* had any protecting characteristics, bishops petitioned civil authorities for legal support of churches as places of sanctuary. The classical legal category *res sacra* was not applied inflexibly to Christian temples but rather morphed in the process of application. In particular, bishops advocated for expanding the types of sacred property exempt from the rule against alienation. Case studies on bishops accused of sacrilege for their practices of mercy bring into high relief the fine line between financial misconduct and care for the needy.

Chapter 4 examines the material remains of late antique church floors and walls, particularly images and inscriptions installed to dedicate churches to their celestial patrons. In certain ways, such material culture visually reproduced juristic rhetoric: that God and his saints protect their churches. In other ways, however, images and inscriptions invited viewers to learn that the rules governing wealth investment strategies in the celestial realm differ from those of the terrestrial realm. Chapter 4 pairs with chapter 3 in that it resumes the topic of churches as protecting spaces.

Chapter 5 analyzes compositions produced for performance on the occasions of church consecrations. This chapter argues that orators and hymnographers ironically downplayed the significance of the church building during the festivities of its consecration. Such performers used the occasion instead to pinpoint human beings as the true temples of God and explain how humans must enter into athletic competition with church buildings and surpass their value. Chapter 5 pairs with chapter 2, showing how

performances did not define ecclesial property in terms of alienability (as jurists did) but as a blueprint for the human soul's perfection.

Chapter 6 first offers a brief overview of the many ways in which consecrations were commemorated with anniversary celebrations. The chapter then focuses on one particular set of literature produced in Egypt: pseudonymous homilies for the annual anniversary of imperially repressed churches in Egypt. These homilies reframe scriptural stories to offer narratives of how the respective churches were originally built and consecrated. The chapter argues that the writers composed such stories in order to defend the sacrality of their churches despite the government's refusal to grant them the status of *res sacrae*. Chapter 6 pairs with chapter 1, analyzing ritualized responses to the juridical question, "what makes a thing sacred?"

The term "sacred" has been a difficult one to define, with most historians resorting to modern anthropological descriptions in order to make use of it. I show that there was a juridical definition of "the sacred" in late antiquity, one originally conceived for "pagan" sacred spaces but later applied to Christian temples. This legal definition of "the sacred" has far-reaching consequences for understanding why Christians fought over ecclesial property and composed pseudepigraphy from AD 312 to AD 638. Management of church wealth was a major issue—just as important as theological questions during this period of "the early church councils"—and scholars misunderstand well-known figures and events by ignoring the legalities. <>

## **THEOSOPHICAL APPROPRIATIONS: ESOTERICISM, KABBALAH, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONS** edited by Julie Chajes and Boaz Huss [Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 9789655361797]

"The thirteen chapters of this volume examine intersections between theosophical thought and areas as diverse as the arts, literature, scholarship, politics, and, especially, modern interpretations of Judaism and kabbalah. Each chapter offers a case study in theosophical appropriations of a different type and in different context. The chapters join together to reveal congruencies between theosophical ideas and a wide range of contemporaneous intellectual, cultural, religious, and political currents. They demonstrate the far-reaching influence of the theosophical movement worldwide from the late-nineteenth century to the present day" Contributors: Karl Baier, Julie Chajes, John Patrick Deveney, Victoria Ferentinou, Olav Hammer, Boaz Huss, Massimo Introvigne, Andreas Kilcher, Eugene Kuzmin, Shimon Lev, Isaac Lubelsky, Tomer Persico, Helmut Zander.

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Excerpt: Appreciation of the historical importance of the Theosophical Society (henceforth, TS) and related movements is growing, and rightly so, yet the extent of theosophical influences can still be surprising, even to scholars in the field. The chapters of this volume contribute to our increasing recognition of the global impact of the TS and its ideas and illustrate lesser-known instances of theosophical appropriation around the world.

From its very beginning, the TS was an international movement. Its founders were an American lawyer and journalist, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907), an Irish-American lawyer, William Quan Judge (1851-1896), and a Russian occultist writer and adventurer, Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891). Following its founding in New York in 1875, the TS soon became a worldwide organization. In 1879, its headquarters moved to India, first to Bombay, and later to Adyar, Madras. From the 1880's, theosophical lodges were established around the world: in America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia. Today, the movement has branches in about sixty countries. The first objective of the Society (as formulated in 1896) was "to form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or color," and it was open to members of diverse religious, national, and ethnic backgrounds. The universalistic nature of the TS was expressed in its interest in different religious7 (t)6.9 (e)0.8 (r)4.7 esoteric traditions: first, in Western esoteric, ancient Egyptian, and Kabbalistic doctrines, and later, in Hindu and Buddhist ones. As a movement, Theosophy encouraged the comparative study of religion and integrated into its teachings concepts and themes derived from a large variety of contexts. Unlike other esoteric movements, the TS included many non-Christian and non-Western members from the outset. These members participated in theosophical adaptations and interpretations of their traditions. Despite these interpretations being offered by adherents of the traditions themselves, they were usually preratedn a modn esoteic perspective, within a Western discursive fr amework. Theosophical appropriations had a considerable impact on the way different religious traditions were perceived in modern Western culture. In particular, they had a decisive and significant impact on new developrnents in, and transformations of, modern Kabbalistic, Hindu, and Buddhist currents.

The chapters that follow are the product of an international workshop held at Ben-Gurion University in December 2013, funded by the Israel Science Foundation (ISF) and the Goldstein-Goren Center for Jewish Thought at Ben-Gurion University. Scholars attended the conference from Israel, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Holland, the United States, Japan, and Sri Lanka. The workshop was part of a four-year research project funded by the ISF (Grant 774/10) on Kabbalah and the Theosophical Society.

As part of that project, we studied Jewish involvement in the TS, the formation of Jewish theosophical groups, and the adaptation and interpretation of Kabbalah by Jewish and non-Jewish theosophists. These topics were also central to the workshop, a centrality reflected in this volume, with its section on Kabbalistic appropriations. The workshop considered Judaism's often-ambivalent placement between the categories of "East" and "West" and the TS's role in the construction of modern Jewish and non-Jewish identities in relation to those categories, *inter alia*. Since we believe questions relating to Jewish theosophists and the appropriations of Kabbalah in the TS should be understood in wider context, the workshop also examined theosophical adaptations in other cultures and traditions as well, especially within Anthroposophy, which emerged directly from the TS.

The chapters in the volume examine intersections between theosophical thought with areas as diverse as the arts, literature, and poetry, scholarship, modern interpretations of Judaism and of Kabbalah, Orientalism, and politics, especially nationalism. How may we explain the extent of these theosophical influences? Although they are very different from one another, these chapters join each other in pointing towards congruencies between theosophical ideas and the cultural logic of a wide range of contemporary currents. In other words, we suggest that Theosophy was exceptionally successful (and influential) because it was a key expression of some of the central cultural, intellectual, and political developments of the period. Yet, for all these congruencies between theosophical, artistic, literary, political and scholarly themes, there were also important differences and tensions. Max Müller's negative stance towards his theosophical admirer, Madame Blavatsky, and Gandhi's ambivalent attitude towards the TS (even though it had influenced him) are just two of the examples discussed in the chapters that follow.

## Chapter Survey and Outlines

The present volume includes thirteen chapters, each of them a fascinating case study of a theosophical appropriation of a different type and in a different context. They are divided into three thematic sections: Theosophical Transformations, Kabbalistic Appropriations, and Global Adaptations. The first section, Theosophical Transformations, focuses on the appropriations that took place in the early TS, especially in the thought of Madame Blavatsky.

In the opening paper, Julie Chajes discusses two of Blavatsky's early works that refer to Kabbalah: "A Few Questions to Hiram" (1875) and *Isis Unveiled* (1877). The chapter elucidates Blavatsky's doctrines of Kabbalah in those texts, each of which have distinct emphases. In "A Few Questions," Blavatsky emphasized Rosicrucianism and Spiritualism, identifying Kabbalah with the current doctrines of the Theosophical Society: conditional immortality and metempsychosis. Blavatsky abandoned these doctrines in her later works. In "A Few Questions," she alluded to three main types of Kabbalah: An original, Oriental Cabala, its Jewish derivation, and the Rosicrucian Cabala, which drew on the Oriental and Jewish varieties. Blavatsky was influenced in her understanding of the Jewish Cabala by the work of

the Polish Jewish scholar, Christian David Ginsburg (1831-1914), and many of her ideas about the Rosicrucian Cabala came from the work of the freemasonic writer Hargrave Jennings (1817-1890). Blavatsky brought these two sources—the work of a professional scholar and that of an amateur historian—together in her narrative.

Two years later, in *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky postulated a Buddhist source for Kabbalah, a position unique to that work. The universalism of her Kabbalah was now more pronounced, and her treatment of Kabbalistic doctrines much more detailed. In proposing a Buddhist source, she was influenced by C. W. King (1818-1888), an expert on gemstones who wrote a book about Gnosticism. Other sources cited in Blavatsky's discussions of Kabbalah include the early-modern Christian Hebraist and Kabbalist, Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636-1689), and the nineteenth-century French Jewish scholar, Adolphe Franck (1809-1893). Although Blavatsky does seem to have known Franck's renowned 1843 work on the Kabbalah in the original French, at least in part, her citations of Franck and of Knorr were derived largely second-hand through the works of the Boston lawyer, Samuel Fales Dunlap (1825-1905). One again, therefore, Blavatsky drew together an assortment of scholarly and non-scholarly influences.

In her narratives, Blavatsky drew on these diverse sources to affirm Ain Soph as the true source of the cosmos in explicit opposition to the idea that Jehovah was the creator. T(,)l.6 ( B 8(e)0.7 (e)0.7 (s87 ( )l.3 (o)-r.6 ( )]]T



Considering Blavatsky's two major works alongside Müller's article "Comparative Mythology" (1856) and his 1892 Gifford Lectures, later published as *Theosophy or Psychological Religion* (1893), Lubelsky highlights the common ground, as well as the antagonism between the two authors. Commonalities include their related (yet differing) images of "Aryan" India as a land of pristine and ancient wisdom as well as the concrete political influence Müller and the Theosophists enjoyed on the subcontinent. In his documentation of this unique relationship between the philologist and the matriarch of the "New Age," Lubelsky deepens our understanding of intersections between scholarship and occultism in the nineteenth century as well as the reception of Theosophy among some of Blavatsky's contemporaries.

In the third chapter, John Patrick Deveney clarifies the nature of early Theosophy vis a vis what the Society became from the 1880's onwards, arguing that the differences between the two are so great that we are justified in speaking of two Theosophical Societies. Redressing an unfortunate under-acknowledgement of the nature of early Theosophy in the scholarly literature, Deveney analyses Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* as well as her early articles and letters. He also considers the writings of other central early theosophists, such as Damodar Mavalankar (b.1857), William Quan Judge, Albert Rawson (1829-1902), and Colonel Olcott. These demonstrate, Deveney argues, that the Society as established in 1875 was devoted to practical occult work, and specifically to the development of the ability to project the astral double. This ability was considered an indication of the fusion of the student's "individuality" with their "divine spirit" to create an "individualized" entity capable of surviving death. The early theosophists attempted to prolong life long enough to achieve this goal and to that end they instituted a number of rules, including temperance, fasting, and some form of sexual abstinence. A system of three degrees was established to indicate the student's progress. From the 1880's, these practical, magical, and occult aims were downplayed, discouraged, and even condemned by the theosophical mahatmas as "selfish." Blavatsky began to describe the individual as the "false personality." Rather than teaching that this individual could become immortal, she now taught that after death it disintegrated and that the only human principles to survive (atma, buddhi, and part of manas) do not constitute the individual who desires immortality here and now, but rather are impersonal in character. The failure of the Theosophical Society to produce the practical occult instruction they had promised and the change in the Society's teachings prompted some theosophists to look elsewhere, for example to the occult movements the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor and the Golden Dawn. The Theosophical rejection of individual immortality was also one of the principle elements that led to the anti-Blavatskian Christian Theosophical current.

Deveney's clarification of the Society's early teachings and change of doctrinal direction is important when considering the issue of theosophical appropriations because to a significant extent, the "two Societies" must be considered separately in terms of their influences and legacies. The first Society was the heir of ideas associated with the Rosicrucians and with Cagliostro (1743-1795), the Italian mage who spread a system of practical occultism across Europe. An heir of this early type of Theosophy was American New Thought. Like Cagliostro, New Thought teachers taught some form of occult sexual practice. This may have involved the retention or ingestion of semen, and was predicated on the idea that sexual energy made psychic and spiritual development possible. This idea was an open secret, Deveney argues, known to all in the quarter century before World War I. Although Deveney does not attribute explicitly sexual practices to Blavatsky and her followers, the early theosophists were well aware of a connection between sexual energy and the achievement of conditional immortality. Whatever the details of the practical work they pursued, Deveney concludes, it is clear that there was

such work, focused on lengthening life and developing an individualized monad capable of surviving death. This was later concealed and (almost) forgotten.

In Chapter Four, Tomer Persico argues that Krishnamurti's famous dissolution of the Order of the Star in 1929—including his abandonment of the role of messiah assigned to him by Annie Besant and Charles W. Leadbeater (1854-1934)—did not represent his negation of religious tradition or the establishment of new one, but rather his embrace of an existing current: the "Tradition of No Tradition" with roots stretching back to Protestant Pietism and articulated most clearly by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882). In his writings, Emerson rejected ritual and tradition and articulated a perennialist view of religious truth, positions that are uncannily close to Krishnamurti's later statements. Persico considers the biography of Krishnamurti (1895-1986), including his native Brahmanism, his "discovery" by Leadbeater, his Theosophical training, and his brother's tragic and traumatizing death. Examining Krishnamurti's writings closely, Persico demonstrates a continuity in his thinking despite his apparent doctrinal volta face. Indeed, iconoclastic elements had always been present in Krishnamurti's thought to some extent, alongside a certain ambivalence towards Theosophical teachings. Persico highlights Krishnamurti's time in England and France, but especially in America, as formative in the development of his thought. It was after this period abroad that Krishnamurti's criticism of Theosophy intensified, his latent iconoclastic tendencies consolidated, and he fully and publicly turned away from Theosophy towards the position exemplified so eloquently by Emerson: the Tradition of No Tradition.

The second section of the volume, entitled Kabbalistic Appropriations, deals with various theosophical transformations of Kabbalah, a theme already introduced in Chajes's paper. As Boaz Huss explains in the first chapter of this section, many theosophists of Jewish origin studied Kabbalah, translated kabbalistic texts, and published articles and books about Kabbalah, in which they created theosophically inspired modern forms of Kabbalah. Huss redresses a lack of academic research on these Jewish theosophists, and offers a preliminary survey of the biographies and literary contributions of key Jewish figures in theosophical centers around the world—Europe, America, the Middle East, China, India, and South Africa—from the foundation of the Society in 1875 into the third decade of the twentieth century. He considers the formation of Jewish theosophical groups, especially the Association of Hebrew Theosophists, founded in Adyar in 1925 following the Jubilee Congress of the Theosophical Society. He also tells the story of another (controversial) Jewish theosophical group, founded in 1926 in Basra, Iraq, by Kaduri Ani and his supporters, which included around 300 families. The members of this Jewish community were excommunicated because of involvement with Theosophy and they established their own congregation until the ban was finally lifted a decade later, when they were reabsorbed into the wider community.

Huss surveys the numerous books and articles of Jewish theosophists, demonstrating that overall, Jewish theosophists had greater access to primary texts of Kabbalah than did non-Jewish theosophists, and some even had enough knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic to prepare their own translations. Nevertheless, their knowledge of primary sources was limited and even those who did have some language skills largely based themselves on secondary literature, including Western esoteric, theosophical, and academic texts. Thus, the Jewish theosophists emphasized kabbalistic themes that were close to Theosophy (such as reincarnation and the divine origin of the human soul) but ignored Jewish kabbalistic notions that were incompatible with Theosophy (such as the theurgic import of the Jewish commandments and the unique status of Jewish souls). The Jewish theosophists believed

Kabbalah reconciled Judaism and Theosophy, and saw themselves as having a double mission: to increase knowledge about Judaism, especially Kabbalah, amongst theosophists, and to help Jews to better understand Judaism, through Theosophy. Although influenced by Blavatsky, unlike her, they presented Kabbalah as unequivocally Jewish and as a force for the renewal of Judaism.

Huss situates these Jewish-theosophical interpretations of Kabbalah within a wider current of modern Jewish interest in Kabbalah, demonstrating that some of the basic assumptions of the Jewish theosophists about the nature and significance of Kabbalah resemble the perceptions of modern scholars of Kabbalah. Their positive reevaluation of Kabbalah took place within the framework of a neo-Romantic and Orientalist fascination with the "mystic East" that often intersected with Jewish nationalism and which portrayed Kabbalah as Jewish "mysticism."

Developing the discussion of Kabbalah and Theosophy, Eugene Kuzmin's chapter is the first academic study of the place of Kabbalah in the thought of the renowned Russian poet, literary critic, and painter, Maksimilian Voloshin (1877-1932). A polymath and highly original thinker whose life and work spanned the Silver Age through the Soviet Era, Voloshin's poetry and prose contain numerous references to Kabbalistic works and principles, as well as to Voloshin's wider occult and philosophical ideas. Kuzmin analyses several key texts (including poems and letters), identifying Kabbalistic references and themes, and exploring their sources in contemporaneous literature on the Kabbalah. Although Voloshin had an interest in Hebrew and Judaism, he was primarily influenced by the occultist versions of Kabbalah that have roots in the Christian Kabbalah of the early-modern period. In particular, Kuzmin explores the influence of Eliphas Levi (1810-1875), Madame Blavatsky, Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) and Antoine Fabre d'Olivet (1767-1825). He demonstrates how Voloshin's texts contained elements drawn from these authors, but that Voloshin was guided in his interpretations by an ideologically based sense of freedom that was the outcome of his perspectives on the unique roles of the artist and the initiate. Kuzmin's chapter provides a fascinating glimpse into some of the adaptations of Kabbalah by Russian intelligentsia, contributing to our understanding of some of the religious aspects of Silver Age, but especially Soviet culture, during which religion was officially repressed.

Andreas Kilcher's chapter also discusses the thought of a Kabbalistically inspired intellectual, the Austrian Zionist, Ernst Müller (1880-1954), who, despite his participation in circles that included many well-known figures, is himself relatively obscure. Kilcher focuses on the alliance between Kabbalah and Anthroposophy as understood by Müller. In *A History of Jewish Mysticism* (1946), Müller's conclusion was in sharp contradiction to Gershom Scholem's, as published in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* just four years previously. Scholem (1897-1982) understood Kabbalah as essentially Jewish, whereas Müller saw it as universal, especially when interpreted through Theosophy and Anthroposophy. Müller was introduced to Rudolf Steiner around 1909, in Vienna. He considered Steiner's new vision of Theosophy (which would be institutionalized as Anthroposophy just three-four years later) as much closer to the Judeo-Christian tradition than the Eastern-oriented Theosophy of Blavatsky. Müller's perspective on Anthroposophy reflected Steiner's own assessment that Anthroposophy would recover the true, mystical, "old Hebrew" understanding of the scriptures. Although Steiner referred to Kabbalah relatively infrequently, Müller took Steiner's ideas and constructed a more elaborate alliance between Anthroposophy and Kabbalah (especially the Zohar). He was helped by his friend, Hugo Bergmann (1883-1975), who, like Müller, was a Zionist with anthroposophical leanings. Kilcher's chapter analyzes Müller's anthroposophical perspectives on Kabbalah, including how they were revealed in his studies and

translations of the Zohar. He concludes with an analysis of Gershom Scholem's critique of Müller's attempted alliance, which Scholem saw as fragile.

In the final chapter of this section, Olav Hammer discusses theosophical appropriations of Kabbalah in the writings of the leader of The Summit Lighthouse, Elizabeth Clare Prophet (1939-2009). He demonstrates how information taken from a spectrum of sources (ranging from older and newer Kabbalah scholarship to occultist works) was adduced by Prophet as support for doctrines of a fundamentally theosophical nature. Beginning with an introduction to the establishment of the Summit Lighthouse Movement—one of the most controversial theosophically derived movements of the twentieth century—Hammer discusses some of Prophet's central doctrines and their Theosophical bases. Some of the Theosophical influences were direct but some were indirect, such as those mediated by another theosophically inspired religious leader: Alice Bailey (1880-1949). Summit Lighthouse teachings include such Theosophical staples as the chakras, karma, reincarnation, the Masters, and a septenary spiritual anthropology, as well as doctrines derived from Christianity and other sources. Elizabeth Clare Prophet combined all these elements in a perennialistic vision. Hammer focuses in detail on Prophet's book, *Kabbalah: Key to Your Inner Power* (1997). He considers the place of distinctive Kabbalistic terminology such as Ain Soph, the sephirot, and the shekhinah as well as the importance of Kabbalah in Prophet's presentations of ethics, gender polarity, spiritual progress, and human occult physiology.

The third and final section of the volume, *Global Adaptations*, opens with Shimon Lev's chapter, which brings together a range of secondary and primary sources, to explore the relationships between Mohandas Gandhi (1883-1944) and his Jewish-theosophist supporters in South Africa. Lev begins with a biography of the main founder of the Johannesburg theosophical lodge, the English Jew Louis W. Ritch (1868- 1952), before focusing in greater depth on the lives and theosophical connections of three more English Jews: Henry Polak (1882-1959), Gabriel Isaac (1874-1914), and William M. Vogl, as well as the German Jew, Hermann Kallenbach (1871-1945). Lev discusses the political activism of these Jewish theosophists, their involvement in the satyāgraha struggle and their friendships with Gandhi, which were often very close. Lev highlights the tension between South-African Jewish identification with the ruling white elite and Jewish critique of that establishment, speculating about a self-perception shared between Jews and Indians as "Oriental" immigrants in South Africa. He notes the appeal of a Theosophical Society that enabled the exploration of unorthodox ideas but which, at the same time, did not require the abandonment of Jewish identity.

Gandhi's own involvement with Theosophy is also considered, especially his membership of the Esoteric Christian Union established by Anna Bonus Kingsford (1846-1888) and Edward Maitland (1824-1897). Lev notes Gandhi's selective intake of theosophical notions, his adoption of the ideas of brotherhood, universalism, and spiritual development (as representative of what he saw as "practical" Theosophy)

but his rejection of what he deemed "formal" Theosophy, which he described as "humbug" involving an unfortunate search for occult powers. Although Gandhi discouraged his Jewish-theosophist friends from participating in the Society formally, it was the theosophical notion of brotherhood, Lev argues, that was a motivating factor in both his— and their— political activism in the context of South-African racial discrimination.

Moving from Africa to Europe, in her chapter on theosophical appropriations in early-twentieth-century Greek culture, Victoria Ferentinou argues for a greater appreciation of the importance of theosophical syncretism in the history of modern Greece. She focuses on five case studies of Greek intellectuals and artists who integrated theosophical themes into their work: the journalist, politician, and academic, Platon Drakoulis (1858-1934), the poets, Kostis Palamas (1859-1943) and Angelos Sikelianos (1884-1951), and the painters, Frixos Aristeus (1879-1951) and Konstantinos Parthenis (1878-1967). Ferentinou charts the gradual institutionalization of Theosophy in Greece, with the establishment of the first lodge in 1876 and the proliferation of Theosophy in the 1920's. As she argues, the early reception of Theosophy in Greece is a complicated and sensitive matter and must be framed in the interplay of nationalist politics, identitarian discourses, Greek Orthodoxy, and secularism during the early-twentieth century. Of central importance was the negotiation of Greece's unique identity vis a vis consolidation of its position as a progressive European nation, as well as its struggle to expand its borders, all the time subject to influences perceived as conflicting: West vs. East; secularism vs. Christianity; modernization vs. tradition. Within this context, there was considerable ambivalence towards Theosophy, which drew criticism from the Orthodox Church as well as the scientific community.

A central theme in Ferentinou's analysis is the notion of "occultist Orthodoxy," first coined by Palamas, and which was part of a wider Helleno-Christian synthesis central to nationalist narratives. This was expressed in art and ideology, especially in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Occultist Orthodoxy, Ferentinou argues, was neither homogeneous nor always religious, but chiefly cultural. It involved Greek intellectuals' adaptation and fusion of ideas drawn from occultism (including Theosophy) with their visions of Hellenism, Paganism, Christianity, and other elements. An understanding of the contours of occultist Orthodoxy and its place in the history of modern Greece can help explain the unique character of individual theosophical syntheses and their ambiguous relationships with wider European culture. Greek intellectuals often desired closer ties with modern Europe, but also had an attachment to Orthodoxy and the idea of "the East." The reassessment Ferentinou proposes as a basis for analyzing these writings and artworks provides us with a more workable theoretical framework than those hitherto proposed by scholars of modern Greece. It illuminates identitarian and nationalist discourses and the interactions between heterodoxy and Christian Orthodoxy at the same time as it elucidates intersections between Theosophy and Greek modernity.

Moving now to Asia in our tour of global theosophical adaptations, Karl Baier's chapter reveals the Theosophical Society to have been a significant influence in the popularization of the cakras from the late-nineteenth century onwards. Baier considers the earliest and most intense period in the history of the appropriation of the cakras by the Society. He discusses pre-modern conceptualization of the cakras, demonstrating the differences between these complex and historically contingent Asian systems and the modern, recognizable depiction of the cakras, which derives largely from the *Satcakranirūpana* (Description of the Six Centers) by the sixteenth-century Bengali tantric, Pūrṇānanda, first published in Sanskrit and Bengali in 1858.

Baier then moves on to theoretical considerations, arguing that the history of Theosophy in South Asia is not one that documents the interactions of representatives of more-or-less well-defined traditions, but rather a history of complex reciprocal processes of transculturation involving protagonists of cultures-in-the-making. He outlines the processes involved in such transculturation, including what he terms "welcoming" and "releasing" structures. The welcoming structures involved in the theosophical

appropriation of the cakras included Orientalist concepts of "selfness" and "otherness." Baier draws on Gerd Baumann's theorization of Orientalism as a grammar of identity/alterity based on "reversed mirroring," arguing that this paved the way for the theosophical reinterpretation of the cakras as part of the perennial ancient wisdom, confirmed by post-materialistic science.

A second welcoming structure was the result of previous Euro-American-Asian cultural transfers, in particular those involving Romantic-influenced images of the "mystic East" to be found in works such as Joseph Ennemoser's *Geschichte der Magie* (1819), Godfrey Higgins *Anacalypsis* (1833), Louis Jacolliot's *Le Spiritisme dans le monde, L' initiation et les scien(c)2.2 es octes dans l'Inde et chez tous les peuples de l'antiquité* (1875), and Hargrave Jennings's *Indian Religions, or Results of the Mysterious Buddhism* (1858). As part of their assimilation of the cakras, the theosophists had to overcome the negative image of Tantra (to which the cakras are closely related) that was pervasive in the literature of Orientalism and Hindu reform movements (such as Dayānanda Sarasvatī's *Arya Samaj*). Baier highlights the important role of the Mahānirvāna Tantra, probably written in eighteenth-century Bengal, and which bridged the gap between tantrism and the Hindu Renaissance. Negative attitudes towards Tantra were reappraised in the Society following the publication of an article in *The Theosophist* by the anonymous "Truthseeker," initiating a series of contributions about tantrism and yoga practices written by South Asian members. "Vedantic Raj Yoga Philosophy" was written by Sabhapaty Swami, published as a booklet by the Society, and advertised in *The Theosophist*. It taught a modern hybrid form of cakra meditation different to that of Pūmānanda's influential *Satcakranirūpana*. The *Satcakranirūpana* itself was introduced to the theosophists in articles by the knowledgeable Bengali Baradā Kānta Majumdār, who later went on to assist Sir John Woodroffe (aka Arthur Avalon, 1865-1936), author of the highly influential work *The Serpent Power* (1918). Ultimately, pro-tantric theosophical figures such as Majumdār overcame the anti-tantric perspective of those such as Dayānanda Sarasvatī, convincing the leaders of the Theosophical Society of the value of Tantra. Nevertheless, Blavatsky accommodated both positive and negative views of Tantra by proposing the existence of both a "black" and a "white" Tantra, analogous to her dualism of black and white magic.

Another welcoming structure in the theosophical reception of the cakras involved perceived convergences between the cakras and preexisting cultural elements, especially those deriving from Mesmerism, for example, the notion of the "solar plexus." Mesmeric images of the body were used for the interpretation of yogic practices, which facilitated the integration of the cakras and kundalinī into the evolving theosophical worldview. The final welcoming structure that Baier identifies is the enrichment that the theosophists expected from the appropriation of the cakras. This enrichment involved the hope for a more detailed understanding of the subtle body, and for a more precise conceptualization of the theory and practice of astral projection, a point that ties in with Deveney's arguments in his chapter about the importance of such practices in the early TS.

Returning to the theme of theosophical nationalism discussed in Victoria Ferentinou's paper, but now in the context of twentieth-century Canada, Massimo Introvigne discusses the celebrated Canadian artist and theosophist, Lawren Harris (1885-1970). Introvigne charts Harris's life and relationships with numerous spiritually minded collaborators, his involvement with the Theosophical Society, and his ideas about "theosophical art." Introvigne focuses on the ways in which Harris's ideas about art and Theosophy converged with his Canadian nationalism, influenced by an existing tradition that drew on a Romantic valorization of the unique Canadian topography. Despite Blavatsky's teaching that a new sub-

race would emerge in the US, Harris believed that Canada would be the true location, and he differentiated between the ethos of Canada (associated with its special natural environment, as well as art, and culture) and the ethos of the United States (associated with business and a lack of spirituality). Harris viewed his renowned depictions of the Canadian wilderness, and his work in general, as truly "theosophical art." He insisted that a work of theosophical art must not transport its audience outside of itself to the "subject" of the painting, but rather draw the audience into the art itself, to enjoy a unitive, spiritual experience. Harris described this process through reference to the theosophical concept of buddhi. Despite his explicit rejection of symbolism, Harris depicted buddhi as part of his painting representing the three theosophical principles, atma, buddhi, and manas. Nevertheless, Harris denied any attempt to depict Theosophical doctrines and refused to accept any symbolic interpretation of his work. Rather, in his elaborations of the meaning of theosophical art, he argued that his paintings were intended to provide a divine experience of beauty and of essential forms, which was an end in itself. Harris's perspective was part of his broader ascetic aestheticism, which included a sexually-abstinent marriage to his second wife, Bess, the attempt to eradicate all personality in art and an emphasis on impermanence that was influenced by Buddhism, mediated by Theosophy. Harris's views, Introvigne argues, constitute just one interpretation among many of what it means to be a theosophist and produce "theosophical art." They demonstrate that Blavatsky's ideas about aesthetics and art were sufficiently equivocal to lead theosophist-artists in quite different philosophical and aesthetic directions, and that they could easily be combined with other discourses, such as nationalist ones.

Our final stop on the tour of global theosophical adaptations is Germany. In his chapter on the transformations of Anthroposophy from the death of Rudolph Steiner to the present day, Helmut Zander considers Steiner's life and legacy, focusing on the various practical applications of Anthroposophy that are popular in Germany as well as internationally: Waldorf schools, anthroposophical medicine, anthroposophical farming methods, and many more. Zander considers the various conflicts that have arisen within and in relation to the Anthroposophical Society, such as the "discovery" of Steiner's ideas on race and the challenges posed by increasing historical-critical enquiry into Steiner's life and works. Considering the internationalization of Anthroposophy, Zander discusses Kfar Raphael ["the village of the archangel Raphael"], an anthroposophical community in Beer Sheva, Israel, which provides a home and employment for adults with special needs. Zander concludes his chapter by considering the "self-defeating success" of the proliferation of the practical applications of Anthroposophy, exploring how the Society might respond to the numerous practical and intellectual challenges it faces in a twenty-first-century world marked by individualism and pluralization.

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# DIVINE AND DEMONIC IN THE POETIC MYTHOLOGY OF THE ZOHAR: THE “OTHER SIDE” OF KABBALAH by Nathaniel Berman [IJS STUDIES IN JUDAICA, Brill, 9789004386181]

Nathaniel Berman’s **DIVINE AND DEMONIC IN THE POETIC MYTHOLOGY OF THE ZOHAR: THE “OTHER SIDE” OF KABBALAH** offers a new approach to the central work of Jewish mysticism, the *Sefer Ha-Zohar* (“Book of Radiance”). Berman explicates the literary techniques through which the Zohar constructs a mythology of intricately related divine and demonic *personae*. Drawing on classical and modern rhetorical paradigms, as well as psychoanalytical theories of the formation of subjectivity, Berman reinterprets the meaning of the Zohar’s divine and demonic *personae*, exploring their shared origins and their ongoing antagonisms and intimacies. Finally, he shows how the Zoharic portrayal of the demonic, the “Other Side,” contributes to reflecting on alterity of all kinds.

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## Introduction: Poetic Mythology for a Broken World

Hollow! It's all hollow! A chasm! It's cracking!  
Can you hear?  
There's something – down there – that's following us!  
Away! Away!  
ALBAN BERG, *Wozzek* (1923)

...

Why has the abyss remained in this world? ... The reason is that each time the blessed Holy One works a great miracle, he sifts siftings from [it] ... And from this raw material come into being creations that the blessed Name creates through his wonders. And this is the mystery of “the

abysses were congealed in the heart of the sea” [Exodus 15:8]. Also the King Messiah has already sifted several times from it.

NATHAN OF GAZA, Discourse on the Dragons (1666)

...

Come and see: among these evil species [demons], there are levels upon levels; the highest level of these are those suspended in the air ... [In regards to] one who has only merited a life-force [nefesh], and this life-force wishes to receive tikun and receive a spirit [rua^]: ... something issues from this life force, and seeks, and does not seek, to rise – until it encounters those [demons] suspended in the air and they tell him matters, some near, and some far. And by means of this rung, he goes and becomes connected to his dream, and acquires a spirit.

SEFER HA-ZOHAR

### Otherness and Brokenness

The relationship to the “Other” – ethnic, racial, sexual, religious, unconscious – is the central challenge of our time. From the bloody wars that ravage the planet to the “culture wars” of academia, from parliaments to the streets, from theological walls between religious denominations to concrete walls between countries, from divided families to divided selves, the contemporary world seems in a veritable state of hysteria about alterity. Embrace or exclude? Efface difference or respect it? Protect or crush? Celebrate or ignore? Repress or express? Our world poses all these alternatives and more.

We oscillate between wildly divergent responses to the confrontation of our collective and individual Selves with the Others that fill us with love, hate, desire, and revulsion. In a world that is painfully divided, divisions also found within our souls, we rush from one stance to another, seeking to overcome, or at least manage, that pain – propelled by a deep-rooted resistance, even if often unconscious, to this alienation from the Other, this transformation of the Other into an alien, and by our desire for harmony with the Other, indeed for the Other’s embrace.

This book is about the poetic mythology of Otherness in the Zoharic tradition in kabbalah. “Kabbalah” is the common appellation for a vast and heterogeneous array of texts and practices that emerged on the historical stage in the 12th and 13th century in Provence, Catalonia, and Castile, and spread all over the Jewish world and beyond it. “The Zohar” – or “the Zoharic literature” – the crowning glory of the formative period of kabbalah, is an array of homiletical, mythological, and mystical texts composed primarily by mid- to late 13th century Spanish writers, largely in Aramaic. These unsigned texts articulate their teachings through the imagined discussions of a group of 2nd century sages, the “Companions,” the ^evraya, during their peregrinations across an imaginary Holy Land. These texts, gradually collected over the generations, were published in Italy in the mid-16th century as the Sefer Ha-Zohar, the “Book of Radiance,” and, a few decades later, in an additional volume of such texts, the so-called Zohar ^adash, “New Zohar.”

While focusing on these textual collections, this book will also often discuss passages from two slightly later Spanish works, also anonymous and composed primarily in Aramaic, the R’aya Mehemna, the “Faithful Shepherd,” and Tikune Ha-Zohar, the “Adornments (or Rectifications) of the Zohar,” written in the late 13th or early 14th century – works that are partly pastiches of the main body of Zoharic literature, partly dramatic stylistic and substantive departures from it. Beyond these works, reference will be made to kabbalistic precursors of the Zoharic literature, particularly the Sefer Ha-Bahir, the “Book of Clarity,” which appeared in Provence in the late 12th century, and successors to the Zoharic

literature, particularly works written during the great kabbalistic flourishing in 16th century Safed. I will primarily discuss works outside the Zoharic literature only to illuminate texts within that literature.

The genre of Zoharic literature that will be my focus consists of mythical portrayals, written with a literary audacity and virtuosity that can only be compared to poetry, indeed often avant-garde poetry. Myth: dramas of divine and diabolical personae, male and female, engaging with each other through love and hatred, desire and repulsion, grace and judgment. Myth: a world in which there is nothing, neither plant nor animal, heaven nor earth, ocean nor land, star nor planet, that does not symbolize, or rather embody, some archetype or persona. Myth: the wedding of a divine King and Queen, chaperoned by their Supernal Mother, wars of a God with a Great Dragon, seduction of a divine Woman by a diabolical Serpent and of a divine Man by the diabolical Lilith, and on and on. Poetry: a proliferation of evocative images, often shifting kaleidoscopically, swamping the efforts of generations of interpreters to reduce them to conceptual paraphrase or symbolic decoding. Poetry: rhythm, rhyme, meter, alliteration, parallelism, defiance of conventional syntax, all in the service of arousing, provoking, startling the reader. Poetry: not a round-about way of stating the prosaic, but true poetry, a conjuration of that which cannot be evoked any other way.

Alterity is the explicit theme of much of this textual proliferation: Zoharic poetic mythology is centrally preoccupied with the relationship between the two “sides” of the cosmos, the divine Sitra di-Kedusha, the “Side of Holiness,” and the demonic Sitra A^ra, literally the “Other Side.” Zoharic texts on the demonic are marked by all the fear, desire, violence, and love – as well as the reciprocal projections, constructions, and illusions – one finds in all profound confrontations with alterity. Zoharic writers articulated their poetic mythology through audacious adaptations, reconfigurations, and often subversions of the entire Jewish textual legacy. Indeed, the vast set of discourses and rituals concerned with evoking, naming, repressing, domesticating, annihilating, and embracing the demonic Other are central to kabbalistic reinterpretations of Judaism as a whole.

One way to read Zoharic writing on the demonic is to treat it as a set of “etiological” myths or mythemes, narratives and images that recount the origin of deeply disturbing features of the world as we live it. The appeal of such myths generally does not rest on their ability to satisfy causal, logical, or normative criteria, but on their narrative, dramatic, or poetic force, often, though not exclusively, of a tragic dimension. They construct a poetic mythology of a world marked by the break between Self and Other: not seeking to deny the brokenness as an illusion, as in some acosmic theologies, nor to provide a justification of apparent injustice, as in theodicy, nor to attribute the world’s ostensibly perverse state to the limitations of human cognition, as in negative theology. Rather, they elevate mundane brokenness to metaphysical drama, in often theologically scandalous terms, indeed often aggravating the theological problem that provoked the myth.

A short example can serve to illustrate this etiological quality:

It has been taught: one day, the Companions were walking with Rabbi Shim'on. Rabbi Shim'on said: 'I see these nations are all elevated and Israel is the lowest of all. What is the reason? Because the King has cast the Queen [Matronita] away from him and inserted the bondwoman in her place.

This passage virtually declares itself to be an etiological myth: the unacceptable political condition of the world, which one can “see” everywhere, leads us to a narrative of the divine King who has rejected his

true, divine consort, the Queen, to dally with her bondwoman. The remainder of this passage, which I discuss more fully in Chapter 3, associates this bondwoman with the female diabolical persona commonly known as Lilith, as well as with one of the archenemies of the earthly Israel, the Egypt of slavery. It also explicitly identifies the bondwoman with alterity: the “alien crown” and the “Other Side.”

The text does not theologically rationalize the degraded condition of Israel, but rather sets it in a mythical frame. Without any reference to human sin or any other normative justification, the text portrays the perverse state of the world as a product of the desire of the divine King for the demonic Other, here in the form of illicit heterosexual desire. The personified, gendered, demonic Other is indispensable to the etiological narration, as is the erotic desire of the King for her.

The Other is thus both absolutely alien to proper metaphysical and political selfhood and yet cannot be kept away from it, either narratively or libidinally. The two realms, divine and demonic, Self and Other, continually intermingle, here impelled by the unstable vicissitudes of erotic desire – but elsewhere, as we shall see, also by a myriad of other, equally intimate drives, ranging from tender suckling to fierce rage. This passage evokes the disturbing features of divine/demonic relations – the power struggles, often of a transgressive, as well as violent character, struggles pervasively gendered, sexualized, and nationalized. But it also suggests the hidden desire for reconciliation with, indeed the love of, the Other.

The text implicitly attributes the esoteric nature of the knowledge it offers to the gap between the surface appearance of quotidian reality and the mythical narrative which holds the key to its truth. The narrative is recounted by Rabbi Shim'on, the master sage of the Zoharic literature, as a revelation to the few of a truth hidden to the many. Everyone can “see” the perverse state of the world, but not its participation in a perverse state of the divine. Without Rabbi Shim'on's narrative, his disciples would be beset by a classical theological quandary: how can a world ruled by an omnipotent and beneficent God be marked by injustice (even if we understand “God” in the Zoharic sense of a unification of male and female personae)? Rabbi Shim'on's myth teaches them that, though it may look like the divine male and female rule the world, and though this should be the truth, in fact the male deity's consort is a diabolical female persona. Without Rabbi Shim'on's mythological creativity, one could never know, or even dare to suggest, that the divine King is united with a demonic consort.

This account not only makes the theological problem far worse, scandalous in every sense, but presents a most terrifying existential predicament: the difficulty of distinguishing between divine and demonic, good and evil, friend and foe, theology and demonology. Such indeterminacy, the existential difficulty, and yet urgency, of discernment between divine and demonic, is itself a feature of our world for which Zoharic tales serve as etiological myths. Absolute opposites that continually interpenetrate, absolute opposites that appear indistinguishable: these are features of our world for which Zoharic myth serves as a poetic etiology.

Alterity, however, is never simply a brute material fact. On the contrary, it is always constructed – socially, libidinally, politically, and so on – and always in culturally, historically, aesthetically distinctive ways. In this book, my primary focus is on the textual construction of alterity in the Zoharic literature. I analyse this construction primarily along two axes: rhetorical technique and ontological portrayal. Both concern the distinctive ways Zoharic texts produce meaning – as opposed to treating them as vehicles for concepts or narratives of which they would be more or less adequate expressions. Zoharic writings

must be read not only for their pervasive brooding on Otherness, but for their construction of that Otherness.

The rhetorical axis of my analysis demonstrates the detailed techniques by which Zoharic texts construct a cosmos split between the structures and personae of the Side of Holiness and those of the Other Side. This analysis reveals a startling feature of these techniques: their destabilization of the cosmic split in the very act of constructing it. I explicate these features of Zoharic textuality using both classical and contemporary methods of rhetorical analysis.

Zoharic rhetoric, however startling, produces an elaborate ontology of divine and demonic structures, personae, indeed entire cosmic realms. This ontology is itself paradoxical: featuring an Other who is not only an absolute opponent of the (divine or human) Self, but also an inseparable intimate of that Self. My analysis, accordingly, explicates not only the ontological split between the two realms, but also their simultaneous emergence and ongoing relationships, relationships of desire, intimacy, nurturance as well as fear, revulsion, violence. A full understanding of this paradoxical construction of alterity can only be achieved by an analysis of Zoharic rhetorical techniques; those techniques, in turn, generate the complex ontology of the “two-sided” cosmos.

The fundamental paradox of the Zoharic demonic thus pervades both the rhetorical and ontological dimensions of my analysis. It is the most crucial thing in the world to establish, to know, and to reinforce the difference of the Other Side from the Side of Holiness; yet that difference is nonetheless continually destabilized, dissolved, transgressed by the very rhetorical techniques and ontological structures that establish it. It is this paradox of alterity, this irreducible criss-crossing between Self and Other, the pyrrhic quality of all attempts to definitively disengage absolute opposites, which this book explores.

I note that I will often have recourse to psychoanalytic terminology to explicate Zoharic ontology, particularly drawn from psychoanalytic discussions of the formation of human subjectivity. Such terminology, while emerging from observation of the most earthly phenomena, is highly productive for understanding Zoharic mythologies of the formation of divine and demonic personae. A key theorist upon whom I draw is Julia Kristeva, whose oeuvre spans the fields of linguistics, literary theory, religion, and social criticism, as well as psychoanalysis. This broad vision makes her a particularly productive reference for understanding the broader implications of the Zoharic mythology of the Other Side. Thus, a third, if more implicit, axis of this book concerns the social and psychological insights into Otherness that are the fruit of Zoharic mythology.

I emphasize that it is not my intention to directly engage the debate about the relationship of psychoanalysis, or psychology generally, to kabbalah, or religion generally. A number of scholars have already discussed the complex and vexed relationship to psychoanalysis of Gershom Scholem, the founder of the academic study of kabbalah.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, I will often employ concepts such as ambivalence, splitting, and abjection heuristically, as a way of reading, organizing, and making sense of the heterogeneous portrayals of the divine/ demonic relations so fundamental to Zoharic writing as well as to much of kabbalistic literature. Moreover, although a demonstration of this point would go far beyond the scope of this book, I believe that 20th century psychoanalysis could be shown to be heir to the kinds of traditions of which 13th century kabbalah is also a part (a hypothesis that has nothing in common

with fanciful notions of an “influence” of kabbalah on Freud). In any case, I believe that each of these discursive worlds can contribute to illuminating some of the deepest truths of the other.

### A (Very Short) Kabbalistic Primer

For those readers for whom 13th century kabbalistic writing is unfamiliar, I offer here an extremely brief introduction to its terminology. I caution that this section only presents some basic kabbalistic vocabulary. The Zoharic literature, by contrast, is its poetry, its mythology, its poetic mythology. Knowledge of the basic vocabulary is indispensable for understanding Zoharic writing, but it can also stand in the way of a deep appreciation of it. An imperfect analogy: while a working knowledge of French is indispensable for reading the convention shattering writings of Apollinaire or Mallarmé, adhering too closely to a dictionary may easily stand in the way of knowing anything about their poetry. With this caution in mind, here is the primer.

In all works of kabbalistic theosophy, beginning at least in the late 12th century, the basic structures of the divine, cosmic, and human realms consist of ten archetypal “Sefirot” (singular: Sefirah), each of which is invested with a great abundance of mythical imagery. The word Sefirot originates in the Hebrew words for numbers and counting. In accordance with their order and terminology as they crystallized in the 13th century, the ten Sefirot are: Keter (Crown), Shokhmah (Wisdom), Binah (Understanding), Chesed (Lovingkindness), Gevurah or Din (Might or Judgment); Tiferet (Beauty), Netsah (Endurance), Hod (Majesty), Yesod (Foundation), and Malkhut (Royalty or Kingdom). Furthermore, beginning with the 13th century kabbalists whom Scholem called “the Castilian Gnostics,” these ten divine Sefirot are doubled by ten demonic Sefirot – known variously as the “Left Emanation,” the “Left,” and, from the Zoharic literature onwards, the “Other Side.”

A key sign that the Zoharic writers did not wish the vocabulary of kabbalah to overshadow their poetic mythology: the word “Sefirot” never appears in Zoharic texts. Though they assume knowledge of the ten-Sefirot structure throughout their writings, and though “Sefirot” had by their time become the standard term in kabbalistic writing, the Zoharic writers apparently desired to prevent their readers from reifying the cosmic entities whose dynamic, protean, and destabilizing narratives they recounted. The Zoharic writers use, instead, a variety of other terms, such as “levels,” “crowns,” “kings,” “lamps,” “lights,” “sapphires,” “rivers,” “names,” “places,” and so on. In this book, when I engage in the widespread practice among commentators of decoding Zoharic images in terms of their “sefirotic” associations, I generally say that this or that image is “presumably” associated with this or that Sefirah. I thereby seek to register the Zoharic writers’ own reticence to make such direct associations explicitly and to evoke the poetic distance they were careful to safeguard between their multivalent images and any one referent. In Arthur Green’s formulation, one should approach the Sefirot as “clusters of symbolic associations,” rather than seeking any univocal “reference points.” It is, therefore, just as proper to refer to these ten “clusters” as “sapphires” or “crowns” as Sefirot, though, following convention, I will tend to use the latter term – even at the risk of offending the authors of the texts themselves.

Zoharic texts pervasively associate the Sefirot with a variety of divine personae, both male and female, mythical figures with whom this book will be centrally concerned. Two male/female erotic and nuptial couples feature prominently: the “Supernal Father” and “Supernal Mother” and their children, the male “blessed Holy One” and the female “Shekhinah” – also known as the “Bridegroom” and the “Bride,” the

“Son” and the “Daughter,” and many other appellations. The Father and Mother are associated with second and third Sefirot, <sup>^</sup>okhmah and Binah; the “blessed Holy One” and the “Shekhinah” are primarily associated with the sixth and tenth Sefirot, Tif’eret and Malkhut – though the blessed Holy One is also frequently associated with the six Sefirot from <sup>^</sup>esed to Yesod. The blessed Holy One is also often called Ze’er Anpin, the “Lesser Countenance” or “Impatient One,” especially in the Zoharic treatises called the Idrot, the “Assemblies.” The endless cycles of separation and reunification of the lower male/female couple, the blessed Holy One and the Shekhinah, form the central drama of Zoharic mythology. Above these two couples stands the Holy Ancient One [Atika Kadisha], associated with the first Sefirah, Keter. The Holy Ancient One is also called Arikh Anpin, the “Greater Countenance” or the “Patient One.”

Different Zoharic texts emphasize varying sets of these five personae. Such sets often consist of three personae: for example, the Mother, her Son (the Bridegroom), and her Daughter (the Bride); or the Holy Ancient One, the Lesser Countenance, and the Shekhinah (also called, in this context, the “Orchard of Holy Apples”). Other texts may foreground the two couples.

I note also that the five personae are associated with the Hebrew letters of the Tetragrammaton, YHVH, Yod-Hei-Vav-Hei: the Holy Ancient One with the upper tip of the Yod, the Father with the Yod, the Mother with the first Hei, the blessed Holy One with the Vav, the Shekhinah with the last Hei.

My designation of these figures as “personae” follows the practice of scholars such as Wolfson and Benarroch – even though the Zoharic literature, curiously, does not employ any general term to refer to them. Later kabbalistic texts, particularly beginning with the Lurianic corpus, pervasively designate them with the term “partsufim,” a rabbinic Aramaic word for “faces” or “facial features.” “Partsuf” is itself a loan word from Greek, deriving from *prosopon*, whose original meaning was “mask” or “face.” “Persona” is the Latin equivalent of *prosopon*. Ancient Greek culture viewed the *prosopon* as revealing the identity of its wearer, even while covering him or her, a paradox well-suited for the play of revelation and concealment which the Zoharic writers attribute to divine names, Sefirot, and personae.

Both the Greek and Latin words played central roles in the history of Christian debate about the relationship between the three members of the Trinity. No normative Jewish kabbalist, of course, would explicitly refer to the formulation of the Christian theologian Tertullian (ca. 155–240), “three personae, one substance” [*tres personae, una substantia*], even if expanded to the full five Zoharic personae. Nonetheless, Zoharic writing contains equivalent formulations. Writing of the Father, Mother, and Son, one Zoharic text declares, “All these three are one in one unity” [אֵל אֱלֹהִים אֵל אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים].

Zoharic writers, moreover, often associate each of the Sefirot with biblical figures. For example: <sup>^</sup>esed with Abraham, Gevurah with Isaac, Tif’eret with Jacob, Netsa<sup>^</sup> with Moses, Hod with Aaron, and Yesod with Joseph. Binah and Malkhut are associated with a variety of female figures, for example with Leah and Rachel, respectively – though Malkhut, the Shekhinah, is also associated with almost all biblical heroines. I caution, moreover, that none of these associations are rigid: Moses, for example, may also be associated with Tif’eret, Solomon with Binah, David with Malkhut. The Zoharic writers were composing poetry, dynamic, associative, kaleidoscopic poetry, not establishing a codebook.

On the Other Side, the main personae are Sama’el, the diabolical homologue of the blessed Holy One, and his consort Lilith, the homologue of the Shekhinah. Zoharic texts often emphasize the resemblance

between the erotic relationships of this diabolical couple and those of their divine counterparts. A second couple, Ashmedai and the Lesser Lilith [Lilit Ze'irta], appear at a lower level of the diabolical hierarchy in pre-Zoharic kabbalistic texts, particularly the 13th century Treatise on the Left Emanation of Yits'ak Ha-Kohen, a crucial precursor to Zoharic writing on the demonic. There would thus be two male/ female couples within each realm. However, while this tradition lived on, for example in the writings of the 16th century kabbalist, Moshe Cordovero, this second couple makes no appearance in the Zoharic literature. Ashmedai himself, however, the Talmud's "King of the Demons," does appear with some prominence.

Zoharic writers, like other 13th century kabbalists, refer to the primordial divine as the En-Sof: literally, "without end," an originally adverbial phrase that, in a characteristic kabbalistic gesture, was transformed into a noun. At least in regard to its use in the Zoharic literature, I would not use the term "proper noun" to refer to the En-Sof, since, as we shall see, it precedes the crystallizations of bounded divine personae. Indeed, it may be better to refer to the En-Sof as the "proto-divine." Divergences in kabbalistic metaphysics often turn on the issue of the relationship of the En-Sof to the Sefirot. Some kabbalists identify the En-Sof with the first Sefirah, Keter. This position yields a more immanentist vision of the relationship between the divine and the cosmos. This position seems to be that of the bulk of the Zoharic literature. The opposed position, that the En-Sof is above the Sefirot, yields a more transcendentalist view.

Zoharic writers designate the demonic realm with a variety of names. For reasons suggested in the preceding section, I generally favor the term "Other Side," the Sitra A'ra. This "side" is also often called the "Side of Contamination" [Sitra Di-mesav'uta]. It is also the realm of demonic entities, called kelipot, literally husks, shells, or peels – by contrast with the mo'ah (Hebrew) or mo'a (Aramaic), the "kernel," "essence," or, "brain," designating the divine. In Chapter 2, I discuss the different valences of these two principal names for the demonic, the Other Side and the kelipot – although the Zoharic literature and, particularly, post-Zoharic kabbalistic works often employ them interchangeably.

I also follow the general convention in English-language scholarship of using the term "demonic" to designate the opposite of the divine. I caution, however, that this term can create confusion between the metaphysical structures and the ruling personae of the evil realm, on the one hand, and the everyday "demons" [שדים, shedim] who have permeated the everyday life of the rabbinic and popular Jewish imagination since at least Talmudic times, on the other. Though I will at times distinguish between "devils" for the former category and "demonic spirits" for the latter, the pervasive use of the word "demonic" for the Other Side in the academic literature makes this distinction impractical to follow consistently. Whenever possible, therefore, I use the term "Other Side." It foregrounds both the "otherness" of the demonic, and its embodiment of the other "side" of a cosmos whose totality includes both divine and demonic. This ambivalence is the major theme of this book.

## Overview of the Book

I now offer a brief overview of the book's trajectory and structure, even if many of the theoretical terms I introduce here will only be clarified by the discussion in Chapter 1. At the broadest level, the book is structured by a heuristic division into two large sets of rhetorical techniques and corresponding ontological constructions, as a way of organizing the vast number of Zoharic texts concerned with the divine/demonic relationship. The first set is concerned with the establishment of a cosmos split between



divine and demonic realms, the second with the dynamic relationships between the two realms' forces, entities, and personae. In both sets, the rhetorical construction of the ontologically split cosmos both establishes and destabilizes the split, generating a pervasive ambivalence about this most fundamental feature of the Zoharic vision. Chapter 1 explores the theoretical assumptions underlying the relationship between these two sets, as well as the contours of the ubiquitous Zoharic ambivalence; Chapters 2 and 3 each take one of the two sets as its primary focus.

Chapter 2 thus concentrates on the ontological splitting between the divine and demonic realms and the rhetorical parallelism through which that splitting is textually constructed. I borrow the term "splitting" from psychoanalysis, as a way of describing the ontology of a cosmos in which two realms are posited as absolutely different, one good, one evil. In particular, I am concerned with the positing of bounded entities – natural or linguistic entities, Sefirot, and personae – who face adversarial Others who are nearly or utterly indistinguishable from them. This split cosmos is textually constructed through the rhetorical techniques of parallelism, the most important of which is anaphora, the composition of small textual units through a series of phrases each of which begins with identical words. As I suggested above, texts marked by ontological splitting and rhetorical parallelism both construct and destabilize the fundamental division of the cosmos between the two realms. Indeed, the very term, "splitting," hints at a primordial common origin, and an ongoing process of differentiation, the themes of Chapter 3.

Chapter 3, then, focuses on dynamic relationships between the two realms, specifically genealogy, intimacy, and nurturance. In other words, I look at texts concerned with the ontological genesis of the two realms out of a primordial undifferentiation, as well as with their ongoing relationships after their emergence. The latter include relationships of intimacy, especially erotic intimacy, and nurturance, particularly those called "suckling." Such dynamic relationships may be generally described as involving a two-step process, abjection-and-crystallization, terms inspired by the work of Kristeva and which I explain in detail in Chapter 1. These relationships are textually constructed through the rhetorical technique of tropes of transition, specifically, tropes of limitation and tropes of representation, terms inspired by the work of Harold Bloom. Tropes of limitation, such as irony (for example, the irony of a divine being emitting some form of inchoate refuse) give way to tropes of representation, whose fullest expression is the crystallization of that inchoate refuse into a fully constituted and formidable demonic realm, including demonic Sefirot and personae such as Lilith and Sama'el.

In sum, Chapters 2 and 3 explore two different portrayals of the relationship between the demonic and demonic realms, those of splitting and abjection-and-crystallization, constructed through rhetorical techniques of parallelism and tropes of transition. I associate the first with the construction of bounded entities, especially divine and demonic personae, in the face of adversarial Others. I associate the second with the primordial and ongoing dynamics of identity-formation, the constitution and perpetual reconstitution of bounded entities and personae.

The second of these portrayals, that of abjection-and-crystallization, may be taken as the deeper of the two, since it explores the constitution of the entities whose opposition is the affair of the first portrayal. Portrayals of abjection-and-crystallization concern "secret and invisible" processes, depict the "uncertain spaces" of "unstable identity," and evoke the "simultaneously threatening and melding ... archaic dyad," phenomena over which language has no hold without being "interlaced with fear and repulsion." Nonetheless, Zoharic portrayals of splitting coexist with the portrayals of abjection-and-crystallization. Zoharic texts unfold within the ambivalences and multiple layers they construct, rather than masterfully

deploying them in the service of a doctrine, even a doctrine as paradoxical as abjection-and-crystallization. The textual complexity of passages comprised of both sorts of processes forecloses a reduction of one to the other – just as it forecloses the reduction of the rhetorical dimension to its ontological referents.

In Chapter 4, I explore two polar consequences of the processes described in the preceding chapters, returning to the themes of etiology with which I began this Introduction. First, I turn to Zoharic portrayals of a split cosmos thoroughly pervaded by the crystallization of a mighty demonic realm, nearly indistinguishable, both linguistically and ontologically, from the divine realm. The ultimate danger in such a world, our world, is that of the impersonation of the divine by the demonic. This danger results from a method of combat between the two realms I call “aggressive enclothing,” the capture of the divine by the demonic in such a way that one can no longer tell of particular entities to which realm they belong. In this reified world, a world of grotesque masquerade, beset by terrifying dangers of misprision and indeterminacy, meaning itself may come to seem always already captured by its opposite. And yet, as I shall show, this horrifying convergence of divine and demonic may contain a secret path to redemption, towards the reunification of a broken world.

I then turn to the opposite danger implicit in the cosmic vision elaborated in the earlier chapters – the dissolution of meaning, a danger embodied in the biblical abyss, the Tehom. In this section, I show how Zoharic texts portray the abyss as the ultimate danger to established beings and meanings, but also as the ultimate source for new beings and meanings. The return to the primordial source, a return fraught with the possibility of catastrophe, is also the key to unlocking reification and re-opening creativity. The abyss is portrayed variously in Zoharic texts as the dwelling-place of lethal demonic forces and as the reservoir of flowing metaphysical abundance, as an apocalyptic threat to the cosmos and as the indispensable source of the primordial Creation and the renewal of creativity in an ossified world. The ontological ambivalence of the abyss is that of the primordial undifferentiation from which emerge both subjects and their objects, both Selves and Others. “Re-birth,” indeed, any kind of truly creative internal or external renewal, must draw on the menacing, yet vital resources of the ambivalent abyss, which is the matrix of both Self and Other, portrayed by Kristeva as “re-birth with and against abjection.”

Finally, in the Conclusion, I draw together some of the most radical hints about the divine/demonic relationship broached throughout the book. I recast the separation of Self and Other as a “primordial crisis,” rupturing both language and being, and suggest that their primordial kinship is the ultimate secret lurking in the Jewish tradition – with implications for thinking about “Otherness” of all varieties. Zoharic texts, the very same texts that fiercely construct the adversarial relationship between Self and Other, also just as surely destabilize the notion that one can definitively distinguish them. The Zoharic Self that both is, and is not, the Other; the adversarial relationship that originates in a secret etiology that may only be mythologically and poetically portrayed; the ongoing relationships of often illicit desire and nurturance – all these point the way towards the most difficult, and yet surprisingly realistic, descriptions of the concrete struggles with alterity in a world, our world, a world broken and longing for redemption.

### A Final Introductory Note

As I have emphasized throughout this Introduction, this book offers a new interpretation of the textual construction of divine/demonic relations in Zoharic writing. In Chapter 1, I situate this kind of work in

the rich and diverse field of contemporary Zohar scholarship. While much of that scholarship offers new interpretive approaches to reading Zoharic texts, crucial strands of that scholarship focus on other concerns. These include new historical contextualizations of the emergence of kabbalah in 12th and 13th century France and Spain, as well as meticulous text-critical work exploring the complex processes by which the texts that began circulating in late 13th century Spain came to be gradually collected and eventually published in the 16th century as Sefer HaZohar. In Chapter 1, I suggest how the specific approach of this book may offer one bridge between interpretive scholarship and text-critical scholarship.

It is, however, one of the advantages of this richly creative era in Zohar scholarship that one can situate one's own work in a collective endeavor, whose individual components shed light from many different directions on the fascinating spiritual, intellectual, and aesthetic phenomenon that emerged onto the historical stage in the 12th and 13th centuries. One may view the evergrowing international fellowship of scholars creating new approaches to this phenomenon as an academic equivalent of the mythical band of the Zoharic *^evraya*, the Companions, out of whose discussions Zoharic poetic mythology emerged. My hope for this book is that it takes its place as one voice in the rich conversation of this new fellowship. <>

## **DEMONS AND SPIRITS IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY: READING THE BIBLICAL TEXT IN ITS CULTURAL AND LITERARY CONTEXT** by John H. Walton and J. Harvey Walton [Cascade Books, 9781498288781]

Some people believe that a battle of cosmic proportions is raging as Satan and his demons seek to destroy Christians and undermine God's plans. Others believe that all talk of demons in the Bible and theology only reflects pre-modern superstitions that should be re-interpreted in philosophical and psychological terms. Despite their contrasts, both believe that the Bible directly or indirectly intends to teach readers about reality. Another path is possible. What if references to demons in the Bible are similar to references about the shape and structure of the cosmos representing the beliefs familiar to the ancient audience but used only as a framework for teaching about the plans and purposes of God? This approach is here worked out through detailed examination of hermeneutical method, the ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman contexts, each of the biblical terms and passages, and the essentials of biblical and systematic theology. Unlike many scholarly treatments of demons, readers will not find an assessment of the metaphysical realities. Instead they will be introduced to a hermeneutical, exegetical, and theological feast regarding what the Bible, understood in its ancient context, teaches.

### **Review**

"The authors argue against two diametrically opposed interpretations of demons in the Bible: demythologizing and reifying. They present a third approach, understanding references to the demonic within the cultural framework and mindset of each of the biblical authors. Their book is an original and cogent contribution to biblical scholarship, and absolutely essential for the scholarly study of the Devil."  
--Jeffrey Burton Russell, Professor of History, emeritus, University of California, Santa Barbara

"This is a timely and critically needed resource that I really hope church leaders--and as many people as possible--will read. We need to have a correct understanding of the nature and schemes of evil today more than ever." --Dan Kimball, on staff at Vintage Faith Church and the ReGeneration Project

"Demons and Spirits in Biblical Theology is a sophisticated yet very readable assessment of the problem of good and evil and how appeals to demons and evil spirits have played a role in the debate. This well researched and well-thought-out book makes major contributions to discussions about Conflict Theology, Prosperity Theology, and Open Theism. The authors wisely conclude that the Bible contains no theology of demons as such, only references to beliefs found in some contexts and settings. I strongly recommend this book." --Craig A. Evans, Professor of Christian Origins, Houston Baptist University

"In Demons and Spirits in Biblical Theology, the authors develop in a new direction the long-term Waltonian program that is designed to make us better Bible-readers by helping us to read Scripture in its ancient contexts. Readers may not agree with every conclusion that arises from their important distinction between reference and affirmation in the Bible. They should, however, recognize the utility of the method in helping us to ensure that, on the matter of demons and spirits, we are people of biblical faith rather than (in reality) polytheists or practical atheists. I warmly commend this book to all who need help in thinking this matter through." --Iain Provan, Professor of Biblical Studies, Regent College

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## Why a book about demons and spirits?

A book like this one is needed because it matters—it matters how we understand the world around us; it matters how we think about the Bible’s authority and how it informs our understanding of the spirit world; it matters because how we think about the spirit world influences how we think about God, both his person and his role. We cannot afford to be inconsistent in our methodology or careless in our interpretation. Most of all, we cannot afford to diminish our great God and his revelation to us by misrepresenting them. Christianity is in need of a more careful assessment of these issues and we hope to put further information on the table so that we can think together through the complex issues that are involved.

## Demythologizing and conflict theology

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.” So writes C. S. Lewis in the preface to *The Screwtape Letters*. When examining modern trends in biblical and systematic theology, we find that the fields are, for the most part, neatly polarized into both of these errors. On the part of unbelief, there is a tendency, often referred to as “demythologizing,” to attempt to redefine the Bible’s various references to demons in terms of psychology, sociology, or other abstractions that can be fitted within the constraints of a worldview defined by scientific materialism. The part of “excessive and unhealthy interest” is more complicated. It does not refer to what Lewis called “magicians”; that is, those who worship demonic spirits and/or invoke their power. Rather, it takes the form of the practice of constructing a theological system wherein the role and activity of demons takes a prominent, or even central, role, which we refer to heuristically as “conflict theology” due to its emphasis on an ongoing conflict between God and Satan and their respective servants or underlings. In recent decades, this position has gained some popularity among evangelical scholars: “One cannot engage in a Biblical study of the power of God without simultaneously exploring the opposing sphere of power—Satan and his principalities and powers. The Bible from beginning to end highlights the theme of conflict with the powers of evil. It is integral to the Biblical worldview.” Likewise, “believing in [ . . . ] the devil and demons is not inherently more difficult than believing in a supreme being that is good and may, in fact, be implicit in such a belief.” Finally, “the fact that [good and evil spirits warring against each other] constitutes a central component of Scripture’s understanding of God and the cosmos should surely inspire us to do so.” Statements like these seem to suggest that a major purpose of the Bible is to teach about demons, and that the Christian worldview simply cannot function without them. (For a comparison of priorities, we may note that demons are totally absent from any of the creeds of the church—that is, the documents that establish the fundamental and integral essentials of Christian doctrine—until the Twelfth Ecumenical Council in 1215, where the first canon mentions the devil in passing: “The devil and other demons were created by God naturally good, but they became evil by their own doing. Man, however, sinned at the prompting of the devil.”)

In our assessment, neither of these approaches is adequate. Through the book we will evaluate them as we consider the methodologies used in approaching the biblical text, and the exegesis of the pertinent texts. Finally, we will engage with them regarding their conclusions concerning theology and the problem of evil. To begin, however, we will briefly examine the approaches and their limitations.

## The limits of demythologizing

“Demythologizing” is an attempt to salvage meaning or value from certain biblical texts whose original meaning cannot be reconciled with what is known to be “real” and “true” as those words are defined by a worldview grounded in scientific materialism. As Rudolf Bultmann, the fountainhead of the demythologizing hypothesis, states: “it is impossible to use electric lights and [ . . . ] to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time to believe in the New Testament world of spirits and miracles.”<sup>6</sup> Likewise Walter Wink: “it is as impossible for most of us to believe in the real existence of demonic or angelic powers as it is to believe in dragons, or elves, or a flat world.” These statements are not admonitions or conclusions; rather, they are observations that serve as an initial premise. Wink continues, “thus a gulf has been fixed between us and the biblical writers. We use the same words but project them into a wholly different world of meanings. What they meant by power and what we mean are incommensurate.” The goal of demythologizing is to interpret biblical teachings in forms that are generic or abstract enough to pass over this gulf and thus retain meaning and relevance for a modern audience who are in point of fact incapable of conceiving anything beyond the material. The exact form that these interpretations take varies between theologians and typically follows the broader themes and categories of larger theological movements such as existential theology (e.g., Bultmann) or liberation theology (e.g., Wink). The biblical passages themselves are read as broad insights about the general nature of such things as evil and power, or merely as stories intended to provoke a particular reaction in the reader upon encountering them.

For our purposes, the problem inherent in the demythologizing approach to biblical texts is not the recognition of the gulf, but rather the method used to cross it. It is true enough that modern readers can have no comprehension of the words and meanings of words that were used by the original authors, for the same reasons that modern readers who understand only English can have no comprehension of the original words written in Greek. The gulf in both cases is the same, and in both cases can be bridged by translation. The problem with demythologizing is that the demythologizers are, metaphorically speaking, poor translators. When translating the Bible’s language, a linguist must first understand the ideas represented by the Greek, and thereafter choose the English words that most clearly convey the same idea based on what those words mean in English. However, a demythologizer who approached language in the same way that they approach theology would not use this method. Instead, they would look at the Greek letters and observe, correctly, that they have no meaning to modern English speakers. They would then consult their own instinct, experience, reasoning, and circumstances to formulate an idea of what would be appropriate for the text to say. They would then formulate those truths in English words and declare that this must be the meaning of the indecipherable Greek, because the Bible is true and therefore its teachings must accord with the truths that they, the demythologizers, have come to know as members and observers of humanity.

This method of interpretation is a problem because it effectively shifts authority away from the text-in-context and onto the reader. Wink writes, “When we ‘let the text speak,’ therefore, we do not value equally everything it has to say, but fashion an order of ranked priorities in terms of the resonances it establishes with our own unknown but higher potentialities.”<sup>10</sup> Note that the valuing, fashioning, ordering, ranking, prioritizing, and resonating are all done by the reader, not by the authors and composers of the documents. Whatever meaning the author wished to convey, or what purpose that conveyance was meant to serve, matters not at all. In this conception, the text does not serve as a medium for the communication of meaning, like a book; it serves rather as a medium for the Holy Spirit

to act on the reader, like an icon. The act of reading the text is not a search for comprehension of knowledge, like study; rather it is a rote act of ritual that indirectly initiates contact with the divine, like veneration. The awareness of its content and message is not achieved through the mechanics of semiotics, but by the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit. The words of the text itself are incidental to this process and may as well be written in gibberish. Proponents of this method sometimes claim that it accords with the practice of the church in the apostolic age, but it is worth noting that the Christians in the apostolic age had no Bible (the New Testament had not been written and the Septuagint was not circulated) and therefore needed no Bible. If we are going to imitate them, then, it follows that we should have no need of a Bible either, and therefore we need not bother to use it. (It is also worth noting that they did have a source of apostolic authority that could respond—positively or negatively—to particular interpretations of the gospel in real time, which is something Protestants specifically wish to do without.) In contrast, a reader who wishes to treat the text itself as carrying some form of authority must pay attention to the values and priorities evidenced in the text itself and discernible through its composition and presentation, just as a translator who wishes to respect the integrity of the source document must pay attention to the identifiable grammatical and semantic values of the existing words.

### The limits of conflict theology

“Conflict theology” is a label we assign for convenience to a trend, most notably within conservative evangelical or fundamentalist theology, of assigning superlative or primary doctrinal priority to the idea of an ongoing war between God and Satan and their respective underlings, either as a dogma in itself (i.e., “something all Christians must believe”) or as a necessary element for understanding fundamental points of doctrine such as the power of God, salvation and atonement, or the mission and role of the church. Conflict theology is a trend, not a school, but nonetheless the arguments offered by various interpreters in its defense are relatively consistent. First and foremost, conflict theologians universally insist on the “real existence” of spirit beings as personal entities possessing agency and will, as opposed to personified abstractions. This is because conflict theology sees the powers as active participants in a war, not as passive obstacles to be demolished. Conflict theology also takes care to emphasize that Satan is a creature, not a god, and that God’s ultimate victory in the conflict is certain, thus distinguishing itself from similar yet unorthodox movements such as Manicheanism (where the patrons of good and evil are equal and opposite gods) or process theology (where God’s victory is contingent on people choosing to work to bring it about).

Conflict theologians, especially when contrasting themselves with demythologizers, pride themselves on “taking the teaching of the Bible seriously.” What this normally consists of is treating the biblical text as a series of propositional statements, each of which, considered independently, is factually true. These propositions, or “proof-texts,” are lifted from the text and arranged like a jigsaw puzzle into a coherent system of interconnected logic. Any gaps in the system that are not provided by the text are supplied by appealing to any combination of tradition, philosophy, logical deduction, experience, or common sense; these are verified by the further internal coherence of the system as a whole. If any of these propositions seem to contradict, one or both are adjusted by appealing to literary or historical context, mitigating cultural factors, or semantic elements such as grammar, semantic range, or even copying errors. As a last resort, the conflicting elements can be simply accepted and held in tension as a paradox. The final result is that the “Bible’s teaching” is assumed to consist of the entire system and everything that can be deduced or derived from it, not merely those statements that can actually be

quoted from the biblical text. In this conception, the biblical documents themselves are merely the tip of the iceberg of God's revealed truth.

This method of interpretation is also a problem because it shifts the Bible's authority away from the text-in-context and onto a philosophical construct. It is true that not all of the Bible's statements can be weighted equally; this is the meaning of the conservative evangelical caveat that the Bible's teaching is true "in all it affirms." But while the relative values of statements—that is, what is or is not affirmed—cannot be determined on the basis of their significance to the reader, as demythologizers do, they also cannot be determined by coherence or dissonance with a broader system of logical propositions. The only way the text's statements can be evaluated is by their own context, within the logic and structure of the literary form in which they are presented. Statements cannot be lifted off the page as propositions; they must be considered according to their function within larger units of composition and discourse. Only at the end of a literary analysis can the text's "teaching" be turned over to the systematic theologians for integration with broader concerns of philosophy.

### The scope of this study

As indicated by these simplistic summaries, this book is not only about demons and spirits; it is also a study in how the Bible is read and interpreted. In particular, it is a study about how we can possibly attain some measure of certainty that our claims about the Bible's teaching can actually trace their warrant to the Bible's text, as opposed to merely deriving from our own speculative philosophy, however sound or persuasive that philosophy may turn out to be. This is the only way by which we might have any basis to claim that the teaching we ascribe to the Bible is actually based on Scripture alone. Consequently, even readers who are not especially interested in the particular topic of demons and spirits might find something of value, in the form of a test case for a method of biblical theology that prioritizes the importance of the text-in-context.

One of the more unfortunate side-effects of the polarization between demythologizing and conflict theology is that rejection of one is automatically assumed to entail adherence to the other. Consequently, many arguments offered in support of either school consist of criticism of the other, with the assumption that their own position will serve as the default alternative. This study is written primarily as a critique of conflict theology, because that is the majority position of our intended audience. However, the criticism that we will offer of conflict theology does not therefore mean that we support the demythologizing process. We consider both of these approaches to be flawed and therefore seek to offer another alternative that falls in between them.

We assume that the various references, direct and indirect, to demons and other spirit-beings, were included in the text by the authors for some particular purpose. What that purpose was, we do not know—at least, not until we read the text they produced. We assume that the text in its final form was written for the purpose of communicating something relatively specific, and despite the gulf of time and culture we believe that comprehension of that message is possible. However, in order for the message to be received it must first be read, and in order to be read it must first be translated. The task of the biblical theologian is to serve as the translator, not primarily of the language and grammar (a task for linguists), but rather of the structure and logic of the discourse that gives semiotic elements their particular meaning. In this way, we can discover what message the text was intended to convey to its



original audience—that is, why it was written—and thereby also discover what specific words and ideas are required to communicate that message to us today. <>

\*\*\* Christian Gnosis: Christian Religious Philosophy in Its Historical Development by Ferdinand Christian Baur, edited by Peter C. Hodgson, translated by Robert F. Brown [Cascade Books, 9781532677403] Translation of Ferdinand Christian Baur, Die christliche Gnosis oder die christliche Religions-Philosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung. Tübingen: C. F. Osiander, 1835

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Excerpt editor's foreword: *Die Christliche Gnosis* appeared from the same publisher (Osiander in Tübingen), and at the same time (June 1835), as David Friedrich Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch gearbeitet*. In fact a notice of Strauss's work is bound into the back of *Gnosis*. The furious controversy that immediately erupted over Strauss's critique of the gospel narratives completely eclipsed his teacher's monumental study, and only gradually has it come out of the shadows and received the recognition it deserves. Baur published another book in 1835, *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe des Apostels*



*Paulus*, which was as revolutionary in Pauline studies as *Die christliche Gnosis* was in the history and philosophy of religion. It demonstrated that Paul could not have been the author of the epistles to Timothy and Titus, and it anticipated Baur's later conclusion that only four epistles (Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans) can be regarded as assuredly written by Paul.

Baur's interest in Gnosticism arose from his early studies in the history of religions, specifically his inaugural dissertation of 1827–28, which examined the idea of Christian Gnosticism and compared it with Schleiermacher's theology, and his 1831 monograph on the Manichean religious system. But the specific motivation that led to the present book is the dispute that arose in the period 1832–34 between Baur and his colleague on the Catholic theological faculty, Johann Adam Möhler, over the doctrinal differences between Catholicism and Protestantism. Möhler had argued in a lengthy treatise that Protestantism represents a Gnostic inward turn that rejects historical Christianity, and Baur had responded with an equally lengthy defense of Protestantism and its turn to the subject against false charges of subjectivism. Evidence suggests that *Die christliche Gnosis* was written very hastily in response to various pressures of publication and academic dispute. Baur was establishing himself as a New Testament scholar and as a historian of the Christian church and theology, so there was a lot on his plate in the mid-1830s. The German text of *Gnosis* contains a number of flaws—typesetting mistakes, erroneous citations of primary sources, and the like—that are not recognized in the Errata at the end of the volume. The translation silently corrects these flaws wherever they were noticed, but has not attempted to verify the accuracy of Baur's citations of pagination in the secondary sources he discusses.

The work as a whole has an uneven quality. The section on Boehme (the least helpful part of the book) is largely a string of long quotations interspersed with brief interpretative comments. This is true of other sections as well, but to a lesser extent. Baur often directly quotes his sources, noting them but sometimes without providing quotation marks, a common practice at the time. His method of citations is erratic. Sometimes he uses footnotes, but at other times sources are indicated in-text. Sometimes he provides publication information, other times not. We have attempted to make the notation style more uniform and to provide more complete bibliographic information. Interspersed with Baur's notes are quite a few editorial notes, designated as [Ed.]. Brief editorial insertions are marked by square brackets, or in some instances italics. We have referred to existing English translations of ancient texts, using the abbreviations ANF to designate The Ante-Nicene Fathers and LCL to designate the Loeb Classical Library. There are a few major headings in the text itself, but Baur introduced detailed headings into the table of contents. Some of these are sentences rather than normal headings. We have put all these headings into the text and have broken up the long paragraphs, which often run for several pages without a break. Baur sometimes adds lengthy footnotes in or near the end of a section, as though he has thought of more that needs to be said, and he even provides additions through the Index and the Errata. The work has the feel at some points of being made up as it goes along. In its original form it is difficult to read, and unfortunately a critical German edition of it has never been published.

Despite all of this, *Die christliche Gnosis* is a brilliant book and a true tour de force. It reveals Baur's remarkable grasp of the history of religions, the history of Christianity, the philosophy of religion, and philosophical theology, ranging from ancient sources to the nineteenth century. This range is a hallmark of all his scholarship, and it is first revealed here. Despite a few earlier works, *Die christliche Gnosis* is Baur's first major scholarly presentation, and his first major engagement with the modern thinkers who deeply influenced him, Schelling, Schleiermacher, and especially Hegel. Hegel was the most recent, Baur

having assimilated his ideas very quickly after the posthumous publication of Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion in 1832. For these reasons, this book is foundational for Baur studies.

The word *gnosis* is written the same way in Greek, German, and English, and simply means “knowledge,” especially religious knowledge or (esoteric) knowledge of spiritual truth. “Knowledge” in English comes from the same Indo-European root as *gnosis*, namely *gnō*. We capitalize the term in this translation because Baur uses it to refer not only to the concept of *Gnosis* but also to the movement known as *Gnosticism* (for which he also employs the term *Gnosticismus*). The more customary term for “knowledge” in German is *Wissen*, which (along with English “wise” and “wisdom”) derives from a different root. *Wissen* forms the basis for *Wissenschaft*, which means scientific or scholarly knowledge. In Baur's day academic theology was regarded as a *Wissenschaft*, along with other human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). Writing about the goal of *Gnosis* as “clear self-consciousness” (in the section on the Pseudo-Clementines), Baur says that Gnostic systems assumed an identity between being and knowing such that “being can only be for knowing, that it can only be ‘being as thought and known.’”

As the subtitle of Baur's book indicates, his usage of the term *Gnosis* goes beyond ancient *Gnosis* to designate the concept of “Christian religious philosophy” (*christliche Religionsphilosophie*) in its historical development. The term *Religionsphilosophie* poses a problem for translators. On the one hand it can refer to “philosophy of religion” in the sense of a philosophical analysis of the concepts and shapes of various religious traditions without the philosopher necessarily sharing any convictions with these traditions other than a recognition of their importance. This is the *modus operandi* of most current Anglo-American philosophy of religion. On the other hand, the term can apply to the work of a religious believer or sympathizer who uses philosophical concepts and methods to describe and/or construct the belief system of a specific religion—Christian religion (and its antecedents) in the case of *christliche Religionsphilosophie*—as well as to defend it against criticism. This practice might be called “religious philosophy” or “philosophical religion” or even “philosophical theology,” and it is the one followed by Baur in this book. He also reads Schelling and Hegel as “religious philosophers,” and he interprets Schleiermacher's *Der christliche Glaube* (Christian Faith) as containing a religio-philosophical aspect because it intends to be a science (*Wissenschaft*) of faith. When *Religionsphilosophie* occurs in the section on Hegel, we translate it as “philosophy of religion” because the reference is to what Hegel himself called *Philosophie der Religion* in his lectures on the topic and elsewhere. These distinctions are of course not hard and fast.

*Gnosis* as used by Baur involves a theory of religious history as well as of religious philosophy or philosophical theology. Religious history is concerned with the relations among three major forms of world religions: paganism, Judaism, and Christianity. Baur devotes a great deal of attention to this matter in Part 2 and offers a classification of the Gnostic systems based on how they construe the relationships. The first major form of *Gnosis* links Christianity closely to both Judaism and paganism, and includes the systems of Valentinus, the Ophites, Bardesanes, Saturninus, and Basilides (Part 2.1). The second major form separates Christianity from both Judaism and paganism, and is represented only by Marcion (Part 2.2). The third major form identifies Christianity with Judaism, and opposes both of them to paganism (Part 2.3). Baur finds a historical exemplar of the latter in the Pseudo-Clementine system (the *Recognitions* and the *Homilies*). Volker Henning Drecoll points out that this is a logical rather than a history-of-religions construction of religious history, and that a fourth major type is conceivable in which Christianity is linked to paganism while rejecting Judaism. Baur can find no historical representation of

this final form because a Christianity “reduced to the same level as paganism” would be a contradiction of the singular character of Christianity, and thus does not appear in the history of Gnosis (although aspects of it are present in Manicheanism).

There are two major drawbacks to Baur’s theory of religious history. One of them is summarized by Drecoll, who explains that Baur’s portrayal of Gnosis

sets out from the concept and then goes on to classify the phenomena. Baur certainly does know his sources, and he develops his concept in such a way that he can order the phenomena accordingly. All the same, his procedure is altogether deductive. It would therefore be unthinkable for him to have a loose structure of categories based on common features, or even a “typological model,” of gnosis . . . This procedure does not take into account the full spectrum of types of Gnosticism (nor, accordingly, the extensive new discoveries of the twentieth century, since Baur’s definition of gnosis can seem no longer serviceable today).

The logical character of Baur’s typology is revealed when, in turning to his third type, he writes: “The self-advancing concept of Gnosis has not yet run through all the moments in the course of its development.” He was convinced that logical patterns are displayed in historical events, but he analyzes the events (and writings) themselves in strictly empirical fashion. Religious history draws on philosophical and theological ideas at the macro level, but on the micro level it is historical-critical.

The other drawback concerns Baur’s use of the category of “paganism” in his account of the historical trajectory of world religions, moving from paganism to Judaism to Christianity. This is in fact a very traditional typology going back to early Christianity. The issue comes up in an interesting way when Baur offers a critique of Hegel’s organization of religions in the second part of his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Hegel does not employ the category of “paganism” at all but speaks rather of “determinate religion” (*die bestimmte Religion*). In the edition of Hegel’s *Philosophie der Religion* available to Baur, *Determinate Religion* is divided into two main parts: nature religion, which includes the religion of magic, Hinduism, and transitional religions (Persian and Egyptian); and the religion of spiritual individuality, which includes Judaism, Greek religion, and Roman religion. Baur by contrast wants to expand the category of nature religion to include all the so-called pagan (non-Judeo-Christian) religions, and to distinguish Judaism from them because it reorients divine mediation away from nature to history. Hegel finds a progression within *Determinate Religion* itself toward “spiritual individuality,” including Greek religion as well as Judaism, each of which contributes important elements to Christianity. Roman religion is a retrogressive form of spirit and provides the immediate context for the birth of Christianity. Hegel’s scheme is more innovative, but it relativizes Judaism; Baur’s scheme is more traditional, but it requires use of the negative category “paganism,” under which the majority of world religions are lumped. Both schemes are hierarchical, placing Christianity as the “absolute” or “consummate” religion at the top. The critical edition of Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* points out that Hegel was constantly experimenting with the organization of *Determinate Religion* and could never arrive at a satisfactory arrangement. In fact, his final effort in 1831 gave nature religion a very minor role and distinguished the Asian as well as Near Eastern religions from it—just the opposite of the direction advocated by Baur.

Baur’s attitude is ambivalent in that, while using the negative category, he says that paganism has been given “a less restricted role” in the more recent philosophy of religion (Schelling and Hegel). “In paganism, nature is regarded as the mediatrix who envelops the spirit that, in the realm of nature, is

rising to the stage of religion but of course is cloaked with nature's veil woven from so many colorful images, while at the same time also graphically setting forth in this veil the models or typology of the gods." The epistemological mode of paganism is a way of seeing or perceiving things in nature (Anschauung). It is foundational for and is taken up into the reflective understanding (reflectirender Verstand) of Judaism and the reason (Vernunft) of Christianity. What remains externally related in nature becomes reflectively assimilated in Judaism and then through Christian rationality grasps the inner connection of things.

Part 3 of Christian Gnosis discusses the conflict of Gnosis with Neoplatonism and the teachings of the early church. Baur points out that this conflict played a decisive role in the historical development of Christian dogma, especially by Irenaeus and Tertullian, and that Clement of Alexandria was both a critic and a proponent of Christian Gnosticism. "Clement concurs with the Gnostics above all on the fact that there must be a Gnosis as knowledge of the absolute. Historical faith cannot suffice. Belief must be elevated to knowledge if Christianity is said to be the absolute religion." This Gnosis is not only theoretical but also serves as practical wisdom. At the beginning of Part 4, Baur provides a very brief survey of the role of Gnosis from Augustine to post-Reformation theology before arriving at more recent religious philosophy (Boehme to Hegel). We pass over these parts of his religious history.

"Gnosis," Baur writes, "is a matter of religious history (Religionsgeschichte) only inasmuch as it is at the same time religious philosophy (Religionsphilosophie), such that we gain a proper concept of the essence of Gnosis from the distinctive way in which these two elements and orientations—the historical and the philosophical aspects—have become intermixed in one totality." Our attention now turns to religious philosophy. In a key passage early in Part 1, on the concept of Gnosis, Baur writes:

The philosophical perspective . . . catches sight of an organic whole in which one and the same living idea moves forward in its concrete configuration, through a series of forms and stages of development. In the idea of religion, all religions are one; they are related to it as appearance or form relates to essence, the concrete to the abstract, what mediates to what is immediate or unmediated. The entire history of religion is none other than the living concept of religion, unfolding and advancing itself and, in so doing, realizing itself . . . For the idea of religion, the history of religion is not merely the history of divine revelations, for these revelations are at the same time the process of development in which the eternal essence of deity itself goes forth from itself, manifests itself in a finite world and produces division with itself in order, through this manifestation and self-bifurcation, to return to eternal oneness with itself . . . Gnosis is the remarkable attempt to grasp nature and history, the entire course of the world, together with all that it comprises, as the series of moments in which absolute spirit objectifies itself and mediates itself with itself.

One should not be surprised that this concept of Gnosis, which can be extracted from its ancient history, is also strictly analogous to the most recent religious philosophy. Baur thus anticipates Part 4 of his book, where he takes up Jacob Boehme's theosophy, Friedrich Schelling's philosophy of nature, Friedrich Schleiermacher's Glaubenslehre, and G. W. F. Hegel's philosophy of religion. Boehme's theosophy stands in the Protestant mystical tradition and is characterized by a duality of principles posited within the divine nature itself and carried over to the created world. It is still couched in mythic and symbolic categories, and Baur does not do much with it other than to quote long passages. His

presentation of Schelling is rather brief and idiosyncratic, describing his relation to Boehme (as shown by his treatise *Of Human Freedom*, which also in part uses figurative terminology), his relation to Gnosticism (his concept of God as becoming, which involves identity, difference, and return), and his nature-spirit dualism.

Our interest in this final part focuses on its treatment of the relationship between Schleiermacher and Hegel, and the movement from the former to the latter. Schleiermacher emphatically insisted that his *Glaubenslehre* does not contain a philosophical grounding for Christian faith. Baur, however, begged to differ.

While the contents of the Christian faith should hardly be based on philosophy, a science (*Wissenschaft*) of the Christian faith . . . can only be accomplished in a philosophical way by the use of philosophical methods and certain philosophical elements, those which theology takes up within itself and works with. But this scientific procedure is completely the same as the one we have already become specifically acquainted with as religious philosophy, in other words, *Gnosis*.

Schleiermacher's great work in dogmatic theology is not simply *Glaube* but *Glaubenslehre*, the doctrine of faith or teaching about faith. (*Glaubenslehre* is a shorthand expression used by Schleiermacher himself for *Der christliche Glaube*.) The "doctrine" part includes a theory about human subjectivity and how the objects of religious faith (such as God and Christ) are modifications of religious consciousness. Christian faith also requires Christian knowledge—knowledge of a *wissenschaftlich* character.

From what Baur says about Schleiermacher at the beginning of his treatment, we gain the impression that, despite their obvious differences in character and content, his own book, *Die christliche Gnosis*, is intended as a supplement to and corrective of *Der christliche Glaube*. This certainly comports with his view, expressed throughout this book and elsewhere, about how faith and knowledge, *pistis* and *gnosis*, are intrinsically connected. As the Apostle Paul expressed it in First Corinthians, a knowledge (*gnosis*) that is not "puffed up" is a knowledge that is engaged in practices of love and is congruent with faith. At the same time it is a knowing by which faith in something historically given is "raised up" to the true concept of what is given. Faith is based on subjective conviction or certainty, while knowledge provides rational backing for it.

As for the transition from Schleiermacher to Hegel, Baur is tracking his own intellectual journey when he writes that "Schleiermacher's subjective standpoint—that of an absolute feeling of dependence without an absolute that has objective content— involves of its own accord the necessity of proceeding on to the Hegelian standpoint of objectivity." If the feeling of dependence is "absolute," if it refers to an "absolute causality," the mind finds itself propelled toward this absolute itself. While Schleiermacher assumes that philosophy can have nothing to do with faith, "Hegel insists on nothing more emphatically than recognizing that it is philosophy's task to bring religion to the true concept of itself and to elevate faith to knowledge, since philosophy and religion coincide as one and religion's object, like that of philosophy, is the eternal truth in its own objectivity: the absolute, or God." Subjectivity and objectivity are unified when it is understood that the mind's journey to God is at the same time God's self-knowledge returning to itself—that finite and infinite spirit are connected in the act of knowing. This connection is what the figure of Christ is all about.

Hegel distinguishes three moments in the doctrine of Christ: the moment of history (a nonreligious perspective), the moment of faith (a religious perspective), and the moment of knowledge (a philosophical perspective). Baur describes the transition to the philosophical (or “spiritual”) perspective as follows:

This faith [in Christ] must therefore now first be elevated to knowledge. The spiritual content must be raised up from the element of faith into the element of thinking consciousness, where it is no longer based on the historical account as of something past and done with, but instead becomes justified by philosophy or the concept, as truth existent in itself, as absolutely present reality. For the truth existent in itself is absolute spirit, God as triune, the identity of the human being with God.

Where Hegel is heading is summed up by Baur:

From the standpoint of speculative thinking, God’s becoming human is no solitary, one-time, historical event. Instead it is an eternal determination of God’s being in virtue of which, in time, he becomes human (in each individual human being) inasmuch as God is human from eternity. The finitude and the painful humiliation Christ suffered as God incarnate is something God endures as human in every age. The reconciliation Christ accomplished is his deed occurring in time. But God reconciles himself with himself eternally, and Christ’s resurrection and ascension is none other than spirit’s eternal return to itself and to its truth. As human, as the God-man, Christ is human being in its universality. Not a singular individual, he is instead the universal individual.

Baur, however, wants to descend from these abstract heights of speculation and “go once again to the lower sphere in which the difference between the historical and the ideal fittingly applies,” that is, to the sphere where “Christ retains a standing and importance no one else can share with him.” Here “Christ” refers to Jesus of Nazareth, the one who was believed to be the Christ. In accord with the usage of the day, it functions as a name as well as a title. Baur introduces a statement that establishes his own critical perspective on Hegel:

Hegel’s philosophy of religion regards Christ as God incarnate only as this relates to faith, and without speaking specifically about which objective features of Christ’s appearing faith in him actually presupposes. But how would faith in Christ as God incarnate have been able to arise unless he was, in some way or other, what faith took him to be? In any case the necessary presupposition is that the truth existent in itself, the unity of the divine nature with human nature, had become concrete truth, become known self-consciously, for the first time in Christ, and had been expressed and taught by him as the truth. This is also therefore the distinctive prerogative or preeminence of Christ.

This statement raises the question as to who the historical Christ was and how he in fact was what faith took him to be. Baur himself investigated the teaching and activity of Jesus and established on that basis a connection between history and faith. The idea and historical reality can never be completely identified in any single individual; rather the idea can fully actualize itself only in an infinite series of individuals. But the non-identity of the ideal and the real can be reduced to a minimum in a single individual, and this is in fact the case with the individual through whom the idea of divine-human unity enters into the consciousness of humanity at a specific point in time.<sup>18</sup> In this sense history provides a foundation for faith, but only faith can affirm that God is present in Christ.

Hegel recognized that the teachings and sayings of Jesus are couched in the language of faith and representation, not that of speculative knowledge, and it was Hegel who established the famous distinction between *Vorstellung* and *Begriff*, representation and concept. But only the form differs, not the content. The content concerns the oneness of divine and human spirit, and this is articulated by Christ in his own way, through teachings, parables about the kingdom of God, and his own messianic self-consciousness. Because the form differs, there must be a distinction between the historical Christ and the ideal Christ, but not, in Baur's view, a separation or disjunction. Baur summarizes his own view as well as that of Hegel when, in a section just preceding the conclusion to the book, he says that Christianity is the mediation of religious consciousness, not in the form of nature (paganism) or the theocratic state (Judaism), but as "the history and person of a single individual." However, "this single individual is at the same time the human being as such or in itself (*der Mensch an sich*)." Only Hegel's philosophy of religion can "make this connection between this form, the history and person of God incarnate as a single individual, and truth existent in itself." Thus Hegel's philosophy of religion must be distinguished from the docetic and dualistic tendencies that were everywhere present in ancient Gnosticism, especially in the system of Marcion.

In his "Concluding Remarks" Baur says that "Christianity had to leave behind it all that is polytheistic and dualistic, the many different versions of the antithesis of spirit and matter, of a higher and a lower god, and the whole figurative, symbolic presentation of religious and speculative ideas." In place of all that it inherited from paganism and Judaism, "the idea of absolute spirit—which took shape in all these forms so as to manifest its own proper nature in them, and through this mediation to grasp itself in its own eternal truth—is what first had to become conscious [of itself] in its freedom and purity." The idea of absolute spirit could only develop on the basis of objective Christianity, and this same objective Christianity serves as a check on religio-philosophical speculation.

Baur's *Christian Gnosis* was written in 1835. Over a hundred years later, in 1945, a trove of fifty-two hitherto unknown Gnostic writings was discovered buried in a jar near Nag Hammadi in Egypt. Different literary genres were represented: gospels (like the "sayings source" used by Matthew and Luke), apocalypses, prayers, and non-Christian writings. These were Coptic translations of more ancient manuscripts, which date to the second century but may contain traditions older than the New Testament gospels. Scholars who have written about the find, such as Elaine Pagels, draw upon the Gospel of Truth, the Gospel of Philip, the Apocryphon of John, and the Apocalypse of Peter, among others, plus some of the ancient sources, especially Valentinus. Prior to Nag Hammadi, in 1896, the so-called Berlin Codex was also discovered in Egypt, containing the Gospel of Mary, the Secret Writing of John, the Wisdom of Jesus Christ, and The Acts of Peter. Obviously, none of these mostly gospel-type writings were known to Baur, whose information was based strictly on ancient Christian sources critical of Gnosis as a heresy. If nothing else, the new discoveries confirm that Gnosticism, in its great diversity of forms, was a massive presence in early Christianity.

Pagels makes a point of the fact that these writings were regarded as heretical, and that early church theologians together with the ecclesiastical hierarchy did everything in their power to suppress them. Her history of modern research on Gnosticism starts with Adolf Harnack, who shared the consensus view that the Gnostics propagated false, hybrid forms of Christian teaching, which he called the "acute Hellenizing of Christianity." She does not mention Baur, for whom the category of "heresy" had an entirely different meaning. Heresy simply designated for him teachings and viewpoints that did not

prevail in early controversies over the meaning of Christian faith. These controversies were essential to the formation of Christian doctrines, and the victors in these struggles designated everything that did not conform to their point of view as heterodox or heretical. They tried to suppress the rich diversity of conflicting viewpoints and practices in early Christianity, a diversity that Baur attempted to recapture in his historical studies. So, in this respect recent Gnostic studies share a common interest with Baur's monograph. In other respects, however, his discovery in Gnosticism of a Christian religious philosophy that came to modern fruition in the philosophies of Schelling, Schleiermacher, and Hegel would likely leave contemporary Gnostic scholars astonished and unengaged. They regard Gnosticism in religiohistorical rather than religio-philosophical categories, and its modern significance lies in the diversity of religious practices it discloses, as well as its interaction with Judaism and other religions.

Another point made especially by Pagels is that the Gnostics used an abundance of female symbolism to describe the nature of God, the creation of the world, the hierarchies in the world, and the redemptive figure. This reflects the fact (in part) that in its earliest years the Christian movement was remarkably open to women; but by the second century patriarchal authority had become entrenched and suppressed gender as well as other forms of diversity in the Christian movement, driving it underground. Baur recognized and described in detail the female imagery in Valentinian and other Gnostic systems; but he attributed it to the influence of paganism, which gave a much larger role to female forces and figures than did Judaism (despite the fact that certain key words in Hebrew such as "wisdom" and "spirit" are feminine in gender). In all the pagan systems there was a strict hierarchy between male and female, with the female occupying the lower level. Yet "the primal being is male-female, inasmuch as the thought still enclosed within the most profound silence of his essence . . . is distinguished from himself." The female is the principle of distinction and separation, thus giving birth and vitality to what would otherwise be a solitary lifeless male monad. Sophia (or Achamoth) is both a mother to and a consort of Christ, a role assumed by Mary in canonical theology.

In her final chapter Pagels addresses a theme that aligns her to some degree with Hegel and Baur. The way to the knowledge of God is not through external revelations and authorities but through knowledge of oneself. By turning to the "light within," one discovers the light that enlightens the world. The Gnostics taught that the relation between God and humanity is reciprocal, each creating the other. Humans discover from their own inner potential the revelation of truth. "Many Gnostics then," she writes, "would have agreed in principle with Ludwig Feuerbach . . . that 'theology is really anthropology.' . . . For Gnostics, exploring the psyche became explicitly what it is for many people today implicitly—a religious quest." The religious quest is for knowledge because it is ignorance, not sin, that creates suffering (a motif central to Buddhism). "Both Gnosticism and psychotherapy value, above all, knowledge—the self-knowledge that is insight." The question then becomes what prevents theology from simply being anthropology? Why call this a religious quest rather than a psychotherapeutic quest? Hegel and Baur were very clear that theology is not simply anthropology, that it is God as absolute spirit who overreaches the difference between the infinite and the finite, incorporating the finite into Godself as a differentiating moment, and returning to Godself as the true or genuine infinite. Hegel worked this conviction out with a philosophical rigor that could be beneficial for those who want to retrieve Gnostic themes today. Baur showed how the ideality of divine-human unity must be actualized in concrete historical events and figures, and how that ideality has progressed through history from Catholic orthodoxy to a modern Protestantism that stresses both the turn to the subject (Schleiermacher) and the objectivity of God (Hegel).



Cyril O'Regan, a Catholic theologian, has written the best (and virtually the only) study in English of Baur's *Die christliche Gnosis*. His thesis, using tools of literary and philosophical analysis, is that the "Gnostic return" in modern Protestant discourses represents a third option in addition to orthodox and liberal Protestantism. O'Regan believes that "Gnostic ascription" is superior to other forms of heterodox Christianity: apocalyptic, Neoplatonic, and Kabbalistic. But the line from Boehme to Hegel calls into question the Christian biblical narrative, substituting for it another, ontotheological narrative, rooted in ancient Gnosis, which argues that God as trinitarian is "not given but becomes, . . . through the economy of creation, incarnation, redemption, and sanctification, in which the pathos of the cross has an essential place." An extension of this model is found in post-Hegelian thinkers such as Berdyaev, Soloviev, Altizer, Tillich, and Moltmann.

O'Regan criticizes this model from the same perspective as the Catholic Tübingen School in the nineteenth century, recalling the debate between Möhler and Baur. He regards the Gnostic return as both "haunting" and "deranging," and he calls it a "fabulous catastrophe." It is fabulous because "the narrations are magnificent in their speculative adventurousness and their aesthetic appeal," and because they offer an "alternative to both the dead letter of Christianity in the post-Reformation period and the death of Christianity in the post-Enlightenment period." But it is a catastrophe because the biblical narrative "is systematically disfigured." The "grammar" of biblical narrative is briefly described by O'Regan as constituted by classical versions of the central Christian doctrines: Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as determinate personal entities), creation (the world as radically distinct from God), fall (through disobedience to the rule of God), redemption (through Christ as the incarnate Son of God), resurrection, and consummation. This is the consensus view from Irenaeus to the Reformers and Protestant scholastics.

In response, we may point out that, for one thing, the biblical narrative is not as *sui generis* as this distinction makes it sound. It too is embedded in its historical nexus and draws upon non-biblical sources. But more importantly, modernity has uncovered tensions in the story that cannot simply be papered over—historical, logical, metaphysical, psychological, scientific tensions. History is violated by repeated supernatural incursions into it and by mistaking myths and legends as historical fact. In its literal form the story is riddled with logical contradictions, and it is based on a static metaphysics for which God is regarded as an unchanging entity beyond the world (the "supreme being") rather than as a spiritual process interacting with, suffering in, and being enriched by the world. The story can be illuminated by what has been learned about human beings from the psychological and social sciences, but if construed literally it conflicts with a scientific understanding of nature. Baur belonged to a generation of early nineteenth century theologians and philosophers who attempted to render the Christian metanarrative intelligible once again by rethinking central Christian doctrines, drawing upon repressed resources from the tradition, and employing bold speculative ideas. Whether they failed or succeeded, and to what degree, has been debated ever since. <>

wordtrade

third-fifth centuries. Caner takes the reader a lot of places, and it is gratifying to see the significant role of Syriac-speaking asceticism being given its proper and measured place in the history." — *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies*

"A model of scholarship: beautifully written and engaging, it clearly situates its subject in the larger historical context, demonstrates an impressive command . . . of relevant sources, and provides clear and compelling support for his interpretation." — *Journal of Theological Studies*

"Caner draws together traditions, episodes, and groups from across the geographical expanse of the Roman Empire (the Syrian Orient, North Africa, Constantinople), to present the wandering monk as a figure around whom the ecclesiastical battle for authority fought between bishops and ascetics took on acute articulations. By focusing on religious practices rather than doctrinal teachings, Caner is able to weave together hitherto separate discussions to reveal a larger pattern of profound change in late antique Christian culture, as different models of monasticism competed for economic and political power in urban centers. This is very important work. It makes major contributions to our understanding of early Christian asceticism, the emergence of monasticism as an institution within church and society, and church-state relations in the later Roman Empire."—Susan Ashbrook Harvey, author of *Asceticism and Society in Crisis: John of Ephesus and the Lives of the Eastern Saints*.

"Caner has cut through to the heart of central issues in the study of early Christian asceticism: social stability, economic self-sufficiency, and the reliability of the sources at our disposal. Those who were apparently unstable and dependent, the wanderers and beggars of his title, occupy the foreground of his account; but his chief argument is that they have to be placed in a broader social and historical context that softens the edges of their idiosyncrasy, and that we have to be careful not to take at face value the exaggerated categories of mutually belligerent parties in the church. . . . The second half of the work begins by tackling the "Messalian" movement—asking whether it is appropriate to talk of a "movement" in so distinctive a way. The supposedly typical "Messalian" inclination—an inclination to dramatic indigence in the service of continuous prayer—seems less *sui generis*, when placed alongside more moderate forms of ascetic dedication. We are warned, therefore, not to accept too readily the paradigms of heresy-hunters like Epiphanius. Caner's account marks an important step forward in our understanding of such patterns of ascetic behavior. Caner also ventures upon an equally fresh and welcome investigation of what lay behind the contentious attitudes of John Chrysostom and Nilus of Ancyra, and then—perhaps even more exciting—explains how the whole study transforms our understanding of the maelstrom of politics that impinged upon religious debate between the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. We are thus brought to realize how eagerly and disruptively ascetic rivals struggled to attract and retain the patronage of the Christian elite, even to the imperial level."—Philip Rousseau, author of *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt*, and *Basil of Caesarea*

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#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Excerpt: This book explores social and economic concerns that contributed to the promotion of certain forms of Christian monasticism over others between roughly 360 and 451 C.E. Its focus is ascetic poverty and competing claims to material support made by ascetic poverty and compelling claims nastic movement was just taking shape: How should monks interpret scriptural pronouncements on poverty? What relation was there between early monastic practice and apostolic tradition? What were the implications for members of the clergy? To what extent, and on what conditions, was material dependency acceptable in late Roman society?

Although we will pursue these questions mainly in Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, the issues involved are best introduced by the warning that Augustine, bishop of Hippo, sent to monks of Carthage in 401:

Slaves of God, Soldiers of Christ, may you thus ignore the deceits of that most fervent enemy, who, desiring with his customary foulness to obscure in every way your good reputation,... has scattered everywhere so many hypocrites in the garb of monks, who wander around the provinces never sent, never stationary, never settled, never stable.... all seek, all demand either the expenses of their profitable poverty or a reward for their pretended holiness. ... Under the general name of monks your good and holy profession, which in the name of Christ we desire to spread throughout Africa as it has through other lands, is being reviled.

Augustine bears witness here to the pervasion of wandering monks throughout the Roman Empire at the turn of the fifth century. Such hypocrites, he claims, feigned holiness to reap material gains. Their begging threatened to discredit monasticism as a whole. Against their example he implored his readers to “show people you are not seeking an easy meal in idleness, but that you are seeking the kingdom of God through the straight and narrow life of [this monastic] profession.” That meant manual labor, practiced within the confines of a monastery.

In these passages Augustine reveals a preoccupation with the impact of wandering, begging monks on public opinion and the problems they raised for the social acceptance of the “good and holy” monastic profession he wished to promote in North Africa. Similar concerns for public opinion were shared by church and monastic authorities throughout the Roman Empire, as we shall see. But the issues raised by such monks in the late fourth and early fifth centuries were far more complex. Augustine wrote *On the Work of Monks* not simply to exhort his readers toward a more respectable form of monastic life, but also to discourage them from emulating certain long-haired, itinerant ascetics who had reportedly gained a considerable following as spiritual teachers among local monks and ordinary

Christian laymen. Such “long-hairs” did not work, that is did not practice manual labor. Instead they offered admirers spiritual edification in exchange for material support, while seeking to live like the “birds of the sky” that “neither sow nor reap,” or the “lilies of the field” that “neither toil nor spin,” in literal accordance the “freedom from care” that Jesus encouraged his disciples to embrace in his Sermon on the Mount (Mt 6: 25–34; cf. Lk 12:22–31). It was against their notions of ascetic propriety that Augustine composed his treatise. In his view, they had not only misinterpreted and abused evangelic precepts by refusing to work, but by claiming a right to material support on the grounds that they were teachers, they were also claiming for themselves the apostolic privileges that rightfully belonged only to vested members of the clergy.

Inasmuch as it served to discredit such ascetic teachers, Augustine’s depiction of “hypocrites in the garb of monks” must not be taken at face value. The same goes for denunciations of wandering “pseudomonks” made by his Eastern counterparts at this time. As we shall see, such accusations and condemnations of ascetic vagrancy and begging were often expressions of a rivalry for social and spiritual authority. Indeed, often what caused concern was that the monks in question had gained prestige not only among their ascetic peers but also among the Christian laity, who rewarded them with alms. So observes the emperor Julian, whose treatise *To the Cynic Heracleius* preserves our earliest (ca. 361) explicit testimony for wandering monks:

Long ago I gave you a nickname, and now I think I will write it down. It is apotaktistai [renouncers], a name applied to certain persons by the impious Galilaeans. They are for the most part men who by making small sacrifices gain much, or rather everything, from all sources, and in addition secure honor, crowds of attendants, and services. Something like that is your method, except perhaps for uttering divine revelations.... And perhaps too there is this difference, that you have no excuse for levying tribute on specious pretexts as they do; which they call eleemosyne [alms], whatever that may mean. But in other respects your habits and theirs are very much alike. Like them you have abandoned your homeland and wander all over....

Julian's sketch is, of course, as much a caricature as Augustine's, meant to chasten ascetics of his own calling. It nevertheless makes plain what Augustine and other Christian writers only imply certain wandering monks

received both popular acclaim and alms by virtue of their material renunciations (i.e., their ascetic poverty) and their charismatic behavior or utterances (here specified as propheg).syn From an ecclesiastical perspective, such acclaim could prove challenging indeed. At Constantinople it became pivotal a series of confrontations between church officials, whose claims to spiritual authority derived mainly from their church office, and monks, who derived both apostolic authority and aristocratic patronage by virtue of their ascetic practices and spiritual services.

As vagrant beggars, spiritual teachers, or charismatic "enthusiasts," wandering monks raised the basic question of what it meant to be a monk wherever they appeared. When the Council of Chalcedon in 451 issued the first church canons that addressed the movements of monks and placed their activities under episcopal control, monasticism was still an evolving phenomenon. One purpose of this study is to demonstrate that the sequestered form of monastic life that the Council favored, as well as the self-sufficient, work-based ideal that authorities like Augustine promoted, were in fact novel developments in monastic history, supplanting an earlier, widely practiced ideal in which an ascetic elite, observing apostolic principles, provided spiritual edification to Christian communities in return for their material support. But this book is also a study in cultural history that explores why certain Christian holy men became recognized as legitimate, while others, who embraced Jesus' most demanding precepts for Christian perfection, became marginalized and repudiated in this most crucial period for the establishment, spread, and acceptance of monastic institutions.

## THE MODEL HOLY MAN

With the victories of Constantine in the first quarter of the fourth century, a cultural revolution gained supremacy in the Roman Empire that would eventually transform or supplant traditions held for centuries. The process of Christianization that followed is most notorious for its violence against pagan temples, sacred groves, and statuary, and for imperial legislation against the practice of ancient rites. Yet this process required more penetrating suasion than could be effected by the swift and irregular destruction

of outward symbols of the cultural past or imposed by the threat of punishment. Ancestral customs tended to reassert themselves where neglected by church and imperial forces. Christianization required that imaginations be reoriented toward new cultural icons, based not only on scriptural examples but

alliiimlhvidlrbodied the ideals that the Scriptures described. At the same time, church leaders had to acknowledge and accommodate the sensibilities of their large congregations, now being filled with the mainstream of Roman society. The pressures on these leaders to persuade and accommodate were exerted in turn upon a figure that rose to prominence in the rhetoric, literature, and society of the late fourth century: the Christian monk.

In previous centuries Christians had already celebrated men and women within their communities who made sexual and material renunciations in order to distance themselves from the ordinary “world” and prepare themselves for the world to come.<sup>8</sup> But as Christianity gained a more central position in Roman society after Constantine, church rhetoric increasingly favored those solitaries whose aske<sup>̄</sup>sis (spiritual exercises, practices, renunciation, or mode of life) placed them outside the normal (urban or village) course of human interactions and concerns. Around such monachoi crystallized the most otherworldly ideals. “To go to the monastery of a holy man,” John Chrysostom told congregations in Antioch (modern Antakya) in the 380s or 390s, “is to pass as if from earth unto heaven,” for in that solitude visitors would find neither the self-indulgence of luxuries nor the burdens of ordinary living.<sup>9</sup> And none seemed to offer a better example than the monks of the Egyptian desert:

If you go now to the desert of Egypt, you will see that this desert has become better than any paradise, with countless choruses of angels in human form. ... They display the same strictness [akribeia] in the great diligence of their lifestyle as they do in their doctrine of faith. For though they have stripped themselves of all possessions and crucified themselves to the whole world,

they push themselves still further, nourishing themselves through their own physical labors. For though they fast and keep vigils, they don’t think it right to be idle during the day; instead they devote their nights to holy hymns and watches, applying themselves during the day to prayers and the work of their hands together at once, imitating the apostles’ zeal.

Anyone would know this who went to Egypt, Chrysostom says; but if they could not, he suggests they consult the biography of “him whom Egypt brought forth after the apostles, namely the great and blessed Antony.” By reading his Life they would learn precisely “what sort of lifestyle Christ’s laws demand.”

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It will become clear that an apostolic lifestyle characterized by wandering and material dependency was widely advocated and practiced in the fourth and fifth centuries all around the Roman Empire.<sup>44</sup> This form of monastic life went back at least to the third century and was justified by a literal understanding of the New Testament (e.g., Mt 6:26–34, Lk 10:38–42, Jn 6:27, Acts 6:1–4, and 1 Thess 5:17).<sup>45</sup> It was based on the notion that strict imitation of Jesus and his apostles (meaning absolute poverty, prayer, and spiritual teaching) was the highest form of Christian life. Though its most radical proponents in this period became identified as heretics (e.g., “Manichaeans,” “Eustathians,” “Messalians”), it was also represented by those ascetics whom Augustine and others identified as “pseudomonks,” who offered urban patrons spiritual services in exchange for material support. We shall see how this form of monastic life was marginalized by church and monastic authorities either through accusations of heresy or through their insistence (justified by giving different interpretations to the scriptural passages cited

above, or by placing greater emphasis on such passages as Acts 4:32–35, 5:1–4, Eph 4:28, and 2 Thess 3:6–10) that withdrawal from urban areas, manual labor, and moderate poverty truly constituted strict monastic discipline and apostolic mimesis. This study therefore establishes that authorities like John Chrysostom who have been most associated with promoting Christian asceticism in this period were not promoting asceticism per se, but rather certain kinds of asceticism. In addition, we shall see that their reasons for doing so derived not merely from spiritual principles but from social preoccupations as well.

The late fourth and early fifth centuries were troubled times for the Roman Empire. Though still prosperous, it was not a world in which many could easily attain *amerimnia* (freedom from care), a word that wealthy citizens of Antioch inscribed in the floors of their suburban villas. Barbarian pressures invasions taxed all levels of society. Nothing reflects these developments more starkly than the imperial legislation preserved for our horror in the Theodosian and Justinian Codes. With authoritarian certitude successive emperors sought to guarantee stability by prescribes were made hereditary obligations, where anyone who tried to seek improvement of his status or make for pastures new was promptly dragged back to the place and calling of his origo.” Thus at the lowest levels of society Emperor Theodosius I in 393 decreed that peasant tenants of large estates in Thrace, even though they appear freeborn by natural condition, shall nevertheless be regarded as slaves to the very land on which they were born, and shall have no right to take off wherever they like or to change their place of inhabitation.

His successors forbade even urban guild members to change their occupations and residences in concern that many such skilled laborers had already “deserted the service of the cities to pursue a life in the country, taking off for hidden and out-of-the-way regions.”<sup>49</sup> Official policy was no less rigid toward citizens whose birth and resources qualified them to serve on local city councils. Edicts were issued nearly every year from 313 to 418 to stem the “flight of the councilors,” that is, to restore the many decurions who sought to evade this financial burden (formerly assumed by local elites as a matter of voluntary competition, and the main basis for urban prosperity in earlier centuries) by slipping into the imperial administration and other professions, or by simply wandering off on peregrinatio (travel abroad).

Historians are rightfully skeptical whether such legislation was enforced or had any real effect on late Roman society. The imperial laws nonetheless illustrate a deep concern for establishing a fixed socioeconomic hierarchy (and thus a dependable tax base) for the late Roman world, and that *stabilitas loci* was a guiding ideal for promoting economic and social stability in the imperial domain before it became advocated in monastic circles. We may be sure that such civic policies and concerns influenced the contemporary church leaders, many of whom now came (especially in the East) from decurion social ranks or higher. It has often been observed that church leaders of this period identified ascetic practices as a rejection of manual labor, male and female cohabitation, liberation of slaves, and the wearing of long hair (by men) or short hair (by women) with heresy partly because such practices effaced commonly recognized categories on which the Roman social order and hierarchy was based. But the monastic movement also challenged notions of proper social order in less dramatic ways.

Although historians have recognized that monasticism provided a new way by which late Roman citizens might improve their social standing, few have studied how contemporary monastic leaders responded to this sudden confluence of men and women from different social origins, or how such mobility influenced contemporary monastic discourse. Yet it is apparent from Augustine’s letters as well as his treatise On



the Work of Monks that “social inequalities were maintained” in monasteries that he and his peers established around Hippo and Carthage. Describing the proper distribution of labor in the monastery, Augustine explained that monks who came from humble origins (*ex paupertate*) should continue to perform the manual labors that characterized their former existence, but those who came from affluent backgrounds (*ex divite*) must not be required to perform such physical toils: they should be given administrative duties instead. Augustine sought to promote compassion between rich and poor members of his monasteries rather than to break down existing social categories. For it would “in no way be decent” (*nullo enim modo decet*), he reasons, that men of senatorial ranks who adopted monasticism should become laborers while workmen became idle, or that peasants (*rustici*) should live luxuriously in monasteries where landed gentry (*praediorum domini*) had retired after renouncing such a life. Thus Augustine accepted and reinforced the distinctions of social rank, status, and privilege of the secular world within his monastic “commonwealth of Christians.”

Few monastic writers of this period make such overt reference to social rank and decorum as Augustine does here. However, the criticism that Nilus of Ancyra laid against wandering, begging “pseudomonks” in Eastern cities of the early fifth century responded to similar concerns. These monks, as we shall see, pursued patronage by offering themselves as ascetic teachers to wealthy urban Christians, which Nilus attributes to their having no source of support from home. Yet urban households were not the only venue through which the *gyrovagi* of this period could achieve upward social mobility. While commenting on the wayward practices of certain bishops under his jurisdiction, Pope Siricius of Rome (384–399) complained that it is hard to imagine anything more illicit than the fact that [certain bishops] refuse to provide sustenance to those who pass through (whether they really are or simply pretend to be monks, as they call themselves), but rather make these men—whose way of life and baptism we can know nothing about, and whose faith we consider uncertain and unproven—their deacons, or hasten to ordain them as priests, or, what is more serious, do not hesitate to make them bishops.... Since [such ordained monks] are not used to restraint, they first exult in pride, then soon fall into falsehood; for those who are complete strangers to the world cannot be assumed to have learned true faith in churches.

Such readiness to hustle wandering monks into church service is otherwise unattested. Siricius’ letter points out, however, what was happening in church dioceses outside our view, as well as the ease with which some monks assumed positions of authority in the ecclesiastical domain. It was not until the mid-fifth century that monks (and other laymen) were expressly forbidden to preach. Siricius bears witness to two problems we shall find repeatedly associated with wandering monks of the East: questionable orthodoxy and a vexing ability to gain recognition as leaders in Christian communities. His letter alerts us that in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, the boundaries between the ecclesiastical and the monastic worlds, as between orthodox and non-orthodox belief, were still often remarkably fluid. <>

## **BRILL'S COMPANION TO THE RECEPTION OF PRESOCRATIC NATURAL PHILOSOPHY IN LATER CLASSICAL THOUGHT** edited by Chelsea C. Harry and Justin Habash [Series: Brill's Companions to Philosophy: Ancient Philosophy, Brill, 9789004318175]

In **BRILL'S COMPANION TO THE RECEPTION OF PRESOCRATIC NATURAL PHILOSOPHY IN LATER CLASSICAL THOUGHT**, contributions by Gottfried Heinemann, Andrew Gregory, Justin Habash, Daniel W. Graham, Oliver Primavesi, Owen Goldin, Omar D. Álvarez Salas, Christopher Kurfess, Dirk L. Couprie, Tiberiu Popa, Timothy J. Crowley, Liliana Carolina Sánchez Castro, Iakovos Vasiliou, Barbara Sattler, Rosemary Wright, and a foreword by Patricia Curd explore the influences of early Greek science (6-4th c. BCE) on the philosophical works of Plato, Aristotle, and the Hippocratics.

Rather than presenting an unified narrative, the volume supports various ways to understand the development of the concept of nature, the emergence of science, and the historical context of topics such as elements, principles, soul, organization, causation, purpose, and cosmos in ancient Greek philosophy.

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One way to think about the reception of a philosophical thinker is to consider the influence of that philosopher on another, or the use that the later writer makes of the work of the earlier. Thus, we can discuss how Descartes's work influenced Spinoza, or how John Rawls made use of both Aristotle and Kant in developing *A Theory of Justice*. Sometimes the influence is seen as direct: How does Spinoza respond to the questions that Descartes asked and develop his own answers to them? Sometimes the influence is less direct: Rawls took care to talk about an Aristotelian principle, claiming to capture something about what Aristotle saw about ethical theory without claiming to be giving "Aristotle's view." In these examples, readers have (or can have) the advantage of having the texts of Descartes, Spinoza, Aristotle, and Rawls in front of them, and can judge to what extent the responders have quoted correctly, or whether the interpretive response is more or less consistent with what one reads in the original. Are we getting Descartes' own view, or a Cartesian theory?

When the subject (as here) is **THE RECEPTION OF PRESOCRATIC NATURAL PHILOSOPHY IN LATER CLASSICAL THOUGHT** a special problem arises. What remains to us of early Greek philosophy is (literally) fragmented. In some cases, we have only a word or two, or a few lines. In other cases (Thales, for example), there is good reason to think that nothing that Thales himself wrote has been preserved in the writing of another author. For some others (Parmenides and Empedocles), although we have larger segments of text, we can be sure that much is missing. The problem becomes more complicated because, in many cases, the sources of the Presocratic fragments are the very people (among others: Plato and Aristotle in 4th C. BCE; Simplicius in the 6th C. CE) who are using and interpreting these texts to make their own points. Moreover, by the time we get to a number of valuable sources for our early philosophers (e.g., Simplicius, who is the only source for some of the most important fragments of Parmenides), the materials that they are using are old, rare, and sometimes in tatters. The problems involved are intertwined: we must rely on our sources to reconstruct the thought of the first philosophers, but we need to have an interpretation of that thought in order to evaluate the responses of those who are our sources. Imagine that all or most of Plato's works are lost to us, and try to reconstruct his views using the remarks about them in Aristotle, and information drawn from the ancient commentators on Aristotle. (This is actually the case with Zeno of Elea's four paradoxes of motion. We have no original texts, only Aristotle's names for and proposed solutions to the paradoxes in *Physics* 6.9.) So, how do we read and study the Presocratics and how do we think about their influence? Although there are difficulties, complete pessimism is misplaced. We can always wish that we had more textual and doxographical evidence, but there is enough general agreement among scholars about enough material to make Presocratic studies lively and interesting; nevertheless most who work on early Greek philosophy understand that a certain level of humility in the face of the evidence should prevail: As in the case of Empedocles and the Strasbourg Papyrus, more new material may yet come to light that will require reconsideration and revision of previous interpretations.

Recently, there has been discussion of the proper term for referring to the group that we are discussing. *Presocratic* goes back to the nineteenth century, and originally implied that Socrates marks a break in the development of philosophy because of his interest in ethics. Some scholars now prefer the

use of “early Greek philosophy/philosophers.” Because of the ubiquity of the older term and because it now seems clear that there was no real break between the Presocratics and the philosophers of the classical Athenian period, the name “Presocratic” is more often a neutral label used to refer to a group of thinkers (who themselves are often classified as early Presocratic or later Presocratic). There is also the irony that Socrates himself wrote nothing, and so there is no evidence for his supposed single-minded interest in ethics other than the depictions of Socrates by Plato and other authors. There is even counter-evidence in Plato: the Socrates of the *Phaedo* reports his early interest in the theories of Anaxagoras.

Careful study of the extant fragments and testimonia can help us build accounts and interpretations of the earliest Greek philosophers. In some cases, we can disentangle text and interpretation by paying attention to language: Archaic dialect and language usage can confirm that we have a genuine text rather than a later report, summary, or outright forgery. Since some Presocratics wrote in verse (Xenophanes, Parmenides, and Empedocles), paying attention to poetic meter can sometimes help connect passages that are reported in different sources. Simplicius occasionally comments on the archaic or poetic language of passages he quotes. For example, in what is now fragment B2, he notes that Anaximander “said that the indefinite (*to apeiron*) is both principle (*archē*) and element (*stoicheion*) of the things that are, and he was the first to introduce this name of the principle.” Later in the same passage he observes that Anaximander “speaks in rather poetical language.” The vocabulary of early Greek thought presents difficulties of its own. In the Anaximander fragment from Simplicius, it is unclear just which word it is that Anaximander is said to have been the first to use (*apeiron* or *archē*) and there have been disagreements among interpreters about this. One thing does seem clear, though: *Stoicheion* with its technical meaning of *element* as Simplicius uses it here, is an Aristotelian coinage, and it would not have been used in this sense by Anaximander himself. The same goes for such Aristotelian terms as “matter” and “substance.” While post-Aristotelian commentators and philosophers can happily use these words and know what they mean by them, using them to explain Presocratic views can be seriously misleading. Thus, many who work on early Greek philosophy talk about *stuff* rather than *matter*. This is not a case of being overly fastidious, for to speak of matter invites talk of form, and the form-matter distinction is Aristotle’s important solution to complicated physical and metaphysical problems that can be traced back through Plato to the Presocratics. The same caveat goes for translations and understandings of the various forms of the Greek verb *einai* (to be). It is a mistake to think that the fundamental notion here is *existence*. Rather, the being of a thing is what it is to be that sort of thing (its nature, or as Aristotle would say, its essence). Parmenides’ account of “Truth” (frs. B1.26–28 to B8.51) is not concerned with what exists (grass, grasshoppers, numbers, pains, etc.) but with what counts as a metaphysically fundamental entity in any account of how things are. Only such a being can be a genuine object of knowledge and serve as an explanatory foundation. This notion of a basic being continues through later Presocratic thought and in Plato, e.g., in the *Phaedo*, only the Forms can be said genuinely to be; and in the central books of the *Republic*, Parmenidean assumptions about what it is to be provide the starting points for the arguments that the Forms are the only objects of knowledge. This progression culminates in Aristotle’s radical and problem-solving assertion in *Metaphysics* Z.1 that “being is said in many ways” and the fundamental way of being is to be a substance (*ousia*).

Yet we might ask: in what sense are these early Greek thinkers *philosophers*? Clearly they did not think of themselves as such. While in fragment 35 (from Clement) we find that “according to Heraclitus, men who are lovers of wisdom (*philosophoi*) must be inquirers into many things,” the extent of the actual

quotation is open to question: Is the word *philosophoi* part of the original text? In an important sense it makes no difference; the presence or absence of a particular word is not relevant in determining whether these thinkers were engaged in what we would now call philosophizing, and Heraclitus was certainly interested in wisdom and the criteria for claiming to know or understand how things are. While we should be careful to avoid anachronism in attributing later philosophical meanings to the terms that they use, the Presocratics can and did use traditional language in new ways, and invented new words.<sup>7</sup> The fact that a word has a particular meaning (or range of meanings) in Homer or Hesiod or other early texts does not entail that the same word cannot have a novel or extended meaning in Heraclitus. Thus, for instance, arguments about how we should understand Heraclitus' notion of *logos* cannot be solved simply by canvassing its uses in Homer. The notion of nature (*physis*) in early Greek philosophy is another subject about which scholars have disagreed vigorously. It seems clear that many of the Presocratics (if not all – and the question of who belongs on the list remains open) were indeed interested in questions about the possibility and structure of human knowledge, in worries about how that which can be known must be in order to be knowable, and the roles that can or cannot be played by sense perception and thinking in answering such questions. Not only are what we would call first-order scientific, metaphysical and epistemological problems considered, but ideas about the proper structure of the accounts (or theories) that would solve these problems are being developed. Another important point is that the Presocratics were discussing and responding to one another. Heraclitus names some of those with whom he disagrees. In other cases, linguistic resonances and word choices indicate that Parmenides was aware of earlier views about the nature of the cosmos, and that both Anaxagoras and Empedocles are constructing accounts that take seriously Parmenides' strictures on the nature of what-is and the possibility of knowledge.

Thus, borrowings and influence (acknowledged and unacknowledged) and responses (both positive and negative) are already present in the Presocratics themselves. In addition, many of the philosophical questions and range of philosophical topics that engrossed and were developed in new ways by Plato, Aristotle, and those who came after them began with the Presocratics. As the contents of this volume demonstrate, when we consider the reception of Presocratic philosophy, we see that the earliest Greek thinkers set the agenda for those who followed. *Patricia Curd*

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Plato and Aristotle, together with the Hippocratic thinkers, are the most celebrated and prolific contributors to a period of ancient Greek thought that we will refer to here as “later classical.” This name and designation is partially bounded by time, ca. 5<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. But, more importantly, it means thinkers that form a sort of “second wave” in ancient Greek thought. This is to suggest that in Plato, Aristotle, and the Hippocratics, we see not only new ideas and novel arguments, but also dialectical arguments, responses to previous positions, and even syntheses of previous ideas. These syntheses, in turn, create new ideas, and even paradigms in early philosophy and science. Those whom we will consider here as a more or less “first wave” of thinkers, given their status as interlocutors to the later classical thinkers, are more commonly known as the “Presocratics,” or as Aristotle called them, the *φυσιολόγοι* (*physiologoi*). This “first wave” of thinkers spans a longer time in history, ca. 6<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, as well as a far more diverse geography, from modern day western Turkey to modern day southern Italy. What is more, they represent different philosophical schools. Nevertheless, we group

them together because we have the sense that they made a collective, if not directly related, effort that effectually began ancient Greek philosophy and science with various enquiries into nature.

This volume takes for granted that both Plato and Aristotle were profoundly influenced by these “first wave” philosophical forebears. For, despite Plato’s Socrates’s well-known account of his own turning away from natural philosophy in the *Phaedo*, ideas about the concept of nature inform Platonic philosophy across Plato’s corpus. Thus we see discussions of “nature” not only in Plato’s *Timaeus*, his singular work on cosmogony and cosmology, but also in works like the *Republic*, a foundational text of political theory, which also takes up the nature of *human* being. Aristotle, often considered the first scientist in the West because of his profound contributions to the foundations of biology and zoology, was also the first philosopher to develop a method by which to undertake and proliferate a complete *phuseôs epistêmês*, or science of nature. While Aristotle’s negative accounts almost always reply to commonly held theories of his time (*endoxa*), these theories are often treated anonymously and not considered in their own right. The *endoxa* to which Aristotle replies nevertheless come from a rich historical tradition of investigation into the greatest mysteries of nature and being, which though perhaps not methodological in compilation and scope, certainly aimed at the same target as Aristotle: truth. As John Burnet put it, curiosity was the common denominator, and Jonathan Barnes famously argued that it was reason.

Despite centuries of excellent philological and philosophical scholarship produced on these early Greek thinkers, they remain lesser known to most than the later classical thinkers. This may be due in part to a lack of extant literature we have from them today. Whereas a figure like Empedocles might present an anomaly to this generalization because we have more extant from him than most, in other cases, e.g., Thales, we have only a few lines of testimony on which to rely. So, even when Plato or Aristotle allude to these first wave thinkers, we face the challenge of sometimes having no other real source to cross-reference, and thus needing to rely on these allusions in order to know the Presocratic thinkers at all. Of course, the fact that we have the allusions indicates for us the relative importance they had for the later classical thinkers; and, yet, the lack of extant material whence we could examine, confirm, or deny certain attributions can make any effort to know these early Greek thinkers better seem speculative at best.

This leads us to a question of reception. While to scholars familiar with both of these waves of thinkers, it is undisputed that the later classical thinkers “received” many ideas (*endoxa*), formulations, and arguments from the early Greek thinkers, the details and force of the reception is still not widely understood. Consequently, what exactly served as theoretical catalysts for the second wave of ancient Greek thought, in what capacity, and to what end, is a topic for ongoing examination. The purview of the present volume is to address, as reasonably as possible, the reception of first wave natural philosophy by the second wave thinkers. By ‘natural philosophy,’ we mean discussions of what some today might consider early or proto-scientific concepts of elements, motion and activity, materiality, form or soul, causation, medicine, dreams and wakefulness, and existence itself. Inquiries into these concepts assume, whether it is explicitly articulated or not, a theory of nature itself. Thus, the art of understanding some of the complexity of even investigating this reception is to consider that the term or concept, “nature” meant different things over the course of the time period of interest to us in this volume.

What is the meaning of “nature” in Presocratic and in later classical inquiries? In the early Greek literary tradition, talking of something’s nature (*phusis*) is generally a way to describe the outward characteristics of a thing. But, notably, it has been suggested that there was a unity in the long inquiry known to us today as Presocratic natural philosophy, namely, that when taken as a cohesive body of inquiry and work, the Presocratics used *phusis* as a term to mean something intrinsic about a thing—that which things really are. Likewise, it has been argued that *phusis* means “origin” only occasionally and that there is no unifying interpretation of the use of the term across extant texts and authors.

Part of the question in this debate is whether nature means the nature of all things, or whether it means the nature of a particular thing. For example, according to Beardslee’s early twentieth century study of the development of the term and concept over time, the Milesians, or earliest of the first wave thinkers, “... focused their attention not on a particular example of the phenomenon, but on earthquakes or lightning-flashes in general. Their inquiries were directed towards classes of natural phenomena, and they exhibit this feature of science, that it investigates the universal and the essential, not the particular and the accidental.” Beardslee then provides a history of the term’s use in early Greek thought: “particular” in the Hippocratic thinkers, “character of things in general” in the Pythagoreans, “universal nature” in Plato’s *Lysis*, “particular nature” in fourth century colloquial usage. Beardslee concludes that: “Until the close of the fifth century there is no direct proof that *phusis* was used for Nature in general.”

Even in what we consider later classical thought, the meaning of “nature” continues to lack consistency. When authors were indeed thinking about similar problems to those of one or more Presocratic philosopher, a shift in method and focus means that these comparisons are not always easily drawn. A key example of this is found in Aristotle, who redefined “nature” as an *archē*, an inner principle, of motion (*kinēsis*) and rest (*stasis*) in his most general work on nature philosophy, the *Physics* (192b13-22). Despite the fact that he is in dialogue with the Presocratic Ionian thinkers, the Pythagoreans, Parmenides, and Plato, his complex and self-contained treatment of nature might seem a world apart from the first wave thinkers’ styles of inquiry and conclusions. Yet, Aristotle’s interest in natural objects is part of his interest in explaining change, and the idea that nature comes from and exists as a single underlying material element, or principle of change and rest, recalls rather than supplants the Presocratic inquiries.

Plato’s philosophy of nature, on the other hand, is less certain, told in the *Timaeus* as only a likely tale (38c). For Plato, the notion of material change, as opposed to the steadfast form or Idea (*eidos*) inherent in nature, called into question the possibility for veracity at all in an account of nature. Thus, at the heart of Plato’s physics is something rather immaterial. Instead of studying the nature of natural beings, it provides an hypothesis about the entire picture. His theory of nature, then, is not a study of individual bodies subject to change; rather, it gives an account of the whole. As aforementioned, Plato talks about nature in other ways outside of his philosophy of nature. In these instances, we see nature means the *nature of*, *x*, or a particular kind of thing. This approach to thinking of nature is employed throughout Plato’s Socratic dialogues, as interlocutors seek truth about the essence of ideas. So too, Plato and Plato’s Socrates’s interest in *human nature* marks a turn from talking about the natural world to talking specifically about human psychology and community. But, just as we recognize the mark of Presocratic natural philosophy in Aristotle’s philosophy of nature, we see here too an echo of a turn in Presocratic philosophy—from the inquiry into the nature of phenomena in the Ionian thinkers to the interest in humanity and community in Heraclitus and others.

In the spirit that fits well with the plurality of views on nature proffered by Plato, Aristotle, the Hippocratics, and indeed the Presocratics themselves, the contributors to the present volume have each brought their individual understanding of the nature and challenges of the idea of reception to bear. The resulting work highlights a familiar disparity of views regarding the major interpretive issues in Presocratic studies but also in conceptions of this idea of reception itself. This is to say that this volume does not purport to offer an interpretive or methodological solution to understanding the reception of Presocratic natural philosophy. The editors aim, rather, to highlight the complexity, relative opacity, and yet the obvious importance, of scrupulous scholarship on the reception of Presocratic natural philosophy in Plato and Aristotle. To this end, this volume brings together a global array of voices in Presocratic studies that include the perspectives of rising scholars in the field along with those of established voices.

The contributions have been organized according to a division among thematic, topical, and methodological lines. While some chapters address broad methodology and continue the conversation about aforementioned concepts present both in Presocratic and later classical authors, other chapters address either misinterpretations and misattributions of specific Presocratic ideas in later classical authors, or work to uncover an overlooked or “hidden” influence of the former in the latter.

### Reception: Methodology and Grounding Concepts

The first four chapters each take up in depth and overarching discussions regarding the meanings of the concepts, *nature*, *reception*, *principles/causes/elements*, and the *beginning of science*, for studies on the reception of Presocratic natural philosophy. These chapters likewise each consider multiple Presocratic figures in their approach to saying something about the reception of Presocratic natural philosophy in Plato and Aristotle. Because of their relatively global approach, these chapters are intended to scaffold, as much as possible, the studies undertaken in the subsequent eleven chapters. Readers will also find cross-references among the first three of these chapters.

Gottfried Heinemann’s chapter continues the discussion about the ancient Greek concept of nature introduced here. Specifically, he establishes this foundation on the philosophical project of the Presocratics as he explores the root of the study of nature in ancient Greek thought, beginning with the Presocratic nature philosophers before turning to Plato, and then to Aristotle. In the end, Heinemann shows Aristotle’s own work on nature to be a sophisticated result of a complex conversation both with the earliest Greek philosophers and with Plato. Aristotle’s works mark a return to a philosophical focus on the natural, but they likewise entail a new way to define nature, in terms of regularity and necessity.

Andrew Gregory takes up the question of Plato’s reception of Presocratic natural philosophy generally, ultimately arguing for a nuanced reading of certain passages in the Platonic corpus, including the famous *Phaedo* passage (96a ff), where Socrates details his original interest in and then subsequent disenchantment with Presocratic natural philosophy.

Justin Habash proposes that we reconceive our understanding of the chain of conceptions of nature that runs from the Presocratics through the so-called Sophists to later classical thinkers like Plato and Aristotle. Habash argues that despite their variations, conceptions of nature among the *physiologoi* almost invariably contain purposive strains that serve as precursors to Aristotle’s more fully developed conception of a teleological nature.



Daniel Graham discusses the beginning of science in Presocratic philosophy, arguing that Parmenides and Anaxagoras are the authors of the “revolution that launched scientific astronomy,” specifically through theories of the source of lunar light and the explanation of eclipses. Their new scientific conceptions replaced all other accounts of these phenomena and have held sway through the present time. Other scholars point to the problems of specific barriers within the reception of certain ideas.

### Hidden Reception: Exploring Sources and Developing Themes

Misinterpretations, unacknowledged influences, and misattributions of Presocratic ideas in later classical thought frequently occurred because of a hidden or obscured intermediary, or due to unrecognized sources. Scholars writing on what we here call “hidden reception,” identify and examine unrecognized links in the chains of specific ideas and concepts as they develop through ancient Greek thought. These chapters provide new ways to understand not only individual thinkers, but also the broader tapestry of ancient Greek philosophy itself.

Oliver Primavesi presents a special case of reception, in that his very project calls into question the meanings of categories like “Presocratic” and “later classical thinkers.” Namely, he investigates a case of Presocratic influence in later classical thought within the Presocratic period. Using relatively recent evidence and deft philological analysis, he offers a convincing argument for the influence of the Pythagorean numerical ratios in the Empedoclean cosmic cycle.

In his chapter engaging the Pythagoreans, Owen Goldin points to specific forms of methodological influence of Presocratic protologic on later classical thought when he argues that Aristotle’s theory of demonstration integrates Platonic ideas of definition with later Pythagorean distinctions between causally basic realities and their derivatives.

Omar Álvarez Salas traces references to Pythagoras in Aristotle’s extant and lost works, arguing that despite never naming Pythagoras in his texts, Aristotle nevertheless implicitly refers to him as often as he does other relevant early Greek thinkers, in the context of the other “so-called” Pythagoreans. This conclusion provides an alternative position to the more standard reading by scholars that Aristotle was not as engaged with Pythagoras’ doctrines as he was with other previous thinkers or that Aristotle was hesitant to include Pythagoras as a member of the Pythagoreans.

Christopher Kurfess provides compelling support from Simplicius’s commentary on Aristotle’s *Physics* to suggest that views on Eleatic *archai* presented by Aristotle in the opening books of the *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, and *De Anima* were first articulated by Theophrastus in a work Simplicius called, *Natural History*. Kurfess’s research and analysis makes possible a reconsideration not only of the relationship between Theophrastus and Aristotle, but also of the reception of certain Eleatic formulations, as we have come to know them by way of Aristotle.

Dirk Couprie illuminates the spherical earth bias present in Presocratic reception after Aristotle, occasioned, as he argues, by Aristotle’s polemical treatment of the flat earth cosmology. The spherical earth bias, which Couprie finds not only in the doxography but also in modern interpreters, has led to a general lack of understanding about the characteristics and distinctive features of the flat earth cosmology. His article provides a careful treatment of these features.

Tiberiu Popa and Timothy Crowley investigate the so-called elements of nature. Popa shows us the role elemental varieties, including quasi-elementary simple bodies, play as explanatory devices both in

cosmological and ontological accounts among Diogenes of Apollonia, Anaximenes, early Hippocratic works, Plato, Aristotle, and Theophrastus. While Popa is cautious in discussing the specific reception of such a role, he provides convincing evidence that simple stuffs helped early cosmological and ontological theory move from basic Ionian material monism to material dualism, as Popa calls the Hippocratic prescriptive emphasis on fire and water, to the more complex theories of simple bodies, elements, and their properties found in later classical thinkers. With a focus on Empedocles and Aristotle, Crowley examines the reception of Empedocles' four element hypothesis. Taking as a starting point Aristotle's remark at *Metaphysics* Alpha, that Empedocles was the first to talk of four material elements, Crowley discloses part of the historically significant and long-standing reception of a theory that was still being discussed in 17th century science. Crowley finds a fundamental difference between Empedocles' four element hypothesis and a four element hypothesis otherwise.

Iakovos Vasiliou and Lilliana Carolina Sánchez Castro focus on reception as it relates to questions of the soul. Vasiliou argues that Plato relies heavily on Anaxagorean concepts of *nous*, separation, and mixture in establishing a teleological framework that explains the relationship of body and soul in the *Phaedo*, focusing on the role of the philosopher's way of life on Plato's theory of body-soul separation. Sanchez Castro tackles Aristotle's engagement with the Heraclitean notion of the soul in *De Anima*, arguing that despite barely a passing mention of the Ephesian's views on *psuche*, Aristotle deliberately includes Heraclitus' view as a way to illustrate the soul as a cognitive principle.

Both Barbara Sattler and Rosemary Wright focus on Plato's careful adaptation of the ideas of earlier thinkers. Sattler first sketches different forms of philosophical reception in the Presocratics, Plato, and Aristotle before turning to a specific focus on the way Plato receives and modifies atomistic theory. Sattler argues that Plato's conscientious construction of atomist thought in the *Timaeus* is a deliberate attempt to be explicit about key points of disagreement while incorporating the ways in which Plato agrees with atomic theory. Ultimately, Sattler offers a new way to understand why, despite atomic influence on his work, Plato does not name or directly refer to the atomists in his corpus. Wright, on the other hand, offers an analysis of the intersection between Presocratic cosmogonical and cosmological conclusions and Plato's use of myths in the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Phaedrus*. Delivering an expert summary of a wide swath of Presocratic views, Wright argues that despite that Plato takes Presocratic cosmology as subjects of myth, or likely stories, they serve as a basis for his views about immortality. In an appendix to her chapter she lays out the evidence for understanding the *Timaeus* to follow closely on the conversation in the *Republic*, thus connecting the ideas of nature in these two key dialogues.

### On Reading This Volume

Due to the indirect, complicated, and sometimes wily nature of addressing Presocratic reception—especially given that “Presocratic” is such a broad and deep category of thinkers and topics itself—the volume allows for multiple ways of entry to read, compare, contrast, and digest the rich contributions contained within.

The first way of entry is linear and straightforward. It takes the first four chapters as a unit constituting a theoretical propaedeutic to the subsequent eleven chapters. Readers can study them first, and use them as a guide to beginning more specific studies on the figures and themes discussed in later chapters.

These first four chapters reveal themselves to be a less straightforward trailhead, however, when one realizes that the aforementioned concepts weave into each other, and that the unit is at times inconsistent: overlapping, converging, but also diverging in complementary, at times challenging, ways. Nevertheless, the muddiness they reveal helps to put the subsequent eleven studies into their proper context and alerts readers to the real interpretive issues with which any study of Presocratic reception must contend.

The next points of entry take just one of the four initial chapters and then looks to between one and four more specific studies in subsequent chapters, which can be identified as thematically and/or stylistically resonant. On this approach, some possible pathways include: “nature, principles, and elements”: read chapter one, followed by chapters five, eight, ten, and eleven; “reception, nature, and soul”: read chapter two, followed by chapters twelve, thirteen, and fifteen; “purpose, nature, Plato, and Aristotle”: chapter three, followed by chapters thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen; “scientific inquiry, nature, cosmos, and reception”: read chapter four, followed by chapters six, seven, and nine. This list, however, is far from exhaustive; the engaged reader will discover many more such theme-based adventures in the pages of this volume.

A final suggestion for beginning an exploration of the pages that follow eschews the scaffolding provided by the first four chapters and uses the following topical guide to begin reading more narrowly about one or more Presocratic thinker(s), theme(s) in nature philosophy, passage(s), or later classical thinker(s): *Aristotle*: ch. 1, ch. 3, ch. 6, ch. 7, ch. 8, ch. 9, ch. 11, ch. 12; *Plato*: ch. 13, ch. 14, ch. 15, ch. 2, ch. 3; *Empedocles*: ch. 1, ch. 5, ch. 10, ch. 11, ch. 15; *Cosmology*: ch. 4, ch. 5, ch. 9, ch. 13, ch. 14, ch. 15; *Heraclitus*: ch. 3, ch. 12, ch. 15; Eleatic: ch. 7, ch. 1, ch. 3, ch. 10; Pythagorean: ch. 7, ch. 5, ch. 6, ch. 15; *Milesians*: ch. 1, ch. 3, ch. 8, ch. 10, ch. 15; *Atomism*: ch. 2, ch. 3, ch. 13, ch. 14, ch. 15; *Phaedo* 96a ff: ch. 1, ch. 2, *Soul*: ch. 2, ch. 12, ch. 13; *Timaeus*: ch. 1, ch. 2, ch. 3, ch. 13, ch. 14, ch. 15, ch. 1; *Theophrastus*: ch. 8, ch. 10.

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How did the most famous classical philosophers benefit from the inquiries and findings of these Presocratics? How exactly was Presocratic natural philosophy received in early Greek philosophy and in later classical times? To what extent does the history of science owe a debt to the explorations and conclusions of the earliest Greek philosophers? With this volume, we strive to address these questions.  
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# THE PRESOCRATICS AT HERCULANEUM: A STUDY OF EARLY GREEK PHILOSOPHY IN THE EPICUREAN TRADITION. WITH AN APPENDIX ON DIOGENES OF OINOANDA'S CRITICISM OF PRESOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

by Christian Vassallo [Studia Praesocratica, De Gruyter,  
9783110726985]

This volume analyses in depth the reception of early Greek philosophy in the Epicurean tradition and provides for the first time in scholarship a comprehensive edition, with translation and commentary, of all the Herculanean testimonia to the Presocratics. Among the most significant scientific outcomes, it provides elements for the attribution of an earlier date to the attested tradition of Xenophanes' scepticism; a complete reconstruction of the Epicurean reception of Democritus; a new reconstruction of the testimonia to Nausiphanes' concept of *physiologia*, Anaxagoras' physics and theology, and Empedocles' epistemology; new texts for better comparing the doxographical sections of Philodemus' *On Piety* with those of Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*, which update H. Diels' treatment of this subject in his *Doxographi Graeci*.

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Conspectus signorum

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II Alcmaeo Crotoniates

III Anacharsis Scytha

IV Anaxagoras Clazomenius

V Anaxarchus Abderites

VI Anaximander Milesius

VII Anaximenes Milesius

VIII Antipho Rhamnusius

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X Damon Atheniensis

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XXV Melissus Samius  
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The idea for this volume was born about thirteen years ago, when I was first embarking on my study of Herculaneum papyrology. As a team member of the ERC-Starting Grant 241184-PHerc (Interactive Edition and Interpretation of Various Works by Epicurean and Stoic Philosophers Surviving at Herculaneum), directed by Graziano Ranocchia, I began to work on PHerc. 1004 systematically. PHerc. 1004 transmits an unknown book of the extensive treatise *On Rhetoric* by the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus of Gadara. This book is extremely important for our understanding of the relationship between philosophy and rhetoric in the debate amongst the Hellenistic schools (a large section of the papyrus is devoted to Philodemus' criticism of Diogenes of Babylon, whose thought on the nature of rhetoric and its role in philosophical training he paraphrases at length), but it is also relevant for the Presocratic tradition, especially in regard to Heraclitus and Pythagoras. This fact, along with my increasing interest in the texts belonging to the stunningly rich Herculaneum library, persuaded me that it was worth undertaking the task of collecting and (partly) re-editing all the Presocratic material transmitted through the Herculaneum papyri. The greatest challenge presented by this task was its interdisciplinary character. As fate would have it, in 2011, during one of my research stays in Germany, I met Georg Mohrle at the University of Trier, at a lecture on the *Placita* given by Jaap Mansfeld. For many years, Prof. Wöhrle has been directing an international research centre on the Presocratic tradition in Trier and — along with other eminent scholars including Richard McKirahan, Denis O'Brien, Oliver Primavesi, Christoph Riedweg, David Sider, and Gotthard Strohmaier<sup>4</sup> — had inaugurated the two renowned De Gruyter editorial series *Traditio Praesocratica* and *Studia Praesocratica*. Further

encouraged by this circumstance and by the fruitful exchange of ideas with friends and colleagues, I broadened my selected research on the Herculaneum papyri and began to place the Presocratic testimonia within the context of the surviving Epicurean literature, from Epicurus to Diogenes of Oinoanda. The first fruits of this work were reaped through a series of preliminary publications, partially collected under the label *Praesocratica Herculanensia*, which have appeared both in collective volumes<sup>5</sup> and in some scholarly journals, including *Analecta Papyrologica*, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete*, *Cronache Ercolanesi*, *Hermes*, *Hyperboreus*, *Lexicon Philosophicum*, *Mnemosyne*, and *Philosophie Antique*.<sup>6</sup>

The research project was officially launched at the 27th International Congress of Papyrology in Warsaw (29 July-8 August 2013), where I delivered a paper entitled *Towards a Comprehensive Edition of the Evidence for Presocratic Philosophy in the Herculaneum Papyri*. A few years later, the project was awarded a DFG-Grant (VA 1030/1-1). Thanks to this funding, I was able to proceed with the research and to give the project a decisive push at the University of Trier, under the supervision of Prof. Wöhrle. During those years (2015-2017) I achieved two important goals: the publication of the first updated catalogue of all the Herculanean testimonia to Presocratic philosophers (*Index Praesocraticorum Philosophorum Herculanensis*)<sup>8</sup> and, above all, the organization of the international workshop *Presocratics and Papyrological Tradition* (Trier, 22-24 September 2016). At this workshop, a team of specialists in the field of philosophical papyrology and ancient philosophy and doxography had the chance to discuss the numerous sources that such an inquiry entails, concentrating on the Herculanean sources as well. Over the years that followed, further important experiences gave me the input required to bring the work to completion: the time I have spent as a Research Assistant Professor at the University of Calabria (Cosenza), where I am currently lecturing Ancient Philosophy - and which has supported and partially financed my research stays in Naples and in the *Officina dei Papyri Ercolanesi* from the first moment I moved from Germany to Italy (2017) - and the Spring Term (2019) I spent as a Fulbright Scholar and Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Notre Dame (IN, USA), where I had the luck to meet two extraordinary colleagues, Gretchen Reydams-Schils and John T. Fitzgerald. I am extremely grateful to them for encouraging me to finish the volume and for inviting me to discuss its content with the graduate and postgraduate students of the Program of Liberal Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

As the reader will see, this book provides an extensive introduction focused on the Epicurean reception of early Greek thought (*Prolegomena*) and the first comprehensive edition of all the Herculanean testimonia to the Presocratics (*Corpus Praesocraticorum Herculanense*), with an English translation of the texts and a wide-ranging commentary on them. The work makes it possible to find easily important pieces of evidence on these philosophers, from the Milesians to the Sophists, which are otherwise either totally absent or only partially considered in the classic Diels/Kranz collection, or which were previously cited only in outdated editions.<sup>9</sup> In particular, the present study aims to advance scholarship on the Presocratics as regards ancient epistemology and theology. Both of these fields are here analysed in reference to the philosophical perspective of Epicurus and the Epicureans (above all Philodemus, but also, for example, Lucretius and Diogenes of Oinoanda), a view which was contrary to both scepticism and atheism. Several testimonia clarify the legacy of Peripatetic (and not only Theophrastean) doxography (and philosophy) in the main works of Epicurus (above all his masterpiece *On Nature*) and Philodemus (especially his treatise *On Piety*). Moreover, some of them (e. g., some passages from PHerc. 1005/862) testify that Epicurus was able to read the original works of some Presocratics directly,

including at least those by Empedocles, Anaxagoras, and Democritus. Hence, we cannot rule out the possibility that in the most ancient holdings of the Herculaneum library these works (or part of them) were also preserved. Among the most significant scientific outcomes of the project, the following deserve special mention: the attribution of an earlier date to the attested tradition of the so-called 'scepticism' of Xenophanes; the complete reconstruction of the Epicurean reception of Democritus (in addition to that preserved in Epicurus' Letters), with particular reference to the problem of the movement of atoms, and of human freedom; a new reconstruction of testimonia to Nausiphanes' concept of, Anaxagoras' physics and theology, and Empedocles' epistemology; and new texts for better comparing the doxographical sections of Philodemus' *On Piety* with those of Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*, which update Hermann Diels' treatment of this subject in his renowned *Doxographi Graeci*.

### Presocratics and Epicureanism: a historico-philosophical inquiry based on the contribution of the Herculaneum papyri

A specific and systematic inquiry into the relationship between Epicurus (and the Epicureans) and the Presocratics has thus far been missing from scholarship on Epicureanism. There are two reasons in particular why such an inquiry is necessary: a) first, it will broaden our perspective on the sources of Presocratic philosophy, in large part through consideration of the papyrological sources, the potential of which has generally been underestimated in prior studies; b) second, it will help in evaluating the actual role of doxography — not only Theophrastean, but also pre-Theophrastean (especially Aristotelian) doxography — in tracing the development of the basic core of doxographical information that was later used and reworked in the *Placita*. However, the (philosophical and doxographical) similarities and differences between the early Atomists and Epicurus have often been treated as an obvious presupposition by those scholarly approaches, beginning from the nineteenth century, that have taken the subject into account. C. Bailey's thesis is representative of this point of view. He argues that, "although in Epicurus there are traces of the influence of Aristotle and a keen critic has even seen an approach to the doctrines of Plato, there is never a word of polemic against either. Epicurus' controversy is with the pre-Socratics, and his debt, unacknowledged and even violently denied, is to Leucippus and Democritus." But — as we will see — Epicurus' debt to the Presocratics cannot be reduced to his philosophical (viz. polemical) relationship with the theories of the early Atomists. Indeed, with regard to the tenets and (Peripatetically influenced) methodology of the Letter to Pythocles, as Bailey observed, "the great majority of the explanations advanced are derived from the hypotheses of previous philosophers, not only from the Atomists, but from the Ionians, Pythagoras, Empedocles, and Anaxagoras, and there is little which is characteristically Epicurean, except the occasional working out of an idea such as that of the genesis of lightning or the atomic mechanism of the action of the magnet."<sup>83</sup> Of course, the presence of all of these influences should not overshadow the original elements of Epicurus' science of nature, which is unique both in its technical tenets and in its ethical aims. In fact, in addition to their theoretical legacy, Epicurus' extant writings also stand out for their (more or less direct) criticism of the Presocratics, who made up a considerable proportion of his "professional rivals," as D. N. Sedley terms them in a famous article. Nevertheless, as several passages of the CPH will demonstrate, this philosophical rivalry never sours the sense of respect that Epicurus felt towards those thinkers, whom he recognized as forerunners of his science of nature.

It is not easy to summarize all aspects of Epicurean polemics against the Presocratics. For the sake of clarity, however, they can be reduced to four main themes: a) physics, b) theology, c) epistemology, and



d) ethics. a) On the physical level, Epicurus first criticizes the monists, by demonstrating the impossibility of explaining a reality that begins from a single principle. As for the pluralists, some sources (especially the Herculanean ones) indicate that he recognized Anaxagoras and Democritus as the forerunners of his version of atomism. However, he seems to disagree with Anaxagoras' theory of homeomerics, due to its inadequacy in explaining the formal shape of compounds. Conversely, the principal points of his disagreement with Democritus concern the features of atoms and their motion. The movement of atoms is also connected with the ethical side of his polemics, especially with the question of how to reconcile atomic determinism with human freedom. b) Theological questions are closely connected to physical ones, since Epicurus and the Epicureans identify the physical principles of the Presocratics (and particularly of the monists) with the gods. Based on this point of view, the Presocratics are generally attacked for undermining the Epicurean concept of the gods as beautiful, eternal, and blessed beings endowed with bodily senses, yet totally impervious to human beings and their vicissitudes. c) As for epistemology, the Presocratics are often criticized for their alleged scepticism. In particular, Epicurus and the Epicureans focus on the dangerous consequences of the Presocratic doctrines that seem to deny the plain evidence of the senses, which provides the starting point of Epicurus' canon of truth. This denial incorporates both a kind of scepticism inherent in Epicurean polemics, which goes beyond the question of the senses and implies that it is impossible to have certain knowledge of human and divine things (e. g., in Xenophanes and the pupils and sceptical interpreters of Democritus, such as Metrodorus of Chios), and even 'relativism', which is sometimes connected — as in the case of Protagoras — to a concealed form of 'atheism'. d) All the previous points converge in the final theme: ethics. For Epicurus, there can be no physical inquiry without the ethical goals of happiness and imperturbability. Therefore, all physical, theological, and epistemological questions raised by Epicurean polemics against the Presocratics are linked to ethics, inasmuch as the Presocratics' philosophical errors run the risk of preventing men from reaching pleasure and impassivity.

Below, I will provide an outline of the problem, with reference to the most important Presocratic authors and schools. In particular, I will try (with additional references to questions that will be examined in depth in the commentary on the CPH) to consider Epicurean doxography in its entirety, including the Herculanean sources known thus far. I must stress that, although they often support the polemical aims listed above, these Herculanean texts also provide evidence of the respect that Epicurus and his school showed towards some of the most prominent representatives of Presocratic philosophy. I will base this general picture in part on the succession of Presocratics printed by Diels in his edition (though without endorsing the *geschichtliche Entwicklung* of early Greek philosophy outlined by E. Zeller), and I will also use the conventional distinction between monists and pluralists. This distinction, introduced by Plato and Aristotle and subsequently followed by Theophrastus, is adopted by Epicurus as well, especially in Book 14 of his treatise *On Nature*.

### The criteria and the rationale of the present collection

Despite the laudable efforts that have been made in recent decades towards fostering the study of the Herculanean papyri, in most cases they still remain unknown to and/or voluntarily ignored in the studies of ancient philosophy. It is not my place here to investigate the causes of this strange phenomenon. What can be said, however, is that even today, to the majority of scholarship, Herculanean papyrology seems an esoteric discipline. Also for this reason, the quotation of the works transmitted by the Herculanean papyri is not an easy task. Therefore, I would like to explain, in light of the anomaly noted above, the criteria that I have adopted in ordering and publishing the CPH. Being fully

aware that, whatever criterion I decided to follow, I would inevitably satisfy some and disappoint others, I have tried to make the numerous references to the Herculaneum papyri as understandable as possible even to those who are not familiar with these sources. Obviously, such a choice makes this volume a work addressed not only to Herculaneum papyrologists, but also (and above all) to historians of ancient philosophy.

First of all, for each author, the order of the Herculanean sources referring to them is conventionally based, for schematic reasons, on the sequence of the inventory numbers of the papyri. The authors, meanwhile, are instead listed (with an indication of their ethnicon) in alphabetical order by name. The rationale of the present collection explains this approach, which differs from Diels/ Kranz's (i. e. in its ordering of the traditional succession of schools and individual philosophers). In fact, in addition to the other historico-philosophical goals of this volume, the CPH is intended to provide aid to scholars currently studying the ancient tradition of individual Presocratics that this book considers, and also to those in the future who will systematically undertake a serious, overarching work that will replace the Vorsokratiker,<sup>457</sup> without leaving out any kind of source - and hence one that takes all the Herculanean sources into account as well, including those absent from Diels/Kranz. Of course, it is always possible to debate whether it is still appropriate today to retain the old denomination 'pre-Socratics' for this group of philosophers, a number of whom were contemporaries with Socrates and even with Plato (thus, even the term 'pre-Platonics', first coined by W. T. Krug<sup>458</sup> and employed for a time by F. W. Nietzsche as well, seems historically inadequate, at the very least). Personally, as a tribute to the philological and historico-philosophical tradition, I prefer to preserve the usual label.

In general, I have decided to use a more inclusive method of selection, taking some sources largely considered uncertain at this point into account. I treat the testimonia that I find absolutely uncertain, however, differently: although I did not include them in the CPH, I take them into consideration under the heading *Dubium/Dubia*, appended to the commentary at the end of the chapter devoted to each relevant author. As for the Herculanean testimonia already recorded in the Vorsokratiker or, sometimes, in the most authoritative modern collections of individual Presocratics, the correspondence of these sources with DK and, where needed, with other collections is indicated in the CPH. Unlike in the catalogue that I have already published (IPPH), I have decided here to treat all the Herculanean passages in the same manner, i. e. like 'testimonia', whose philosophical and doxographical meaning is caught between the fragmentary nature of the papyrological context and the polysemy of the so-called cover-text, a very useful (although vague) label coined by G. Schepens to indicate the texts that hand down the fragments of lost ancient historians. Hence, in this volume, I will not distinguish between the passages in which (certain or alleged) fragments (i. e. *ipsissima verba*) of Presocratics appear and those that transmit testimonies on, names of, and/or allusions to one or more Presocratics. Where necessary, the commentary explains the reasons for including certain dubious testimonia in the CPH. When the same testimonium mentions or refers to more than one Presocratic philosopher, I record it only once, in the section devoted to the author more directly involved by the testimonium, i. e. not always in the section devoted to the author who appears first. Specific cross references will orientate the reader, making it possible to find the corresponding texts both in the Corpus and in the commentary. Moreover, the commentary will concentrate on the details of the testimonium with minimal repetition, with the exception of occasional necessary remarks in the brief introduction that precedes the commentary on each text.

I have re-examined all the Herculanean passages of the collection autoptically in the *Officina dei Papiri Ercolanesi* of the National Library 'Vittorio Ema-nuele III' in Naples, using binocular microscopes and Multi-Spectral Images (MSI) of the Herculaneum papyri." Whenever it is possible, for each testimonium I provide the name of the scholar who has published the most recent comprehensive edition of the papyrus in question (or of the work to which it belongs). Where (my or other scholars') new readings and conjectures have considerably changed the text of the reference edition, the reader will find them in the critical apparatus and the bibliographical references in specific footnotes. The reference editions I used in the CPH (the same that I used for the IPPH, but with additions and updates) are listed at the end of the collection (*Locorum laudatorum editiones*) and divided into four sections: the first three sections are devoted to individual authors (or authors identifiable with a fair degree of probability), namely (in alphabetical order), Demetrius Laco, Epicurus, and Philodemus; the last section is devoted to anonymous Herculanean authors (*Scriptores incerti*), with reference to the works transmitted by PHerc. 176, PHerc. 1589, and PHerc. 1788. This list takes all the most recent editions into account, not only those already published, but also those in preparation or in press (both my own and those of fellow scholars who, over the last few years, have kindly provided me with advance access to their forthcoming works). Basically, only the editions of the papyri quoted in the collection are taken into consideration, even where the work to which they belong is preserved in multiple papyri. As for partial editions of Herculanean works that are composed of several books (or parts), I have preferred to indicate in the footnote the corresponding page of the comprehensive edition that is still the reference edition in scholarship.

Finally, for the papyri of uncertain attribution, I put the author and/or the title of the work in square brackets in the cases where palaeographical and historicophilosophical considerations have led some scholars to put forward convincing hypotheses about the question of their attribution.

Each Herculanean witness is provided with a critical apparatus and an English translation. Unless otherwise noted, the translations are mine. The critical apparatus that follows the texts I have not completely re-edited is modelled after the apparatus of the reference editions. But, for reasons of uniformity, this apparatus has been increased and/or modified, as required; furthermore, the form of specific editorial, textual, and bibliographical references has sometimes also been changed. As for the previous editors, if any, they are indicated by surname only, and, in doing so, I refer the reader to the *conspectus siglorum* of the reference editions reported, as mentioned above, immediately after my collection. My own readings and supplements are instead indicated in the apparatus by an asterisk (\*). Where the readings of the reference edition have been confirmed with some slight changes — e. g., only a few letters have been placed outside a lacuna —, the 'new' reading is printed in the text, while the previous one (along with its author, not necessarily the same as the reference editor) is recorded in the critical apparatus in round brackets. In the restored texts, the use of the sigma lunatum is limited to cases in which the placement of the letter at the beginning, the middle or the end of a word remains uncertain (the same criterion is applied for the *lectiones* of the *disegni* recorded in the critical apparatus of the individual testimonia). For the sake of brevity, any palaeographical observations, which should be part of the diplomatic transcription of a given text, are generally excluded from the critical apparatus. However, the diplomatic transcription of the various texts has been described in many of my earlier works, preparatory to the CPH. In the critical apparatus, the readings of the Oxonian and/or Neapolitan apographs are marked by top half brackets. when they represent the only or a better source. Letters of either or both apographs modified by the editor are indicated with a low asterisk (\*). Generally,

diacritical signs of the Leiden System are used, but they have been adapted to the specific requirements of Herculaneum papyri. One of the peculiarities of these papyri is represented by overlapping layers (sovrapposti and sottoposti), that is, portions of papyrus layers that, when the scrolls were unrolled, have remained stuck to the immediately preceding (sovrapposti) or following (sottoposti) winding(s) of the roll. Replacing these layers is one of the most challenging tasks of the Herculaneum papyrologist. If performed correctly, this operation allows to gain new textual portions formerly disregarded by editors. As is standard in the most recent editions of Herculanean texts, I indicate replaced sovrapposti and sottoposti through boldface letters. Finally, with regard to the testimonia belonging to Herculanean works or books transmitted in more than one copy, in addition to printing the text of the various copies separately, I have decided to provide the reader with a unified text, which is the result of my 'collation' of the various copies available. This virtual text is preceded by the conventional sign # and is followed by an English translation.

As I have often pointed out elsewhere, any collection of the testimonia to the Presocratics in the Herculaneum papyri must be considered provisional and subject to progressive improvement. Publishing as yet unpublished papyri or reediting those already known according to the updated criteria of Herculaneum papyrology could lead us to surprising new finds. In the meantime, this selection, edition, and explanation of the sources known thus far is intended to be a step forward in the study of Presocratic thought and a contribution to the reconstruction of its reception in antiquity, including in Hellenistic philosophy, and, in particular, in the Epicurean tradition. Any attempt to achieve this goal, philosophical or philological, would be in vain without a serious and rigorous examination of the texts now preserved in the Officina dei Papiri Ercolanesi, almost two millennia after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD and more than two and a half centuries after the stunning discovery of the charred scrolls from Herculaneum.

### Diogenes of Oinoanda's criticism of Presocratic philosophy

The topic of the relationship between Epicureanism and Presocratic philosophies in both the Epicurean and the anti-Epicurean Latin literature of the first century BC deserves a separate discussion, as this literature deals with the question extensively. In the anti-Epicurean line, I refer to Cicero, especially to *De natura deorum* (but the discussion should be extended to the Lucullus as well); in the Epicurean line, I obviously refer to Lucretius. In the commentary on the CPH, I have stressed the doxographical importance of Cicero's texts on numerous occasions. In particular, the new critical edition of the passages of Philodemus' *On Piety* parallel to the doxographical sections of Book I of Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods* provides relevant material for revising and reinterpreting the pages of the *Doxographi Graeci* that Diels devoted to this complex issue. As far as Lucretius is concerned, it would be useless to reopen the discussion on the topic here in a systematic way. Many studies have already been dedicated to the *vexata quaestio*, and in particular to the excursus on the Presocratics in vv. 635-920 of Book I of *De rerum natura*. On the other hand, in the *Prolegomena* we have had cause to mention this doxographical section of the poem several times. It makes sense instead - and may be very useful - to devote the Appendix of this volume to an Epicurean author who, because he was active in the first half of the second century AD (i. e. in the latest phase of Epicureanism in antiquity, a period in which Diogenianus, for instance, also was active), allows us to revisit the problem of the relationship between Epicurus and the Presocratics from a broader perspective. I am obviously alluding to Diogenes of Oinoanda. In fact, among the remains of his renowned inscription, a considerable number of fragments are preserved in which the Presocratic doctrines are more or less directly called into

question. As we will see, the Herculanean testimonia collected in this volume are often extremely important for better interpreting Diogenes; and, vice versa, Diogenes often facilitates a better understanding of certain fragmentary Herculanean passages. This is an exemplary case of interdisciplinary hermeneutic work, in which papyrology and epigraphy are revealed as fundamental tools of the historian of ancient philosophy.

As a matter of fact, the most obvious distinctive feature of the philosophical fragments in question is that Diogenes' writings are transmitted by epigraphic sources. Diogenes, for his time certainly a rich man, had a kind of abrégé of Epicurus' thought engraved onto a portico wall belonging to his property, placed in the ancient city of Oinoanda in Lycia (in present-day southwest Turkey). This inscription is important not only for reconstructing Epicurean thought, but also for the doxographical and historico-philosophical information we can infer from it. The exposition of Epicurus' ethics and physics entails (as in the case for all Epicurean literature, including that transmitted by the Herculaneum papyri) a close confrontation with and a criticism of non-Epicurean doctrines, in particular those of the Presocratics, the Socratics (especially the Cyrenaics), Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. In reality, the Inscription of Oinoanda is not the only epigraphic source of information concerning early Greek thought. For example, on the famous stele of Al Khanoum, about a hundred and fifty maxims of the Seven Sages were engraved: although almost entirely lost (only a small fragment is known to us), the inscription can be dated to the first quarter of the third century BC and is ascribed to the Peripatetic philosopher Clearchus of Soli. However, the Presocratic witnesses transmitted by the Oinoanda Inscription require more complex philosophical discussion. As in the case of the majority of the testimonia of the CM, all Diogenes' evidence should be evaluated and assessed from the perspective of the Epicurean tradition and its use of the philosophical past.

As is well known, the portico where the inscription was erected was discovered in 1884. The first fragments (sixty-four in all) were published in 1892 by G. Cousin and then, in 1897, by R. Heberdey and E. Kalinka. Following the editions by J. William, A. Grilli, D. W. Chilton, and A. Casanova, the reference edition is now that published by M. F. Smith in 1993. Over the next few decades, leading up to the present — thanks above all to a series of excavations directed by Smith along with J. Hammerstaedt — a large number of new fragments have come to light. These fragments have made a substantial contribution to our understanding of Diogenes.<sup>838</sup> According to our current knowledge, the Oinoanda Inscription is the largest that has survived from the ancient world. By Smith's calculations, it originally extended to about 80 m in length, while its considerable height (about 2.5 m) was divided, according to content, into seven groups of writings: 1) the first group (in the lowest course of the inscription, preceded by an uninscribed stone base) contained Diogenes' epitome on Epicurean ethics; 2) the second group contained an epitome on Epicurean physics, and was placed on a stone layer higher than that devoted to ethics, in order to allow passers-by to read it first (in accordance with the Epicurean principle of the utility of physics only in view of ethics, viz. of the achievement of happiness); 3) in the third course of the inscription, we find letters that Diogenes addressed to his friends and supporters (like Antipater and Dionysius) and to his relatives, together with some (Epicurean) maxims, probably written by the same Diogenes; 4) to the fourth group of writings belong some letters (probably) written by Diogenes, and perhaps a letter of Epicurus to his mother; 5) finally, at the top of the inscription (and separated from the previous courses by a brief engraved stone layer), there are three sections containing a treatise of Diogenes on old age.'

If we consider what has been said so far in the Prolegomena, we can understand how the question of Diogenes of Oinoanda's criticism of the Presocratics mostly (but not only) concerns the fragments of the lowest courses of the inscription: those transmitting Diogenes' two epitomes on ethics and physics. All this philosophical and doxographical material, as we will see, is a vital component for any attempt to reconstruct the Presocratic tradition in Epicureanism.' However, it is not easy to reassess these fragments according to a consistent methodology. In general, the task could be carried out in one of three ways: a) by examining the Presocratics involved in the inquiry one by one; b) by analysing the testimonia according to the thematically arranged layers of the inscription, listed above; c) or by studying the fragments on the basis of Diogenes' polemical targets. For convenience's sake, I will follow this last approach, above all because it favours the unification of authors and themes that often involve either the same course of the inscription or single fragments (or continuous sequences of fragments). Hence, the agenda of the present inquiry is as follows: 1) the legacy of the doxographical catalogues on the Presocratics (and others) in Diogenes; 2) Diogenes on the monistic Presocratic doctrines; 3) Diogenes on the Orphic-Pythagorean tradition, Empedocles' physics and daemonology, and Anaxagoras' pluralism; 4) Diogenes on the physical, ethical, and epistemological aspects of Democritus' atomism; and 5) Diogenes on the Sophists and Diagoras of Melos. Such a division could be put forth once more with a focus on the philosophical object of the polemics. This approach traces Diogenes' criticism of the Presocratics back to the following fundamental subjects, which, *grosso modo*, reflect the topics explained above in the Prolegomena with regard to the Herculanean Presocratic tradition,<sup>842</sup> namely: a) Presocratic physics and the inquiry into the causes (criticism of monism and pluralism); b) knowledge and the role of the senses (criticism of some Presocratics' so-called 'scepticism'); c) theology and the nature of the soul (criticism of some Presocratics' alleged atheism and of the stone layer), there are three sections containing a treatise of Diogenes on old age.'

If we consider what has been said so far in the Prolegomena, we can understand how the question of Diogenes of Oinoanda's criticism of the Presocratics mostly (but not only) concerns the fragments of the lowest courses of the inscription: those transmitting Diogenes' two epitomes on ethics and physics. All this philosophical and doxographical material, as we will see, is a vital component for any attempt to reconstruct the Presocratic tradition in Epicureanism.' However, it is not easy to reassess these fragments according to a consistent methodology. In general, the task could be carried out in one of three ways: a) by examining the Presocratics involved in the inquiry one by one; b) by analysing the testimonia according to the thematically arranged layers of the inscription, listed above; c) or by studying the fragments on the basis of Diogenes' polemical targets. For convenience's sake, I will follow this last approach, above all because it favours the unification of authors and themes that often involve either the same course of the inscription or single fragments (or continuous sequences of fragments). Hence, the agenda of the present inquiry is as follows: 1) the legacy of the doxographical catalogues on the Presocratics (and others) in Diogenes; 2) Diogenes on the monistic Presocratic doctrines; 3) Diogenes on the Orphic-Pythagorean tradition, Empedocles' physics and daemonology, and Anaxagoras' pluralism; 4) Diogenes on the physical, ethical, and epistemological aspects of Democritus' atomism; and 5) Diogenes on the Sophists and Diagoras of Melos. Such a division could be put forth once more with a focus on the philosophical object of the polemics. This approach traces Diogenes' criticism of the Presocratics back to the following fundamental subjects, which, *grosso modo*, reflect the topics explained above in the Prolegomena with regard to the Herculanean Presocratic tradition, namely: a) Presocratic physics and the inquiry into the causes (criticism of monism and pluralism); b) knowledge

and the role of the senses (criticism of some Presocratics' so-called 'scepticism'); c) theology and the nature of the soul (criticism of some Presocratics' alleged atheism and of the doctrines of the soul's immortality, such as metempsychosis). Finally, it must be said that all these themes do not simply recap the basic reasons for Diogenes' polemics against the Presocratics; they also show how, in general, the polemical passages of the Oinoanda Inscription are never an end in themselves, but represent a prerequisite for a more effective and correct exposition (and dissemination) of Epicureanism and its 'truth', and do so in a philanthropic and universalistic key. In other words, the sections belonging to the *pars destruens* of the inscription — from the Presocratics to the Stoics — cannot be separated from the *pars construens*. <>

## THE SOCRATIC METHOD: A PRACTITIONER'S HANDBOOK by Ward Farnsworth [Godine, 9781567926859]

A thinking person's guide to a better life. Ward Farnsworth explains what the Socratic method is, how it works, and why it matters more than ever in our time. Easy to grasp yet challenging to master, the method will change the way you think about life's big questions. "A wonderful book."—Rebecca Goldstein, author of *Plato at the Googleplex*.

About 2,500 years ago, Plato wrote a set of dialogues that depict Socrates in conversation. The way Socrates asks questions, and the reasons why, amount to a whole way of thinking. This is the Socratic method—one of humanity's great achievements. More than a technique, the method is an ethic of patience, inquiry, humility, and doubt. It is an aid to better thinking, and a remedy for bad habits of mind, whether in law, politics, the classroom, or tackling life's big questions at the kitchen table.

Drawing on hundreds of quotations, this book explains what the Socratic method is and how to use it. Chapters include *Socratic Ethics*, *Ignorance*, *Testing Principles*, and *Socrates and the Stoics*. Socratic philosophy is still startling after all these years because it is an approach to asking hard questions and chasing after them. It is a route to wisdom and a way of thinking about wisdom. With Farnsworth as your guide, the ideas of Socrates are easier to understand than ever and accessible to anyone.

As Farnsworth achieved with *The Practicing Stoic* and the *Farnsworth's Classical English* series, ideas of old are made new and vital again. This book is for those coming to philosophy the way Socrates did—as the everyday activity of making sense out of life and how to live it—and for anyone who wants to know what he said about doing that better.

### Reviews

"The Socratic method decelerates reasoning, making space for deliberation when disagreements arise. So, the Socratic method is, Farnsworth says, an antidote to some social pandemics of our day." —

**George F. Will**

"A wonderful book. It is elegant, erudite, but wears its pedagogical virtues so lightly as to never come off as pedantic." —Rebecca Goldstein, author of *Plato at the Googleplex*

"A group of bad American movies has unfortunately associated the Socratic method of inquiry and

teaching with a bullying style of teaching. But the Socratic method was something very different to Socrates, and is something that remains at the heart of serious intellectual honesty. Ward Farnsworth's important book is not only impressively erudite in its mining of classical sources, but is also the best account we have of what the Socratic method really is and why we dismiss or caricature it at our peril." —**Frederick Schauer, David and Mary Harrison Distinguished Professor of Law, University of Virginia**

"Many of us refer casually to the Socratic method and some of us think we practice it. But is only when reading Ward Farnsworth's learned and inspiring book that one can begin to appreciate the profundity of Plato's teaching and understand how its lessons are just what is needed in a world where invective and hasty judgments seem to have replaced deliberative reasoning and rational argument." —**Stanley**

**W** **g Fish, author of** **e A**

"A great success. There is nothing like it. An excellent resource both for students and for general readers." —**A. A. Long, author of** **e i : B Lia A a è e G d f d**

"A beautifully written, immensely thoughtful, and multi-faceted book. Ward Farnsworth offers a fresh understanding of the Socratic method as it's represented in Plato's early dialogs, then shows how it can be internalized as a way of bettering intelligence." —**Henry Ablove, Professor Emeritus of English, Wesleyan University**

"Ward Farnsworth's *The Socratic Method* deserves attention from scholars and lawyers and teachers of law—but, really, from anyone who wants to practice clear thinking. The book rests on a firm foundation of scholarship and then goes on to do something at which few such scholarly works succeed: it is useful for ordinary readers. It is indeed a practitioner's handbook. Read it to enlarge your knowledge of ancient thought, but also read it for the mental exercises all thinkers need in order to stay agile." —**Paul Woolf, author of** **e e a g c e e G h i R i f d e i d H la E h d**

"Ward Farnsworth's brilliant new book, *The Socratic Method*, offers powerful insights into the most important and effective means for discovering the truth, or at least coming closer to it, in education, politics, business, and everyday relations. Building on the wisdom of Socrates, Farnsworth makes clear not only why Socratic discourse is essential, but also how to undertake such discourse in a positive and affirming manner. This is especially important today at a time of deep political polarization in which Americans increasingly speak only to people like themselves and hold those who disagree with them in disdain. This state of affairs, no doubt contributed to by the advent of social media, poses a serious threat to a well-functioning democracy. If we as a nation are to make it through these times and preserve the most fundamental premises of our democracy, we must all learn how to engage in Socratic discourse and embrace the principles of an open mind, rigorous questioning and honest debate. This book offers essential lessons to anyone seeking to preserve American democracy." —**Geoffrey R. Stone, Edward H. Levi Distinguished Professor of Law, The University of Chicago**

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The Socratic method is a style of thought. It is a help toward intelligence and an antidote to stupidity. This has to be said right away because many people consider the Socratic method, if they consider it at all, to be a technique for teaching. It is that; but the reason the Socratic method is useful in the classroom is that it's a style of thought better than the one we tend to apply naturally to important things. Socrates didn't question people in order to teach us how to question people. He did it to teach us how to think. That is what makes his method a matter of general interest, not a device for specialists or special occasions. This is a practitioner's handbook, and the first lesson is that everyone is a practitioner, or can be, on any given day.

This book explains what the Socratic method is and how to use it—the original method, that is, as practiced by Socrates in the dialogues of Plato. It is a book about the operation of the mind. It is also a practical introduction to the philosophy of Socrates more generally. Socratic philosophy is still startling after all these years because it doesn't definitively answer hard questions. It is an approach to asking hard questions and chasing after them. Socratic thought is a route to wisdom but not wisdom in a box; it denies that wisdom can be fit in a box. It is helpful for thinking about every kind of problem, large or small—how we should live and who should walk the dog.

This book also tells the origin story of Stoicism, an ancient family of ideas that many people still find compelling. The Stoic teachings that have had staying power descend from the teachings of Socrates; anyone interested in what the Stoics said should understand how it relates to what Socrates said. And anyone interested in Socrates can in turn find, in the Stoics, examples of how Socratic thinking can be put to work in ordinary life.

The teachings of Socrates can also improve conversations about all sorts of hard subjects. The Socratic method means, among other things, asking and receiving questions fearlessly; it means saying what you think, and not getting hot when others say what they think; it means loving the truth and staying humble

about whether you know it. In other words, it's about all the good things that have been vanishing from our culture of discourse.

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That is a short account of this book's purpose. Here is a more complete one.

About 2,500 years ago, Plato wrote a set of dialogues about ethical and other questions. Most of the dialogues, especially those now said to be the early ones, follow the same pattern. Plato doesn't appear. The dialogues depict Socrates having conversations with others. Usually he asks questions to which his discussion partners think they know the answers. Socrates tests what they say, takes apart their claims, and shows that they don't understand the topic as well as they had imagined. Readers tend to come away with the same impression about themselves. This sounds straightforward, but the way Socrates does it, and the reasons why, amount to a good way of thinking about many things. This we will call the Socratic method.

The Socratic method is often described as one of the foremost productions of the classical mind. Gregory Vlastos, the 20th century's most distinguished scholar of our subject, described the method as "among the greatest achievements of humanity" because it makes moral inquiry a common human enterprise, open to every man. Its practice calls for no adherence to a philosophical system, or mastery of a specialized technique, or acquisition of a technical vocabulary. It calls for common sense and common speech.

The value of the method extends to law, politics, and all other matters that call for reasoned judgment. John Stuart Mill regarded the Socratic method as a profound influence on his thinking and a mighty asset, causing him to reflect, in an essay on Plato, "on the debt mankind owe to him for this, incomparably his greatest gift."

So the method is the most valuable legacy of Socrates, and Socrates is perhaps the most illustrious figure in the history of Western thought. We might therefore expect that everyone would be familiar with the principal features of the Socratic method. But most people aren't, and even most intellectual types don't feel any particular sense of profit from the teachings of Socrates, at least not directly. Why, then, is there such a discrepancy between the value of the Socratic method (by reputation, anyway) and popular knowledge of it?

I believe there are three reasons. First, the method is never clearly explained in Plato's dialogues. It runs in the background of discussions that are about other things. The method has to be inferred from the way Socrates talks and acts and from comments he makes about why; the reader who opens a dialogue looking for direct instruction won't find it.

Second, the discussions in the dialogues, and Socrates himself, can be off-putting. The characters often will argue about a question that is of no pressing interest to the reader. They conclude nothing except that they don't have a good answer, and the arguments along the way sometimes seem to be hair-splitting or formalistic. Pushing through those arguments to enjoy the method and learn from it is a kind of work that, for most readers, can charitably be described as an acquired taste.

Third, the Socratic method is never likely to be popular because it doesn't offer what most people think they want. The teachings of Socrates don't propose to make anyone richer or more famous. They don't

offer rewards after death. They don't answer the questions that torment us, and they don't confirm that we're right about what we already think. What the teachings do offer is wisdom, but this good thing is always bought at the price of some discomfort. The human appetite for wisdom, and its tolerance for discomfort, has never been great, in ancient times or ours.

These points help explain why the Socratic method isn't known to most people and isn't taught in school. But it should be. The elements of the method are simple and potent, easy to grasp and challenging to master. It can produce results in the hands of those who know nothing else about philosophy. It's helpful for thinking or arguing about things that matter to everyone now, not just things that mattered to Plato. And the method does offer a route to happiness in the ancient sense of that word: a better life, if not a better mood.

Since the dialogues don't set forth the method in an accessible way, that is what this book means to do. It seeks to make the ideas of Socrates, and especially his method, easier to understand.

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There are lots of other books about Socrates and Plato, so I should say why another one seemed worth the trouble. Such books are almost all written by scholars in philosophy departments. Their job is to read Plato closely, to debate the fairest way to interpret what he wrote, and to teach students to do the same. I read what those scholars write and admire it. But the question that most interests me is how the Socratic method can be used, not just by teachers but by anyone. I mean to approach it as a farm animal rather than a zoo animal. This difference in approach is modest; I'm interested in what Plato meant and will cite a lot of scholarship on that question, too. But I want to focus on applied aspects of the method. The book is for those coming to philosophy the way Socrates did—as the everyday activity of making sense out of life and how to live it—and who want to know what he said about doing that better.

In practice this means the book will spend less time than others on a complete textual analysis of every issue raised. Plato provides endless grist for debate. It takes a lot of time and space to defend any claim you might make about him against every competitor or criticism. But I want this book to be of moderate length, and it's impossible to keep it that way while also chasing down every issue raised by the evidence. The book therefore will treat a lot of hard questions lightly, just showing where they lie and letting the footnotes explain where to read more if you like. The reader who wants a finer-grained exegesis has hundreds of other books to choose from. Many of them are listed in the bibliography, though it is far from being a complete or up-to-date index of the writings on our subject; it mostly just covers the sources that are cited in the text. But it is enough to give the interested reader points of entry into the literature.

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A few years ago I wrote a book called **THE PRACTICING STOIC**. It presents ideas from the ancient philosophy of Stoicism that are still of modern interest. This book is, in effect, a prequel to that one. It explains where Stoicism came from. The Stoics regarded themselves as descendants and followers of Socrates, and his influence on them was immense; the ethical teachings of Stoicism can, indeed, be viewed mostly as an elaboration and extension of what Socrates taught. This book shows why. No knowledge of Stoicism is needed to enjoy what follows, but those who are interested in that subject

should also be interested in this one. Many readers like Stoicism because, more than some other philosophies, it has constant practical application to their daily lives. The teachings of Socrates are like that, too. They produce a mindset that is useful all the time. It is, as we will see, the mindset of Epictetus; and from that way of thinking, many more specific Stoic teachings followed naturally as details.

Much the same might be said of Skepticism, another philosophical tradition with many modern adherents (whether they are conscious of it or not). The ancient Sceptics were students of Socrates and rivals of the Stoics. We will spend time on their views as well.

The book will also offer some ideas about how Socratic teachings relate to our current cultural and political difficulties. Let us backtrack a moment. The ancient Romans built elaborate networks of pipes to deliver water where they wanted it to go. The networks were a marvel. But many of the pipes were made of lead, and the water carried the lead along with it. One school of thought regards this as part of the reason for the decline and fall of Rome: lead poisoning gradually took its toll, impairing the thought and judgment of many Romans, especially at the top. The theory is much disputed; perhaps it contains no truth. But as a metaphor it is irresistible. We have built networks for the delivery of information—the internet, and especially social media. These networks, too, are a marvel. But they also carry a kind of poison with them. The mind fed from those sources learns to subsist happily on quick reactions, easy certainties, one-liners, and rage. It craves confirmation and resents contradiction. Attention spans collapse; imbecility propagates, then seems normal, then is celebrated. The capacity for rational discourse between people who disagree gradually rots. I have a good deal more confidence in the lead-pipe theory of the internet, and its effect on our culture, than in the lead-pipe theory of the fall of Rome.

The Socratic method is a corrective. Before viewing it as a technique, consider it an ethic of patience, inquiry, humility, and doubt—in other words, of every good attitude discouraged by social media and disappearing from our political and cultural life. It means asking hard questions fearlessly and receiving them without offense; indeed, it means treating challenge and refutation as acts of friendship. Socrates, as we shall see, sometimes likes to define an elusive concept by asking for the name of its opposite. That approach can help us here, too. If I were pressed for a one-word opposite of the Socratic method, a strong candidate would be Twitter.

The threat that such technologies pose to the quality of our discourse, and the damage they have already done, are both obvious to all. But the battle is fought between forces that have not been defined as crisply as might be useful. Fanatical partisanship, wishful thinking in place of truth, the shaming of dissenters, the censorship or self-censorship of disapproved views, the inability of people who disagree to talk, let alone cooperate—everyone sees all this on the rise, and most thinking people fear and loathe all that it involves and portends. Those tendencies have not been unified under any coherent heading, though, except insofar as people on one political side say those problems (or the worst of them) mostly belong to the people on the other. And an alternative to all of them at once hasn't been expressed in a programmatic way. Nobody likes what is happening, but the resistance has not had a shape, a plan, or a hero.

This book nominates Socrates as that hero, and the Socratic method as his plan. It is the natural corrective to the entire family of vices named a moment ago. Distinguish between the vices and distribute them between the political extremes as you like; the Socratic mindset is, regardless, the best corrective for them. It is also a worthy muster point: an apparatus of thought that comes with a

powerful rationale, a useful set of tools, and a venerable pedigree. Those who mean to push back against the corrosion of our thought and discourse on every front and without partisanship can helpfully say, before they identify by party, that they are Socratic; before they take up arms, they can subscribe to Socratic rules of engagement. This book explains what that commitment might mean.

As an inhabitant of a university, I especially mean this book to broadly suggest the ethic by which such institutions function best. Their health requires Socratic commitments: to reason, to refutation, and to not flinching when hard questions are put on the table. A university should be a Socratic gymnasium.

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This book covers a lot of ground related to the Socratic method, and some readers will be interested more in certain parts than in others. Here is a brief roadmap of what the chapters cover and where.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide background. Chapter 1 talks about who Socrates was (or might have been), and the relationship between the historical Socrates and the literary one. Chapter 2 explains the distinction between the substance of Plato's ideas and the methods of the Socrates that he gives us in his dialogues.

Chapters 3–12 show how the Socratic method works. The elements of it are summarized in Chapter 3, then explained in detail in the chapters that follow. Chapter 4 talks about the use of the method in one's own thinking rather than in conversation. Chapter 5 discusses the question-and-answer approach to inquiry. Chapters 6 and 7 explain the elenchus—the type of argument Socrates likes best—and the importance of consistency in Socratic thought. Chapter 8 explains the Socratic approach to drawing and erasing distinctions; Chapter 9 discusses the method's use of analogies. Chapter 10 goes over some ground rules for Socratic dialogue. Chapter 11 is about ignorance and, in particular, double ignorance—that is, ignorance of one's own ignorance: the problem at the heart of the Socratic project. Chapter 12 is about aporia—the impasse to which Socratic dialogue often leads, and the states of mind that can result from it.

Chapter 13 lays out the Socratic case for caring about the benefits that the method provides. Chapters 14–16 show examples of where the method can lead. Chapter 14 summarizes the conclusions that Socrates reached about the meaning of happiness and how to achieve it. Chapter 15 shows how the methods of Socrates were used, and his conclusions extended, by the Stoics. Chapter 16 does the same for followers of Skepticism.

Chapters 17 and 18 show some simple ways to create Socratic questions of your own. The Epilogue turns the Socratic method, and the ethic behind it, into rules of engagement for conversations that take different forms. It also talks about the importance of the Socratic ethic in the life of a school.

This book uses footnotes. Sometimes they offer a brief comment from scholarship that is relevant to the main text. Sometimes they just show where an interested reader can find more discussion of a point. I prefer footnotes to endnotes because they don't require flipping to the back of the book. If you don't like footnotes, though, just ignore them here; they are never essential for understanding anything.

Notes on the translations appear at the end of the book. The citations to Plato as we go along will use the Stephanus numbering system. Those numbers make it easy to find the same passage in any edition of Plato's dialogues. They refer to pages in a beautiful edition of Plato's works published by Henri Estienne,

a 16th-century French printer (his Latinized name was Stephanus). He published the dialogues in three volumes. Each of the volumes has page numbers that start near 1 and then run into the hundreds. Then he divided each page into parts with the letters a through e. It is conventional to use the pages and letters in those editions to refer to passages in Plato's works. (Similar numbering is used to cite the works of Plutarch, as we also will see at a couple of points.)

The result is very convenient. Suppose you see a quotation from Socrates here and it's cited as "Symposium 221d." If you go get a copy of Plato's *Symposium*—translated by anyone and published by anyone—you can probably find "221d" in the margins, and you will see the same passage there. Technically speaking, "221d" means the quote appeared in section d of page 221 of the volume in which Stephanus put Plato's *Symposium* (which happens to have been volume 3). But the practical point is simple: the number lets you quickly find a line from Plato in any book that contains it. <>

## THE PRACTICING STOIC: A PHILOSOPHICAL USER'S MANUAL by Ward Farnsworth [Godine, 9781567926118]

"Farnsworth beautifully integrates his own observations with scores of quotations from Epictetus, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Montaigne and others. This isn't just a book to read—it's a book to return to, a book that will provide perspective and consolation at times of heartbreak or calamity."—The Washington Post

See more clearly, live more wisely, and bear the burdens of this life with greater ease—here are the greatest insights of the Stoics, in their own words. Presented in twelve lessons, Ward Farnsworth systematically presents the heart of Stoic philosophy accompanied by commentary that is clear and concise.

A foundational idea to Stoicism is that we appear to go through life reacting directly to events. That appearance is an illusion. We react to our judgments and opinions—to our thoughts about things, not to things themselves. Stoics seek to become conscious of those judgments, to find the irrationality in them, and to choose them more carefully.

In chapters including *Emotion*, *Adversity*, *Virtue*, and *What Others Think*, here is the most valuable wisdom about living a good life from ages past—now made available for our time.

### Reviews

"As befits a good Stoic, Farnsworth's expository prose exhibits both clarity and an unflappable calm... Throughout *The Practicing Stoic*, Farnsworth beautifully integrates his own observations with scores of quotations from Epictetus, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Montaigne and others. As a result, this isn't just a book to read—it's a book to return to, a book that will provide perspective and consolation at times of heartbreak or calamity."—Michael Dirda, *The Washington Post*

"It is reported that upon Seneca's tomb are written the words, *Who's Minding the Stoa?* He would be

pleased to know the answer is *Ward Farnsworth*.”—David Mamet

“This is a book any thoughtful person will be glad to have along as a companion for an extended weekend or, indeed, for that protracted journey we call life.”—*The New Criterion*

“This sturdy and engaging introductory text consists mostly of excerpts from the ancient Greek and Roman Stoic philosophers, especially Seneca, Epictetus through his student Arrian, and Marcus Aurelius as well as that trio’s philosophical confreres, from the earlier Hellenic Stoics and Cicero to such contemporaries as Plutarch to moderns, including Montaigne, Adam Smith, and Schopenhauer... A philosophy to live by, Stoicism may remind many of Buddhism and Quakerism, for it asks of practitioners something very similar to what those disciplines call mindfulness.”—*Booklist*

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This is a book about human nature and its management. The wisest students of that subject in ancient times, and perhaps of all time, were known as the Stoics. Their recommendations about how to think and live do not resemble the grim lack of feeling we associate with the word "Stoic" in English today. The original Stoics were philosophers and psychologists of the most ingenious kind, and also highly practical; they offered solutions to the problems of everyday life, and advice about how to overcome our irrationalities, that are still relevant and helpful now. The chapters that follow explain the most useful of their teachings in twelve lessons.

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We appear to go through life reacting directly to events and all else in the world. That appearance is an illusion. We react to our judgments and opinions — to our thoughts about things, not to things themselves. We usually aren’t aware of this. Events come to us through lenses of judgment that are so familiar we forget we have them on. Stoics seek to become conscious of those judgments, to find the irrationality in them, and to choose them more carefully.

This idea is foundational to Stoicism. Sometimes its truth can be seen by noticing that when we react to an event, we really are reacting to what we've said to ourselves about it. (Perhaps we can say something different.) But in other cases it's harder to see the role of judgments in producing a reaction because they are so ingrained that we take them for granted. The Stoics investigate those reactions — the ones that feel inevitable — by comparing them to the very different reactions that others have to the same things when their conditioning is different (or to the different reactions that we have when our circumstances are different). The Stoics infer from all this that our way of reacting to anything depends, indeed, on thoughts we think and beliefs we hold, however deeply buried they might be. Since those beliefs and thoughts belong to us, they should be possible to change, and so ought to be subject to more rational scrutiny than they usually get. Our experience of the world is our own doing, not the world's doing, and the Stoic means to take responsibility for it. (Chapter 1.)

We should stake our well-being on what we can control and let go of attachment to what we cannot. We generally can't control events, or the opinions or behavior of others, or whatever else is outside ourselves. The Stoic thus considers money, fame, misfortunes and the like to be "externals" and regards them with detachment. A Stoic still has preferences about those things, and so would prefer to avoid adversity and would rather have wealth than not have it. But attachment to those desires or fears is considered a guarantee of anxiety, and a form of enslavement to whoever controls the objects of them. In sum, it is against Stoic policy to worry about things that you can't control. What we can control, and should care about, are our own judgments and actions. (Chapter 2.)

To put these first two points together: we get attached to things beyond our control, and this brings us misery; we are oblivious to features of our thinking that we can control and that, if managed better, would bring us peace. Stoicism tries to make us conscious of this pattern and reverse it.

Having shown that our thoughts and judgments create our experience, the Stoics set out to change them. They use two kinds of strategies for the purpose, which we might describe as analytical and intuitive. The analytical side consists of rational arguments — using reason and evidence to show the futility of material desires, the needlessness of various fears, and so on. The intuitive approach consists of looking at life from perspectives that are meant to have effects similar to those produced by the arguments, but without the arguments. One just sees things from a new angle and has a different reaction to them. Equivalently, we might say the Stoics seek to persuade with words and with pictures.

To begin with the intuitive side — that is, the pictures: we all have an ordinary and automatic point of view. We peer out from inside ourselves and see the world accordingly. This angle of observation makes us captive to a long list of deceptions. The Stoic seeks freedom from them by looking at events from a standpoint less obvious — comparing things or events to the scale of the world, or of time, or seeing them as they would look from far away, or seeing your own actions through the eyes of an onlooker, or regarding what happens to yourself as you would if it happened to someone else. Stoics gain skill at viewing life from perspectives that encourage humility and virtue and that dissolve the misjudgments we live by. (Chapter 3 and elsewhere.)

The Stoic also works not only to overcome the fear of death but to treat mortality as another source of perspective and inspiration. Being mindful that existence has an end puts daily life into a new and ennobling light, in much the same way as contemplation of the scale of the universe or of time. (Chapter 4.) Stoics also practice thinking about comparisons that make us less neurotic than the envious ones



with which we ordinarily harass ourselves. (Chapter 5.) These all can be considered more examples of seeking wisdom through adjustment of one's point of view.

Turning to the analytical side of the project: the Stoics dissect the stuff of our inner lives — desires, fears, emotions, vanities, and the rest. Those states are shown to be products of how we think and to mostly amount to mistakes; the judgments that lie behind them are found on inspection to be false or idiotic. The Stoic remedies broadly amount to applications of the first two points above. We react not to things but to our judgments about them, and those judgments typically consist of scripts that follow convention or are otherwise foolish or fictitious. The Stoics try to dismantle the scripts and give us better ways to talk to ourselves about the subjects of them.

The more specific Stoic analysis of desire, fear, and perception consumes the middle of the book, and it can't all be summarized here. Much of it involves observing human nature very exactly and taking notes on the irrationality found in it. For example: we desire whatever we don't have, we are contemptuous of whatever we do have, and we judge our state and our success by comparisons that are arbitrary and pointless. We chase money and pleasure in ways that can bring no real satisfaction; we pursue reputation in the eyes of others that can do us no real good. We torment ourselves with fear of things that are more easily endured than worried about. We constantly overlook the present moment because we are preoccupied with future states that will in turn be overlooked when they arrive. There is more, but this suggests the flavor of the Stoic diagnosis. In short, we vex ourselves with beliefs, mostly half-conscious, that came from nowhere we can name and that tend to make us unhappy and ridiculous. Thinking better and harder about the workings of our minds can free us from many subtle insanities. It might seem doubtful that analysis of the kind just sketched could change the way one feels about anything; you might suppose that people can't be talked out of habits and feelings that they weren't talked into. But sometimes they can. Besides, the point of Stoicism is that, without realizing it, we often were talked into our feelings — by our culture, and by ourselves. (Chapters 5-9.)

Stoics take a different view of adversity than is conventional. They don't seek out pain or hardship, but they seek a mindset that isn't thrown into disarray by those things and that is able to turn them to good. It is an unavoidable and important part of life to meet with what we don't want; and unwanted developments produce great achievements, strong characters, and other things we do want. Stoicism therefore means applying one's imagination to developments that seem unwelcome and using them as a kind of building material. The Stoic takes whatever happens and puts it to use. (Chapter 10.)

Some of the Stoic analysis just reviewed has a rich but negative character. It amounts to the reasoned annihilation of false beliefs that serve us badly. As a Stoic sees it, though, none of this should lead to despair. Quite the contrary: we can find more durable and satisfying pleasures in wisdom, and less anguish, than we ever did in our illusions. The Stoics propose an escape to reality, so to speak, not away from it. Seeing the world clearly, understanding life rightly, and being free from the fictions that drive most people crazy — this they regard as the good life. (Chapters 6 and 11.)

Stoics also advocate enjoyment of pleasures that are natural, as opposed to the ones we invent to keep ourselves going on the hamster wheel. The usual Stoic goal is to enjoy or react or do most else in the world with moderation and a sense of detachment. (Chapter 6.) The detachment doesn't mean a lack of attention or interest. It is better considered an aspect of moderation — moderation, that is, in our relationships to external things. Stoics avoid getting elated or crushed or otherwise worked up about

them. A large share of Stoicism might be viewed, in effect, as interpretation of two famous inscriptions above the entrance to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi: know thyself; nothing in excess. The Stoics turn those maxims into a detailed philosophical practice.

. Stoicism also offers a strong affirmative vision of what life is for: the pursuit of virtue. Living virtuously means living by reason, and the Stoics regard reason as calling for honesty, kindness, humility, and devotion to the greater good. It also calls for involvement in public affairs — that is, in the work of helping others in whatever ways are available. Instead of living to satisfy desires, Stoics regard themselves as meant to function as parts of a whole. There is great joy to be had in this, though it is not the variety that comes from the acquisition of things or approval from others. The happiness the Stoic seeks is eudaimonia — the good life, or well-being. Virtues bring about that type of happiness as a byproduct, and Stoics regard this as the only reliable path by which happiness can be secured. (Chapter 11)

Stoicism is meant to be a practice, not a set of claims to admire. It is hard work, because many of our judgments, and the fears and desires that follow from them, are habitual and hard to change or set aside, and they are constantly reinforced by our surroundings and conventions. Taming the mind through reason takes the same kind of commitment that we associate with martial arts or other demanding physical disciplines. In return, Stoicism offers happiness, equanimity, and sanity. (Chapter 12.)

Stoicism has been criticized for advocating a lack of feeling or compassion, for asking the impossible of its students, and (because it is impossible) for making hypocrites out of those who claim to follow it. Chapter 13 offers some replies to those criticisms. To summarize:

Stoics can be viewed as using reason as a substitute for time and experience. They try to respond to temptations and hardships in about the way they might if they were experiencing them for the thousandth time; the recommended Stoic reaction to most things is the natural reaction of the veteran. This way of looking at Stoicism makes it less otherworldly. The philosophy can be considered an effort to help us toward the state of mind we might reach on our own with more time, rather than as an effort to make us less human. Looking at Stoicism this way also makes clear that the practicing Stoic isn't unfeeling or uncaring. The Stoic responds to the suffering of others like a good doctor who has seen it all before: with activity and compassion, though probably without much emotion.

Perfect Stoicism is no doubt impossible. The "wise man" held up as an example by the Stoics is best viewed as an ideal. It is meant to provide a direction rather than a destination. This shouldn't be alarming. Many philosophical and religious traditions call on their aspirants to work toward an ideal that nobody quite attains. The question is not whether anyone gets to the end. It is whether we are helped by trying.

Claims of Stoic hypocrisy usually arise from a misunderstanding of what Stoicism is for. Its purpose is to help those who use it, not to give them a basis for judgment of others. The exhortations of Stoic teachers sometimes create a different impression, but explaining Stoicism and practicing Stoicism are different activities. Stoicism may have to be taught if it is to be learned, but the practice of it involves thinking and acting, not preaching. If Stoicism inspires claims of hypocrisy against its students, the

students are probably bad Stoics — not because their actions are impure, but because they are talking too much.

The order of the chapters in this book mostly follows the order of the discussion above. Many discussions of Stoicism start instead with the definition and place of virtue in the philosophy. In this book that comes later — not because it is less important than what comes earlier, but because it is (I suggest) easier to follow once one understands the Stoic view of what reason means and requires, which is a theme developed in the earlier chapters. I say this so the reader will feel free to take what follows in whatever order is of interest, and not treat the sequence of topics as an argument of the Stoics or as an argument of mine. The order is proposed as useful, not at all as essential. <>

## **ISAGOGICAL CROSSROADS FROM THE EARLY IMPERIAL AGE TO THE END OF ANTIQUITY** edited by Anna Motta and Federico M. Petrucci [Series: *Philosophia Antiqua*, Brill, 9789004506183]

This book explores how introductory methods shaped school practice and intellectual activity in various fields of thought of the Early Imperial Age and Late Antiquity. The isagogical crossroads—the intersection of philosophical, philological, religious and scientific introductory methods—embody a fascinating narrative of the methods regulating ancient readers' approach to authoritative texts and disciplines. The strongly innovative character of this book consists exactly in the attempt to explore isagogical issues in a wide-ranging and comprehensive perspective—from philosophy to religion, from medicine to exact sciences—with the aim of detecting connections, reciprocal influences, and interactions shaping the intellectual environment of the Early Imperial Age and Late Antiquity.

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## Excerpt: Towards the Isagogical Crossroads

### Premiss

Isagogics concerns introductory methods and exegetical rules for what are considered classic texts in various fields. And it is precisely the use of isagogical methods across various fields that reveals the pervasiveness of isagogics, making it difficult to define it as a literary genre. This characteristic, together with the role it plays in schools, must not lead us to dismiss isagogics as an arid didactic practice with no theoretical basis. The study of the isagogical crossroads, i.e. the intersection of philosophical, philological, literary, and scientific concerns in relation to the issue of introductory methods, texts, aspects, and questions, can provide new knowledge of the theoretical and philosophical principles shaping the way in which authoritative texts were read and thought of in Antiquity.

This makes it all the more astonishing that very few studies so far have reviewed exegetical patterns and schemata isagogica in a comparative way: in particular, comprehensive research on how literary, scientific, and philosophical aspects of different disciplines complement one another is still lacking. With the exception of Marian Plezia's volume published in 1949, interest in isagogical themes and writings probably reached its apex with Jaap Mansfeld's seminal book *Prolegomena. Questions to Be Settled Before the Study of an Author, or a Text, and its 'spin-off', Prolegomena Mathematica*. More than twenty years have now elapsed since the publication of these volumes, and scholars have been exploring new texts and issues, especially with respect to early Imperial and late antique philosophy, and developing Mansfeld's groundbreaking research in a number of directions. On the other hand, some aspects of Mansfeld's *Prolegomena* have been submitted to criticism. For instance, Harold Tarrant<sup>6</sup> referred to it as "a picture of unity in diversity": according to Tarrant, it is impossible to find and compare fixed schemata; instead, it is possible to speculate on the practical needs of the students who had to learn certain things and of the mentors who has to teach them.

With this volume we wish to reopen the debate and to shed new light on isagogical topics, especially by exploiting recent discoveries pertaining to the aforementioned philosophical contexts and by framing isagogical writings in a wider interdisciplinary framework – most notably, that of scientific, religious, and doxographical texts. This is even more important given that a mutual influence (the 'crossroads') between different schools and perspectives from the early Imperial age to Late Antiquity has been widely and authoritatively acknowledged over the last thirty years: this does not imply that literary and philosophical commentators all employ such patterns in the pursuit of the same goal, but it encourages us to take the nature, forms, and goals of this crossroads seriously into account. This is our main goal: through a selection of case-studies, we aim to show that introductory schemata and isagogical forms can reveal both essential connections and intriguing contrasts between different fields, and that the interaction between these fields had seminal implications also from a theoretical point of view. By

avoiding compartmentalisation, we provide a detailed yet comprehensive picture of the crucial intellectual approach represented by isagogical literature, which will prove to be not just a didactic or introductory tool, but a formally codified means to address intellectual, scientific or philosophical issues.

We too have an isagogical question to address, which stems from our main goal: this question is whether it is possible to find any standard conception of isagogics transcending the field of philosophical isagogical texts. Investigating this issue means providing some test cases in the field of philosophical writings, and then comparing the results with isagogical writings in other fields. In turn, this implies first establishing a methodological premiss, and then addressing some related questions. As to the former aspect, we do not aim to produce an ossified picture, in which the same isagogical patterns occur over and over again. Rather, what the volume highlights is that crucial issues and exigencies related to the introduction of certain authors or disciplines, or of discussions on important problems, are regularly addressed in isagogical writings, which also reveal a consistent theoretical outlook. This leads to further questions: what are the origins of these shared aspects? How are they chosen and proposed, or – conversely – how and why are they modified in specific cases? More particularly, what is the deep cultural meaning of isagogical writings? What is their ‘ideological’ import? On the basis of the chapters collected in this volume, we will provide some general answers to such questions in sections 4 and 5 of this introduction. First, however, let us briefly outline the Hellenistic background to our research (section 2) and unravel our narrative from the early Imperial age to the end of Antiquity by referring to the contents of each chapter (section 3).

### The Background. A Quick Survey

Hellenistic literature and philology had a considerable impact on the classification of literary genres and hence of isagogics, a ‘genre’ which was given a significant boost in the Alexandrian age, when scientific, grammatical, and philological studies became widespread. As a matter of fact, Alexandrian philology marks a decisive moment not only for the choice of ‘canonical’ authors – and the conservation and loss of works from the past – but also for the definition of interpretative rules and the constitution of the philological-exegetical apparatuses of texts. Although many of the writings produced in this context have been lost, it is quite evident that the work of editing and interpreting the texts of Alexandrian philologists paved the way for the creation of isagogical texts and schemes in Late Antiquity. Moreover, the activity of the Alexandrian philologists enabled the creation of a common educational path in schools, under the control of grammatici, which is to say teacher of rhetoric and philosophers. It was precisely the school milieu – or, rather, a school path common to literary, juridical, scientific, and philosophical disciplines and involving grammarians, rhetoricians, and philosophers – that promoted the intersecting of rules contained in handbooks, which in Late Antiquity came to be defined as isagogical schemes.

In particular, the training offered by the school or *7r* system managed by municipalities or via Imperial decrees is a Hellenistic legacy that developed in tandem with the development of a general literary culture, once grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy had become part of the school system in the era of, with grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy running along parallel tracks. The study and teaching of different disciplines, which included the detailed exegesis of the great masters and an analysis of the aesthetic components of classic texts, took place within the same cultural traditions. Accordingly, the background of isagogics is characterised by the historical evolution of the relationship between the *compositio* of an oral or written text and school praxis, which is to say the analysis of the best way to

give unity and consistency to a text, which progressively – and more precisely in the Hellenistic age – led to the literary criticism of the Alexandrian philologists, i.e. to the analysis of how texts had been composed. The following step concerns the encounter of Alexandrian literary criticism with philosophy and especially Platonism: this encounter made it possible for the Platonists to demonstrate the consistency of Platonism and to read Plato's dialogues as an image of the unity of their own metaphysical system.

In fact, this crossroads between rhetoric and philosophy is, in a sense, the development of a more ancient link: the one between the rhetorical rules of discourse composition and philosophy already established by Plato. In a well-known page of Plato's *Phaedrus*, Socrates explains to Lysias that the rhetor (or sophist) has little real awareness of the overall process of composition in terms of the development of a coherent structure or plot, because "every discourse must be organised, like a living being, with a body of its own, as it were, so as not to be headless or footless, but to have a middle and members, composed in fitting relation to each other and to the whole" (264c). Not only in the *Rhetoric*, but also – and especially – in the *Poetics* (8.1451a30–35), Aristotle appears to be consistently interested in the organic unity of what constitutes a whole and in the realisation of its potential. By assimilating Aristotelian tragic criteria to the whole of poetic literature and making it more radical, the Epicurean Philodemus highlights an aspect of the approach to the arrangement of a discourse as an organic whole. He stresses the fact that a piece of rhetorical art, like any work of art, can only be understood when it is perceived in the totality of its component parts. The Stoics introduced the concept of syntax into the discussion of the rhetorical arts by emphasising the notion of a natural or right, that is logical, order. According to Stoic theory, all reflection about the arrangement of a discourse falls within the system of dialectics, which is also how it tended to be defined in the Socratic-Platonic critique of the sophist tradition and in Aristotle's discussion of the arrangement of parts.

Traces of the development of the rules for parts of speeches are found in authors ranging from the early Stoics to the Alexandrian grammarians. Consequently, there is evidence that the ancient rhetorical theories of discourse provided the basis for the literary criticism of Alexandrian philology to flow into isagogical texts. And it is only possible to detect these developments by reflecting on the isagogical crossroads, as this emerges from an overview of the narrative of the present volume.

### An Overview of the Narrative

Each chapter in this volume has a twofold nature. It is, of course, a study of an author or a piece of writing, but at the same time its focus on isagogical aspects contributes to defining our crossroads. The dawn of the early Imperial age coincided with a new stage in the contest for philosophical supremacy: the dominant position of Stoicism was challenged by the comeback of dogmatic Platonism and a new use and circulation of Aristotle's esoteric writings. This is the dynamic and fascinating framework for the first three chapters, which explore case-studies revealing how post-Hellenistic Peripatetics and Platonists dealt with the issue of developing isagogical material for the new philosophical agenda of their traditions. In the first chapter, Federico M. Petrucci provides an attempt to grasp the isagogical approach of pre-Alexandrian Peripatetics (chapter 1). This is a somewhat daunting task, as the transmitted evidence for Peripatetic isagogai is extremely scarce, though we know that such writings existed and circulated. Rather than simply giving up on the possibility of grasping them, in this chapter Peripatetic isagogics is reconstructed by referring to traces of it which may be found in commentary writings by authors such as Andronicus, Boethus, and Aspasius. This will reveal that such texts attest to the

existence of isagogical patterns, and even to something more, that is an overall conception of Aristotle's corpus and writings: these authors present Aristotle's corpus as a continuous progression of philosophical steps, corresponding to a series of writings and a series of goals to be achieved; in turn, each piece of writing is developed according to a continuous argumentative style, which is distinctive and determines both Aristotle's obscurity and the need for readers to become specifically acquainted with it.

The study of exegetical patterns in the Platonist tradition instead touches upon the debate surrounding the *perfectissima disciplina platonica* and the need to develop a 'system': this is indeed the goal which the Middle Platonists pursued by establishing and employing isagogical patterns useful for reading Plato. This is what emerges from Franco Ferrari's enquiry into the third book of Diogenes Laertius' *Lives* (chapter 2). Exegetical proposals, such as the classification of dialogues and the reading order, suggest intriguing remarks about the (important, yet not decisive) stimulus which the tension between the Sceptics and the Dogmatists provided for the development and the application of hermeneutical criteria.<sup>18</sup> In addition to Greek Middle Platonism and its introductory texts and patterns, we need to take into consideration another crucial testimony from the Latin world, which provides important isagogical material: Apuleius' *De Platone*. This is still a very puzzling text, and before assessing its isagogical content, it is necessary to really understand what kind of work it was. This is precisely what Justin A. Stover sets out to do in chapter 3. Through an analysis of the manuscripts containing the text of Apuleius' *De Platone* and philological and philosophical observations on isagogical questions, it is possible to set this Platonist introduction in relation to other authors, such as Alcinous and Atticus, so as to come up with the picture of a new *De Platone* – that is, a text with a different structure and title – and, above all, to reconsider its introductory role. More specifically, this kind of isagogics aims to produce a specific outline of Plato's corpus as a whole: Apuleius' introduction to Plato's corpus is a joint description of Plato himself and of the body of his philosophy in terms of the body of his work.

writings (chapter 5). As a matter of fact, a comparison between rhetorical isagogics and the development of Platonist isagogics shows how Platonists (especially Albinus, Iamblichus, and Proclus) appropriated specific aspects of the rhetorical debate, namely ones allowing them to make the cosmos of Plato's dialogues fit within the unitary cosmos of Plato's doctrine, and hence to overcome the problems associated with the image of Plato as a swan, "darting from tree to tree and causing great trouble to the fowlers, who were unable to catch him."<sup>19</sup> All this sets the stage for an outstanding – and hitherto understudied – case of isagogical patterns embedded in commentary writings, namely that provided by Proclus. As Gerd Van Riel shows (chapter 6), Proclus further developed isagogical tendencies in two ways: on the one hand, he maintained the need to establish a consistent and systematic representation of an authority (namely, Plato); on the other, he allowed 'controlled' contradictions to appear in his isagogical sections. This produced a consistent new isagogical strategy, which Proclus exploited in order to support his own philosophical agenda – as Porphyry had done before him – which included a straightforwardly theological reading of the *Timaeus*.

The first six chapters represent the philosophical core of the project, exploring crucial case-studies in philosophical isagogics: in some respects, this is a narrative in itself. For the very same reason, however, this section is an effective starting point to broaden our perspective to the reciprocal influence between philosophical writings and other fields of research. Hence, the next chapters have the aim of shedding light on isagogics across different fields, from theology to medicine, from astronomy to musical theory – or, in brief, to outline our crossroads.

In the last few years, increasing attention has been paid to the relation between early Imperial and late antique philosophy, on the one hand, and the formation and development of Christian thought, on the other: scholars have emphasised not only the significant degree of proximity between the two as far as theoretical tools and arguments are concerned, but also a mechanism of appropriation of ideological perspectives and methods that appears to be at work. Sébastien Morlet's enquiry (chapter 7) confirms this trend by detecting isagogical schemata and perspectives in a Christian author, namely Eusebius, and by emphasising their continuity with respect to previous Greek, and especially Platonist, literature. At the same time, Morlet highlights how Eusebius' appropriation is shaped by specific exigencies, which led to a new way of interpreting the schemes: Eusebius has his own agenda, one implying a polemic against the Jews, and, as part of his isagogics, develops an introductory discourse designed to help the reader make spiritual progress, as well as an attack on his opponents.

Interestingly, a similar double pattern of appropriation and targeted rethinking also emerges from a very different field, that of scientific isagogical writings – namely medical, astronomical, and musical ones. Late antique medical isagogics, analysed by Giulia Ecce (chapter 8), displays astonishing general parallels with philosophical isagogics. These concern not only isagogical literary genera (the presence of introductions to specific texts and general prolegomena) and patterns, but also ideological aspects – for instance, the representation of a curriculum according to progressive degrees of 'authoritativeness' (namely, from Galen to Hippocrates). On the other hand, medical isagogics also introduces specific patterns in order to exploit their didactic nature, and this is clearly based on the nature of the discipline, which has to be practically applied – obvious as this may seem, medical isagogics is meant to produce physicians! While Ecce's study is focused on rather late texts, Victor Gysembergh's research on the prefatory letter in Hipparchus' *Commentary on the Phaenomena* gives us the opportunity to return to the Hellenistic age (chapter 9). As the author clearly explains, this is justified by the fact that Jaap Mansfeld has widely



enquired into later mathematical isagogics in his 1998 book. Hipparchus' work strengthens the case made there for isagogical patterns in mathematical writings and, at the same time, crucially contributes to our narrative in a particular way. On the one hand, Hipparchus' Hellenistic isagogical treatment of Aratus' *Phaenomena* already reveals the presence of certain introductory issues that were to be discussed by later authors; on the other, it highlights the tendency to use isagogics in order to bestow new authority on particular theoretical readings. Interestingly, in this case the heading in question is the one formulated by Hipparchus himself, who attempts to establish his own astronomy as authoritative. Hence, as in relevant philosophical cases, isagogics here becomes an instrument combining introduction and scientific advancement, teaching and research.

However, the plausibility of the hypothesis that such complex use was made of isagogic texts also depends on the historical development of given disciplines at the time in which these texts were produced: while Hipparchus' aim may have been to establish his own 'astronomy' as authoritative, later technical isagogical works often merely acknowledge the authority of some predecessors. This does not mean that such texts do not have an agenda, though, as the case of the musical introductions by Cleonides and Gaudentius show. Writers of musical introductory works were in a position to rely on a stable technical authority, Aristoxenus, and this also conditioned the formal structure of their works. After providing a wide-ranging survey of early Imperial and late antique musical introductory writings, Eleonora Rocconi shows (chapter 9) that Cleonides' main aim was to preserve all the basic notions of Aristoxenian harmonics by following a more or less standard 'Aristoxenian' pattern of topics. In other words, teaching harmonics, in his view, meant teaching Aristoxenian harmonics, and doing so according to a rational introductory path and specific instruments, namely a selection of capital points and simplification. This scenario is enriched by the analysis of Gaudentius' musical isagoge, which Andrew Barker presents in the Appendix, along with an introduction to the text and a new English translation of it. Gaudentius would indeed appear to have pursued a similar didactic plan, with the aim of providing not so much a challenging discussion, as a clear (and clearly arranged) system of notions to be absorbed by the reader. Furthermore, while the core of Gaudentius' introduction confirms the primacy of Aristoxenian harmonics, the text also includes a section which transmits a different version of harmonics, namely a 'Pythagorean-Platonist' one. By embedding this material too into his work, Gaudentius assigns his text an even wider goal, namely to preserve, "for the benefit of his contemporaries and of posterity, as much of the harmonic 'wisdom of the ancients' as he could within a restricted compass."

### The Crossroads of Isagogical Methods

In skimming the chapters of this volume, readers will not find something that it would indeed be unreasonable to expect from a book like ours, namely: perfect unity. Of course, in outlining an isagogical crossroads, we cannot simply aim to flatten out the differences springing from the wide number of disciplines, historical settings, and even intellectual features of introductory writings. What we do find at the crossroads of these different perspectives, however, is a series of formal affinities, revealing some significant forms of communication and cultural exchange across the centuries. This is in itself a first feature shared by isagogical writings, for our chapters frequently and recurrently acknowledge the mutual indebtedness between different fields: philosophical isagogical writings draw on the legacy of literary and rhetorical ones, just as Eusebius draws on philosophical introductory writings (especially Porphyrian, or Porphyrian-like, ones); medical isagogical texts seem to present strong ideological similarities with philosophical ones (especially as regards the establishment of an authoritative corpus of

texts to be read); finally, astronomical and musical isagogical works share with philosophical ones a specific concern as to the establishment, or preservation, of an authoritative version of a discipline. On the other hand, this kind of fluid communication is also reflected by the literary genres incorporating isagogical material. As a matter of fact, the wide-ranging analysis conducted in this volume shows that isagogical forms are present in both relatively short introductory writings (as in the case of Cleonides and Gaudentius, but also Porphyry) and quite extensive ones (Eusebius), but also in commentaries (Aspasius, Hipparchus, Proclus, Galen, and Stephanus), handbooks (Apuleius), and even biographies (Diogenes Laertius and, even more specifically, Porphyry). In other words, isagogics is not only a literary genre in itself, but a sort of literary form, which can be adapted to suit different literary contexts and meet specific needs. Most importantly, this protean quality of the genre can be detected across all fields we have taken into account.

It is within this already rich framework that one should search for more specific formal affinities. First, there is a crucial point emerging from the chapters, which strongly confirms Mansfeld's seminal research: isagogics takes the form of patterns of questions to be settled. This does not mean that all introductory writings deal with the same questions, but that – first of all and more generally – in order to have a good introduction, it is of primary importance to develop relevant contents according to an orderly pattern of questions. This point granted, it is also true that some of the standard isagogical issues which are famously detectable in the most renowned philosophical introductory writings are well-attested in almost all isagogical texts taken into account here: 1) the aim or purpose of a work, 2) its place within an author's corpus, 3) its usefulness, 4) the explanation of its title, 5) the issue of its authenticity, 6) its division into parts, 7) the question of what section of a particular (sub)discipline or literary (sub)genre it belongs to, 8) the clarity or lack of clarity of the author or text, 9) the qualities required of the student and/or the teacher, 10) in the case of a canonical corpus, what the first work to be studied is. Either implicitly or explicitly, topical issues systematically recur in philosophical, theological, medical, and astronomical introductions.<sup>25</sup> The (partial) exception of musical isagogical texts can easily be explained by referring both to their nature as technical introductions and to the nature of the readership or audience these works are intended for. However, it should also be noted that these writings too follow a pattern for introductory issues, although this differs from the 'mainstream' one, and that this pattern was in turn used in philosophical writings including sections devoted to technical isagogics and exegesis.

A further recurring formal feature is related to the intrinsic tension between the aim of systematisation (whose import we will explore in the next section) and didactic requirements. On the one hand, a good introduction is meant to encompass everything that is needed to outline a 'system' of knowledge related to a text, a discipline, or a specific topic. On the other, it can neither dwell on minute points or provide a full examination of relevant topics. Even in the case of very extensive introductory writings (such as Eusebius' work, which can be taken as an extreme case in this respect), what an isagogical piece of writing provides ideal readers with is therefore a systematic selection of what they would need, in order to be effectively introduced to the knowledge of a discipline – and, if applicable, to its practice (this is particularly evident in the case of medical introductory texts).

Of course, this 'methodological map' of the isagogical crossroads must also be considered in the light of the historical development of each discipline. This is crucial, for the chapters show to what extent the production and shaping of isagogics also depends on the specific way in which authoritative backgrounds came to be produced for each discipline. As we shall more boldly emphasise in the next section,



were made compatible with the core theoretical tenets of Neoplatonism and used to justify certain doctrinal innovations; but it is also (and already) the case with Porphyry, who aimed to bridge an apparently puzzling gap between the Middle Platonists and Plotinus, and with Proclus, who was even willing to introduce alleged contradictions into his isagogical remarks on the *Timaeus* in order to support his own overall reading of Plato's dialogues.

Interestingly, a similar 'systematic' orientation also emerges from late antique medical introductions: albeit within a relatively complex scenario, medical isagogical works seem to share with Platonist ones the precise aim of outlining medicine as a system of knowledge encompassing – in due order and according to a theoretical progression – Galen's and Hippocrates' writings. Finally, a similar point emerges – though on the basis of very different requirements – from late antique musical introductions: neither Cleonides nor Gaudentius felt the need to establish a system – for Aristoxenus was already a widely acknowledged authority, at least as far as musicology was concerned – but their introductions reflect a desire to systematically and suitably present a standardised system, which could potentially even prove inclusive with respect to more marginal trends in musicology.

In the light of what has emerged from this and the preceding section, it is clear that isagogical writings are intrinsically related not only to the tension between theoretical production and didactic transmission, but also to that between the attempt to make an individual contribution to a discipline and the reception and strengthening of a shared standard. The latter tension manifests itself through oscillations within a spectrum ranging from strong individual theoretical contributions – as in the case of Hipparchus – to the complete lack of any individual theoretical contribution (as in the case of Cleonides and Gaudentius); but in most cases one encounters a compromise, whereby individual contributions strengthen existing models. This applies to medical models,<sup>32</sup> to Eusebius' appropriation of philosophical isagogics from the perspective of his own constructive yet at the same time polemical Christian isagogics, and especially to philosophical introductions, which sometimes also encompass considerable theoretical innovations (as in the cases of Porphyry, Proclus, and late antique Neoplatonists more generally) within a well-established system of doctrines, which is meant to be enriched, and not just reaffirmed, by these theoretical contributions. This also explains why the didactic function of isagogics often consists in an effort to help ideal readers progress along their path. It is not just a matter of conveying notions: the point is rather to allow readers to improve in the relevant field, and this is possible only if they are provided with the most effective systematic presentation of the fundamental notions in the relevant discipline. <>

## **PHILOSOPHY IN OVID, OVID AS PHILOSOPHER** edited by Gareth Williams and Katherina Volk [Oxford University Press, 9780197610336]

Ovid has long been celebrated for the versatility of his poetic imagination, the diversity of his generic experimentation throughout his long career, and his intimate engagement with the Greco-Roman literary tradition that precedes him; but what of his engagement with the philosophical tradition? Ovid's close familiarity with philosophical ideas and with specific philosophical texts has long been recognized, perhaps most prominently in the Pythagorean, Platonic, Empedoclean, and Lucretian shades that have been seen to color his **METAMORPHOSES**. This philosophical component has often been perceived as

a feature implicated in, and subordinate to, Ovid's larger literary agenda, both pre- and post-exilic; and because of the controlling influence conceded to that literary impulse, readings of the philosophical dimension have often focused on the perceived distortion, ironizing, or parodying of the philosophical sources and ideas on which Ovid draws, as if his literary orientation inevitably compromises or qualifies a "serious" philosophical commitment.

**PHILOSOPHY IN OVID, OVID AS PHILOSOPHER** counters this tendency by considering Ovid's seriousness of engagement with, and his possible critique of, the philosophical writings that inform his works. The book also questions the feasibility of separating out the categories of the "philosophical" and the "literary" in the first place, and explores the ways in which Ovid may offer unusual, controversial, or provocative reactions to received philosophical ideas. Finally, it investigates the case to be made for viewing the Ovidian corpus not just as a body of writings that are often philosophically inflected, but also as texts that may themselves be read as philosophically adventurous and experimental.

The essays collected in this volume are intended at the individual level to address in new ways many aspects of Ovid's recourse to philosophy across his corpus. Collectively, however, they are also designed to redress what, in general terms, remains a significant lacuna in Ovidian studies.

- Addresses a significant gap in Ovidian Studies
- Fresh attention to Ovid as seriously engaged in diverse and unexpected ways with the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition
- New readings of many Ovidian texts and passages from a philosophical perspective

### Review

"This volume will do a lot to advance the idea that there is much more to Ovid than his lascivia. More broadly, it will help to reframe in very positive ways how we understand the relationship between philosophy and Latin poetry." -- Joseph Farrell, University of Pennsylvania

"This excellent book mightily exceeds the expectations of a collaborative volume. The multi-author collection not only takes stock of philosophical themes and intertexts in Ovid's oeuvre but also opens up fresh perspectives grounded in the proposition (really developed here for the first time) that Ovid is seriously engaged with Greco-Roman philosophy. A groundbreaking volume that charts totally new paths towards more fully understanding an underappreciated dimension of Ovid's poetry." -- John F. Miller, University of Virginia

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## The Project

The sixteen essays collected in this volume began life as papers delivered at a conference held at Columbia University in March 2019. This event, organized by the present editors under the title of *Ovidius Philosophus: Philosophy in Ovid and Ovid as a Philosopher*, brought together a distinguished group of scholars from both sides of the Atlantic in an attempt to explore from different but mutually informing viewpoints Ovid's profound engagement with philosophical sources and influences across his poetic corpus.

Ovid's close familiarity with philosophical ideas and with specific philosophical texts has long been recognized, perhaps most prominently in the Pythagorean, Platonic, Empedoclean, and Lucretian shades that have been seen to color his *Metamorphoses*. This philosophical component has often been perceived as a feature implicated in, and subordinate to, Ovid's larger literary agenda, both pre- and post-exilic; and because of the controlling influence conceded to that literary impulse, readings of the philosophical dimension have often focused on the perceived distortion, ironizing, or parodying of the philosophical sources and ideas on which Ovid draws, as if his literary orientation inevitably compromises or qualifies a "serious" philosophical commitment.

The Columbia conference sought to counter this tendency by (i) considering Ovid's seriousness of engagement with, and his possible critique of, the philosophical writings that allusively inform his works; (ii) questioning the feasibility of separating out the categories of the "philosophical" and the "literary" in the first place; (iii) exploring the ways in which Ovid may offer unusual, controversial, or provocative reactions to received philosophical ideas; and (iv) investigating the case to be made for viewing the Ovidian corpus not just as a body of writings that are often philosophically inflected, but also as texts that may themselves be read as philosophically adventurous and experimental. Few scholars would now hesitate to call Ovid philosophically informed; but what further light might be shed on his poetics if he should be perceived as philosophically confident, adept, and resourceful? To what extent can or should *Ovidius philosophus* be seen as an abiding or evolving presence in our reading of his oeuvre? In what ways did the post-Ovidian literary tradition at Rome recognize philosophical import in, and/or perhaps the philosophical idiosyncrasy of, his writings?

Certain of these questions have been well treated in important contributions on specific Ovidian texts in recent times,<sup>1</sup> but we hope in this volume to broach the topic of Ovid's philosophical engagement frontally, so to speak: to prioritize the philosophical component, that is, and to show how Ovid uses his literary apparatus to deploy, test, and experiment with ideas received from a range of schools and thought systems. Even though this area of Ovidian studies continues to show encouraging signs of growth, much work remains to be done: it is telling that in both the Brill and the Cambridge Companions to Ovid, each of which was published in 2002, there is no index entry on philosophy, let alone any dedicated chapter on Ovid's treatment of philosophical ideas; and the same holds true of the Blackwell Companion of 2009.<sup>4</sup> Against this background, the essays collected in this volume are intended at the individual level to address in new ways many particular aspects of Ovid's recourse to philosophy across his corpus. Collectively, however, they are also designed at least partially to redress what, in general terms, remains a significant lacuna in Ovidian studies.

...Against this background, the ironic flippancy that has long been detected in Ovid's earliest work, his *Amores*, represents a youthful spirit of nonconformity--a voice that is not anti-Augustan per se, but sets

itself in tension, however playfully, with the new values and conventions of Augustan discourse. This tendency may undergo adjustment as Ovid expands the scale of his literary ambition in the *Heroides*, *Ars amatoria*, and *Remedia amoris* and then, in the early years CE, in the *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses* down to his exile in 8 CE. But if in these works Ovid serially tests the underpinnings of Augustan meaning and authority, his independence of outlook suggests the freethinker's detached viewpoint, not the more disciplined form of Roman mindset (focusing "the individual's thoughts upon his role as an individual in the state") that Braund associates with Virgil. So in the matter of Ovid's experimentation on a philosophical front: in an age when the fissures between the Augustan legend and reality were becoming increasingly open to interrogation, when fanciful hypothetical scenarios were all the rage in the declamatory schools, and when the compass of Roman self-identity was being sorely tested in the transition from Republic to Empire, in many contexts Ovid can be seen to probe and play with philosophical ideas rather than ideologically building with and on them in the Virgilian sense; to posit ideologies of the self rather than of the state (witness the erotic "philosophy" of the *Ars*), and even, in his erotodidaxis, to explore certain "techniques of the self" that touch on and redirect the ethical-therapeutic strain in philosophy from the Hellenistic age onward; and, in his restless appetite for experimentation, to be more interested in the intellectual process of inquiry than in its end result. In effect, the advancing Augustan times set for Ovidius philosophus an agenda very different from that of Virgil in particular: Ovid is no less seriously engaged with philosophical ideas than Virgil, but the sociopolitical context gives a different ideological meaning to and motivation for his probings. True, after his banishment to Tomis in 8 CE, a more somber philosophical demeanor prevails, with notable shades of a Horatian turning-within; but there, too, the exploratory impulse still remains visible, as several chapters in this volume seek to show.



excursions and appropriations: his treatment of Pythagoras in *Metamorphoses* 15 offers but one example of how the literary and philosophical impulses are inextricably conjoined in him, and how the same capacities of bold initiative are to be expected and looked for on both fronts simultaneously.

Third, a major aim of the chapters in this volume is to show that philosophical appropriation is not just an ornamental feature of Ovid's poetics, but in many ways instrumental to them: the philosophical component drives contextual meaning rather than offering mere window dressing. The same is evidently true of Lucretius, say, or Virgil; but the point bears stressing in Ovid's case partly to counter any lingering suspicion of philosophical superficiality or dilettantism in him, and partly to highlight what is perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of Ovidius philosophus: the singularity of effect that he achieves in any given context where philosophical ideas are invoked, adapted, or exploited to carefully calculated ends. Hence the chapters that follow are surveyed from two perspectives in the rest of this Introduction. First, the individuated focus: our overview of each contribution is meant to stress not just the restless diversity of Ovid's philosophical probings across his corpus, but also how a fresh or renewed sensitivity to philosophical considerations can enrich, deepen, and even transform our understanding of particular works or contexts. Second, the collective focus: in tracing certain patterns of thematic commonality and continuity among the chapters, we aim to capture something of the tension between part and whole that we find to be central to the functioning of Ovidius philosophus across his oeuvre. The localized context may crucially condition the point of his philosophical maneuvering in the moment, but allowance has equally to be made for the possible accumulations and networks of philosophical meaning that transcend the localized viewpoint. In effect, our goal is to examine Ovidius philosophus both in toto and per partes, and to explore the possible interdependence of those categories.

### The Chapters in Overview

A single chapter occupies the first of the five sections into which this volume is divided. In Part I ("Ovid's sapientia"), Francesca Romana Berno's "Ovidius sapiens: The Wise Man in Ovid's Work" anchors the collection with a wideranging exploration of the term sapiens and its cognates throughout Ovid's oeuvre: in exploring the evolution of his use of such terms, Berno argues that a progressive thread of meaning in the concept of sapientia can be traced from his erotic and erotodidactic writings into the "middle" phase of the *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses* and finally into his exilic corpus.

The global span of Berno's chapter sets the stage for the schematic division of the Ovidian corpus in Parts II—IV. The five chapters in Part II ("The Erotic Corpus") focus on Ovid's erotic corpus from a variety of perspectives. In Chapter 2, "Elegy, Tragedy, and the Choice of Ovid (*Amores* 3.1)," Laurel Fulkerson takes her starting point from the epiphany first of personified Tragedy and then of Elegy in *Amores* 3.1, where both vie for the poet's attention: which poetic path will he take? Elegy wins the day; but in relating Ovid's dilemma to Prodicus' famous "Choice of Hercules" between vice and virtue, Fulkerson argues that Ovid's undoing of the traditional generic opposition between elegy and epic through the insertion of tragedy in *Amores* 3.1 allows him to explore a more sophisticated and complex view of "choice" than the Prodician model allows for: philosophy and virtue, she argues, rarely center on a single life decision, and by adding tragedy to the generic mix in *Amores* 3.1, Ovid folds the Prodician dimension into a wider reflection on the nature of philosophical, poetic, and life choice.

The focus turns to Epicureanism in Chapters 3 and 4. In Chapter 3, "Ovid's *Ars amatoria* and the Epicurean Hedonic Calculus," Roy Gibson explores Ovid's engagement in his amatory corpus with the Epicurean calculus of pleasure. That calculus is spread unevenly over the three books of the *Ars*. It appears largely absent from Book 3, except in those instances where Ovid recommends gradually decreasing pain and increasing pleasure for men. Conversely, the concept of Panaetian-Ciceronian decorum is strongly in evidence in Book 3, but less prevalent in the books addressed to men. In exploring this relative imbalance of philosophical emphases for the sexes, Gibson argues that Ovid turns the spotlight on the Epicurean calculus at certain significant junctures of the *Remedia* as well as the *Ars* to negative effect: in the midst of his erotodidaxis he expresses serious doubts about fundamental aspects of the Epicurean project.

In Chapter 4, "Criticizing Love's Critic: Epicurean parrhesia as an Instructional Mode in Ovidian Love Elegy," Erin M. Hanses argues that throughout his erotic corpus Ovid engages with a key element of Lucretian didactic, Epicurean parrhesia. The relationships nurtured or displayed between student and teacher in Lucretius' *De rerum natura* are manipulated by Ovid as he shifts his own persona from that of student of love in the *Amores*, to teacher of love in the *Ars*, and finally to doctor of love in the *Remedia*. Each of these shifts mimics a different aspect of Epicurean parrhesia: talking across (student to student), a mode evinced in the *Amores*; talking down (teacher to student), as in the *Ars*; and talking up (student to teacher), a mode actualized when the *Remedia* is read as a response to Lucretius. In progressing through the ranks of these didactic relationships, Hanses's Ovid directly challenges Lucretius qua philosophical authority on love.

The *Ars* features centrally in the two remaining chapters in Part II. In Chapter 5, "Ovid's *imago mundi muliebris* and the Makeup of the World in *Ars amatoria* 3.101-290," Del A. Maticic argues that Ovid, in the instructions he delivers on female *cultus* in that section of *Ars* 3, subverts the technique of ekphrastic world depiction in the well-known *imago mundi* shield tradition. For Maticic, Ovid redirects that tradition by constructing not an *imago mundi* but a *mundus muliebris* ("woman's world")—a description not of a work of art but of an aesthetic system encompassing the body of the female practitioner of *cultus*. The protective connotations of the heroic shield are also carried over to this *mundus muliebris*: Ovid delineates a *cultus* shield that is forged in the worldly experience of his female reader, and the alternative "cosmology" so portrayed is that of her relations with the sociocultural systems surrounding her. On this approach, Ovidian *cultus* engenders not so much a quality of worldliness as an aesthetic of what Maticic terms "worldedness," where the materials of the female body are enmeshed as phenomena with the apparent beings surrounding her.

Then, after our tour of the localized world of 3.101-290, Katharina Volk takes a broader view of the *Ars*, and also of the *Remedia*, in Chapter 6, "Ovid's Art of Life." Volk contends that Ovid's erotodidactic poems, the *Ars* and *Remedia*, constitute philosophical texts, in the senses (i) that both are very much like philosophy, in that they are influenced by philosophical doctrines and discourses popular in Ovid's time; and (ii) that these poems are philosophical in their own right, deploying their own theories of anthropology, psychology, and ethics to promulgate a method of "loving wisely." For all its humor, all its reveling in artifice, and its willing suspension of disbelief, Volk finds a positive vision at the heart of Ovid's *ars*; and this "philosophy" shows numerous similarities to the Foucaultian "techniques of the self" that we touched on earlier: methods of cognitive and behavioral conditioning designed to achieve the desired inner state of mind and outer practice of virtue.

In what ways does Ovid's range of philosophical vision and experimentation expand outward when he progresses from erotic elegy to the "higher" generic callings of the (still elegiac) *Fasti* and the (qualifiedly) epic *Metamorphoses*? The five chapters in Part III all focus on the *Metamorphoses* in particular, and a concerted effort has been made to explore parts and aspects of the poem that have thus far received relatively little attention from a philosophical perspective. In Chapter 7, "Keep Up the Good Work: (Don't) Do It like Ovid (Sen. *QNat.* 3.27-30)," Myrto Garani begins from Seneca's grandiloquent visualization of the universal cataclysm at the climax of *Natural Questions* 3 to argue that Seneca draws on Ovid's account of the mythical flood in *Metamorphoses* I as a proto-scientific text. According to Garani, Seneca suggests that he himself is about to build on those earlier "scientific" discoveries so as to elucidate more effectively, from a philosophical viewpoint, the recurring phenomenon of the cataclysm that heralds the end of each world cycle. Through selective quotation from the *Metamorphoses*, Garani's Seneca systematically demythologizes Ovidian storytelling and then turns both mythical and historical events into integral parts of his own cosmic narrative, thereby formulating an effective Stoic *praemeditatio futurorum malorum*, that is, the best means of reconciling his addressee, Lucilius, to the inevitability of cosmic catastrophe. In effect, Seneca invests Ovid's mythical flood with a heuristic value so as to create a "diachronic analogy" with his own flood narrative, and so to invoke his Ovidian source as reinforcement for the cosmic projection delivered at the end of *Natural Questions* 3.

In Chapter 8, "Venus discors: The Empedocleo-Lucretian Background of Venus and Calliope's Song in *Metamorphoses* 5," Charles Ham considers a particular aspect of the song contest between the Heliconian Muses and their mortal challengers, the daughters of Pierus—an aspect that has major ramifications for the broader Empedoclean presence in the *Metamorphoses*. Focusing on the Muse Calliope's performance, Ham argues that her song, and specifically its representation of Venus, are to be read against an Empedocleo-Lucretian background. Ham's Calliope represents Venus not simply as a version of Empedoclean *Philia*/Aphrodite or the Lucretian Venus of the proem to *De rerum natura* I, but rather as a chiefly discordant figure akin to Empedoclean *Neikos* or Strife. Further, in exploring Venus' representation in the song, this chapter also considers some of the ways in which Calliope's Empedocleo-Lucretian background bears on her status as an important ideological symbol in the Augustan period.

The Lucretian/Epicurean accent then recurs in Chapter 9, "Labor and pestis in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," where Alison Keith examines Ovid's engagement in three episodes with two famous "problems" of Epicurean philosophy, labor ("toil") and pestis ("plague"). For Keith, Ovid's reference to human toils in the Deucalion and Pyrrha episode—*genus experiens laborum* (*Met.* 1.414)—implies the impossibility of mankind's attaining the chief goal of Epicurean philosophy, pleasure. Ovid uses the same phrase late in his account of the plague at Aegina when describing the Myrmidons (7.656), a hardy new people created by Jupiter from ants. The unexpectedly happy outcome of Ovid's Aeginetan plague narrative, in which Aeacus' piety is rewarded with the renewal of his people, comprehensively undoes the devastation of Lucretius' plague narrative in *De rerum natura* 6 and systematically opposes the Epicurean logic that underpins it. In his account of Hercules' demise on Mt. Oeta, Ovid again conjoins the motifs of labor and pestis in the hero's mental review of his labors as he lies dying. In his final words on the pyre, Hercules questions the very existence of the gods in a phrase (9.203-4: "Can anyone still accept that the gods exist?") that recalls Epicurean skepticism of traditional religion. But Ovid's subsequent narrative of the hero's apotheosis methodically refutes this Epicurean position in an episode that heals the cosmic and physical desolation symbolically embodied in Hercules' death on the pyre.

Plato enters in Chapter 10, Peter Kelly's "Cosmic Artistry in Ovid and Plato:' This chapter explores the particular appeal that Platonic philosophy held for Ovid, especially when Plato operates at the border with myth and fuses cosmic and human artistry. Kelly argues that a main attraction for Ovid lay in the fact that the first major rendition of creationist cosmogony in the Greco-Roman tradition is found in Plato. Plato continually utilizes the imagery of artistic production and mimesis to interrogate the relationship between how the world is formed and how we can come to knowledge of it, which leads to a pervasive parallelism between the structures of the world and the text—a dynamic that is evident throughout Ovid's work, not least in the suggestive identification of cosmogony and textual creation in *Metamorphoses* I. Further, Plato repeatedly blurs the interface between myth and philosophy when attempting to represent the fluid and bodily nature of the material world in a way that, Kelly proposes, was foundational for Ovid.

After this Platonic interlude, Lucretius again looms large in Chapter 11, Darcy A. Krasne's "Some Say the World Will End in Fire: Philosophizing the Memnonides in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*." The cremation of Memnon and the subsequent generation and destruction of the Memnonides in *Metamorphoses* 13 have primarily drawn attention as one modulation of the Homero-Virgilian Trojan cycle of Books 12-14. In launching her different trajectory of argument, Krasne proceeds from the concluding lines of the episode (13.600-22). There, Ovid appears to be engaging with scientific terminology, especially the language and imagery of Lucretius' cosmogony in *De rerum natura* 5. Taking this observation as her starting point, Krasne presses its ramifications further, both within and beyond the *Metamorphoses*, tracing Ovid's intertexts back to Virgil, Lucretius, and Empedocles. Through this complex of intertexts, Krasne argues, the Memnonides become a metaphor for Rome's birth in fratricide and its resulting cyclical trend of ekpyrotic civil war and rebirth.

We move in Part IV ("The Exilic Corpus") to Ovid's place of exile on the grim Pontic shore in Tomis (modern Constanta in Romania). K. Sara Myers sets the scene in Chapter 12, "Ovid against the Elements: Natural Philosophy, Paradoxography, and Ethnography in the Exile Poetry:' The four Empedoclean elements that underlie the metamorphic physics of the *Metamorphoses* reappear in Ovid's descriptions of the environment of Tomis. But Myers shows how, in Pontus, these elements are largely reduced to three: air, water, and earth, all of which behave in unnatural or disordered ways. Ovid's frequent use of *adynata* further underscores the cosmic disarray of the natural world of his exile, and the regression to disorder and Chaos. Missing in Tomis, Myers observes, is the element of heat that could thaw the icy water, make the land fertile, and set in motion a harmony of the elements; instead, a continual state of elemental strife persists. Ovid's exilic cosmos can thus be seen as the opposite of the universal flux and change posited by Pythagoras in *Metamorphoses* 15; in Myers's Tomis nothing flows and all stays the same. Yet she demonstrates how Ovid's employment of the traditional explanatory discourses of natural philosophy, ethnography, geography, medical theory, and aetiology signals his continued mastery of these modes of knowledge, even as he finds himself in an environment where the impossible becomes real, and in a world that seems beyond the reach of human understanding.

A different but complementary challenge to human (self-)understanding is then explored by Donncha O'Rourke in Chapter 13, "Akrasia and Agency in Ovid's *Tristia*." Elegy often illustrates a particular condition of personal agency known in ancient ethical discussion as *akrasia*, whereby individuals find that they are powerless to stop themselves from engaging in actions that they rationally understand to be objectionable or harmful. O'Rourke examines how this elegiac concern with *akrasia* plays out in Ovid's

exilic oeuvre, when the object of the poet's unrequited amor is replaced by faraway Roma, access to which is now denied by an emperor whose indulgence has given way to unremitting anger. The exilic poetry's obsessive concern with the terms *crimen*, *culpa*, *scelus*, and *error* can similarly be read as an urgent attempt to understand the degree of Ovid's agency in his own downfall. For O'Rourke, however, the exiled Ovid deploys a technical-ethical vocabulary not just to articulate and explore his own responsibility for his actions, but also to mobilize a philosophical evaluation of Augustus' assent to anger and his doubtful capacity for meaningful clemency. If philosophical therapy in the exilic works seems to offer Ovid only slight mitigation of his psychological anguish, O'Rourke argues that it does at least enable him to take a view of the emperor as one who ultimately is possessed of no higher self-control than the poet he has sought to disempower.

In Chapter 14, "Intimations of Mortality: Ovid and the End(s) of the World;" Alessandro Schiesaro brings together different strands of thought and imagery in the *Metamorphoses* and the exilic poetry to compare and contrast Ovid's treatments of eschatology in the two works. Schiesaro duly stresses the role that eschatology as a theme plays throughout the entire Ovidian oeuvre, but with a particular focus on recurrent conceptualizations, as well as significant changes, across the divide between the *Metamorphoses* and the exilic corpus. Whereas in the *Metamorphoses* Ovid deftly balances the illusion of permanence with intimations of an end through metamorphic inevitability, in *Tomis* "the end" is ever wished for but endlessly deferred: as the corpus expands into book after book without offering any sign of change or alleviation for the poet in *Tomis*, Schiesaro stresses the gradual hardening of our realization that a standstill has been reached on the Pontic shore. It is as if the endless cycle of repetition that characterizes the Stoic cosmos—and Pythagoras' speech in *Metamorphoses* 15—were now taking shape in the form of serial, yearly collections of poetry.

Part IV concludes in Chapter 15 with Gareth D. Williams's "The End(s) of Reason in *Tomis*: Philosophical Traces, Erasures, and Error in Ovid's Exilic Poetry." Williams focuses on the extent, manner, and consequences of Ovid's philosophical "failure" in exile, but with the ultimate goal of reflecting anew—from a philosophical standpoint—on the nature of his elusive error. Partly through appeal to Empedocles' sub-presence in both Ovid's preexilic and *Tomitan* writings, this chapter first sets the lack of any sustained philosophical appeal in *Tomis* against the very different structuring principles that prevail in the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*: this move from structure to unstructure after his banishment in 8 CE importantly preconditions, Williams argues, the phenomenon of philosophical failure in the exilic corpus. That failure is then explored in relation to Ovid's infamous error: the error is so fundamental to his exilic plight—implicated no less (through the "mistake" of Augustan misreading) in the incrimination of the *Ars* than it is in Ovid's fateful mistake—that the poet can never construct any fully rationalized understanding of his fate; and he therefore struggles to form any coherent philosophical response to exile on a foundation that is so undermined by factors of judicial inexplicability and nontransparency.

Finally, in Part V ("After Ovid"), a single chapter, Philip Hardie's "Philosophizing and Theologizing: Recarnations of Ovid: Lucan to Alexander Pope," offers an important platform for further inquiry into the reception of Ovidius philosophus. The more recent reception of Ovid has largely denied his works serious engagement with philosophical issues; but the longer history of reception shows that over many centuries Ovid was read as a source and repository of philosophical—and theological—wisdom. Hardie presents a selective survey of this history, with a particular focus on Ovid as a cosmological and natural-

philosophical poet. The chapter builds outward from aspects of Ovid's reception in later antiquity (Lucan and Claudian), including among Christian poets who drew on Ovidian cosmogony to lend a philosophical coloring to versifications of the creation story of Genesis. Turning to early modern English poetry, Hardie then examines Edmund Spenser's use of Ovid in the underpinning of *The Faerie Queene* with a philosophizing doctrine of mutability (the Garden of Adonis, the *Mutabilitie Cantos*); John Milton's use of the Narcissus and Echo story to teach lessons about human psychology and theology; and finally, in the eighteenth century, Alexander Pope's self-alignment with Ovidius philosophus in his *Essay on Man*.

### The Collective Viewpoint

If the summary of the individual chapters as offered earlier is essentially centrifugal in orientation, conveying the range and versatility of Ovid's philosophical commitments in particular contexts, certain centripetal tendencies also conjoin many of the chapters in ways that lend at least a measure of coherence to the textual personality of Ovidius philosophus. Our aim in this section is hardly to posit any generalized Ovidian "philosophy" on the basis of the findings of the sixteen chapters; rather, we briefly take stock of those chapters by sketching what they reveal of Ovid's recurrent philosophical tendencies and interests.

Berno's tracing of the evolution of the term *sapiens* and its cognates across the Ovidian corpus usefully initiates the balance that this book seeks to achieve between attention to specific texts, on the one hand, and, on the other, sensitivity to broader philosophical developments throughout the oeuvre. Beyond the Empedoclean epos of Pythagoras' speech in *Metamorphoses* 15, Ovid's engagement with Empedocles is explored in Books 5 (Ham) and 13 (Krasne), and then traced into the exilic corpus by Myers and Williams. Lucretius, too, is profoundly implicated along with Empedocles in the *Metamorphoses* (so Keith) and the exilic poetry; but Gibson, Hanses, and Volk all demonstrate the breadth of Ovid's part-interrogation and part-appropriation of Epicurean ethics in his erotic and erotodidactic works, while Williams also touches on the relative "failure" of Epicurean therapy in Tomis. O'Rourke on *akrasia* and Schiesaro on eschatology in the *Metamorphoses* and the exilic corpus complement Berno's range of vision by stressing connectivity between different Ovidian parts; and those chapters that invoke other reference points—Fulkerson on Prodicus' "Choice of Hercules" in *Amores* 3.1, Maticic on the *imago mundi* shield tradition and female "worldedness" in *Ars* 3, and Kelly on Plato in connection with the Ovidian cosmogony in *Metamorphoses* 1—all enlarge the philosophical mosaic that is an expanding work in progress throughout Ovid's career. As for the reception of Ovidius philosophus, Garani contributes another perspective on the Ovidian cataclysm and conflagration in *Metamorphoses* 1 and 2 in her treatment of Seneca's response to Ovid in *Natural Questions* 3, while Hardie widens the reception horizons yet further in a survey that whets the appetite for future inquiry in this area.

Empedocles, Epicurus/Lucretius, Prodicus, Plato, the *imago mundi* tradition: beyond the representation in this volume of these different philosophical authors, schools, and tendencies, three broader concerns create further networks of linkage between the chapters. First, ethics: several contributions (Berno, Fulkerson, Gibson, Hanses, Volk, O'Rourke, Williams) are centrally concerned with the emotions and their control, social ethics, consolation, life choice, and the *ars vitae*, and in combination these chapters usefully convey the breadth of Ovid's vision in an ethical direction. Second, physics: multiple chapters (Garani, Ham, Keith, Kelly, Krasne, Myers, Schiesaro) treat this topic from diverse perspectives, especially in reference to the *Metamorphoses* and the exilic corpus, focusing notably on the relation of cosmos and chaos; the Empedoclean elements; and eschatology, partly through cataclysm and apocalypse

in the *Metamorphoses*, and partly through Ovid's portrayal of Pontus as a place of physical extremities and "end-of-the-world" desolation. Third, aesthetics: various chapters (Fulkerson, Maticic, Kelly) relate Ovid's appropriations in ethics and/or physics to aesthetic concerns that often involve self-conscious reflection on the poet's own art. These three broad categories are themselves hardly mutually exclusive, and their points of interpenetration further enhance the overall unity of the collection.

Through thematic connectivity between various chapters, then, and through the linkage in multiple contributions between different Ovidian contexts, we hope that this book offers at least the beginnings of a holistic appreciation of Ovidius philosophus. But no volume of this sort can seek to offer fully satisfying coverage of a subject as multifaceted as philosophy in Ovid. While certain parts of his oeuvre are well represented here, others are not: the *Fasti* in particular has suggestive philosophical properties that are not addressed in these pages (though see Kelly and Williams on the figure of Janus in *Fasti* 1); any potential that the *Heroides* has in this direction goes unexplored; and even though several chapters are devoted to the erotic corpus, the *Metamorphoses*, and the exilic corpus, the philosophical potential of all three areas far outruns the dimensions of this current project. We nevertheless hope that the quality and interest of the essays assembled here will significantly offset any restrictions of scope in the volume and, still more important, that this effort will provide a catalyst for further examinations of Ovidius philosophus. <>

## **THROUGH YOUR EYES: RELIGIOUS ALTERITY AND THE EARLY MODERN WESTERN IMAGINATION** edited by Giovanni Tarantino and Paola von Wyss-Giacosa [Series: Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture, Brill, 9789004464919]

The focus of **THROUGH YOUR EYES: RELIGIOUS ALTERITY AND THE EARLY MODERN WESTERN IMAGINATION** is the (mostly Western) understanding, representation and self-critical appropriation of the "religious other" between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Mutually constitutive processes of selfing/othering are observed through the lenses of credal Jews, a *bhakti* Brahmin, a widely translated Morisco historian, a collector of Western and Eastern *singularia*, Christian missionaries in Asia, critical converts, toleration theorists, and freethinkers: in other words, people dwelling in an 'in-between' space which undermines any binary conception of the Self and the Other. The genesis of the volume was in exchanges between eight international scholars and the two editors, intellectual historian Giovanni Tarantino and anthropologist Paola von Wyss-Giacosa, who share an interest in comparatism, debates over toleration, and history of emotions.

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## The “Religious Other” through Early Modern Eyes by Giovanni Tarantino and Paola von Wyss-Giacosa

The historic focus of *Through Your Eyes* is the (mostly Western) understanding, representation, and self-critical appropriation of the “religious other” between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The original idea for the volume arose from seminar discussion with members and fellows of the Käte Hamburger Kolleg (khk) ‘Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe’ at Ruhr-Universität, Bochum, about the powerful conceptual language concerning the variation and fluidity of otherness and othering offered by social anthropologists Gerd Baumann and Andre Gingrich in their coedited *Grammars of Identity/Alterity: A Structural Approach* (2004). The making of the present book, however, has extended over several years, countries, and continents and found its final shape through the fruitful exchange of views and ideas between its editors, an intellectual historian and an anthropologist who share an interest in early modern religious comparatism, history of emotions, and theories and practices of toleration.

Otherness, which is instrumental to the quest for and development of national and cultural self-definition, is commonly regarded as being intrinsically related to the notion of an enemy that has to be destroyed, enslaved, or assimilated. However, Baumann, in particular, developed a ‘weak’ and nuanced concept of identity in which sameness and alterity, identity and difference, are not demarcated in an exclusive way. Cannibalizing three classic social theories originally proposed by Edward Said (1978), E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1940), and Louis Dumont (1980), Baumann conceptualized three grammars of selfing/othering (orientalization, segmentation, encompassment) in which identities and alterities are viewed as ‘mutually constitutive or potentially dialogical.’

Orientalism is not a simple binary opposition of ‘us = good’ and ‘them = bad’, but a very shrewd mirrored reversal of: what is good in us is [still] bad in them, but what got twisted in us [still]



remains straight in them ... The social grammar of a segmentary system is a logic of fission or enmity at a lower level of segmentation, overcome by a logic of fusion or neutralization of conflict at a higher level of segmentation ... It is thus entirely a matter of context who is one's foe and who one's friend at what classificatory level ... The Other may be my foe in a context placed at a lower level of segmentation, but may simultaneously be my ally in a context placed at a higher level of segmentation ... Encompassment means an act of selfing by appropriating, perhaps one should say adopting or co-opting, selected kinds of otherness ...: 'you may think that you differ from me in your sense of values or identity; but deep down, or rather higher up, you are but a part of me'.

The first of the three grammars, orientalization, constitutes "self" and "other" by negative mirror-imaging: 'what is good in us is lacking in them.' At the same time, and most significantly, it also entails 'a sense of loss' and adds a subordinate reversal: 'what is lacking in us is (still) present in them.' Famous early modern examples of fictional reverse travel writing come to mind, with Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* (1721) being the most distinguished among them. A lesser-known case in point—portraying 'a sensible Chinese' travelling through intolerant Christian countries—was offered by the versatile eighteenth-century Sinophile journalist and freethinker Thomas Gordon (see Tarantino's contribution to this volume). Failing to see these societies as 'Christians according to the gospel,' the Chinese traveller concluded that he should bless 'himself, and the more Christian spirit of good old Confucius.'

The second, so-called segmentation grammar 'determines identities and alterities according to context.' Think, for example, of the Italian Dominican friar Daniello Concina (1687–1756) who, in his five-tome *Della religione rivelata, contra gli ateisti, deisti, materialisti, indifferentisti, che negano la verita^ de' misteri* (Venice, 1754), set about opposing the unbelief of his age by demonstrating how eminent non-Catholic theologians and clerics, 'though obstinate heretics' (including Jean Le Clerc, Johann Franz Buddeus, Jacques Abbadie, Gilbert Burnet, Samuel Clarke, Edmund Gibson, Thomas Sherlock, Abraham Le Moine, William Warburton), had bravely overturned the depraved motivations of misbelievers. As for the third grammar, universalistic thought systems (no matter whether religious or secular) may actually smooth out difference by encompassing it. If segmentation always implies the existence or the construing of a common enemy, and if encompassment is always hierarchical, orientalization can raise ideas of complementarity and reverse mirror-imaging. By 'cannibalizing' and greatly simplifying Baumann in turn, and without either uncritically surrendering to the potential ecumenism of readings which rely too heavily on the concept of negotiation once warned against by Peter Burke, or underestimating Guy G. Stroumsa's caveat that 'comparing never reflects a neutral account of the other,' the contributors to *Through Your Eyes* specifically explore the potentially self-critical dimension of the representation of the "religious other" in the early modern era.

Translocal perspectives have also prompted a critical rethinking of categories such as 'identity,' 'nation,' 'civilization,' and 'religion,' and many historians have recognized the importance of theorization, despite an earlier distaste for it. In modern cultural studies, space is not understood in purely physical or material terms but is thought of as embracing a wide range of spaces, be they imagined, ascribed, mental, textual, corporeal, literary, and so on. A transcultural history of religion, if it is to be inventive, must work with very different notions of space, 'globally encompassing understandings of the past' while remaining sensitive to local particularities. Thus, as observed by Gleijeses and Jasper: 'Translocality can thus be understood both as the practice of crossing geographical borders and as the act of transgressing

geographical into mental spaces.’ Writing entangled and translocal histories calls for an interest in ‘the agentive capacities of all actors,’ a ‘decolonization of thought’—aptly evoked by Daniel Barbu in the afterword to this volume—and a hermeneutics that considers ‘the permeability of borders; the negotiations of power; the dynamism of intercultural processes; and the inextricability of material and symbolic factors.’ In what is known as the global or globalized age, cultures, and religion(s), can no longer be viewed as discrete units and must be seen as hybrid formations involved in a constant process of multidirectional exchange with other cultures.

...

Early Modern historian Lee Palmer Wandel noted how Montaigne, having witnessed the harsh confrontations between Huguenots and Catholics over revealed truth, the discordant accounts of peoples and cultures separated by bodies of water and iconoclastic acts in churches, had pointed to the fact that ‘none took into account either the subjectivity of the eye or the role of prior knowledge in shaping what the eye could see.’ Those perceptive insights have been taken up in a particularly fruitful manner in the historical study of ‘regimes of comparatism.’ Scholars in anthropology and ethnography, art history, geography and cartography, history, history of science, religious studies, and national literatures have explored with increasing sophistication and sensitivity what Wandel, by evoking Michael Baxandall’s notion of ‘the period eye,’ suggests might broadly be called ‘the subjective eye.’

Through Your Eyes sets out to explore how the “religious other” was seen, perceived, understood, appropriated, or distanced between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. If Baumann’s grammars suggested a fertile starting point, the contributors to this volume, all specialists in their fields, were invited to write in line with their own training and epistemologies, methods and methodologies, questions and terms, so that in reading the chapters one also becomes aware of many more “eyes” present in the volume. ‘Mutually constitutive’ processes of selfing/othering are observed through the lens of credal Jews, a bhakti Brahmin, a perceptive collector of Western and Eastern singulalia,<sup>14</sup> a widely translated Morisco historian, well-travelled Christian missionaries in Asia, critical converts, toleration theorists, and freethinkers— in other words by mostly western or largely westernized people, dwelling in an ‘in-between’ space that undermines any binary conception of the Self and the Other ‘as mutually exclusive poles.’ Indeed, as Gauri Viswanathan has convincingly shown, ‘assimilation may be accompanied by critique of the very culture with which religious affiliation is sought. Equally, dissent may aim at reforming and rejuvenating the culture from which the convert has detached herself.’ In contrast, by visually and emotionally confining the “religious other” to the dark periphery of the world, the title page vignette by Charles-Nicolas Cochin the Younger, one of King Louis XV’s favourite engravers, which appeared on each volume of the ‘Catholicized’ 1741 version of Jean-Frédéric Bernard and Bernard Picart’s *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde*—a powerful expression of dialogue, knowledge, and tolerance (see, in this volume, the essays by Minuti, Stünkel and Tarantino)—rendered non-Christians, and even more specifically non-Catholics, liminal.

Although privileging Western gazers (with the partial exceptions of the essays by Chakravarti, Minuti, and Rule on missionary encounters in India, Siam, and China), the collection has a broad geographic range, spanning Western and Southern Europe, the West and East Indies, the Far East, and North America. The chapters explore culturally specific ways to represent, understand, and emulate—but also to silence, domesticate, and appropriate—the “religious other”.

Talya Fishman offers a survey of ‘creedal moments’ in Jewish history. Fishman argues that such building and expressions of creed—that is, the necessary and defining beliefs—by Jewish scholars in Christian and Islamic lands, is rooted primarily in external historical circumstances necessitating a doctrinal clarification of Jewish identity. Consequently, Fishman discusses the topic episodically and diachronically. Her examples range from the twelfth through to the eighteenth centuries, from medieval thought and crypto-Judaism to the emergence of the modern nation state and ‘Jewish “capitulation” to confessionalisation,’ revealing the ‘gap separating Judaism’s modern turn from its medieval antecedents.’ Most significantly, for the purposes of this collection, the uncharacteristic separation of belief and practice, with a privileging of the former, is explained as a development unique to Iberian conversos and to their Jewish descendants in lands of the Western Sephardic Diaspora.

Historian Ananya Chakravarti compares two dialogic texts in Marāʿihī from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries respectively, which, by means of staged inter-religious dialogue, present the complexity and ensuing difficulties of religious co-existence between Hindus, Muslims, and Christians in the region. In offering a close reading of these roughly coeval textual sources, Chakravarti considers the importance, particular meaning, and finality of silence within such religious debates and explores the acceptance of difference grounded in bhakti devotionalism in the name of a shared and fundamental humanity. In contrast, Thomas Stephens’s silences in his *Discurso sobre a vinda de Jesu Christo* reveal his limited acceptance of the other.

Fernando Rodríguez Mediano surveys the vicissitudes surrounding the publication and reception of the extraordinarily successful *Historia verdadera del rey d. Rodrigo* authored by the Morisco physician Miguel de Luna (d. 1615), uncovering the complex ways in which Old Christian Spanish society (and more broadly, early modern Europe) toyed rhetorically with cultural and religious distance, and used Oriental chronicles and Islam as instruments for self-reflection (‘Hee that knoweth no Countrey but his own, knoweth not the worth or wants of his owne’). As Mediano illustrates, the circulation of Morisco works such as de Luna’s within Spain and other European countries was as meaningful in its original intention of defending the existence of the Morisco community under the Spanish monarchy as in its later appropriation and reinterpretation by different political, historical, and literary agents.

The anthropologist Paola von Wyss-Giacosa looks at a treatise published in 1615, which presented an innovative theory about the historical diffusion of idolatry from ancient Egypt to the Americas and Asia. The author, Paduan antiquary Lorenzo Pignoria, based his comparative studies on material culture and, accordingly, included a considerable number of illustrations of the objects he had examined in his book, often using the first person in his writing and consistently supplying detailed information on the whereabouts of the artefacts to enable the verification of his observations. As Wyss-Giacosa argues, a close reading of the text and images, systematically employed as evidence by the antiquary, uncovers intriguing contradictions. Pignoria used the concept of ‘conformità’ as a heuristic tool. His engagement with the “other” through the sources on idolatry he had gathered led to an increasing intellectual and emotional irritation, to an intensified and challenging reflection on religion.

In his chapter on seventeenth-century Chinese converts to Christianity, Sinologist Paul A. Rule acknowledges that ‘the other can be made familiar by misidentification, a perverse denial of otherness,’ which may have informed the sympathetic appreciation displayed by European Jesuits for Chinese belief systems. At the same time, however, he forcefully rejects competing scholarly accounts of ‘an insurmountable otherness of Christianity,’ examining what he calls ‘Confucian Christians.’ Their tenets

are encapsulated in the reflection by Xu Guangqi (known as one of the ‘Three Pillars of Chinese Catholicism’) that Christianity ‘complements Confucianism and reforms Buddhism.’ Significantly, Rule also notes the Jesuit missionaries’ own conversion ‘from a narrow Christianity to a broader—if you like more “liberal”—Christianity.’

In the next chapter, Rolando Minuti focuses on the Western understanding of Siamese belief systems. The growth of political and commercial dealings between Siam and European states, especially France in the second half of the seventeenth century, coupled with various missionary initiatives, resulted in a greatly increased knowledge of Siam and its religious traditions. This in turn provided a means for interrogating European culture. Minuti considers three main instances of ‘orientalizing’ attitudes—the reference to Siamese religion in Bayle’s writings, the comparative approach in Bernard and Picart’s *Cérémonies*, and the deistic interpretation of d’Argens’s work—and points out the difficulties of assuming a ‘radical’ attitude as a uniform and consistent framework of the Enlightenment’s contribution to the long history of European philosophical thought about religion and the “religious other”.

This radicalism is specifically addressed by Knut Martin Stünkel, who examines one of the most celebrated Enlightenment critiques of Christianity’s moral and political influence. For Baron d’Holbach—Stünkel glosses, drawing on Jean Starobinski’s *théorie du dévoilement*—‘institutionalised religion (and the Church) and tolerance concerning matters of an inexplicable nature are mutually exclusive.’ In his ‘unveiling, enlightened and stereotyping view, the “other” is religion, while religion itself is othering.’ Having been overcome by scientific and philosophical attack, religion (‘a device for rulers to intensify an emotion’) is viewed as having left a gap in the moral structure of human beings which needs to be filled by reason, experience, and education. Thus restructured, the moral code of the Enlightenment affords a perspective for considering other religious traditions (‘Christianity provides no advantages compared to the other religions’).

Equally importantly, as Vincent Carretta shows in his essay, Islam, RomanCatholicism, paganism, Protestantism, and Christianity were, in general, all subjected to ‘the comparative and evaluative gaze’ of early black authors who, with their writings, marked the beginnings of black transatlantic literature and social criticism. Writing as ‘strangers in strange lands’ and repeatedly making use of ‘the trope of the sacred talking book,’ they were positioning themselves rhetorically as outsiders and supposedly disinterested observers critiquing the religious beliefs and practices of societies they found themselves in, but not fully of, including Christian ones. Most eighteenth-century writings by and about individual people of African descent appropriate Judeo-Christianity in order to reveal and judge the beliefs and practices of contemporary hypocritical self-styled Christians of European descent.

In the final chapter of the volume, Giovanni Tarantino argues that the Enlightenment’s excessively contrived emphasis on priestly analogies between different religious traditions (think of Thomas Gordon’s coinage ‘priestianity’) might have paved the way for religious indifferentism, or even, paradoxically, for a powerful rhetoric of intolerance and dramatically caricatural representations of religious alterity. In contrast, the indulgent consideration of human nature displayed in Bernard and Picart’s *Cérémonies* (notably translated into English by Voltaire’s accomplished translator John Lockman) appears to have offered, despite a number of contradictions, a more effective argument for adopting a humanist and informed position on all cultural belief systems, encouraging mutual toleration without being disparaging of religious practice as such. Peaceful coexistence was, of course, often undermined or shattered by government repression, ecclesiastical intransigence, and sectarian and

sometimes violent tensions. Yet, as the late Thierry Wanegffelen rightly affirmed, ‘religious history should not only be that of institutions, dogmas and rites but has also to allow failed virtualities, suffocated sensibilities and repressed aspirations of the conscience of believers.’

Daniel Barbu’s afterword reflects on the ways in which the notion of “perspectivism” introduced by Amazonian anthropologist Viveiros de Castro may contribute to the historiography of cultural encounters in the early modern era. The discussion suggests bringing America back into the picture, in particular sixteenth-century discussions of religion and idolatry, and of the cannibal customs of the sixteenth-century Tupinamba established on the Brazilian coast. Cannibalism is here used also as a metaphor for cultural imperialism, although an attempt is made to complicate the West vs the rest narrative by considering how “alien eyes” informed European intellectual history, from Montaigne to Lévi-Strauss.

...

The primary thesis formulated by the khk research program in Bochum was that ‘the major religious traditions form, establish, and develop in mutual dependency.’ The program viewed religious and ethical traditions as the result of continuous processes of ‘entanglement, exchange, adaptation, and demarcation’, and investigated the ‘intercultural compatibility’ of the term ‘religion’. Although a great deal has been written about the notion of “religion,” defining it remains a “slippery enterprise.” As the prominent khk guest fellow Christoph Auffarth warned, ‘religion, as can be gathered from the history of the term, is a concept of European religious history.’ The term pertains to a ‘Christian object-language,’ and is clearly problematic as a comparative term of ‘religious studies metalanguage.’ A widely used basic conceptualization of religion in the social sciences is that it is a ‘system of beliefs and practices oriented toward the sacred or supernatural, through which the life experience of groups of people are given meaning and direction.’ Moreover, religions ‘frequently take on an institutional form.’<sup>22</sup> Equally significantly, social research has singled out at least three basic dimensions of religion in society, known in English-speaking literature as the “big three Bs”: belonging, behaviour, and belief. Besides these three dimensions, the social analysis addresses three different levels of society, the micro, the meso, and the macro, which deal respectively with the individual, with intermediary agents, and with society (or larger social systems in general). While nowadays what is meant when individuals affirm that they belong to a particular religious group or tradition may vary considerably, and for many is merely a categorical form which does not interfere with a person’s identity (“being just a member”), in the early modern (and mostly Western) world religious belonging was typically a form of personal and collective identity, highly relevant to the self-understanding and behaviour of individuals and communities. The well-received modern thesis of “believing without belonging” did have its own precedents though, as Leszek Kolakowski’s *Chrétien sans Église* has shown, with its focus on relatively unknown early modern thinkers from across Europe who embraced Christian ideas while refusing to adhere to organized, institutionally controlled forms of religious life.

In *Forgetting Faith?*, a collective volume published in 2012, co-editors Isabel Karremann, Cornel Zwierlein, and Inga Mai Groote suggested that early modern historiography has seen a kind of ‘religious turn’ since 9/11, with a rediscovery of the continuity of religious division and confessional conflict in the modern world. In their view, the ‘old narrative of secularization’ was called into doubt, with a critical reappraisal of the classic periodization whereby the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were some sort of ‘confessional age’, as opposed to the age of secularization ushered in by the eighteenth-century

Enlightenment and fully achieved in the modern world. Most important though was the emergence and subsequent historiographical evolution of more internal approaches to religious phenomena, which went hand in hand with the decline in socioeconomic history from the 1970s onwards. Since then, Katsumi Fukasawa recently observed:

the leading interest moved from the economy to mentality; from the social to cultural ('cultural turn'); from social structure to individual actors; from macrostoria to microstoria; from sociological determinism to a quest for internal significance, whether individual or collective; and from structuralist to constructivist analysis; in short, from explanation to comprehension, favoring altogether the passage from social reading of the religious to religious reading of the social. Thus the 'religious turn' was prepared by a 'return of the religious' that became manifest ... from the 1990s.

This combination of theme and approach—Fukasawa continues—has prompted new strands of research. First, unhampered by an ecclesiastical or denominational framework, historians are now becoming very interested in interconfessional or interreligious relations, all the more so as religious pluralism is a major feature of the contemporary globalized world. Second, in order to avoid the kind of political or social reductionism that generally results from a mechanically applied external reading, historians are pursuing a 'more nuanced and internal approach' to interfaith relations, viewing religious conflict not just as an ideological expression of political struggle or social antagonism. Third, having observed a persistent gap between the institutional framework and social reality, and how legal or ecclesiastical constraints were disregarded more than was previously thought, historians are uncovering a 'less conflictual and antagonistic' side to interconfessional dealings. When examining everyday social relations from a microhistorical perspective, or reconstructing the individual journey of a given actor or interactions between several different actors, historians also find that although it was not uncommon for people to be 'divided by faith,' they nonetheless coexisted peacefully without mutual fear or concern.

A further key theme when focusing on religious interactions is that of conversion (and reconversion), which was both the chief task of internal and external missionary work but also the main cause of anxiety and suspicion, given the various forms of dissimulation and secrecy rife in the early modern age. Groups from different confessions or religions inevitably mingled in social contexts (or in powerful representations), and this, accompanied by everyday forms of dissimulation, often resulted in a groundswell of tolerance and sometimes very personal and eclectic shifts between faiths and confessions. Johannes Heinrich Horstmann, born in Borgentreich in 1663, was baptized no fewer than twenty-two times during a lifetime of denominational peregrinations between different faiths and religions, even though such moves were frequently motivated by the desire of individuals to escape from unhappy or no longer gratifying conjugal ties.

Studies of early modern ideas and practices of tolerance have concentrated for the most part on theological justifications for persecution, the enduring divisions caused by the Reformation, and the battle of ideas over liberty of conscience, championed by humanists, Protestants, and deists. Others have explored the negative economic effects of intolerance. Historians of emotions, by seeking to chart the background and development of modern psychological thinking, are contributing significantly to a more nuanced understanding of the discernible shift towards greater tolerance in Europe over the period (see, for example, the emotional undertext of Pignoria and Picart's comparatist efforts hinted at by Wyss-Giacosa and Tarantino in their contributions to this volume). They are trying to do so by

examining practical and affective relations between people of differing creeds at a local level, by casting light on the points where patterns of intellectual, social, and cultural history meet, and on the gaps between them.

As Alexandra Walsham has remarked, attitudes such as enmity and amity, prejudice and benevolence, rubbed shoulders in early modern society for a long time, forming a ‘cyclical rather than linear’ relationship. Individuals kept at bay and appeased the guilt they felt about having dealings (in either real or representational space) with people who professed a ‘false’ creed through periodic outbursts of prejudice and violence. This is clearly illustrated by the Gordon Riots of 1780, which led to almost 300 deaths and proved to be one of the worst civil disturbances in British history. The riots were sparked by opposition to the Catholic Relief Act granting Catholics living in England some minor relief from discrimination. There was little in the act to offend the sensibilities of Protestants, who were broadly speaking accustomed to the presence of Catholics and quietly turned a blind eye to some of the more stringent restrictions applying to Catholics. The Gordon Riots were witnessed by Ignatius Sancho (see Vincent Carretta’s essay in this volume), who had been born a slave in 1729 on an Atlantic slave ship, and was brought to Britain when he was very young. Here he worked in the homes of wealthy Londoners, rising from a decorative black domestic to a man of refinement and accomplishment. In 1773 he managed to open a shop in Westminster. Shocked by the violence of the riots, Sancho, a former Catholic turned Anglican who also flirted with Methodism, comments ironically in a letter on the ‘worse than Negro barbarity of the populace.’ And then, significantly, he continues: ‘I am forced to own, that I am for a universal toleration. Let us convert by our example, and conquer by our meekness and brotherly love!’

The real-life experiences of early modern interconfessional and interreligious conviviality suggest that the intellectual labours of the European thinkers who advocated toleration did not occur in a social or cultural vacuum. However, it was not until Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) that the assumed existence of an intrinsic link between being a believer and being a good citizen was seriously called into question. No less importantly, John Locke acknowledged that what a peaceful, fruitful discussion of religious issues required did not just concern the substance of the debate. The manner of disagreement, namely civility, was equally important. True civility was above all about dispositions—the ‘disposition of the mind not to offend others.’ Practically speaking, toleration was less about displaying an ‘outward respect,’ and more about expressing actual ‘respect,’ ‘esteem,’ and even ‘love.’ So, Locke argued, in questions of civility, as in religion, popular instruction was best served not by legislative prescription but by education and the setting of a moral and emotional example.

Admittedly, in early modern Europe, this practical wisdom often grew out of the difficult years of confessional hostility and religious wars. At the same time, it may encourage historians to ask what ordinary believers, who were not necessarily as inflexible in their attitudes as priests and ministers, really felt about ecclesial and doctrinal divisions. This pertains to what has been called the ‘new social history of toleration’. Moreover, Fukasawa notes, the popular practice of coexistence should not be put down to a straightforward “pragmatism” that would consider religious belief as a secondary problem compared with the individual or communal interests of daily life’. Historians must always be wary of slipping into reductionism, which is why the ‘negotiation of the norms’, as Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire suggested, is so important in this particular context. When engaging with the people, church, or government of another faith, everyone—be they high or low, rich or poor, lay or clerical, unlearned or

learned—needs to negotiate in order to adapt to circumstances that may be varyingly problematic to their own religious practice. Beaufort suggests that negotiating the norms is not always simply a matter of bargaining or arriving at a studied compromise. Negotiation entails discussion and dialogue between opposing groups, which may cause rupture and unremitting antagonism, but could equally result in fruitful interaction and mutual understanding. As a consequence, ‘negotiating the norms may be both an “experience of the other” and a quest for one’s own identity reflected in the mirror of the otherness’.

Returning, then, to Baumann and Gingrich’s perceptive conceptual toolkit—the initial inspiration and conceptual frame for our project—we are of the view, together with all the authors of this volume, that difference is more usefully understood ‘not in an ontological but in a subject-centred manner as part of identity.’ <>

## **THE PHILOSOPHERS AND THE BIBLE: THE DEBATE ON SACRED SCRIPTURE IN EARLY MODERN THOUGHT**, edited by Antonella Del Prete, Anna Lisa Schino, and Pina Totaro [Series: Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, Brill, 9789004418639]

The Bible is the crucible within which were forged many of the issues most vital to philosophy during the early modern age. Different conceptions of God, the world, and the human being have been constructed (or deconstructed) in relation to the various approaches and readings of the Holy Scriptures. This book explores several of the ways in which philosophers interpreted and made use of the Bible. It aims to provide a new perspective on the subject beyond the traditional opposition “faith versus science” and to reflect the philosophical ways in which the Sacred Scriptures were approached. Early modern philosophers can thus be seen to have transformed the traditional interpretation of the Bible and emphasized its universal moral message. In doing so, they forged new conceptions about nature, politics, and religion, claiming the freedom of thought and scientific inquiry that were to become the main features of modernity.

### Contributors

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## Part 2 Prophet's Witnessing

important debates and the breeding ground for questions that have always nourished the history of cultural tradition in the Western world. Consider, for example, the metaphysical discussions on the nature of being, or the problems linked to the origin of evil and sin, the essence of good, truth and life, the concepts of eternity, freedom and free will, and the soul-body relationship. Different conceptions of God, the world, and the human being have been shaped on the basis of the history of salvation, constructed (or deconstructed) in relation to the various approaches and readings of the Holy Scriptures. Not to mention the history of languages and their linguistic implications, since some of the great idioms of the European tradition found their written and literary style thanks to translations of the ancient Hebrew, Greek, and Latin texts of the Bible. Such was the case of the German language, which established itself thanks to Martin Luther's translation, or of English, which became definitively established with the so-called King James Bible. These are just a few examples, but they are very significant in terms of the theoretical and practical effects of the long-lasting influence of the scriptural text. Much of European cultural heritage has been elaborated around it, from the formation of the collective imagery (proverbs, idioms, the multiform representations of figures such as the serpent or the devil, for example) to the great cosmological systems. The same process of secularization that began with Renaissance humanism is studded with questions of biblical exegesis, to such an extent that it seems impossible to discuss early modern and contemporary thought while ignoring or downsizing its biblical foundations.

Despite the widespread presence of the text of the Scriptures in Western culture, scholars have partly neglected this aspect in the analysis of philosophers' thought, certainly discouraged by the fact that 17th-century theologians have always taken exegetical work into their own hands, mistrusting if not outright rejecting the readings proposed by the laity. Indeed, with the exception of the pioneering work of Amos Funkenstein, of the volume devoted to the 17th century in the series *Bible de tous les temps*, edited by Jean-Robert Armogathe, and a few other general, monograph studies, not many texts have offered extensive and in-depth reconstructions of the philosophers' relationship with Scriptures. Hence the proposal for a debate on the different readings of the Bible in the early modern age, specifically devoted to the 17th century as a privileged century for philosophical analysis: it marked a milestone after the turmoil caused by the impact of the Reform and the development of knowledge. Furthermore, during this century the mingling of conceptual categories reached its peak, and the debate on the interpretation of the Bible began to affect directly the most compelling scientific issues in the fields of ontology, psychology, ethics, as well as in anatomy, physiology, geology, and above all cosmology, which had traditionally derived from the fusion of biblical cosmology with the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic world picture (see for example the clash between Galileo Galilei and Cardinal Bellarmino).

Historiography has long enriched and modified our knowledge of the vast movement of thought that runs from the Reformation to the Enlightenment, but common belief is still grounded firmly in the idea that the great cultural change that began and developed between the 16th and the 17th centuries primarily concerned astronomy, mathematics, physics, applied sciences, and medicine. That an equally radical mutation also affected the historical and hermeneutical disciplines was a deep conviction initially held by scholars such as Eugenio Garin and Paul Oskar Kristeller, who explored Italian humanism and Renaissance. Later, other scholars systematically traced connections between this tradition and its developments in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. Today, the framework of our knowledge has expanded considerably and, thanks to the essential contribution of authors from different disciplinary areas (historians, exegetes, anthropologists, philologists, and linguists), our approach to the relationship

between the Bible and philosophy has changed considerably. There is a growing awareness that the rejection of bookish erudition, exemplarily expressed in Descartes's *Discours de la méthode*, and strongly supported by Malebranche's pages of *La recherche de la vérité*, coincided with a general movement of break with tradition, and at the same time with a substantial affirmation and recovery of concepts, notions, and convictions that united rather than divided the different fields of knowledge of early modern European culture.

In fact, the impact of biblical exegesis on scientific debate has been the focus of a large range of recent studies. Particular attention has been paid to the disputes over the reconciliation between heliocentrism and the literal interpretation of the Scriptures as well as to its opponents and their doctrines. The feature that unites the pro-Copernicans, beyond the sometimes strong differences in their strategies, is the claim for an autonomy of scientific research from the control of theologians.<sup>7</sup> This claim is based on three assumptions. First, the belief in a twofold revelation developing through the book of Scripture and the book of nature: the two books are endowed with equal dignity, but they refer to different spheres, so that the book of Scripture does not concern and does not hand down those scientific truths that must instead be explored in the book of nature, as Galileo explicitly declared. In the second place, the purpose of the Bible, in fact, is equated to its salvific message and to the moral indications contained therein, without forgetting that the study of nature can also take on an apologetic function. These themes are explored in the sections *Rational Theology and Natural Religion* and *The Moral Message of the Bible*, respectively. Lastly, biblical language is structurally "humanized," i.e. adapted or accommodated (*accommodatio* is the technical term) to man's intellectual capacities (*ad captum vulgi*). The section *The Accommodation Doctrine* is devoted to this topic.

None of the above-mentioned assumptions on the interpretation of the Bible shared by Copernicans was wholly original and they are accepted by both Catholic and Protestant sides on behalf of different auctoritates. However, both orthodoxies deny that they can be used to claim the autonomy of natural philosophy. On the contrary, this is the time in which the different religious confessions devised conceptual tools necessary to elaborate and reinforce their own formulas of faith, define the boundaries between what could be tolerated and what had to be refused, and reorganize their control and propaganda apparatuses. These macro-structural frames, largely transversal to the different historical contexts and geographical borders, explain why scientists and philosophers, although animated by deep Christian faith, may have aroused the suspicion, or even the hostility, of the ecclesiastical hierarchies, which agreed in the refusal of Copernicanism regarded as incompatible with biblical dictates.

In the last decades, research devoted to the early modern age studied the spread of increasingly sophisticated exegetical tools, functional to the textual and hermeneutical criticism of the Scriptures. During the 17th century, the development of the philology of ancient texts applied to biblical studies has led to the accumulation of an increasingly comprehensive knowledge about the languages, the historical context, and the nature of the sacred texts. This increasing attention to historical aspects seems finally to have led to a radical critique of the very foundations on which the authority of the Bible was built. Through the creation of communication tools and cultural networks spread throughout Europe – epistles, journals, and newspapers, for example – individual scholars participated in a *Respublica litteraria* going beyond the constraints of mere confessional ties and geographical borders of the various local and national communities.

The most recent studies in this field largely share the same characteristics, focusing in particular on reconstructing the intellectual physiognomy of an individual author and exploring his writings, or examining a specific thematic framework or cultural heritage. The merit of these contributions is that they have shown how the work of philosophers and exegetes led to the reconsideration of the Bible as a historical and cultural product. Hence the need to delve into the philosophical aspects of these themes and to reconstruct the origins of some particular hermeneutic trajectories in the sections devoted to Enquiring on Moses and Prophet's Witnessing.

The issue of vowel points highlighted by several authors, the attention to internal inconsistencies in the original texts, the incompatibility of the biblical chronology quoted in the various books, the semantic shifts in the translations raise doubts and heuristic problems that are difficult to resolve, undermining the very authority of the Scriptures. On the one hand it is denied, for example, that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament can be corrupted, on the other hand the Protestant principle of sola Scriptura not only encourages the proliferation of a large number of individual interpretations of the sacred text, but also contributes powerfully to the emergence of different confessional creeds and sects, often "sans Église," as well as to a progressive historicization of the Scriptures.

Despite of orthodoxy's repeated attempts to demarcate social and cultural spaces, the debate on "Mosaic physics" is very lively among exegetes and scientists as a clear sign of a dissent connected to a different understanding of power relations in the political and intellectual fields. However, without ignoring the existence of forms of unbelief, irreligiousness, and atheism, it seems that a large number of scientists and philosophers between the 16th and 18th centuries were sincere believers and sometimes programmatically structured their activity as a contribution ad maiorem gloriam Dei. Nonetheless, when cases of self-censorship did not occur, their adherence to a shared religiosity relentlessly clashed with the ecclesiastical institutions of the time. The "secular theology [...] conceived by laymen to laymen," so well described by Funkenstein, took on different meanings in authors such as Galileo and Descartes, for example, who aimed to ensure that natural philosophy had a space free from theological interference. Other philosophers and scientists, conversely, while agreeing with the need for science and philosophy to be free to investigate without the undue intervention of other disciplines, constantly interlaced theological and scriptural elements with their own scientific or philosophical thinking, as in the case of Kepler. Others, such as John Wilkins and Thomas Sprat, believed that it is a specific task of the philosopher to venture into natural theology, giving rise to what would be called physico-theology.

Therefore, the present volume does not aim to question the relationship between science and religion or the progress in biblical exegesis, which, as we have seen, have been widely explored by scholars, but rather to analyse the different uses that philosophers make of the Bible. As much as the fluid disciplinary demarcations of the early modern age allow, philosophy is the main focus of this work. Every chapter addresses fundamental aspects of early modern philosophers' views on the Bible. A complex picture emerges: it appears that, in very different ways and using different approaches, early modern philosophers made a constant effort to explore, deconstruct, and reconfigure the most diverse ontological, epistemological, logical, and theological-political issues through a close comparison and a careful reading of the biblical text. Some topics in particular stand out. In the first place, there was a strong interest in Moses's role as a lawgiver and founder of states, an interest arising from reflections on political issues of urgent relevance in an era characterized by the rise of absolutism and the emergence of the modern state. Secondly, the theme of prophecy stands out: it concerns the possibility of the

communication of the divine word and of a mediation entrusted to a few chosen men. The debate on prophecy is thus configured as the privileged place for probing the relationship between religion and power and for assessing areas of coexistence of temporal and spiritual powers. Besides, the reflection on the Bible, its historical-documentary value, and its moral content, is closely intertwined with the debate on the possibility and significance of a natural, unrevealed, and rational religion, finding a fertile breeding ground during the 17th century. Lastly, the relationship between religion and science becomes a crucial issue: philosophers and scientists rediscovered ancient theological doctrines – often anchored in a traditional language, but used according to new forms and meanings – providing them with new functions and producing a deep change in the relationship between philosophy, faith, and reason. As a result, this volume is divided into five distinct sections: Enquiring on Moses, The Prophet's Witnessing, Rational Theology and Natural Religion, The Moral Message of the Bible, and The Accommodation Doctrine. However, this subdivision does not intend to provide programmatic signposts. It is rather a possible reading path, stemming from the identification of some areas of research that has emerged in recent years as the most interesting and fruitful. Spinoza's role is confirmed as central, while, even if not directly addressed, the debate spreading after the 'Galileo affair' constitutes the background of the book.

The various contributions collected in the five parts of this volume examine, in the first place, the multifaceted use of the figure of Moses, variously presented as legislator, magician, or even impostor (Enquiring on Moses). The reflection on his role as author of the Pentateuch is an opportunity to address questions of a purely theoretical nature (see, respectively, the chapters by Simonetta Bassi and Pina Totaro). Thereafter, the wide domain of prophecy is put in the spotlight (The Prophet's Witnessing): its nature and status are analysed in the chapters concerning Campanella, Hobbes, and Spinoza with the aim of defining its theological-political implications (Guido Giglioni, Anna Lisa Schino, and Diego Donna). The relationship that some representatives of Cambridge Platonism, the English Unitarians, and Pierre Bayle established between rational theology and natural theology is then addressed (Rational Theology and Natural Religion by Sarah Hutton, Luisa Simonutti, Stefano Brogi). Pascal, and again Hobbes and Spinoza, then come under scrutiny (The Moral Message of the Bible) to identify the strength of the moral message of the Bible as its sole area of competence, negating further scientific implications (Simone D'Agostino, Francesco Toto, and Giovanni Licata). Lastly, the new use of the theory of *accommodatio* as a vehicle for a break with tradition is investigated throughout case-studies provided by Kepler, Mersenne, Descartes and his Dutch followers, Newton, and Wolff (The Accommodation Doctrine by Édouard Mehl, Claudio Buccolini, Antonella Del Prete, Matteo Favaretti Camposampiero, and Franco Giudice).

In conclusion, the confrontation of modern philosophers with the Holy Scriptures appears to be marked by radical solutions, which paved the way and contributed to founding the values of tolerance and *libertas philosophandi*, with a highly diversified range of proposals. On the basis of this confrontation, indeed, the concept of freedom of speech finds a philosophical foundation and a theoretical justification in the claim for the separation and emancipation of philosophy from theological authority. The debate on history, on languages, and on the meaning of the sacred texts carried out by the philosophers contributed to a general rethinking of the nature of human beings and of their relationship with God and with the world. The elaboration of new frameworks establishing the relationships between civil and religious authorities and defining theological-political categories were decisive elements in the birth of modern thought. <>

## **THE CAMBRIDGE HANDBOOK OF INTELLIGENCE, 2 VOLUME SET, 2ND EDITION** edited by Robert J. Sternberg [Cambridge Handbooks in Psychology, Cambridge University Press, 9781108485104]

- ➔ Provides a comprehensive historical overview of the field of intelligence and intelligence testing
- ➔ Contains new topics not to be found elsewhere, such as intelligence and video games, collective intelligence, leadership intelligence, and the historical evolution of intelligence
- ➔ Virtually no area of intelligence research is left untouched

Written by the foremost experts in human intelligence. It not only includes traditional topics, such as the nature, measurement, and development of intelligence, but also contemporary research into intelligence and video games, collective intelligence, emotional intelligence, and leadership intelligence. In an area of study that has been fraught with ideological differences, this Handbook provides scientifically balanced and objective chapters covering a wide range of topics. It does not shy away from material that historically has been emotionally charged and sometimes covered in biased ways, such as intellectual disability, race and intelligence, culture and intelligence, and intelligence testing. The overview provided by this two-volume set leaves virtually no area of intelligence research uncovered, making it an ideal resource for undergraduates, graduate students, and professionals looking for a refresher or a summary of the new developments.

### **Review**

'This Handbook is the ultimate collection of chapters needed by everyone who is interested in intelligence. It's exciting to see how the field has developed from the first to the second edition!' — Joachim Funke, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Germany

'The definition, scope, and operation of intelligence is central to the field of psychology and no topic has been more controversial. This Handbook, ably edited by Robert J. Sternberg, is comprehensive, authoritative, up-to-date, and admirably balanced.' —Howard Gardner, John H. and Elisabeth A. Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education

'Robert J. Sternberg has assembled the ideal people to cover the field of intelligence at the highest level of expertise. This Handbook is destined to remain the definitive source for information about the field for a long time.' —Richard E. Nisbett, Theodore M. Newcomb Distinguished University Professor Emeritus, University of Michigan

I am not a researcher or specialist in this field, though I do have a long time interest in the nature of intelligence--- both human intelligence and machine capabilities aiming towards intelligence. I find this book a pleasure and joy to read through. The endorsement comments made by the prominent academics are spot on. This two volume set is beautifully crafted and curated. Every article is well written and well organized. It is easy to skip around to find the chapters or sections within chapters that the reader may be particularly interested in or want to skip over. Creating this updated 2nd edition was obviously an incredibly large labor of love by Professor Sternberg. Everyone interested in the nature of

intelligence-- from academic researchers who specialize in the area to non-specialist who want to understand and follow these developments--- is fortunate that Professor Sternberg worked with all the co-authors to produce this handbook. A gigantic thank you! —Steven Miller, Professor Emeritus of Information Systems, Singapore Management University

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Back in the late 1970s, immediately after I received my PhD, I recognized what I saw as a need for a handbook that would integrate theory, research, and practice in the field of human intelligence. The resulting product was the Handbook of Human Intelligence, which also was my first book with Cambridge University Press. At the time, the book seemed enormous, comprising fifteen chapters and more than a thousand printed pages. That book proved to be something of a milestone for the field. Handbooks expire after some number of years: New theory and research result in their replacement. For example, in 1982, Howard Gardner had not yet proposed his theory of multiple intelligences nor had I proposed my own triarchic theory of intelligence. It was time for a replacement. In 2000, I edited for Cambridge the Handbook of Intelligence, which had twenty-eight chapters. It was printed in a larger format and came in at about 700 pages. Yet this book had an even shorter shelf life because, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, research on human intelligence, which had moved slowly during the twentieth century, was on the fast track. By 2011, the first Cambridge Handbook of Intelligence was published, edited by myself and Scott Barry Kaufman. The book was up to forty-two chapters and more than 900 pages in a large printed format. And now I present what will be, for me, almost certainly the last edition of the handbook I edit: the Cambridge Handbook of Intelligence (2nd ed.), which contains fifty chapters and 1250 pages.

The monotonic increase in the number of chapters over the successive versions of the handbook represents the huge expansion of the field since the publication of the original handbook. For example, a chapter on video games would have meant an entirely different thing in 1982, before the advent of the Internet, and there was little or no research to speak of. Concepts such as emotional intelligence, collective intelligence, mating intelligence, practical intelligence, and leadership intelligence had not yet been proposed. Although social intelligence had been studied, the research had been of psychometric tests not all so different from what was to be found on standard intelligence tests. The chapter on biological foundations in the original handbook had almost no overlap with the current chapter, so much



has the field changed since then. The Flynn effect had only recently been discovered and the field had not yet realized how important the finding of secular increases in intelligence would be. Chapters on intelligence and wisdom or intelligence and expertise could barely have been written because the literatures at the time were so thin.

In only the near-decade since the first Cambridge Handbook of Intelligence came out, the field has again been transformed. And that is the reason why I am editing this last, for me, edition of the handbook, hoping that someone else takes over the next edition. Because, although I may grow old, the field is still a relatively young one, at least in the multiple and diverse forms it takes today. It is hard even to speculate what a handbook of intelligence for 2030 will look like. And that is precisely what makes the field so exciting.

## The Concept of Intelligence: The Metaphors Underlying How Intelligence Is Understood by Robert J. Sternberg

Upon her death bed, Gertrude Stein has been said to have inquired, "What is the answer?"

Getting no answer, she said, "In that case, what is the question?" (Toklas, 1963)

Gertrude Stein's question, "In that case, what is the question?" applies to few fields as well as it does to the field of intelligence (Sternberg, 1985b, 1990). The source of many of the questions asked about intelligence is the model, or metaphor, that drives research on intelligence. Different metaphors of mind give rise to different questions about the nature of intelligence and about what various empirical phenomena relating to it mean (Sternberg, 1990). The field of intelligence has been and continues to be marked by noisy and sometimes vitriolic debates, but often the debates have been more about the best questions to ask rather than about what the answers to particular questions are.

As an example, a persistent debate in the field of intelligence is over the respective roles of nature and nurture in the manifestation of individual differences in intelligence (Mandelman & Grigorenko, 2011; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 1999). But the argument makes sense only if the terms are carefully defined. Where do interactive epigenetic effects fit in? How about gene-environment covariance? What exactly is meant by intelligence? Is the intelligence for which nature and nurture are being studied really the same thing over the life span, or is it a changing entity such that changes in effects may be due in part to changes in the entity of intelligence itself? And perhaps most important, what kind of entity is intelligence anyway — a hypothetical factorial construct, a set of processes going on in the brain, a cultural invention, or what? If it is a factorial construct, then it is perhaps stable across time and space, but if it is a cultural invention, then it certainly is not stable, and so it is not clear how one even could pin down genetic and environmental effects.

Scientists sometimes are unaware or only vaguely aware of the metaphor under which they are operating, even though that metaphor can have a major effect on the way they conceptualize the phenomena they are studying. In this chapter, I consider seven metaphors: geographic, computational, biological, epistemological, sociological, anthropological, and systems. I further consider mixed metaphors, and how they work in the study of intelligence.

### The Geographic Metaphor

The geographic metaphor is based on the notion that a theory of intelligence should provide a metaphorical map of the mind. The use of a map leads to particular questions:

1. What are the underlying sources of individual differences, or psychometric factors, along which people differ, that generate observed individual differences in standardized test scores?
2. How do people differ with respect to their scores on each of these psychometric factors?
3. How does the map of the mind evolve as an individual grows older? For example, do factors grow more differentiated with age, perhaps then becoming less differentiated in old age?
4. How predictive is each of the factors of performances of various kinds, such as school grades or job performance?

If one metaphor has dominated research on intelligence, it almost certainly is the geographic one. Virtually all standardized tests, which are used so widely not only in the United States, but also around the world, are based on the geographic metaphor. Although early editions of the Stanford-Binet and Wechsler tests were largely atheoretical, more recent versions are more closely tied in with geographic theories, such as Carroll's (Roid, 2003; Wechsler, 2008). The most well-known theories of intelligence (e.g., Carroll, 1993; Cattell, 1963; Spearman, 1927; Thurstone, 1938; Vernon, 1950) are based on this metaphor.

Various factorial theories compete to answer the four questions above. The competition today is probably less heated than in the past. Whereas in the past, arguments raged over whether the general factor was predominant (Spearman, 1927) or secondary and even epiphenomenal (Thurstone, 1938), today there is probably pretty widespread agreement over the hierarchical nature of geographically conceived intelligence (Willis, Dumont, & Kaufman, 2011), although the exact nature of the hierarchy is still a matter of dispute (e.g., Carroll, 1993, versus Johnson & Bouchard, 2005).

The competition has always been somewhat dubious because factors can be rotated in an infinite number of different ways, and part of the answer to the question of what geographic representation makes most sense depends on where one places the axes, and on how many orders of factors one decides to extract. There are an infinite number of possible maps that could be correct for any given geographic region, and which map is best turns out to be a question of usefulness rather than of veridicality. (Nowhere is this more clearly shown than in the gerrymandering state legislatures have done to favor one or the other political party, resulting at times in contortionist districts created to favor one political party over the other.) The locations of the points on the map do not change — just how they are labeled (districted). Each map of the mind may be useful, but only for its own particular purposes.

Because geographic theories are structural, they tend more to address questions about structure but less or not at all questions about other issues. If one's goal is to predict school or job performance in general, a single score on a general factor of an intelligence test may be adequate, but if one wishes to do more differentiated prediction, more precise scores, such as of verbal, numerical, and spatial ability, may be more useful (Lubinski, in press). Geographic theories have little or nothing to say about the mapping of factors onto the brain and they do not have a clear way to deal with transition mechanisms in cognitive development (Sternberg, 1984). Geographically based theories tend to be derived on the basis of individual-difference data so that their depiction of intelligence is in terms of sources of individual differences. If intellectual abilities exist that are common in both the nature and level of ability across people, geographic theories tend not to represent them because there are no individual differences from which to derive psychometric factors.

A difficult issue for all of the geographic theorists is how fine a mapping one wishes to create. Carroll's (1993) was very refined, Cattell's (1971) much less so. Just as different kinds of mappings are possible, so are different degrees of differentiation within the regions of those mappings. Once again, then, there is no correct answer. One comes to realize that, within the geographic metaphor, there is room for many theories to be "right," in some sense. They all represent the same ground, but with different borders and different degrees of precision.

### The Computational Metaphor

The computational metaphor sees the mind as a computing device analogous to a computer. "Software" in the mind determines the mental processes of thought, just as software in a computer determines the computational processes of the computer. The metaphor has proven to be enormously productive of both theory and research (see, e.g., Hunt, 2010; Sternberg, 1985a, 1988). Perhaps because the computational metaphor in the study of intelligence was generated largely in response to the geographic one (Hunt, 1980; Sternberg, 1977), its strengths and weaknesses tend to be complementary. For example, the geographic metaphor, because of its relatively static nature, tends to be somewhat weak in addressing questions of process. In contrast, the computational metaphor tends to be well able to address questions of process. But in the computational metaphor, inferences about structure are much more indirect than they are in the geographic metaphor, in which the results of a factor analysis directly provide a structural model. Moreover, whereas data from experiments generated by geographically based theories primarily make use of individual-differences data, data from experiments generated by computationally based theories tend to focus on commonalities among people and processing. Normally, in the computational approach, the main source of variation observed is that variation that occurs across stimulus conditions rather than across subjects. The result is that the computational metaphor tends to be well able to point out commonalities in information processing rather than individual differences. Indeed, many information-processing experiments do not even consider individual differences at all, whereas psychometric studies, in contrast, virtually always do. This problem was recognized by Cronbach (1957), who spoke of the difficulty psychologists had had bridging the gap between experimental and differential psychology. Now, more than sixty years later, the problem exists as it did then.

The computational metaphor seemed, when it first was used, to be an answer to the ever-proliferating numbers of factors being posited by geographic theorists. At the time, the worst proliferator was probably Guilford (1967, 1988), who by the end of his career had increased the total number of proposed factors in his theory from 120 to 150 and then to 180. But in fact, the computational metaphor has the same problem as the geographic one. The computational metaphor provides no final answer, however, because just as factors can be subdivided endlessly, so can processes be subdivided endlessly. For example, one can speak of "encoding" stimuli, but certainly there are many subprocesses involved in figuring out what a stimulus is. Again, there is no one correct level of analysis: It depends on what one wishes to do with the theory. But it is important to realize that arguments over how finely processes should be split will be fruitless, because there is no one right answer. For example, one would wish to pay more attention to the details of how stimuli are perceived in a computer program that is designed to simulate visual perception than one would pay in a program that uses visual perception in the service of, say, inductive reasoning. Thus, even computer programs provide no final answer. When a program "encodes," how much information it needs to encode a stimulus depends on the purpose to which the encoding will be put.

Computational theorists tend to be insensitive to individual differences. As a result, these theorists have not always been quick to realize that often there is no one uniformly correct information-processing model that applies to all individuals, with respect either to performance on a given task or to performance on classes of tasks. Rather, there may well be individual differences in the processes and strategies different people use to solve a given problem or class of problems (e.g., Hickendorff et al., 2010; Sternberg & Weil, 1980).

At one time, there was a hope that individual components of information processing would map into factors (Sternberg, 1977), such that each elementary information-processing component would map into its own factor as a source of individual differences. This view was idealistic and also naive. Informationprocessing components tend to cluster together into factors, rather than standing as separate factors (Sternberg, 1983). Moreover, the components do not always cluster into the factors they were expected to cluster into. Sternberg (1977) found this out early, when a preparation-response component proved to have high loadings on an inductive-reasoning factor — higher than did the components alleged to measure inductive reasoning. So there is no more a set of "correct" components than there is a set of "correct" factors.

Computational theorists have even argued among themselves as to what constitutes a true information-processing theory. Some early theorists, such as Newell and Simon (1972), viewed their computer programs themselves as theories. This made for extreme specificity in a theory, but perhaps to a fault. Would one really want to argue that even changing a line of code in a computer program resulted in a new theory, or even a serious variant of the original theory? And how general were these theories anyway? A computer program might be able to solve a given type of problem or perform a particular kind of task, but usually it would not have much generalization beyond the problem or task. Designating a program as a theory results in at least two criteria for good theories perhaps going by the wayside — parsimony and generalizability.

Other theorists, such as Schank (1972) and Anderson (2015), have viewed computer programs as operationalizations, and imperfect ones at that, of theories. Perhaps the biggest danger with computational theories is that they will fail to distinguish the forest from the trees. Because they tend to deal with information processing at a very basic level, it is easy for computational theorists to become extremely focused on the details of information processing and, at times, to lose sight of their deep motivation for studying a particular task. They may even lose sight of how performance on that task fits into a larger scheme of things. Cognitive psychology can get quite wrapped up in trees and be quite oblivious of the forest in which the trees grow.

### The Biological Metaphor

Biologically based theories generally study intelligence in terms of the functioning of the central nervous system and especially the brain. Because our understanding of the brain is still rather rudimentary, biological theories are largely works in process. But some of them have come quite far (see, e.g., Haier, 2017). Many of the theories tend to be based on one or more of five types of data.

The first kind of data, briefly mentioned earlier, is actually of two subtypes —behavior-genetic and molecular-genetic data (see Plomin et al., 2012). These models typically use geographically derived theories to determine the structure of intelligence. That is, they are not models of structure or process but rather of the origins and development of intelligence. In the past, genetic and environmental factors

were viewed as somehow opposed to each other, and theorists such as Jensen (1998) and Kamin (1974) saw their respective roles as arguing either for the higher (Jensen) or lower (Kamin) heritability of intelligence as defined by IQ. Hans Eysenck and Leon Kamin even wrote a book together that expressed their debating positions of higher or lower heritability (Eysenck & Kamin, 1981). Those arguing for higher heritability, such as Eysenck and Jensen, believed the heritability of IQ to be around 0.80, whereas those at the other extreme, such as Kamin, questioned whether there was any heritability at all. A consensus estimate was around 0.50 (Mandelman & Grigorenko, 2011).

The debate was not one of the more productive ones in the history of psychology. For one thing, the debate falsely assumed that genetics and environment work in opposition to, rather than in coordination with, each other. Today, there is good reason to believe that gene-environment covariation is extremely important, and it is hard cleanly to assign such covariation effects to either genes or the environment since they work in coordination (Flynn, 2016). For another thing, as Herrnstein (1973) pointed out, there is no single true heritability of intelligence or of anything else. Heritability is determined as a ratio of genetic to phenotypic variance, and the level of the ratio will depend on the amount of variation there is in a given gene pool or in a particular set of environments. Where genetic variance is low — in genetic pools that are largely homogeneous — environmentality will have to be relatively high. Where environmental variance is low — in environments where everyone, say, has a poor or a good environment — heritability will have to be relatively high. These conclusions are deductively true — that is, they have to be correct because they are a function of the mathematics of the situation. What is odd, therefore, is that Herrnstein received such a vitriolic reaction to his book and other writings of the time. He was merely stating what mathematically had to be true, and what suggested that an effort to find "true heritability" was a waste of time.

Eric Turkheimer and his colleagues (Turkheimer et al., 2003) showed that the situation is even more complex, in that the heritability of intelligence appears to vary with social class. In particular, lower social class is associated with lower heritability of intelligence, presumably because there is more variability in the environments of individuals from lower socioeconomic status (SES) than is found for individuals of higher SES. The fact that SES affects heritability of intelligence suggests, of course, that there probably are other variables that affect heritability as well. The bottom line is that simply looking for the value of heritability seems to be a fruitless search. Understanding the mechanisms aside from variability that affect heritability, however, seems like an entirely worthwhile pursuit.

A second path to understanding the biology of intelligence is via brain-scanning mechanisms, such as positron emission tomography (PET) scanning and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) analysis. Some of the earliest pioneers of this method, such as Richard Haier and colleagues (1992a, 1992b), used PET scans to measure glucose consumption in the brain while subjects performed complex tasks, such as the game of Tetris. One might have expected that the more able subjects would become deeply involved in the game and show higher levels of glucose consumption; however, the opposite was true. The more able subjects showed lower levels of glucose consumption, presumably because they found the tasks easy and did not have to work very hard on them. For more difficult tasks, the pattern was reversed, presumably because the less able subjects gave up and the more able ones worked hard to solve the problems.

More recent studies have used fMRI to isolate portions of the brain involved in particular tasks. As a result of PET and fMRI analysis, Jung and Haier (2007) proposed a new theory of intelligence, parieto-

frontal integration theory (P-FIT). This theory, described in more detail in Chapter 19, argues that the most important parts of the brain for the development and execution of intelligence are in the frontal and parietal lobes of the brain. Some of the relevant areas are in the left hemisphere, others in both hemispheres. The theory emphasizes the importance of the integration of the different parts of the brain in producing intelligence. This theory, in a sense, is opposite to Howard Gardner's (2011), which emphasizes the modularity of the various aspects of intelligence.

A third type of data is the specific use of patients with various kinds of brain damage, such as HM (now known to be Henry Molaison), who had a bilateral medial temporal lobectomy in the hope of mitigating symptoms of epilepsy. As a result, HM lost most of his ability to acquire new information. Thus, he could remember much of what happened in his past, but he could not form new memories. Many of the early brain-based theories of intelligence relied heavily on knowledge gained from such patients (e.g., Gazzaniga, 1970; Levy, Trevarthen, & Sperry, 1972). These theories represent pioneering early work on brain-based theories of intelligence. The advantage of such theories was that it was possible to study what effects specific lesions had on intellectual functioning. At the same time, the methodologies raised some challenging questions. First, brain-damaged patients are scarcely typical, and it has never been clear how generalizable results from these patients are to other individuals. Second, to the extent that intelligence depends on interconnections among various brain systems, these patients are not the best individuals to study, because their brain interconnections are disrupted. One's conclusion may or may not generalize to normal brains. Third, the N's in studies of brain-damaged patients tend to be extremely small, leading to questions about how generalizable the results can be.

A fourth method has been somewhat superficial but nevertheless popular among some investigators, namely, studying head size or brain size (Pietschnig et al., 2015; Witelson, Beresh, & Kigar, 2006). There seems to be little doubt that there is a correlation between brain size and intelligence, as well as between brain integrity and intelligence. The larger question is what to make of the correlation. For example, is a larger brain a cause of greater intelligence, an effect, or both? In what specific areas does size matter? It appears greater interconnectivity between hemispheres can compensate in some degree for lesser size (Gur et al., 1999). How much do size and interconnectivity actually matter, and to what extent can they trade off? At the very least, the technology has come a long way since people simply were measuring head size, as they did in earlier centuries.

A fifth approach has been to use electrophysiological data. Electrodes are generally attached to a person's skull, and event-related potentials (ERPs) or electroencephalogram (EEG) measurements are taken while subjects are at rest or while they are performing some task. The idea here is usually to look at patterns in the electrophysiological data or to convert the data into one or more scores and then relate the patterns or scores to measures that are believed to assess intelligence, such as the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scales or Raven's Progressive Matrices (Neubauer, Freudenthaler, & Pfurtscheller, 1995). Such studies have revealed interesting aspects of performance, such as the relevance of certain event-related potentials (such as P300 — a positive deflection in an ERP occurring about 300 ms after the presentation of a stimulus) to alertness in task performance.

### The Epistemological Metaphor

The epistemological metaphor is largely attributable to Jean Piaget. That said, Piaget was himself influenced by others, such as James Mark Baldwin. Piaget referred to his own approach to theorizing as

"genetic epistemological," reflecting its joint influence by biology and philosophy. Although Piaget's theory is multifaceted, the theory as it applies to intelligence has two main parts.

One part of Piaget's account of human intelligence is his theory of equilibration, according to which the absorption of new information is achieved by a dynamic equilibrium between two complementary cognitive processes, assimilation and accommodation. The other part of Piaget's theory is his account of periods of development, starting with the sensorimotor period and ending with the formal-operational period. Piaget's theory has been enormously influential in developmental psychology and psychology in general, although today it has been superseded, at least in parts, by more modern cognitive theories (see Goswami, 2013).

Piaget's theory is not only formal itself, but draws heavily on formal logic and other aspects of the philosophy of knowledge in its development. As a result, it sometimes has been viewed as a theory of competence rather than of performance, describing the formal structures that underlie development rather than the way these structures are put into practice.

First, the theory is much more nearly complete in accounting for the development of formal and logical thought than it is in accounting for the development of intuitive and aesthetic thought. But much of intelligence is not understandable in terms of scientific modes of thought. Moreover, current cognitive research questions much of the account of scientific thinking (see Goswami, 2013). That said, the only theories that have been more influential in psychology probably are those of Freud. The goal of psychological theories probably is not to be correct in all details, but rather to have heuristic value in generating further research, and few theories have generated more research than have Piaget's.

Second, there seem to be problems with strictly stagelike theories, whether Piaget's or anyone else's. Several critiques have been written of stage theories (e.g., Brainerd, 1978), but the biggest problem is that intellectual development just does not appear to show the strictly stagelike properties that it is supposed to show according to Piaget's theory. Piaget himself was aware of the problem and introduced the concept of "horizontal decalage" to account for the fact that not all operations within a given period seem to develop at the same time. But naming a problem does not in itself solve or somehow get rid of the problem.

Third, it now appears that children can accomplish many tasks at earlier ages than Piaget thought possible (Galotti, 2016). In some cases, children defined problems differently from the way Piaget and his coworkers defined them, resulting in their performance looking poorer than it might have if they had better understood what the examiner intended to ask. In other cases, the sources of difficulty that Piaget and his coworkers attributed as critical to the problems now appear to be quite correct. The most famous example perhaps is that pointed out by Bryant and Trabasso (1971), where difficulty in transitive inference problems that Piaget attributed to reasoning proved instead to be attributable to memory.

Fourth, formal operations, as Piaget called the last period, which begins at roughly age eleven or twelve, no longer seem to be the end of the line with respect to intellectual development. A variety of research efforts have suggested periods of intellectual development that go beyond formal operations (Arlin, 1975; Case, 1984). At the same time, it has become clear that not everyone even reaches the formal-operations stage.

## The Sociological Metaphor

The sociological metaphor owes as much to Lev Vygotsky (1978) as the epistemological metaphor does to Piaget. Whereas Piaget viewed intelligence as making its way from the inside, outward, Vygotsky saw it as making its way from the outside, inward. As children develop, they internalize the socioemotional processes they observe in the environment. The sociological metaphor, consequently, focuses on how socialization processes affect the development of intelligence and related constructs.

The sociological metaphor is a fairly popular one today in developmental psychology, perhaps partly in reaction to Piaget. However, its being in vogue is certainly due in large part to the importance of enculturation and socialization processes to the young. That said, there exists nothing even resembling a complete theory of intelligence that is based on the sociological metaphor. The closest is the theory of Reuven Feuerstein (1979), the late Israeli psychologist, who believed that human intelligence is fully modifiable. However, his theory is more one of cognitive modifiability than of intelligence per se.

Vygotsky emphasized the notion of a zone of proximal development, according to which learning occurs best with guidance from an experienced teacher at a level just beyond that at which an individual feels comfortable. The idea is that, with intervention, people can learn things they could never learn themselves. Intelligence is measured via dynamic testing (Grigorenko & Sternberg, 1998; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002).

Dynamic testing is unlike conventional static testing, in that people are tested and then inferences are made about their abilities. But dynamic tests differ from static tests in that children are provided with feedback that will help them to improve their performance. Vygotsky (1978) argued that children's m n c , r r2i2ia2ilm 7ar



believe that in order fully to understand intelligence within a culture, one needs to study that culture in its own right and not assume that generalization can be made from one culture to another.

The anthropological metaphor provides a needed counterbalance to the metaphors considered earlier, especially the geographic, computational, and biological, because it views intelligence in terms of the external world, not just the internal world of the individual. So whereas Haier (2017) argued that intelligence is entirely biological, those who believe in the anthropological metaphor might say that cognitive processes have some biological origins, but how they are manifested in the everyday world to display intelligence can vary widely from one culture to another.

A first possible problem with this metaphor is that it can go from the biological extreme to a cultural one. Intelligence probably represents some interaction of biology with culture. It is not clear that either a purely biological or a purely cultural viewpoint is as enlightening as some kind of integration of the two.

A second possible problem is that we do not have good theories of context, at least as it applies to intelligence. Context may well matter for the manifestation of intelligence, but we have nothing with the precision of the factor models in order to say just how these effects come about or even what exactly they are.

A third problem is that if intelligence is really so different from one culture to another, the implication is that any model must be painfully culturally specific. There have been attempts to remedy this apparent difficulty. For example, Sternberg (2004) has argued that the mental processes that underlie intelligence — processes like recognizing the existence of a problem defining the problem, formulating a strategy to solve the problem representing information about the problem, etc. — are universal.

But the ways in which these processes are manifested in the environment, and the ways in which they are best tested, can differ radically from one culture to another. On this view, some things are common, others are not, and part of understanding intelligence is understanding what is specific and what is not.

### The Systems Metaphor

The systems metaphor is perhaps the vaguest of all of the metaphors that have been considered. I group under "systems theories" those theories that seek to understand intelligence in terms of multiple systems of intelligence or even multiple intelligences (Gardner, 2011; Sternberg, 2003). These theories are more complex, in some respects, than theories in the past generally have been, although probably no more complex than P-FIT theory. One goal of these theories is to understand intelligence in a way that transcends a single metaphor and the

among others (see Sternberg & Kaufman, 2011), also considers the general factor of intelligence (g) to

system can be useful for different purposes. So is it with metaphors of mind. There is no one "right" one, although different ones can be more useful for different purposes. If one wants to understand the role of the brain in intelligence, one might turn to the biological metaphor, but if one wants to understand the role of culture, the anthropological metaphor will be more useful. We maximize our learning about human intelligence when we recognize that the metaphor that serves us best is the one that best serves our theoretical and research purposes. Sometimes, combining metaphors — even mixing them — is best of all. <>

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