SPOTLIGHT 101

Wordtrade Reviews: Poetic Epistemologies

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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. <>

TIME IN THE ANCIENT WORLD: MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES by Peter N. Singer [Chronoi, De Gruyter, 9783110751925]

The book presents the author's latest research on ancient perceptions of time; it centres on medical discussions, especially of the doctor-philosopher Galen, while also contextualizing his work within Graeco-Roman evidence and discussions - archaeological, medical, technological, philosophical, literary - more broadly. The focus is on questions of medical or experiential significance: life cycles, disease cycles, daily regimes for mind and body, clinical assessment, including the vital area of diagnosis through the pulse, technologies of time measurement. But the philosophical background is also examined: questions of the nature and definition of time and its relationship to space and motion. Galen offers original contributions in all these areas, at the same time as shedding important light on both contemporary attitudes and previous discussions.

The book thus offers an accessible and vivid overview of key issues in ancient time perception and awareness, while also offering the first in-depth exploration of the insights that the Galenic texts add to this picture.

Five thematic chapters - Time Measurement, Year and Life Cycles, Biography, Medical Cycles - consider a wide range of evidence and of recent scholarship, while highlighting the contribution of medical texts.

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This book explores ancient Graeco-Roman attitudes to time, its perception, measurement and daily management, and does so with a particular focus on medical approaches and medical sources.

I aim to address such questions as: How did people in the Graeco-Roman world divide organize or divide their days? How did they understand the aging process, or the successive phases of their lives? What was the significance of the changes in the seasons to their daily regimes? What was the relevance of these and other `cycles' to the understanding of health and disease? What was the role of measurement, and of various technologies of measurement, in these contexts? How did they conceive of their own lives within a broader time span, in relation to — real or imagined — previous ages?

There has been much recent work on time in the ancient world, which has focussed on a number of different topics, especially: calendars and techniques of time measurement; sociocultural constructions of the lived day, and of different ages or stages of life; attitudes to the past; philosophical speculations, definitions and analyses. But these areas of study have remained to a large extent separate; there is no introductory study offering an overview taking account of them all.

This book aims to fill that gap. At the same time, and while exploring the above questions and offering a synoptic account on the basis of a wide range of sources, it has a particular focus medical writing, and an even more particular one on the work of Galen.

Let me offer a few words by way of explanation of the rationale, first for the focus on medical sources, and secondly for the especial focus on Galen.

Medical writing and medical conceptions constitute a major source of evidence for ancient approaches to and experiences of time, as well as its division and measurement, and the context of this evidence is one of major salience for everyday lives. Medical texts pay closer attention to time than any other literary in chapter 3), his works have a close theoretical and ideological relationship with those of the earlier periods, with certain of the `Hippocratic' works in particular.

For all these reasons, it is difficult to tell anything like a diachronic story of developments in any area related to medical history. I have chosen rather — partly because of this consideration and partly as a function of my own research interests, which have focussed more closely on Galen — to paint a synchronic picture, based mainly in second-century Rome, but at the same time to contextualize this picture with the help of various other texts, some from much earlier periods, but all informing the same intellectual and experiential tradition. In the process, there is inevitably some jumping backwards and forwards, for example between Galen and `Hippocrates', but it is hoped that such leaps are informative and enriching of that central synchronic picture.

The book thus offers at once a synoptic view of the current state of knowledge of Graeco-Roman thought and practice, in such areas as time measurement and management, approaches to aging, and the perception of time in relation to motion, and also the results of my own and others' latest researches in the specific field of ancient medicine, for example in relation to disease diagnosis or to health prescriptions, which substantially enrich our understanding of these questions.

I should mention a few areas that I do not attempt to address, even synoptically. I give no account here of the relationship of festive to everyday time, or of the extent to which the festive calendar conditioned perceptions of or management of time. The role of both political and religious calendars, and the dedicating of days within the calendar to specific purposes (festive, commercial, juridical, etc.), as well as the related development of a division into either seven-day weeks or eight-day *nundinae*, constitutes a hugely important aspect of the ancient experience and management of time, which has received a comparatively high level of attention in recent literature. These areas have been beyond my scope; moreover, as already suggested, the medical discourse in some ways offers a countervailing historiographical perspective.

Nor, while examining a number of other crucial cycles, do I consider conceptions of cycles of years, arising in either a religious or a philosophical context. Such consideration of the measurement of longer periods of time would potentially lead also to analysis of the complex history of the development of the solar calendar and its division into months, and relatedly of the relationship of solar and lunar calendars - again questions not addressed here.

There is much recent work, both within classical studies and within social anthropology, which approaches the question of attitudes to and experience of time from a range of anthropologically-informed theoretical perspectives.' The present study does not aim to engage with such theoretical approaches head-on, let alone to advance a new theoretical framework of its own; it does, however, seek to take account of discussions arising in such work where they seem of particular relevance to the specific topics under investigation.

The book is structured in five chapters, each of which takes one large thematic area and aims to consider it from both a broader textual or social perspective and in relation to a more narrowly medical (or in some cases Galenic) perspective. In the first chapter I consider the `horological scene' of imperial Rome, the importance and the varieties of time measurement and management in daily life, and in particular the division into hours, on the basis of a wide range of sources. This broadly-based account is then followed by a more detailed investigation of the Galenic evidence, both for daily health prescriptions and for the role (and interrelationship) of sundials and water-clocks. In the second chapter, I consider two closely related `cycles', that of the human lifespan and that of seasons, and the ways that these were conceptualized, experienced or negotiated, both in Graeco-Roman societies more generally and in the medical - especially Hippocratic and Galenic - discourse in particular. Thirdly, and with a main focus on Galen, I consider the two related questions of the (self-)perception or construction of a life or personal biography in the ancient intellectual world and of the attitude to, and nascent periodization of, the past. The fourth chapter investigates the importance of both day and time divisions in ancient diagnostic and clinical practice; it focuses on the crucial medical concepts of krisis and kairos, also attempting to place these in a broader intellectual and literary context. Finally, I examine Galen's theoretical-philosophical contribution to the discussion of time, both placing this in the broader Greek philosophical tradition and considering its relevance to important clinical and practical questions, in particular the nature of our assessment of time, speed or motion, and the role of qualitative and quantitative elements in this.

As a function of this particular thematic approach, my focus in the book is neither entirely on `long' nor on `short' time, to use the terminology adopted in recent literature. While most of the present study is related to a variety of `short' time units — from hour divisions down to the microscopic divisions theoretically involved in the measurement of the speed of the pulse — I also explore the measurement and conception of time in two `longer' contexts, that of the ages or phases of life, and that of attitudes to and self-positioning in relation to the past. Moreover, the thematic organization just outlined entails that I do not move neatly either from shorter to longer time units or vice versa, as the various units arise in different ways in relation to the themes successively addressed.

Through its particular focus, the book aims to open a window into some of the most significant questions regarding the ancient awareness, measurement, management, perception and conceptualization of time, and the salience of these to both medical theory and practice and everyday experience. <>

APOCALYPSE AND GOLDEN AGE: THE END OF THE WORLD IN GREEK AND ROMAN THOUGHT by Christopher Star [Johns Hopkins University Press, 9781421441634]

How did the ancient Greeks and Romans envision the end of the world?
What is the long-term future of the human race? Will the world always remain as it is or will it undergo a catastrophic change? What role do the gods, human morality, and the forces of nature play in bringing about the end of the world? In APOCALYPSE AND GOLDEN AGE, Christopher Star reveals the answers that Greek and Roman authors gave to these questions.

The first large-scale investigation of the various scenarios for the end of the world in classical texts, this book demonstrates that key thinkers often viewed their world as shaped by catastrophe. Star focuses on how this theme was explored over the centuries in the works of poets, such as Hesiod, Vergil, Ovid, and Lucan, and by philosophers, including the Presocratics, Plato, Epicurus, Lucretius, Cicero, and Seneca. With possibilities ranging from periodic terrestrial catastrophes to the total dissolution of the world, these scenarios address the ultimate limits that define human life and institutions, and place humanity in the long perspective of cosmic and natural history. These texts also explore various options for the rebirth of society after world catastrophe, such as a return of the Golden Age or the redevelopment of culture and political institutions.

Greek and Roman visions of the end, Star argues, are not calls to renounce this world and prepare for a future kingdom. Rather, they are set within larger investigations that examine and seek to improve personal and political life in the present. Contextualizing classical thought about the apocalypse with biblical studies, Star shows that the seeds of our contemporary anxieties about globalization, politics, and technology were sown during the Roman period. Even the prevalent link between an earthly leader and the beginning of the end times can be traced back to Greek and Roman rulers, the emperor Nero in particular. **APOCALYPSE AND GOLDEN AGE** enriches our understanding of apocalyptic thought.

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Near the midpoint of his Meditations, the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius wrote the following vision of the future: "Very soon, everything in existence will be changed; and it will either be vaporized, if the nature of the universe is one, or it will be scattered" (6.4). For centuries, the reign of Marcus Aurelius has been seen as one of the major turning points in world history. Edward Gibbon famously declared that his principate fell within "the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous." Significantly, the death of Marcus and the accession of his son, Commodus, in 180 CE signaled for Gibbon the end of this golden age and the start of the subject of his monumental tome The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. More recently, the movie Gladiator (2000) cast Marcus Aurelius as the last legitimate Roman emperor and the man who gave Rome back its true self by ensuring that his son did not rule and that power was returned to the senators. In reality, Marcus Aurelius had planned for several years that his son Commodus would be the

next emperor. Commodus had the rare experience among the Roman emperors of knowing that he would eventually succeed his father. In this way, Marcus Aurelius ended the tradition of adoptive emperors that had been in place for nearly a century (98-180 CE), the period that Edward Gibbon saw as the height of human prosperity and felicity. Today, two massive monuments remain in Rome as testament to Marcus Aurelius's achievements as emperor: a column, now in the Piazza Colonna, which depicts events during his wars against the tribes on Rome's northeastern frontier, and an equestrian statue, now on the Capitoline Hill.

With this historical context and modern reception history in mind, the mini-apocalypse, set within the private world of the emperor, becomes all the more surprising and significant. When the emperor looks to the future he does not see a golden age continued by his son or, as the film would have it, by a restoration of the republic. Nor does he envision future generations admiring his monuments. Rather, Marcus envisions two different scenarios for the end of the world; both of which, he declares, will come quickly. To modern readers familiar with elaborate visions of world destruction both contemporary (films and novels) and ancient (the Bible), Marcus's one-sentence account is atypical. He does not refer to the burning or scattering of everything in existence as the end of the world. Rather, he considers both events from a strictly physical perspective. As such, each event is properly referred to as a "change" that transforms our epiphenomenal world back into the primal building blocks of the universe. Marcus does not see either scenario as arising from the actions of humanity. In fact, the death and suffering of humanity is of no concern for him. Rather, for Marcus, both possibilities are built into the nature of the universe. The end of the world is an unavoidable eventuality that is not contingent on human vice and virtue. Aside from this declaration about the rapidity with which the end will come, Marcus's mini-eschatology shares little with the roughly contemporary Jewish and Christian apocalypses to survive from the ancient world. To take only the canonical texts, Daniel, likely formalized in the mid-160s BCE, concludes by stating that the end will come in three and a half years (Dan. 12:5-13).

Revelation, likely composed in the 90s CE, states in the first sentence that this apocalypse was given to John so that God may reveal "to his slaves what must happen quickly" (Rev. 1:1). Perhaps suggesting the speed with which the change will come, Marcus's vision of the end is remarkably brief. It is a single sentence, and not an entire book, like Daniel and Revelation.

Marcus's eschatology is part of a larger text. The Meditations is not solely devoted to describing the end of the world. Marcus's vision of the end of the world, subsumed as it is within a larger, non-apocalyptic text, is typical of Greek and Roman authors. There is not a single extant text by a pagan Greek or Roman writer that is entirely devoted to describing the end of the world. All of the accounts treated in this book are set within a larger narrative context. Like Marcus, Greek and Roman authors typically do not place accounts of the end at the end of their texts, in the way in which Revelation is the final book of the Christian Bible. Marcus's account of how the world may end comes in the middle of his text. It is part of his larger book of exhortations to himself, what Pierre Hadot has called "spiritual exercises" to help the emperor live his philosophy each day. As spiritual exercises, these writings were likely only intended for Marcus himself. Thus, his prediction about the end of the world may be unique among ancient eschatology in that the emperor did not write it for the enlightenment of anyone else. The visions of the end that Marcus gives are not unprecedented, however. They would have been familiar and understandable to anyone who had studied ancient philosophy.

Marcus's two possibilities for the coming change reflect the theories of the Stoics and Epicureans, respectively. The Stoics argued that the universe was made up of one primal universal building block, divine fire. It periodically returns to this element and the world is "vaporized" in the fiery ekpyrosis. Orthodox Stoic theory also stated that the world is then reborn and unfolds in exactly the same way. Marcus curiously leaves out this aspect here, but elsewhere he writes about the world's eternal cycles and the continuity of past and future. The second scenario, that the world will be scattered, is encapsulated by one verb in the original Greek text. This option succinctly puts forth the rival Epicurean view that the universe consists of atoms and void and eventually our world will return to its constituent building blocks. Thus, Marcus's prediction is part of a larger philosophical debate and tradition, rather than a religious text. While the Stoics did believe that the fire that made up the universe was identical with divine providence and could also be called Zeus or Jupiter, the periodic return to fire was typically seen as a natural part of the universe's functioning. The ekpyrosis did not occur as part of God's judgment of a sinful humanity. And if there is a theological element lying behind the Stoic theory, by contrast the gods are entirely absent from the Epicurean vision of the birth, growth, and dissolution of the world. Although Marcus is typically seen as a Stoic philosopher, when it comes to contemplating the end, he is not dogmatic. He is willing to accept the possible validity of two rival theories.

Typically, the Jewish and Christian apocalypses to survive from the ancient world are believed to have been written by anonymous, or pseudonymous, outsiders. They are attributed to long-dead fictional figures like Daniel, or ancient characters from the Bible like Enoch or Baruch. Revelation in as outlier in that the author reveals his actual name and history, although for centuries the author was conflated with John the Evangelist. These texts often vividly depict the downfall of earthly empires and anticipate the arrival of God's eternal kingdom. As scholars have long noted, the ancient apocalypses often set themselves against the empires of Greece and Rome and protest that the wrong king is on the throne. The leaders of these empires are typically the villains of these narratives. Daniel casts the Seleucid ruler, Antiochus IV, as a blaspheming beast. Nero is given a similar role in Revelation. Marcus Aurelius's Meditations turns this trope on its head. Here we see the emperor himself imagining the destruction to come. Instead of separating himself from this destruction as a member of God's elect, Marcus imagines himself as a small part of the catastrophe, which is not part of God's judgment of humanity but part of the "changes" that take place within nature. Like Marcus Aurelius, the majority of the Greek and Roman authors investigated in this book were far from anonymous outsiders. They were members of the elite who likely had little desire to see a sudden, radical change to the status quo. Nevertheless, their social status did not prevent them from developing different end-of-the-world scenarios. Writing about the end of the world is not simply the invention of oppressed outsiders. Nor did the nameless imperial subjects who wrote the ancient apocalypses have the monopoly on this mode of thought. Marcus Aurelius demonstrates that even one at the top of the imperial hierarchy could engage with it. Rather than focusing on the end of Rome, however, Marcus's brief eschatology is part of a larger philosophical project to help him become a better emperor and human being.

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The passage from Marcus Aurelius represents what may be one of the last visions of the end of the world written by a pagan from the classical period of Rome. As Marcus Aurelius's reign represents the end of what Edward Gibbon once saw as the golden age of the empire and the "happiest period in human history," so his Meditations also represents the limits of Greek and Roman eschatology. With a

gesture to cosmic cycles and return, this book will venture back in time to Hesiod and the origins of Greek and Roman thought about the golden race, the repeated destructions experienced by humans, and predictions about the future. Chapter 1 investigates the wide range of Greek thought on the history and future of humanity. Our specific focus is on accounts of destruction. We travel from Hesiod's myth of the metallic races to the long history of philosophical thought on the relationship between humanity and world catastrophe. Only brief testimonia and a few enigmatic fragments preserve the first Greek philosophers' thoughts on this topic. From what we can tell of the opinions of Anaximander, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Democritus, each offered vastly different theories. Only with Plato, in four of his dialogues, do we find detailed accounts of the periodic terrestrial catastrophes that have ravaged the human race in the past and can be expected to do so in the future. Plato's student Aristotle may have subscribed to this theory as well, but the accounts of world catastrophes attributed to him only survive in fragmentary works. After Aristotle, the two main schools of thought to develop during the Hellenistic period, Epicureanism and Stoicism, each posited the world's total destruction. As we have already seen with our investigation of the passage from Marcus Aurelius, each school envisioned different methods of destruction and different aftermaths. Unfortunately, the writings of Epicurus and the early Stoics about the end of the world are not very elaborate or detailed.

Perhaps surprisingly, aside from Hesiod and Plato, Roman authors have passed down to us the most detailed accounts of the end of the world to survive from classical antiquity. These authors build on ideas from their Greek predecessors but develop them with unprecedented detail, immediacy, and connection to contemporary politics. Thus, in chapter 2 we consider the multiple accounts of the end of the world in Lucretius's Epicurean poem De rerum natura (c. 55 BCE). Then the analysis moves to Cicero's development of Plato's theory of periodic world catastrophes in the final book of his De re publica, likely published a few years after Lucretius (c. 51 BCE).

Chapter 3 considers the interplay between the golden age and the end of the world in writers from the Augustan period. Until recently, this period itself was often designated the golden age of Rome. Along with the hope for peace that came with Augustus's consolidation of power and the acknowledgement that a new era had begun, we can also see a fascination with the end of the world. Vergil hints at this possibility already in Eclogue 4, a poem that is more famous for the declaring that the golden age as returned. As we have already seen, Horace writes of the end of the world as an exercise in courage and a celebration of Augustus's future apotheosis. Yet a much earlier poem, Epode 16, provides an account of Rome's future destruction and is seen by some as a pessimistic response to Vergil's eclogue. Ovid's Metamorphoses provides detailed accounts of the primal destructions of humanity, by flood and fire. Yet he repeatedly connects these events from the origin of the world to his times. In addition, Jupiter remembers a prophecy that may promise the eventual destruction of the world.

The final chapters treat the most prolific eschatologists from the Greek and Roman world, Seneca the Younger and his nephew Lucan. Chapter 4 considers Seneca's account of the flood-to-come that closes the third book of his Natural Questions. Chapter 5 investigates poetic accounts of the end of the world, first in Seneca's drama Thyestes and then in Lucan's epic the Civil War on the conflict between Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great that ended the republic in the early 40s CE.

Chapter 6 considers the last detailed accounts of the end of the world in classical literature. Octavio and Hercules Oetaeus, two anonymous plays inspired by and once attributed to Seneca, provide very different accounts of how the world might end. Octavio makes manifest the relationship between Nero

and the end of the world, a relationship that is only hinted at or obliquely referenced in the works of his two victims, Seneca and Lucan. Octavio and Hercules Oetaeus consider the end of the world from opposing angles. Octavia takes place in the world of recent Roman history and portrays the tyrant Nero at the height of his power. Hercules Oetaeus is set in a world pacified by a mythological hero. In addition, these plays, along with Seneca's Thyestes bring together the dual notion of catastrophe. They envision, in unique ways, the final catastrophe that will engulf the world. All three plays give their accounts of the end of the world at a moment of heightened tension and emotion. Thus, in the original poetological sense of the word, these plays' visions of the final world catastrophe are also sensational coups de theátre. Indeed, they are unique in classical literature, No other surviving play from antiquity offers such detailed accounts of the end of the world. These plays demonstrate not only the popularity of Seneca in the years following his death by suicide under Nero's orders but also how eschatology was seen as a key facet of his thought. Indeed, another text attributed to Seneca, a collection of epigrams, opens with an account of the end of the world. In this final stage, eschatology in Latin literature looks back to the lost world of the Julio-Claudians, and of Seneca and Nero.

Aside from the pseudo-Senecan authors, visions of the end of the world largely disappear and can only be found in short passages such as we have already seen in Marcus Aurelius. Romans would still repeatedly declare the return of the golden age and the eternity of their empire, but they would not consider the possibility of the end. The willingness to engage with the various scenarios of future destruction appears to have been largely confined to a few authors during the end of the republic and during the era of the first emperors. This fact suggests a close association between political instability and change and interest in eschatology. This impression could in part be accidental due to the texts that have survived. Passages in Seneca and Epictetus, as well as the passage from Marcus Aurelius (6.4), suggest that different visions of the end of the world were well known and debated among the learned elite for centuries. The unique detail and intensity we see in Latin authors from the late republic and early empire may offer us a rare instance where Latin writers are more `original" than their Greek predecessors. As far as we can tell, for example, Lucretius did not base his detailed accounts of the end of the world on anything he found in the writings of Epicurus. Similarly, the majority of Seneca's varied accounts of the end are not simple illustrations of the Stoic ekpyrosis.

Pagan Roman interest in the end may illustrate on a larger scale the psychology of apocalypse that Adela Collins identifies with the Christian apocalypse of John. According to Collins, apocalyptic writings spring in part from cognitive dissonance, when reality does not line up with expectations. This may seem like an overly broad and generalizing principle, but the simple fact that reality and expectations very rarely line up may account for the longevity of narratives about the end of the world. The disjunction between the real and the ideal, theory and practice, was likely particularly acute for many elite Romans during the final years of the republic and the first decades of the principate.

Like many of us today, Romans like Lucretius, Vergil, Seneca, and others may have felt that their world had reached its breaking point and that they were living in the final age. The purpose of this book, then, is to investigate the varied ways in which Greek and Roman authors conceived of the collapse of the world and its aftermath. In scripting these scenarios, these writers were not simply pessimists in love with writing about mass destruction. Rather, by writing about the end of the world, or the breakdown and renewal of human society, these authors sought to define their places within the grand scheme of

world history as well as demonstrate the interaction between the forces of nature and their own social, cultural, and political institutions.

As we saw with Marcus Aurelius, writing about the end of the world could be deeply connected to the larger practice of philosophy. It combines ethics with physics. In other words, knowing about the nature of the universe and the dramatic "changes" that are built into it can help us to live in the present and be unafraid of the future. The philosophical payoff is not simply to know that world catastrophe could come quickly and so we must "seize the day." Rather, regardless of whether one posits the end of the world in the distant or near future, envisioning and writing about it demarcates the ultimate conditions and the limits to fame, power, and progress that the gods or the nature of the universe have set for us. Marcus's pithy sentence is not representative of many of the accounts of the end, both past and future, that we will treat in this book, however. More typically, writing about the end of the world is a source of literary and narrative creativity and originality. After all, Plato's story of Atlantis, still immensely popular today among adults and children for envisioning lost worlds, grew out of his larger philosophical theories of periodic terrestrial catastrophes. This combination of philosophical and narrative creativity demonstrates the deep importance that many ancient Greek and Roman authors placed in understanding the role that catastrophes play in shaping the human and the ecological world, both past and future. This is a lesson with which the modern world is just beginning to come to grips.

Before moving on to our analysis of Greek and Roman visions, scenarios, and thought experiments about world catastrophes, a brief word about the present one. I write these lines in the relative safety and comfort of Vermont while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to claim lives throughout the world. If these ancient visions teach us anything, it is the value of this sort of thought experiment and the importance of envisioning multiple scenarios for the future. The best the ancients could do was to admit the inevitability of the end of the world as we know it and to encourage us to accept this fact with mental fortitude. Living in a time that has largely moved beyond prophecy, visions, poetry, and philosophy about the future and has replaced them with forecasts, scenarios, and risk management, we should understand not only the importance of thinking through the potential scenarios for catastrophe but also the need to develop robust plans to prevent and mitigate the next ones that we will inevitably face. <>

THE LOST REPUBLIC: CICERO'S DE ORATORE AND DE REPUBLICA by James E.G. Zetzel [Oxford University Press, 9780197626092]

Cicero's dialogues *De oratore* (On the Orator) and *De re publica* (On the Commonwealth), composed between 55 and 51 BCE, examine two topics central to Roman public life: the role of the orator in society and the importance of honorable statesmanship for the preservation of republican government-- which came to an end in Rome with the dictatorship of Julius Caesar only a few years later. The two dialogues are closely related to one another in Cicero's choice of Plato as a literary model, in the selection of Roman public figures of the two generations before Cicero as speakers, and in their intertwined arguments about the values of civic life and political engagement.

THE LOST REPUBLIC provides the first detailed analysis of these two dialogues taken together. It

demonstrates how carefully they complement one another and, in addition to explaining their arguments and their place in the history of rhetoric and political theory respectively, reads them as the first examples of literary dialogue in Latin. Cicero, as James Zetzel demonstrates, uses Platonic models as a means to question the value of Platonic ideals, just as he uses an idealized portrait of Roman aristocrats of earlier generations both to praise and to interrogate the virtues of the Roman past. The two dialogues create a complex and subtle argument about the relationship between the traditional values of Rome and the new approaches to both ethics and rhetoric brought by Greek philosophy. By treating these dialogues as masterpieces of literary imagination shaped to present a compelling vision of the intellectual and moral underpinnings of civil society, Zetzel makes an original and important contribution to our understanding of Cicero and of the world in and about which he wrote.

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Mansuetiores Musae

At the end of 54 BCE, Cicero wrote avert' long letter (Far. 1.9) to P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther. Cicero owed Lentulus a great deal: as consul in 57, Lentulus had helped organize Cicero's restoration from exile, and the eight letters Cicero wrote to him in 56 and 55, while Lentulus was away from Rome governing Cilicia, are filled with expressions of loyalty and gratitude. But after the eighth letter, probably written in February 55, there is a gap in the correspondence until December 54. Then comes the long letter—in reality, a carefully composed essay, an apologia justifying Cicero's way of life and his political position. It was obviously meant for a larger audience than the single man addressed.

The letter to Lentulus is organized as a response to questions about Cicero's political behavior: after being for his entire career a resolute supporter of the senatorial order, how could Cicero suddenly change in 55 and 54 and deliver speeches in support of Caesar and in defense of Vatinius, a man he

loathed and had previously savaged in the trial of Sestius in 56? Cicero reminds Lentulus and other readers of what had happened to him since his consulate and of how badly he felt treated by the optimates at the time of his exile in 58, stressing (with some exaggeration) his long-term support for, and from, Pompey: why should Cicero stick his neck out for fair-weather friends against the man who actually helped him? He also points out the risks such action would entail: he describes his vigorous senatorial speeches of early 5 6 and opposition to the triumvirs, and then the aftermath—the conference at Lucca, which led to Pompey's telling Cicero in no uncertain terms not to oppose Caesar, and reminding Cicero of his obligations to Pompey and thus indirectly to Caesar too; that Cicero's brother ^uintus was in Gaul as Caesar's legate, and thus under Caesar's surveillance, had some effect as well. Cicero, in practical terms, had little choice but to toe the line.

Cicero's account of his recent life and political career in the letter matches fairly closely what he writes elsewhere: the redescription of his unceremonious departure from Rome in 58 as a deliberate choice to protect his fellow citizens from the need to defend him and to avert the violence of Clodius and friends; his sense of betrayal; his disgust with the state of politics and the lack of principle of his so-called friends; his desire for cum dignitate otium (Far. 1.9.11), a phrase found also in Pro Sestio of early 56 (98) and the preface to De oratore (1.1). The correspondence of these years, particularly the more candid correspondence with Atticus, shows repeated expressions of unhappiness with the political world of Rome and Cicero's sense of his own lack of influence. Although immediately after his return from exile in 57 he had been optimistic about resuming what he felt to be his rightful leading position in public life and had spoken boldly about public affairs—and against Caesar—in the first months of 56, by the middle of the year he had been compelled by Pompey and Caesar to utter what he described as a "palinode" (probably the speech De provinciis consularibus, supporting Caesar's continuing command in Gaul). Valeant recta, vera, honesta consilia, he wrote in June of 56 (Att. 4.5), and in describing the comparable humiliation inflicted on Domitius Ahenobarbus (denied the consulate of 55), he wrote in November (Att. 4.8a.2) that the only entity in a worse state than Domitius was the res publica itself, "in which we can't even hope for anything better." A letter he wrote on or about April 39 of 55 BCE vividly expresses Cicero's dilemma: after referring to the death of L. Cornelius Lentulus Niger, who had earlier been a candidate for the consulate of 58, Cicero notes that his grief at Lentulus' death was tempered by the fact that he had died at the right time: "he so loved his country that his being snatched out of its conflagration seems to me a gift of the gods" (4.6.1). In contrast to Lentulus' good fortune in meeting a timely end, Cicero describes his own unhappy condition: "If I say what I ought to about the commonwealth people will think I'm crazy; if what I have to, a slave; if I keep silent, a defeated prisoner: imagine my painful condition" (4.6.2). The gloomy representation here of Cicero's situation and state of mind is not unusual, but this sentence shows very dearly just what Cicero thought his contribution to the res publica had been and ought to be: speech. But in the circumstances of", he felt that nothing that he could say in public about public affairs could possibly satisfy either himself or others. There was no good choice.

During the course of the subsequent months, however, Cicero found other ways to speak, and the letter to Lentulus shows how. Together with the practical and political (and face-saving) arguments for going along with Pompey and Caesar, Cicero, as Sean McConnell has shown, employs in the letter to Lentulus three texts of Plato to justify his position. The Laws is used to argue that the decline in the behavior of the Roman people is intimately related to the decline in the morality of leadership in the years after Cicero's own consulate (Far. 1.9.12). The Seventh and Fifth Letters are cited together

(1.9.18), the first to show that one should treat one's country as a parent, in other words not bring force against it, and the second to show that there was more reason for him to remain in politics, given the good that still existed in Rome, than for Plato in an Athens described as old, weak, and sick.' Cicero concludes his political analysis by saying that if Lentulus were there to advise him, he would still behave the same way: it is better to contribute what he must and can than to abandon the res publica.

The letter to Lentulus offers both practical and philosophical responses to criticisms of Cicero's political position. What may be most important about it, however, is that the letter itself, as McConnell shows, is clearly based on the Platonic letters Cicero cites. It is thus not only a discussion of politics but is itself a literary form of political action, using allusion to Plato in order to structure as well as to clarify his own position. Although Cicero uses Plato in his argument, however, he does not identify with him. Cicero is not Plato; Roman circumstances are not the same as those Plato faced in Athens; and as a result, Cicero's decision to remain active in public life, even in ways that Lentulus and others might criticize, goes directly against the decision Plato described in the Fifth Letter. It is important to recognize too that much as Cicero admires Plato as a writer, it is his life, not his philosophy, that serves as a template to be accepted or modified. As will become clear in subsequent chapters, Cicero's admiration for Plato's style and imagination did not for the most part extend to Plato's philosophy.

The letter to Lentulus does not end when Cicero has finished making his antiPlatonic case for his political choices; instead, he turns to more particular matters of politics or business, constantly assuring Lentulus of his good will and respect. The first and most important of these paragraphs deserves attention here: after talking about his political position in Platonic terms, he responds to Lentulus' apparent request for copies of whatever Cicero had been writing (1.9.23):

> You ask me to send you what I've written since your departure. There are several orations which I'll give to Menocritus; don't worry, there aren't very many. Since I've pretty much divorced myself from oratory and have gone back to the gentler Muses (ad mansuetiores Musas), who have given me great pleasure, as they have since I was very young, I have also written in the manner of Aristotle (at least that was my intention) three books of dialogue De oratore; I imagine they would be useful to your son. They depart from standard kinds of instruction and instead embrace the whole subject of oratory as discussed by the ancients and by Aristotle and Isocrates. I have also written three books in verse De temporibus meis; I would have sent them to you before if I had thought they should be made public. They are, and will be forever, witnesses of your good deeds to me and of my gratitude. But because I was afraid, not of those who might think themselves wounded (even though I did so both rarely and gently), but of those who treated me well but whom it would take forever to name.... But I will have these books sent to you if I can find someone I can entrust them to. That whole part of my way of life is all yours: whatever I can accomplish in writing and study, our sources of pleasure from long ago, I will happily offer to your judgment, a man who has always loved these things.

Cicero passes rapidly over the orations he has written, concentrating instead on two recently composed works: one is the three-book epic on his exile and return, De temporibus suis, which was apparently completed but, as this letter implies, never circulated; the other is the dialogue De oratore. What is notable in this description is the frame within which he puts these two works. Cicero has turned from oratory to something different, ad mansuetiores Musas. At the end, in flattering Lentulus once more, he talks about quantum litteris, quantum studiis ... consequi poterimus. And in both sentences he notes that

these literary activities have always been important to him: *sicut iam a prima adulescentia delectarunt; istam ... partem vitae consuetudinisque nostrae.*

In its context in the letter to Lentulus, this paragraph appears to move away from the preceding political exposition: Cicero starts by turning to what seems to be a different request from Lentulus (*Quod ragas...*) and becomes more personal, describing *De oratore* as suitable for Lentulus' son to read as part of his rhetorical training. In fact, however, Cicero is still reflecting on his own place in the contemporary scene—and the paragraph does not altogether harmonize with his earlier argument that, however unhappily, he should remain involved in public life. Here, he indicates a turn away from politics toward the gentler arts; and just as he emphasized the consistency of his public behavior in the main portion of the letter, so here he emphasizes the consistency of his private, literary activities.

In describing his recent writings to Lentulus, Cicero begins from the most obvious category, his orations, and as a joke remarks that Lentulus need not worry, that there are not many of them. This may be self-disparaging humor, but we do not in fact know of that many speeches given by Cicero between the middle of 56 and his departure for Cilicia in the spring of 52; it appears that very few of those speeches were circulated, and in fact very few of them survive. The contrast with the first part of 56 is striking: before Lucca, he delivered the extant *Pro Sestio* (together with *In Vatinium*) and *Pro Caelio*, in addition to participating in at least two other trials and taking an active part in the senate; in the second part of the year, however, after the uncomfortable *De provinciis consularibus*, the only significant speech was his defense of Pompey's friend Cornelius Balbus. Only one major speech from 55 is known, *In Pisonem*, delivered in September; in 54 Cicero was more active in the courts (perhaps ten forensic speeches, including the extant *Pro Scauro*, *Pro Plancio*, and *Pro Rabirio Postumo*), but not happily so, being forced to defend Vatinius and Gabinius. And after that, only one speech (*De aere alieno Milonis*) is known from 53, only one important one (*Pro Milone*; there are four other cases) from ^, and one from the early months of 51. Cicero's surviving correspondence is unfortunately also very sparse: thirty-one letters written in 54 survive, but only eight from 55, seventeen from 53, and two from 52 (contrast 51 letters from Cicero in both 51 and 50, and more than 90 in 49). We are thus lacking our major evidence for his activities; even so, nothing we know suggests that he spoke frequently in major cases in the courts or in the senate on matters of major political importance.

Even if he spoke less in public, however, Cicero did not keep silent. The two other works mentioned in the letter to Lentulus at the end of 54, *De oratore* and the epic *De temporibus suis*, reflect large-scale literary activity beginning in 55 and possibly even earlier. The same letter to Atticus of April 55 in which Cicero expressed his sense that there was no possibility of public speech that was both ethical and effective offers the earliest clue to a new direction in his writing. At the end of the letter, he first discusses a suggestion from Atticus and then refers to one of his own recent compositions (*Att.* 4.6.3-4):

As to your advice to write something concerning Hortensius, I've found something else to do. I haven't forgotten your instructions, but once I began I shrank from it: I don't want somehow to seem to have been stupid in [not] putting up with my so-called friend's rudeness and then being equally stupid in making his insult public if I write something. At the same time, I don't want my restraint to be less apparent in my writing than it was in the event; that would make my response seem frivolous. But we'll see. You should write something to me as often as you can. You should get from Lucceius the letter I

wrote asking him to write about my history; it's very clever. You should urge him to hurry and thank him for having written back to me that he would do it.

The reference in the second part of this note is to Cicero's letter to Lucceius (Far. 5.12, probably written shortly before the letter to Atticus quoted here), a well-known and very clever attempt to get the historian to write a monograph on Cicero's dramatic career, from his defeat of Catiline through his exile to his (in his own mind) triumphant return in 57; the request failed, despite Lucceius' promise to write what Cicero wanted. This was, in fact, the second coming of Cicero's desire for commemoration by himself and others: in the years immediately after his consulate, he had written several versions of autobiography, including the epic poem De consulate suo, and had attempted without success to have his victory over Catiline immortalized in Greek poetry by Archias, whose claim to Roman citizenship he defended in 62 and in Greek prose by the historian and philosopher Posidonius. In the mid-50s he renewed the attempt and expanded the scope of the desired narrative of his vicissitudes, both through his request to Lucceius and through the epic De temporibus suis (a sequel to De consulate suo) that he mentioned to Lentulus. In both periods, Cicero was unsuccessful in his requests to others, but his desire to have himself commemorated was very real.

The reference to Hortensiana that precedes Cicero's mention of the letter to Lucceius in Att. 4.6 is less transparent. Atticus seems to have urged Cicero to write something about (or to) Q. Hortensius Hortalus, with whom Cicero was then for some reason not on good terms. In the letter, Cicero says that he made several attempts to do so but then, he says, in alia incidi. We do not know for certain what the alia were, but a few days later (Att. 4.10.1) Cicero tells Atticus that he is working in the library of Faustus Sulla, and the linked reference ^^ Hortensius may suggest that he was thinking of De oratore, in which Hortensius is praised in the very last paragraph. By the middle of November 55, at any rate, Cicero included a laconic statement near the end of a letter to Atticus (Att. 4.13.1): "I've worked hard on the books about oratory, and they were in my hands fora long time. You can copy them." A year later, when Cicero wrote his long letter to Lentulus, not only was De oratore in circulation, but Cicero had already begun another work, the dialogue that was to become De re publica; his correspondence shows that he had made considerable progress on it by the summer of 54.

The letter to Lentulus itself, then, can be seen not just in the context of Cicero's political anxieties and self-justifications in the period after Lucca: it is also part. of Cicero's literary self-transformation as a writer. As has been emphasized above, the letter is a very artful composition: it cites not only Plato but Terence, and it assumes that its readers will understand the relevance of the works cited to Cicero's own argument. And indeed it alludes not just to other authors, but to Cicero's own current projects— not merely through the explicit mention of De temporibus suis and De oratore, but also more obliquely: the reference to cum dignitate otium might refer to Pro Sestio, but it is far more likely to be an allusion to the opening sentences of De oratore; and when Cicero speaks of his return to the literary aspirations of his youth, guae me mazime sicut jam a prima adulescentia delectarunt, he echoes a phrase of the same preface (1.2), eas artis guibus a pueris dediti fuimus. The letter to Lentulus is thus itself an effective example of Cicero's return to the mansuetiores Musae.

Several elements of the literary construction of the letter are relevant to the dialogues that Cicero was writing in just the same years. One is clearly the use of Plato as a model. Another is the letter's self-conscious literariness: Cicero not only draws on earlier literature, he also draws the reader's attention to it and expects the reader's active engagement with his use of quotations. A third is a much broader

feature, implicit in the letter but quite emphatic in the dialogues: the links and contrasts between Greek and Roman life, between Plato and himself, between the philosophic life and the active life of a politician. These three points entail a fourth: a preoccupation with the role of leisure and letters in the intellectual formation and public behavior of a Roman senator. The letter is both self-contradictory and self-reflexive: while the bulk of it stresses Cicero's engagement and preoccupation with the public world, the paragraph about the mansuetiores Musae suggests that he is much less engaged with politics than with writing. It is also clear that it is those Musae themselves who allow him to express clearly (in the letter itself) his views about the public world. Precisely the same tension exists in the preface to De oratore: while the turbulence of the public world has denied Cicero the opportunity for reflection, writing, and otium cum dignitate, he is still able to write about the public world in which he is simultaneously a participant and an observer.

What Cicero says about De oratore in the letter to Lentulus is disingenuous: he describes it as a new and improved version of rhetorical education based on Aristotle and Isocrates, but says not a word about its elaborately constructed historical setting and his emulation of Plato in constructing it, nor does he mention his complex account in the dialogue of the relationship between philosophy, rhetoric, and oratory in both Greece and Rome. But in fact part of the elaborate politeness of this letter—and of Cicero's letters in general—involves self-deprecation of a kind that his readers would recognize as not altogether sincere. He disparages his speeches; he says that he will not circulate Be temporibus suis; and he makes Be oratore appear to be a work of rhetorical instruction designed for students.

De oratore does have quite a lot to say about rhetoric, a subject that was central to Roman education; to a certain extent the dialogue is also about its importance in Roman education. But Cicero's next project was definitely outside the standard syllabus. Be re publica was probably begun early in 54, but it was not circulated, and therefore presumably not completed to Cicero's satisfaction, until just before he left Rome to govern Cilicia in May of 51—more than three years later, far more time than Cicero devoted to anything else he ever wrote. A third dialogue is frequently grouped with these two: the amount of time that elapsed between the first mention of Be re publica and its circulation has made it seem likely to many scholars that Cicero was at the same time also working on De legibus as a companion to De re publica. While that is certainly possible, there is no positive evidence for it, as well as fairly strong evidence that if De legibus was ever completed, it was certainly not made public before the summer of 44. De legibus is often used to supplement the fragmentary Be re publica, particularly for the sections in the two works concerning natural law, but there is no indication that they were conceived as a pair. Be legibus is clearly the latest of the three Platonic dialogues: there are links back from it to each of the others, but nothing in De oratore or De re publica looks ahead to Be legibus.

Within Be legibus, Cicero sets up a parallel between his Republic and Laws and the corresponding pair of Platonic dialogues: the Laws in each case provides a legal code for the society described in the Republic and while each Republic is set in the past, the dialogues about law are in the present, with the author as the principal character in his own dialogue. In Plato's case, the Laws was in fact written long after the Republic, but we cannot assume the same for Cicero's dialogues; whenever De legibus was written, it was designed to look back to De re publica as a written text which is cited by the participants in the dialogue in the same way that Cicero's later De divinatione looks back to De natura deorum as a written text that had been read by the participants in the later dialogue. The result is that while it is important to read De legibus against De re publica, the reverse is not true. Cicero certainly may have

begun to think about De legibus or even to write parts of it in the late 50S along with De re publica, but we have no way to know whether he actually did so, or that he was satisfied with what he may have written; nor do we know for certain whether or not he ever returned to the text after the civil war.

No matter what one thinks of De legibus, and no matter how useful comparison of De legibus and De re publica might be, the relationship between those two dialogues is fundamentally different from the relationship between De oratore and De re publica. These two dialogues, as will be argued below, are parallel as well as sequential works, and they are also programmatic statements: both individually and as a pair, they are self-conscious representations and examinations of the intellectual and philosophical underpinnings of Roman public life. Each one not only describes and defines the values inherent in an aspect of Roman civic behavior, but also, through the use of the dialogue form and the choice of setting, illustrates the performance of those values. And while each of them starts from a Platonic model and premise, Cicero's intention in De oratore in particular is to demonstrate the independence of Roman practice from Greek theory and to trace the history of Roman thought both internally—exemplified by the development of Roman law—and through engagement with Greece. In so doing he offers a vision of the history of Greek thought through a Roman lens: he defines those areas of Roman intellectual life that owe something to the Greeks and those which are indigenous. De re publica is similar in its understanding of the conduct of civic and political life, although it is much harder at present to follow Cicero's argument: the text is very fragmentary, and only about one third of it survives. In that respect, the parallels between De oratore and De re publica are of great value for reconstructing the argument of the latter.

These are broad claims and deliberately so; I hope that the following chapters will clarify and justify them. Much of what has been written about these dialogues, and about De re publica in particular, seeks to find a narrow and immediate purpose for them, in some cases self-justification and in others advocacy of a particular political position. But while it is clear that Cicero's choice to write works of this kind was conditioned by his immediate situation—as he says in the letter to Lentulus—it is equally clear that his intentions in writing them go far beyond momentary concerns: these texts are, and were meant to be, not works of ephemeral relevance.

In the same spirit, much has been written about De oratore and De re publica on the assumption that Cicero was attempting the narrow goal of making accessible and useful in Rome ideas about rhetoric and government that he took wholesale from the Greeks; but the fact that Cicero knew Greek philosophical and technical literature very well does not mean that he meant to reproduce it: much that he says has precedents in Greek thought, but very little of it is simply derivative. In general, as will be argued below, Cicero writes as a Roman senator, not a Greek professor, and he has no intention of constructing an argument about either rhetorical or political theory that would satisfy a Hellenistic philosopher or a modern academic. De oratore and De re publica are large and complex works of imagination that use as their starting point questions about rhetoric, philosophy, and government that had been addressed by Greek scholars, but Cicero enlarges them well beyond the narrow confines of technical writing to offer brilliant portraits of the place of such intellectual matters in the lives and conversations of the Roman elite.

De oratore and De re publica, in short, need to be read and understood in much the same way as other contemporary literary works; they cannot be reduced to a single argument or a simple summary and cannot be approached from one single perspective. Their very literariness is central to their

interpretation: Cicero deliberately shaped these dialogues not only as explorations of the values of Roman public life, but as compelling fictions in which the organization, characterization, and style all contribute to and reflect the argument itself. Both dialogues have multiple voices speaking from different perspectives, and the differences among these voices are not always resolved—except that they start from the shared assumption (which many modern critics have not shared) that textbook learning and Greek intellectualism are of limited value in late republican Rome.

My interest, then, is in interpreting these dialogues in their own time, as masterpieces of Cicero's literary art, an approach that entails certain limits. On the one hand, these dialogues have sometimes been used as vehicles for the understanding or improvement of modern public life. That is often interesting but rarely fruitful, and I cite scholarship of that kind here only when I think it offers something of value for understanding Cicero himself; my intention is to try to understand him in his own context, not in terms of the value his works may still have in a very different world. Here, I am starting from the assumption that their primary importance is as works of imaginative literature. On the other hand, just as I do not think it particularly useful to read Cicero in a rearview mirror, so too I believe that while questions about sources (which have historically dominated discussion of Cicero's theoretical writings) are important for scholars interested in recovering those sources, they are largely unimportant for the interpretation of Cicero himself. It does not matter anymore in assessing what Cicero has written if what he says about Plato or Aristotle is based on a lost treatise of Philo of Larisa on rhetoric or on a lost Peripatetic work on constitutional theory than does a modern scholar's use of his or her predecessors: even if—and I do not believe he did so more than very rarely—Cicero is in fact translating from a lost Greek source (the assumption of much Quellenforschung), he made a conscious, informed, and deliberate choice of what to excerpt, and any such borrowing is therefore part of his own philosophy as well as that of any putative source. Cicero's relationship to his Greek sources and models (and he certainly had them) is not one of dependence but one of intertextuality: he feels free to adapt, distort, echo, or combine the books that he read, and in that fashion he offers interpretations of those books that contribute to his own argument. Cicero was a writer of astonishing brilliance and originality and deserves to be read with the attention more often given to poetry: he knew what he wanted to say and he knew how to say it, and I assume throughout that in every aspect of these texts he meant what he wrote.

The two works discussed here are closely related, but they pose very different problems of interpretation. The first part of this book deals with De orntore on its own, both because it is the earlier work and because it is complete, beginning with a discussion of the form of Ciceronian dialogue and Cicero's choice of setting and characters, then examining the major elements of the argument: Cicero's theory of rhetoric; the relationship between oratory and philosophy; and the complex relationships between Greek theory and Roman practice and between law and philosophy. The second part focuses on De re publica, and because of its fragmentary condition I have paid much more attention to reconstructing what Cicero in fact said; in this, the relationship between De oratore and De re publica is a useful guide to the interpretation of the Tatter's structure and argument. My goal is to locate these works in three different contexts, all of which were of some importance in the years before the civil war in Rome, and all of which I believe Cicero had in mind when writing: the place of Greek philosophy in Roman life; the literary developments of the late Republic; and the loss of that Republic itself. <>

DANTE'S NEW LIFE OF THE BOOK: A PHILOLOGY OF WORLD LITERATURE by Martin Eisner [Oxford University Press, 9780198869634]

This study uses the material transmission history of Dante's innovative first book, the Vita nuova (New Life), to intervene in recent debates about literary history, reconceiving the relationship between the work and its reception, and investigating how different material manifestations and transformations in manuscripts, printed books, translations, and adaptations participate in the work. Just as Dante frames his collection of thirty-one poems surrounded by prose narrative and commentary as an attempt to understand his own experiences through the experimental form of the book, so later scribes, editors, and translators use different material forms to embody their own interpretations of it. Traveling from Boccaccio's Florence to contemporary Hollywood with stops in Emerson's Cambridge, Rossetti's London, Nerval's Paris, Mandelstam's Russia, De Campos's Brazil, and Pamuk's Istanbul, this study builds on extensive archival research to show how Dante's strange poetic forms continue to challenge readers. In contrast to a conventional reception history's chronological march, each chapter analyzes how one of these distinctive features has been treated over time, offering new perspectives on topics such as Dante's love of Beatrice, his relationship with Guido Cavalcanti, and his attraction to another woman, while highlighting Dante's concern with the future, as he experiments with new ways to keep Beatrice alive for later readers. Deploying numerous illustrations to show the entanglement of the work's poetic form and its material survival, Dante's New Life of the Book offers a fresh reading of Dante's innovations, demonstrating the value of this philological analysis of the work's survival in the world.

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A Philology of World Literature

Ican still remember the multiple copies of Dante's Vita nuova that I discovered on the library shelf. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's thick anthology of Dante and His Circle placed it in the company of other medieval Italian poems, Charles Eliot Norton offered his own English version followed by several

explanatory essays, Kenneth McKenzie gave the text in Italian with extensive English annotations, and Thomas Mosher printed Rossetti's translation without any 'exegetical array' on Van Gelder paper. How could a single work have generated such diverse physical forms, each of which both was and was not Dante's Vita nuova? While one could pose this question of any work that exists in more than one copy, Dante dramatizes this problem in the work's first paragraph. He writes:

In quella parte del libro de la mia memoria, dinanzi a la quale poco si potrebbe leggere, si trova una rubrica la quale dice: Incipit vita nova. Sotto la quale rubrica io trovo scritte le parole le quali è mio intendimento d'asemplare in questo libello; e se non tutte, almeno la loro sentenzia. (VN I)

> In that part of the book of my memory before which little can be read, one finds a rubric which says: Incipit vita nova [Here begins The New Life]. Under this rubric I find written the words that I intend to copy into this little book, and if not all of them, at least their meaning.

Dante represents himself as both a reader guided by the material layout of a pre-existing book ('libro') and a scribe who copies selectively to make this little book ('questo libello') that his readers hold in their hands. While critics have identified potential biblical, patristic, and rhetorical sources for Dante's book of memory, they have paid less attention to the implications of Dante's emphasis on the activity of transmission. Calling attention to the material features of the idealized book of memory, Dante encourages his readers to scrutinize the visual and graphic elements of their material copies. Underlining his own selective transcription, he shows his readers how they can participate in remaking the text.

Just as Dante uses the scene of transcription to dramatize his ongoing efforts to understand his own experiences—to find 'sentenzia' (meaning) in what he reads—later readers, guided by the dimensions, rubrics, paragraphs, and paratexts of their own copies, transformed Dante's enigmatic work into new languages and material forms. In its journey to a New England library more than half a millennium later, Dante's mixture of prose and poetry to tell the story of his love for Beatrice, her death, and his attempts to keep her memory alive was transformed in numerous ways. Editors not only placed it in the company of other poems, added notes, appended essays, and printed it on special surfaces; they also rearranged its elements, reduced its components, modified the number of chapters, orthography, layout, and even the title. Whereas works such as Gilgamesh and Beowulf were preserved in unique copies, the Vita nuova has survived through history, undergoing transformations from the digits of scribes to the digital, while crossing historical, cultural, linguistic, and media boundaries. The four copies I found constituted a handful of the many copies that anyone can now access thanks to 'the migration of our traditional cultural inheritance to a system of digital storage, access, and reuse'.

This book proposes a philology of world literature that investigates the significance of the work's material survival in the world. It explores how the Vita nuova was transformed into different languages, formats, and dimensions, across postcards, paintings, music, and film, as it journeyed through Boccaccio's Florence, Emerson's Cambridge, Rossetti's London, Nerval's Paris, Mandelstam's Russia, De Campos's Brazil, Pamuk's Istanbul, and contemporary Hollywood. I examine this expansive tradition to discover those moments that have most confused and perplexed its readers, calling for editorial intervention or creative response. Read from the perspective of a philology of world literature, the tradition shows the work's key moments or fields of tension to support a new interpretation of the work.

This approach requires reimagining the relationship between the work and its material manifestations. Confronted with the archive of any work's transmission history, scholars have usually tried either to

reconstruct the absent ideal 'libro' or to scrutinize the significance of the single copy ('questo libello'). When Michele Barbi surveyed the tradition of the Vita nuova at the beginning of the twentieth century, in the founding edition of what he called the New Philology, he examined the whole tradition to identify those textually significant witnesses whose variants he could use to reconstruct the textual archetype. He charted the relationships between these copies in a genealogical tree ('albero genealogico'). While textual critics, such as Barbi, attended to what was called the 'substances' of the words themselves, book historians and material philologists emphasized the significance of individual witnesses' 'bibliographic codes', 'paratexts', and 'visual poetics', which textual critics tended to consider 'accidents'. For these critics, what was important was the individual leaf ('questo libello') not the 'libro' at the tree's root.

The philology of world literature brings together both approaches to examine the dynamic relationship between the idealized 'libro' and its material manifestations that Dante describes. In keeping with medieval etymologies of 'book' (liber), which derives from the 'inner membrane of bark, which clings to the wood', this study analyzes the whole tree, not just the root or individual leaf.9 It expands on the textually significant witnesses mapped by Barbi to include other copies, translations, and adaptations, like those I had found in the library. Investigating this vast tradition, this approach aims to avoid the Scylla of a Platonism that would place all value and being in the abstract work (Dante's 'libro de la mia memoria') and the Charybdis of an Aristotelianism that would identify the work with a single instance (Dante's 'questo libello'). Instead of a contrast between text and work (Barthes) or work and text (Tanselle) or transcendence and immanence (Genette), this approach understands each manifestation as participating in the Vita nuova. This idea of participation conceives of the work as existing in all of its copies, adaptations, and translations, without identifying it with a single one. Like Dante's illustrious vernacular, the work is both everywhere and nowhere in particular: a panther whose 'scent is everywhere but nowhere to be seen' (DVE 1.16.1); 'belongs to everyone but seems to belong to none' (1.16.6); 'common yet owned by none' (1.18.2); 'one but its components are scattered' (1.18.5). From this perspective, the 'whole book' refers not just to the single material object but also to the network of multiple objects that contributes to the work's survival through time. Instead of aiming to reconstruct the text or a single moment of its cultural reception, the philology of world literature proposes a mode of reading through this expanded tradition to find the work's distinctive formal features.

To think of a work in these terms requires moving beyond naturalized images such as Barbi's tree, Paul Maas's river, and Giorgio Pasquali's oil stain. Human agents generate the work's continuing life, as Dante's first paragraph makes clear, mediating between the book as an idea and as a material object. Gerico visualizes this idea in his illustration of Dante's paragraph, Incipit vita nova. Instead of the solitary archetype copy falling away through textual corruption, Gerico shows the scribal dancer engaging the larger network of the work's diffusion in the world. She reassembles the work's diverse elements that radiate out in multiple directions to gather them into a new physical form. The dancer-scribe is not entirely free, however. She is constrained by the lines of the tradition that surround her and the dimensions of the book in which she writes. While each of these material copies participates in the work, the lines that connect these individual copies show the work's resonance. It is the relationship between these multifarious copies that this book scrutinizes.

While scholars of world literature have drawn on models from evolutionary anthropology, geology, and sociology to explore how some works survive the 'slaughterhouse of literature' across 'deep time' to

inhabit their own autonomous 'literary world space', they rarely consider the material forms that constitute this remarkable survival. I argue that an attention to a work's material survival in the world over time produces a new literary history that is not simply a sequence of authors and works; instead it offers a literary history that is both more historical (because it examines the work's survival in the world) and more literary (because it attends to questions of literary form).

When Erich Auerbach considered the problem of literary historical method in his 1952 essay 'The Philology of World Literature', he worried about how one could pursue what he calls 'a scholarly and synthesizing philology of Weltliteratur', without it falling into mere 'encyclopedic collecting'. He offers two positive examples and a third, speculative one that involves Dante's reception. Auerbach's first example is E. R. Curtius's European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages where Curtius describes his attempt to find a new way to analyze the tradition. 'A narrative and enumerative history', Curtius writes, 'never yields anything but a cataloguelike knowledge of facts. The material itself it leaves in whatever form it found it. But historical investigation has to unravel it and penetrate it. It has to develop analytical methods, that is, methods which will "decompose" the material (after the fashion of chemistry with its reagents) and make its structures visible.' For Curtius these structures were the commonplaces or topoi of the rhetorical tradition, which could be compared to the epiphenomena analyzed in other fields during the same period, such as Aby Warburg's Pathosformeln or A. O. Lovejoy's 'ideas'. Auerbach's second example is his own modified version of stylistics which he describes in his chapter on Virginia Woolf in Mimesis, where he associates her technique 'with that of certain modern philologists who hold that the interpretation of a few passages from Hamlet, Phèdre, or Faust can be made to yield more, and more decisive, information about Shakespeare, Racine, or Goethe and their times than would a systematic and chronological treatment of their lives and works'. Auerbach's attention to the relationship between the work and its world inspired many later scholars. Edward Said's investigations of the relations of culture and imperialism, Frederic Jameson's dissections of how poetic forms encode political realities, and Stephen Greenblatt's anecdotal analyses of how a work reflects the social energies of its times have all acknowledged their debts to Auerbach's model. Auerbach's third example involves neither epiphenomenal structures nor an author's relationship to his own world; instead, it concerns the significance of Dante's later reception. He writes:

> Existing works on Dante's reputation in various countries are certainly indispensable: a still more interesting work would emerge (and I am indebted to Erwin Panofsky for this suggestion) were one to trace the interpretation of individual portions of the Commedia from its earliest commentators to the sixteenth century, and then again since Romanticism. That would be an accurate type of spiritual history [Geistesgeschichte].

Auerbach argues that the interpretations of a single Dantean passage over time would show the spirit of the different ages that received it. This approach follows the principle that Hans Robert Jauss identifies as the earliest expression of what he calls 'the reception concept', Aquinas' claim that 'Quidquid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur' (whatever is received is received according to the receiver). While each age may produce its own Dante, emphasizing different episodes and critical problems, what I found in my examination of the Vita nuova's eighty manuscripts and many more editions, translations, and adaptations corresponded to Contini's reformulation of Aquinas' claim, namely that '"quidquid recipitur" imposes somewhat of its form upon the "recipiens"'. In other words, to rewrite another (and earlier) expression of the reception concept, it is not only that 'habent sua fata libelli pro captu lectoris'

(books have their fates according to its reader's understanding); the libellus (book) also shapes how its readers receive it.

Dante's own textual strategies of compilation, commentary, textual analysis, and material arrangement, for example, informed the four volumes of Dante's Vita nuova that I found on the library shelf. When Dante collected his own poems (and one by Cavalcanti), he established a model of situating the work in a poetic tradition that inspired not only Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Dante and His Circle but also earlier volumes such as the fourteenth-century manuscript Chigi L VIII 305, where Dante's work is accompanied by other poems, and the many modern editions and translations that include other poetic compositions. Dante's strategic use of prose to explain the circumstances of his compositions influenced Charles Eliot Norton's decision to print essays in his edition, which follows a tradition of commentary that begins with the biography Boccaccio uses to preface the work in his manuscripts and persists in modern translations, such as Mark Musa's. Dante's glosses to his poems, the so-called 'divisioni' (divisions), encouraged Kenneth McKenzie's extensive annotations which reappear in modern editions where Dante's text occupies very little space in contrast to the quantity of notes. Dante's attention to the materiality of the book in his decisive relocation of its divisions after Beatrice's death informed Thomas Mosher's attention to the kind of paper on which he printed his copy of Rossetti's translation. Many other interpreters have similarly used the material text to advance their arguments, from Boccaccio's relocation of the 'divisioni' to the margins in his manuscripts to Gorni's alteration of the book's chapter breaks in his edition.
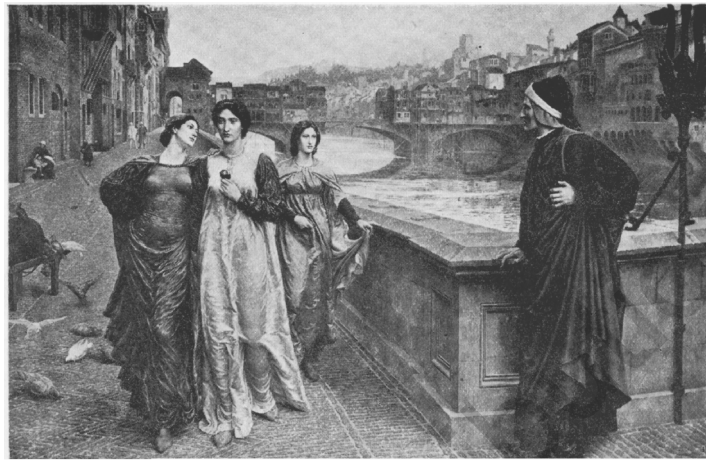
HENRY HOLIDAY, DANTE AND BEATRICE (1883) IN DANTE ALIGHIERI, LA VITA NUOVA, ED. BY KENNETH MCKENZIE (BOSTON: D. C. HEATH, 1922).

While Dante's own strategies shaped these later interventions, modern editors also used visual illustrations to respond to Dante's work. Illustrations first appear in the 1753 printing of Biscioni's edition and reach their climax at the turn of the twentieth century when Pre-Raphaelite images regularly appear as frontispieces across the world. These initial images have a powerful impact on how readers interpret the work. Mosher's edition, for example, begins with a frontispiece that reproduces a black-and-white image of Rossetti's painting, Dante's Dream (1871), which also appears in many modern editions, including the 1911 Temple Classics edition that T. S. Eliot read. The painting's full title, Dante's

Dream at the Time of the Death of Beatrice, underlines its thematic emphasis on the death of the beloved. McKenzie's edition, by contrast, begins with Henry Holiday's 1883 painting Dante and Beatrice, which emphasizes Dante's love instead of his loss. Holiday's representation of Beatrice denying Dante her greeting, which also appears in Estonian, Japanese, and Italian editions, shows the beginning of the amorous and poetic crisis that will ultimately lead to Dante's discovery of the so-called 'praise style'.

The emphases on death and love poetry found in these images reflect the major modern interpretations of Dante's work. While Charles Singleton underlined the centrality of Beatrice's death, a thematic concern that continues in the work of more recent critics who have emphasized the theme of mourning, Domenico De Robertis has highlighted the development of Dante's poetic style. Each of these critical positions aligns Dante's work with a distinct rhetorical mode. Singleton sees the work as one of forensic retrospection, while De Robertis identifies it with the demonstrative (or epideictic) rhetoric of the praise style. What lies behind both these existential and poetic concerns, however, is the deliberative mode that animates the first paragraph of the Vita nuova, where Dante tries to interpret the significance of his own experience. Whereas Petrarch begins the Rerum vulgarium fragmenta by emphasizing the 'vergogna' (shame) and 'vanità' (vanity) of the love described in the poems that follow, Dante begins his work by dramatizing his search for meaning and concludes it by imagining writing another work that would address the topic more fully. From beginning to end, Dante persists in the deliberative mode which is focused not on the past or present but the future.

The strangeness of Dante's experience may be best conveyed by Aurelio Bertiglia's early twentieth-century postcard parody of Holiday's scene. Whereas Holiday's Beatrice pointedly ignores Dante, her eyes staring straight-ahead even as her companion leans over to look at the poet, Bertiglia's Beatrice looks at Dante out of the corner of her eye. In the course of parodying Holiday's image, Bertiglia transforms Beatrice's denial of her getting into what seems to be a representation of Dante's first encounter with Beatrice at 9 years old. Bertiglia's infantilization was a personal style that he applied to numerous well-known images. In this case, however, the medieval work outflanks the modern attempt at transgression. What Bertiglia intends as a parody of Holiday highlights the strangeness of Dante's own representation of his first encounter with Beatrice which does occur among young children.

AURELIO BERTIGLIA'S PARODIC POSTCARD OF HENRY HOLIDAY'S DANTE AND BEATRICE WITH ALL FIGURES PORTRAYED AS CHERUBIC YOUTHS (1910).

Dante's attempt to understand this experience has made his work a point of reference many different love stories. In Gertrude Stein's Q.E. D. (written 1903, first published 1950), its Lesbian protagonist Adele identifies with Dante's work:

> Later on she was lying on the ground reading again Dante's Vita Nuova. She lost herself completely in the tale of Dante and Beatrice. She read it with absorbed interest for it seemed now divinely illuminated. She rejoiced abundantly in her new understanding and exclaimed triumphantly 'At last I begin to see what Dante is talking about and so there is something in my glimpse and it's alright and worth while' and she felt within herself a great content.

This passage exemplifies the kind of identifications one finds throughout the tradition, which encompasses the homoerotic desires expressed in both Stein and Frank Bidart's translation of the book's first sonnet as 'Love Incarnate'.33 Adele's 'reading again' shows both the shared deliberative mode that characterizes later adaptations and the iterative nature of reading through the tradition that this book proposes.

Dante's reflections on the vagaries of transmission stretch from the Vita nuova's first paragraph to the end of Paradiso. In an address to the reader that Erich Auerbach says 'probably has no parallel in earlier literature', Dante offers an intriguing discussion of the relationship between author and reader. He invites his readers to consider the crooked path that leads from the Creator to Creation:

> Leva dunque, lettore, a l'alte rote
> meco la vista, dritto a quella parte
> dove l'un moto e l'altro si percuote;
> e lì comincia a vagheggiar ne l'arte
> di quel maestro che dentro a sé l'ama,
> tanto che mai da lei l'occhio non parte.
> Vedi come da indi si dirama
> l'oblico cerchio che i pianeti porta,
> per sodisfare al mondo che li chiama.

> Che se la strada lor non fosse torta,
> molta virtù nel ciel sarebbe in vano,
> e quasi ogne potenza qua giù morta;
> e se dal dritto più o men lontano
> fosse 'l partire, assai sarebbe manco
> e giù e sù de l'ordine mondano.
> Or ti riman, lettor, sovra 'l tuo banco,
> dietro pensando a ciò che si preliba,
> s'esser vuoi lieto assai prima che stanco.
> Messo t'ho innanzi: omai per te ti ciba;
> ché a sé torce tutta la mia cura
> quella materia ond' io son fatto scriba. (Par. 10.7–27)

> Reader, lift up your gaze with me to the high spheres, straight to that part where one motion hits the other; and there begin to delight in the art of that master who loves it so much within himself that his eye never leaves it. Look how from there radiates the oblique circle that bears the planets to satisfy the world that calls them. For if their road were not twisted, much of Heaven's virtue would be vain, and almost all power dead here below. And if it were to depart more or less far from the straight, much would be missing from the worldly order both above and below. Now remain, reader, over your desk, thinking back on that which you have forestated, if you want to be happy before you tire. I have put it before you: now feed yourself because all my concern is turned to that material of which I have become a scribe.

While Leo Spitzer and Armando Petrucci have emphasized the novelty of Dante's description of the reader as an embodied figure sitting at a desk and Teodolinda Barolini has explored the implications of Dante's claim here to be God's scribe, the significance of what Auerbach calls an 'astronomical lesson' has not been addressed. Dante wants his reader to recognize how the twisted path of divine creation actualizes creation's divine potentiality as it radiates throughout the world. If the path were not crooked, he says, the full potency of divine power would die. Noting how the 'arte | di quel maestro' (art of that master)—God's art—radiates the fullness of its potential by indirect means, Dante proposes a parallel between divine and human artifice: the twisted course of textual transmission both activates a work's potentialities and constitutes its life (not its afterlife), as it follows a similarly tortured path from author to reader. This crooked path is the life that Emily Dickinson describes in the following verses, where she argues against those who see the work as a pale shadow of its inspiration:

> A word is dead
> When it is said,
> Some say.
> I say it just
> Begins to live
> That day.

Understood from this perspective, a work's biography consists not only of its coming into being but also of its continued survival.

Following the twisted path of the Vita nuova, this book highlights Dante's experimentation with both bibliographic and literary form. Although I have had to omit several events about which one can only speculate because they left no material traces, such as the codex entitled Vita nuova that was stolen in Bologna at the beginning of the fourteenth century and Rilke's impromptu translations of the work at Duino, the path remains a rich and intricate one. Barbi identified at least nine distinct configurations of Dante's work: copies that have (i) the prose and poetry, (2) the prose and poetry with divisions in the margins; (3) the prose and poetry without the divisions; (4) the prose and poetry with the divisions only after the poems; (5) the thirty-one poems alone in sequence without prose; (6) the same poems in different sequences; (7) eleven selected poems (Barbi's 'rime scelte'); (8) the prose with only the incipits of the poems; and (9) extracts from single chapters. Building on Barbi's foundational studies and the work of scholars, such as Corrado Bologna and Simon Gilson, who have investigated particular moments of reception, this book follows the sequence of Dante's own work instead of the chronology of the work's reception, to investigate how the work's reception shows its literary form.

Dante's struggle to express the significance of his experience of Beatrice leads him to experiment with the boundaries of the book form. Mixing thirty-one poems with prose narrative and commentary, Dante accommodates strange poetic forms, including an incomplete canzone and a sonnet with two beginnings, while also structuring meaning in the relationship between the poetic compositions themselves and creating networks of connections that constitute minicollections. All nine chapters begin with an object that brings into focus issues that emerge consistently through the tradition. Part One: 'Interpreting Beatrice', examines the extravagance of Dante's representation of Beatrice as a Homeric hero, his cannibalization of Cavalcanti's poetry, and his crafting of a Boethian harmony among different poetic forms. Part Two: 'Glossing Beatrice', analyzes how Dante uses the divisions to call attention to Beatrice's body, legitimate vernacular literature, and give Beatrice's death a larger political meaning. In Part Three: 'Remembering Beatrice', I scrutinize how Dante tries to keep Beatrice alive by writing a poem with two beginnings, creating a conflict between poetic compositions, and compiling a collection related to the Veronica.

'Of all man's instruments,' Jorge Luis Borges writes, 'the most wondrous, no doubt, is the book. The other instruments are extensions of his body. The microscope, the telescope, are extensions of his sight; the telephone is the extension of his voice; then we have the plow and the sword, extensions of the arm. But the book is something else altogether: the book is an extension of memory and imagination.'41 Dante begins the Vita nuova by calling attention to the material book ('questo libello') as an extension of the book of his memory to propose how others might reproduce it to perpetuate, and participate in, its future life. For Dante, there is no such thing as perfect transmission. When Dante reaches the Primum Mobile, he observes what he had already asserted in the first paragraph of the Vita nuova: 'l'essemplo | e l'esemplare non vanno d'un modo' (Par. 28.55–6; the example and the exemplar do not correspond).

Just as Dante dramatizes the scene of textual transmission from 'libro' to 'libello' in the first paragraph of the Vita nuova, he uses the book as an image of both unity and multiplicity at the end of Paradiso:

> Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna,
> legato con amore in un volume,
> ciò che per l'universo si squaderna:
> sustanze e accidenti e lor costume
> quasi conflati insieme, per tal modo

che ciò ch'i' dico è un semplice lume. (Par. 33.85–90)

In its depth I saw ingathered, bound with love in a single volume, that which is unbound throughout the universe: substances and accidents and their relationship conflated together in such a way that what I say is a simple light.

DANTE'S NEW LIFE OF THE BOOK examines how the first volume Dante bound together with love—the Vita nuova— was unbound throughout the universe in different languages, scripts, and surfaces. Exploring the relationship between substances and accidents in manuscripts, printed books, postcards, films, paintings, statues, and illustrations, it shows how the tangled wood of the Vita nuova's transmission history testifies to the work's power to generate new life. <>

LOVE AND SEX IN THE TIME OF PLAGUE: A DECAMERON RENAISSANCE by Guido Ruggiero [I Tatti Studies in Italian Renaissance History, Harvard University Press, 9780674257825]

As a pandemic swept across fourteenth-century Europe, the *Decameron* offered the ill and grieving a symphony of life and love.

For Florentines, the world seemed to be coming to an end. In 1348 the first wave of the Black Death swept across the Italian city, reducing its population from more than 100,000 to less than 40,000. The disease would eventually kill at least half of the population of Europe. Amid the devastation, Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* was born. One of the masterpieces of world literature, the *Decameron* has captivated centuries of readers with its vivid tales of love, loyalty, betrayal, and sex. Despite the death that overwhelmed Florence, Boccaccio's collection of *novelle* was, in Guido Ruggiero's words, a "symphony of life."

LOVE AND SEX IN THE TIME OF PLAGUE guides twenty-first-century readers back to Boccaccio's world to recapture how his work sounded to fourteenth-century ears. Through insightful discussions of the *Decameron*'s cherished stories and deep portraits of Florentine culture, Ruggiero explores love and sexual relations in a society undergoing convulsive change. In the century before the plague arrived, Florence had become one of the richest and most powerful cities in Europe. With the medieval nobility in decline, a new polity was emerging, driven by *Il Popolo*—the people, fractious and enterprising. Boccaccio's stories had a special resonance in this age of upheaval, as Florentines sought new notions of truth and virtue to meet both the despair and the possibility of the moment.

Review

"Paints a sweeping portrait of Florentine cultural life during the origins of the Renaissance…Shows how *The Decameron* illuminates the key social development through which Boccaccio (1313–1375) lived…Ruggiero expertly elaborates the theme of *virtù* in *The Decameron*, with results that are insightful and engaging."—**Andrew Stark, *Wall Street Journal***

"Ruggiero's invitation, evident on every page of his well-researched volume, is to fully appreciate the historical and theological context that shaped these stories, and in turn how they prompted new ways of

imagining the world."**—Dan Turello,** *Los Angeles Review of Books*

"An insightful and provocative analysis of how love and sex were actually 'lived' in the Rinascimento. Ruggiero is not only a leading historian, but also a literary critic at the top of his game. His book is well-timed, eerily current in fact. Almost seven centuries after Boccaccio wrote of the horrors a pandemic inflicted on Florence, individual responses remain, in fact, fairly identical: fear of the neighbor, anxiety about the future, escape to the countryside, dread from physical touch, and searches for pleasant, escapist ways to fill the day."**—Valeria Finucci, author of** *The Prince's Body: Vincenzo Gonzaga and Renaissance Medicine*

"A dazzling new contribution to the history of emotions. Desire, passion, love, sex and all their perils come to life in Ruggiero's analysis of Boccaccio's celebrated *Decameron*, giving us an imaginative reconstruction of the complex cultural world of courtship, honor, and marriage in fourteenth-century Tuscany."**—Joanne M. Ferraro, author of** *Venice: History of the Floating City*

"Guido Ruggiero, leading cultural historian of the Italian 'Rinascimento' and pioneer in the study of sexuality in the early modern period, now offers us an extraordinarily valuable reading of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. From his rich and innovative perspective, the 'hundred novelle' unfold in the shadow of the devastating Black Plague of 1348 and in a longer-term transition in Florence from medieval feudalism to economically-driven republicanism. Students and scholars of Boccaccio's masterwork may or may not finally agree with all of Ruggiero's bold conclusions, but anyone who comes to grips with them will be the wiser for it."**—Albert Russell Ascoli, author of** *A Local Habitation and a Name: Imagining Histories in the Italian Renaissance*

"Quite fascinating for its reading of the *Decameron*, but beyond that also offers considerable insight into the place and times—and tells a good story of both the beginnings of the Renaissance and attitudes towards love and sex. An enjoyable and interesting read."**—***Complete Review*

"Ruggiero, in this exemplar of *microstoria*, demonstrates the prominent place in the history of modern notions of love, sex, marriage, and power of the Italian Renaissance."**—Dean T. Ferguson,** *International Social Science Review*

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Listening to the Decameron: An Introduction

The year 1348 shocked the world, or at least the world as viewed from the West; for it was the year that an apparently new plague that would become known as the Black Death struck Europe, carrying off from one-half to two-thirds of its population. Indeed, it is still remembered today as one of the greatest disasters of history. But, at the time, it seemed to confirm widely shared apocalyptic visions that the end of time was nigh. And with good reason, for the tremendous dying off had left the survivors wandering in the suddenly empty streets of once thriving towns and in the countryside contemplating abandoned fields and villages with fear about what further calamities an angry and punishing God had in store for a sinning humanity.

Giovanni Boccaccio claimed that in response to that deeply disturbing disaster he wrote the Decameron, one of the greatest and best-known works of Western literature. Although he had begun collecting and rewriting the one hundred tales that make up the heart of his masterpiece before the plague struck and continued revising them afterward, he maintained that he had decided to write it in order to help his fellow Florentines weather the emotional stress of the staggering loss and devastation of the Black Death. His tales, he promised, would provide a pleasant diversion from the cruel reality of those empty streets and vacant palaces that literally haunted their once flourishing city and his imagination.

Significantly, one of the themes of those stories that he asserted would be most useful in doing so was love: a crucial emotion, key to recovering normal family life and community after that destruction. But he promised that love could offer something more valuable yet—for it was an emotion that he noted was especially important for uplifting the spirit of the women who had suffered so much, both from the plague and from the unhappy arranged and loveless marriages and unjustly restricted life they led. In sum, Boccaccio declared that the healing power of love in the time of the plague was his motive for retelling the tales of the Decameron and an ideal antidote for the material and emotional disaster that had struck his world.

Yet where Boccaccio saw love, he also saw sex. For the two were deeply intertwined in the culture and life of the day for him and his compatriots. And love both ideally and regularly led to shared sexual pleasures, at least in the tales of the Decameron. The reverse, unsurprisingly, was not always the case. Sex did not necessary lead to or even involve love, and therein lay a series of problems moral, practical, and emotional. Problems that at first might seem to have been quite similar to problems faced today, but Boccaccio's second half of the fourteenth century was not the modern world, and the way those problems were lived and felt at the time opens up revealing vistas on a complex of values and emotions that were often decidedly different. And this was the case even if they were in many ways foundational for our own values and emotions.

To return to a metaphor that I have used before, that world of love and sex at the time of the plague in Italy was rather like the world that Alice encountered when she went through the looking glass in Alice in Wonderland. People, things, and practices seemed familiar, but, tellingly, nothing worked there in quite the same way as it did before she entered her disorienting wonderland. Our own wonderland of Boccaccio's Decameron reads in much the same way, for at the same time that it often seems not quite right and disorienting, as we explore it in this book, its historical settings and textures offer fascinating comments and critiques both positive and negative on sex and love in the time of the plague and perhaps today as well as we respond to the dislocations and traumas of a modern pandemic.

In Florence in Boccaccio's day, for example, it was recognized and feared that the passions and practices associated with love and courting slid all too easily into the pleasures and myriad dangers of sexual intercourse, formally labeled illicit. Adultery and youthful premarital sex, in fact, were the assumed ideal locus of love, at least in the literary traditions of courtly love, the dolce stil nuovo, and the poetry of noted and much-imitated writers like Dante and Petrarch. In contrast, love in marriage, both in literature and practice, was a relatively unlikely proposition. For, while courting provided an important measure of status and setting for social interaction, the emotional love that was seen as developing in that context was viewed as too driven by youthful passions and too quickly passing to be used as the base for the carefully planned family alliances that were held to be at the heart of successful marriages—marriages that served greater family goals and provided the stable disciplinary base for an ordered society, socially and sexually.

Love was simply too quick, too fleeting, and too irrational an emotion to forge a long-term relationship like marriage. And, in turn, marriage, as a binding relationship entailing a series of obligations, was literally too constraining and unfree to allow one to follow one's desires and freely choose a lover, while true love was nothing if not free. In many ways, it was that freedom to love that made it an emotion both attractive and dangerous—deeply dangerous and often far distant from the modern world of Valentine cards or saccharine love stories. Yet, as we shall see, Boccaccio's tales suggestively break free from this vision of the correct order of things. And anticipating that thesis of this book, they broke free to attempt to "civilize" the emotions associated with love and sex, to make them less dangerous for the newly reordered urban civil society that was to be rebuilt following the devastation of the plague.

Having said that, however, this is not really a book about Boccaccio or why he wrote the Decameron. For, well beyond considering Boccaccio's intent in writing it and his vision of love and sex, it is a reading of that fascinating and still evocative work, attempting to imagine how that masterpiece was heard in its day and how it might be heard anew today from a historical perspective. Much like a great symphony—a human symphony of the first Rinascimento—the Decameron is even more telling for me, this study, and Boccaccio's contemporaries, because it offers a rich entry into how they heard its many riffs on love: now laughing, now tragic; sometimes humble, often aristocratic; frequently realistic, and from time to time playfully whimsical. As a result, my goal in retelling these tales in their historical setting marries the interests of the literary critic in reopening (and ideally reevoking) the excitement of great tales and of the historian in rediscovering the historical texture of suggestive texts to offer hopefully new insights and textual pleasures.

For the Decameron, with its one hundred tales told over ten days by Boccaccio's fictional group of young aristocrats, sang of the life of a city, Florence, that was rapidly developing into one of the most important and richest economically and culturally in what would become Europe. And thus it was

encountered there and elsewhere in the urban world of northern Italy, I would suggest, with a shock of recognition that the life of which it sang had not only changed profoundly but was continuing to change rapidly in the wake of the plague. Merchants, bankers, lawyers, secular scholars, and the humbler artisans of their world had come to matter—the popolo (literally the people) as they styled themselves. In turn, the old, landed nobility and their ways no longer were the stuff of the tales that mattered there, except perhaps as lessons on an outdated past—lessons to which the Decameron regularly returned.

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Nonetheless, the Decameron presents the case for true love and its accompanying sexual pleasures as the base for successful marriages, returning repeatedly to the unhappy and dangerous outcomes of traditional arranged marriages often involving unloving, unhappy couples of widely different ages and desires. And, over and over again, these negative examples of loveless and pleasureless marriages and the negative emotional life they offered are contrasted with the happy ending of true love in well-founded marriages where loving couples, having decided to marry, live happily ever after. Although it might be pointed out with a certain irony that few tales continue to describe the life of those married lovers living happily ever after, suggesting perhaps that that improbable conclusion for the Rinascimento was hard to demonstrate even in the happiest of the Decameron's tales.

That said, however, we do have significant archival evidence that the radical ideal of marriage for love and sexual pleasure was actually followed by some at the time in Florence and in the other cities of northern Italy and that it often entailed violence, both in terms of violent resistance by families interested in maintaining more traditional familial goals for marriage and violence by the lovers themselves or their supporters attempting to overcome those traditional goals to marry instead for love. Thus, returning to the tales of the Decameron, despite their emphasis on the ideal of peaceful and civilized marriages based on love, they also at times portray contemporary forms of violence associated with love, especially what was deemed true love, to win marriage. Moreover, this violence was usually presented positively, suggestively, in contexts much like those found in contemporary judicial documents. In fact, Boccaccio-author periodically describes in detail such love-driven violence with Dantean relish (often troubling to modern readers) and as virtually a heroic requirement proving true love, thus leaving us with a civilizing and peaceful institution frequently founded on violence and the disruption of the social order that it was supposed to support and civilize.

If this all seems complicated and even at times contradictory, that is, of course, because it was. The many transitions that the cities of northern Italy were undergoing economically, socially, and culturally were nothing if not complicated, and the responses were seldom as neatly symmetrical and logical as social theorists, critics, or historians might desire or like to imagine. Rather, they were complex and rich with contradictions, much like the tales of the Decameron, and perhaps, we might point out, like the normal disorder and messiness of everyday life and contradictory values found in most societies. In those contradictions we can see the complexity and force of love and sexual desire and the feelings associated with both in the Rinascimento that at times still seem familiar today but often range far afield and involve much stronger and more dangerous feelings and emotions. For I would suggest that an often-overlooked aspect of the way the modern world has developed is the way love, desire, and feelings in general have been pared down and controlled internally and externally to lose much of their power, force, and at times dangerous potential for violence.

In this I am not claiming a linear process of the civilization of manners but rather an ongoing complex process of adapting emotions to different societies and cultures and their shifting relationships with die expression of feelings and passions—a history just beginning to be explored. And from time to time today in our supposedly more civilized and controlled society, when those feelings break through our carefully honed filters of self-control and culture, we are astounded and deeply troubled by the things that love and desire and the emotions associated with them can play a role in triggering. In the Decameron, we jump to a. different world and culture, where different controls are being put in place, driven by decidedly different social and cultural forces. A world and a culture where love, sexual desire, and their associated feelings were imagined in ways often strange to the modern eye and seen at the time as involving dangerous clusters of passions far distant from the modern.

This book, then, aims to reopen the Decameron and its symphony of life, a symphony of Rinascimento love and sexual desire and their associated feelings and passions, in sum, love and sex—when they were imagined as congeries of emotions dangerous, dark, seductive, and yet crucially alive with the melodies of life itself in the time of the plague. <>

GARY SNYDER: COLLECTED POEMS by Gary Snyder edited by Jack Shoemaker and Anthony Hunt [Library of America, 9781598537215]

The first collected edition of an essential, Pulitzer Prize-winning Beat poet, the indispensable voice whose deep ecological vision and Buddhist spirituality grows more relevant with each passing decade

Gary Snyder is one of America's indispensable poets, the "Thoreau of the Beat Generation" and our "laureate of Deep Ecology." Now, for the first time, all of Snyder's poetry is gathered in a single, authoritative Library of America volume.

Here are all of Snyder's published books of poetry spanning a career of almost seventy years. Early collections such as *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems*, *Myths & Texts*, and *The Back Country* reflect his hardscrabble rural upbringing in the Pacific Northwest; his life as a logger, fire-lookout, freighter crewman, carpenter, and trail-blazer; his lifelong interest in Native American oral literatures; and his pioneering studies of Zen Buddhism.

In *Turtle Island* and *Axe Handles*—the former a winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1975 and the latter the American Book Award in 1984—he explores countercultural alternatives to environmental and spiritual decline and envisioning new forms of harmony with nature.

His epic *Mountains and Rivers Without End*, a poem four decades in the making and regarded by many as his masterwork, is followed by *Danger on Peaks,* and the intimate, preternaturally candid late lyrics of *This Present Moment*, which meditate on his life as a father, husband, friend, neighbor, and homesteader in the foothills of California's Sierra Nevada, where he has lived since 1971.

The volume concludes with a generous selection, made by Snyder himself, of previously uncollected poems from little magazines and broadsides; translations from East Asian literatures; and drafts and fragments never before published. Also included are explanatory notes, a detailed chronology of Snyder's life, and an essay on textual selection.

Author and editors

Born on May 8, 1930, in San Francisco, Gary Snyder grew up in the rural Pacific Northwest. He graduated from Reed College in 1951 with degrees in anthropology and literature, and later studied Japanese and Chinese civilization at Berkeley, returning there to teach in the English Department. After participating in the San Francisco revival, the beginning of the beat poetry movement, Snyder went to Japan in 1955 where he stayed for eighteen months, living in a Zen monastery. He has lived and written and worked in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada since 1969.

Jack Shoemaker is Founding Editor of Counterpoint Press, publishing the works of Wendell Berry, M.F.K. Fisher, Evan S. Connell, Robert Aitken, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, and James Salter, among many others. He has worked with Snyder for over 50 years.

Anthony Hunt is the author of Genesis, Structure, and Meaning in Gary Snyder's Mountains and Rivers Without End(2004). Now retired as professor of English at the University of Puerto Rico–Mayagüez, and a former Fulbright scholar and Peace Corps worker, he lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Reviews

"The book is a total treasure and catalogue of a life that clearly has been a work of art itself."—Lion's Roar Magazine

"The non-profit Library of America just published a handsome volume of Snyder's collected poems. It contains every one of his books as well as numerous works which appeared in magazines, journals and obscure publications … The thing that makes this collection special is he was involved in the project and added commentaries on some of his work." —Dayton Daily News

Amazon notes:

A life well lived is one that a person is able to do what they love, what they are best at, which allows them to be happy, to make others happy, and makes a difference in the world. That is just my theory, but it seems something to strive for, though society seems to frown on it. Gary Snyder has been living his best life for over 90 years, seventy of those years writing poetry, essays, or just putting words on paper for any reason he wants to. The Library of America has collected almost all of Mr. Snyder's works in one volume, Gary Snyder Collected Poems (Library of America #351), edited by Anthony Hunt and Jack Shoemaker.

Starting with poems written in the forests that he worked either logging of as fire spotted in the national parks, Mr. Snyder began writing about the trees, the land, the men who traveled it and the feelings it gave him. The influence of the Beats was predominant in his early works, until his return to school and his fascination with Asian art and poetry began. Soon he was translating many Zen poets, offering those to western readers for the first time, along with more poems about his travels in Japan, and on the Pacific where he worked as a sailor on many a tramp freighter. Included are works like Turtle Island,

which won a Pulitzer, Axe Handles which won the National Book Award, and his epic poem in both length and time it took to writer Mountains and Rivers Without End which was created and formed over four decades.

The poems tell of men, women nature, love, life, and his children growing. Essays are included, pieces about his family, his life, and his love of nature and conservancy. Some poems are short, some are long, but the imagery is usually powerful. As with anything some of the works have not dated well, attitudes change, maturity sets in, but most seem fresh and as new as when they were written. The notes section is very informative, and comprehensive with an full publishing history for many of the poems, that is fascinating to read. Some of the works have never before been published, so that is also a treat.

Recommended for poetry fans, fans of the beats, of nature, Zen, and good poems. Library of America always makes beautiful collections and this one is no exception. A great addition to any reader's library.

True to form, the Library of America's Collected Poems issue of Gary Snyder's work begins with his first book Riprap and concludes with his most recent work This Present Moment. The book also includes almost sixty uncollected poems -- a mixture of very early Snyder poems, outtakes from over the years, and translations of various ancient Asian poets, among others. I am also pleased to see a more extensive chronology at the end that outlines Snyder's eventful life. A very comprehensive collection that serves its purpose and shows us again why Snyder will rank as one of America's most important 20th-21st century poets and thinkers. <>

THE SUPERHUMANITIES: HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS, MORAL OBJECTIONS, NEW REALITIES by Jeffrey J. Kripal [University of Chicago Press, 9780226820248]

A bold challenge to rethink the humanities as intimately connected to the superhuman and to "decolonize reality itself."

What would happen if we reimagined the humanities as the superhumanities? If we acknowledged and celebrated the undercurrent of the fantastic within our humanistic disciplines, entirely new cultural worlds and meanings would become possible. That is Jeffrey J. Kripal's vision for the future—to revive the suppressed dimension of the superhumanities, which consists of rare but real altered states of knowledge that have driven the creative processes of many of our most revered authors, artists, and activists. In Kripal's telling, the history of the humanities is filled with precognitive dreams, evolving superhumans, and doubled selves. The basic idea of the superhuman, for Kripal, is at the core of who and what the human species has tried to become over millennia and around the planet.

After diagnosing the basic malaise of the humanities—that the truth must be depressing—Kripal shows how it can all be done differently. He argues that we have to decolonize reality itself if we are going to take human diversity seriously. Toward this pluralist end, he engages psychoanalytic, Black critical, feminist, postcolonial, queer, and ecocritical theory. He works through objections to the superhumanities while also recognizing the new realities represented by the contemporary sciences. In

doing so, he tries to move beyond naysaying practices of critique toward a future that can embrace those critiques within a more holistic view—a view that recognizes the human being as both a social-political animal as well as an evolved cosmic species that understands and experiences itself as something super.

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Teaching the Superman

> In the ordinariness of each of us there had to be a place of rest, of relief. I didn't yet grasp the implications of this except that [Clark Kent as] Superman seemed to highlight that common condition because in him the extremes were so much greater. . . . The sharp contrast between the self as nonentity and the self as all- powerful seemed to suggest a secret, private, but universal experience. ALVIN SCHWARTZ, "The Real Secret of Superman's Identity"

By vocation or calling, I am a teacher. More specifically, I teach people how to think about what we have come to call religion. I teach people to think about religion comparatively— that is, across cultures and times, with no particular religion privileged above the others. I teach people to think about religion critically— that is, with all the tools of the modern university, including the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. I teach people to think about religion historically— that is, with a clear understanding that every religious form was created by humans at some point in space and time for specific and local reasons that privileged some and marginalized others.

But that is not all. And that is not enough. I have long insisted on something special or something left over that none of these ways and days can quite capture or explain. I have long insisted on the strange, the fantastic, the misbehaving or rogue aspects of religious experience that interact not only with other people but with the physical environment, with the material cosmos. And so I also teach people to think about religion experientially and, perhaps most controversially, empirically. With such adverbs, I mean to argue that religious ideas and symbolic expressions might sometimes function, rarely but really, as imaginative cultural translations of actual human encounters with consciousness and the cosmos, including aspects that no scientific mode of knowing can touch for one simple but profound reason: because they are not things or objects to touch, much less measure and manipulate.

Go ahead. Try. Some people, with the right mix of education and secularism, can manage some approximation of the comparative, critical, and historical parts. Some people, with the right extraordinary life events, will be able to imagine the experiential or empirical part. But almost no one can put them together. It is as if our cultures will not allow us, as if they are protecting their own fragile

natures through some kind of refusal to look too closely, some distraction from the essence of things, some immunological response cloaked as a belief, an argument, an ego, a set of values, whatever.

Because I have written about how mystical or paranormal experiences are basically signs or signals from outside this matrix of history, belief, ego, and culture, young intellectuals often come to me wanting to study some pretty weird things. Actually, what they most want to do is study only these things. They want to become Professors of the Paranormal.

I don't let them do that. To explain why, I tell a little pop- cultural parable that is, like all such parables, culturally specific and gendered. I do the polite thing, which is the right thing. I apologize for that cultural and gendered limitation, and then I tell them the story anyway. It seems to help more often than not, so I keep telling it. It goes like this.

"I know you want to be Superman," I tell them. "I know that there is an X factor behind your desire to give your life to years of graduate study that may not result in the paying job or professional career for which you now want to work so hard. Ordinary people don't do that. It makes no sense. Unless, of course, something has happened to you, unless you know that the world is not what it seems to be, unless you know that you are not what you seem to be. I am guessing that this has already happened to you. I am guessing that you know that, deep down, you are Superman.

"But here's the thing. No one will hire Superman. Superman never gets a job. If you come here to study with us, we will privately affirm and even help you cultivate the Superman, but we will also insist that you learn to be Clark Kent. Only Clark gets a job. You can't just be Superman. You have to put on your glasses and pretend to be someone else. You have to learn things you may not want to learn, whose utility and value you will only see later, maybe much later. You have to go to the Daily Planet every day and write this and that little thing.

"Consider this particular graduate school your phone booth, that magical place in those silly older comics where Clark Kent turns into Superman and Superman turns back into Clark Kent. We're like that. The secret of this kind of higher education is not about being one or the other. The secret is in the phone booth. The secret is learning how to be both, but also when to be which." That, in a pop- cultural nutshell, is the message of this book. It is a bit more complicated than that, of course. It gets weirder. Way weirder.

Sometimes, for example, this "teaching the Superman" gets more literal, gets real, becomes a matter of life and death.

It was November 2018. I had invited one of my advanced PhD students to a private symposium at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, on "Evolution and Deification." I asked him to tell the group a story that he had told me before and that I had written about in my own work as the story of "James."

James grew up in a fundamentalist Christian family in West Texas. He was pulled from "Satan's public school system" so that he could be indoctrinated into absolute truths like creationism and the literal truth of the Bible. He also experienced excruciating guilt around his emerging sexuality. By the time he was a teenager, James was severely conflicted, emotionally tortured, really. He had, in fact, become suicidal.

One night, his parents were out. James decided that he would use the opportunity to kill himself— blow his head off with his dad's pistol in the gun safe, which was left unlocked that night. That would end it all.

But that didn't happen. Instead, James found himself falling into a kind of mild trance while he drove around town and, in his own words, "Ouija drove" to the local Barnes & Noble, a business and a building that he had never entered before, since he was not allowed to visit such a "worldly" place. Still, that is where he drove, or his car drove, or something drove.

James got out of the car and walked into the bookstore, still very much in an altered state. His body zigzagged through the bookstacks, with real direction and real force, as if it somehow knew where it was going. He certainly didn't. James, in fact, felt disconnected from himself, "dissociated" most would probably say today, as if that that somehow explains anything at all.

Suddenly, he just stopped. He found himself at a section inexplicably marked "Philosophy." He had no idea what the word meant. Then it happened. A book fell off the shelf and landed at his feet. It was as if the thing jumped right then, for him no less. When the book hit the floor, James suddenly came back to himself. He reached down and picked it up. The book had a strange title: Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Well, at least he could understand two of the words (they sounded biblical). He looked up. A young beautiful blonde teenager in a very short black dress was snapping his photo and giggling at the other end of the book aisle. She ran away, never to be seen by him again.

James decided to buy the book that seemed to have sought him out and take it home, perhaps even read a little of it before he ended his miserable life. So he bought it and drove home, now in a "normal" state (if you can call the intention to kill yourself normal). James sat at home, with the book on one thigh and his dad's Colt pistol on the other. He read Nietzsche's famous prologue, where the mountain hermit Zarathustra announces the death of God and the coming of the Superman (Übermensch).

Was it the teaching of the Superman? Or how Nietzsche taught it, transmitted it to the ready reader through his uncanny words that night? In any case, this book turned out to be "the antidote to a lifetime of poison I hadn't known I was drinking," as James put it to me much later. He walked outside into a rainstorm. "I stared up at the stars between the clouds and laughed. A divine laughter, an ecstatic laughter while the rain poured down. It was the greatest moment I had ever experienced. When my sides ached and the rain abated, I walked back inside, dried off and read the rest of the book."

Perhaps it was significant that it was storming outside, and that James could see the stars between the clouds. It was also storming and lightning in the book he was reading, after all, and Nietzsche's prose is filled with dancing divine stars and nonhuman laughter. In any case, James had been changed by the book, by the author, by Zarathustra, by something. He put his father's gun away. Friedrich Nietzsche and his Superman had saved a young man's life a century into the author's future and an ocean and continent apart.

James would go on to engage in a full study of Nietzsche's body of work in college. He would write a dissertation on occult superhumans in the twentieth century within esoteric communities and movements that were inspired by Nietzsche's most famous book. But that is not the end of the story. Stories, after all, result in other stories, particularly when they are told to the right people at the right time. The "Evolution and Deification" symposium was such a people and such a time.

What happened after James told his story to this group of people was almost as remarkable as the story itself. Richard Baker, the American Zen teacher, was in the room as one of the invited participants. Richard Baker Roshi engaged James as a Zen teacher would. He worked with him, right there and then. He told James that what he had experienced that night in those special pages and in the laughter of the lightning, thunder, and rain was an early realization of the nature of mind itself. It was an early enlightenment experience, a satori, to use the Japanese word. Richard encouraged James to continue working with the awakening, to see it as a beginning and not an ending, an introduction and not a conclusion.

I have heard a lot of stories, many of them strange beyond strange. But James's story hit me in a particularly powerful way. I believe that this story and my subsequent interactions with James as both his teacher and his student continued to shape me, my reading, and, eventually, this book. Actually, I think this story (all of it) is how I wrote this book— or, better, how it wrote me. <>

The Secular Paradox: On the Religiosity of the Not Religious by Joseph Blankholm [New York University Press, 9781479809509]

Living in a culture saturated with Christian language and ideas, America's nonbelievers struggle to define themselves on their own terms. They face the difficult choice of avoiding religion completely or embracing parts of religion and living with contradictions. In The Secular Paradox, Joseph Blankholm explores what it feels like to be secular and live with this ambivalence. Relying on several years of ethnographic research among secular activists and organized nonbelievers in the United States, the volume shows how secular people are both absolutely not religious and part of a religion-like secular tradition.

The Secular Paradox focuses heavily on nonbelievers who don't fit easily within secularism because they are the ones who tell its story best. The challenges faced by people of color, women, and those who have left non-Christian religions shed light on what secularism is and how it works by revealing its limits and contradictions. Placing them front and center unveils a new landscape of American religion and offers a view into what American secularism is becoming.

Review

"By far the best work done on secular movements and secularism. Blankholm's impressive scope of data and his attention to diversity based on ethnicity, gender, and apostates from non-Christian traditions make this a unique and exceptional contribution to the field." —DARREN SHERKAT, Southern Illinois University

"Masterfully illustrates how the organized secular movement in the US is constantly being negotiated." — RYAN CRAGUN, The University of Tampa

"Simultaneously, an incisive examination of American secularity's paradoxical relationship to `religion,' its constitutive other, and an expansive ethnography of how secular people live with and in that paradox. Blankholm brilliantly attends to secularity not simply as a space of absence—religion's remainder—but as a set of ethical, epistemological, and affective commitments —a tradition.... A remarkable book and

essential reading for those interested in debates about secularism and religion in the United States and beyond." — MAYANTHI FERNANDO, University of California, Santa Cruz

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This book focuses almost entirely on nonbeliever organizations with a national presence, many of which have local chapters throughout the United States. Though some of these groups have existed for many decades, several were formed in the past few years, and new groups appear all the time. The largest groups include the Center for Inquiry, the American Humanist Association, the Secular Student Alliance, the Freedom From Religion Foundation, American Atheists, the Secular Coalition for America, the Ethical Culture movement, the Unitarian Universalist Humanist Association, and the Society for Humanistic Judaism. Smaller organizations include Black Nonbelievers, Hispanic American Freethinkers, Foundation Beyond Belief, Secular Woman, and Ex-Muslims of North America.

All these groups have different organizational structures and aims. While some are more interested in forming communities, others focus entirely on activism and advocacy. The Center for Inquiry, for instance, is an umbrella organization that includes the Council for Secular Humanism, the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science, and the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry, each of which has a different mission and constituency. The American Ethical Union is a less centralized organization that unites the more than twenty independent Ethical Culture societies throughout the United States. The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) has a range of programs that it runs from its offices in Madison, Wisconsin, though with the help of its large team of lawyers, it primarily provides legal support for nonbelievers. FFRF has more than twenty local chapters, but the leaders in Madison emphasized to me that the local groups began at the grassroots level, and the national organization has no formal role in their governance. This hands-off approach is typical of groups that have a strong aversion to religion because they seek to avoid structures they consider authoritarian or dogmatic. Despite these differences among national groups, many organized nonbelievers I met are members of multiple communities in their local area and affiliate with several national organizations. The landscape of organized nonbelief reflects a combination of strategic pragmatism and strong beliefs about the appropriate attitude toward religion.

This book focuses specifically on organized nonbelievers for reasons that also have a lot to do with pragmatism and intellectual commitment. When I first began to consider what an anthropology of atheism or secularism would look like, it was 2009, and I was a graduate student at Columbia University. My initial attempts to study secular people were inclusive and nearly aimless. Living in New York City

and being at a university, I was so surrounded by secular people that a man who is now a close friend came out to me as Christian after meeting me several times and sharing a few drinks. The challenge of studying secular people soon became clear: Who counts, and how do I study them in a systematic, empirically rigorous way? My own identity provided little help in structuring the break between self and other ostensibly required for anthropological inquiry. Despite what strangers think when they meet that most ridiculous of doctors, a doctor of religion, I am a secular person in more senses than one. Thus, at the start of my research, my challenge was twofold: How do I Identify secular people, and how do I alienate myself sufficiently enough to make what I am an object of study?

To tackle the first challenge, I made the practical decision to look for the most committed secular people I could find. Many of these were involved with secular groups, but some were not. Soon I realized there was an entire world of organized secularism that had been continuously active for more than a century. Through a scholar's eyes, the groups I encountered looked strangely religious despite their opposition to religion. My confusion cemented my focus on secular people who join communities because they posed a problem I became obsessed with figuring out. As it turns out, secular people who form groups are doing things that seriously challenge many of the big ideas about religion that we in American culture inherit. I knew I was onto something fascinating, and I had to pursue it.

My decision to focus on nonbelievers who organize themselves was practical in two ways. I could delimit who counts for the purposes of my study, and I could pursue the strangeness of the secular-religious until I managed to make sense of it. Though this book hardly answers all of the important questions relating to secular people, it relies on my research and the research of others, including many recent studies, in order to provide a vocabulary and framework for understanding who secular people are and why being secular can feel so weird at times.

The problem of how to deal with my own secular identity might seem more challenging, but this book's thesis is an argument for why it is not. Inasmuch as the secular is not what it appears to be and inasmuch as it is shot through with its ostensible other, it provides the loose thread of its own undoing to anyone willing to pull it. Its history and genealogy lead into a disorienting hall of mirrors. These seemingly infinite reflections are a condition of being secular, so documenting that condition performs the work of self-estrangement that is so important to social scientific inquiry. I hope those who read this book can share with me the numerous odd epiphanies that I have experienced while conducting years of research among secular people. Indeed, I have discovered what I have to come to call, only half in jest, my subterranean religion. Whether we are secular is entirely a matter of dispute—and that conflict is at the heart of being secular.

A Generative Tension within Secularism

There is a surprising variety of names for secular people. This variety stems from nonbelievers' ambivalence toward religion, which is their desire to both reject it and preserve something like it. Affirmative labels like "humanist" can emphasize the beliefs, practices, and ways of belonging that nonbelievers share with one another. Negative labels like "atheist" can emphasize the bad parts of religion that they seek to avoid. The work of affirming what nonbelievers share and emphasizing what they deny is the generative tension that secularism carries within its semantic and conceptual sediment. Secular ambivalence structures what it means to be secular.

Most secular people I spoke with strike a balance that works for them. They reject the things that seem too religious, and they embrace the religion-like things they find important and useful, though sometimes ignoring their uncanny religiosity. This same tension exists within atheism, which is both an old Christian term for heresy and, since the late eighteenth century, a name for the beliefs of nonbelievers. Because secular people face a choice between rejecting religion and embracing something like it, they often disagree about where to draw the line between secular and religious. Those who dissent from the existing options found new groups, invent new labels, and create new ways of being secular. Secular people's ambivalence toward religion is highly productive, and tracing its effects is crucial for understanding what it means to be secular in the United States today.

Sometimes secular people negotiate their antagonistic drives consciously, either as individuals or in conversation with one another. At other times their reactions are visceral and not up for debate. Nonbelievers develop particular ways of thinking, speaking, and being secular by deciding, consciously or unconsciously, which things are too religious and need to be avoided. This in turn shapes the structures and activities of the groups they form. The numerous ways in which secular and religious can be distinct, overlapping, or analogous become points of contention and delimit the boundaries that separate one way of being a nonbeliever from another. Successfully avoiding religion, or even just the wrong kind of religion, requires ongoing reflection on what religion is and how much its pollution sullies the secular. Everyone I spoke with described how, over time, what they reject has changed, sometimes toward a purer secular and sometimes toward the hybridity of secular religion. To be secular means to struggle, in ways big and small, with being not religious. None of the people I met during my fieldwork—and no secular people in the rest of my life—have resolved this ambivalence. Declaring it resolved by calling secular people "religious" or "not religious" is an error because it pays no heed to secular people's effort to avoid religion while also embracing it. That ongoing labor indexes their need to avoid religion's pollution but also its permanent proximity.

Whether secular people feel the need to reject religion and the extent to which they do depends on what the^ think religion is. These definitions remain mostly implicit, though the speech and behavior of secular people provide plenty of clues about the kind of religion they see themselves embracing or rejecting. For instance, many nonbelievers hold a belief-centered understanding of religion, so for them, being an atheist means not being religious because being religious means believing in God. Behaviors that can be religious or quasi-religious, such as meditation or yoga, can become taboo for the atheist with a belief-centered approach that relies on a broad conception of religion because affirmation of the supernatural can pollute religious practices and ways of belonging by association.

On the other hand, a belief-centered approach with a narrow conception of religion can allow engagement with religious practices and institutions because the^ can be separated from beliefs and thus purified of religious error. Nontheistic religious humanists, for instance, disaggregate belief from other aspects of religiosity, embracing religious behavior and belonging without exposing themselves to religious pollution. Others, like secular humanists, also negate religious belief, but they purify religious behavior and belonging through the work of analogy and abstraction. They avoid religious language even when their institutions or practices resemble religious equivalents. Instead of clergy, they have Secular Celebrants; instead of orthodoxy, they have eupraxsophy. Some nonbelievers avoid anything that resembles religious belief, behavior, or belonging—including groups for nonbelievers. Because the work of being secular always depends on what religion means, it takes place at the intersection of two shifting

terrains: the things people think and do and the labels that describe them. To really understand what it means to be secular requires navigating both terrains at once, the possibility of which is good evidence that they are not entirely separate.

Defining and delimiting religion is vital work for people who identify strongly as secular, who engage in secular activism, and who shape their identities in face-to-face communities with other nonbelievers. Because being secular is so important to them, they negotiate their ambivalence toward religion more often and more thoroughly than people with weaker secular identities do. This book examines very secular people closely to observe the effects of secularism's ambivalence on their speech, their feelings, their bodily habits, their institutional structures, and their legal strategies. Though I focus specifically on nonbelievers who join groups, all secular people, even those who have no interest in joining a nonbeliever community, struggle with secularism's ambivalence and face decisions about what things are too religious. This is the condition of being secular. Thus, while this book focuses on organized nonbelievers and secular activists, it can provide insight into what it means to be secular in a more general sense in the United States today.

Others who have studied secular people have noticed a similar ambivalence and have struggled to name it. I aim to make a big deal of it because it explains so much and because the causes and effects of this structuring ambivalence have come into increasingly better view with the help a growing body of social scientific and historical research. I argue that being secular is inherently paradoxical; its internal tension defines it. In one of the earliest and best studies of nonbelievers, the sociologist Colin Campbell observed at two extremes the "abolitionists" and the "substitutionists, who seek to abolish or replace religion, respectively. Campbell recognizes that these are not the only ways to be secular but rather the poles of a kind of spectrum. He also observes a fuzzy boundary between the substitutionists who want to replace religion and the traditionally religious.

More recently, sociologists including Jesse Smith, Stephen LeDrew, and Jacqui Frost have studied how nonbelievers emphasize what they share with one another and how they model their communities, at least in part, on religious equivalents. These substitutionists, in Campbell's terms, want to focus on what they affirm rather than what they negate. The Sunday Assembly, a group founded in London in early 2013, and the Oasis Network, founded in Houston in 2012, are examples of affirmative movements that have grown rapidly in the United States since I completed the bulk of my field research. Though these movements aim to build something new on their own terms, a bigger view of organized secularism shows how they fit snugly within its history. If they continue to grow and have staying power, they will represent the latest generation of secular people to organize themselves around their shared beliefs and values, echoing earlier movements like Ethical Culture in the nineteenth century and humanism in the twentieth.

Scholars have identified a similar binary within atheism. Philosopher Antony Flew has described "negative" and "positive" atheism as two ways in which the "a-" can negate "theism." For Smith and for other philosophers such as George H. Smith and Michael Martin who have built on his work, negative atheism is a lack or absence of belief in God. Positive atheism is more than a mere absence; it is an active disavowal. Smith also uses the terms "implicit" and "explicit" to capture this distinction, and a number of social scientists have used the terms "passive" and "active" secularism to describe a similar division between those who are merely indifferent to religion and those who affirm a secular worldview and take on a secular identity. Sociologist and theologian Stephen Bullivant observes an "ambiguity" in

atheism, by which he means something more like confusion. His is less a bifurcation and more an entire range of ways in which atheism negates or even affirms. Atheism can negatively target the supernatural, gods, religion, or monotheism, or as for Smith and Martin, it can signal a mere absence of avowed belief. Bullivant's positive atheism can describe a belief system that is atheistic as a consequence rather than its raison d'etre, such as existentialist atheism, Soviet scientific atheism, or Ayn Rand's objectivism.

Certain worldviews are more atheistic than others, both in their ontologies and in their historical associations. French historian of atheism Georges Minois has paid close attention to the positive that atheism contains, while also observing what it negates: "Atheism is not merely an attitude of refusal, rejection, or indifference, defined only by its relationship to religion. It is also positive, constructive, and autonomous. Contrary, once again, to the assumptions of religious historians of atheism, the atheist is not merely one who does not believe. Atheists believe—not in God—but in man, in matter, and in reason." The ambiguity that Minois identifies in the history of atheism I encounter as productive ambivalence among secular people in the United States today. Understanding secularism requires that we understand what secular people negate and what they affirm—as well as the tension between.

Misfits of the Secular Paradox

Few secular people can simply reject religion and live in religion's remainder. Their need to affirm what they believe to be true and share in that truth with like-minded others leads secular people to gather together—if not always in nonbeliever communities, then in cities and neighborhoods where they feel at home. The secularism they affirm, however, is not one-size-fits-all. Many secular people—especially people of color—feel out of place in most nonbeliever communities in the United States. Particular ways of being secular arise from myriad small decisions about what parts of culture are too religious and what parts can be affirmed. If a secular community has a culture, whose culture is it?

Over drinks at a bar in Detroit, an ex-Muslim man told me about his double bind: "There's no way to separate Arabic and Islamic culture. There's nothing left. There's no Arabic culture. There's Islamic culture. What's left? The desert?" The man, who was born in the United Arab Emirates, was only half joking. In American secularism, he sees little that resembles his birth culture, so being secular means rejecting much if not a11 of it. A Latino humanist who used to be a Pentecostal youth minister described the same problem in different terms when speaking to me and a white leader of a local nonbeliever community in Los Angeles: "Religion is a culture as much as being Mexican is. We have to include a lot of culture when we reach out to the Latin community... White culture is a culture. I respect you and believe what you believe, but this [secular community] isn't my culture. It doesn't feel homey." Being secular requires them to negate too much—"What's left?"—and American secular culture has mostly failed to replace it.

Many women I spoke with have also felt excluded from the culture of organized secularism. In its distrust of emotion, in its confidence that critical thinking can produce ethical outcomes, and in its pattern of supporting men who have sexually harassed and assaulted women, organized secularism in the United States has disappointed many women who are ardently secular. In the backhanded words of one woman, reflecting on why more women are not involved in nonbeliever groups, "Many activist women may prefer to give their support to feminist organizations." Another woman, describing the founding of a prominent nonbeliever organization in the United States, said that she and her cofounders "would not have done so" if they "weren't feminists." For her, there is a strong connection between her secularism

and her feminism: "We wanted to keep religion out of laws affecting women and social policy." While some women have tried to reform organized secularism, others have given up on it, founding their own groups that work in parallel or shifting their focus to other causes and making their secular identities secondary or tertiary rather than primary.

Though secularism negates and affirms, it affirms the culture of white men more easily than the cultures of women and people of color. As one Chinese American woman who left the secular movement told me, "I'm an atheist, and my family worships our ancestors. I don't have a problem with that, but these secular people do." The stories of women and people of color are woven throughout every chapter of this book in order to demonstrate that secularism is a racializing and gendering formation that struggles to contain those who are not cisgendered white men. In the double movement of negating religion and affirming what secular people share, some lives mis-fit. At the same time, these misfits are creating new ways of being secular in which their lives can become legible. They are pioneering some of the most interesting forms of secular religiosity in the United States today, and their stories show not only who and what misfits the secular but how and why. They also represent the horizons of what secularism is becoming.

Each chapter of this book examines a different aspect of religion: belief, community, ritual, conversion, and tradition. Because secular people struggle to simply remove all these religion-like elements from their lives, they affirm them in part or entirely, sometimes uncritically but more often quite carefully and not without reservations. In the chapters on belief and tradition, this book shows that the avowedly secular people I met and interviewed share many strongly held beliefs about reality and the best way to know it. They also share many of the same values, and they largely agree on the terms of their internal debates, if not the conclusions. I found that these fundamentally shared beliefs cut across differences of race and gender and define secular people at least as much as what they refuse. In carefully exploring secular people's ambivalence toward religion, this book thus excavates an epistemological and ontological tradition that binds secular people in religion-like ways that cannot be acknowledged as religious in any simple terms. Their ambiguous religiosity provides ways to think through and beyond outmoded conceptions of religion that have reached their breaking point. Americas Christian inheritance—its concepts and its vocabulary—can only capture the lives of secular people as a paradox with mis-fitting remainders. Through an immanent, affectionate critique, I explain why and provide a map for navigating a new and emerging American religious landscape. <>

OCCULT IMPERIUM: ARTURO REGHINI, ROMAN TRADITIONALISM, AND THE ANTI-MODERN REACTION IN FASCIST ITALY by Christian Giudice [Oxford Studies in Western Esotericism, Oxford University Press, 9780197610244]

Christian Giudice's OCCULT IMPERIUM explores Italian national forms of Occultism, chiefly analyzing Arturo Reghini (1878-1946), his copious writings, and Roman Traditionalism. Trained as a mathematician at the prestigious University of Pisa, Reghini was one of the three giants of occult and esoteric thought

in Italy, alongside his colleagues Julius Evola (1898-1974) and Giulian Kremmerz (1861-1930). Using Reghini's articles, books, and letters, as a guide, Giudice explores the interaction between occultism, Traditionalism, and different facets of modernity in early-twentieth-century Italy.

The book takes into consideration many factors particular to the Italian peninsula: the ties with avant-garde movements such as the Florentine *Scapigliatura* and Futurism, the occult vogues typical to Italy, the rise to power of Benito Mussolini and Fascism, and, lastly, the power of the Holy See over different expressions of spirituality. **OCCULT IMPERIUM** explores the convergence of new forms of spirituality in early twentieth-century Italy.

Review

"With this outstanding volume, Christian Giudice is offering us the first academic monograph ever dedicated to Arturo Reghini and his milieu. Erudite, wide-ranging and yet eminently readable, the present study illuminates the cultural and political roots of fin-de-siècle and early twentieth-century Occultism in Italy, up to and including the Fascist era. By retracing Reghini's intricate intellectual and Masonic journeys, Giudice gives us a penetrating analysis of the entanglements of occult spirituality, (neo)pagan Roman Traditionalism and an anti-modern political stance typical of the then cultural avant-garde, in an Italy grappling with the seemingly unstoppable onslaught of modernity, nationalism, and war." -- Jean-Pierre Brach, Directeur d'études, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sorbonne

"*Occult Imperium* covers the life and work of Arturo Reghini, Italian esotericist, translator of René Guénon, and author of the original "Pagan Imperialism" of 1914, a work that inspired the title, and much of the content, of Julius Evola's Pagan Imperialism of 1928. **OCCULT IMPERIUM** is recommended for all who have an interest in the history of Traditionalism, Guénon, and Evola, and also because it introduces us to the little-known Italian esoteric milieu from before the First World War to the Fascist period, a milieu that both echoes and differs from the better-known French esoteric milieu of the same period." -- Mark Sedgwick, author of Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century

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CONTENTS

In Chapter 1, the core questions of my book were enunciated and, for convenience, will be posed once more here: How and why did Arturo Reghini react so vehemently to the modern, and what can the analysis of his writings offer to the ongoing debate regarding the intricate relationship between occultism and modernity?

Like many Italian occultists of his age, Reghini had an upper-class background and naturally saw himself as a step (or two) above the teeming and malleable masses. Having grown up with the ideals of the Risorgimento, Reghini saw a world where heroes, above-average human beings, had succeeded in accomplishing what was for many decades thought to be impossible: the reunification of all Italian territories under one rule. Thus, characters such as Garibaldi and Mazzini must have influenced young Reghini's mind significantly, so much so that, in "Imperialismo Pagano; he included them in the list of greats who had helped keep the Italic-Pythagorean Tradition alive through uncertain times. This elitist attitude of separating the collective from the individual was probably the first of Reghini's displays of reaction against what he perceived as the pernicious tendencies of the modern. Since many pages have passed from when I first asked the core questions that I have endeavored to answer in this work, I think it will be useful for the reader to recall Reghini's, and the Schola's in general, reaction toward the seemingly unstoppable malaise of modernity.

The first aspects, which would have definitely influenced both Armentano and Reghini in their longing for the past glories of ancient Rome and the tout-court rejection of the customs and cultural manifestations of the day, can already be found, as written earlier, in the Risorgimento period. The exaltation of Rome could be witnessed not only in the discourses of the great politicians of the day, such as Cavour or King Vittorio Emanuele, but also in the arts and literature of the day: in Chapter 2, I gave De Amicis's Cuore

and Manzoni's Promessi Sposi as examples of best-selling novels peppered with Risorgimento ideals such as the love for one's country and the rise of the three core values of the day, admirably summarized by Alberto Mario. Banti in the combination of love/honor/virtue (amore/onore/virtu), sacrifice (sacrifici^), and kinship (parentela). A list of war heroes was provided to the youth like Reghini, growing up in post - Risorgimento Italy: Garibaldi, the man capable of triumphing in any feat; Mazzini, who baptized Rome as the imperishable eternal city; and other minor figures such as Ippolito Nievo, who had called Rome the Gordian knot of the Italians' destinies.

Another idea that was readily available for young people of Reghini's generation was the role played by Freemasonry: many readers of Reghini, including biographer Natale di Luca, have asked themselves why Reghini and the Schola wished to transmit the teaching of a supposedly age-old tradition through often short-lived and chaotic Masonic manifestations, such as the Rito Felsitic Italiano. The answer, in my opinion, lies in the exaggerated role that Freemasonry attributed to itself in the unification of Italy, which has by now been discredited by scholars of Italian history and Freemasonry alike. In Reghini's days, and in the post-unification years, though, the allure of Italian Freemasonry was still very much alive, and that is why we see Reghini joining the I Rigeneratori lodge of Palermo as early as 1902. As we have seen, Garibaldi had been assigned an Honorary Grand Master title by the Italian Grand Orient (GOI), and many politicians, who were active in the years leading up to and after the reunification of Italy, were members of a Masonic lodge. To Reghini, belonging to a secret society meant being able to discuss everyday issues with his peers, while learning esoteric secrets that could help him advance spiritually: this is why he was so shocked and appalled by GOI's decision to open its ranks to the bourgeoisie. Masonic orders were supposed to be the training ground of the elite, in Reghini's possibly outdated view, not a place to meet up and exchange calling cards with members of lower classes. Another aspect of Risorgimento Freemasonry, which no doubt Reghini approved of, was its strong anticlerical stance against the temporal power of the Papacy in Rome. As we have seen, this would be a nonnegotiable aspect of Reghini's personality, which he no doubt picked up from the post-Risorgimento cultural heritage.

Another inclination that Reghini, maybe subconsciously, adopted from post-Risorgimento culture was his fascination with the occult. If we are to believe Parise, who first published Reghini's biographical sketch, Reghini had helped found the first Theosophical Lodge in 1897, which would have made him nineteen at the time, and travelling from Florence to Rome for that purpose. Such an early predisposition toward the occult sciences was shared by many others that he would start frequenting in the cultural cafes of Florence at the turn of the century, and it appears that, back at the beginning of the twentieth century, occultism was possibly more widespread and less problematic than it is today. Many of Reghini's friends were, to varying degrees, interested in the occult: from Theosophists Giovanni Amendola and Augusto Agabiti, to foreign residents in Florence such as Alexey Dodsworth, Theodor Daubler, and Annie Besant, to the Masonic contingent composed, among others, by Moretto Mori and Amerigo Bianchini. The diversity of the youngsters belonging to the blossoming avant-garde movements meant that Reghini was also active in other circles and rubbed shoulders both with the Idealists of the Leonardo, Giuseppe Papini and Giuseppe Prezzolini, and with Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and the members of the Futurist movement. Reghini also contributed to Leonardo in its brief occult, post-Nietzschean period, in which Papini seemed willing to try any avenue possible in order to elevate his everyday being to a higher status (perhaps influenced by the theory of the Ubermensch). Reghini was a central figure within the Florentine Theosophical movement, when he worked as the director of the Theosophical library, and through his

short stay within the Society, he managed to develop an interest for Eastern traditions, which the other members of the Schola never did. This is possibly the reason why, in later years, he would get on so well with Rene Guen^n, who, as we have seen, had abandoned all hope for a spiritual revival of the West. Ideas predominant within the Theosophical milieu would end up intriguing Reghini for the rest of his life, even after he had severed all ties and gone on to study under Armentano's tutelage: to name but two, Reghini would always be interested in the concept of the Hindu cycles of time, the Yugas, and the mythical subterranean city of Agarthi, hidden beneath the mountains of Tibet, and ruled by the mysterious King of the World. Another aspect of Theosophical activity in Italy, though, would be of paramount importance to Reghini's development: Decio Calvari's decision to focus on more autochthone manifestations of the secret wisdom, which immediately excited Reghini because of the possibility of linking his love for ancient Italy and his passion for occultism. This Theosophical beginning of Reghini's pursuit for a Roman Tradition has been overlooked by all previous scholars and must not be underestimated.

In Chapter 4 we have another series of clues that point toward Reghini's rejection of modernity, that are to be found especially within his Masonic misadventures. Reghini had joined the Michele di Lando (later rebaptized Lucifero) lodge in 1904, but he had been outraged by the new direction all lodges under GOI were moving toward: the democratization of Freemasonry, though the lowering of the fees had been the first episode to cause annoyance within Reghini's circle of friends. This had rapidly been followed by a reduction in the ritualistic aspect of GOI, which was primarily the reason Reghini had joined Freemasonry in the first place. When the head of GOI, Ettore Ferrari, had argued in favor of a greater involvement of Freemasons in Italy's public life, Reghini developed a lifelong disgust for GOI and its progressive initiatives. When, in 1906, Ferrari had added a commitment toward the world order and a willingness to fight for the democratic principle in the social and political sphere, Reghini abandoned the lodge. Luckily for him, just before leaving the Lucifero lodge, he had met Armentano and had immediately begun to study under his tutorage. If we were to summarize Armentano's teachings to Reghini, we could condense them in two key points: first, that a Pythagorean Tradition was passed down through the ages from master to disciple since the days in which Pythagoras taught his followers in ancient Kroton. Second, that such a Tradition was intimately bound to a form of Freemasonry that predated the Enlightenment and, therefore, could be brought back to its pristine state by eliminating all the profane and misinformed changes that had been made since the advent of modern times. In Armentano, Reghini had found a great ally in his war against the modern world: one of his most popular maxims had been that progress was equivalent to nonbeing, and that where order was, progress could not be. Hailing from an aristocratic Italian family, which had made its fortunes in Brazil, Reghini found in Armentano a mentor, a friend, and a fellow anti-modernist. As the Pythagoreans before him, Armentano taught that it was impossible to disconnect the various planes of a man's existence. According to him, the magical could not be disjoined from the political, the intellectual from the practical. It is clear, then, that Armentano and Reghini were in diametrical opposition against the process of progress and democratization that the modern world was beginning to manifest in 1910s Italy. The two were in favor of the eternal, the fixed, the orderly, while the modern world offered a maelstrom of protean changes in social, economic, and spiritual issues. The pair's attempt at taking over the Rito Felicific Italiano failed quickly: according to Reghini, it was due to the incompetence of the third head of the lodge, Eduardo Frosini. It might just be that to manifest what the Schola taught in a mundane environment such as a Masonic order in 1910s Italy was an endeavor doomed to failure.

The fifth chapter is possibly the most significant, when it comes to finding examples of Reghini's many reactions against the modern world, and also the most rewarding when looking for the reasons for such vitriolic retorts. The analysis of "Imperialismo Pagano" brings all of Reghini's grievances to surface, and none of his enemies are spared. To him, the nationalists were too imbued with Catholic propaganda, and the masses had no appeal. At the same time, a small group of intellectuals possessed a patriotic, pagan, elitist, and anticlerical sentiment, and this minute coterie rallied around Reghini and Armentano: Reghini was rumored to be the invisible head of the Florentine Futurists, the other members of the Schola Italica had happily accepted Reghini's role as their official spokesperson, and a good part of the Florentine cultural milieu shared Reghini's pagan, elitist, and imperialist political outlook. While small in number, the people for whom Reghini wrote "Imperialismo" were a vocal and influential aspect of the Italian prewar cultural scene. Reghini's publication was critiqued by the many who did not share his vast culture and knowledge of ancient Greek and Roman literature and customs. And the anti-Christian character of the article was denounced by members of GOI and his ex-Theosophist friends. The arguments contained in "Imperialismo" can be grouped in three distinct sections, for convenience: the first includes the overarching narrative, which includes Vergil, Dante, Bruno, Campanella, Garibaldi, and Mazzini as its main actors, of the transmission of an Italic-Pythagorean, imperial, pagan, antidemocratic, and anti-modern Tradition, which Reghini represented and that "Imperialismo Pagano" sought to present to the public on the eve of the Great War; the second cluster of arguments relates to the anticlerical aspect of the Schola's teachings: not only did Reghini blame Christianity for the fall of the Roman Empire, but he also found that, behind any historical crisis of Italian imperial power, the culprit was the Catholic Church, which Reghini famously described as a "Semitic cult"; the third, more hidden cluster of ideas, is the - rallying call for the creation of an intellectual elite that could divert the disastrous direction Italy was going in, by influencing the political climate of the day, through both political and magical means. The performance of rites to influence the events in Italian politics was something that Reghini continued to implement right until his break with Evola in 1929, and much of the practical work of the Ur Group was dedicated to this effort. "Imperialismo Pagano" could then be seen as a call to action, in order for Armentano and Reghini to see who was really ready to usher in a new age for Italy by any means possible, and it is reflected in the war correspondence between the two, ending with Reghini's statement that because of their work Austria had perished.

The themes of Chapter 6 and 7 may be considered together, as both sections deal with the more practical manifestations of Roman Traditionalist ideas. The three main events to influence the movement in the 1920s were without a doubt (1) Mussolini's rise to power, which so enflamed the hearts of the Roman Traditionalist milieu, with its imperial trappings and reference to ancient Rome and its grandeur; (2) a first, brusque awakening in 1925 with the regime's approval of the Bodrero bill, which effectively outlawed secret societies and dealt a huge blow to the dream of recreating a Masonic vehicle for Roman Traditionalist ideas, and which contributed to the voluntary exile of many of the core members of the Schola, including Armentano; and finally, (3) the tangible experience of occult practices of the Ur Group, in which groups or chains of initiates worked secretly to steer Mussolini's ideas toward the neo-Pagan stance shared by the members of this secret coterie. The concept of social occult modernism coined by Roger Griffin was used to express two key elements that preoccupied both the members of the Schola and the newly installed Fascist regime: the conviction of the decadence of the days they were living in, on the one hand, and a prophetic confidence in a renewal of ancient customs, which would benefit Italy as a whole, on the other. Victor Turner's idea of the individual abandoning society to form a smaller

communitas was also explored in correspondence of the Schola and of the first group of Fascists: both were deeply disillusioned by what they saw as a decadent age of ever-increasing mechanization, alienation of the individual, and erosion of social values. Both the Schola and the early Fascist regime argued for the creation of a new man, who would incarnate ancient ideals and who could bring forth a new, brighter future, or what Conservative Revolutionary Arthur Moller van den Bruck would call a reconnection forward. Although the thrill of having found in Mussolini a kindred spirit who had to share their same views on the Italic Tradition only lasted for approximately four or five years, the Schola's enthusiasm and Reghini's literary output both witnessed a significant boost. With the ban on Masonic organizations, Reghini realized that the ally they had sought in Mussolini had turned his back on them, and his Concordat with the Vatican, which granted the Pope temporal power again, after an absence from the political scene which lasted sixty years, smashed any dream of a new pagan Rome that was left. We are reminded once again of de Turris's conclusions that, if the National-Socialist regime did have occult roots, to be found in the volkisch and Ariosophist movements, the Fascist government never allowed occult expressions to thrive, from Mussolini's rise to power in 1923, until his downfall in 1945. The fact that some occultists attempted to favor his political endeavors through the use of magical rites can be seen as one minor expression of adherence to Mussolini's ideals of the foundation of the Third Rome, but the Duce himself did certainly not imagine his Rome to be influenced by Reghini's intellectual elite: he already had his Fascist elite, which ruled the country with an iron fist.

The previous chapter, covering the years spanning from 1930 to Reghini's death in 1946, shows two major themes running parallel: the first one is Reghini's idea that something could still be gained from Mussolini's regime, and that the declaration of the Catholic creed as the official religion of the country did not seem to bother him too much. In 1933 he became a card-carrying member of the Partito and he wrote on the virtues and symbolism of Fascism's main symbol, the lictores fasces. Such enthusiasm, though, would steadily wane throughout the 1930s, and by the start of the war, Reghini's preoccupations became more practical in nature. With little or no money, abandoned by his closest friends, who possibly lived under circumstances as bad as his, Reghini spent the last years of his life far away from his beloved Rome. The second major theme, which he developed especially in his Dei Numeri Pitagorici, was an even more intricate exploration of the Pythagorean Tradition that Armentano had initiated him to: right up to two years prior to his death, Reghini worked on his magnum opus and continued to practice the Pythagorean techniques, which would eventually allow him to experience palingenesis. Even in the most desperate of times, Reghini never lost the enthusiasm for the Italic-Pythagoean Tradition, which he did not see as remote and static, but as the only lens to see the world through: throughout the bombings, the Nazi raids of his house, poverty, and illness, Reghini saw the world as a perfect reflection of the Pythagorean monad, inspiring Camilla Partengo to write to Armentano, once Reghini had passed, about how "he was the example of that spiritual calm that belongs to he who lives in a higher plane and does not fear anything"

Throughout this book, I have provided a unique and novel approach that has demonstrated the existence of a manifestation of the occult, which defies both extreme characterizations as described earlier and creates a significantly important bridge. As to the ideas of the first group of social scientists, the anti-modern stance adopted by Reghini and the Roman Traditionalists is clearly anti-Positivist, against any idea of linear progress and to a certain extent irrational in that they do not seek to link science and spirituality in a novel, modern fashion. Nevertheless, entertaining the idea that anti-modern occult circles paved the way for the rise of Fascism is ludicrous. The Fascist entourage never viewed

occult circles with favor, and the ban on secret societies in 1925 and the Concordat with the Vatican in 1929 went against all Reghini represented. His correspondences with Rene Guenon, Amedeo Armentano, and other Traditionalists and his published books and articles have provided innumerable examples of Reghini's anti-modern, pro-Masonic, and anti-Christian dispositions. If one of the two parties had ever been eager to jump on one's bandwagon, it was the Roman Traditionalists, and certainly not Mussolini, whose affection toward the idea of imperial Rome was of a propagandistic nature, not a spiritual one. The differences with the conclusions reached by authors to cite only the most prominent scholars, like Alex Owen, Corinna Treitel, and Marco Pasi, who are involved in the contemporary debate on the intersection between occultism and modernity, could not be more evident, as we will see in the following paragraph. The aforementioned authors have all dealt with Mitteleuropean and Northern European countries, and it is my opinion that because they have dealt with a different kind of modernity, to put it with Eisenstadt, than the one that manifested in southern European countries, the results are necessarily very different.

In this book I have argued that, far from what can be surmised from the most recent scholarship in the field, the interaction between occultism and modernity was hardly always a progressive, Positivist hub in which occult circles stood at the forefront of social emancipation. Indeed, my main argument has been that there were, and still are, occult milieus that were reactionary, nonprogressive, anti-Positivist, antidemocratic: in a word, anti-modern. By using Eisenstadt's theory of multiple modernities, I have argued that if a rose-tinted version of progressive occultism was a reality in more northern European countries, where the process of modernization had started sooner and had produced more encouraging results, the same could not be said about countries in southern Europe, and especially Italy, which at the turn of the century was lagging behind most other European countries in both scientific fields and the humanities. However, it is clear by now that occultism does not equate to irrationality, as the Frankfurt School, but even more recent and better-informed scholars such as James Webb, have posited. While the idea of progressive occultism has been researched and argued with success by scholars such as Treitel and Owen, it is my opinion that the simplistic approach to the field of occultism seen as the embodiment of the irrational may be finally discarded and its idea considered passe and absolutely inaccurate.

By using Reghini's writings and those of other Traditionalists of the early part of the twentieth century as empirical material, I have defended the idea of the existence of a different expression of occultism, which I have termed antimodern occultism, and given multiple examples in order to bolster my main theoretical framework The most significant result of my research is that of having pinpointed a more obscure, oft-neglected facet of occultism in modern society, which almost forms the point of a triangle, it being equidistant from Adorno's theory of occult irrationality and that of modern scholars' progressive occultism. Indeed, this neglected facet has yet to be researched in depth, and it does not limit itself to the Schola Italics or Italy.

The Different Approaches to Occultism
Anti-modern Occultism

Occultism as   *Progressive*
Irrationality   *Occultism*

If we were to do away with the idea of occultism as irrationality altogether, as I suggest, a line would be formed, with manifestations such as Reghini's Schola Italics, on the one hand, and more progressive examples of occult manifestations such as the Theosophical Society, on the other. This dark side of occultism at the turn of the century had been previously ignored, and the many publications on fin de siecle occultism had all endeavored to show how in line with the major tropes of modernity the Occult Revival actually was. This had created a disproportionate imbalance, which I can only believe was pursued in order to create a sanitized version of the occult, which would make it acceptable for academic interdisciplinary studies in the future: by doing so, though, the academics who have highlighted the positive (or Positivist?) aspects of the occult, while sweeping what didn't fit with their theories under the proverbial rug, ended up providing a disservice to anyone interested in the whole story. As I mentioned many times in the course of this book, anti-modern occultism was not only represented by Reghini's Schola Italics. We find examples of it everywhere in Europe: in France, with Alexandre Saint-Yves d'Alveydre and his idea of an occult synarchy as the perfect form of government; in Austria, with Guido von List and Lanz von Liebenfels, and the tenets of Ariosophy; in Switzerland, France, England, and Italy, with the Traditonalist School shaped by Rend Guenon and developed in different directions by Julius Evola, Frithjof Schuon, Martin Lings, and others, with their fierce critique of modernity, materialism, progressivism, psychologism, scientism, empiricism, agnosticism, and atheism.

Progressive   *Anti-Modern*
Occultism ●────────────────────────● *Occultism*

Anti-modern occultism is certainly a challenging topic, and its relationship with modernity raises many issues, some of which I have tackled in this work: research on this facet on occultism, when compared to the more "socially acceptable" esoteric manifestations covered by previous scholars, who have investigated the intersection between the occult and the modern, has been sorely lacking. It is my hope that this work, and the handful of others dedicated to anti-modern occultism, will inspire other scholars to readdress the balance. <>

HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY AND CREATIVE ALCHEMY: THE EMERALD TABLET, THE CORPUS HERMETICUM, AND THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE SEVEN SPHERES by Marlene Seven Bremner [Inner Traditions, 9781644112885]

- Examines the foundational texts and principles of Hermeticism and alchemy, showing how they offer a foundation for a psycho-spiritual creative practice
- Takes the reader on a Hermetic journey through each of the seven traditional planets, offering meditative discourses that speak directly to the intuitive soul
- Provides examples from traditional alchemical art and the author's own intricate esoteric paintings

Drawing on ancient Egyptian and Greek cosmogonies and essential Hermetic texts, such as the Corpus Hermeticum, the Emerald Tablet (Tabula Smaragdina), and the Nag Hammadi codices, Marlene Seven Bremner offers a detailed understanding of Hermetic philosophy and the art of alchemy as a foundation for a psycho-spiritual creative practice. Offering examples from traditional alchemical art and her own intricate esoteric paintings, Bremner examines the foundational principles of Hermeticism and alchemy and shows how these traditions are a direct means for accessing higher consciousness and true self-knowledge, or gnosis, as well as a way to extract the essence of one's own creative gifts.

The author takes the reader on a Hermetic journey through each of the seven traditional planets--Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon--exploring their mythological, philosophical, alchemical, Qabalistic, magical, astrological, and energetic natures and offering meditative discourses that reach past the rational mind to speak directly to the intuitive soul. She relates the seven planets to the esoteric anatomy of the human body, specifically the seven chakras, and shows how the planets can offer understanding and experience of archetypal energies and patterns in the body, in one's life, and in the creative process.

A profound synthesis of magical and occult teachings as well as an initiation into the alchemical opus, this book reveals how to integrate and apply Hermetic and alchemical principles to awaken inner knowing, liberate the imagination, and live a mystical, creative, and truly inspired life.

Review

"This life-changing book will take you on an amazing, enlightening, soul-filled journey into the wisdom and profound insights of Hermeticism, alchemy, and the occult arts. It gracefully reveals universal truths, cosmic secrets, and hidden mysteries through the author's immense knowledge on the subject matter as well as her own brilliant creative process. I highly recommend this book to all those who would like to spark their own healing process and spiritual awakening." — *PHILIP M. BERK, author of Mountain's Stillness, River's Wisdom and A Single Flower: Medi*

"Marlene Seven Bremner has blessed contemporary readers with a comprehensive book on the history and practice of Hermeticism. Well-researched and approached from the experience of the creative process itself, **HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY AND CREATIVE ALCHEMY** offers valuable insight into the

transmutative path of the Great Work. As an artist and true daughter of Hermes, the author adeptly shows us why Hermeticism is referred to as the Royal Art. An absolutely pleasurable and edifying read." — *WILLIAM KIESEL, author of Magic Circles in the Grimoire Tradition*

"Bremner guides us on a transformative journey of the energetics of change that bridges ancient wisdom with new scholarship. She illuminates the alchemical arts brilliantly and unforgettably, both textually and visually. Her complex paintings reveal her vision and unfold their meaning only upon the reader's resonant, meditative gaze. This book invites us to enter into the cauldron of our mystical transformation and awaken our creative forces." — *LESLIE KORN, PH.D., MPH, author of Rhythms of Recovery: Trauma, Nature, and the Body*

"**HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY AND CREATIVE ALCHEMY** is an important and necessary work, especially for anyone involved in art and art making who wishes to use their making as a spiritual practice. Alchemy is an art; in fact, it has been called 'the Art' of arts in that all creation, according to alchemical theory, flows from the same principles. Implied in this is that any art practice may be used in the alchemical work of making change. In *Hermetic Philosophy and Creative Alchemy*, firmly grounded in primary texts and enriched through her own practice, Bremner provides a remarkably varied and thorough foundation in Hermetic philosophy, cosmology, and practice with leads for deeper study. With this foundation established, Bremner then sets before us another rich feast in her word-portraits of each of the planetary spheres--each portrait an incredible array of myth, poetry, science, philosophy, and magic. Understanding these spheres is critical, as they are the stages of 'the old, old path' of the soul's journey to the One. *Hermetic Philosophy and Creative Alchemy* provides the maps and tools for this journey. It is all here. The only thing missing is you." — *BRIAN COTNOIR, author of Alchemy: The Poetry of Matter and Practical Alchemy: A Guide to the Great W*

CONTENTS

The aim of this present work is to illuminate in a small way the origins, development, and general philosophy, theology, and mysticism of Hermeticism and the art of alchemy, in order that a solid foundation may be laid. Special attention is given to alchemy as a psycho-spiritual art of engagement with life, involving the Soul, Mind, and Body, or in other words, Consciousness, Thought, and Matter. Emphasis is placed on the value of self-initiation and the cultivation of a direct relationship with the Divine, and full immersion into the Hermetic mysteries. Where I may lack in scholarly and technical training, I make up for in personal experience of Hermetic truths through creative discipline, devotion, personal revelation, and over twenty years of intensive study, practice, and experimentation in the occult. In addition to this, my own experience of uniting art and alchemy has greatly informed my views in this work. It is my conviction that this union empowers the initiate to trust their own intuition and creative capabilities for personal and global transformation.

It is not the intention of this book to be a comprehensive and solitary source for Hermetic philosophy, nor do I proclaim to be anything more than a seeker who has been inspired (called by Spirit) to put my experience and understanding into written form, in the hopes that others may thereby benefit in their own quest. The aim of this book is to introduce the reader to the Hermetic teachings and associated subjects of alchemy, astrology, philosophy, and magic that have served as a means for self-initiation from the most ancient times to the present day, and to set these forth as meditative discourses that penetrate beyond the rational mind to the intuitive soul. As a means to help the reader integrate and conceptualize what has been historically called the perennial philosophy (philosophic perennis), comparative analysis is offered between various cultures and their mythologies, mystic and religious traditions, and sacred texts to reveal the common threads that link them through time and space. However, the primary focus of this work remains Hermetic and seeks to present the core of Hermetic teachings as they've developed through the ages in a way that is both scholarly and initiatory.

By following the teachings of Hermes, the initiate may open the mind and attune to its inherent divinity, partaking of its immortal essence and coming to know "God," or that ultimate and eternal presence within. This is not so much a discovery of something new, but rather more like uncovering what has been there all along, spoken of as an awakening from a drunken sleep or stupor, as in the "poemandres" (CH 1.27): "O ye people, earthborn folk, ye who have given yourselves to drunkenness, and sleep, and ignorance, be sober now, cease from your surfeit, cease to be glamoured by irrational sleep!"" The numinous quality of such an experience can verge on surreality and awaken a mystical, vibrant participation with life.

In alchemy, this awakening process is called "the Great Work" (magnum opus), and it certainly is no small endeavor. Between the personal and collective traumas that we carry and the deep conditioning

that we undergo by our families and cultures, we may be deeply enmeshed in a materialist and alienated conception of the world that resists fundamentally the notion that communion with the infinite mind of God is even possible. Yet just as the earth forms a rough stone, that the river may later smooth it into a peaceful and harmonious shape, experiencing the trauma of life softens and shapes the soul. In this way we are prepared through the ordeals of life to approach the ineffable truth of who and what we are, and what our purpose is. By reconciling the opposing principles within us, facing our own inner dragons, and purifying our consciousness, we awaken to a much greater Self, in tune with our individual passion and purpose, and empowered to create a life that is beneficial to others and ourselves. Underlying the cosmogonies, theologies, philosophies, and theurgical practices of Hermeticism is the fundamental truth that we are creating the world through our imagination and thoughts each and every day.

Definitions: Hermetic, Hermetism, And Hermeticism

Before we can properly describe the origins of the Hermetic tradition, let us first clarify the terms to be used throughout this work. In surveying works pertaining to the Hermetic tradition, one encounters the words Hermetism and Hermeticism, which may seem interchangeable; however they bear differing and specific meanings. According to Antoine Faivre in his essay "Renaissance Hermeticism and the Concept of Western Esotericism," the difference can be attributed to the god Hermes himself, from whose name both Hermetism and Hermeticism derive.

Hermetism, as Faivre explains, relates to the ancient Greco-Egyptian god Hermes Trismegistus, an extension of the even more ancient Egyptian god Thoth. It encompasses the body of theological and philosophical writings and teachings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, specifically a body of work cumulatively referred to as the Hermetica. Hermeticism, on the other hand, relates to the Greek Hermes, also known as Mercurius, the psychopomp and messenger between humans and the gods that facilitates the transmutations of alchemy. Thus the terms Hermetic science and Hermeticism sometimes refer specifically to alchemy; however Hermeticism has also come to encompass Hermetism, astrology, Qabalah, Christian Theosophy, occultism, and magic. This book is primarily written from within the multifaceted gem that is called Hermeticism, with frequent references to its origins in the tradition of Hermetism.

There are some who would do away with the popular term Hermeticism altogether. Wouter J. Hanegraaff asserts that Hermeticism derives from faulty conclusions drawn by Frances A. Yates in the 1960s about the Hermetic writings and the so-named Hermetic tradition that developed in the late Middle Ages. He is in agreement on using Hermetism to describe the religio-philosophical writings of the Hermetica. However, according to Hanegraaff, despite there being some important works of occult science—the astrological, theurgical, and alchemical writings—attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, many were not, and hence it isn't appropriate to label them Hermeticism. For simplicity, however, we will use the term Hermeticism to refer to the broad scope of Hermetic occultism, and Hermetism when referring specifically to the theological works of the Hermetica.

The word Hermetic is used in a number of ways, all of which say something about the nature of Hermes himself Hermetic is used to describe subjects of an abstruse, occult, esoteric, or mysterious nature, and also applies specifically to the teachings of Hermes. A Hermetic seal is used when something needs to be airtight and protected from external influence, an important aspect of operative laboratory alchemy, and a powerful metaphor for internal alchemy. A person living a Hermetic life is someone that is adapted to

reclusiveness and solitude, study and contemplation. All of these meanings are important within the context of Hermetic and alchemical studies, for the mysteries transmitted through Hermes and the path to gnosis, the knowledge of the Soul, are best approached in a Hermetic way, with devotion, study, contemplation, sufficient solitude, and in a way that protects the process from external influence that might corrupt it.

The Path Ahead

This book is arranged into three parts, each one building on the last. In part I we will answer the question of what exactly Hermeticism is and why it matters to us today, particularly if we are in any way involved in the occult arts, and even more so for those of us who want to live spiritually oriented and creative lives, in tune with the cosmos and awakened to our innermost potential. To begin with, a brief overview is given of the various ancient texts that make up the Hermetica, including the Corpus Hermeticum and the Emerald Tablet, which are fundamental to an understanding of the tradition. Throughout the book, passages from these profound teachings of Hermes will be drawn upon to show the ways in which they initiate us into gnosis and liberate the imagination. Then we will follow the arc of Hermeticism's development, from its distant past up to the current day, finishing up with a look at the three branches of Hermeticism: astrology, theurgy, and alchemy.

Part II provides a look at the Hermetic story of creation and ordering of the cosmos, and how this relates to alchemical philosophy. This is a system for understanding the relationship between consciousness and matter, between the individual soul and the cosmos, and between the Creator and the created. Alchemical theory is fundamental to any true understanding of alchemy, whether one is practicing in a laboratory, or as a spiritual and creative process.

Finally, in part III, we will take a journey with the wandering stars, those seven inner planets of the solar system whose archetypes are alive within each and every one of us. The purpose of this voyage is to saturate the mind with planetary myths and correspondence that will speak to the unconscious and catalyze inner transformation. Each of the seven planets has its own set of indispensable lessons to impart to those of us on the path of self-initiation, and they are the key to unlocking the seven chakras for the liberation of creative potential. As these pages are written in an initiatory manner, the reader will interpret them based on their own personal level of initiation, and any ideas that spark the inspiration and ignite that inner alchemical fire should be investigated further, with intuition as your guide. These chapters should be digested slowly, with plenty of space taken for personal reflection and integration in Body, Mind, and Soul.

May these teachings be an inspiration and a light to you on your path, as they continue to be on mine, stoking the flames of transformation; liberating your imagination to create a mystical and expansive life; and instilling in you a deep appreciation for the teachings of Hermes and all that they have to offer humanity at this crucial time in our evolution. In the words of Virgil, sic itur ad astra, "thus one goes to the stars."

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This book has endeavored to provide a historical foundation for the Hermetic teachings, and to extract their essence through a philosophical system that serves as a means of deepening one's personal relationship with the Divine. I have attempted to present, as clearly as possible, the Hermetic

cosmogony and the journey of the soul from its involution into matter through its evolution to gnosis. Further, throughout this work I have introduced the basis for Creative Alchemy, the aim of which is the liberation of the imagination and the realization of one's fullest creative potential. A fundamental understanding of alchemy's underlying philosophies as well as a thorough comprehension of the planets and their correspondences is the foundation of this practice.

For those who find themselves on a Hermetic path of self-initiation, or perhaps just curious about the subject, this book is a resource and a guide, but by no means is it the final word on these matters. One must immerse oneself in both practical creative work and devout study of contemporary and traditional sources, as well as form a personal understanding of the material. In particular, reading the theological and philosophical Hermetica is essential, for they are in themselves an initiation into gnosis. As concerns the technical Hermetica and arcane alchemical texts, there is much to be gained in their reading even if understanding is evasive, for in between the lines of obscurity the truth will be revealed in time. Yet it is not enough to remain in the mental realm. We must also engage emotionally and physically in order to integrate these teachings and begin the work of transmuting planetary energies into their most exalted and noble forms. Like the trinity of Body, Mind, and Soul, we are tasked with the integration of feeling, thought, and action, a union that will elevate us as individuals and form a bridge between our internal healing and its externalization, by which we share our unique gifts with the world.

At the core of the Hermetic teachings is the idea that all of life is part of one, seamless field of creation, ever-changing and yet eternal. In the solitary work of self-realization, we must not lose sight of our obligation to the betterment of all life, which is to say consciousness itself. Our individual contribution will be entirely unique, and through continually purifying and refining the content of our bodies, minds, and souls, we can aspire to endow our gifts with authenticity and a spiritual potency that will be of great benefit not only to ourselves, but to others as well.

Do not be mistaken that there is an end to this work, nor let yourself be deceived into believing in an ultimate perfection; it is a life-long process, and yet there are moments of triumph over the vices and corruptions that have enslaved us, and even more moments of failure. With the victories come great powers, and great responsibility. The only perfection that can be attained exists in this moment, in its unbroken completion. While we strive for perfection in our alchemical work, we come to know that true perfection lies in how clearly we can relate to the All-That-Is, which exists in eternal perfection. We each have our seasons of light and dark, and mustn't be discouraged when all of our hard work seems to be for nought. Rather, what happens through a devoted practice of Hermeticism and Creative Alchemy is that we develop resilience to the hardships of life and a deeply fixed faith in our eternal and true Self. This is the true lapis philosophorum, the elixir of life, equivalent to Hermetic gnosis, and the means by which you may perform the most sublime transmutations in your life.

Is it possible to create the philosopher's stone through one's very own creative process, without the use of any laboratory equipment? In my next book, I will rely on the foundational understanding of Hermeticism's roots developed here to explore a practical approach to the art of Creative Alchemy. Hopefully, after our immersive journey through the planetary spheres, we have begun to see how these energies relate to the creative process as well as to our personal stories and experiences in life; inspiring the imagination and opening up the possibility of that Hermetic ideal of deenergizing the seven rulers to reach the eighth sphere of creative freedom. In that book, we will look at how artists throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries attempted to liberate the imagination from societal constraints; how

they sought to reestablish the subjective as a valid lens with which to view reality; and how the role of the unconscious in art came into focus and found its efflorescence in Surrealism. During this sojourn we will see how alchemy infused itself into the minds of these artists and found expression both metaphorically and practically. From here we will take an immersive journey through the magnum opus, the "Great Work," exploring the four stages of the nigredo, albedo, citrinitas, and rubedowhich we have touched on in this book—and applying these to the creative process in a way that results in both inner and outer transmutation.

While engaging with the alchemical opus, this first book can be referred to as a reference when seeking deeper insight into the planetary archetypes that you are working with in your own process of transmutation, as well as to the fundamental philosophy underlying the alchemical opus. After ascending the Hermetic tree from its roots and into its vastly sprawling branches, and after traveling from the boundless abyss to making the journey through the seven spheres, your mind has been saturated with the teachings of Hermes and the multivalent qualities of the spheres. As you begin to recognize the ways in which these energies are working through your life, finding your own personal myth within theirs, you will begin to unlock their secret powers that reside in the chakras. This experience will help to inform you as you embark on the magnum opus to not only liberate your imagination, but to purify, through the processes of alchemy, the seven essential layers of your being so that your authenticity and unique gifts shine through in whatever you create.

In my own life, uniting the Hermetic path with art has been a richly rewarding experience, instilling within me an unwavering trust in my creative process, as well as the ups and downs of life. It was the means by which I made it through the long, dark night of the soul, precipitated by a terrifying encounter with the prima materia. This was a near-death experience and simultaneous kundalini awakening that left me shattered and searching desperately for solid ground. All of my usual methods of self-regulating seemed to exacerbate my separation and fear. Incidentally, it was at this time that my journey with oil painting and my alchemical initiation began. I learned that I could transmute my pain through visual symbols, and by uniting art and alchemy, I was able to reassemble myself after a complete psychological dismemberment and separation of soul and spirit. Thus commenced many years of gazing into the alchemical retort in my "lab"—my studio—and a slow digestion of the secret matter I had retrieved from the abyss. I understood that every painting was an alchemical process, and I treated the canvas like an empty retort in which I placed the material to be rectified or transmuted. When I wasn't painting, I was reading everything I could get my hands on about Hermeticism—alchemy, magic, astrology, Qabalah, and tarot; as well as mythology, meditation, and psychology. Hermeticism seemed to be the key that unlocked all of the spiritual traditions and brought them to union.

My practice of Hermeticism and alchemy has led to a deeply intentional existence from which my creative expression has blossomed in ways I never could have foreseen when I started out. On this magical-alchemical path the separation between subjective and objective reality dissolves, allowing for a continual dialogue between the inner and outer experience. This work has taught me the art of listening, so that in every instance the unconscious voice may be heard; to look into the ineffable face of the mystery and extract the essence of an idea, and then to bring it into form. Dreams, subtle impressions, signs from nature, and subliminal messages become part of a rich tapestry to gaze upon in self-reflection, and from which to draw upon for subject matter. When combined with planetary magic and mythology, this can lead to some unexpected, surreal, and revelatory results. <>

PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA ON TRIAL: HERESY, FREEDOM, AND PHILOSOPHY by by Brian Copenhaver [Oxford University Press, 9780192858375]

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola has been a beacon of progress in modern times, and the *Oration on the Dignity of Man* has been the engine of his fame. But he never wrote a speech about the dignity of man. The prince's speech announced quite different projects: persuading Christians to become Kabbalists in order to annihilate themselves in God; and convincing philosophers that their path to saving wisdom was concord rather than disputation.

PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA ON TRIAL: HERESY, FREEDOM, AND PHILOSOPHY shows that Pico's work was in no way progressive - or 'humanist' - and that his main authorities were medieval clerics and theologians, not secular Renaissance intellectuals. The evidence is Pico's *Apology*, his self-defence against heresy charges: this public polemic reveals more about him than the famous speech that he never gave and that deliberately kept its message secret. The orator's method in the *Oration* was esoteric, but the defendant in the Apology made his case openly in a voice that was academic and belligerent, not prophetic or poetic.

Since the middle of the last century, textbooks written for college students have promoted only one Pico, a hero of progressive humanism. But his *Conclusions* and *Apology*, products of late medieval culture, were in no way progressive. The grim scene of the *Apology*, his report on a battle for life and honor, was the proximate medieval past where human history was despised as the annals of sin. To understand Pico's universe of dismal expectations, our best guide is his *Apology*, based on lessons learned from medieval teachers.

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Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94) has been a beacon of progress in modern times, and the celebrated Oration on the Dignity of Man has been the engine of his fame. But he never wrote a speech about the dignity of man, as I showed in my recent book about Pico della Mirandola and his Oration in Modern Memory. The prince's speech announced quite different projects: persuading Christians to become Kabbalists in order to annihilate themselves in God; and convincing philosophers that their path to saving wisdom was concord rather than disputation.

This book about Heresy, Freedom, and Philosophy shows that Pico's work, before and after he wrote the Oration, was in no way progressive—or 'humanist.' My main topic is Pico's Apology, his self-defense against heresy charges: this public polemic reveals more about him than the famous speech that he never gave and that deliberately kept his ideas secret. The orator's method in the Oration was esoteric, but the defendant in the Apology made his case openly in a voice that was academic and belligerent, not oracular or poetic. Perhaps because of its size and presentation, the Apology has been read less than Pico's other writings: as far as I know, the last book devoted entirely to it appeared more than five centuries ago.

Because Pico's speech was misread for so long, he came to be seen as a herald of modernity and a prophet of Enlightenment. This book confirms that he was no such thing. Pico wrote the Apology, his second book, to defend his first book, the outrageously provocative 900 Conclusions that he published a

few months earlier. This collection of theses for academic debate caused an uproar. Pope Innocent VIII condemned thirteen of the prince's propositions within weeks after the Conclusions appeared. To answer the Pope's indictment point by point, Pico divided his Apology into thirteen parts, called "Questions." My book discusses these Questions, labeled Q1, Q2, Q3 and so on, while focusing on six of them.

Chapter 1: To put Pico's Questions in context, my first chapter introduces the Apology as a whole—a record of conflict between Pico and his papal judges about basic points of Christian doctrine, like God's incarnation as a human, the descent of Jesus to Hell, Christ's eucharistic body, and constraints on belief about such teachings. The six Questions studied here show better than the other seven how the prince confronted his prosecutors on these fundamentals of his faith and theirs.

After Jesus was crucified but before he rose from the dead, he descended to Hell in order to release good people imprisoned there temporarily: this 'Harrowing of Hell' was a primary but perplexing article of the Christian creed. When Jesus went down to Hell, his body was still buried. But Pico and his adversaries in court, like all Christians, thought of the Hell that Jesus visited as a place—or a place containing many places, if Dante was right. How could Christ, without a body, be in a place, any place at all?

The person who took this trip to the underworld was God—a pure spirit, eternal and changeless. But this God had taken on a human body, as Jesus, in order to save other embodied humans. Yet Pico knew that human bodies were material and imperfect, that they changed, suffered, and died. Then how could a changeless God be both perfect and embodied? To understand the dogma of incarnation—the embodiment of God—in a philosophical way, the inquiring prince needed a theory of divine embodiment. But the version that he proposed offended the authorities, and they ruled that his ideas were heretical.

Chapter 2: To express his theories and defend them, Pico used techniques and terminology of scholastic theology, as taught by Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham but also by Jean Cabrol, Pierre de la Palud, Jean Quidort, and other lesser figures. To document his Apology, Pico relied on three dozen medieval authorities in all—both obscure and eminent. Their philosophical vocabulary was specialized, even arcane, but Pico had to master it, and he did. My second chapter shows the complexity and depth of what he learned.

An indispensable part of the scholastic language that Pico acquired—with life or death consequences for him—was the medieval terminology of 'suppo- words.' He inherited these technical terms from a tradition ten centuries old, and venerable age was part of their value for him. The suppo- words tracked in my second chapter were Pico's tools throughout the Apology: this intricate terminology is a portal to his way of doing philosophy. Doorways to the prince's defense against heresy charges have been shut for five centuries: Pico della Mirandola on Trial opens them.

Chapter 3: My third chapter analyzes Pico's account of Christian teaching on the incarnation. When he published a thesis about this doctrine in the Conclusions, the Pope swiftly attacked the proposition along with twelve others. To make the offending statement in the Conclusions and to restate it in the Apology, Pico used an odd word not found in today's dictionaries of classical Latin, the verb suppositare.

This unusual verb and its cousins—other suppo-words—occur two dozen times just in this one Question on the incarnation.

Asa matter of Christian orthodoxy, who was right about the sacred dogma of incarnation: the prince or his papal opponents? Answers to this threatening question turned on suppo- words. The intemperate author of the Apology revered a Church that executed people like himself, before and after his heresy trial, because the Church's agents condemned wrong answers to such questions as grievous sins, not just misunderstandings—as insults to God that deserved capital punishment. Mistakes about terminology could be fatal.

Chapter 4: When Pico, a pious Christian, went to church and prayed at Mass, he believed that Christ came in his body to that very place, where he and others could see God there in front of them on an altar. All Christians thought that Christ came every day—body and blood, soul and divinity—to altars in churches everywhere in Christendom. Yet no one ever actually saw the body or the blood. In all those places, the only sacramental sights were bread and wine blessed by a priest: how could that be? Pico took such questions up in three of his condemned theses, discussed in my fourth chapter.

Chapter 5: My fifth chapter moves from the metaphysics of divine embodiment and the semantics of suppo- words to the ethics of belief—to the moral environment of Pico's views about articles of faith, like the eucharist and incarnation, and of denunciations of his views by opponents. The papal agents who condemned the prince thought that some beliefs, as articles of faith, were necessary for salvation. Pico agreed—in principle. But as a practical matter, he had to defend himself in a heresy trial. By the standards of his time and place—Italy in the late fifteenth century—who made the better case about faith and belief: Pico or his assailants? My fifth chapter takes this question up.

Conclusions: Since the middle of the last century, textbooks written for college students have promoted only one Pico, purportedly a hero of progressive humanism. But his stance in the Conclusions and Apology, which were products of late medieval culture, was in no way progressive. The familiar, forward-looking Pico did not write the Apology. The grim scene of his book, his report on a battle for life and honor, was the proximate medieval past where human history was despised as the annals of sin. To understand Pico's universe of dismal expectations, our best guide is his Apology. But the author did not choose his book's topics, and its theories were not his own. He learned them from medieval teachers.

During his lifetime, Pico allowed only three of his books to be printed—the Apology, Conclusions, and Heptaplus—and none was a humanist project. Now a false icon of humanism, he wrote little in the humanist style and circulated none of it widely. His thoroughly medieval works may seem strange to modern readers who come to them for the first time. They're utterly unlike writings by Poggio Bracciolini, Agnolo Poliziano, Lorenzo Valla, and others for whom the word 'humanist' might be a better fit. Pico's Conclusions and Apology are products of the late Middle Ages.

Studying Pico as the author of these books and linking them with their sources relocates the author in the history of European thought: his thinking in these works was medieval and scholastic, and so was his self-presentation—not modern or even pre-modern.

Procedures: Pico spent years studying philosophy and called himself a philosopher—often and insistently. He was right: he was a philosopher in the same way that Aquinas, Scotus, and Ockham were

philosophers. But in the Anglophone world, where analytic philosophy is the standard, philosophers now pay little attention to him: most assume that his way of doing philosophy is alien to them and useless. As a result, Pico has rarely been studied in a way that Anglophone philosophers today would recognize as philosophical.

My book aims to bring Pico closer to current philosophical conversations by clarifying his thought with tools of analytic philosophy—seldom applied on the scale of this book to a Renaissance text. Realizing that the ways of philosophers may annoy or baffle some historians, and vice versa, I've done this in order to make my investigations recognizable as philosophy to philosophers without making them inscrutable to historians. For the theory that supports this project, see my article in the British Journal for the History of Philosophy. In broader terms, Pico della Mirandola on Trial is a book for students and teachers of history, languages, law, literature, philosophy, religion, rhetoric, and theology, also medieval and renaissance studies. Pico fans in their legions might like it too, I hope.

Nonetheless (in the interest of full disclosure), because Pico's Apology is a work of philosophy, because Western philosophy since Descartes has taken paths unknown to Pico, and because my own outlook is post-Cartesian, I find the medieval Apology hard to read. The circumstances of the book's production, especially the author's haste under pressure, aggravated other difficulties, which start with language no longer familiar to readers like me.

If a philosopher today mentions Dasein when discussing Heidegger or refers to Bedeutung when talking about Frege, she can assume that other philosophers will understand. Likewise, when Pico used suppo-words like suppositum and suppositare again and again in the Apology, he knew that other philosophers would understand. But suppositum and its cousins are now obscure: even experts on pre-Cartesian thought are not always sure that they, not to speak of their readers, understand this terminology.

For this reason, I've paid close attention to the Latin of the Apology's Questions and the Conclusions—which is in no way 'humanist' Latin. When English words in texts that I've translated correspond ambiguously to the Latin possibilities, I've supplied the Latin in parentheses. I've also provided full English translations for four of Pico's Questions (Q4, 8, 9, and 10) at the ends of Chapters 3, 4 and 5. Pico's arguments, in the manner of scholastic philosophy, are often dense and almost never supported by formalizations like 'A is B' or 'if p, then q.' To clarify Pico's reasoning and to avoid ambiguity and repetition, I've used such devices to supplement words and phrases represented by them. For example: double quotation marks always indicate direct quotations from sources cited, while single quotation marks mainly distinguish using a word, like 'frog' in 'a frog has four legs,' from mentioning a word, as in 'frog has four letters.' I've also added lists and tables to summarize formalizations used over long stretches of text.

I became interested in Pico's heresy trial while working on an edition and translation of the Apology for the I Tatti Renaissance Library (ITRL). An ITRL edition and translation of the Oration and of the Life of Pico by his nephew will appear in 2022. Over the years, several ITRL projects contributed to my Magic and the Dignity of Man (2019), whose topic is Pico's Oration. This book, which studies the Apology, is entirely separate in concept and content: agreement with my Pico book of 2019 is thorough, but there is no overlap. This new book is entirely different.

I first encountered Pico's kind of philosophy at Loyola College (as it was then) in Baltimore in 1960— before the Second Vatican Council turned Roman Catholic education upside down. When students of my age enrolled in psychology courses at other colleges, they read Freud and B. F. Skinner while I was memorizing Aquinas on phantasms at Loyola. My Jesuit teachers delivered a curriculum still shaped by a Plan of Studies written in the sixteenth century to promote Thomist scholasticism. When I left Loyola in 1964, I kept reading philosophy while exploring the history of Pico's world. But four decades passed before the next time I saw philosophy historicized as consequentially as it had been at Loyola— where the main motives of my teachers were religious, not academic.

Until 2003, when I moved from UCLA's bureaucracy to its Philosophy Department, my philosophical education continued, as hostility to history gradually decreased among Anglophone philosophers. The days of "just say no to history" as a philosopher's slogan were waning. The tide had been high at the flood, however, and I seldom saw the waters bridged—from either side—for forty years after I left Loyola. My history friends and my philosophy friends usually talked past one another, when they talked at all. Starting almost twenty years ago, Calvin Normore changed all that for me—changed it utterly. Our seminars at UCLA, which we've often taught together, showed me how to bring Pico—the historical Pico and others like him, the honored philosophical dead—back into living philosophical conversations.

To stimulate such conversations is an aim of this book.

Only a book's readers can judge whether it succeeds—whether it works. For my readers and judges, I have a request, then a suggestion. First, please be kinder than Pico's judges were to him. Next, before starting on the first chapter, read one of Pico's Questions translated at the end of the third, fourth, and fifth chapters: they're quite short. Then go back and read the whole book before trying the same Question again. If you understand the Question better on a second try, the book will have done its job—I think. <>

THE PRAGUE CIRCLE: FRANZ KAFKA, EGON ERWIN KISCH, MAX BROD, FRANZ WERFEL AND PAUL KORNFELD AND THEIR LEGACIES by Stephen James Shearier [Academica Press, 9781680537765]

A group of mostly Jewish German-speaking writers, the Prague Circle included some of the most significant figures in modern Western literature. Its core members, Franz Kafka, Max Brod, Franz Werfel, Paul Kornfeld, and Egon Erwin Kisch, are renowned for their seminal dramas, lyric poetry, novels, short stories, and essays on aesthetics. The writers of the Prague Circle were bound together not by a common perspective or a particular ideology, but by shared experiences and interests. From their vantage point in the Bohemian capital during the early decades of the twentieth century, they witnessed first-hand the collapse of the familiar and predictable, if not entirely comfortable, monarchical old order and the ascent of an anxious and uncertain modern era that led inexorably to fascism, militarization, and war. In order to deal with their new challenges, they considered strategies as diverse and oppositional as the members of the Prague Circle themselves. Their responses were shaped to

various degrees by Catholicism, Zionism, expressionism, activism, anti-activism, international solidarity with the working class, and transcendence. Stephen Shearier explores how these authors aligned themselves on the spectrum of the Activism Debate, which preceded the much studied Expressionist Debate by a generation. This study examines the critical reception of these influential literary figures to determine how their legacies have been shaped.

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While the works of Franz Kafka and Franz Werfel have for generations been literary treasures for audiences throughout the world, these writers have been considered by most readers as having stood outside and independent of their time. Traditionally they have been treated by literary critics sui generis, that is, as autonomous, i.e. isolated from any context. It has not been taken into account, for example, that Kafka and Werfel along with their fellow Prague writers Egon Erwin Kisch, Paul Kornfeld, and Max Brod were for a number of years in close personal and professional contact with one another, that their cross-germinating works were a collective response to a specific historically-determined, troubled milieu and that they were members of a large seminal group of writers known as the Prague Circle.

While for decades works by members of the Prague Circle have enjoyed wide success, their popularity has been by no means constant. Paul Kornfeld, for example, was acclaimed by his contemporary critics and general audiences alike as the best dramatist of his generation, only subsequently to fall into nearly total obscurity. In the 1940s and 1950s Franz Werfel achieved extraordinary success in the U.S. but is virtually forgotten today both here and in German-speaking countries. While for nearly a century Kafka has been recognized in the West for his subtle and genial exposure of the ubiquitous oppressive social apparatus, he was considered anathema in the East.

Is this phenomenon of waxing and waning popularity simply the result of mutable literary tastes or does it perhaps have something to do with the serendipitous circumstances of professional and popular reception? The argument posited here is that artistic value is by no means

intrinsic but rather the cumulative time-dependent result of unpredictable forces. Grounded on the premises that 1) the writers of the Prague Circle were indelibly influenced by the particular set of sociological, political and cultural conditions extant in the milieu located chronologically and aesthetically between Impressionism and Expressionism and that 2) the "meaning" of art is created in large part through its reception, which in turn is the product of particular historical contexts and the concomitant matrices of their respective variables, this examination attempts to demonstrate how our understanding of the works by the Prague Circle has been mediated by their historical reception.

Since it is assumed along with Deleuze and Guattari that the relationship between a work and its interpretation is not necessarily informed by the relationship between signifier and signified, but is rather an infinite series of ruptures, of "deterritorializations,"1 the objective of this investigation is to determine the ways in which changing perspectives in the reception of the Prague Circle over time and across national boundaries reflect the relativity of literary aesthetic value judgments. It is not my desire to weigh in on the debate around aesthetic merit, i.e. as to whether said merit is intrinsic or determined by variables such as market value, or specific time and place, etc. It will become obvious, however, that the reception of works by the writers of the Prague Circle over the course of the last 100 years has had a substantial, undeniable influence on the viability of these writers for both scholarly and lay audiences in the 21st century.

While the intention of this study is to be demonstrative, illustrative, the attempt has been made to ascertain the sociological and political effects on the critical and popular reception of the works by the Prague Circle in German- and English-speaking countries from the time of their publication through the first decades of the 21th century. To be clear: due to the inexorably growing and ever-changing academic landscape, this study could never aspire to be comprehensive and exhaustive.

Opposed to psychological interpretations dominant in Germany and France,2 and to the 'text immanent' approach employed by the New Critics prevalent in the U.S. since the 1950s,3 this study is conceived as a reading of readings. Based on Jauss' notion of 'Rezeptionsästhetik,'4 it proceeds to establish a 'history of reception.' Structurally it is designed to determine the various ways in which the members of the Prague Circle responded to extant conditions during the production of their works and to evaluate the extent to which our understanding of these works has been mediated by their reception over time.

In order to demonstrate how meaning is not merely a function of a literary work's representation of the "real world" in a literary work, but is created moreover by readers (general audience and professional critics alike) in their respective historical and cultural contexts, reception will be traced through various epochs in both the German-speaking world and in the USA. The production of meaning will be considered furthermore in the context of what I refer to as the Activism Debate.

While observing similarities as well as differences with respect, e.g., to their epistemological method, their ontology, their teleology/ theology, and their positions regarding the polemics of activism, this study concludes that the writers of the Prague Circle, who were zealously engaged in both the

theoretical treatment and practice of perception, were strongly influenced by the then-current philosophical method of phenomenology, cultivated in particular at the Charles University in Prague.

Quintessentially Expressionist, that is, characteristic of the artistic movement engendered by phenomenology, many of the works created by the Prague Circle were deliberately opened to infinite possibilities for interpretation. As such they require ever contemporary, that is, constantly updated interpretation as well as the utmost rigor in historical exegesis for their valorization.

It will be shown that through the multiplicity of possible meanings they have offered in their works the writers of the Prague Circle not only present an iconoclastic alternative to hegemonic methods of interpretation, but in their act of aesthetic liberation offer an irrefutable gesture of generosity.

The collective efforts by the Prague Circle manifest a distinctive tension brought on by the decline of Impressionism and the rise of Expressionism. The coincidence of the moribund Habsburg Empire and Berlin's emerging vitality was reflected by sometimes stark contradictions within the work of the Prague Circle, which on the one hand attempts desperately to salvage the old regime and on the other hand pushes ineluctably towards aesthetic pluralism and modernity. This modernist aspect of the Prague Circle (and the polyvalence of meaning it presents) lends itself readily to the dynamic made possible by reception theory. <>

TIME AND PRESENCE IN ART: MOMENTS OF ENCOUNTER (200–1600 CE) edited by Armin Bergmeier and Andrew Griebeler [Sense, Matter, and Medium, De Gruyter, 9783110720693]

This volume explores the relationship between temporality and presence in medieval artworks from the third to the sixteenth centuries. It is the first extensive treatment of the interconnections between medieval artworks' varied presences and their ever-shifting places in time. The volume begins with reflections on the study of temporality and presence in medieval and early modern art history. A second section presents case studies delving into the different ways medieval artworks once created and transformed their original viewers' experience of the present. These range from late antique Constantinople, early Islamic Jerusalem and medieval Italy, to early modern Venice and the Low Countries. A final section explores how medieval artworks remain powerful and relevant today. This section includes case studies on reconstructing presence in medieval art through embodied experience of pilgrimage, art historical research and museum education. In doing so, the volume provides a first dialog between museum educators and art historians on the presence of medieval artifacts. It includes contributions by Hans Belting, Keith Moxey, Rika Burnham and others.

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'What Then is Time?' Present and Presence by Armin Bergmeier and Andrew Griebeler

An Introduction

Made in Abbasid Egypt between the mid-eighth and mid-ninth centuries, a tapestry icon currently in the Cleveland Museum of Art is today but a fragment. Now 53.3 ^ 80.7 centimeters but perhaps once twice as long, the slit-and-dovetailed woven tapestry panel shows two haloed Evangelists grasping books. They appear within bold crimson roundels against a lighter yellow background, adorned with a repeating pattern of medallions with floral crosses inside and between them. Triangles inscribed with stepped ribbons and botanical motifs zigzag in the dark outer borders. At the broken upper edge of the panel, scrolling vegetation fills a circular border enclosing a vivid red ground. Within its partial center, we see the bejeweled leg, arm, and crimson pillow of a throne while the white sleeve of its former occupant rests above it.
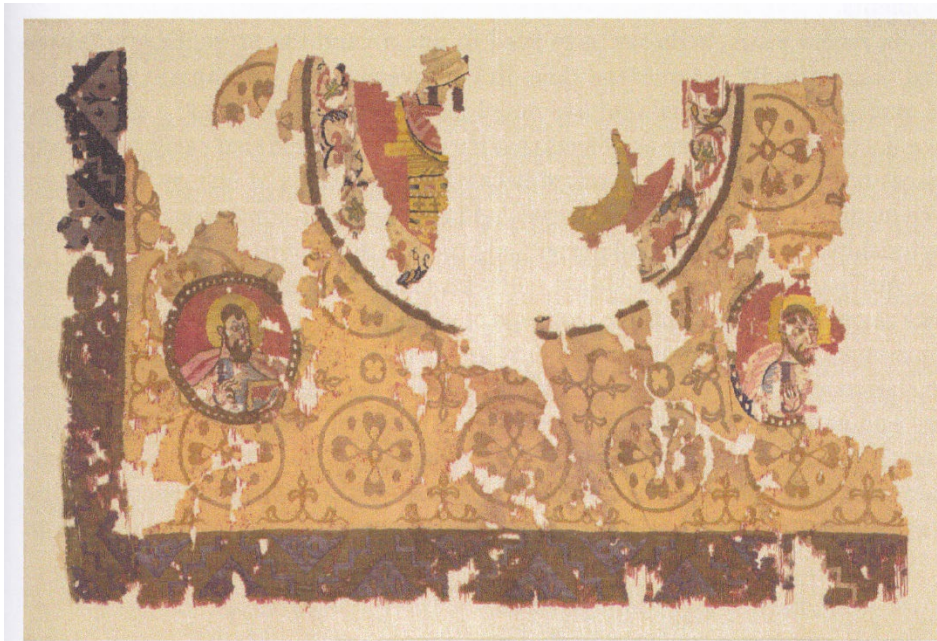
Fig. 0.1: Fragmentary textile icon with Christ in Glory (?) with Evangelists, slit-and dovetailed-tapestry weave, wool, Egypt, 750–850 CE, Cleveland Museum of Art. Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund 1952.256. (https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1952.256).

The empty space that now opens within the central motif closes our access to the past, but at the same time, it actively invites viewers to fill it in. While artifacts appear to promise entry to what seems to be the past, they also withhold it. They thus become sites for present-day projections about what once was visible but is now lost. We can surmise that the large central roundel once portrayed Christ enthroned between the four celestial beings, a widespread visual mode for rendering a divine apparition.

This object was made in Egypt during the time of the Abbasid Caliphate ruling from Baghdad. More broadly, the textile panel is a product of the "Middle Ages." While we acknowledge that the Middle Ages are a construct of the discourses and institutions of the modern age, we are also aware of the necessity to differentiate and not obscure the particularities of time and place. An object, image, or building from a distant past or culture was made for different circumstances, uses, and audiences. Its makers had different conceptions of its relationship to their present — what is, to us, the past. This situatedness in time is one of the two core concepts this volume aims to address. The second is the ability of artifacts to continuously exert their aesthetic presence in ever new present moments.

In recent years, scholars have tried to understand the presence of artifacts and their capacity to transcend time. In her investigation of temporal aesthetics in ancient art, Zainab Bahrani has noted that ancient images "had a diachronic presence; they were seen as objects that transcend time and that carry or embody traces of time itself. They therefore became foci of rituals of history and collective memory, of reinscriptions, burials and recoveries, in continuous dialogic relationships between past and present and present into the past."

Artifacts offer access to distant moments in the past and the future while forever remaining tied to multiple moments of encounter in the present. Today potent encounters can happen in museums, in architectural spaces, on pilgrimages, and in classrooms. This volume explores the presence and the temporality of premodern and early modern artifacts in relation to those moments of encounter in the now. Present and presence are not just etymologically linked; they mutually constitute each other. They derive their power from each other. When we encounter the fragmentary tapestry panel in the Cleveland Art Museum, whether it is on display, in storage, or even online, we recognize a trace of the past and its differences. We imagine the tapestry panel's past presence in and through its variable presences in our own moment in time. We might also ask ourselves if this tapestry was meant to depict a present state or if it anticipated a future situation. In part 1 of this introduction, Armin Bergmeier argues that it was, in fact, a desire to depict a present situation and not a future apparition at the End of Days that motivated this and similar images in the early medieval period. In the second part, Andrew Griebeler unpacks the various approaches scholars have taken to study the presence of artifacts. Following the introduction, the contributions in this volume address both of these interconnected questions of the present time and an artifact's presence: first, how medieval and early modern societies conceived of and pictured their present; and second, how artifacts exerted their presence on beholders, thereby embodying ever new iterations of present "realities" from the distant past until today.

Scope and Overview

The contributions in this volume consider an artifact's presence in terms of its temporality. Time, the present in particular, is a frame for the horizon of conscious experience, as is so clearly articulated in Augustine's thoughts on time. The contributions here focus on case studies drawn from what we might call the long Middle Ages in western Eurasia from the "end" of antiquity to the beginning of the early modern era. Over the past three decades, scholarship has increasingly come to terms with the limitations and exclusions in conventional histories of medieval art. As museums and the academy continue to address these historical legacies, the Middle Ages remain essential to the critical reassessment of our current thinking on objects and images. Regarding works purely as "objects" for "our" gaze, even conserving and displaying them, can reenact the violence of iconoclasm, colonialism, and secularization by denying them their proper audience, context, ontology, meaning, and use. The consideration of medieval conceptions of the varying presences and presents of objects and images in this volume can therefore help to reveal some of these modern misconceptions. Medieval concepts of presence and the present in artworks can further inspire a broader rethinking of the nature of artistic production and aesthetic response today. The contributions in this volume address the interrelatedness between the time depicted or perceived in an artwork and the production of presence. They investigate both the (present) temporality of the objects and their beholders' conceptions of time. The volume includes authors who not only follow academic approaches in the strict sense but also focus on real experiences inside and outside of museums today.

The contributions in **TIME AND PRESENCE IN ART: MOMENTS OF ENCOUNTER** together take broad views and interdisciplinary approaches to the topic, including art historical, historical, museological, and educational studies, which combine traditional academic scholarship with practice-oriented approaches. The volume opens with the section "Temporality, Presence, and Writing Art History" that introduces the topics of time and presence in art historical research. While Keith Moxey's work exemplifies the malleability of time in a transcultural perspective, Hans Belting looks back on his own work and on the wider historiography of presence-related scholarship in an interview with Armin

Bergmeier. Papers in the second section, "Time and Presence in the Middle Ages," focus on the ways medieval images represent and frame concepts of time, addressing how images picture the present at the moment of inception or thereafter. The contributions in the sections "Encountering Past Presents" and "Experiencing Presence in Museum Education" further explore the presence of artifacts in the past and today.

The contributions in the second section, "Time and Presence in the Middle Ages," engage with visual expressions of temporal consciousness and representations of timekeeping. Heba Mostafa discusses the temporality of the Dome of the Rock. The concerns motivating the erection of the building have long been debated. Mostafa shows that early Islamic people used it in order to establish a link between the site and expectations around the eschatological future. Sarah Griffin shows how the fourteenth-century visionary Opicinus de Canistris inscribed his present within an innovative and idiosyncratic mapping of cosmic and divine time scales. Simone Westermann investigates how developments in clockmaking and debates about the nature of time in the fourteenth century inform a depiction of Genesis in the Paduan Baptistery, which was then adapted to also serve as a funerary monument. Matthew Champion examines how different artworks made in the fifteenth-century Low Countries created a plurality of overlapping and even dissonant presents. These explorations together show how past image makers created multiple presents. An awareness of these processes further allows us to reconsider how we instantiate a multitude of present temporalities in our work.

The volume's third and fourth sections look at how art historical and museological approaches address how people in the past and today experience the presence of artworks. The contributions in "Encountering Past Presents" explore the links between presence and time in the past. Stefan Hanb's contribution on modes of visualizing the battle of Lepanto shows how Venetians bent time and used artworks anachronically, actualizing older paintings (such as by Jacopo Tintoretto) and merging images of the biblical past with the historical present (as in Paolo Veronese's Allegory of the Battle of Lepanto). Benjamin Anderson discusses the state of melancholy that derives from the realization of the separation of the past from the present. He explores the affective nature of "uncanny encounters" resulting from the overlap of distinct temporalities. Anderson further demonstrates how medieval Byzantine and modern Western texts use prophecies in order to link present and future. Prophecies provide information about the future, but they derive it exclusively from events and signs observed in the present, thereby linking these two temporalities. Tanja Hinterholz spotlights the connection between movement and aesthetic experience. She shows that the physical position and movement of a visitor to Matted Giovannetti's frescoed chapels in the papal palace at Avignon is vital for understanding its unique spatial and temporal orientations and for approaching its various painted presences. Ivan Foletti describes his Migrating Art Historians project, examining how the physical demands and experiences of pilgrimage transform the contemporary art historian's understanding of medieval monuments built for pilgrims.

This exploration of immersive research practices forms the transition to the last section, "Experiencing Presence in Museum Education," which examines our encounter with artifacts and their presence in modern museums. The contributions mobilize strategies and methods from museum education in order to illustrate how presence is generated during the encounter of beholders and artworks. Nathaniel Prottas's article examines scholarship from the field of museum education to argue for its special ability to help visitors experience the presence of artifacts. Rika Burnham demonstrates her method of

dialogical teaching in the museum through a reenactment of an encounter between museum goers and Piero dells Francesca's painting of the Crucifixion in the Frick Collection. The volume concludes with a discussion between Burnham and Prottas about the values, challenges, and the potential for a dialogical approach to museum education. The conversation also addresses broader questions of how art objects, whose moment of inception has long passed, can retain their relevance and presence for us today. We hope that, along with the other contributions in this volume, the transcript of Burnham and Prottas's discussion at the conference in Leipzig opens the topic up to a wider audience and a broad spectrum of future academic and nonacademic engagements. <>

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: DISCOURSES AND WRITINGS ON SPIRITUALITY Introduced and Translated by Christopher B. Barnett [Classics of Western Spirituality. Paulist Press, 9780809106486]

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) is primarily known as a philosopher, although much of his authorship was explicitly dedicated to spiritual growth, or "upbuilding." This volume redresses this situation. Included are some of Kierkegaard most important spiritual writings, ranging from his early "upbuilding discourses," which gently encourage the reader to consider a life lived in and for God, to his late broadsides against the Danish state church, which shock in their condemnation of bourgeois Christianity. In between are a variety of pieces in which he develops his spiritual insights and methods. His discourses on the lilies in the field and the birds of the air treat the natural world as an image of the human being's spiritual condition. His analysis of the human self in The Sickness unto Death uses abstract philosophical language in order to make a spiritual point—namely, that happiness stems from the self's willingness to find "rest" in God. In every case, Kierkegaard establishes himself as one of the key figures in modern Christian spirituality.

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The great Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) once remarked to a friend, "Kierkegaard was by far the most profound thinker of the last century. Kierkegaard was a saint." Just what Wittgenstein meant by this statement is unclear. After all, there is not a direct correlation between intellectual accomplishment and holiness. We do not say a thinker is excellent on account of holiness, nor do we understand holiness as a guarantee of intellectual excellence. When the two do seem to coincide—as in the case of a Thomas Aquinas or an Edith Stein—we may very well appreciate the concurrence. And yet, Thomas's Summa Theol^gica remains widely read today not due to the saint's religious virtue but, rather, to his philosophical and theological insight.

How, then, should Wittgenstein's claim about Kierkegaard be taken? Perhaps the juxtaposition of "thinker" and "saint" is instructive enough, for, as this volume will demonstrate, Kierkegaard was a thinker deeply concerned with the problem of being a saint—that is to say, with the problem of holiness.

What is holiness? Is holiness possible for human beings? If so, what are its characteristics? What implications does it have for one's social life? Both in his published and unpublished writings, these are questions to which Kierkegaard directly and indirectly returned. Moreover, he dedicated a significant portion of his authorship to fostering holiness, though, as will be seen, he preferred the term upbuilding. Thus it appears that Wittgenstein actually gets to the heart of the matter: Kierkegaard's holiness, however it be construed, cannot be separated from his willingness to think about and think through holiness.

The purpose of this volume is to acquaint readers with this fundamental aspect of Kierkegaard's thought. Included here are some of Kierkegaard's most important spiritual writings, ranging from his early "upbuilding discourses;' which gently encourage the reader to consider a life lived in and for God, to his late broadsides against the Danish state church, which shock in their condemnation of bourgeois Christianity. In between are a variety of pieces that see Kierkegaard develop his spiritual insights and methods. His discourses on the lilies of the field and the birds of the air are lyrical parables that treat the natural world as an image of the human being's spiritual condition. His analysis of the human self in The Sickness unto Death uses philosophical language in order to make a spiritual point—namely, that

happiness stems from the self's willingness to find "rest" in God. In every case, Kierkegaard establishes himself as one of the key figures in modern Christian spirituality.

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KIERKEGAARD'S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality has been defined as the pursuit of "life integration" by way of a process of "self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives." Thus particular doctrines underlie every spirituality—for they articulate the "ultimate value" in question—but spirituality itself is not a mere set of doctrines or rules. Rather, it involves the existential application of such principles, whether they concern "the Transcendent, the flourishing of humanity, or some other value."

With this in mind, "Christian spirituality" refers to that spirituality whose "horizon of ultimate value is the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ and communicated through his Holy Spirit, and the project of self-transcendence is the living of the paschal mystery within the context of the church community." The person concerned with Christian spirituality, then, will have certain presuppositions about who God is. Her task, however, will not be to elucidate and to expand on those presuppositions—as it is in theology—but to relate them to who she is and to what she wants in life. On this understanding, Christianity is always already more than a cognitive assent or an interior "feeling." It is a mode de vie, which involves political, sexual, social, and spiritual matrices.

As a thinker, Kierkegaard has often been labeled as an "existentialist" or, more forcefully, as the "father of existentialism." As Robert Solomon explains, "It is generally acknowledged that if existentialism is a `movement at all, Kierkegaard is its prime mover" Existentialism can be defined as a way of philosophizing that stresses the importance of the human subject, not only as a thinker, but also as a concrete, acting individual confronted by a variety of problems—for example, the experience of freedom in a world that often seems hostile, even absurd. But this is, doubtless, an extensive definition, and, as Simon Blackburn notes, "existentialism" is not so much a unified philosophy as a "loose title for various philosophies that emphasize certain common themes." Thus existentialist themes crop up in writers of various stripes, from the ontological ruminations of Martin Heidegger to the probing of meaninglessness by Jean-Paul Sartre. In other cases, what seems to be "existentialism" may not be that at all. Thomas Merton once observed that the differences between existentialism and mysticism are not always clear-cut, for both focus "on the ineluctable fact of death, on man's need for authenticity, and on a kind of spiritual liberation" Similarly, James Collins argues that existentialism cannot be reduced to a modern phenomenon, given that it has "striking parallels" in thinkers such as Augustine of Hippo and Blaise Pascal. With this in mind, it is worth adding that Collins does not view Kierkegaard as an existentialist per se but instead as one who, along with Friedrich Nietzsche and Edmund Husserl, strongly "contributed to the current of thought from which existentialism stems."

Identifying Kierkegaard with "existentialism." then, is hardly a straightforward matter. It may be that the very themes that Kierkegaard bequeathed to existentialism are better understood in light of Christian spirituality, since a number of Kierkegaard's most cherished ideas and motifs follow the "contours of Christian spirituality." Lawrence S. Cunningham and Keith J. Egan maintain that "any authentic Christian spirituality" must possess each of these general features: (1) an emphasis on Christianity as a "way of life." rather than "an abstract philosophy or a code of beliefs"; (2) a thematization of the Christian way of

life as discipleship, understood, in particular, as the following of Jesus Christ; (3) a recognition that discipleship is not purely an individual matter, but also entails interpersonal involvement; (4) a stress on the reception of the Eucharist; (5) a sensitivity to the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of discipleship; and (6) an openness to the world, rather than a longing for a "shield from the exigent realities around us" Kierkegaard's authorship displays each of these qualities. The upbuilding writings, in particular, might be taken as manifestly spiritual. And yet, even Kierkegaard's more philosophical works, many of which are seen as existentialism's loci classici, either highlight or, at least, hint at the contours of Christian spirituality. Hence, rather than portion out a "philosophical" and a "religious" Kierkegaard, it is better to view his authorship as a whole, which, at any juncture, is capable of moving from irony to upbuilding.

Whatever the case, the persistence of spiritual themes in Kierkegaard's authorship raises the question, Where do they come from? In other words, if thinkers such as Kant and Hegel form the background of Kierkegaard's philosophical output, who are the key sources behind Kierkegaard's spiritual writings? Answering this question will not only better situate Kierkegaard in the history of Christian spirituality, but, eventually, will also bring his own contribution to Christian spirituality into sharper relief.

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In closing, it seems appropriate (if also ironic) to register Kierkegaard's disdain for the kind of material presented here. He writes in an 1848 journal entry,

> What I have to say may not be taught; by being taught it turns into something entirely different. What I need is a man who does not gesticulate with his arms up in a pulpit or with his fingers upon a podium, but a person who gesticulates with his entire personal existence [Existents], with the willingness in every danger to will to express in action precisely what he teaches.... Precisely this is the profound untruth in all modern teaching, that there is no notion at all of how thought is influenced by the fact that the one presenting it does not dare to express it in action, that in this very way the flower of the thought or the heart of the thought vanishes and the power of the thought disappears.

Scholars often ascribe such complaints to Kierkegaard's opposition to the Hegelian system and its concomitant model of philosophy as objective science—an interpretation that is not without merit. And yet, to prioritize this reading is to suggest that Kierkegaard is best defined by what he is against rather than what he is for. It is to treat him as a detractor rather than as an advocate.

Gradually, however, the notion that Kierkegaard is a mere voice of existentialist angst and protest is fading. Since the 1980s, increasing attention has been paid to Kierkegaard's category of ogbyggelse, and there has been a resurgence of interest in Kierkegaard's mystical-cum-Pietist sources and their influence on his thinking. To say the least, then, Kierkegaard's connection to and treatment of Christian spirituality is a live issue in the scholarly world, and the upshot is a fuller understanding of the Dane's work.

I hope this book will contribute to this ongoing development, demonstrating that Kierkegaard wants to provoke existential transformation and to foster Christian holiness. Moreover, in devising and effecting such a project, Kierkegaard finds himself not at the margins of Western thought but, rather, as part of an intellectual tradition that stretches back to antiquity, finds its full flowering in the Christian era, and remains prominent to this day. This is the tradition of spiritual writing, and it boasts some of the most important thinkers in Western history, from Plato and Augustine to Meister Eckhart and Teresa of

Avila. To the extent that this volume encourages one to situate Kierkegaard among their kind, it will have met its aim. <>

FIGURES OF POSSIBILITY: AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE, MYSTICISM, AND THE PLAY OF THE SENSES by Niklaus Largier [Cultural Memory in the Present, Stanford University Press, 9781503631045]

From medieval contemplation to the early modern cosmopoetic imagination, to the invention of aesthetic experience, to nineteenth-century decadent literature, and to early-twentieth century essayistic forms of writing and film, Niklaus Largier shows that mystical practices have been reinvented across the centuries, generating a notion of possibility with unexpected critical potential. Arguing for a new understanding of mystical experience, Largier foregrounds the ways in which devotion builds on experimental practices of figuration in order to shape perception, emotions, and thoughts anew. Largier illuminates how devotional practices are invested in the creation of possibilities, and this investment has been a key element in a wide range of experimental engagements in literature and art from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, and most recently in forms of "new materialism." Read as a history of the senses and emotions, the book argues that mystical and devotional practices have long been invested in the modulating and reconfiguring of sensation, affects, and thoughts. Read as a book about practices of figuration, it questions ordinary protocols of interpretation in the humanities, and the priority given to a hermeneutic understanding of texts and cultural artifacts.

Review

"This is a truly original work, grounded in wonderfully wide and deep learning. It is also a profound reflection on the ethical life and the role figuration might play within it. There is nothing like it that I know of, nor could anyone without Largier's range of learning and depth of thought have written it." -- Amy Hollywood — *author of Acute Melancholia and Other Essays*

"FIGURES OF POSSIBILITY is a singular achievement, both as a work of breathtaking scholarship and as a new and exciting theory of aesthetic experience. The writing is exceptionally clear; the prose is passionate, beautiful, and compelling. Largier turns rigorous scholarship on medieval and early modern mysticism into a new approach to reading literature and aesthetic experience." -- Eric Santner — *author of Untying Things Together*

CONTENTS

This book originated with the observation that, against common characterizations, modern literary and philosophical engagements with earlier mystical traditions rarely foreground moments of belief, esoteric knowledge, or an extraordinary experience of the divine. Instead, the fascination driving these engagements—from the decadent writer Joris-Karl Huysmans to the composer John Cage and the artist Dan Flavin, from Ralph Waldo Emerson to Georg Lukas and Robert Musil, from Wassily Kandinsky to Georges Bataille, Simone Weil, Paul Celan, Clarice Lispector, and Gilles Deleuze—responds to the style and the ways in which mystics made use of figures and practices of figuration. They did so, surprisingly, both in drawing attention to figures as rhetorical devices that form and transform our perception and in accentuating that the figural itself reflects the ungraspable character of the worlds of which we are a part. The mystical texts fascinate because they emphasize the fundamentally figural shapes of these worlds and their resistance to gestures of understanding. And they fascinate with the practices of figuration that they use to modulate our senses and the ways we inhabit these worlds. In doing so, the mystics draw attention away from the affiliation of figuration with metaphorical meaning and allegory. Instead, the mystics insist on the disruptive force of figures and their effects and on the invention of styles that speak the unspeakable. In their use of the example of the apostle Paul's words, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me," the stakes are made clear. According to the interpretation of this exemplary point of reference in the Christian mystical tradition and its emphasis on figure and form, the proposition is not to be taken as metaphor, as the fulfillment of a norm, or as a subjective commitment to imitation. Instead, it is understood in the sense that, through a radical dispossession, the divine cosmopoetic "matrix" (Jacob Bohme) in its concrete and dramatic incarnation has literally turned into the form of Paul's life.

I look at this not in terms of "belief" or of "religion" but of a radically negative, iconoclastic anthropology and theology, which foregrounds the convergence of figure, sensation, and imagination. Building on Paul's emphasis on dispossession and the "foolishness" of love, this has been recast, more recently, in Clarice Lispector's Passion according to G. H., where the loss of self to the "spasmic moments of the world" speaks through the mirroring eyes of a dying cockroach. I argue that in such concrete, deeply material, and often expansive dramatizations of the role of the figural and its relation to the production of meaning, these mystical moments resonate with what modernity calls aesthetic experience and experimentation. They do so in privileging the figural against the hermeneutic, the representational, and the figurative that Gilles Deleuze, to Lake another example, reaching back to Paul Cezanne, has portrayed in his book on Francis Bacon.

To be sure, all the so-called mystical texts also produce rich archives of meaning, of scriptural hermeneutics, and of allegorical reading. They insist at each stage, however, on the fact that grace, freedom, beauty, and ecstatic absorption are not experienced through the mediation of a self in the sphere of normative orders of knowledge or allegory. As the texts show, rather than argue, these moments come about in a dramatic exposure to and a participation in the formative figures that underlie, precede, bracket, and complicate all production of meaning. Paradoxically, in this view, the figural is not opposed to the literal. Instead, it is the (hyper-)literal in its expressivity and multiplicity,

perceived in the form of what I call a figural realism or a radical figuralism that moves at the limits of discourse. Thus, the mystics also challenge established modes of distinguishing the real and the imaginary, the literal and the symbolic, the material and the spiritual, the self and the other. In fact, in their notion and use of figuration the mystics—and I count Clarice Lispector drawing attention to the abject beauty of the eyes of the cockroach among them—foreground the

concretely particular in its changing, often dissonant forms and effects, insisting on the force it carries and on its resistance to modes of abstraction and understanding. The seventeenth-century cobbler Jacob Bohme, to whom I return in Chapter 6, explicitly draws attention to this. Building on the medieval traditions I discuss in Chapters 3 to 5—and inspiring Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, William Blake, and Friedrich Schelling with his writings—Bbhme asks his readers to return to the figural, to the world of concrete forms in their emergence and in their effects as they move through us and as they resist capture in finite modes of being, understanding, and knowing. Instead, the emergence of figures and the metamorphoses of forms that unfold through and beyond us are, in his eyes, the place of a participation in the material and spiritual "imagination" that our worlds in their concrete expression happen to be. Partaking sensually, affectively, and intellectually, not representing or understanding in terms of meaning, knowledge, or subjective experience, is at the core of his thinking and of a practice of renunciation that makes the distinction of materialism and idealism obsolete.

What figuration draws attention to is the fact that everything, each sensation, each affect, and each thought, can be seen as not a thing or a moment of representation but a concrete instance of participation, an expression in which we partake underneath the determined modes of meaning, understanding, or being, thus abandoning those very determinations and rejoining, in the words of Alfred North Whitehead, "the passing flux of immediate things."' The mystics, radical formalists in this regard, reach down into the dark abyss of figural expression, attending to it, drawing on it, mobilizing it in its dissonances and consonances, abandoning themselves to it, and playing with it against the attachments that make up our worlds. Looking at it from a different angle, they can be seen as foregrounding both the exposure to and the absorption into forms and effects that run up against the hermeneutic and metaphysical grasp of a1 l knowledge—without being able to leave it behind entirely. In rearticulating this grasp in ever-richer variations of sublime allegorization and wild conceptualization, in engaging its sedimentations critically only to abandon them in the return to forms and figures, they dramatize perception and the production of meaning and create different spaces of living.

It is this emphasis on the figural that I take as the starting point in this book, insisting on the dramatic tension it establishes in relation to understanding and abstraction, hermeneutics and metaphysics—and foregrounding the realms of sensual, affective, and intellectual play this dramatization creates. The chapters that follow explore this provocative notion of the figural in mystical texts and in the literary and philosophical engagements with them. They examine the ways in which figures—sounds and words, images and things as they are used and perceived in what we often call spiritual exercises—have been taken as the rhetorical devices that support the range of possibilities and the styles of partaking, as well as sensual, aesthetic, and ethical transformations. Along these lines, practices of figuration relentlessly reinvent and reconfigure the realms of sensation, affect, imagination, and thought. In reconstructing the genealogy of these practices, I argue—against the assumption that mysticism necessarily implies a notion of "immediate experience," "pure presence," or "subjective feeling"—that "figure" and "figuration" must be seen as key terms. They allow us to think through and with the rhetoric of the mystics, their

resonances in modern thought and literature, and their significance for a specific understanding of possibility in medieval and modernist contexts—and, most recently, in critical race theory and poetry with the work of Nathaniel Mackey, Fred Moten, and J. Kameron Carter.

This notion of figure, I argue throughout the book, allows us to conceive of possibility in a different way. It is to be seen as a form of virtuality that permeates the "real" in the very experience of figural effects and in the practices of figuration that undo seemingly stable, gendered, racialized, and other normative orders. Thus, figural practices challenge and suspend perspectives that focus on the possible in ontological or epistemological terms, locating it in determined forms of being or knowing.

The Austrian modernist writer Robert Musil—to whom I return in Chapter 7—draws attention to this notion of figure and figuration when he adopts rhetorical elements from a medieval mystical tradition in his novel The Man without Qualities. In a famous passage he introduces the protagonist as a "man without qualities," an expression he borrows from the medieval philosopher and mystic Meister Eckhart. Shortly thereafter, he talks of the protagonist, still without a name, as a person with a "sense of possibility." Strikingly, Musil deploys a notion of possibility that does not derive from an understanding of possibilities as potentialities (an apple seed that will turn into a tree), as virtual realities (that supplement and transform the real), or as forms of utopian or messianic reconciliation. Instead, he sees possibilities—in conversation with mystical texts and with the scientific interest in perception around 1900—as emerging from a "sense" that is open to the slight, even slightest, modifications of sedimented orders of perception. In his writings, both literary and essayistic, Musil points to the fact that such modifications emerge in interactions with figures that have effects on the malleable shape of ourselves and our worlds. According to him, this malleable shape of humans—he speaks of "human formlessness" and of the plasticity of man—comes into view in encounters with what will be called "figures" in this book. To put it bluntly, according to Musil, in our encounters with the world we do not just see and feel things in either an immediate or a mediated way; instead, the things and environments come to us as figures and textures of figures, as shapes that assert themselves in acting on us, and as artifacts that materially embody our history—something that the German word Wirklichkeit, derived from wirken, "to be effective," reflects in its opposition to the ontological and epistemological frame that the term "reality" suggests. In acting as figures, these textures and shapes at first neither mean nor mediate anything that could be determined. Instead, Musil's "man without qualities" is the one who, in his or her lack of determining qualities, has a "sense" for the figural encounters—and for the sphere of possibilities they make emerge before they turn into sedimented orders of signification and meaning.

According to Musil, human shapes and their changes can be seen—and studied in literature, particularly in the essay and the novel—as a result of figural effects and practices of figuration that give a specific life, a specific historical form to the soul as it partakes in the world. What Musil draws attention to—also in his engagement with contemporary science,

psychology, and philosophy is the observation that a film, a house we see, a handshake, the atmospheric conditions we enter, always function not just as a neutral environment but as a figural setting, a form that acts on us, that we can explore in its effects, and that we can play with in ways of attending to it. Most important, his observations suggest that the figural effects, styles of encounter, and affordances modulate and animate our senses, our affects, and, more generally, our perception in ways that precede our understanding and our conceptual grasp of a world.

Figures and figural arrangements—a row of houses, a car accident, a view along a street, a first touch of two hands—do not just communicate some feeling or meaning that can be known. They do not just create an atmosphere that can be felt and understood. Instead, figures produce effects and differential intensities that precede and resist all mimetic assimilation in sensation, affect, imagination, and thought. Figure refers to what strikes us and makes us part of it. Mimetic assimilation, however, refers to the series of similes, analogies, and concepts that respond to this moment of striking. Think of the sound of a bird. It strikes us as we are sitting there, disrupting our world and making us part of something else. Only then it takes shape as a "song" in sensual, affective, and cognitive forms, each of them at first nothing else than a mode of resemblance that, in fitting a pattern or Gestalt, structures our recognition: a melodic sound, a pleasant feeling, a name for a bird and for the feeling that arises. These are what I call mimetic assimilations in the deployment of a world of meaning. Thus, to take an example from Musil's novel, the handshake in a scene where Ulrich, the "man without qualities," meets his cousin Diotima for the first time triggers a broad range of sensations, feelings, and thoughts. Indeed, the handshake quickly translates into the imaginary world of comparisons and similes that allow him and the narrator to picture and understand movements and constellations of sensations, affects, and thoughts that follow. Taken in itself, however, the figure and its effect, the moments of differential intensity, precede and underlie the production of similes, evoking the realization that the assimilation in sensation, affect, and meaning can never exhaust it. This is what makes the handshake not only a meaningful thing or an event but also a figure that, in acting on Ulrich, puts the entire world and its history in a state of both absorption and suspension: absorption in the figural effects that simultaneously express and disrupt a world, suspension in the possibilities of assimilation that come to nest in the historically shaped textures of it. Similarly, Marcel Proust writes of the effects of a "good book." It is, he insists, "something special, something unforeseeable, and is made up not of the sum of all previous masterpieces but of something which the most thorough assimilation ... would not enable" us "to discover."

Beyond the series of assimilations, that is, the chains of similitude and comparison they unlock, figures produce moments of disruption, which, in their force, are nothing else than the very act, the sheer fact of participation in their effects. Figures do not evoke only chains of similes and analogies; forms of assimilation and understanding; or the exploration of possible feelings, sensations, and thought. Underneath all this, the figural effects take possession and give shape to what we are before we know or guess what they might mean, breaking with the real and turning the seemingly determined historical moment into an open space of possibility. In disrupting the textures of meaning, their movements break with the known and the knowable orders of the world and open the perspective that—in Musil's simple words, which are also the words of the "fools" who speak up against the normative orders—it might all be otherwise or "just as well."

Musil's "sense of possibility" is the sense that lets itself be moved by this very disruption. It is the sense that sits on the threshold of the disruption by a figural effect and that unlocks a pull into a world of similes, comparisons, and analogies, which then provide us with meaning. At the same time, it is the sense that, in the recognition that neither the similes nor the conceptual abstractions ever fully grasp the figure, pulls us back into the figural realm and opens a path into a world of endless experimentation. This threshold is the space from which possibilities, according to Musil, emerge.

Similes, analogies, and concepts tend to eclipse the figures and their effects. The former give shape to the worlds we inhabit, worlds woven tightly from and within them. However, this process never fully

succeeds, since the very weave of similes and concepts is always being undone by the figural effects. Thus, in his first exploration of what "a man" with the "sense of possibility" is, Musil leaves us with nothing else than a series of comparisons that leads to the conclusion that such "possibilists are said to inhabit a more delicate medium, a hazy medium of mist, fantasy, daydreams, and the subjunctive mood." A person with this sense, he writes, "wants the forest, as it were, and the others the trees, and forest is hard to define, while trees represent so many cords of wood of definable quality."

This and similar passages in Musil's novel—and in his thoughts about the form of the essay—inspire the way in which I use the term "figure" here, following his interest in perception and its modifications, and in the tension between the figural effects and mimetic assimilation. Many of the scenes and chapters in The Man without Qualities form experimental arrangements that study the effects of figures and figural constellations and the movements of affect, sensation, imagination, and thought they produce. While the very notion of figure is indeed abstract, the term refers in each instance to something that is concrete. In all his writings Musil draws attention to the concreteness of figural moments, their shaping force, their assimilative and disrupting effects on the life of the soul. It is the concrete thing, the concrete and inconspicuous event, the figural constellation that affects and moves and that only then turns into a series of similes, an object of meaning, an allegory, and a thought. Thus, inspired by my reading of Musil, I use the notion of figure as a name for things and moments in their concreteness as they emerge in their formative ways. I use it not in view of a "hidden meaning" but as referring to the forceful moments that give shape to perception and that enter into a tension with the worlds of signification. Figure refers, to say it simply, to the forms in movement that resist all discourse and that shape us as they shape everything else.

The figural stands on a threshold. It constitutes the ground of all assimilation in sensation, affect, and imagination and the basis of all conceptual abstraction; however, it is not a sphere of first or noumenal experience or a sphere of excessive presence but nothing else than a moment of disruption in which we participate in striking effects. On this threshold figures always affirm a world and disrupt it. They make possibilities emerge in the textures of the real when they draw our attention to the concrete moments and to the fact that in their formative function these moments break with the determined order of meaning and make us part of another world. In this, they open a tension between figure and simile, between partaking and assimilation, that will be at the core of this book.

No doubt, figures always produce series of moments of sensual and affective assimilation and mimetic repetition—all the resonances and affective traces that fill our imagination and become part of an expansive phenomenology of ourselves. The handshake I just mentioned, at the center of one of the key encounters in Musil's The Man without Qualities, produces a new world full of sensual, affective, and cognitive possibilities. However, none of these possibilities are immediately known or meaningful; even if a "meaning" of the handshake will be determined at some point in the future, this does not subsist in its meaningless force in the moment when it is introduced. The very assimilation produced by the handshake, the sphere of sensual and affective attunement, the resonances, and the surplus of possible meanings it evokes break open the known texture of the world. This break brings to our attention that—beyond the modes of assimilation—the very effect of the figure, the participation it draws us into, is never exhausted. It always makes us partake in a world we do not understand, in a world that strikes, resists, and reverberates.

Erich Auerbach's essay "Figura," written during his exile in Istanbul, forms a surprising corollary to this notion of figuration. As I argue in Chapter 2, Auerbach develops his thoughts in correspondence with his earlier work and his reading of Dante, particularly his interest in the moments of what he perceives as the "strikingly concrete" in Dante's poetry. In Auerbach's return to the use of figura in classical rhetoric, in Lucretius, and in the theology of the church fathers he foregrounds the "plastic" aspect of figures. He emphasizes, like Musil, the fact that figures shape perception before we enter the realm of meaning, spiritualizing interpretation, and allegorical reading. Before we ask questions about meaning and signification, figures strike us and shape our perception. They do so, according to Auerbach's reading of the early Christian theologian Tertullian, in the form of an "energetic realism," drawing us, once again, into the threshold underneath the assimilation that occurs in analogical imagination and affect and before all acts of abstraction. As Auerbach argues in his reading of classical authors, rhetorical treatises, and early Christian theology, figura always establishes a tension within our "tendencies" to let the realm of meaning take over, to allegorize, or to conceptualize. Against these tendencies, the figural marks a point of resistance where we are "struck," where constellations between such moments of being "struck" emerge, and where experience opens toward the strikingly concrete and its asymmetry before it is captured in meaning and thought. It is an asymmetry that does not "mean" or refer to anything or disclose some hidden immediacy or presence. "Asymmetry," when I use the term here, names the fact that the figural, seen as what has a striking effect on us, can never be fully absorbed into assimilation. In drawing attention to the concrete, it claims a fullness that can be acknowledged only in gestures of disassimilation, dispossession, and disaffiliation. The figural is the particular and concrete that strike us and that cannot be known—not because of a limit on the parts of the faculties of perception and thought, though, but because of the excessive force that asserts itself in the figure itself.

Thus, in both Musil's and Auerbach's understanding of figure, its disrupting and shaping effect produces a moment of suspense that we call possibility, the indeterminacy that is there in its asymmetrical fullness, the indeterminacy of the concrete that has not yet been grasped in forms of meanings or concepts. It is this observation that brings Auerbach's notion of figure and its emphasis on the concrete in conversation not only with Mush's experimental modernism but also with a long tradition of medieval and early modern mystical thought. While I focus on some aspects of the history of Christian mysticism in this book, similar observations could probably be made—and have been made—about other mystical traditions that address the challenges of the imposition of meaning. They appear in a l l forms of radical iconoclasm, negative theology, and the choice of silence. Faced with the ungraspable and unnamable divine, the medieval Christian mystical traditions, which form the object of Chapters 3 and 4 of this book, explicitly raise the question of the function of practices of figuration in light of the unsayable, of the undoing of language, and of images. In many instances, the mystical texts thematize figures and figuration not in terms of their allegorical meaning and conceptual function, not in their role of representing the divine symbolically, but in their effective force, which underlies—in the contemplative practices that we call mystical—exercises of shaping sensation, affects, and cognition. They ascribe this force of the figural not only to the symbolic orders that mediate between the creature and the divine but also to each moment in the hierarchical design of such orders. Comparable in this gesture to the role of figure in Auerbach and Musil, manuals, theories, and narratives of mystical practice use figures and figuration, often words and images they employ in prayer and contemplation, as devices that subvert discursive and cognitive orders—Musil's "sense of reality"—break with them from within in concrete and striking experience, and produce experimental settings for the possibilities of an endless reweaving

of perception. In short, through the undoing of sedimented old ways of seeing and the production of new figural arrangements, the world is thus made to appear and to be seen otherwise.

In focusing on the rich archive of medieval contemplative practices that I lay out in Chapters 3 and 4, I ask the reader to follow into this rather unfamiliar territory of texts that have so often exercised a fascinating force on modern readers, provoking returns to these traditions of contemplative practice from Romanticism to recent forms of new materialist thought and critical race theory. What I foreground in my presentation of the texts, however, is not something that can be cast in terms of "religious experience" or a different Weltbild, be it Romantic, idealist, or materialist. Instead, it is the investment of this medieval archive of texts in the very practices of figuration and in addressing questions of how to conceive of possibilities to reweave the perception of the world and the ways of inhabiting it. Thus, I do not identify mystical traditions in terms of supposed claims for an immediate experience of the world, of beauty, or of the divine but of their character as exercises of figuration that problematize all orders of perception and naming. In doing so, I foreground the reduction to the figural—in traditional terms, ascetic theology—over and against the amplification of experience in models of strategic layering of perception, affect, and thought—the symbolic theology, which I will hopefully treat in another volume on wonder and praise.

As I argue throughout this book, our attempt to conceptualize contemplative practices and their reliance on figuration in terms of an opposition between transcendence and immanence, or the infinite and finitude, is both unavoidable and wrong. What I will show is that the moments of drawing attention to figures and a specific use of and experimentation with language and media make such conceptual distinctions collapse. While the reading and contemplation of the Holy Scriptures, and the practices of prayer that build on these readings, seem to establish separate orders of this world and another world, of the human and the divine, they actually return to variations on the theme of the fullness of the worlds in which humans partake. In the notion of partaking the distinction between here and there, earth and heaven, collapses not in an imagined unity or a notion of immanence but in the irreducibly concrete creaturely multiplicity that the figures evoke.

In this collapse—in the eyes of medieval mystics the convergence of the particular and the divine—figural concreteness often turns into what modernity since the eighteenth-century calls aesthetic experience. While this might, once again, look like the introduction of a perspective of transcendence in a "quasi-religious" form of aesthetic pleasure from the point of view of post-Enlightenment discursive orders, it is in fact the opposite. I thus speak, instead of transcendence, of a moment of irreducible marginality and asymmetry that the figures produce. The notion of immanence cannot do justice to this moment either. What the focus on figuration asks for, once we acknowledge the threshold position of the figural, is not a "belief" in the existence of another realm, the transcendence of the divine, the disinterested pleasure of beauty in a judgment, or of either an experiential or conceptual truth. Nor can the asymmetry of the figural—its disruptive force that underlies and resists all mimetic assimilation and conceptual grasp—be translated into ideals of humanity, compassion, tolerance, solidarity, identification, healing, otherness, difference, and understanding, that is, of a projected and imposed erasure of the concrete in a well-meaning spirit of sameness. Instead, the asymmetry, the recognition, or maybe better, the acknowledgment of the failure of meaning and concept in the disruptive encounter with the figural effects of worlds and words has no other place and time than the practice where the figure finds the space to resist and where it thus challenges the order of nature and culture alike. In the concreteness of

the figure, the finite is thus realized while it makes all forms of assimilation collapse, giving way to the infinite.

It is in this acknowledgment of the asymmetry of the figural, too, that we grasp an ethical moment. To be sure, there is nothing normative in figural disruption, in terms of either an ethical "good," aesthetic "beauty," or ideal "humanity." Instead, the very practice of the acknowledgment of the figure is the place of the asymmetry, the articulation of the suppressed concrete that cannot be deployed in abstracted positions. It lets the space at the margins of our worlds open toward suspended possibilities in gestures of affirmation: the magnanimity of the reader in the perception of the strikingly concrete in Auerbach's idea of a specific will to interpretation; the contemplative mode of looking at a hill, cows, and trees in Musil's novel; the stone and the wood of the pulpit that, seen as figures, make all sermons superfluous according to Meister Eckhart; or the intervention of the slave songs at the beginning of his essays in W. E. B. Du Bois's The Souls of Black Folk. All these instances articulate the utter asymmetry of the figural, the marginal and disrupting position of the absorption into the concrete, and the ethical shape of submission that perception takes in the acknowledgment of the figure and the participation in its effects, devoid of all generalizations. I thus speak of acknowledgment rather than recognition. While the latter emphasizes a cognitive aspect, the former affirms an existential and temporal act, a renunciation and reformation of the will that undermine the stability of knowing subjects. In theological terms, marking the asymmetry of figural effects as supernatural gifts, we might speak of a transition from an order of nature to an order of grace here; in philosophical terms, marking the limits of knowledge, of the excess of the given in its concreteness. In both instances, we encounter the constitutive threshold again: Figure stands for the concretely real, always marginal moment that underlies and simultaneously resists mimetic assimilation and conceptual abstraction, that is, the tools of imposition and power. With some of the mystics we might thus affirm that, while it can be everything, this marginal moment is nothing—and thus, thinking with Musil, the mystics will always be "immoralists" in the eyes of normative positions.

Following a line of thought that has been deployed in Christian theologies and in the mysticism of late antiquity and the Middle Ages in terms of theosis, theopoiesis, and divinization, I am referring to notions of participation or partaking to characterize the specific mode of the acknowledgment of the figural. At its core lies a transition from mimetic assimilation in sensation, affect, imagination, and conceptual thought to modes of participation that always have a practical shape. The figural, thought of in this way, is the creaturely world as it resists both mimetic assimilation and conceptual grasp, calling thus for a different and always new form of acknowledgment beyond the trajectories of sameness and otherness. It is the world without content and determination that disrupts speech from within and makes us part of it.

This notion of figure and figuration as partaking, the multiple tensions and suspensions figuration produces, and the possibilities it opens are the matter of this book. It operates on three levels that often cannot be separated. "Figure" is a term that applies to the experience of perception in its movement from the striking and disruptive moment through forms of assimilation in sensation and affect, "before" it enters the sphere of meaning and conceptualization. "Figure" is a term that enables us to think of a continuity between perception, the material world in its extension, and the media that modify the shapes and movements of perception. In this sense, as shown in the texts of the mystics, figures support practices of expansion, intermingling, dramatization, and absorption in a wide range of delicate and excessive forms of pleasure and terror, reminiscence and anticipation. "Figure" is, finally, also a term that

allows us to conceive of practices of experimentation with the shapes of perception, the modes of participation, and of exposure to the world that—maybe in the mode of a speculative surrealism and supernaturalism—produce possibilities in a state of suspense, undermine the spheres of meaning and concept, and displace what Musil calls the "sense of reality."

These possibilities are neither within the real nor utterly opposed to it. They also do not form a sphere of a unique or different experience. Instead, they are everywhere. The notion of figuration allows us—in what we might call a reductio ad figuram—to see possibilities as critical modifications of sedimented forms of knowledge, habits, and meaning, in other words, of the ontological and epistemological orders that shape and colonize worlds and peoples. These modifications, not channeled primarily through the deployment of discursive formats, are deviations and convulsions that nest within the worlds and the words whenever we return from the spheres of assimilation, meaning, and concept to the resistance and asymmetry of figures. In Chapters 3 and 4 I try to show the richness of medieval engagements with this use of figures, following the variations through the production of mystical tropes, first in their exercises of reweaving perception, then in their forms of exemplary imitation. Moving through this archive of texts allows us to see how these tropes, in returning to the most provocative one, the ungraspable divine, address the challenges of figuration and establish a range of paradigmatic forms of sensual, affective, and conceptual assimilation—however, undermining these paradigms time and again in their return to the threshold function of the figural. Most provocatively, they present us with multiple ways of designing practices and reinventing the circulation of sensation, affect, and thought that only the close reading of this rich archive can offer.

As I show based on these readings, this never means that we must end with a stable opposition between the figural and the worlds of assimilation, meaning, and concept. "Nesting," in my use of the term, refers to the fact that figuration inhabits and undergirds all sensation, imagination, and production of meaning and that what the practices of figuration ask for is the acknowledgment not of its opposition to it but, again, of the very asymmetry that is at stake here. This happens also in the movements of turning moments of meaning and conceptualization against themselves, making them into figures where we first think of them as signs. This, I argue here, has been at the core of a practice of contemplation and prayer in mystical traditions often characterized as the marginal, embodied, experiential, and somewhat subversive side of the history of medieval Christianity and dogmatic belief. As noted earlier, this is also one aspect that has made mysticism an object of fascination and engagement throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In drawing attention to the figural and the fact that it can never be fully assimilated, however, my focus is on more than a set of practices that emphasize experience instead of dogma, belief, and conceptual grasp. As I argue, the notion of the figural forces us to think along a perspective of the concrete and creaturely that, in its irreducible asymmetry, like the divine and indeed mirroring it, can never be owned or understood. Thus, I use figure here not only as a concept but also as a heuristic tool, often just an image, that allows delineation of a sphere where the "soul"—to use this seemingly archaic term that comprehends all aspects of the life of all things--is intimately woven into the textures of the world and entirely part of it, denaturalizing it and opening it to the "otherwise." It is this notion of figure—and the detours through Musil and Auerbach—that has helped me understand some of the fundamental stakes of the mystical theologies I have been working on. And it is the observation that figure cannot be conceived of without the multiple paradigms of assimilation that has made me understand that we always must return to this archive of texts and their history to grasp the very tensions that are at stake.

This book comprises eight parts. I start with an introductory meditation on the notion of figure in Chapter i, focusing on a few characteristic moments where the disruptive force of figures and the outline of a radical figuralism come into view. In Chapter 2 I turn to a discussion of Erich Auerbach's attention to the concrete, his work on figura, and his engagement with the understanding of history as a continuous modification of our minds that he finds in the thought of Giambattista Vico. This is the background for the exploration of the role of practices of figuration in forms of reweaving perception and the imitation of examples at stake in medieval theories and practices of prayer, contemplation, and aesthetic experience in Chapters 3 and 4. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 focus on questions of how such practices have been framed and controlled between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries; how they have been recast in early modern times; and how they reemerged in some forms of modernist thought and literature. In Chapter 8, the book concludes with the return to a figure that crosses the centuries, the holy fool, in my eyes the very figura of figuration as an agent of intervention. Not surprisingly, it is this image of the "fool" that returns also in Musil's text when he speaks of the "man without qualities."

In drawing attention to the practices of figuration, medieval Christian texts on prayer and the experience of the divine play a key role in this book. As I argue, these texts are, above all, invested in practices of shaping and reshaping sensation, emotions, and thought. At the center of this we encounter not an expression of belief, or a cognitive act of distinction between the human and the divine, or even a theory of analogy, but an investment in practices that transform and transfigure the ways of perception and of inhabiting the world. Thus, building on essays I have published in earlier versions, Chapters 3 and 4 focus on traditions of spiritual exercises that are meant to produce this transformation. Many of these practices foreground a tension between figuration, forms of assimilation, and hermeneutics, arguing for a critical focus that privileges the plastic side of perception against the imposition of meaning. At the same time, they establish and explore the tensions between the figure and the forms of assimilation that precede all hermeneutics and the empire of meaning. In all instances, we are asked to move from the meaning of a text, usually a text from the Scriptures, to an exemplary moment of mimetic assimilation— scenes from the lives of saints, for example—and to the figural threshold that can be grasped fully neither in understanding nor in the exemplary imitation itself.

In producing this movement and in rearticulating a radical negative theology, figures mark a point of suspension and dispossession where the world takes shape "otherwise." Particular moments play a role in this production of suspension and inform the contemplative practices that are at the center of my study. My main interest in identifying these moments along a line that leads from late antiquity to modern times lies neither with the characterization of specific authors nor of a conceptual framework or a definition of "mystical thought" or a universal "mystical experience" but with specific techniques, movements, and procedures that are foregrounded in the contemplative practices around the relations between figure and mimesis; the focus on reinventing sensation; the gestures of prayer; aspects of dramatization and exemplarity; visualization and imagination; the topics of the abject and disfiguration; enumeration and meditation; surrender, experiment, rapture, and delay. In focusing on these aspects of contemplative practice and their theological implications, I identify not a shared and thus idealized mystical experience or a form of belief but specific axes around which medieval contemplative practices and exercises are organized. As I show, in each instance and along each of these axes, the tension between the figural and the forms of assimilation is being evoked and complicated in a phenomenology of rhetorical effects.

In each instance the asymmetry of the figure is also being evoked in these practices that long for an experience of the world in light of the divine, beauty, and love. Articulated in moments of unity or utter ecstatic absorption, none of these forms of experience can ever be grasped or known. They give a name, however, to the asymmetrical character of the figural, the challenge of a differential intensity that disrupts the world, that suspends ontology, and that emerges in the concrete, thus negating all abstraction and all powers of subjection. In theological terms, once again, we are asked to think here of the gift of grace and of transfiguration or metamorphosis; in philosophical terms, of the excess of the concrete; in rhetorical terms, of the absorption into the figure on the thresholds of assimilation. The medieval texts that I present in Chapters 3 and 4 are, in each instance, variations on the exercises that engage these aspects of the practice of figuration.

In Chapters 5, 6, and —not following a strict chronological path—I identify moments and instances where these practices of participation, assimilation, and transfiguration have been discussed and reframed: first from the late Middle Ages to the Baroque, then in some of the modern voices that engage the positions that are at stake here. As I show, the discussions around the adoption of mystical tropes repeatedly answer to specific historical conditions, and they articulate new forms of conceiving of the figural challenge. Thus, among others, Jacob Bohme's cosmopoetics, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's and Johann Gottfried Herder's notion of aesthetic experience, Joris-Karl Huysmans's space of decadent pleasure, Robert Musil's sense of possibility, Musil's and Georg Lukacs's thoughts about the form of the essay, and Bela Balazs's notion of a new visibility of the world in silent film come into view. What also come into view are the multiple ways of framing and controlling the extravagance of figural thought and the enthusiasm it engenders, and, finally, in Chapter 8, the very foolishness that characterizes the radical abandonment to the power of figures and the ethics of asymmetry it entails—including the foolishness of this very book. It establishes, as will become clearer, a strong opposition between figurality and hermeneutic engagement only to acknowledge that hermeneutics, the arts of reading and interpretation that connect flesh, history, and spirit, are always at stake here and that the figural emerges where hermeneutic engagements realize their own finite limit position, abandoning themselves to practices of assimilation at first, to the absorbing asymmetry of the figural worlds of possibilities at last.

While I concede that specific historical shifts could be considered here, I reflect on these only in oblique ways. Thus, I refer not to historical lines of continuity or reception. Instead, after laying out what I see as a basic notion of figure and a history of medieval types of engagement with the figural in Chapters 1 to 4, in Chapter 5 I focus on a series of moments of framing the figural practices and the tensions they articulate in transitions from medieval to modern times. I argue that in the late Middle Ages and in the early modern era we move from a complex phenomenology of rhetorical effects, meant to contain practices of figuration in medieval contexts of spiritual exercises, to a framework of hermeneutic authorization and a control of "free spirits"; to a semiotics of the demonic and divine and a neutralization of inspired speech in Luther's critique of figural practices; and an entirely naturalized clarification of rational principles of discernment in Kant's elaborations of the conditions of the possibility of knowledge and his critique of "enthusiasm."

However, in Chapter 6 I draw attention to three moments of a countercurrent to these frames of control, the "monadological transcription" of the figural in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that resists some aspects of this very framing. I argue that in Bohme's emphasis on the cosmopoetic

imagination, in his theory of the signature of things, as well as in Baumgarten's and Herder's notion of aesthetic experience, particularly in the emphasis on the "ground of the soul" and on "touch," we encounter a new monadological understanding of the figural. It takes the figure as monad, building on the idea that the entire world is folded into each moment of concrete encounter and that perception unfolds in specific forms of partaking that rearticulate the tensions between figure, assimilation, and understanding. I present the early modern notion of the emblem as the characteristic form of expression of this very tension in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. And I argue that in the constellation of an abstract notion, the figural image, and the expository language of assimilation—that is, the emblem in its exemplary shape—the figural, the assimilative, and the conceptual are held in a state of suspension. The form of the emblem—opposed to a11 subordination to metaphysical and to naturalizing conditions of possibility of knowledge—has kept its fascinating allure, returning at moments that we call Romantic, decadent, or expressionist in their diverse shapes.

Chapter 7 follows this line of inquiry further, focusing on four instances where modernism and its precursors rearticulate these tensions—my eclectic selection of these moments largely ignores the Romantic movements, which, in their attempts to think figuration anew in correlation with both an individual and a cosmopoetic imagination, would merit a separate book that moves from what I am tempted to call the reduction to the figural to the dreams of a sublime and delirious symbolic amplification. With Huysmans we turn in Chapter 7 to the so-called decadent pleasure "against nature"; with Georges Bataille to mysticism at the "limits of the possible"; with Musil and Lukács to the form of the essay, its return to mystical tropes, and its figural investment in the play of possibility on the thresholds of figure, simile, and concept; with Balazs, finally, to the figural gestures of silent film and the new visibility of the world.

In these modern instances, I am tempted to speak of transformations of the emblematic tension. What the Baroque emblem foregrounds as an irreducible constellation of concept, figure, and assimilation is now more straightforwardly and explicitly conceived of in terms of experiments: the experiment with rhetorical devices and moments of intensity in Huysmans; the limit function of the erotic excess and the mystical in Bataille; the art of the essay in Lukacs and Musil; and the new practice of seeing in Balazs. In each instance, a set of gestures enacts the experimental character of addressing the correlations of figures, thoughts, and the play of sensation and affect. In each instance, the notion of possibility is correlated with a set of expressive gestures anchored in what has been called spiritual exercises since late antiquity, creating thus, in these moments of radical modernity, a deep resonance between modernist concerns and medieval practices of prayer and contemplation.

These gestures, as I acknowledge in Chapter 8 in dialogue with more recent critical interventions by Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, are indeed gestures of a foolish exercise that transfigures the real into a place of the possible beyond its subordination to the imposition of discourse and naturalizing perspectives. It is a foolish expression of dispossession that delves into the space of possibility beyond and within the world as we know it—and that, in the best of all cases, attempts to give back to the concrete all its divine powers.

As I mentioned earlier, parts of Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 7 have been published previously in different versions. However, while preserving the richness and detail of the medieval and early modern textual archive most modern readers might not be familiar with, I have structured the presentation and analysis of these materials here along new lines. The picture of contemplative techniques that emerges is not set

up in terms of particular forms of experience, theories, authors, or historical paradigm shifts but practices that are organized around mystical tropes and, more important, the specific stakes that are foregrounded in particular moments and texts. Thus, the chapters trace different aspects of the engagement with figure and figuration, foregrounding a shared interest in exploring a basic tension: the disrupting force of the figure in its concreteness, the divine contemplative depth and terror, the experimental play with it, and the forms of assimilation that the texts explore. In this tension a "sense of possibility" emerges as a sense of the concrete that creates a conversation between medieval and modernist attempts to reweave the forms of perception and of partaking beyond all naturalist temptations. <>

BETWEEN CELAN AND HEIDEGGER by Pablo Oyarzun, translated by D.J.S. Cross, Forward by Rodolphe Gasché [SUNY series, Literature…in Theory, State Univ of New York Press, 9781438488370]

The relevance of Martin Heidegger's thinking to Paul Celan's poetry is well known. _Between Celan and Heidegger_ proposes that, while the relation between them is undeniable, it is also marked by irreducible discord. Pablo Oyarzun begins with a deconstruction of Celan's _Todtnauberg_, written after the poet visited Heidegger in his Schwarzwald cabin. The poem stands as a milestone, not only in the complex relationship between the two men but also in the state of poetry and philosophy in late modernity, in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Discussion then turns to _The Meridian_, Celan's acceptance speech for the prestigious Büchner Prize for German language literature. Other issues are insistently addressed—place, art, language, pain, existence, and the Heideggerian notion of dialogue—as Oyarzun revisits several essential poems from Celan's oeuvre. A rare translation of Oyarzun's work into English, _Between Celan and Heidegger_ affirms the uniqueness of Celan's poetry in confrontation both with Heidegger's discourse on _Dichtung_ (a poetic saying centered in the idea of gathering) and with Western philosophical notions of art, _techne_, mimesis, _poiesis_, language, and thinking more broadly.

Review

"Celan's poetry has certainly attracted considerable attention from literary critics, philologists, and poetologists, but remarkable in his case is the consistent attention his work has drawn from philosophers and philosophically sophisticated literary critics. With this, the question arises: what is it in Celan's writings that challenges philosophical thought? Among its many accomplishments, Oyarzun's study not only engages the philosophers' accounts of the poetry in question . . . but also enquires into what motivates this philosophical interest in the first place. In short, it is an inquiry into the stakes of the philosophical encounter with poetry." -- from the Foreword by Rodolphe Gasché

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Prologue

I am going to recall things that are all too well known. When Paul Celan read some of his poems in Freiburg im Breisgau on 24 July 1967, Martin Heidegger was in the audience. The next day, they met in the cabin at Todtnauberg, that unadorned refuge annexed to the smooth slope of a hill in the Black Forest to which the philosopher would withdraw in order to immerse himself in his pensive craft—"knit at the secretsticking"—sustained in the rhythm of modest daily labors and walks.

What was said? What happened between the two? Almost from the very moment it occurred, this meeting has incited innumerable commentaries and attempts at interpretation. The more they have intensified, the more famous the entirely decisive significance of Celan's work has become for poetry's situation and for the relations between poetry and philosophy in the epoch of late modernity, and the more complex consideration of Heidegger's thought has become for the situation of philosophy and for its relations to poetry and art within that same horizon. Without having to cave to the temptation of seeing in the meeting "a quasi-mythical episode of our epoch," as Alain Badiou calls it (Manifesto, 86), due to the vexing resonance that the allusion to the "mythical" might have precisely in this context (among which numbers, above all, the formulation "myth of the twentieth century" that Alfred Rosenberg uses to characterize Nazism), it cannot be omitted that this meeting is pregnant with signs.

What happened between the two? I asked. Many hypotheses have been ventured with respect to this meeting, the relation between Heidegger and Celan, and the poem—the remarkable poem "Todtnauberg"—that would seem to cipher their relation like a dense abbreviation, along with equally many wagers on the "word / to come" (Celan, Collected Later Poetry, 257) onto which the poet's cordial hope opens. It seems entirely vain to me—vain for me at least—to venture a conjecture with even a minimal aim of verisimilitude concerning this meeting and the other issues intertwined with it. To mention only one issue, I would have no other recourse than drawing up a story in which to make room for my conjecture and, perhaps, supporting this story with the several hints that patience might track in Celan's so densely sedimented writing. Unable to do so, I have limited myself to something else: I have sought to insist upon the "between," to interrogate it assiduously, to weigh it and plumb its depths. This book is not an exercise in fiction but, rather, an attempt to construct that "between" on the basis of its impossibility. For that very reason, I should confess beforehand that I have lost hope of doing justice to the "between"; the book has had to remain necessarily open at its extremities.

Upon entering into the cabin, Celan signed the visitor log that the thinker kept: "Into the cabin logbook, with a view toward the Brunnenstern, with hope of a coming word in the heart." On Maundy Thursday in 1970, Celan and Heidegger met again on the occasion of a reading before a small group. The philosopher proposed taking a walk with the poet in the summer of the same year. On 20 April, once

again in Paris, Celan walked toward Pont Mirabeau, which neighbored his room, and threw himself into the Seine with no witnesses; a fisherman found his body seven miles away on the first of May.

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From 'The Idiom of the Poem: A Foreword by Rodolphe Gasche'

… **BETWEEN CELAN AND HEIDEGGER** is an assiduous effort to resist all interpretations and readings of Celan tempted to locate and fix his work and thought in a stable place. From what we have seen so far, the Celanian conception of place—the topos of his study of topoi—is that of a "between." It comes as no surprise, therefore, if Oyarzun also confesses that he does "not feel inclined" to validate Derrida's "Jewish theory of the poem" (**BETWEEN CELAN AND HEIDEGGER,** 102). Oyarzun resists opposing to a German theory of the poem and its place, such as Heidegger's, and by extension also to a Greek paradigm an other determined paradigm—more precisely, a paradigm of the Other construed along the predictable and conventional lines of the divide between Greek and Jewish thought. Needless to say, rather than situating Celan's work in one direction or the other, however plausible, Oyarzun wishes in this case as well to endure the "between" of both alternatives. However, more is at stake, and in conclusion ^ wish to highlight another outstanding concern of the book that, I believe, makes Oyarzun's contribution a singular one.

It is certainly not by accident that the concern in question is broached in the central chapter devoted to "Language." Throughout this chapter, Oyarzun argues that the Celanian poem seeks to extricate itself from "the occidental mimetic tradition," to uproot itself from "the metaphorical regime of occidental language" (**BETWEEN CELAN AND HEIDEGGER,** 54), and to leave the Heideggerian—that is, the Western—conception of the absolute interiority of language behind. What has been said so far regarding the nonrepresentational nature of the language of Celan's poems must suffice here. By contrast, the dense and intense pages of chapter 4, in which this departure from the tradition's mimetic conception of poetry is shown to be intertwined with a reconsideration of the function of image and metaphor, would require careful attention. In brief, Oyarzun submits here that "the form and dominant format of poetry in the occidental tradition" (54) are decided in Celanian poetry by the litter's treatment of the image or metaphor. As a movement of transportation and thus of reaching beyond, he argues, metaphor "is the condition under which, in the circle of occidental languages, the possibility of the relation to the other has been established, predefining that relation as communication" (54-55). However, when Celan claims that, in the poem, the images are "what is perceived and is to be perceived once and always again once, and only here and now," the poem becomes "the place where all tropes and metaphors want to be carried ad absurdum" (Celan, Meridian, 39b). Thus practiced, though they remain repeatable, the images and metaphors of language are also "only here and now" (39b) in the poem—that is, in the singular in all its uniqueness—and are therefore subtracted from their universal availability in the arsenal or "garden of rhetoric" (Oyarzun, **BETWEEN CELAN AND HEIDEGGER**, 54). In short, uprooted and destroyed, the metaphor's general citability and its power of taking one beyond oneself toward the Other, which is the very condition of the occidental understanding of language as communication and of the peculiar clarity that it possesses, are renounced to the benefit of thinking and practicing what Celan calls "the mystery of the encounter" (Celan, Meridian, 34b), an encounter that, qua ainigma, seems to be shrouded in extreme obscurity. In other words, intent on securing a relation to the Other in all his, her, or its singularity, Celan's poetry undoes the occidental mode of relating to the Other that, as a meta-phoric transportation, has a universality under which all differences are

subsumed in the brightest of lights, which as such is a light that, by forcing the Other into its brightness without shelter, paradoxically stifles all encounter.

The "dialogue" between Heidegger and Celan, if it is a "dialogue," is marked by a resistance on Celan's part to Heidegger's "absolute postulation of the 'interiority'" of language (Oyarzun, **BETWEEN CELAN AND HEIDEGGER**, 129n3) and its speaking through both thinking and poetizing. As we have seen, it is to this interiority, on the basis of which and through which we are, that Celan responds by interjecting: "But the poem does speak!"—not poetry as such but, rather, the individual poem as an inauguration of an address to the Other in advance of language's anteriority. Now, Oyarzun's point is that, with this statement, Celan breaks with "the Greco-Germanic matrix of dialogue" that Heidegger developed through his interpretations of Holderlin and, by extension, with the Western matrix of dialogue, and this break occurs in view of "a different possibility of dialogue" (96-97). However, this possibility is not hastily to be associated with any determinate non-Western position, including—as we have seen—the Jewish paradigm. In the book's final chapter, titled "Dialogue" in the same way as the opening chapter, Oyarzun stresses not only that "the political is a principal key for all Celanian poetry" but also that "political" here is to be taken "in the highest and most radical sense" (95). The stakes of his reading of Celan thus become explicit: its aim is to rethink the nature of dialogue, which Heidegger's interpretation of Holderlin has shaped into the constructive principle of community, as one that instead differs from its Greco-Germanic matrix and, in view of a non-Western conception of the dia-logical, has place for a plurality of logoi.

Again, the point is not that Celanian poetry has effectively broken with the occidental philosophical and rhetorical tradition regarding language, dialogue, and community and already speaks from another space, the space of the Other, as if this space could be definitively located. On the contrary, it is a u-topic, improbable, impossible, if not "absurd" space that is not to be confounded with any other so-called space and that can only be reached, without being reached once and for all, through or by way of a traversal of the Western paradigm that it suspends but does not therefore destroy. Celan's poetry goes the way of the Western tradition to free itself from it and thus perhaps to be able to take a step in the direction of what is other, an operation that occurs exclusively in, or as, the suspended "between."

By resisting the brilliance of so many astute readings and interpretations of Celanian poetry and thought, Oyarzun resists not only what he terms "the regime of eloquence," that is, "the occidental law of language," but also the light that prevails in it, "a light, a certain light, a law of light that forces clarity: Lichtzwang' (**BETWEEN CELAN AND HEIDEGGER**, 57). In this foreword, I have been concerned with the alleged obscurity of Celanian poetry and the question concerning what sort of obscurity it is. From what we have seen, this poetry is a challenge to lightduress, to compulsive clarity, which also means that it is a challenge not to universality as such but, rather, to a certain form of the universal. Inevitably, such a challenge would necessarily seem to give in to obscurity. Yet, when Oyarzun avers that, in the face of forced clarity, "one must also affirm another mode of light [... ,] the light of utopia, of the absurd place" (59), it is not a light intent on illuminating the particular at the expense of the universal. For the philosopher whose eyes are inescapably oriented toward the universal, Celanian poetry represents an extraordinary challenge. In order to be capable of thinking how, in the dated and thus individualized poem, that which is "perceived once" is "always again once" what it is "only here and now" (Celan, Meridian, 39b), one must think a repeatability of the singular constitutive of its equally singular otherness and its reaching toward and addressing the Other—a repeatability that, at the same

time, provides the obscurity of the singular outreach with another kind of clarity and, by extension, another kind of universality for which there is no model. Although no determinate model for such universality can be found in any of the existent forms of the nonoccidental, thought and the poem must traverse the occidental in order to be able to take a step, perhaps, in the direction of this u-topic place. <>

Consciousness and Quantum Mechanics edited by Shan Gao [Philosophy of Mind, Oxford University Press, 9780197501665]

Consciousness and quantum mechanics are two great mysteries of our time--and recently scholars have postulated a deeper connection between them. Exploring this possible connection can be fruitful: an analysis of the conscious mind and psychophysical connection can be indispensable in understanding quantum mechanics and solving the notorious measurement problem, and there is also likely some kind of intimate connection between quantum mechanics--the most fundamental theory of the physical world--and our efforts to explain, naturalistically, the phenomenon of consciousness.

The seventeen newly written chapters in this volume are divided into three sections: Consciousness and the Wave Function Collapse, Consciousness in Quantum Theories, and Quantum Approaches to Consciousness. This is the first volume to provide a comprehensive review and thorough analysis of intriguing conjectures about the connection between consciousness and quantum mechanics. Written by leading experts in physics, philosophy, and cognitive science, **Consciousness and Quantum Mechanics** will be of value to students and researchers working on the foundations of quantum mechanics and the philosophy of mind.

Contents

Consciousness and quantum mechanics are two mysteries in our times. It has been conjectured that a deep connection between them may exist. The connection is bidirectional. On the one hand, an analysis of the conscious mind and psychophysical connection seems indispensable in understanding quantum mechanics and solving the notorious measurement problem (Gao, 2019).1 Indeed, as Harvey Brown once emphasized, "The issue of psycho- physical parallelism is at the heart of the problem of measurement in quantum mechanics" (Brown, 1996). On the other hand, it seems that in the end quantum mechanics the most fundamental theory of the physical world, will be relevant to understanding consciousness and even solving the mind-body problem when assuming a naturalist view, even though we are not quite there yet (Atmanspacher, 2019). Therefore, a careful and thorough examination of possible connections between consciousness and quantum mechanics is not only necessary but also even pressing i order to unravel these two mysteries.

This book is the first volume that provides a comprehensive review and thorough analysis of intriguing conjectures about the connection between consciousness and quantum mechanics. It contains seventeen original chap- ters that are written by leading experts in this research field. This book is accessible to graduate students in physics and philosophy of mind. It will be of value to students and researchers in physics with an interest in the meaning of quantum mechanics, as well as to philosophers working on the foundations of quantum mechanics and philosophy of mind.

This book is organized into three parts in order to facilitate reading, although a few chapters do fit into more than one part. Echoing the possible bidirectional connections between consciousness and quantum mechanics, the first two parts are about the possible roles of consciousness in quantum theories. The first part is about the specific consciousness-collapse conjecture, and the second part is about other possible roles of consciousness in quantum theories, and the third part is about the possible roles of quantum mechanics in understanding consciousness.

A more detailed introduction of the three parts of this book is as follows. The first part investigates the relationship between consciousness and the collapse of the wave function. If consciousness really collapses the wave function, then this will provide both a solution to the measurement problem and a potential role for consciousness in the physical world. This well-known consciousness-collapse conjecture has a long history, but it is often dismissed as a very speculative and imprecise idea. Recently,

there has been exciting new progress on developing the idea and making it more precise. One main reason is that theories that give precise and mathematically defined conditions for the presence or absence of consciousness have been developed, such as Tononi's (2008) integrated information theory, in which consciousness is quantified with a mathematical measure of integrated information.

In Chapter 1, David Chalmers and Kelvin McQueen give a comprehensive introduction to the consciousness-collapse idea and answer the usual objections to the idea. Moreover, they put forward a way of making the consciousness-collapse idea precise by exploring and evaluating dynamic principles governing how consciousness collapses the wave function. Two models are proposed. The first one is a simple consciousness- collapse model on which consciousness is entirely superposition-resistant. This model is subject to a conclusive objection arising from the quantum Zeno effect. The second model combines integrated information theory with Pearle's continuous-collapse theory, and it is not subject to the objection. The prospects of empirically testing these models and potential philosophical objections to them are also discussed. The authors conclude that the consciousness-collapse idea is a research program worth exploring.

In Chapter 2, Elias Okon and Miguel Ángel Sebastián introduce a consciousness-collapse model called the subjective-objective collapse model, evaluate the virtues of the model, and answer some possible objections and challenges related to it, such as the multiple realizability of conscious states. This model consists of an objective collapse scheme, where the collapse operator is associated with consciousness as a physical property or with a physical property that correlates with consciousness. Like Chalmers and McQueen's models, the advantage of this model is that consciousness is incorporated into quantum mechanics in a well-defined way, both mathematically and conceptually, and in a way that is fully compatible with the truth of physicalism if consciousness is physical.

In Chapter 3, J. Acacio de Barros and Carlos Montemayor investigate the role of consciousness in the consciousness-collapse quantum theories. According to them, the observer in quantum mechanics is an access con- scious observer, rather than a phenomenally conscious observer, because measurements are not entirely determined by merely appearance properties of experiences, but rather by concrete interventions in an environment by a rational agent with specific goals that have unique theoretical meaning. Moreover, they argue that an access-consciousness version of panpsychism, which they call "panintentionalism," suffices, and it is better equipped to account for the role of consciousness involved in these theories than the standard one, based on phenomenal consciousness.

In objective collapse theories of quantum mechanics, the collapse of the wave function is not caused by consciousness. However, the conscious perceptions may also put constraints on these theories. In Chapter 4, Adrian Kent analyzes the perception constraints on mass-dependent collapse models. According to the previous analysis of Bassi et al., the parameters of these models consistent with known experiments imply that when a person observes a superposition of a few photons a collapse would happen in her eye within the normal perception time of 100 ms, and thus these models are consistent with our conscious perceptions. Kent notes a key problem of this analysis: the relevant processes are assumed to happen in a vacuum, rather than in cytoplasm. Moreover, he argues that when considering the existence of cytoplasm, these collapse models with parameters consistent with known experiments may not satisfy the perception constraints.

The second part of this book is about other possible roles of consciousness in quantum theories. In Chapter 5, Philip Goff argues that the reality of consciousness puts a constraint on the ontology of quantum mechanics. According to wave function monism, a popular interpretation of the ontology of quantum mechanics, fundamental physical reality consists of a complex-valued field in a high-dimensional space. Goff analyzes the question of whether the reality of consciousness can be accounted for by wave function monism. After criticizing the existing attempts to close the wave function/three-dimensional objects explanatory gap, he argues, based on an analysis of the grounding relationship, that the wave function monist has no way to account for consciousness, at least on the assumption that she can't account for three-dimensional objects. Goff's argument does not assume either a materialist or a non-materialist view of consciousness.

In Chapter 6, Peter J. Lewis argues that the word "experience" should not appear as a primitive in the formulation of quantum theory, just as Bell argues that the word "measurement" should not so appear. The psychophysical connection is not something that philosophers and physicists can posit at their convenience; neuroscience constrains the connections between brain structures and experience, whether or not the latter is reducible to the former. But he cautions that, while it is relatively easy to tell whether a use of "measurement" in a discussion of quantum mechanics is good or bad, it is not so easy to tell whether a use of "experience" is good or bad.

In Chapter 7, Jenann Ismael addresses a more general question than the other papers in the volume. The paper is not addressed to the connection between consciousness and quantum mechanics specifically, but to the broader question of whether physics should steer clear of the mind completely. Ismael makes a case that discussion of the mind is both legitimate and essential (as she says: "Physics doesn't stop at the surface of the skin"), but that one can do it while excluding the aspects of mentality that give rise to the mind-body problem. If consciousness has no functional or causal role of its own in the physical world, then physics will not know the difference between the conscious state and its physical basis, and thus consciousness is irrelevant to physics and we need not worry about the mind-body problem in physics. If consciousness itself has a causal role in the physical world as in the consciousness-collapse theories that treat it as a physical primitive, it will indeed become something that matters to physics. But then it also becomes something that is characterizable in terms of its physical role, effectively providing a solution to the Hard part of the mind-body problem.

In Chapter 8, Shan Gao defends his new mentalistic formulation of the measurement problem and argues that it is more appropriate than Maudlin's original formulation. Moreover, he argues that the solutions to the measurement problem need to care about the minds of observers, e.g., they need to assume a certain form of psychophysical connection, and their validity depends on our scientific and philosophical understandings of the conscious mind.

In Chapter 9, Paul Skokowski examines the role of human belief within an Everett no-collapse version of quantum mechanics. He considers the claim that an observer of a measurement resulting in a superposition ends up being deceived about her own perceptual beliefs. Skokowski argues that, upon examination of the neural vehicles that comprise the belief eigenstates of the observer, and the intentional contents of these states, the observer will not, in fact, have the deceptive belief claimed by this interpretation of quantum mechanics.

In Chapter 10, Michael Silberstein and W. M. Stuckey offer a new realist psi-epistemic, principle-based account of quantum mechanics and a neutral monist account of experience. Recent gedanken experiments and theorems in quantum mechanics, such as new iterations on Wigner's friend and delayed choice, have led many people to claim that quantum mechanics is not compatible with determinate and intersubjectively consistent experience (what some call absoluteness of observed events). They show that jettisoning wavefunction realism in favor of a principle-based account and conceiving of consciousness as qualia in favor of neutral monism, allows one to uphold the absoluteness of observed events, deflate the hard problem of consciousness, and deflate the measurement problem, all without giving up free will (i.e., no superdeterminism), locality, or the completeness of quantum mechanics. Their account requires no invocation of relative states (e.g., outcomes being relative to branches, conscious observers, etc.) and requires no "hybrid models" such as claims about "subjective collapse." They provide a take on quantum mechanics that yields a single world wherein all the observers (conscious or otherwise) agree about determinate and definite outcomes.

In Chapter 11, Michel Bitbol argues that phenomenology provides a possible way of understanding quantum mechanics and consciousness and further solving the measurement problem and the mind-body problem. According to phenomenology, a philosophical discipline that favors a first- person approach of any ontological and epistemological issues, conscious- ness is neither something nor a property of something, but the flux of the self-splitting of what there is into subjective existence and its objective targets, and physical systems and processes are nothing more than objects of consciousness. This supports the neo-Bohrian approaches to quantum mechanics such as QBism and participatory realism, according to which the symbols of quantum mechanics are primarily used by agents to assign probabilistic weights to the outcomes of experiments so that such agents can make consistent bets, and the insuperable dependence of these symbols on our situation and experience indirectly reveals the nature of reality so that our knowledge of it can only be participatory rather than representational, predictive rather than descriptive.

In Chapter 12, Lucien Hardy investigates the possibility that when humans are used to decide the settings at each end in a Bell experiment, we might expect to see a violation of quantum mechanics in agreement with the relevant Bell inequality. He argues that this result is well motivated when assuming superdeterminism and mind–body dualism, and if it is confirmed, it will be tremendously significant for our understandings of quantum mechanics and consciousness. Moreover, he also discusses in detail how we can perform such a Bell experiment based on current technologies.

The third part of this book is about quantum approaches to consciousness. In Chapter 13, Roger Penrose argues that the human ability to achieve conscious understanding is a non-computational process, and this requires something beyond current physical theory, an effect of gravitation on quantum mechanics, in supplying a physical basis for "the collapse of the wave function," denoted by OR. OR events are what allow a firm classical reality to arise from a quantum reality having a somewhat weaker ontological status. When appropriately orchestrated, these "proto-conscious" OR events become genuine conscious processes according to the Orch-OR proposal. Moreover, from the principles of relativity theory, it can be deduced that OR, and therefore Orch-OR, can have a certain "retro-active" effect, which may explain how conscious decisions can act within a very small fraction of a second, in contradiction with a conclusion frequently made, on the basis of various experiments, that such acts

must be necessarily unconscious. According to Penrose, this provides an explanation for some puzzling related effects found by Benjamin Libet in the 1970s.

In Chapter 14, Stuart Hameroff gives an up-to-date and comprehensive review of the Penrose-Hameroff "Orch OR" theory. The theory attributes consciousness to "orchestrated" quantum computations in microtubules inside brain neurons, which terminate by Penrose objective reduction (OR), a process in the fine scale structure of the universe that introduces phenomenal experience and non-computability. The theory suggests that microtubules (1) encode memory and process information, (2) orchestrate quantum vibrational superpositions (qubits) of pi electron resonance dipoles within tubulin that unify, entangle, and (3) evolve to meet Orch OR threshold for full, rich conscious experience, most likely (4) in dendrites and soma of cortical layer 5 pyramidal neurons, and (5) selection of microtubule states that regulate axonal firings and behavior, and (6) "retroactivity" inherent in OR and Orch OR can resolve issues in quantum mechanics, free will, and Libet's famous "backward time referral." Hameroff concludes that Orch OR has explanatory power, and is testable and falsifiable.

In Chapter 15, Basil J. Hiley and Paavo Pylkkänen propose that quantum theory implies a radically new notion of matter that has not been properly understood before David Bohm's groundbreaking work. Bohm proposed that the fundamental particles of physics (such as electrons) are not merely pushed around mechanically by classical forces but are also able to respond to information. Information is thus assumed to be an objective commodity that can exist independently of the human mind and that actively guides or instructs physical processes. This notion of active information also applies in computational, biological and psychological phenomena, thus helping us to understand how the mental and physical sides of reality are related. It may even help us to understand the nature of conscious experience. The latter part of this chapter considers the deeper mathematical and physical background of quantum theory and suggests that we need to revise our basic assumptions about quantum objects, such as the role of the wave function.

In Chapter 16, William Seager argues that the goal of interpretation of a theory such as quantum mechanics is intelligibility, which aims to show how the world described by a theory can be made intuitively clear. He identifies three kinds of intelligibility: mundane, mathematical, and metaphysical, and notes that the mismatch between high mathematical intelligibility and low mundane intelligibility of quantum mechanics motivates the search for its interpretations, which attempt to provide metaphysical intelligibility. More- over, Seager considers several such interpretations and argues that Bohm's view, which puts mentality or some basic kind of proto-consciousness as the bearer of intrinsic information, as a fundamental feature of the world, may be the best way to provide a metaphysically intelligible basis for quantum mechanics.

In Chapter 17, Lee Smolin proposes an approach to the question of how consciousness fits into the physical world in the context of a relational and realist completion of quantum mechanics called the causal theory of views. In this theory, the "beables" are the information available at each event from its causal past, and a causal universe is composed of a set of partial views of itself. Smolin proposes that conscious perceptions are aspects of some views. Concretely speaking, only those views that are novel, in the sense that they are not duplicates of the view of any event in the event's own causal past, are the physical correlates of conscious experience, and to be conscious a view must also be maximal, in the sense of being the smallest composite not being part of a larger entangled state. This gives a restricted form of panpsychism defined by a physically based selection principle that selects which views have

experiential aspects, and explains why consciousness always involves awareness of a bundled grouping of qualia that define a momentary self.

Notwithstanding these new insightful thoughts about possible deep connections between consciousness and quantum mechanics, maybe we are still far away from the final answer. But this is just the impetus to do the research. I really hope this book will inspire more researchers to join the search for the ultimate reality of the universe. <>

THE DIE IS CAST by Robert Desnos, translated by Jesse L. Anderson [Wakefield Press, ISBN: 9781939663696] Originally published as *Le vin est tire . .* by Editions Gallimard in 1943.

A startlingly contemporary portrait of drug addiction in prewar Paris

Published in 1943 (just a year before its author was arrested by the Gestapo for his Resistance activities), **THE DIE IS CAST** was a departure for Robert Desnos: a shift from his earlier, frenetic Surrealist prose to a social realism that borrowed as much from his life experience as his career as a journalist. Drawing on his own use of drugs in the 1920s and his doomed relationship with the chanteuse Yvonne George, Desnos here portrays a band of opium, cocaine and heroin users from all walks of life in Paris. It is a startlingly contemporary portrayal of overdoses, arrests, suicides and the flattened solitude of the addict, yet published in occupied Paris, years before "junkie literature" established itself with the Beat Generation. An anomaly both in his career and for having been published under the Occupation by an active member of the Resistance, *The Die Is Cast* now stands as timely a piece of work as it had been untimely when it first appeared.

Robert Desnos (1900–45) was Surrealism's most accomplished practitioner of automatic writing and dictation before his break with André Breton in 1929. His career in journalism and radio culminated in an active role in the French Resistance. Desnos was arrested by the Gestapo in 1944, and passed through several concentration camps until finally dying of typhoid in Terezín in 1945, a few days after the camp he was in was liberated.

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Seated across from him, Auportain had patiently listened
Barbara, thanks to her fortune
In Marie-Jacqueline's little apartment
Its possible to maintain one's relationships
More than opium, it was love
Now that he was out of the hospital
Columot hung up his telephone
Arichetti's specter
Life is mediocre
The shadows offour heads
Dondlinger counted his money
Estival was daydreaming with a sheet of paper
One of the smokers led the curtain
Arichetti's mother
Courvoisier arrived late to Lily's
Marie-Jacqueline had been living at Lily's
There are days in Paris
Antoine was not at all surprised
The Columot factory
Dondlinger had found
Courvoisier smiled sadly
Without drugs
Why this day
One April afternoon
Several months before

To readers familiar with the more celebrated selections from Robert Desnos's oeuvre, his late novel **THE DIE IS CAST** (*Le vin est tiré* Literally, "the wine is drawn," a French expression whose English equivalents include this translation's title and "the bed is made," the message being that some actions lead to less than desirable consequences that one must face. Although the English-language idioms capture the meaning of the French, they lack the allusion to intoxication, which is especially pertinent in a book about opium addiction.) will look something like an oddity, a blip of social fiction toward the end of a somewhat irregular output of surrealist poetry. And this impression wouldn't be wrong: the book—which tracks the deterioration of a small band of Parisian opium addicts—is indeed an oddity when set beside the rest of Desnos's literary work, not simply for being social fiction, but for being fiction without any qualifier attached. When **THE DIE IS CAST** was published in 1943, Desnos had written only a handful of other novels: Liberty or Love!, Mourning for Mourning, and The Punishments of Hell, books an anglophone hesitates to even label as novels (the French have always been more generous with the word) owing to their diminutive length and heterodox content. Add to this the fact that **THE DIE IS CAST** was written some two decades after these other fictional works, and the blip stands out even more.

But if we take a closer look at Desnos's work and life, the novel begins to make more sense. Desnos was socially engaged to a degree that was unusual among other early surrealists. He covered any number of political and social topics while working as a journalist in his twenties, and much of his later poetry was overtly political. And he didn't limit himself to words: during the German Occupation, he

used his journalistic access to privileged information to aid the French Resistance, an action that would eventually cost him his life.

Other instances of Desnos's political convictions and development can be found throughout his biography. In 1928, he helped smuggle the Cuban writer and dissident Alejo Carpentier out of his home country aboard a France-bound ship. On another occasion, Desnos began smashing glasses in a club after a Black friend was refused admission, on racial grounds, to the dance floor. More specific to the concerns of the novel, Desnos had watched his beloved Yvonne George, a Belgian cabaret singer, succumb to opium addiction—a passive incident compared to the more engaged ones just cited, but it's also the most central to understanding the germination of **THE DIE IS CAST**.

The experiences and impulses necessary to write the novel, then, were there to be drawn upon. Desnos—who'd already written poems and prose, song lyrics, plays, advertisements, and radio jingles—simply had to make the decision to sit down and write it.

Robert Desnos was born on 4 July 1900, to parents on a steady rise toward the middle class. His father sold poultry in Les Halles, a famous and expansive Parisian market, and for most of Robert's childhood the family lived in the nearby Marais neighborhood, a medieval section of Paris whose mystic atmosphere Desnos would credit with spurring his precocious imagination. He was young enough to avoid fighting in the First World War but still had to complete mandatory military service after high school. It was during this time that he first met—through mutual friend Benjamin Peret—Andre Breton and Louis Aragon, who would soon become figureheads of the surrealist movement. It wasn't until Desnos was discharged in 1922, however, that he was fully integrated into the burgeoning group and began making a name for himself as a poet.

The most noteworthy of Desnos's early experiences with the Breton-helmed group were what are known as the automatist sessions, nocturnal séances during which those who gathered—sometimes individually, sometimes in groups—appeared to fall into a trance through a kind of self-hypnosis and then interacted with the others from an apparently heightened or altered state of awareness. How authentic these trances were is debatable, but what's clear from contemporaneous accounts is that Desnos was far more impressive than the others while hypnotized (an account of this can be found in Breton's surrealist classic, *Nadja*). He would become a seemingly endless fount of short, word play—laden poems, and some of his earliest published works, the "Rrose Sélavy" poems, were a product of these sessions.

Desnos went on composing surrealist poetry through the 1920s while also beginning his career as a journalist. This didn't sit well with Breton, who saw journalism as a profession unworthy of someone with Desnos's linguistic talents. It was an early crack in their friendship, and by the end of the decade—after many boyish internecine battles among the surrealists—Desnos had become, so to speak, unaffiliated, a free agent. Some months later, in April 1930, Desnos went through another life-shifting event: the death of Yvonne George, whom he'd fallen in love with shortly after meeting her in the mid-1920s. By many accounts. Desnos was obsessed with the Belgian chanteuse, and though his love went unrequited, he grew increasingly obsequious as her health deteriorated from the combined effects of opiate addiction and tuberculosis. During the last two years of her life, Desnos had even begun hunting down drugs for her.

So the 1930s, for Desnos, began with ruptured artistic ties and a dead love interest. He soon found replacements for both. In the creative domain, Desnos began work as a radio broadcaster, a job he adored and would continue at until the outbreak of the Second World War. Reflecting his wide-ranging curiosity, Desnos was involved with a variety of programs and hosted several, including one dedicated to the exploration of foreign cultures and another, *La Clef des Songes* (The key to dreams), in which he interpreted listeners' dreams. He also discovered a knack for marketing, and wrote radio ads for pharmaceuticals, furs, the National Lottery, chocolate, perfume, and much else besides. Unfortunately, and owing to the fact that Desnos lived in a time before widespread recording of the radio, only some twenty minutes of his voice have been passed down to posterity.

As for love, Desnos had already fallen for another woman by the time of George's death. Her name was Youki Foujita, a Frenchwoman who'd adopted her decidedly un-French first name—it was originally Lucie—after marrying Japanese painter Tsuguhara Foujita. Desnos and Youki were interested in each other while the marriage was still intact, but the sudden and lasting departure of her husband in 1931, along with his sanctioning of their relationship in a farewell letter, allowed the two to go beyond mere interest and move in together. Though never legally married, they would remain a couple until the end of Desnos's life.

He published scantily in the 1930s, but Desnos was still writing and, for a time, strove to complete a poem every night before bed. It was during this period that Desnos wrote one of his most celebrated poems, "The Tale of the Bear," a response to the interwar political upheaval in Paris and an example of his artistic engagement with society at large. It was a harbinger of the kind of work Desnos would publish in the even more turbulent decade to come.

In the fall of 1939, Desnos was mobilized and sent to Brittany with the 436th Regiment of Pioneers. Upon his return to Paris the following August, he found that the radio stations had become propaganda outlets for the Vichy regime and returned to newspaper work to make a living. His columns were often, to varying degrees of explicitness, politically charged, with pieces on themes like neighbor-on-neighbor denunciation and French unity. He also wrote regular reviews of jazz records, a poke in the eye to the Nazis, who considered the genre degenerate.

The articles weren't enough. Soon after some thirteen thousand French Jews were rounded up in, and subsequently deported from, the Velodrome d'Hiver stadium in July 1942, Desnos joined the Agir ("Act," in English) Resistance cell, for whom, in addition to supplying information gathered using his press credentials, he forged identification documents.

THE DIE IS CAST was released the following year by Gallimard. Employing an ensemble cast of characters to show opium's non-discretionary appeal across class and generational lines, Desnos is explicit in his preface regarding the novel's purpose: "This book attempts, without the author necessarily believing himself to have succeeded, to demonstrate that social circumstances are responsible for the daily increase in the diffusion of drugs, that addicts deserve to be brought back into the fold of daily life, that the current suppression-based laws are absurd, unjust, harmful, and that it's vital, with the assistance of the medical community, to reform our barbaric legal system." The book is antidrug, but it's not anti-addict. The empathy espoused by Desnos, in these lines written nearly eighty years ago, is admirable; the argument he makes is prescient. One need only look at the success of models that have adopted an

approach similar to that described by Desnos—Portugal being a notable example—to see how clear-sighted he was.

Though it does at times take turns toward the surrealistic that are reminiscent of—and arguably even allusive to—his earlier writings, the book's straightforward aim renders fruitless the deep, symbol-driven exegesis that can be done with much of Desnos's work: **THE DIE IS CAST** speaks for itself.

Of course, the reader can draw connections between the text and Desnos's life. Barbara—the wealthy, elusive love interest of Antoine, the closest character the book has to a protagonist—is modeled on Yvonne George, and Antoine's continually thwarted relationship with Barbara bears more than a passing resemblance to Desnos's own doomed courtship. Antoine's visit to Barbara's apartment in the third chapter gives an idea of the utter powerlessness Desnos may have felt in his pursuit of George. To take the Antoine—Desnos connection further, the opening scene, a hallucinogenic memory of Antoine's military service in Morocco, is almost certainly based on Desnos's own posting in Morocco before he joined the surrealists. And Les Halles, where Desnos's father worked, is memorably described through Antoine's eyes in one of the book's best scenes.

But such details, in the end, are trivia. What matters is that **THE DIE IS CAST** is a very good book—entertaining, moving, replete with descriptions and scenes that are not easily forgotten—written by a highly and multitudinously talented writer. That Desnos hadn't written any fiction of note for fifteen years only makes his accomplishment here more impressive.

Desnos also published the poetry collection *Etat de veille* (which included "Tale of the Bear") in 1943; the year after, he published another set of poems in *Contrée*. Both books were political in a manner the Germans would not have appreciated, and both were semi-clandestine—meaning they were available in some bookstores but had evaded the collaborationist censors. **THE DIE IS CAST** allowed Desnos to openly address a political issue close to his heart, without fear that it might land him in prison, or worse.

Tragically, Desnos's work in the Resistance was already leading him toward such a fate.

Desnos was arrested on 22 February 1944. A colleague from Aujourd'hui, the newspaper he was then working for, had called his apartment that morning to warn him that the Gestapo were out looking for him. Desnos helped Alain Brieux—a young man he'd taken in to help avoid a forced work program recently instituted by the Germans—escape and then stayed behind to protect Youki. A trio of officers soon arrived and took Desnos away to Gestapo headquarters, on rue des Saussaies. From there, Desnos passed through two transit camps and on 30 April arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where he had his head shaved, was put into a striped uniform, and had the number 185,443 tattooed on his arm.

He made it out of Auschwitz. It seems that those running the camp were surprised to have been sent a non-Jewish convoy, and Desnos's group was sent away to Buchenwald in mid-May. Before the end of the month, Desnos would be transferred again, this time to Flossenbürg. It was to be another short stay—on 2 June, he left for Flöha, on the Czech border. He arrived the next day and would remain there until April.

His time at Flöha wasn't as hard as it might have been. He was able to receive packages from Youki to supplement the meager rations, and his duties were among the camp's easiest. According to fellow prisoners, he was voluble and often in surprisingly high spirits, telling stories and reading fortunes in the

evening. This all changed, however, when a confrontation with a server led to Desnos throwing hot soup into the other's face. As punishment, Desnos would be given the camp's most demanding jobs for the remainder of his stay.

This would last only about a month. It was the spring of 1945, and the Americans were moving inexorably closer, leading to the camp's evacuation on 14 April. The prisoners then began a brutal march toward another camp, Terezin, or Theresienstadt, in Czechoslovakia. Conditions along the way were wretched, and Desnos was much older than most of the other prisoners. Nevertheless, he made it to Terezin alive—in bad shape, but alive—on 7 May. The Allies won the war the very next day; the prisoners were free; the only thing to be done now was find a way back home. Desnos wouldn't make it. He grew increasingly ill, and just days after meeting a Czech doctor who'd recognized him from a photo in *Nadja*, Desnos died on the morning of 8 June. Weeks before his arrest, a film for which Desnos had written the screenplay, *Bonsoir Mesdames, Bonsoir Messieurs,* was released in Parisian cinemas. Two months into his imprisonment, two of his most celebrated works were published, *Contrée* and *Trente chantefables pour les enfants sages a chanter sur n'importe quel air,* a collection of nursery rhymes that's still taught to children today. Later this same year, *Le bain avec Andromède* would come out, and 1945 saw the publication of a play, *La Place de l'étoile*, and a long poem, "*Calixto*."

Desnos's arrest and deportation, it seems, cut short an unprecedented stream of productivity. We can only guess what else might have come of it. <>

DICE AND GODS ON THE SILK ROAD: CHINESE BUDDHIST DICE DIVINATION IN TRANSCULTURAL CONTEXT by Brandon Dotson, Constance A. Cook, and Zhao Lu Series: Prognostication in History, Brill, 9789004461208]

What do dice and gods have in common? What is the relationship between dice divination and dice gambling? This interdisciplinary collaboration situates the tenth-century Chinese Buddhist "Divination of Maheśvara" within a deep Chinese backstory of divination with dice and numbers going back to at least the 4th century BCE. Simultaneously, the authors track this specific method of dice divination across the Silk Road and into ancient India through a detailed study of the material culture, poetics, and ritual processes of dice divination in Chinese, Tibetan, and Indian contexts. The result is an extended meditation on the unpredictable movements of gods, dice, divination books, and divination users across the various languages, cultures, and religions of the Silk Road.

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This book is about movement: the random movement of dice as they fall through the air and then settle on the ground in a particular configuration; the ontological and positional movements of gods and diviners through a ritual that brings about their intersection; and the physical movement of dice, books, and ritual techniques across India, Central Eurasia, and China. The event at the heart of these various movements is a ritual in which humans attempt to impose order, intention, and control over dice divination and over the gods, but where both dice and gods are united as unwieldy forces that largely evade these efforts.

This book is also about books, and about one book in particular. At its heart is a slim tenth-century codex from Dunhuang containing four medical texts and four divination texts, one of which is called the *Divination of Maheśvara* (*Moxishouluo bu* 摩醯首羅卜). The latter is a dice divination text whose method is unlike that in any other extant Chinese divination text, but which can be found in Turkish, Tibetan, Sanskrit, and Sogdian divination texts from the sixth through tenth centuries. The text was used to interpret the results of dice throws in concert with a local, perhaps Dunhuang-specific pantheon of Indian and Chinese gods and spirits led by the Indian god Śiva in his esoteric Buddhist guise as Maheśvara. There is one deity assigned to each of the *Divination of Maheśvara*'s sixty-four written oracular responses, each of which is further keyed to one of sixty-four different numerical trigrams, or combinations of three numbers. Such methods place the text in a long tradition of Chinese numerical trigram divination on the one hand, and within Indian dice divination traditions on the other.
The *Divination of Maheśvara* is also a product of its specific time and place in Dunhuang, a center of Buddhist iconographic and textual production and a multi-ethnic enclave of Chinese, Tibetans, Khotanese, Sogdians, and Uighurs. As such, the *Divination of Maheśvara* can be approached from many

angles as relevant to, variously, the Buddhicization of Chinese divination techniques; the Chinese assimilation or appropriation of transregional divination traditions; innovations based on long-standing Chinese divinatory traditions; the local reception and adaptation of Indic Buddhist pantheons; and the local articulation of divinatory relationships with the gods.

This book is sympathetic to its subject matter in the sense that it is structured somewhat like a consultation of the *Divination of Maheśvara*. Just as the latter allows one to divine up to three times about a given matter, this book has three main chapters, each of which, like an oracular response, has a similar structure but differing contents. The first chapter is a detailed study of the *Divination of Maheśvara*, the second surveys numerical trigram divination in China, and the third surveys dice divination on the Silk Roads.[1] Each chapter attends to the materiality of divination, and also interrogates divination users' ideas about the power of dice and of other objects used to construct mantic figures. Each chapter also investigates the mantic figures themselves, and how these perform an interpersonal communication between gods and humans. Besides such issues of materiality, ritual process, and divinatory aesthetics, each chapter also considers the gods and spirits that make up the divinatory pantheons of various Indian, Tibetan, and Chinese divination systems, and how these align with and diverge from the contents of the texts. These three chapters and their contents were not arrived at through a randomized throw of the dice, but the book nevertheless hopes to reward other ways of navigating its pages than proceeding from front to back.

Meta-Divination

It will be helpful to begin by introducing how one consults the *Divination of Maheśvara* and also to offer a glimpse of the text through a short "meta-divination." Suppose you live in Dunhuang in the tenth century, and you have an important issue about which you need some advice, or perhaps an outsider's perspective. You visit a diviner and agree to his fee. He tells you to sit down and face west. The diviner then invokes the gods Śakra, Brahmā, and the four heavenly kings, as well as a host of other spirits as witnesses. He tells you to state your name, to focus your mind, and to profess a vow. Then he tells you to announce the issue that brought you here, and gives you an odd, rectangular die. Its four sides each have concentric circles as pips: one on one side, two on the next, three on the next, and then four circles side by side (see figs. 6a and 6b). The diviner tells you to throw the die three times. Your first roll is a four, your second is a two, and your third roll is a one. The diviner looks through the pages of his book, stops, and reads out loud,

> 4-2-1 This is called the King of the Wind Spirits set. You are constantly unhappy. Even if this is the case now, you'll later have happy celebrations. Don't worry or be fearful, as before long things will go your way. Initially inauspicious, but later auspicious.

The diviner tells you that this is a good result. You are not sure of this, and ask if you can roll the dice again. The diviner nods and tells you to once again announce the issue you are divining about while you throw the dice. This time you roll a one, then a two, and then a two again. Once more the diviner turns the pages of the book. He pauses, then intones:

> 1-2-2 This is named the Supervisor of Life Allotments Demon set. If you completed this set, no evil will reach you, but nothing you seek will come about and none of the goods you want will follow. You must be calm and tranquil, and contemplate goodness. This mantic figure is therefore neutral.

You consider this silently, thinking that this seems better than the first one, even if it is supposed to be "neutral" whereas the first response was "auspicious." After a long silence, you ask the diviner if you can throw the dice again for a third response. The diviner tells you that it is permitted to divine three times, but not more. You think this over, and consider the danger of ending up with a bad response.

"How many responses are there in the book?" you ask.

"Sixty-four," replies the diviner.

You decide to try one last time. Holding the die and running your thumb over the circular pips on each of its four sides, you announce your issue again and throw it three times. Two, two, and two. Once more the diviner turns the pages of the book, and stops near the front. He recites:

> 2-2-2 This is named the God Vināyaka set. If a person has issues to resolve, the god will protect him/ her. Whatever s/he needs will soon be obtained; clothing and food will come of their own accord and whatever s/he seeks will be fulfilled. Subsequently, camels, horses, and various domestic animals will not die or be injured. Greatly auspicious.

You feel a great sense of relief. The diviner looks pleased. You try to reflect solemnly on each of the three responses, but it is this last one that repeats in your head, blotting out the uncertainty of the first two. You feel a sense of lightness.

This "meta-divination" offers a sense of the divination ritual's sensibilities and of the *Divination of Maheśvara*'s contents. Its basic method also reveals what it is and what it is not. One creates a numerical trigram by throwing the die three times. The numbers or values from the die—one, two, three, or four—can occupy three slots, such that their ordering matters. There are as a consequence sixty-four possible combinations of numbers, that is, sixty-four numerical trigrams. Mathematically, one can represent this simply as $4^3 = 64$. As a point of reference, this is precisely analogous to how the four nucleotides in DNA and in mRNA, adenine (A), uracil (U), guanine (G), and cytosine (C), combine in groups of three (e.g., ACU, GAC) to form sixty-four possible codons. It should also be noted by way of comparison that although the method used by the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing*) also results in sixty-four possible combinations and sixty-four corresponding entries in the text, this is arrived at in an entirely different way that demonstrates the dissimilarity of the two traditions. In the *Changes*, one sorts stalks to create a set of three unbroken (Yang) or broken (Yin) lines, thereby producing one of the Eight Trigrams, or *bagua* 八卦. Mathematically, the possible outcomes are thus $2^3 = 8$. Repeating the process, one creates a second trigram and then combines these two trigrams to make a hexagram, e.g. $8^2 = 64$. It is in short an utterly distinct method of combining signs that happens to also produce sixty-four possible combinations.

Even if it is practically and numerically a bounded system, the sixty-four possible outcomes in the *Divination of Maheśvara* might have been conceived of in their totality or in their potentiality as symbolizing the entire field of possibilities. Casting the dice and creating a numerical trigram, however, decisively narrows the field to one named god or spirit who either protects or is a source of harm. In the above meta-divination, we encountered the King of the Wind Spirits (*Fengshen Wang* 風神王), the Supervisor of Life Allotments Demon (*Siming Gui* 司命鬼), and the god Vināyaka (*Dasheng Tian* 大聖天). The first is to be linked with the Indic god Vāyu, but also evokes Feng Bo 風伯, the Chinese wind spirit associated with birds, mountains, and the Winnowing Basket astral lodge. The second god, the

Supervisor of Life Allotments, is a famous ancient Chinese god associated with fate and with the underworld. The third, Vināyaka, is a Buddhist guise of the elephant-headed Indian god Gaṇeśa. This is a fairly representative sample of the Indic, Buddhist, Chinese hybrid pantheon of the text, which speaks to its divinatory sensibilities and to its social and religious context in tenth-century Dunhuang. The three gods and the three responses also mirror the three main chapters of this book, with their respective emphases on the *Divination of Maheśvara*, the long history of numerical trigram divination in China, and the transmission of dice divination out of India and across the Silk Roads.

Gambling with the Gods

The meta-divination additionally demonstrates the dynamics of play and of risk that inform dice divination. The die is a playful object, both in the sense that it is used in games and also in its being fundamentally equivocal. A die's multiple faces encode randomization and chance more completely and more succinctly than any other object used in divination. Dice divination is rooted in dice games, and in particular in the tradition of dicing or gaming with the gods. Tales of gambling with supernatural partners come to us from both China and India. In China dicing with the gods is often associated with the game of *liubo* 六博, in which opponents advance twelve pieces—six for each player—on a board by casting rods or dice.[2] While the image of immortals playing *liubo* became a popular motif during the Han, the game was also associated with lowlife gamblers and violent youths.[3] Mark Edward Lewis recounts a story from the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 (*Intrigues of the Warring States*), compiled between 23 BCE and 8 BCE:

> [A] "bold youth" (*han shao nian* 悍少年) … challenged the deity of a shrine to the god of the earth to a game of *bo*. The stakes stipulated that if the youth won he would borrow the god's power for three days, while if he lost the god could make him suffer. He made throws for the god with his left hand, throws for himself with his right, and won the match. He accordingly borrowed the god's power but then did not return it. After three days the god went to seek him, and as a consequence the grove around the shrine withered and died.

Surveying this and other episodes of gambling with the gods, Lewis observes that those who play *liubo* with the gods or spirits "are portrayed as figures bordering on the criminal who challenge the conventional order." This may be largely due to the association of the game with drinking and gambling. Additionally, it must be acknowledged that to challenge the gods is fundamentally a transgressive act. This is signaled by the stakes and by the mode of interaction, which Lewis even likens to combat: the game will establish a winner and a loser, and by winning humans seek to effectively become god-like, that is "to expand their own powers, alter their fate, and manipulate their world."

The instances of gambling with the gods in China come largely from literary sources where they feature in anecdotes and cautionary tales. Gambling with the gods enjoys a more prominent place in Indian mythology and narrative. As in China, in India there are myths about the gods playing dice with each other and those in which the gods dice with mortals. In one example of the former type of myth, from the *Kedārakhaṇḍa*, it is the game of dice that precipitates the fragmentation of the unified, androgynous godhead into its male and female constituents, Śiva and his wife Pārvatī, when it/they are invited to play. In the course of a few rounds both the god and the goddess resort to cheating (*chalena*). Pārvatī wins from Śiva his crescent moon, his necklace, and his earrings, and then finally takes even his loincloth. In anger, Śiva stalks off to the wilderness to practice austerities in solitude. The story is full of humor and irony, but at its heart is the theme of oneness and separateness, and the remainder of the story is about

the loss of wholeness that both Śiva and Pārvatī feel, and their attempts to regain it.[7] A passage just after Śiva's departure depicts Pārvatī's ambivalent love for and frustration with her sore-loser husband:

> She was tormented by this separation and found no joy anywhere. She thought only about Śiva. Her attendant Vijayā said to her, "You won Śiva by self-mortification; it was wrong to play dice with him. Haven't you heard that dicing is full of flaws? You should forgive him. Go quickly, before he is too far away, and appease him. If you don't, you will be sorry later."

Pārvatī replied, entirely truthfully: "I won against that shameless man; and I chose him, before, for my lover. Now there is nothing I must do. Without me, he is formless [or ugly—*virūpa*]; for him, there can be no separation from, or conjunction with, me. I have made him formed or formless, as the case may be, just as I have created this entire universe with all its gods. I just wanted to play with him, for fun, for the sake of the game, in order to play with the causes of his emerging into activity [*udbhava-vṛtti-hetubhiḥ*]."

This exceedingly rich passage sets up a contrast between the usual way of winning a god's favor, such as through self-mortification, and playing a game of dice.[9] The game of dice is "full of flaws," possibly because of the cheating that accompanies it, possibly because the undeserving can win by chance, or possibly for both reasons.

It is curious that Pārvatī's reply is marked as having been given "entirely truthfully." The meaning here is surely not ironic, since she is in fact revealing the core of the myth and the heart of the game: it is about fragmenting the androgynous, holistic godhead, "a state of infinite density and interconnectedness, in which no discontinuities exist" into discrete, gendered entities, and doing so for play (*līlā*), for fun, and "for the sake of the game." As we will see, this playful fragmentation of holism has a powerful analogy in dice divination.

One other point that this myth conveys is also found in many other Indian myths about dice games, namely, that dice games disrupt the social and cosmic order. The game achieves this by almost invariably dealing a loss to the ontologically or positionally superior party. This dynamic is present in the shearing off of aspects of Śiva, represented by his jewelry and garments, which then accrue to the winner, Pārvatī. The topsy-turvy sensibility of the dice game is even more apparent when human gamblers challenge gods. In one myth of this type from South India, a human gambler named "Unfettered" (Niraṅkuśa) is reminiscent of the transgressive "bold youth" from the *Zhanguo ce*. He prefers erotic treatises to the *Vedas*, and instead of staying with his wife he whiles away his time playing dice with courtesans until he loses all of his wealth and is thrown out of his house. Destitute, he enters a ruined Śiva temple, insults the god, and challenges him to a game of dice. Like the Chinese youth's game of *liubo*, "Unfettered" plays both sides, casting the dice for himself and for the god, who remains silent, represented by a stone *liṅga*. "Unfettered" eventually wins and demands his prize: Rambhā, the courtesan of the gods. Loudly demanding payment, "Unfettered" ties a red cloth around the "neck" of the stone *liṅga*.

He pulled the edges of the cloth even more tightly together, strangling the god. Śiva appeared before him—perhaps because he accepted his defeat at the hands of someone who spoke the truth; or because he respected his aggressive devotion, a reflection of the fact that Unfettered was more of a god than he was; or possibly because Unfettered was really an idiot, and this brought out the god's compassion.

The passage underlines the ambivalent status of the gambler: he is possibly an idiot, but he is also "more of a god" than Śiva. As for the meaning of this latter gnomic statement, Handelman and Shulman answer this by describing the characteristics of gamblers like Unfettered:

> They are impudent, supremely confident, unstable, unpredictable …; above all they are perfectly at home in the shifting and fluid world of the game—indeed they are in a sense analogues of the game itself, or human embodiments of its inherent trickiness and flux. Emerging from below—unlike the god, who enters the mode of play from his higher order level of wholeness—they act as solvents on any form of solid or static being, including the rules of the game they play.

Unfettered is more god than Śiva because in being drawn into the game of dice Śiva is drawn out of his own supreme confidence, instability, and unpredictability and is crystallized into one particular form, just as in his game with Pārvatī he was sheared off from a state of unbounded wholeness to become a wandering, bereft, gendered god. The game is tricky in part because it can invert the usual dynamics of human-divine relations, reducing or canalizing the fractal nature and ontological multiplicity of the god—its "trickiness"—while enabling and facilitating something very like this for the human gambler, who is transformed by virtue of his winning from the god some of these very powers.

There are several analogies to be made here between dice and the gods. As we have emphasized, they are both multi-faceted. This is obvious in that a die is defined largely by its number of faces, and it is also obvious in the case of a god with more than one head or face. But a die's simultaneously representing a potential range of possibilities and its decisively settling on one of these in a given moment also points to the tendency of gods and spirits to similarly shift through a variety of forms, modes, and affective states according to time, place, and ritual setting. Bernard Faure, drawing on the work of John Law, describes the dynamic and shifty nature of the gods as follows:

> a god is a 'fractional object'—that is, an object that is 'more than one and less than many.' Gods are also plural because they owe their being to a network of relations. There may not be two Nyoirin Kannon, Aizen Myoo, or Benzaiten exactly alike: sometimes an individual name designates a combination of several deities, at other times a specific aspect of a multifaceted deity. Their fractal nature also reflects an essential, ontological multiplicity that cannot and should not be reduced to historical accidents.

The difference between the die as it falls through the air and the die that has settled on the ground is very like the difference between the unified godhead and its constellation as, say, Śiva. More obviously, both dice and gods have the power to determine a winner and loser, to benefit or to harm, or to grant a boon or deal a loss. Dice do this unpredictably, at random, and their own transition from unrolled potential to one particular outcome both models and precipitates the god's movement from infinite density and holism to a fragmented specific entity. These movements transpire in the game itself, which invites reversals in which human gamblers can become tricky and unwieldy and gods can become static.

Not all dice games are fair, and cheating is often an expected part of the proceedings. But trickiness on the part of the players can also succeed too well, to the point of rigging the game. This is in fact precisely the point of the dice game that forms a part of the Vedic horse sacrifice, or *aśvamedha*. In part of this ritual the king plays a dice game in which the danger of his opponent's potential winning throw, a four, is ritually neutralized and further exorcised by the sacrifice of a "four-eyed dog," which represents and incarnates the winning throw. The danger thus averted, the ritual will succeed predictably as planned. Commenting on this and on another similarly staged and similarly predetermined game of dice

in another Vedic royal consecration ritual, the *rājasūya*, Handelman and Shulman write that "[t]he Rājasūya and the Aśvamedha games preview hypothetical futures that will be brought into being, and provide procedures that will actualize these acts of cultural imagination … Put otherwise, the Rājasūya and Aśvamedha dice games contain their futures within themselves, and control processes of causality that actualize these futures." Placed in dialogue with Śiva's game of dice with Pārvatī and his game with the human gambler "Unfettered," we might also simply say that in the cases of the Rājasūya and the Aśvamedha kings and priests have rigged the game, emptying it of all its "trickiness." These are very different sorts of players than Unfettered: where his brash confidence came from his unstable, unpredictable, and shifty nature, and established him as an agent of disorder, those who rig these royal dice games represent the forces of order.

This dynamic of exerting control over the game, and eliminating its instability and unpredictability, is perfectly clear in a ritual dice game that has formed a part of the Tibetan New Year's festivities since at least the 17th century. Here a representative of the Dalai Lama plays a game of dice with a figure who is essentially a scapegoat king, or a monstrous royal double of the Dalai Lama, called the *lugong gyelpo* (Tib. *glud 'gong rgyal po*). But this unfortunate's black dice are customarily marked with all ones, and the Dalai Lama's white dice have all sixes. After his inevitable loss at the dice game, the *lugong gyelpo* is expelled from the city of Lhasa. Such manipulation of the die itself is a literal destruction of its multifaceted nature and a reduction to stasis and certitude.

The dice game is an arena for communication between humans and gods, where forces of instability and unpredictability pull against those of order and coercion. In the parlance of games and gaming, a dice game is ludic in the sense that it is governed by a clear set of rules, where there are winning rolls and losing rolls. *Alea* is the pure chance or unpredictability of rolling the dice to see who wins and who loses. *Agôn* is *alea's* opposite, the operative dynamic in a contest of pure skill. Roger Caillois describes *alea* in terms that lay bare its challenge to social and cosmic order:

> In contrast to *agôn*, *alea* negates work, patience, experience, and qualifications. Professionalization, application, and training are eliminated. In one instant, winnings may be wiped out. *Alea* is total disgrace or absolute favor. It grants the lucky player infinitely more than he could procure by a lifetime of labor, discipline, and fatigue. It seems an insolent and sovereign insult to merit.

Alea's "insolent and sovereign insult to merit" is very likely one of the "flaws" that Pārvatī's attendant Vijayā saw in the dice game. The ritual attempts to erase *alea* and to avert risk can also be seen as a response to the "trickiness" of the dice game. As the myths we've just introduced show, dice and the dice game are not impartial. Their disruption of the cosmic order is also a disruption of the status quo. They correct in favor of balance, which is itself an assertion of a different sort of cosmic order. Even in a "fair" game of dice, such as that between Śiva and Pārvatī, the ontologically weaker party usually wins. This is even more apparent in the game between a human gambler and the great god. A god-like figure such as a king or a Dalai Lama would therefore theoretically face great danger when dicing against a lowly figure like the *lugong gyelpo*.

Dice Gaming and Dice Divination

The die carries many of the sensibilities of gaming with the gods into the practice of dice divination. In some forms of Tibetan dice divination, as described in chapter three, the ritual approximates a dice

game with a divine opponent, such that we refer to this type of dice divination as "oracular gambling" and to the diviner as an "oracular gambler." Dice divination's entanglement with dice games helpfully corrects the common misapprehension that divination is only about accessing hidden knowledge or seeing the future. While divination can be concerned with prognostication, this is not all that it does, and it is not simply a matter of revelation. Like the game, which creates a winner and a loser, divination is also creative, bringing into existence a new situation with respect to the actors involved. As Filip de Boeck and René Devisch put it in their study of Ndembu basket divination, "divination does not so much offer a mimetic model of a social context, but rather *makes* a world … [It] constitutes a space in which cognitive structures are transformed and new *relations* are generated in and between the fields of the human body (senses, emotions), the social body and the cosmos." It is this creative, world-making element of dice divination that its relation to the dice game spotlights. This is not to the exclusion, however, of divination's uses of models and microcosms as a part of its creative processes.

Dice divination differs from dicing with the gods in two important ways. Firstly, its communication with the gods is radically aleatory in a way that the dice game is not; secondly, it introduces the intermediary of the mantic figure or numerical trigram. Divining, the dice will bring one into contact with a god or spirit, but which god or spirit that will be remains unknown until the dice have fallen through the air and settled on the ground. Divining with the *Divination of Maheśvara* is not a targeted communication like a prayer or sacrifice that is offered to a specific god or spirit. The gods and spirits of the divination text are on shuffle, "up in the air" like the dice themselves until a given roll summons forth one of their number. Until their number is called, these gods and spirits remain a pantheon in potential, unknown as a whole to any but perhaps the diviner or a habitual user of divination.

One cannot choose the god or spirit the dice invoke any more than one can choose whether this contact results in benefit or in harm. Moreover, because some combinations are almost inevitably missing in the dice divination book, sometimes there will be no response at all. This ability of a divination system to refuse to respond and to remain silent is known as "resistance," and it is an important indicator not only of perceived "objectivity," but also of the vitality of a given system. Also, whereas dicing with the gods instrumentalizes the game's ability to invert order and bring down the god as it raises up the human gambler, dice divination performs an interpersonal relationship with the gods that is less determined, less coercive, and less transactional in nature.

The second main difference between dicing with the gods and dice divination concerns their respective media. The bold youth's game of *liubo* with the soil god and Unfettered's dice game with Śiva were both more or less direct, even if the gods' rolls were done by proxy with the gamblers' "other" hands. There was a god, a human gambler, and dice. In dice divination, by contrast, there is an intervening medium, which is the mantic figure (Chinese *gua* 卦). As for the form and content of the mantic figure, the gods and spirits of the divinatory pantheon are invoked in the first instance not with words, but rather with one of sixty-four figures, or "numerical trigrams" randomly generated by the dice. This mode of communication between human and divine simultaneously insists on difference by avoiding the medium of human language, but also on some degree of commensurability by appealing to the language of numbers or of visual representations of numbered groups of dice pips, counting rods, or stalks.

The intermediary role of the dice-generated mantic figure, which in dice divination stands between the human divination user and the invoked god or spirit, further complicates the more direct

communication found in the dice game. In the latter, there is a clear homology between the dice game and the cosmogonic process. This trades on the Vedic principle of homologies, or *bandhu* connections: "[t]he dice game, and the dice embedded within the game, are constituted through homologies. Since the dice model the cosmic process, their action effects the dice game. And since the dice game models the cosmic process, its action effects the cosmos." It is precisely these *bandhu* connections that priests exploited when rigging the royal dice game during the horse sacrifice, thereby controlling the processes of causality. With the introduction of the intermediary mantic figure generated by the dice, the *bandhu* connections seem to be randomized and potentially more difficult to manipulate: there appears to be no homology, for example, between a dice roll of three twos and the god Vināyaka. Even if the relationship between a given god or spirit and a given mantic figure can be said to be "arbitrary"— as loaded a term as one finds in divination—this does not negate the more consequential homology that remains: the shiftiness of the dice is captured or crystallized in the mantic figure just as the god or spirit is drawn out of the "pantheon in potential" and into invoked presence. It is the mantic figure, interposed between the dice and the god, that attracts them both in the manner of a magnetic opposite. Where gods and dice are shifty and equivocal, the mantic figure is solid and certain.

The intermediary role of the mantic figure in relation to gods and spirits and with respect to the material culture of divination has also been theorized in a Chinese context. Here, rather than the microcosmic-macrocosmic homologies of *bandhu* connections, one tends to speak of correlative cosmology, the workings of *qi*, and the principle of creating a stimulus (*gan* 感) to elicit a response (*ying* 應) from the gods. A particularly utilitarian view both of the mantic figure and of the material culture of divination is offered by Yu Chan (287–340) in his treatise on milfoil and turtle divination.

After material things [e.g., stalks, turtles] are brought forth, there are images (or symbols [*xiang* 像]). After there are images, there are numerical appetencies (*shu* [數 decoding of the symbols/ mantic figures]). After there are numerical appetencies, benign and malign tendencies abide in them. The milfoil plant is the chief item for looking into numerical appetencies, but is not something that is made real by the divine spirits. The turtle is the basic substance for disclosing ominous signs, but it is not something that is brought into being by unearthly presences … It is the same as with the fish-trap which, although it captures the fish, is not the fish; or the rabbit-snare which, although it captures the rabbit, is not the rabbit. In this way one uses the image to search out the subtle message, and when the message is found, then the image may be forgotten. So, the milfoil is used to search out the spirit, and when the spirit is thoroughly understood, then the milfoil may be dispensed with.

Put simply, divination is here seen as a means to an end of communicating with gods or spirits. The mantic figure is there to be decoded, and rather than being fetishized it should be discarded once its purpose has been served.

Against this utilitarian approach to mantic figures as signs to be read, understood, and then discarded, there is the opposite extreme that treats the mantic figures as gods themselves. The Eight Trigrams that form the basis of the *Changes*' sixty-four hexagrams, and which are also arrayed in a variety of mantic figures, for example, are deified as the Eight Spirits (*bashen* 八神) or the Eight Archivists. This is comparable to the deification of other cosmological, calendrical, and astrological forces such as the Stems and Branches, the planets, and the Astral Lodges (*xiu* 宿).

The form of the mantic figure may be pertinent to whether it is understood as a sign to be decoded, an invocation to the gods, or a god itself. In the *Divination of Maheśvara* the mantic figures that stand at the beginning of each oracular response are simply numbers, as they are in the Sanskrit dice divination texts in the sixth-century *Bower Manuscript*. As such they are signs with phonetic values. In Tibetan and Turkish dice divination texts, however, the mantic figures are pictorial representations of dice pips. That is, the pips of the dice are not "translated" into numbers on the page. There are similar pictorial sensibilities in Chinese numerical trigram texts in which the array of stalks or counting rods that constitutes the mantic figure is similarly transferred rather than translated on the page. This choice of representation relates to the issue of "legibility," and to what Yu Chan assumes about reading or decoding the "numerical appetencies" of the mantic figure. As we will see throughout the book, the *Divination of Maheśvara* and many other Chinese numerical trigram texts implicitly reject the premise that their constituent parts—the three individual numbers or symbols making up the trigram or mantic figure—are to be "read" and interpreted. This is the case even when these texts use some of the vocabularies of correlative cosmology that might connect them to Yin and Yang and other standard interpretive strategies for reading and decoding mantic figures.

To complicate the status of the numerical trigram and its location between sign and symbol, the numerical trigrams of the *Divination of Maheśvara* are named after gods and spirits, and other Chinese numerical trigram traditions that use pictorial representations—as well as the hexagrams of the *Book of Changes*—are also given names. The precise relationship between the mantic figure and its name or the god or spirit associated with it is usually left undefined, to be teased out by the semantics of the oracular responses and by other hints in the text. But some gods appear more than once, and some are linked to one mantic figure in one text but to a different mantic figure in another text. The link between a mantic figure and a given god or spirit is, if not random, characterized by flux and by a sense of play.

A Relational Network of Gods, Dice, Books, Divination Users, and Mantic Figures

This trickiness—of the mantic figure, of the dice, of gods, and of the game, has seeped into the fibers of this divination tradition, infusing it with a sense of movement that extends also to divination books. These books are found on their own in paper and birchbark scrolls and codices, but they are also often found as parts of compilations that variously include astrological texts, medical texts, ritual texts, and legal texts. This demonstrates that divination is one ritual mode among many, and that it usually falls short of offering a comprehensive program of diagnosis, prognosis, healing, and exorcism, to say nothing of cosmology and soteriology. But besides showing divination to be deficient as a panacea, or not fully self-sufficient, these partnerships or collocations of ritual modes and practices testify to divination's adaptability and malleability.

Divination has a tendency to work in tandem with other modes of ritual action. An oracular response in a divination text might, for example, prescribe that one perform a specific ritual in order to ensure good fortune or avert bad fortune. Similarly, divination might reveal the source of a malady as a preliminary to exorcism or to other more elaborate and well-established ritual prescriptions. And it might be employed at the end, to confirm that a ritual worked. Divination's use for diagnosis and prognosis also makes it a natural partner for medicine.

In addition to their tendency to join other texts within compilations or sometimes stand on their own, divination texts are also infused with movement themselves. A dice divination book should have sixty-

four oracular responses, and as we will see, there are various strategies for how to array these responses (e.g., descending order) in a book so that there will be no repeated or omitted combinations. Nevertheless, every Sanskrit, Tibetan, Turkish, and Chinese dice divination text that we've studied features repetitions and/or omissions. As a result, very few dice divination books feature the prescribed sixty-four responses. In fact, the only dice divination books that include sixty-four responses without omission or repetition are those that have been "canonized"—the Sanskrit *Pāśakakevalī* and the Tibetan "Divination Calculation" (Tib. *Mo rtsis*)—later developments that we do not cover here. Faced with these and similar textual peccadillos in isolation, the textual scholar's tendency is to assume sloppy scribes and lazy editors, or to take these as indications of a text's popular or vernacular milieu. But given how widespread this phenomenon is across divination texts, and given also the dynamic instability of all of dice divination's other elements—dice, gods, mantic figures, and oracular gamblers—we additionally perceive here a tendency of the texts to shift, seemingly at random, under the hands of their users, scribes, and editors.

This textual shiftiness represents an extreme version of what Paul Zumthor, in a medieval European context, refers to as "mouvance." This is the process by which anonymous or semi-anonymous texts, as opposed to those with attributed authors, are prone to high degrees of variation on both structural and syntactic levels as a result of traditional modes of composition across the oral and literary divide. As a consequence, a given text is "materialized in an unstable way from manuscript to manuscript, from performance to performance." The aleatory mode of dice divination only compounds this instability, producing a more virulent strain which we call "divinatory mouvance." Like the genius of the dice game and its tendency to invert social and cosmic orders, divinatory mouvance similarly informs dice divination and frustrates human attempts to wield and control. Divinatory mouvance is infused with *alea*, the lifeblood of dice divination. The missing and repeated responses, unstable orthographies, and other traces of divinatory mouvance are the vital signs of a divination system that is alive, coursing with creative tension against human efforts to wield it. Where *alea* is exorcised, by contrast, and humans fully subdue a divination system by emptying it of risk through "house rules," ritual adroitness, and other forms of "cheating," they only succeed in proffering a system that is inert and lifeless. It is no coincidence that only the "canonized" dice divination texts, which also suffer from creeping morality and soteriology, as well as impoverished oracular poetics, are perfectly ordered, with sixty-four responses.

There is a variety of ways in which one might approach this state of flux involving tricky and elusive dice, gods, mantic figures, divination users, and divination books. One might emphasize the mantic figure and its relationship to the concepts of sign and symbol. One might attend to the identities and biographies of the gods and spirits of divination on the one hand or to the determinative or interpretive agency of human diviners and clients on the other. Or one might make a fetish of the material culture of divination, so as to attribute autonomy and power to inanimate objects like dice and books. A safeguard against this latter approach, and against permitting any one of dice divination's moving parts—dice, gods, mantic figures, books, or divination users—to dominate or overbalance the others, is Michael Taussig's observation that "apparently self-bounded and potent 'things' are but the embodiments and concretizations of relationships which bind them to a larger whole." Taussig continues,

> Their identity, existence, and natural properties spring from their *position* in an all-encompassing organic *pattern* of organization in which things are understood as but partial expressions of a self-organizing totality … If attention focuses on a single thing, as it must at some point in any

analysis, then the thing is to be seen as containing its relational network and surrounding context within itself; the "thing" is a system of relationships.

Attending to the gods, dice, books, divination users, and mantic figures as a "relational network" in this manner is further supported by actor-network theory as developed by Bruno Latour. This recommends itself for its emphasis on movement, and also for addressing itself to the situational and contingent dynamics that define dice divination. "A network is not a thing but the recorded movement of a thing. The questions AT [actor-network theory] addresses have now changed. It is no longer whether a net is a representation or a thing, a part of society or a part of discourse or a part of nature, but what moves and how this movement is recorded." The actor, or "actant" need not be human, and it is also characterized by movement: "actors are not conceived as fixed entities but as flows, as circulating objects, undergoing trials, and their stability, continuity, isotopy has to be obtained by other actions and other trials." In dice divination, the moving pieces—the dice, the mantic figures, the books, the gods, and the human divination users—act upon each other through movements. The dice fall through the air, the mantic figure is formed, the pages of the divination book are turned, a god is drawn out from the pantheon and invoked into presence, and the relations of divination users to their worlds are altered. The actor-network of dice divination might be visualized as a web of axons and neurons, with a given roll of the dice setting in motion one action and not another. But unlike the neuroscientific simile, the movements are multidirectional.

In applying actor-network theory to dice divination we are also inspired by how Bernard Faure makes use of Latour's concept of the actant in his study of Japanese gods.

By viewing the Japanese gods as actors in this sense, and by remembering that they are ever-changing nodes within a network constantly in flux, we can more accurately perceive the Japanese gods as the unstable aggregates that they are rather than as static projections of human minds, society, culture, or what have you. Furthermore, actor-network theory allows us to see that the relationship between gods and humans was bidirectional: gods were not only a product, but in taking on a life of their own, they too became active, productive elements within a larger network.

Dice divination makes a larger network than this bidirectional relationship by its injection of similarly "unstable aggregates"—dice, mantic figures, and divination books—and by the infusion of this network with *alea*. Once again, if dice divination has something to offer actor-network theory it is its injection of randomization.

Besides Zumthor's concept of mouvance, Taussig's view of "things" as standing in for relational networks, and Latour's actor-network theory, we are also indebted to the gods of divination and to the oracular responses of divination texts themselves for suggesting to us a further interpretive framework. Although a dice divination book's sense of instability, born of the push and pull of order and disorder, might make it an attractive and sympathetic harbor for the gods, the gods of divination often convey something different from the oracular responses to which they are attached. In the *Divination of Maheśvara*, for example, there is a preponderance of gods associated with death and misfortune, and there are also a number of gods associated with the wind and with celestial phenomena, or who transit the liminal space between heaven and earth. Gods of the wind and sky also occupy central positions in Sanskrit and Tibetan dice divination texts. Similarly, poetic images of wind and clouds are a hallmark of Chinese oracular poetry. Coming up against these wind gods and images of wind and sky again and again, it dawned on us that the wind is the central element in dice divination in much the same way that fire is

the central element in the *homa/ goma* ritual. Amidst the shifting gods, dice, books, and mantic figures, as well as the uncertain concerns facing the human divination users, the sense of being "in the wind" offers the perfect leitmotif for dice divination and its various movements.

Wind whips and batters or it gently cools; it bears along tidings of good or ill; it blows against the traveler or it fills one's sails. These are all relevant to divination, as is the fact that the wind is helpfully plural in the sense that there are many different kinds of winds, some of them named, and there are also various diverse, culturally specific ways of thinking about the wind. Wind blows across the dice as they fall through the air, and it blows through the pantheon of dice divination texts. The wind also whips through the pages of divination books, aligning it with mouvance and the tendency of the books' textual contents to twist or tatter, and also to move alongside medical, astrological, and other ritual texts. Like metaphor, which both "is" and "is not" simultaneously, wind conveys order and disorder. It might be disruptive, in the way that divinatory mouvance is disruptive and chaotic when restoring balance and *alea* in the face of manipulative diviners and clients. But winds can also be calming forces, and in an excavated Sanskrit dice divination text from Kucha it is the Maruts—wind gods associated with storms and battles—who ensure the truth of the divination process.

The wind is similarly ambivalent in various Chinese traditions. In the *Divination of Maheśvara* wind appears in oracular response [51]:

> 3-1-1 This is named the King of the Mountain Spirits set. Body and mind are like the wind neither stopping nor going. Nothing you want will be accomplished. Your thoughts are so unfixed that they cannot settle on their own. This matter will not be achieved. Inauspicious.

Here wind symbolizes prevarication, or pointless activity or thought that results in nothing.

In earlier Chinese numerical trigram divination texts, as we will see in chapter two, wind can be the source of a curse. This does not mean, however, that wind is inherently bad or destructive: it is the type of wind that matters, and one's relationship to that wind. The expression "Eight Winds" (*ba feng* 八風), for example, refers to the movement of the four seasons. Sages who live in harmony with the Eight Winds enjoy long life; those who go against the wind, or who are struck by wind from the wrong direction, suffer harm.

As a leitmotif for dice divination, and as the governing element of its relational network, wind points to divination's "shiftiness," and its restlessness to blow across the Silk Roads and embrace a variety of users who speak different languages and profess different beliefs. Wind also cannot be pinned down or bottled, and our own attempts here to make sense of dice divination are offered with this in mind, and with a recognition of the limits of our powers to fully capture or comprehend a tradition that has not been practiced for hundreds of years.

Outline of the Work

These theoretical reflections could certainly be pressed further to include an even greater emphasis on the analogy between dice divination and the dice game as bounded models that act upon an unbounded world, as a map of an actor-network, and as a venue for constituting gods and humans interpersonally through an aleatory mode of communication. There are also further points on embodiment, gender, ontology, positionality, contingency, and eventuality that follow from our approach to divination. But this is not that kind of book. Its chapters are not theory driven but are shaped rather more like case studies

out of which we draw observations about the dynamic exchanges between divination users, gods, mantic figures, and the material culture of divination books and the objects of divination.

Chapter one attends to the Dunhuang codex in which the *Divination of Maheśvara* is contained, and then offers a close analysis of the text's instructions, its semantic fields, and its treatment of affective states. The semantic analysis of the *Divination of Maheśvara*'s oracular responses lays bare the divination process that it imagines. Namely, the client's intentions interact with the dice, which then form a mantic figure. Through the act of naming the mantic figure after a specific god or spirit, that god or spirit is invoked and activated as an agent of either protection or harm. Chapter one also explores the *Divination of Maheśvara*'s pantheon of gods and spirits in some detail, attending to their fluid classifications, their various identities, and the question of their relationship with the mantic figures and the oracular responses. The chapter closes with a full translation and transcription of the *Divination of Maheśvara*.

Chapter two contextualizes the *Divination of Maheśvara* within a long history of divination with numbers and numerical trigrams in China, from the fourth-century-BCE excavated bamboo manuscript of the *Stalk Divination* to medieval divination codices from Dunhuang like the *Duke of Zhou Divination Method* (*Zhou Gong bufa* 周公卜法), and the *Guan Gongming Divination Method* (*Guan Gongming bufa* 管公明卜法) that are contemporary with the *Divination of Maheśvara*. It attends to the ritual process and material culture of divination with stalks, counting rods, coins, draughtsmen, and dice-like teetotums. It also focuses on the format of some of these books, particularly divination codices from Dunhuang. Additionally, chapter two emphasizes the role of divination in identifying the sources of curses to be exorcised, and it contrasts divination with the production of talismans and their differing modes of interaction with gods and spirits. Chapter two also attends to oracular poetry and the recurring images in divination texts, as well as to different forms of the mantic figure. Throughout, the chapter wrestles with questions about correlative cosmology and its (in)applicability to many forms of numerical trigram divination, and also considers the ways in which cosmological representations are used to variously lend further efficacy to divination and/or to attempt to fit it within Daoist, Buddhist, or other cosmologies and soteriologies. It finds divinatory mouvance at work in some Chinese numerical trigram texts, and identifies materials and methods that come close to those of the *Divination of Maheśvara*.

Chapter three surveys Turkish, Tibetan, and Sanskrit dice divination texts that share the *Divination of Maheśvara*'s method, and traces this tradition to India. It begins by introducing Old Turkish and Old Tibetan dice divination codices from Dunhuang that are contemporary with the *Divination of Maheśvara* and which use the same method of dice divination. It then examines a larger body of ninth-century Old Tibetan dice divination texts from Dunhuang and Turfan, and explores the "trickiness" of Tibetan diviners who interact with the patron goddesses of divination as their opponents and their partners in a contest whose ludic dynamics justify its being called "oracular gambling." Chapter three also examines the two dice divination texts in the sixth-century birchbark *Bower Manuscript* from Kucha, which are the earliest extant dice divination texts of this tradition. Attending both to divination books and to the archeological record of the four-sided dice used in this form of divination, known in Sanskrit as *pāśaka*-s, the chapter demonstrates that the *Divination of Maheśvara* ultimately derives from a tradition of dice divination and of dicing with a deep prehistory in India. Across these texts, there are some striking continuities, but the most persistent constant is their "shiftiness,"—a simultaneous willingness to be adopted and adapted while at the same time resisting the full imposition of order.

The short concluding chapter considers the pantheons, poetics, and sensibilities of these various texts and finds them to be united by images and creatures of the wind and the sky. It reflects on the paradoxes of a divination system whose hallmark in its transmission across the Silk Roads has been its variability and adaptability. The appendix offers full translations and transcriptions of the *Tricks of Jing* (*Jingjue* 荊訣), the *Duke of Zhou Divination Method*, and the *Guan Gongming Divination Method*, which are introduced and analyzed in some detail in chapter two.

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At once comparative and rooted in close philological study, especially of the Chinese and Tibetan texts, this book owes a great debt to path-breaking research in both dice divination and Chinese numerical trigram divination. We are particularly indebted to the incisive works of Marc Kalinowski on the latter, as is apparent throughout the book and in chapter two especially. We have also taken obvious inspiration from Michel Strickmann's preliminary comparative treatment of dice divination in the context of his larger, wide-ranging study of the transcultural transmission of lot divination (*chouqian* 抽籤).

A divination book in the abstract might represent unbounded possibilities and omniscience, but in practice it consists of (more or less) sixty-four responses. Our book is similarly bounded, and there are some topics that it does not treat. It does not attempt a definitive global history of the tradition of divining with four-sided *pāśaka* dice. Such a history would have to go into more archeological and material cultural detail than what we provide in chapter three. It would also have to address the transmission of this form of dice divination to the Islamic world, and the many related dice divination texts found in Persian, Arabic, and Turkish dating from at least the late-14th century onward. We all but ignore these texts here, as well as the archeological finds of *pāśaka* dice as far west as Egypt. Because our inquiry begins in Dunhuang, with a tenth-century manuscript, we have emphasized excavated texts and vernacular texts. We do not examine the later (post-13th-century) Tibetan Buddhist tradition, nor the similarly "canonical" Sanskrit *Pāśakakevalī*.

Also, while we illuminate the *Divination of Maheśvara* by comparison with related dice divination texts and similar numerical trigram traditions, that is where the comparison ends. Since this is not a global history of *pāśaka* dice divination, we do not put it on the "transcultural divination map" by comparing dice divination at length with the *Book of Changes*, with Greco-Roman *sortes* traditions, or with Islamic *al-Raml* divination and its variants such as Ifa and Yifa. We hope that our case study and our reflections on the many movements of dice, mantic figures, gods, books, and divination users will have something to contribute, however, to such a project. <>

CLOSE READING: KUNSTHISTORISCHE INTERPRETATIONEN VOM MITTELALTER BIS IN DIE MODERNE, FESTSCHRIFT FÜR SEBASTIAN SCHÜTZE
edited by Stefan Albl, Berthold Hub and Anna Frasca-Rath [De Gruyter, 9783110710939]

CLOSE READING puts the artwork in the center of concentrated art-historical interpretations programmatically. Seventy-two international authors each analyze one work of architecture, sculpture, painting, drawing, or graphic work, from Albrecht Dürer and Matthias Grünewald, to Titian, Artemisia Gentileschi, Michelangelo, and Nicolas Poussin, Francesco Borromini, and Fischer von Erlach, to Oskar Kokoschka and Shirin Neshat. They pursue various methodological approaches, address the creation context or questions regarding dating and attribution, the history of a collection, provenance, and restoration, or dedicate themselves to relationships between picture and text as well as to iconographic, iconological, and image-theory aspects.

Sebastian Schütze for whom this volume is his Festschrift, studied art history, classical archaeology and ancient history in Berlin, Bonn, Cologne and Rome. After completing his doctorate at the Free University of Berlin in 1989 (studies on Massimo Stanzione's painting with a critical catalogue of his works), he was a research assistant at the Bibliotheca Hertziana (Max Planck Institute for Art History) in Rome from 1992 to 1997. In 1997 he habilitated at the FU Berlin (Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, later Pope Urban VIII, as a client and patron. Beiträge zu einer Archäologie des rdmischen Hochbarock). After serving as professors at the Universities of Leipzig, Munster and Dresden, he was Professor of Modern Art History at Queen's University in Kingston Canada from 2003 to 2009. Since 2009, Sebastian Schütze has been University Professor of Modern Art History at the University of Vienna, where he has also served as Dean of the Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies since 2018. In 2013 he was elected as a corresponding member in Germany and in 2016 as a real member of the philosophical-historical class of the ÕSterische Akademie der Wissenschaften. His research focuses primarily on Italian art of the early modern period and its European appeal.

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Tobias G. Natter

This commemorative publication on the occasion of Sebastian Schütze's 60th birthday is part of the long and beautiful tradition of honouring scientists on the occasion of their milestone birthday. Nevertheless, this time is far too early to pay tribute to the life's work of the jubilee or even to draw a conclusion. With this publication, the multifaceted nature of his scientific achievements is shown in the mirror of the studies of friendly colleagues, employees and former doctoral students. Like a kind of photo mosaic, an idea of the diverse areas of interest and the topics of Sebastian Schütze's lively and always open scientific dialogue with his environment appears from the entirety of the contributions and contributors.

Requiring authors to   closely read an object of their choice, the commemorative publication focuses on a central method of Sebastian Schütze's studies. This methodical approach is ultimately also to be understood as a commitment to an art history that, despite all the thematic and theoretical expansion of the subject, repeatedly focuses on the work of art. Each contribution presented here is based on a work or a small group of works and is dedicated to their interpretation and interpretation. Which methodological approach the contributors also choose depends on the subject matter and the research questions and can range from dating, attribution or restoration results to questions of iconography, image and text relations and analyses of the context of origin. The chronological framework spans from the Middle Ages to the modern age.

The 72 contributions to this commemorative publication are to be seen as a sign of the authors' friendship and solidarity with Sebastian Schütze. His biographical stations are inscribed in this international and interdisciplinary network of colleagues at universities, research institutions and museums. After studying in Berlin, Rome, Cologne and Bonn, he received a doctoral scholarship at the Bibliotheca Hertziana in Rome for his studies on the Neapolitan painter Massimo Stanzione and spent numerous research stays in Naples. Already in these early years he laid the foundation for his deep and long-standing connection with Italy, his colleagues on site and Italian art and culture. After his habilitation

on the art patronage of Maffeo Barberini, later Pope Urban VIII, at freie Universität Berlin, he was appointed interim professorship in Leipzig, Dresden, and Munster, and a research professorship at the Bibliotheca Hertziana.In2003, Sebastian Schütze was appointed to the Bader Chair for Southern Baroque Art in Kingston, Canada, and finally to the Chair of Modern Art History at the University of Vienna in 2009. Here he was head of the Institute of Art History and head of the doctoral program, since 2018 he has served as Dean of the Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies. In 2016, the Austrian Academy of Sciences appointed him a w. member of the philosophical-historical class.

The importance that Sebastian Schütze attaches to exchange and dialogue can also be seen in his diverse scientific achievements, which can only be touched upon the conception of conferences, the publication of series and the implementation of study courses and exhibition projects. To name just a few examples: the conference series Dialogues - Reflections - Transformations initiated with Antonietta Terzoli, which has been held regularly in Vienna and Basel since 2014 and examines the interactions between art and literature; the series Perspektivenwechsel, which has been published since 2020. Collectors, collections and collection cultures in Vienna and Central Europe, which publishes the research results of the Vienna Center for the History of Collecting, which he founded, as well as the series Hermathena, in which the editors and the editor of thiscommemorative publication published their dissertations or habilitations; the study courses on hand drawing, which are published in cooperation with the Albertina, or those he regularly holds at the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici in Naples, with whose founder Gerardo Marotta he had a deep friendship; and last but not least the numerous and extensive exhibitions, by Bernini Scultore e la nascita del barocco in Casa Borghese (Galleria Borghese 1998, with Anna Coliva) to Der Gõttliche: Hommage an Michelangelo (Bundeskunsthalle Bonn 2015, with Georg Satzinger) or Friedrich Nietzsche and the Artists of the New Weimar (Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada 2019).

Among the contributors to this publication are several (former) doctoral students and staff. Sebastian Schütze shared and discussed his ideas and broad knowledge with them in the lecture hall and on excursions in front of the original. This long-lasting connection is not only based on many findings in terms of content, but also on shared memories. For example, with the same passion and with the same precision in content as in front of the objects, important everyday topics such as the quality of the "pyre" were debated in Viennese coffee houses. His research also reflects his enthusiasm for new and different topics - such as Stefan George or William Blake. However, the center of Sebastian Schütze's research is Italy and the art of the early modern period - from Michelangelo, Caravaggio, and Bernini to Baroque painting in Naples.

This commemorative publication conveys a central idea of the ongoing exchange between the contributors and Sebastian Schütze. In terms of content and chronological breadth, it presents many new research results. In the layout of the individual contributions, quite a few authors were inspired by a new reading of Sebastian Schütze's fundamental writings… <>

Essay: Marc Mayer: Resilient Obscurity

One sunny afternoon, when I was about nine years old, I got myself wrapped-up in a play on television. I could not figure out what was going on, but it fascinated me. Three characters, two women and a man, were conversing in barely comprehensible sentences; I struggled to understand what the motivations for

the words might be, and who these three people were to each other. They did not correspond to my experience of how adults interact.

Twenty minutes into it, my father entered the room and broke my concentration by asking, with exasperation: "Why are you watching that crap? You should be out playing!".

"I like it," was my meek response. He left the room shaking his head. I felt guilty and confused by the reprimand, but defiant. Why shouldn't I like it? I really did find it interesting, probably because it was barely comprehensible.

Recently, as I considered the cultural underpinnings of modernist art for a forthcoming lecture, this half-century old interaction came to mind. An odd memory to have harboured for so long, it seemed somehow connected to my observation that a familiar characteristic of modernist culture, a defining one of sorts, and of which that play was an example, is its difficulty.

Modern art, and its continuation under the euphemistic synonym "contemporary art," often relies on obscurity as a deliberate effect. Abstraction is the most notorious example, but Dadaism, Futurism, Surrealism, Reductivism, Conceptualism, and so much else - well into our own moment - are evidence enough that obscurity is a modernist convention in visual art. The same applies to modernist literature, theatre, dance, etc. Why?

After thinking about the various ways in which art can be obscure, and finding many, I concluded that we moderns must be addicted to obfuscation for its own sake. Searching further, it became increasingly clear to me that this reliance on obscurity is, in fact, more than a mere convention, but rather a richly developed and central feature of modernist culture. There must be a reason.

A set of plausible reasons eventually came to me, but my childhood fascination with that vanguard play showed me the most obvious one, and I believe the most important: pleasure. Many of us enjoy the mental effort required to understand the world, we love the strain of devising our own explanations for things as a form of psychic calisthenics. We are stimulated by interpretive resistance, which may be why the arts happily provide so much of it.
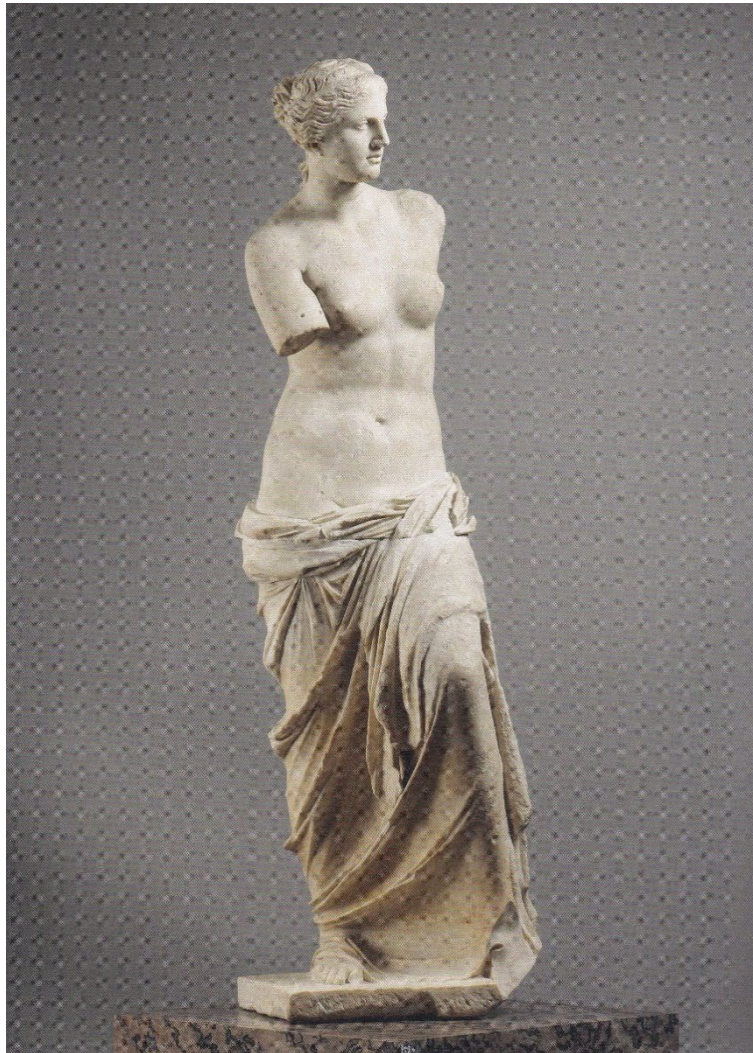
VENUS DE MILO, CA. 130 BC. MARBLE, 203 CM. PARIS, MUSEE DU LOUVRE, INV. N 527

Art is a safe place to be unknowing. Unlike the larger world, where not understanding can be dangerous, even fatal, culture lets us enjoy our ignorance without harm, by being the place where we can go to exercise our capacity to overcome it. In fact, art is so benign that, should we not succeed in understanding a given work, the only consequence we would suffer is the distraction of its other pleasures.

New art attracts sensualists who want to escape a world of exhausted clichés, of pat sense and predictable sequences, an audience happy to put in the mental work this kind of escape requires. The tenor of much art criticism illustrates this mentality well with overly familiar put-downs such as "derivative "one-liner," "obvious," "facile "deja-vu," etc. Now that skill has become a secondary concern, the main complaints are either about a lack of originality or a lack of obscurity.

In an attempt to explain the phenomenon, let me borrow a term from computer science. "Cognitive friction" is to be avoided in user interface design. But it is experienced as pleasure by the intellectually

—or at least the aesthetically — ambitious who are avid to explore the inscrutable. Resistance to rapid assimilation will be known to scientists as inevitable because inherent to their subject: inscrutable nature. Such resistance may also explain science's appeal, aside from its principal goal of advancing knowledge. Labour-savers, we design the world and organise our lives to avoid cognitive friction. Should one regret the loss, science and art are there to restore it.

Many of us enjoy strenuous thinking as much as we might enjoy physical exertion; in both cases, the reward is elation. Problem solving, theory building, the fashioning of speculative constructs are great ways to spend a day. For scientists, obscurity is reality, but artists invent their own because cognitive friction is the point. When things are too familiar and predictable, for example rote aesthetic transactions or formulaic entertainments, aesthetes are quickly bored. They look for things that resist rapid assimilation because they experience boredom as a form of pain. They also know that, given an open mind and a taste for new sensations, such pain can be avoided through art's constantly evolving enterprise of beauty.

Before returning to the justifications for obscurity as a cultural value, let's sample the evidence that its modernist typology provides. I have identified the following five types, though sustained consideration may uncover more. Esoteric obscurity is an especially common and longstanding feature of art. For example, Bosch and Breughel both painted riddles for the literate. Having always played a pedagogical role — both as a teaching aid and to enjoy one's education — art enlists esoteric obscurity most successfully when it appeals to those trained in art history and theory, its guaranteed audience. The success of Canadian artist Jeff Wall has been based to a large extent on his occult references to art historical precedents in genre painting, history painting, still life, and other canonical forms of the Western tradition. His large backlit photographs nod to the cultures of film, theatre, literature and photography, making his work especially rich for a broadly sophisticated audience who will also enjoy his flirting with subjects as diverse as psychoanalysis, racism, capitalism, urbanism, the gender agon, eros, politics, history, and so on. Like many artists today, Wall relies on a broadly literate audience that is simulated by iconographic puzzles.

Similarly, the ongoing development of abstraction has a strong appeal to those familiar with the idiom and its history. Monochrome painting, a particularly well-tilled soil in the field of abstraction, is notoriously esoteric and typically attracts mockery from the uninitiated, who will invoke Hans Christian Andersen's naked emperor. But for the happy few whose education and experience permit them to enjoy its wit, ironies, politics, spirituality and, especially, its pure retinal pleasure, monochrome painting is one of art history's glories. But it remains obscure, even for its lovers, who must acquaint themselves with the artist's specific intentions, as these are surprisingly varied.

That we have successfully developed an artistic means to communicate emotionally between strangers, outside of time, and without resorting to symbols or even surface detail, is a cognitive achievement that leaps over languages and customs to ennoble the whole enterprise of abstraction. Separating the picture from the image, so to speak, is on par with splitting the atom as a feat of ratiocination, though it is not discussed in such terms. Those who find abstract painting exciting are, famously, in a small minority, which may be another of its charms.

In our modern art world where the evacuation of all forms of orthodoxy is a multi-generational project, any subject will do, and the more esoteric the better. Today, art can be about anything or nothing at all

and take any form, or none. But the imperative to "make it strange as an artist once admitted to me, is a unifying principle.

Absurdity has been a familiar form of obscurity since the early 20th century. Dadaism, its initiator, seems quaint by comparison to art's subsequent absurdities. This forthrightly risible form of obscurity became standardised and strategic, not to mention increasingly humourless under Andre Breton's theory-laden Surrealism. Once spent, Surrealism dissolved into a tributary of mainstream abstraction, buoyed along by its Freudian undercurrent.

After a second World War that ended in a nuclear holocaust, artists looked back at their Dadaist forebears' reaction to their own cataclysm, and the absurd was ripe for revival. A first glimpse of it came through the apocalyptic, "all over" sensibility of Abstract Expressionism, the outright obliteration of the image (Pollock) or its uninhibited violation (de Kooning). It then reemerged more explicitly through the post-abstract Neo-Dadaism of Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. Pop art, which is fundamentally absurd, soon followed, along with Pop's more Dionysian manifestations in Europe. Performance art, a conservative idiom on the whole, ever faithful to its Dadaist roots, continues to lean heavily on the absurd to create interest. As the world becomes once again preposterous and unfortunate, artificial absurdity continues to appear virtuous and sane.

A taxidermy goat wearing a tire like a darkly ridiculous yoke, and covered in paint drips longer than its hair, has a pathos that struggles for our attention because it is undermined by its absurdity. In this famous work by Robert Rauschenberg, originality and aesthetic intelligence take up as much psychic space as pathos and stupidity for the perceiver who can enjoy it as a hybrid emotion locked in the amber of art. This is unlikely to be the case, however, for the general population of artistic outsiders who only have the work's pathos and stupidity available to them. Why would one buy such a thing, you might ask? Because it is so meaningfully ridiculous, the aficionado of the absurd might answer, being careful to avoid specifics.

Dadaism is conventionally framed today as an admirable form of dissent against the calamitous militarism that lead to the killing fields of World War I. For its mid-century manifestation, the target was the frenzied consumerism that followed World War II. Absurdist obscurity bookends the first half of the 20th century. In the initial instance, we might think of it as artists on strike, protesting the more authentic insanity of mass death by refusing to make sense. The strategy was employed the second time to feign the suicide of high art, annihilated by its assimilation to hegemonic consumer culture. That, to me, is what Andy Warhol's Brillo box means, if it means anything at all.

Using symbols and figures to achieve meaninglessness is quite hard to do. As we navigate our surroundings, our minds are always searching for recognizable patterns and familiar icons that correspond to our experience. Consciously or not, the mind keeps trying to decipher what it finds before it until sense, or a functional equivalent, is either revealed or constructed. Creating a work of art with recognizable symbols and figures that share no coherence and refuse to form a cogent narrative goes against our nature and our "will to signification," if you will permit me. As a referential equivalent to non-referential abstraction, figurative absurdity results from deliberate striving, rather than chance, though chance is a useful tool.

Absurdity may no longer define an artistic movement today, a time beyond movements, but its tropes, postures and dissimulated gravity still pop up in art like baffling mushrooms. The fragmentary approach is an effective and convenient means for producing obscurity and is, therefore, widespread. Withholding key information from the viewer incites conjecture that prolongs the cognitive process, with all that entails for the work's "use value" as pleasure. This approach was surely inspired by inadvertent precedents, such as the Venus de Milo and other sublime fragments, or relics of the non finito, which gain emotional power by being automatically intriguing: the mind wants a whole, so it imagines one. Programmatic fragmentation may originate with Caravaggio's elimination, or severe reduction, of the background in his paintings. Obscurity in baroque painting usually refers to the darkness of the scene, but we witness the migration toward its more recent second sense of "difficult to understand," as the trope of the blank background migrates through Caravaggio, David, Goya, Manet, Picasso, Mondrian, the "figure/ground" and "push/pull" problems of postwar abstraction and, ultimately, toward monochrome painting, where obscurity itself becomes the main event, however bright the colour.

When an object presented in the context of art withholds important details of its subject matter, obscurity will necessarily result. For the Caravaggisti, eliminating the background is withholding information to benefit the visibility of the foreground figures. They are, so to speak, "imposed" upon the viewer through a dramatic decontextualization. Can we think of monochrome painting as the revenge of the background? Why not? Such a question reveals the interpretive play that mystifying fragments enable.

Perhaps the best-known artist working in the fragmentary mode today is Gerhard Richter, with his highly influential "blur" procedure. By scraping or smearing the painted surface of otherwise conventional renderings, Richter compels the viewer to fill in the missing information in the mind, and engage with the object through its violation. Although Richter has blurred far more abstract paintings than figurative ones, the fact that he has practiced the same procedure on both can justify our suspicion about the authenticity of his abstractions. Both types of his aesthetically damaged pictures can only be reconstituted the same way, suggesting that they can be similarly "read," making them equivalent on a technicality. Are Richter's works in the idiom an embodiment of its spirit, or rather an illustration of abstraction as a subject? The notion, then, that Richter's work might be an earnest example of non-objectivity is hard to swallow. His recent blurred paintings, based on four photographs taken by an inmate of the death camp at Birkenau, give yet more substance to this suspicion. Stricto sensu, these pictures are abstract because of the way they are fragmented, but the whole project of abstraction has been steering us away from seeking occult images, as this restores representation. Richter's abstractions are unorthodox in this tradition, a form of archaism. Be that as it may, by taking the path of fragmentation he fascinates us uncomfortably with the novel retinal effects of his auto-vandalism to achieve a high classicism of modernist obscurity.

A sound work by Ceal Floyer removes all the lyrics sung by Elvis Presley in Love Me Tender, except for the words "me" and "you," which occur where they do in the original recording, leaving silence where they do not. After much effort, we might eventually recognize the voice and then the song, though now we know that the word "me" occurs far more frequently than the word "you," with the negative implications that has for the sincerity of Presley's love song. South African artist Candice Breitz similarly explores fragments of film history towards an analogous feminist critique.

Another example comes from French artist Renaud Bézy, in a video where he has removed the _characters and the dialogue of Disney animations. Only the cartoon backgrounds and the background music are left, creating a hybrid desolation of uncanny familiarity. Yet another approach comes from Cree painter Brenda Draney, who simply leaves her subject unpainted, giving us only the context to look at, in compositions made lopsided by missing information. But this approach to fragmentary obscurity more properly belongs to the next type.

Private obscurity withholds information about the subject in works that are also personal talismans for the artist. Although such works are technically sentimental, their inscrutability saves the artist from accusations of sentimentality, a cardinal sin in an orthodox modernism that sees itself in opposition to the kitsch of those cultural industries that exploit empathy.

Private obscurity is the more porous type, as it might incorporate the esoteric, the fragmentary, or the absurd. Draney, for example, withholds aspects of her pictures through fragmentation to underscore the personal nature of her subject, usually a private anecdote. It reminds me of redaction, perhaps of a human resources report where the principals and respondents are unnamed in compliance with privacy laws. Draney leaves a blank field, or raw canvas, where there should have been an identifiable figure or a significant object. As a result, the artist and the viewer become estranged.

A more extreme approach to private obscurity, similarly, resulting in estrangement, was taken by the late American painter Thomas Nozkowski. Although his works look for all the world like the sincerest of abstractions, they are perfectly legible to the artist as schematic mementos of an experience, of an anecdote, or of a fleeting emotion that he wished to preserve. For the viewer, these are scrupulously non-representational pictures, but for the artist they are the opposite. Nozkowski orchestrates incompatible perspectives between artist and viewer. As they both face his painting, the difference between them is categorical because they are not seeing the same thing. He was careful throughout his career to avoid revealing his paintings' subjects, so this alienation was deliberate. In my mind, Nozkowski invented a moot instance of irresolvable opposition as an analogy of democracy, about which he was passionate. The beautiful paintings that result from instrumentalizing privacy in this way form a compelling, if abstract argument for democratic conciliation.

If we consider the reliance on personal history of the artists Joseph Beuys and Louise Bourgeois, we might find their work private and esoteric in equal measure. If you know the story that Beuys told of his wartime adventures, regardless of its veracity, you will understand why there is so much fat and felt in his work. What remains, however, is the job of justifying it for yourself as art. If you know about Louise Bourgeois' childhood, you will understand the large spiders and the great lengths of thread in her corpus. As Bourgeois was more conventionally skilled than Beuys, her artistry is also more evident.

Unlike with Nozkowski, where there are no insiders but himself, privacy is enlisted as a form of seduction for both Bourgeois and Beuys. Their knowing viewer — and it's easy to become one — is like an intimate acquainted with private anecdotes that illuminate murky iconographies. If you do not know the stories that these artists told about themselves, if you are not an intimate, you are left to squint at their work's opacity. Meanwhile, initiates marvel at genius overcoming trauma. Which brings me to the final type of obscurity on my list.

Cultural obscurity results when the references in a work belong to a non-mainstream, or non-Western culture unfamiliar to the viewer. In this case, the insider/outsider distinctions are just as stark as in the other forms of obscurity, but they tend more toward the inadvertent, where they are not compounded by contemporary art tropes. For example, an Anishnaabe artist does not necessarily intend to be obscure by referring to her people's creation myth, but that will be the result for those who are not familiar with it.

The growing prevalence of cultural obscurity in art, no doubt the result of identarian aesthetics, also reveals the new, non-dogmatic, non-prescriptive, post-colonial, ecumenical and inclusive spirit of the contemporary art world. Chronologically speaking, this form of obscurity is both the most recent and the most ancient, because cultural misunderstanding has always troubled humanity. As to which we should credit for this very positive development, the new inclusivity of the art world or a taste for cognitive friction that constantly needs replenishing, is an open question.

Feminist art, Queer art, Indigenous contemporary art (the qualification is crucial), art by African Americans and other diasporic practices, new art from various global cultures participating in the great mosaic of the art world, often make references that will not be readily available to a Western audience. If the viewer learns about such cultures - which brings its own pleasures - obscurity can become exclusivity, just as it does in the esoteric, absurdist, fragmentary and private modes.

With the advent of modernism, Westerners put aside the ethnic peculiarities of Europe, not to accommodate foreign sensibilities, but as cultural hygiene to salve Western disenchantment with its own heritage. Whether through philosophy or science, those who had lost faith in their inherited myths and traditions wanted to open the windows and let in fresh air. What would high culture look like if it bore no resemblance to what had come before? What if the very premise and purpose of art were replaced, improved, elevated? Modernists had intended to build a world governed by reason and evidence, but that world has yet to be achieved, because modernists had more than reason and evidence in their baggage. Unfortunately, the obscurity that qualifies so much modernist art has hindered artists from participating effectively in the all-important bourgeois dialectic that determines the quality of life in liberal democracies and their client economies. Obscurity has a downside.

Emancipated by modernism, artists emphasized the new over the established, and made originality their goal. Having overpowered orthodoxy as a value, the imperative of originality created the ideal conditions for art to accommodate a rich diversity of practices. Clearly defined ideologies are hard to come by in artistic culture today, where ambiguity, ambivalence and especially obscurity join intellectual and aesthetic freedom as core values. Intentionally or not, modern art, and the reverence for originality that it shares with science, set up the conditions by which contemporary art was able to become an inclusive culture on a planetary scale. Both the intelligentsia and the market are now in sync in their enthusiasm for a global art world. And because such a world is also necessarily transcultural, we are now experiencing a great nourishing tide of obscurity.

Nevertheless, although an artist may be from China, Egypt, or Ghana, contemporary art lovers will be familiar with the tropes, tactics, conventions and trends learned in today's art schools, experienced in art museums and illustrated in art magazines, for the time being still predominantly in the West. Though the details of specific cultural references may elude the bulk of the audience, the form and intentions are

familiar. Such details can be learned, perhaps by reading an insightful exhibition catalogue or an explanatory wall label, after a sufficient amount of time is spent in pleasant obliviousness.

For those of us familiar with modernist art and its contemporary extensions, a cross-cultural language can be intuited. But modernist aversion to artistic prescription has discouraged the development of a standardized grammar that can be learned outside of experience. Experience, then, is still the great determiner of who gets to be an artistic insider. Consequently, it also supports economic class distinction, as experience is expensive to obtain in art, unlike music or literature. If you do not live in a major art centre; or if you do not have the time and resources required to travel and build a repertoire of direct experience large enough to produce such intuition; or, more typically, if you come from a background where such experience and intuition is deemed irrelevant, modern art will be opaque to you and may feel symptomatic of the class struggle.

Which brings us back to the reasons for obscurity's ascendancy, beyond mere pleasure. If the ever-expanding education industry has shied away from establishing a standard aesthetic grammar for modern art, my guess is that the anti-academicism of its modernist foundations remains sturdy and determining. A violent reaction against the constraints of the aristocratic regime, bourgeois modernism produced a field that still wants neither compass nor map. Human nature being what it is, the insider/outsider dichotomy, a result of modernism's fundamental agonism, is well served by a field that loves obscurity for its own sake, and that uses it as both sword and shield. Perversely, the dichotomy is also very appealing if you oppose the ideal of liberal democracy's illusory classless society. A snob is happy to belong to an exclusive minority, alone in its understanding that much of modern art is not meant to be understood.

But let's try out a more practical and less politically tendentious perspective. To maintain its ancient noble status, art has had to distinguish itself within the modern world's visual field, comprised mostly of superficial decoration, advertising, signage, pictographic instructions, pornography, all meant to be assimilated immediately. Obscurity slows assimilation. Slowing down the viewer by troubling the synaptic network between eye and mind has been a fruitful strategy for art, a guarantee of its distinction and a good path to its continued elevation. Conveniently, it undergirds a market that rewards novelty, scarcity and the extended "use value" of the inscrutable object. A work that holds its mystery stands a better chance of holding its value. In a consumer economy, the rare and increasingly valuable thing is the attractive product that resists definitive consumption.

There is yet another reason why obscurity has had such appeal, one that may give it renewed vigour as a new wave of insurgent calls for social justice faces an energized populism, causing upheaval within liberal democracies. An important new battleground for the left is on questions of decorum, taste and etiquette where modernist art has a solid history of antagonism. Freedom of expression, sacrosanct to liberal democrats, seems as illusive as ever in a time when a wrong word, a stupid joke or "unwanted attention" can instantly transform a hero into a pariah. Just as taboo subject matter was encrypted in modernist literature — think of Proust, Faulkner, Joyce, Eliot, and Woolf — obscurity provides its own encryption and its own quiet resistance. If art is a safe place to be unknowing, obscurity makes it also a safe place for candour.

If the left has made a provisional truce with a vanguard culture that still wants to "épater le bourgeois," modernist art continues to resist invitations to be socially instrumental. Its association with "bourgeois

decadence," from the point of view of the traditional left, may seem old hat for the moment, given what we know of art's dialectical agonism within bourgeois society. But it is not a stable peace, as the left regroups for a different kind of revolution, one that implicates' art museums for the first time in decades. Although he abandoned abstraction in favour of a socially engaged return to iconography, it is precisely Philip Guston's fidelity to modernist obscurity, the ambiguity of his message to all but his knowing audience, that has recently frightened art museum directors into postponing his retrospective.

The fate of modernist obscurity, like the fate of modernism itself, is anyone's guess. From my perspective, it still has psychology, precedence and its own relatively robust economy going for it. The day that artists find a way to make compelling and relevant works of art that do not rely on the methods of obscurity, they will have finally become postmodernists. <>

THE SCHEMA OF THE THEORY OF REIFICATION by Wataru Hiromatsu, translated by John Hocking with an introduction by Makoto Katsumori [Historical Materialism Book Series, Brill, 9789004335103]

Hiromatsu argues that the change from Marx's theory of self-alienation to the concept of reification is crucial in establishing a new relational worldview which is still relevant today. Amongst other topics, his discussion of the understanding of society sees such as a relational dynamic wherein the individual is constantly composed and composing in relation to others, including nature. This understanding is, he argues, the "single science of history" of Marx and Engels. It overcomes the hypostasizing subject - object relation still prevalent today.

Originally published in Japanese as *Busshōkaron no kōzu* by Iwanami Shoten, Publishers, Tokyo, 1983, 1994. © By Kuniko Hiromatsu.

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The present volume, **THE SCHEMA OF THE THEORY OF REIFICATION**, is a translation of Hiromatsu Wataru's (1933–1994) book which was published by Iwanami Shoten in 1983 and later included [Collected works of Hiromatsu Wataru], Vol. 13. The book consists of five chapters and an epilogue, and those chapters, except for the third section of the first chapter, were originally published as discrete essays in journals between 1969 and 1983. The third section of Chapter 1 and the epilogue were newly written for the book publication. While a number of Hiromatsu's major books, including the present one, have been translated into Chinese, translations into European languages have to date been limited to some individual essays and excerpts from books. The present publication is indeed the first ever English translation of an entire book by the author.

Undoubtedly one of the most important philosophers in twentieth-century Japan, Hiromatsu has so far been relatively little known abroad, not least in Europe and North America, among other regions. As his German translator Raji Steineck rightly suggests, this hitherto limited attention to Hiromatsu's work may be attributed to the fact that his thought does not fit into the widespread preconception of "Japanese philosophy" as essentially tied to or rooted in the East-Asian cultural traditions. While such culturally essentialist notions of Japanese philosophy could be questioned even with regard to its supposed representative figures, such as Nishida Kitarõ or some other largely prewar philosophers, their inadequacy becomes all the more apparent with reference to Hiromatsu. His work may be characterized as a rigorous and critical engagement with modern philosophy whose scope and context are by no means restricted to, or centered on, the cultural or geopolitical entity of Japan or East Asia. In this introductory essay, I wish to situate in an appropriate context the author Hiromatsu, his philosophical thought, and specifically the present work The Schema of the Theory of Reification.

Born in Yamaguchi Prefecture in 1933, Hiromatsu grew up mainly in Fukuoka Prefecture, southwestern Japan. Immediately after the end of World War II in 1945, Hiromatsu as a schoolboy took a keen interest in Marxism and started extensively reading left-wing literature, notably the Japanese edition of The Collected Works of Marx and Engels. While in junior high school, he joined Communist-led political activities, and a few years later, he was expelled from high school for distributing fliers protesting the then raging Red purge. After passing the high-school equivalency examination, Hiromatsu entered the University of Tokyo in 1954, and studied philosophy while at the same time further engaging in political activities. During this process, he became increasingly at odds with the orthodox or "Russian" school of Marxism over a series of theoretical and practical issues, and consequently parted company with the Japan Communist Party. Shifting toward what was then taking form as the New Left, he helped develop a new orientation of the revolutionary movement, and this effort was, on the basic theoretical level, bound up with his seminal project of exploring and reinterpreting Karl Marx's thought.

During the 1960s, the young Hiromatsu emerged first of all as a new leading theorist of Marxism. Starting with his 1963 essay "Marxism and the Theory of Self-Alienation," he presented a novel interpretation of Marx's thought that differed from orthodox Marxism as well as from the "humanist" version of Marxism based on the notion of "alienation." As is well known, Marx's early critique of alienation, as developed in his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, revolves around the idea that the human subject externalizes itself into an alien object and yet eventually overcomes this alienation, turning back to itself. In Hiromatsu's reading, this idea of alienation is "inseparable from a specific concept of the subject" as represented by Hegel's concept of "spirit" – which was subsequently recast by the Young Hegelians into various notions such as "humanity," "self-consciousness," or "species-being" – and it was within such a conceptual framework that the early Marx set forth his critique of alienation. In due course, however, according to Hiromatsu,

Marx's thought underwent a radical change. In the middle of the 1840s, starting in his unfinished joint work with Friedrich Engels, The German Ideology, Marx developed a renewed critique of society no longer based on the abstract notion of the subject, but rather on his new conception of the human being as "the ensemble of social relations." This new orientation of Marx's thought had hitherto been obscured, however, by the then standard edition of The German Ideology, Part i, which, in Hiromatsu's view, was seriously flawed by an arbitrary compilation of the authors' manuscripts. Hiromatsu

accordingly proceeded through a detailed textual criticism of The German Ideology, which eventually resulted in the publication of his own edition of the text (Marx and Engels 1974).

In his 1969 book The Horizon of Marxism and other writings, Hiromatsu characterized the development of Marx's thought as the transition from "the theory of alienation" to "the theory of reification." The mature Marx's critique of "reification" (Versachlichung) is no longer aimed at the subject turning into an alien object, but at the "fixation of social activity" arising from the naturally evolved cooperative relations between individuals. As succinctly summed up by Hiromatsu, 'reification' for Marx refers to the circumstance that "the relation between persons appears as a relation between things, as a thing-like substance, or as a thing-like attribute". Analyzing this idea of reification as it was introduced in The German Ideology and further developed in Marx's later work, particularly in Capital, Hiromatsu sought to show how this conceptual innovation implies surpassing the framework of modern philosophy marked by the subject/object schema. His new interpretive approach to Marx's thought as just outlined was received with fervor by a wide range of readers, especially among young students involved in the rising campus struggles during the late 1960s. Then teaching at Nagoya University, Hiromatsu himself acted in solidarity with the student revolt, and in 1970 resigned from the university in support of the movement. He remained outside academia until 1976, when he became assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Tokyo.

Notwithstanding its great intellectual impact, Hiromatsu's work in Marxism and Marx studies by no means covered the whole of his scholarship. As can also be perceived from his analysis of Marx's thought, he was deeply grounded in a broad range of Western philosophy, notably German idealism, neo-Kantianism, and phenomenology, as well as the thought of physicist-philosopher Ernst Mach. More importantly, however, unlike many other contemporary researchers in the field, Hiromatsu engaged above all in philosophizing with remarkable originality and systematic coherence. He developed his own philosophical project in his 1972 book The Intersubjective Being-Structure of the World and subsequent works, most elaborately in his masterpiece Being and Meaning, vol. 1 (1982) and vol. 2(1993). The basic motif of his philosophy was a systematic critique of the "modern worldview," which he characterized as substantialist and bound by the subject/object schema. He sought to overcome this modern worldview by extending Marx's innovative ideas, particularly his critique of reification, to the general philosophical dimension.

The starting point of Hiromatsu's analysis is that all phenomena in the world bear "meaning" or "value," or, in other words, that they appear as something. The phenomenon always appears as something more or something other than the phenomenal or real given. For instance, "[t]he sound that is just heard appears intuitively as a car horn; what is seen outside the window appears as a pine tree"). Any phenomenon thus consists of two factors, the given and the meaning/value, which are inseparably linked in such a way that the former appears as the latter. Further, Hiromatsu continues, the phenomenon is every time a phenomenon "for someone," and this someone is also of twofold character. For example, a hammer has an instrumental value for someone insofar as he/she "plays the role of striking a nail" with it. In this way, something appears to someone as a general "role-taking Someone." It is important to note that the formation of a meaning or value is correlative with the process through which different subjects make themselves "intersubjectively isomorphic" to become a general Someone. In this way, "intersubjectivity" serves as an essential link between meaning/value and Someone.

The above twofold structures of both subject-side and object-side are combined to form what Hiromatsu calls the "fourfold structure": "A given presents itself as something to someone as Someone". For instance, the sound dog bears the meaning of 'dog' for someone as an English speaker. It is also in terms of the fourfold structure that Hiromatsu analyzes Marx's account of the commodity: A product of labor appears as a value to someone as a subject of abstract human labor. As Hiromatsu stresses, the above four moments of the phenomenon are not independent elements, but exist only as terms of the fourfold functional relationship. This relational character of phenomena has been missed, however, in the substantialist philosophical tradition, and Hiromatsu critically designates this tendency as "reification".

Broadening Marx's concept of reification into a general philosophical concept, Hiromatsu redefines reification as the hypostatizing misconception of what is actually a functional relation. While, for Marx, reification is limited to the hypostatization of social relations, what may be reified in Hiromatsu's sense covers relations in general, including natural and nonhuman relations. He specifically focuses on the reification of meaning and value, extended from the Marxian reification of the economic value of commodities. He also critically analyzes the reification of role action, in which roles are misconceived as fixed and ready-made positions and statuses. By thus uncovering and overcoming various forms of reification, Hiromatsu seeks to replace the modern worldview with a new philosophical orientation marked by the primacy of relation and the intersubjective fourfold structure.

Among Hiromatsu's numerous works, the present book is the only one that centrally thematizes the idea and theory of reification. To be sure, as he himself admits, the book may, in a sense, appear to be a kind of "patchwork" of essays originally written independently. Far from being just one topic among others, however, the concept of reification plays a key unifying role in Hiromatsu's work: It runs through his overall scholarly project covering both his interpretive approach to Marx's thought and his systematic effort in general philosophical reasoning. On the one hand, as we have seen, Hiromatsu's reading of Marx revolves around the thematic of reification as distinct from that of alienation. In the first essay of this volume, he outlines his basic views of Marx's transition from his earlier theory of alienation to his later theory of reification, and in the second essay, presents an in-depth analysis of this Marxian idea of reification. On the other hand, as noted above, he reformulates the idea of reification in the general philosophical dimension in such a way that the critique of reification serves as the leading motif in his endeavor to develop a new philosophical world-view. Steps in this conceptual extension is first taken in the third essay on the reification of the historical world, which also contains a fourfold-structural analysis of Marx's theory of the commodity. The fourth essay on Marx and Engels' conception of nature is also highly relevant to Hiromatsu's extension of the idea of reification, notably to his critical approach to "the historical reification of nature" as exemplified by the modern mechanical view of nature. It is above all in the long "epilogue," however, that he thematically discusses his project of expanding the theory of reification, which is to include the reification of norms, institutions, and social power, among other constructs in the practical dimension. Thus, it is no wonder that he characterizes the epilogue as, "along with the second essay, the central part of this book".

In this way, the present book provides the reader with a vantage point for viewing Hiromatsu's overall scholarly enterprise, where the thematic of reification constitutes a pivotal link connecting his major fields of inquiry. The reader who has completed reading this book will be able, without too much difficulty, to proceed to other works by Hiromatsu, whether his more detailed accounts of Marx's

thought, his general theory of the fourfold structure, or his philosophical analysis of natural science, particularly relativity theory, among other themes. It is all the more hoped that translations of his other books will also be available soon.

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"The composition of the theory of reification" serves as an important key for understanding the later thought of Marx for me, and, also, serves as the methodological foundation for my own conception of the philosophy of society, the philosophy of history and the philosophy of culture. Whilst I have expressed this occasionally over the last ten or more years I have hesitated for a long while to discuss as the main theme the "logical composition of the theory of reification" itself. This is because, on the one hand I had left a slight degree of impasse in the work of interpreting comprehensively in line with the composition of the theory of reification Marx's system of "critique of (the study of) political economy" which encompasses the complete three volumes of Capital, but mainly because, on the other hand, in the matter of the influential determinant in my philosophy of praxis, especially in the arrangement of role action, it was difficult to see through to a necessary and sufficient methodological deployment. However, in the last year or two, in regard to the former, having gained as co-author the specialist Mr Yoshida Norio, I have come to be likely to achieve a revision and expansion of my old work The Philosophy of Capital and consequently a restructuring of interpretation containing the whole of the system of "Marx's critique of (the study of) political economy." In regard to the latter, too, as the draft of Being and Meaning Volume II "The Being-Structure of the World of Praxis" has gradually come together I have reached the point where my conception has more or less firmed. This is the reason that I am here putting forward this book which takes as its thematic content the "composition and range of the theory of reification" for public examination and am seeking correction from the well-informed reader.

This book is not, however, something which discusses abstractly and generally the composition of the theory of reification in the form simply of methodology. Moreover, this book is a collection of essays, and it contains an old essay published in an academic society journal more than ten years ago. In addition, although it takes the general title of The Schema of the Theory of Reification, the main body of the book is limited to the theory of reification of Marx and Engels, and my own conception is only revealed in the form of an epilogue.—Though by nature I am slothful, it's not that I didn't have in mind to write a "newly written text." Also, once I had decided on the form of a collection of essays I did, temporarily, draft a long introduction. However, after careful consideration, I decided on the current form, having a particular thing in mind.

I personally desire in mind that to more easily gain the understanding of the reader regarding the composition and range of the theory of reification, taking the form, as in this book, of restricting the ridge of the theory of reification in Marx and Engels to the primary "backbone" of discussion and fleshing things out in my description of such first, and then having done that stating in an abbreviated form my conception as a continuation and development of such would—rather than the normal forms of resolving to be too accurate and tending to stray into byways, or reducing complexity and describing things comprehensively—rather be more suitable. I sincerely pray that such thinking of mine is not complacent.

To the extent that they were written independently of each other, the five essays contained within the book should be comprehensible even if perused in a random order, but in order to ascertain the schema of the theory of reification it would be best to read them through in the order in which they are arranged. However, for a certain kind of reader, the first essay may be seen as an unnecessary preamble, and I fear that it may be felt to be boring. At such a time, I would ask that the second essay and the epilogue be read, and that the first essay be bypassed for the time being.

The first essay, "For an Extolling of Materialist History", whilst rejecting crude understandings of the image of historical materialism, extols the perspective of materialist history as world-view and its composition, but in the context of this book, it, in particular, is such that it should perform the function of an introduction in regard to Marx's theory of reification with discussion, in particular, of the continuous discontinuity = discontinuous continuity of the so-called "theory of alienation" in the "early Marx" and the "theory of reification" in the "later Marx." Furthermore, section 3 of this essay, "The Sublation of the Theory of Alienation, and The Theory of Reification", is newly written, and with this addition I have also done some revision of the text and notes (the notes are provided together at the end of the chapter)1 of the preceding sections 1 and 2.—In this book I do not go into the specific content of materialist history itself, and I would be grateful if this lack can be made up for through the easily obtainable separate work, The Original Image of Materialist History (San'ichi shobõ, Shinsho Edition). In this separate work, whilst dismissing crude forms of materialist history, I discuss as main themes the view of society, the view of the state and the view of history of Marx and Engels, and I engage in an explicatory investigation of the fundamental concepts of materialist history. Also, regarding the features of Marx and Engels' discussion of human being, I ask that you see chapters 3 and 4 of the separate work, The Horizon of Marxism (Keisõ shobõ).

The second essay, "The Composition and Scope of the Theory of Reification", has the feature of originally being a rewriting in the form of an independent essay of the incomplete "Section 3" of the first essay, but, putting aside the circumstances of its formation, regarded just in the context of this book, it forms the central trunk of such. In including it in this book expansion and revision was undertaken, primarily in the notes.—No matter how much this essay has the features and the position of being a continuation of the first essay, it was published in the form of an independent essay and it includes points which to some degree duplicate those in the first essay, but, fearing causing jumps in the gist of the argument, I deliberately didn't undertake a large-scale cutting of material.

The third essay, "The Theory of Reification of the Historical World", is the manuscript for an academic society special lecture written in the late autumn of 1968 (it was published in the academic society journal beforehand, with corrections made in January 1969), fifteen years previous to now, and it discussed the proposal to extend the composition of the theory of the "world of the commodity" in Capital into the reificatory being-structure in the "historical world" in general. This old essay is worth commemorating for me as the essay in which I first state my interpretation of Marx's theory of the world of the commodity, and it is also, at the same time, the essay in which I first state publicly my "role theory composition", but I have until now refrained from including it in an essay collection. The reason for this is not because it contained points I wished to withdraw, but because, later, I published section 2 of this essay in an elaborated and developed form as "The Being-Structure of the Linguistic World" and "The Co-operative Being-Structure of the Historical World", (both are contained in my work The Intersubjective Being-Structure of the World published by Keisõ shobõ), and also, I published

"Heidegger and Reificatory Misapprehension" (republished in my work An Outpost Towards a Koto-Centred View of the World published by Keisõ shobõ) which develops as the main theme points of critique from this essay, and further, I published as an independent book, The Philosophy of Capital (published by Gendai hyõron sha), the reading of Capital which supports section 1 of the essay, and so in this way, I developed as main themes foundational statements from this essay = academic society lecture in a variety of directions, and therefore published the essay in a different form. In this way, I abandoned the essay to an academic society journal which would never be read at all by anyone apart from the typesetter, but this old essay, no matter how much of a rough sketch it is, indeed, because it is a foundational rough sketch, can be seen as convenient in bringing into relief the main line of argument in the context of this book. This is the reason I have dusted it off and republished it.—Because the idea is to republish my first statements regarding the various aforementioned themes, I have stopped at correcting of misprints and have taken the expedient of inserting somewhat explanatory "translations" (within square brackets) of European words. I hope that I might be somehow forgiven for duplication with other essays. For this academic society lecture, taking into consideration the circumstance that the audience was a school of philosophers with little connection with Marx but with a close affinity with Heideggerian terminology, I make frequent use of Heideggerian jargon. Whilst I fear that I will invite the displeasure of a certain kind of reader I can only ask that attention to and distinction of Heideggerian terminology be made.—Although the fact that the essay is not on the whole sufficiently developed was beyond my control, for me the major dissatisfaction is the fact that I completely omitted relating discussion to Marx's "theory of value form." Of course, human relations in the "theory of value form" only fully applies to "the simple commodity producer model." It was having carefully considered this that I omitted relating discussion to the theory of value form. Even so, it can't be denied that this lack is a cause of pushing the discussion into an abstract realm, and to you readers who are economists it is likely that you will have the impression that "with this kind of discussion in the end a consistent reading of the complete three volumes of Capital using the composition of the theory of reification can't possibly be believed." Certainly, in extolling, not only in this essay but in the book as a whole, the theory of reification which runs through the complete three volumes of Capital, I have left a large amount of work undone. To fulfil this work, however, concrete discussion focused along the lines of Capital, such as the "problem of transformation" etc, is necessary and would easily necessitate a book with this as its main theme. For this reason, I have deliberately refrained in this book from incomplete discussion of related, non-central matters. For the time being, regarding the "theory of value form" and the "theory of fetishism", I would be grateful if the lack in this book is supplemented through my previously published, separate book The Philosophy of Capital (incidentally, this existing work of mine is scheduled to be newly published by Keisõ shobõ next spring, having undergone expansion and correction).

The fourth essay, "The Historical Reification of the Natural World", is once again a republication of an old essay written for an academic society journal, and apart from a condensing of the notes at the end of the essay, and the supplementation of material in square brackets I have stopped at only correcting misprints. The points of argument and the quotations in this essay are almost all duplications with those in the first essay, the second essay and the epilogue, and it wasn't that I didn't hesitate to republish it, but this short essay is the only essay for me where I discussed as the main theme Marx and Engels' concept of nature, and recently, for reasons of its rarity, I have frequently been asked about it, so I chose to publish it here as an "addendum in a different place", refraining from altering the duplication of points of argument. I'd like to beg forgiveness.

The fifth essay, "Philosophy in Marx", is the record of a speech given under the auspices of "Terakoya", and it is not an essay which takes the theory of reification as a direct topic, but deals with the matters of the composition of "systematic description = systematic critique" mentioned in the second essay and the "realising sublation = sublating realisation of philosophy" in the place of practice, and in general it also has an aspect of generalising motifs (though from a particular vantage point) contained in this book, so this too has been included as an "addendum." Apart from omitting part of the preamble and addendum notes it is a mostly faithful republication.

The epilogue, "Expanding the Theory of Reification", is an outline of my own thoughts and proposals as to how I wish to continue and develop, on the basis of what kind of direction and with what kind of deployment, Marx and Engels' theory of reification. Even though, formally, it is an "epilogue", this long, new essay can be seen as, along with the second essay, the central part of this book. In the context of it as a continuation of the main text I haven't refrained from re-declaring points of discussion and reinserting quotations.

Reading the printer's proofs it is difficult not to feel embarrassed. Even though it was put together in accordance with a pre-established line, I am extremely ashamed of the duplication arising from the republication of material, especially the duplication of quotations. For example, a certain section of The German Ideology is not only quoted in every chapter but has ended up being used twice within the same essay, making things extremely unattractive. Also, from a different perspective, this book presents such a patchwork appearance, and in contrast to the more than ten essay collections I have previously sent out into the world being a unity furnished with an internal arrangement in their own way, in the case of this book, it is simply a completely distorted five-pointed star. In the group of my works this book is bound to be judged the most unattractive.

Rethinking things, however, being published in advance of the revised, new edition of The Philosophy of Capital and the volumes to follow it, and alongside Being and Meaning Volume ii, in the case of this book which promotes the composition of Marx's theory of reification and which ought to present my own composition of the theory of reification, this clumsiness may perhaps be on the contrary well equal to its task. The essays contained in it have, for me, each been accompanied by catharsis, and all I can do now is hope for good luck. <>

INHALING SPIRIT: HARMONIALISM, ORIENTALISM, AND THE WESTERN ROOTS OF MODERN YOGA by Anya P. Foxen [Oxford University Press, 9780190082734]

Recent scholarship has shown that modern postural yoga is the outcome of a complex process of transcultural exchange and syncretism. This book doubles down on those claims and digs even deeper, looking to uncover the disparate but entangled roots of modern yoga practice. Anya Foxen shows that some of what we call yoga, especially in North America and Europe, is genealogically only slightly related to pre-modern Indian yoga traditions. Rather, it is equally, if not more so, grounded in Hellenistic theories of the subtle body, Western esotericism and magic, pre-modern European medicine, and late-nineteenth-century women's wellness programs. The book begins by examining concepts arising out of Greek philosophy and religion, including Pythagoreanism, Stoicism, Neo-Platonism, Galenic medicine,

theurgy, and other cultural currents that have traditionally been categorized as "Western esotericism," as well as the more recent examples which scholars of American traditions have labeled "metaphysical religion." Marshaling these under the umbrella category of "harmonialism," Foxen argues that they represent a history of practices that were gradually subsumed into the language of yoga.

Orientalism and gender become important categories of analysis as this narrative moves into the nineteenth century. Women considerably outnumber men in all studies of yoga except those conducted in India, and modern anglophone yoga exhibits important continuities with women's physical culture, feminist reform, and white women's engagement with Orientalism. Foxen's study allows us to recontextualize the peculiarities of American yoga--its focus on aesthetic representation, its privileging of bodily posture and unsystematic incorporation of breathwork, and above all its overwhelmingly white female demographic. In this context it addresses the ongoing conversation about cultural appropriation within the yoga community.

Review

"Using the metaphor of inosculation, this fascinating and compelling study traces the Western roots of modern yoga, which Foxen (California Polytechnic State Univ.) argues "is only slightly genealogically related to Indian yogic traditions." She charts the development of physical culture in the West, particularly forms embedded within philosophical and spiritual traditions rooted in classical Hellenism, from Neoplatonic strains in Islamic culture, medieval Platonism, and magical traditions, into the movements of Emanuel Swedenborg, Franz Anton Mesmer, and New Thought. ... This text will be valuable to those interested in the history of ideas, esoteric studies, embodied religions, physical culture, women's studies, Orientalism, yoga, harmonialism, cultural appropriation, countercultural studies, identity construction, and dance." -- G. J. Reece, *CHOICE*

"*Inhaling Spirit* represents an extremely fascinating and engaging volume, that might serve as a fundamental read not only for scholars, but also for practitioners willing to delve into the history of 'their' yoga, in order to approach its practice in a more conscious and knowledgeable manner." -- Valeria Infantino , Sapienza University of Rome, *Recensioni*

CONTENTS

We, Other Greeks

> In regard to the numerous other systems with which the world is deluged we have nothing to say, since the best results to be obtained from all of them can be found beautifully expressed in a judicious combination of the basic principles which underlie Greek art and the more practical training of the Swedish poet. The system of psycho-physical culture and the various exercises for the same given in this work are based chiefly upon those just mentioned, combined with others more occult and mystic in their nature, which have been taken from those ideal and charmingly beautiful motions of sacred dance and prayer practiced by various oriental nations for certain religious and metaphysical effects, while the whole is blended with a system of vital dynamic breathing and mental imagery. This perfect combination stimulates to healthy, vigorous action every power and molecule of the brain, so as to produce, by mental reaction, a life-giving, stimulating ecstasy upon the soul—the psyche; hence the true meaning of this especial system which is, in very truth, psycho-physical, and affects, simultaneously, the body to vigorous health, the brain to powerful mental action, and the soul to a higher aspiration. —Genevieve Stebbins, *Dynamic Breathing and Harmonic Gymnastics* (1892)

I would like to begin this book by making a clear and unequivocal statement: I am not setting out to argue that yoga has its true origins in Western civilization. Nor am I proposing that white women invented yoga. In fact, for a considerable portion of this book, I will not be talking about "yoga" at all.

If we want to boil this book's argument concerning yoga down to its basic essence—to distill its spirit, so to say—it might read as follows: many white women (for they are overwhelmingly white, and overwhelmingly women) practicing "yoga" in the United States today are actually engaged in something that is only slightly genealogically related to Indian yogic traditions. That is, had history taken a different turn, we might see the same practice taking place today under some completely different name. This is not a wholly original argument. In fact, the basic seed of it is inherent in Mark Singleton's statement, made in his seminal study of modern yoga, *Yoga Body* (2010), that "postural modern yoga displaced—or was the cultural successor of—the established methods of stretching and relaxing that had already become commonplace in the West, through harmonial gymnastics and female physical culture." This book digs deeper into precisely what these modes of stretching were (and, in reality, they were far more than stretching) and where they themselves came from.

My ultimate point is this: there is a Western history of practice here that was overwritten by the imported language of yoga, thereby becoming invisible. In this form, it has continually been used to inform and occasionally to colonize the category of Indian yoga. Modern transnational yoga is ultimately a deeply syncretized and amalgamated entity resulting from the interaction of Indian yogic traditions with this Western body of thought and practice, among others. (That is, this book is about the body of practices we call yoga in Europe, and especially in North America. If we want to understand transnational yoga as it is practiced in, say, Japan, we would have to grapple with a whole other set of traditions indigenous to that particular culture.)

To this end, the present book traces a specific cultural strand, which I am terming "harmonialism," that has profoundly influenced how practices such as yoga have been received and interpreted in the West.

The larger thrust of this argument could easily be expanded to other cultural imports, such as Buddhist meditation, indigenous American practices, and any range of other such systems that have been appropriated as elements of "alternative spirituality." As I will argue, basic harmonial logics can be traced all the way back to antique Hellenic sources. As such, they are not specifically European in their origins. Likewise, they arrive in Renaissance Europe to a large extent by way of Arabic sources, both as novel philosophical tracts and commentaries and as preserved translations of Greek materials that might otherwise have been lost. However, starting in the Renaissance, this cluster of ideas is elaborated in ways that are more or less specific to Europe and subsequently North America. And it is precisely this complex of concepts and supporting practices that, in the nineteenth century, gives rise to something that looks very much like modern postural yoga.

The broadest level of argument I mean to present deals with the dynamics of cultural exchange. To understand any kind of transcultural system of practice we must face something perhaps akin to the eternal problem of anthropology: To what extent is one really able to enter the culture of another? Transmission is a constant act of translation. The traveling idea or practice must be adapted to the logical structure and idioms of its new context, so that it can speak to a different set of cultural understandings and embodied experiences. When we look at traveling practices especially, it is never suffcient to assume that the practice has been transmitted wholesale, since practice involves not only a conceptual dimension but also an applied embodied component. This is operant on a micro level even within a culture—my experience of a practice will never be quite identical to yours—but it becomes amplified when transmission takes place transculturally. In other words, transmission always involves an act of syncretism, whether conscious or unconscious. What is received is always necessarily combined with and adapted to a preexisting conception of the world.

This book adopts an intentionally teleological approach: modern yoga is where we are "going" To those interested in modern practice and wrangling with questions of origins, meaning, appropriation, and authenticity, I imagine this will prove engaging enough in its own right. However, as I asserted earlier, there is a larger question implicit here, and therefore a larger argument. The larger question deals with our ability to ever define or historically delineate a practice and its evolution. The argument is that, actually, we do this constantly and necessarily both as scholars and as human beings (insiders, if you will). Whenever we undertake a practice or engage with a research question, we are defining and delineating and—above all—comparing. Specifically, we are comparing and, if we are doing this particularly unreflexively, immediately synthesizing our preexisting understanding with the objective data that we encounter. Therefore, no datum, no text, no historical narrative, no diagram, no embodied experience is ever "pure:' To say that we naturally understand the world by relating new objects, ideas, and experiences to our existing knowledge base is not a new or particularly exciting statement. Nor is it precisely a problem, but simply human. It does, however, present some complications when one is striving for objectivity, as a scholar might. conducted by Yoga Journal and Yoga Alliance found that 55% of yoga practitioners have never set foot in a dedicated yoga studio or center. Home practice followed by health clubs and gyms are the two leading venues. In these contexts, it becomes extremely likely that yoga is taught and practiced in a way that contains few of the specific features found in premodern Indian sources, whether the contemplative style of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras or the more physically grounded methods of medieval hatha yoga. As a result, it becomes easy for practitioners who are exposed to such sources to conclude that their practice is a feeble knockoff, a bastardization of some authentic ancient South Asian practice. There is much to be said for the difficulty that inevitably emerges

when one attempts to establish a single and coherent "authentic" yoga originating on South Asian soil. However, treating modern yoga practice that diverges from these histories as simply a shallow bastardization also ignores the basic dynamics of cultural transmission. Transmission never results in a perfect replica, but neither is the receiving context a blank slate. The truth of the matter is that variants of postural yoga that apparently ground themselves solely in asana and eschew the complexities of premodern (or even certain modern) South Asian systems also have a history. This history is long and metaphysically complex—but it is largely not Asian.

As yoga has reached peak popularity in the West over the first two decades of the twenty-first century, it has become an epicenter of complex political negotiations involving nationalism, the blurry lines that separate the religious from the secular, and perhaps above all colonialism and cultural appropriation. If we are to talk about cultural appropriation constructively, we cannot continue to replicate its basic assumptions. Specifically, it is a profound mistake to treat the dominant culture as a tabula rasa onto which distorted versions of colonized practices are imposed. The dominant culture is in these cases the very source of the distortion, and, if we seek to recalibrate and correct our skewed perception of the status quo, it is not enough to simply work backward to the "authentic" logics of the colonized cultural material. Or, at least, doing so will continue to obscure how we got into our current predicament, leaving the situation to repeat itself again and again. Allowing the dominant culture to persist in acting as a cipher is akin to insisting that whiteness is not a racially motivated identity or that masculinity should not be included in an analysis of gender. In other words, the colonizing and imperializing culture in question—in this case, that of the Euro-American yoga community—must be objectified, relativized, and historicized in the same ways that the Western academy has traditionally used to approach the cultures of "Others."

Part of this book's project is therefore deconstructive—a sort of debunking of the pedigree of Western yoga practice. However, this same project is also constructive insofar as it aims to trace the European and subsequently American traditions that share family resemblances, whether historically cognate or simply analogous, with Indian yoga systems as a way of contextualizing the synthesis that ultimately results in modern transnational yoga. It is my hope that this aspect of the book will be helpful not only to scholars but to practitioners who are seeking to understand their practice by restoring to them a history that actually legitimizes elements of modern yoga that may otherwise seem like corruptions. Finally, as a critical middle ground between these two goals, I seek to highlight the ways in which these genuine commonalities have been used in the context of imperialism and colonialism to assert Euro-American supremacy through a narrative of origins, authenticity, and ownership.

This book expressly does not address yoga's South Asian history, which it takes for granted as a point of origin for premodern practice as well as a primary component of the modern synthesis that yields Indian forms of postural yoga. "Yoga' is a Sanskrit word. It has a long and diverse history in the various traditions of the South Asian subcontinent, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, among others. This is not up for debate. If anything, one might use this book to conclude that perhaps we should not be calling some of the practices that we find in North America and Europe "yoga" at all. Is this realistic in a practical sense? Almost certainly not. But, moreover, to assert such a position belies the basic reality that practices are never homogeneous, historically or geographically. Russian Orthodox Christianity has a very different history from Pentecostal Protestant Christianity, but we would generally not deny the label of "Christian" to a practitioner of either. In a similar way, modern Western yoga—different as it

may be in its form and originating cultural assumptions—has been naturalized as one form among the many that now fall under the rubric of transnational yoga. The syncretism has been under way for over a century, and it seems unlikely that we can undo it—the inosculation is complete. What we can do, however, is take an honest, informed, and critical look at the branches and untangle their points of origin, at least to some extent.

The Structure of This Book

The initial chapters of this book are focused on establishing, in necessarily broad strokes, the long-view history of harmonialism in the Western world. Chapter 1 establishes the origins of harmonial ideas in the ancient world, focusing primarily on the Greek and later more broadly Hellenic world, ranging approximately from 500 BCE to 500 CE. It starts out by exploring the evolution of cosmological ideas of harmony (harmonic) and sympathy (sympatheia) on the one hand, and spirit (pneuma) and its relationship to notions of the soul (psyche) on the other. It then proceeds to focus on the idea of a subtle body and the two spheres in which its utility has been explored: religious soteriology (or "theurgy") and medical theory and practice.

Chapter 2 traces harmonial ideas from the end of antiquity through the metaphysically based religious and mind cure movements of the nineteenth century. It begins by briefly surveying developments in the early Islamic world and medieval Europe before proceeding to explore astrological medicine and theurgy in the European Renaissance, focusing primarily on the spiritus theory of Marsilio Ficino. It further argues that the legacy of astrological medicine on the one hand and theurgy on the other can be found in the eighteenth-century movements founded by Franz Anton Mesmer and Emanuel Swedenborg, respectively. It then concludes by examining the reconvergence of these two strains of thought in the New Thought movement of the late nineteenth century, focusing chiefly on the work of Warren Felt Evans, which synthesizes Swedenborgian ideas with contemporary medical thought, including the importance of breath and physical culture.

Chapter 3 examines the relationship between lingering harmonial ideas and the nineteenth-century evolution of physical culture. Specifically it relates the development of Ling Swedish gymnastics and its iteration as "Movement Cure" (alongside the more broadly examined Mind Cure movement) with the rise of alternative medical therapies on the one hand and gender dynamics on the other. In doing so, it points to two trends that speak to modern yoga's form as well as its gender demographics. First, modern yoga—especially the vastly popular dance-like flow styles—looks most like the light calisthenics that would have been prescribed for women during this time period. Second, these types of calisthenics were elaborated to address distinctly feminine concerns, such as dress reform, which led to a special focus being placed on elements that would become central to modern yoga practice in the West, namely a generalized emphasis on deep breathing (rather than the more specific techniques of pranayama) and attention to aesthetic form. The chapter concludes by examining the ways in which these currents—feminized physical culture, health reform, and harmonial aesthetics—converged in the late nineteenth-century rise of American Delsarteism.

Chapter 4 more closely examines American Delsarteism as a form of harmonialism, positioning it between harmonial breath and movement practices being advocated within the broader metaphysical New Thought movement and the development of modern dance. It focuses on the work of Stebbins, whose use of esotericism closely connects her to prominent proponents of New Thought such as Evans,

but whose influence upon women such as Duncan and St. Denis makes her something of a grandmother to the first iterations of modern dance. It then traces the innovations within American Delsarteism exemplified by Stebbins into Duncan's work, which likewise exhibits a strong esotericist influence and a harmonial subcurrent. In this context it points out the lack of Asian content characteristic of these formulations as they culminate in Duncan's strong Hellenic neoclassicism. Finally, it positions St. Denis as a contrast to Duncan's Hellenism by focusing on her engagement with a resurgent and popularly explosive Orientalism. St. Denis exemplifies the standard historical tendencies of a Platonic Orientalism, starting with the origin myth of her career in the Egypta cigarette poster, ranging into her fascination with India and its yogis, and underpinned by her lifelong commitment to Christian Science and Western esotericism more broadly. However, her thought also betrays the ultimately Euro-American roots of this approach as her gradually deepening engagement with Indian philosophy and yogic practices constitutes only a fraction of her worldview.

Chapter 5 then grapples with the dynamics of Orientalism, specifically as enacted by white women with regard to India and its two central personas: the yogi and the dancing girl. It first addresses how the ambiguous gendering of yogis as Oriental men allowed white women to inhabit this persona as a specific way of legitimating their spiritual authority. It also briefly examines how certain white men (such as Pierre Bernard and Yogi Ramacharaka) adopted the same tactic to even greater effect, becoming early twentieth-century authorities on yoga despite often representing a deeply Westernized version of yoga that sometimes had little grounding in any Indian tradition. As a complement to this masculine model, St. Denis's popularity represents the rise of the nautch girl as the symbol of a specifically feminine Orientalism. Even more so than the yogi persona, the appropriated image of the nautch girl reflects broader trends not only within the dance world but within popular culture, as Oriental imagery increasingly becomes co-opted by white women at the turn of the century to express their lingering fantasies and their newfound freedoms. Women's physical culture, which historically had cleaved closely to dance, quickly begins to mirror this trend as "Oriental dance" exercises are increasingly diffused through the preexisting practice of light calisthenics. However, just as in St. Denis's work, engagement with actual Asian concepts and practices remained superficial at best. Often the effect was simply one of masking older Western content under an exotic Oriental glamour.

Chapter 6 examines the effect of all of these historical dynamics upon the development of modern yoga practice, both in the United States and Europe as well as India. Previous studies have shown that European physical culture was a crucial ingredient of the syntheses effected by Indian yoga reformers in the early twentieth century. Here I seek to connect such developments with the parallel history of these practices in the West, including the ways in which yogis who traveled to spread their teachings abroad (including Vivekananda, Abhedananda, Yogananda, Yogendra, and others) found themselves at the center of a series of two-sided adaptations and appropriations. Indian yogis were intimately familiar with not only Western physical culture but also Western metaphysical traditions. For this reason, we can see a diffusion of Western harmonial language (such as a focus on ether, magnetism, resonant energy, cosmic influx, and so on) into the writings on Indian yogis, where such terms are used to express an entirely different school of metaphysical concepts. This is mirrored by the ways in which Sanskrit terms such as "prana(yama), "chakra; and "yoga" itself are being used in Euro-American sources to represent genealogically Western harmonial concepts. The chapter concludes by examining the multiple waves of synthesis affected by later teachers of this hybrid yoga, such as Indra Devi, who found themselves at

pains to differentiate between the yogic teachings they brought from India from the naturalized content of the broader harmonial fitness movement.

In the short epilogue I return—in broad strokes—to some of these issues of definition, identity, origins, ideological imperialism, and colonial appropriation.

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Before we depart on this project, I want to once more restate explicitly something that I hope the previous pages have already elucidated: I am not arguing that white American women invented yoga. I do, however, want to claim that much of what we call yoga in the United States today, as it is practiced in fitness centers and studios not explicitly positioning themselves with reference to Indian lineages, is largely derivable from Euro-American harmonial physical culture as developed and implemented by white women at the turn of the previous century. This form of practice can be triangulated with more masculinized forms of Western and Indian physical culture, which are the primary sources that Singleton has referenced for the synthesis of modern postural yoga at Tirumalai Krishnamacharya's Mysore school and elsewhere across the Indian subcontinent. However, insofar as early Indian yoga innovators cite the work of American women like Stebbins alongside her male counterparts in positioning their own systems, this influence reaches all the way to modern yoga's immediate Indian roots. Furthermore, transnational Indian innovators are fundamentally imbedded in this context. Indeed it is they who first labeled these "psycho-physical" practices "yoga."

This complicates the debate over yoga's status as a culturally appropriated product. Without denying the colonial power dynamics that govern this exchange of ideas and practices, it would nevertheless be incorrect to imagine mainstream American yoga as some kind of stripped-down, corrupted, or bastardized version of an authentic Indian practice. Indeed, it is the more "authentic" forms of yoga—the ones that consciously lay claim to and imagine themselves as a continuation of premodern Indian sources or the lineages of certain gurus—that must most intensely grapple with the implications of this history. For them, the synthesis goes much deeper, as it consciously draws on shared myths, rituals, terminology, sources of authority, and (perhaps most important) bodily and metaphysical logics that are grounded in Indian cultural and intellectual history.

For the majority of popularized American yoga, the kind we find in gyms and other nonlineage/nondevotional contexts, the case is surprisingly rather more simple. If a charge of cultural appropriation is to be leveled, it bears not on the practice itself but rather on the term used to Identify that practice. In those cases, what we call yoga is in reality simply a continuation of nineteenth-century harmonial gymnastics—a practice that can be derived with little to no reference to Indian sources. Indeed if cultural appropriation is truly a concern, it might be more intellectually honest to simply stop calling such practices yoga. To do so, however, aside from seeming rather unlikely given the situation on the ground, would deny that more complex history that embroils both the current forms of transnational yoga that make genuine efforts to engage with Indian roots and the historically Indian postural forms that developed at the turn of the century through dialogue with Western physical culture. Finally, it would obscure the "why" behind this process. The answer to that "why" is inextricably bound up in colonialism, capitalism, and consumer culture. However, it also points to deep and genuine connections between the therapeutic, metaphysical, and ultimately salvific concerns—the genuine

commonalities of shared body and breath practices—that first led Indian men and American women at the turn of the century to call them by a common name.

In its most popular (such as in classes offered at multipurpose gyms) and corporate (such as exemplified by chain studios of the likes of CorePower and YogaWorks) forms, yoga is often not qualitatively different from other, similar modes of fitness, including barre and Pilates, that profess no Oriental pedigree. The phenomenon of mainstream American yoga, which often knows very little of said pedigree, cannot be understood apart from such practices and their predecessors over the past century and a half. It would not be going too far to say that the yogis who surround me at my regular noontime class at the local corporate yoga studio have nothing in common with the yogis I have spent years tracking through premodern Indian sources—except perhaps a shared preference for topknots. Yet if we are to say that this makes them "inauthentic," then it is in name only. They have a history too, just not the one they may imagine.

Examining this history can help us understand a number of crucial features found in today's Western, specifically American, yoga communities, such as their emphasis on asana almost to the exclusion of everything else, their nonsystematic engagement with breath, and their attention to aesthetic form even in the face of an emphasis on natural and intuitive movement. Music in yoga classes does not make a whole lot of sense if one tries to find precedent for it in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras or medieval hat/ia yoga traditions. It does make sense if one considers it in light of the long-standing Western notion that music is the closest thing to spirit, which is all over European Renaissance sources and can from thence be traced back all the way to Platonism and Pythagoreanism. Doing yoga in a vineyard (which is indeed a thing that people regularly do in California) does not make a whole lot of sense either. That is, until one considers that the Renaissance wage Marsilio Ficino once asserted that the spiritual body is fed by wine and its aroma, as well as song and light. I am being a bit facetious in making that second assertion—but only a bit. <>

BREATHING: AN INSPIRED HISTORY by Edgar Williams [Reaktion Books, 9781789143621]

Our knowledge of breathing has shaped our social history and philosophical beliefs since prehistory. Breathing occupied a spiritual status for the ancients, while today it is central to the practice of many forms of meditation, like Yoga. Over time physicians, scientists, and engineers have pieced together the intricate biological mechanisms of breathing to devise ever more sophisticated devices to support and maintain breathing indefinitely, from iron lungs to the modern ventilator. Breathing supplementary oxygen has allowed us to conquer Everest, travel to the Moon, and dive to ever greater ocean depths. We all expect to breathe fresh and clean air, but with an increase in air pollution that expectation is no longer being met. Today, respiratory viruses like COVID-19 are causing disasters both human and economical on a global scale. This is the story of breathing—a tale relevant to everyone.

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The biology of breathing has been a lifelong fascination of mine. It is a phenomenon I have spent my career studying in creatures of all sizes, from small aquatic crustaceans to fish and humans. Along the way I have read widely on the subject, its history and its background, not only to inform my own research but that of students to whom I have had the great pleasure of teaching respiratory physiology for many years. As a respiratory physiologist investigating the mechanisms of breathing, I have travelled the world working in the very laboratories where many of the great discoveries in the science and history of breathing were made. In any series of lectures on the physiology and pathology of breathing, the names of the scientists and physicians who first made these discoveries arise, since they often named the mechanisms they had discovered after themselves: hence we have the Bohr effect, Cheyne-Stokes breathing and Guillain-Barre Syndrome, to name but a few. Research into the cause and management of respiratory illness is important, as it remains one of the greatest causes of global morbidity and mortality, affecting young and old alike.

The history of how we gained our present understanding of breathing is both long and fascinating. It spans many centuries, progressing in fits and starts as major discoveries suddenly revealed new insights into the mechanisms of breathing, such as the first microscopic examination of the lungs by the anatomist Marcello Malpighi (1628-1694), the discovery of oxygen in the eighteenth century, and the identification of the tuberculosis bacterium by Robert Koch in 1882. Historical epidemics of polio, tuberculosis and influenza have shown us how important breathing is to our health. The twentieth century brought huge increases in chronic incurable respiratory conditions such as asthma and smoking-induced chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). In the twenty-first century, methods of improving health and wellness, such as yoga and meditation, have been popularized. Central to their practice is the self-control of breathing, which helps to manage stress and ease the pressures experienced in everyday life.

Recently air pollution has focused the health-conscious public and governments of the world on the long-term impact of our health. Researchers have realized that ultra-small carbon particles from vehicle exhausts can enter the blood via the lungs and lodge in tissues within the brain and heart. Breathing has gained new cultural relevance with the emergence of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. The unknown virus, which originated in China and is new to the human species, spread rapidly around the world, infecting and killing millions of people. This coronavirus enters bodies through the delicate respiratory membranes in the lungs. On its arrival, suddenly breathing other people's breath became potentially dangerous to life, as nobody had any immunity to the virus (officially named SARS-COV-2). Quarantine, isolation and physical distancing became global watchwords as every country's economy

shut down in an attempt to keep everyone safe. We all had to breathe within our own individual space, as did our nearest and dearest.

In most cases of Covid-19, the disease caused by the virus, the viral infection causes mild symptoms such as persistent coughing, a raised body temperature and aching limbs. Most people who catch the virus experience these mild symptoms, which pass quickly, but in a few cases, particularly vulnerable members of the public such as the elderly and those with heart disease, virus-induced pneumonia develops, making breathing difficult. Indeed, staying alive depends on breathing supplying the body with enough oxygen. Many of those who recover in full have commented on their struggle to breathe and how frightening this sensation can be. For the unfortunate few whose bodies overreact to the infection, in whom a `cytokine storm' develops into pneumonia, the only solution is mechanical ventilation and sedation until the storm is over. This book describes how, through the development of our understanding of breathing, we conceived the technology to support breathing, whether it be partially via a mask or fully by ventilator. It tells the story of how physicians and scientists sought to eliminate respiratory illness, and how they not only discovered the secrets of breathing but developed machines to support it. The innovations have helped to prolong life, and aid breathing on mountain tops or when diving beneath the sea.

Throughout, I have sought to answer a single question: why do we breathe the way we do? This book sets out the evidence.

Inspired Breathing

Breathing is such an ethereal and everyday occurrence that it is rarely the subject of poems, works of art, books or cultural phenomena. It does, however, feature in many English phrases and idioms. Before our modern understanding of breathing, early writers saw breathing in the context of pneuma, as a spiritual phenomenon. In fiction it was considered as a gentle breeze or as a spirit providing a vital life force. As we reach modern times, breathing becomes more visceral. Most modern works of fiction are permeated with a plethora of references to breathing, where it is used to signify heightened emotional states. Films with a breathing theme do exist and feature stories about extreme environments or the consequences of chronic respiratory disease.

There many phrases and idioms in the English language associated with breathing, be they physical, psychological or comical. One can talk 'under one's breath'. Less complimentary is the expression, 'I wouldn't breathe the same air' or the sarcastic retort 'pardon me for breathing; which can be followed with 'what a waste of breath' (which is related to the more archaic saying about 'saving one's breath to cool one's porridge'). To have someone 'breathing down your neck' is not a pleasant experience, giving the sense of being overly pressurized by someone or something.

On a more positive note there are phrases such as 'like a breath of fresh air' or to 'take someone's breath away,' usually referring to an inspiring or cheerful event. 'Catching one's breath' can signify the straightforward act of resting to overcome a temporary bout of breathlessness or can be uttered in order to initiate a brief pause to collect one's thoughts or plan ahead for what to do next. The phrases `to breathe a sigh of relief', 'breathing room' and 'breathing space' all speak for themselves, as does 'take a breather'.

A common phrase is 'with bated breath', or sometimes the malapropism 'with baited breath', the title of a Warhammer novel by George Mann. This phrase is frequently used but has obscure origins. At first it

may seem to imply that the subject has halitosis, but this is not the case. It was first used by Shakespeare in the comedy The Merchant of Venice, by the character Shylock:

> SHYLOCK: Shall I bend low, and in a servant's whine, with bated breath and whispering humbleness say, 'Sir you spit on me on Wednesday last.

'Bated' is a short form of the word 'abated: The phrase 'bated breath' was popular in Victorian times, especially in the numerous melodramatic novels popular at the time. Good illustrative examples can be found in the novels of Georg Ebers, the German Egyptologist who discovered the medical papyri that bear his name. Ebers tried to popularize his discoveries through writing historical romances. In his novel A Thorny Path from1892, his characters 'listened with outstretched necks and bated breath', 'stood at the window with bated breath' and 'listened with bated breath'.

'Don't breathe a word' is a usually issued as a warning, asking someone to keep a secret. The opposite is found in 'long-winded' when a person speaks for an unnecessarily long time. Even inanimate items can breathe, such as wine, and in times gone by the medical practice of breathing a vein was considered good medicine and used to treat many a condition or illness.

The ancient Greeks, without our modern view of breathing, saw only pneuma and aether. Homer made effective use of these phenomena in his epic poems The Odyssey and The Iliad. In the first, The Odyssey, Homer equates peace and tranquillity with breathing, often referring to the gentle breath of the wind and evoking a quiet and peaceful climate: 'the gods becalmed me twenty days without so much as a breath of fair wind to help me forward', or 'Minerva took the form of the famous sea captain Dymas's daughter . . . then, coming up to the girl's bedside like a breath of wind, she hovered over her head'.

In stark contrast, in the more bloodthirsty Iliad, which includes the siege of Troy, where the Greeks battled the Trojans, the loss of breath or pneuma signifies the loss of life. Many warriors die in this epic, such as Achilles: 'Long as Achilles breathes this vital air' and 'The corpse now breathless on the bloody plain: Furthermore, breathing is commonly attached to an emotion or behaviour: 'Breathing revenge, in arms they take their way' and 'Thus they, breathing united force with fixed thought, Moved on in silence:

The fiction of Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400) includes the notion of pneuma, and its function as a vital life force and as a mechanism to cool the body, with the lungs considered the engine of the body.' In the Canterbury Tales the first tale, The Knights Tale (1386-8), explores the effects of love on two cousins, Palamon and Arcite, and ends with Arcite dying after being thrown from his horse. Here Chaucer describes the death in detail: after the heart stops beating, the 'pipes of his longes' 'shent with venym and corrupcioun', In other words, the circulation of the blood ceases, and the lungs cannot cool the body anymore. The final demise happens thus: `Dusked his eyen two and failled breeth' with the loss of breathing marking the point of death. This passage provides a good view of medical knowledge at the time, reflecting the view that breath was a vital life force.

Shakespeare's works contain many references to breathing, both dramatic and functional, such as in the following exchange from Romeo and Juliet:

> NURSE: Jesu, what haste! Can you not stay awhile? Do you not see that I am out of breath?

JULIET: How art thou out of breath when thou hast breath to say to me that thou art out of breath? The excuse that thou dost make in this delay is longer than the tale thou dost excuse: (II.5)

Shakespeare even offers a new technical term to describe breathing: 'suspiration:','Nor windy suspiration of forced breath, No, nor the fruitful river of the eye' (Hamlet, 1.2). This refers to a long deep sigh, the windy and forced component implying that the sigh is falsely generated.' It is a useful word, but one rarely used in modern language or at all in medicine. An example is given by T. S. Eliot, who after surviving bombing in the London Blitz in his poem 'Little Gidding' (1942) muses on being destroyed by the fires of war or the fire of the Holy Spirit. The fourth stanza of the poem begins: 'The dove descending breaks the air' and ends:

> The intolerable shirt of flame.
> Which Human power cannot remove.
> We only live, only suspire
> Consumed by either fire or fire.

Some people argue that Shakespeare wrote his lines in such a way that they were best delivered with a pause after each line and a breath taken before the next line. Today this is known as Hall's pause. This idea is controversial, as this might suit the actor in delivering their lines to a rhythm, but most audiences find it a distraction.

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) reflects the mechanistic view of breathing coming to the fore in his novel The Fair Maid of Perth: "Then I am so accustomed to the use of arms, and so well breathed, that few men can match me" said the little man, expanding his breast . . . "here is room for all the wind machinery":

The English poet and playwright John Dryden (1631-1700) used breathing to dramatize death: 'In vain: if sword and poison be denied me, I'll hold my breath and die' and 'The youth though in haste, / And breathing his last, / In pity died slowly, while she died more fast'. In the next verse a nymph persuades a young shepherd to revive himself so that she can die slowly and he more quickly, a noble act.

A book which covers many of the early twentieth-century issues concerning the discovery of industrial lung disease and thought by some to have influenced the Welsh Labour Party politician Aneurin Bevan (1897-1960) in his views on the structure of the National Health Service in the UK was The Citadel, published in 1937 by A. J. Cronin, a Scottish-born doctor-turned-novelist. It was an instant best-seller and in 1938 was made into the MGM film Citadel, starring Robert Donat and Rosalind Russell. The book follows the career of a newly qualified doctor, Andrew Manson, starting with his first job serving the coal-mining communities of the South Wales valleys as an inexperienced young doctor and ending with treating only wealthy private patients from his own practice in Central London. Apart from providing a commentary on medicine during the pre-Nils period, the book is notable because Manson is interested in pulmonary medicine. In the Welsh valleys he comes across miners with pneumoconiosis and tuberculosis. At the time coal dust was considered inert. Conducting research on the miners and later guinea pigs, he discovers the cause of the miners' lung disease, postulating that exposure to silica leads to tuberculosis. This is of course wrong: the author, Cronin, was unaware of pneumoconiosis. In the book Manson is expelled from his post in the Welsh valleys after his unlawful vivisection is discovered. In London he falls for the luxuries afforded by treating wealthy clients. He practises in the leading London Chest hospital but soon realizes that London is too foggy and polluted for TB patients. He

advocates the ideas of the sanatorium in the cleaner airs of the home counties. The book closes with Dr Manson facing the General Medical Council for trying to cure TB by assisting in the deliberate creation of pneumothorax. The idea behind the treatment being that the collapsed lung would recuperate while resting and unventilated. This was a fashionable but illegal idea at the time and was later proved not to work. The doctor is cleared in the end. Cronin went on to create the 1960s television series Dr Finlay's Casebook.

Modern fiction writers show a good knowledge of the mechanism of breathing and its relationship to emotion and behaviour. An example can be found in the first chapter of Broken Ground, published by Val McDermid in 2018. It opens in 1944 in Wester Ross, Scotland, where two men are digging pits. `The slaps of spades in dense peat was an unmistakable sound. They slipped in and out of rhythm; overlapping, separating, cascading, then coming together again, much like the men's heavy breathing: Later, one rests with his `breath tight in his chest: After a night of hard toil, their task is complete, and the chapter ends with the line: `Even as he spoke, the Mycobacterium tuberculosis organisms were creeping through his lungs, destroying tissues, carving out holes, blocking airways'. The character dies of TB, setting the scene for the story firmly set in the twenty-first century.

In Jo Nesbo's detective novel Knife (2019), the leading character, Harry Hole, is about to hear from the police unwelcome news about his partner Rakel: `Harry held his breath. He had read that it was possible to hold your breath for so long that you died. And that you don't die from too little oxygen, but from too much carbon dioxide'. When told that they have found her, he wanted to ask why and thought to himself `But to do that [I] would have to breathe: He breathed. And that means "what?", he asked. "She's dead, Harry"

Perfume: The Story of a Murderer (1985) is a tour de force of the olfactory sense, breathing and the craft of perfumery, written by the German author Patrick Süskind. The main character is Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, born in 1738, abandoned by his mother at birth, brought up by the Church and fostered by wet-nurses and childminders. Born without an odour, he soon realizes in his childhood that he has a superhuman sense of smell and can identify not only very subtle smells but the components of the odour. The book begins in Paris, a crowded and very smelly city. He starts life working for a tanner, a very smelly occupation. He secures an apprenticeship with an aged perfumer who has fallen on hard times, lacking a new perfume with which to entice his rich clients. With some scepticism from his employer, Grenouille is given access to the perfumer's collection of chemicals and scents and in a few days produces dozens of new perfumes which are so popular that they are soon produced on an industrial scale and sold all over Europe, making the perfumer a wealthy man.

The book illustrates how we take our sense of smell for granted and how we are surrounded by many familiar smells. Breathing and olfaction sets our emotions and behaviours: the invigorating smell of freshly brewed coffee in the morning, the smell of freshly baked bread stimulating hunger. Breathing the fragrance of fresh mown grass brings back memories of a summer long past. We recognize the scent of our loved ones, of babies and pets. These scents are all different, but we learn to enjoy or detest them.

After leaving Paris, Grenouille gains his credentials as a perfumer and sets off to Grasse in southern France to learn more about creating scents from flowers and plants. On his journey he invents a series of personal perfumes, which he cynically uses to influences people's opinion of him. One allows him to be the centre of attention, with everyone treating him like a celebrity; another keeps everyone away.

They are scents that alter people's behaviour without the beholder noticing; something all modern scent manufacturers wish to do nowadays. Many of today's perfume- or fragrance-makers employ adverts to indicate that your attractiveness will be increased if you wear their fragrance.

On his journey south, at Montpellier, Grenouille meets the Marquis de la Taillade-Espinasse, a man influenced by the Enlightenment who has developed the idea that the earth generates a toxic gas which he calls Fluidium letale Taillade. Grenouille, who is looking rough after living in a cave for seven years, provides the marquis with a perfect example of the ill-effects of this terrestrial gas. His reasoning is that all living things move upwards away from the ground to avoid this gas. To test this theory, the marquis has invented a vital ventilation machine in his cellar, inside which Grenouille is sealed. The breathing machine is constantly ventilated with air drawn from a flue extended out of the house roof. Through an air-lock he is fed food from 'earth-removed' regions such as dove bouillon, lark pie and fruit picked from trees. The total recovery of Grenouille following this treatment proves to the marquis that his theory was correct. With this in mind the marquis departs on an expedition to the Pic du Canigou, in the French Pyrenees, which can be snow-capped for most of the year. The Marquis believes that living at altitude will make him superhuman by being free from the evil Fludium latale, the cause of all illness. The marquis is last seen ascending the mountain. Pic du Canigou was also visited by Sir Humphry Davy in January 1814, who was so impressed by its natural form and light that it inspired him to sketch the mountain and write a poem, 'The Canigou', which alludes to the geological forces of nature.

The portrayal of breathing is significant in some films. One of the most famous film characters known for their breathing is Darth Vader from the Star Wars films. In his youth, in his former life as Anakin Skywalker, Vader is severely burned, after which he can only breath through a full-face mask (rather like a motorcycle helmet). The mask gives his slow, steady breathing a very distinctive mechanical and sinister sound. Mask breathing also features in the psychological thriller Blue Velvet (1986). Here the character Frank Booth, played by Dennis Hopper, carries two cylinders of gas, which he breathes through a mask. These allow him to change his personality, swapping between 'Daddy' and 'Baby: The original idea was that the gas was helium, and when breathed it would raise the adult voice so that the character would sound like a child. In the end the gas is more 'pharmacological' than this and may act more like amyl nitrite.

Breathing is a common motif in films, not overtly, but in a subtle way, and is common in certain genres such as horror, melodrama and pornography. Here screaming, panting and hyperventilation are used to impart mood and promote the impact of the drama. Studies have shown that in general the emphasis of breathing on-screen is off-putting for the audience and is best left under the radar of perception and cognition. Thus the sound of breathing or lack of it is a conscious omission from many films and TV programmes. As one researcher states, `no one is ever just breathing:

While smoking is often depicted in films, there are few feature films that focus on respiratory disease. A recent example is the film Breathe (2017), a biographical drama about Robin Cavendish, who while living in Kenya in 1958 caught polio at the age of 28, having just married. He became paralysed from the neck down and could only breathe with a bedside respirator. After returning to the UK he was bedridden and given only a few months to live. After the birth of his son raised his spirits, he set about improving his quality of life by improving his bedside ventilator. The film illustrates his long struggle to convince his doctors and the medical profession that his improved ventilator, when incorporated into a wheelchair, is a great advance over the iron lung then used by many doctors to keep paralysed polio patients alive. His

ventilator was so mobile that it allowed him to travel abroad and live a fuller life. It is an inspiring story with a tragic ending, as eventually the many years of mechanical ventilation fatally destroyed his lungs. He died at the age of 64, one of the longest surviving responauts, as they are called.

The film Apollo 13 (1995) tells the true story of the survival of the astronauts of the NASA mission in 1970. Tragedy struck two days in as an oxygen tank exploded in the service module. Fortunately, this was not the only supply of oxygen, but the mission had to be abandoned and the astronauts returned to Earth by using a slingshot circumnavigation of the moon to propel the crew back to Earth just before their oxygen ran out and the carbon dioxide levels in the cabin became toxic. The astronauts all returned safely to breathe another day. Last Breath (2019), a remarkable film in documentary style, details the true story of a deep-sea diver who while repairing an oil installation on the bottom of the North Sea is suddenly left without an oxygen supply. On the surface the support ship loses its position over the divers owing to a stormy sea, and the umbilical cord connected to the diver via a diving bell lowered from the ship and providing him with heat, air and power becomes tangled around an underwater installation and snaps. The diver is left with a small rescue tank carried for such emergencies that only contains 5 minutes of air. With the ship moving, the refuge of the diving bell also moves away, leaving the diver alone on the bottom of the North Sea. The sea is so rough that the crew struggle to return the ship to its original position, eventually taking around 3o minutes. When the ship's main cameras refocus on the diver, he is lying motionless on top of the structure. His diving buddy, who had made it safely back to the diving bell before the ship had lost position, was tasked with recovering the body and bringing it back to the diving bell. Once inside the diving bell, the recovered diver is given mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, and to everyone's surprise he instantly comes back to life. After a few months, the diver recovered completely. It is thought that he survived so long without oxygen as his body was cooled and supersaturated with oxygen: he had spent a long time in a hyperbaric chamber before the dive.

The film The Aeronauts (2019) is a biographical adventure film about two balloonists, a scientist and a professional balloonist (based on Sophie Blanchard, the wife of the balloonist Jean-Pierre Blanchard) in the 1800s who attempt to explore the upper atmosphere, with disastrous consequences.

The English Language is rich with phrases involving the act of breathing, both mechanically and sensually. Literature has used this rich source to express and emphasize the drama and pathos of many works, from ancient times, through Shakespeare, to modern times. It is through the depiction of disaster, disease and adversity that we are told the consequences of not being able to breathe. In literature the boundary between life and death is often signified by the presence or absence of breathing and it is in the final chapter that we explore how we make one final great gesture before we pass away: our last breath. <>

THE LIFE OF BREATH IN LITERATURE, CULTURE AND MEDICINE: CLASSICAL TO CONTEMPORARY edited by David Fuller, Corinne Saunders, Jane Macnaughton [Palgrave Macmilian, 9783030744427]

This open access book studies breath and breathing in literature and culture and provides crucial insights into the history of medicine, health and the emotions, the foundations of beliefs concerning body, spirit and world, the connections between breath and creativity and the phenomenology of breath and breathlessness. Contributions span the classical, medieval, early modern, Romantic, Victorian, modern and contemporary periods, drawing on medical writings, philosophy, theology and the visual arts as well as on literary, historical and cultural studies. The collection illustrates the complex significance and symbolic power of breath and breathlessness across time: breath is written deeply into ideas of nature, spirituality, emotion, creativity and being, and is inextricable from notions of consciousness, spirit, inspiration, voice, feeling, freedom and movement. The volume also demonstrates the long-standing connections between breath and place, politics and aesthetics, illuminating both contrasts and continuities.

Review

"The Life of Breath was born of a brilliantly varied years-long project in the critical medical humanities which brought together artists, humanists, medical practitioners, scientists and patients to study and perform arts and acts of breathing. This essay collection breaks new ground in establishing the foundational role of respiration in the (inter)subjective workings of desire, the interdependence of interior and exterior environments and 'conspiration'—the often-hidden commonality of breathing. Because we all breathe the same air, 'breath, intimately connected with life, connecting mind and body, opens onto profound—and timeless— ethical questions,' write the editors. Those questions are richly and magisterially addressed in essays that trace histories of living and thinking the breath, and articulate what the editors call 'the potential of the arts to help people live well with breathlessness.' This volume is required reading for anyone, in any discipline, devoted to any of the many arts of living, who recognizes the urgency, today, of returning 'to every living thing—human, plant, and animal—the space and conditions required for its breathing.'" —Aranye Fradenburg Joy, Psychoanalyst and Professor Emerita, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA

"Across centuries and countries, we have one thing in common: we all breathe. But after reading this volume it is not possible to draw breath without a nuanced and awed awareness of what that breath means, how attitudes to it differ and what it means to lack or be denied breath. Ranging from Homeric epic to the twenty-first-century clinic, this mesmerizing collection investigates highly diverse topics, but even more impressive than the variety of essays is their seamless intersection. The ways in which they relate to each other is testament to the ways in which breath and breathing affect every aspect of our body, our environment and our politics. It is easy to say that this is an 'inspiring' collection but such a pun does disservice to the complexity of the topics addressed. Just as it is rare to find a collection of essays of this span so integrated, it is unusual to find a medical humanities topic that is so symbiotically valuable to both medical and humanities communities. From start to finish, this book is a remarkable achievement." —Laurie Maguire, Professor of English Language and Literature, University of Oxford, UK

"An inspired collection of essays on the life, origin, meaning and metaphor of breath over the centuries in the sacred and secular worlds, a wonderful fruition of an interdisciplinary Wellcome research project The Life of Breath. It is timely, as breathing and breathlessness have been brought to the centre of the world's attention in the last year by the devastation and human suffering wrought by the coronavirus. It is rich, bringing to readers' attention the many interpretations of the significance of breath and breathing over millennia. It is definitive—there is no other volume that brings together such depth and breadth on this subject." —Sara Booth, Lecturer, University of Cambridge, and Honorary Consultant, Cambridge University Hospitals, UK

"The Life of Breath is a truly breathtaking panorama of the newly-formed respiratory paradigm of our time, taking in a vast range of philosophical, psychological, religious, medical, artistic and political articulations of the quality of air. Its own rhythm orchestrates the anxious or oppressive constrictions of breath with the many positive ways of producing, unloosing and augmenting it. The volume is truly voluminous in every sense—in the reach of its themes, occasions and instances, and the giant span of its historical focus, from the classical world to the contemporary agonistics of respiration. Breath gives life, but this unbated volume reciprocally imparts new kinds of life to breath." —Steven Connor, Director of CRASSH, Grace 2 Professor of English, University of Cambridge, and Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge, UK

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Contexts and Approaches: 'The Age Of The Breath'?

'The Age of the Breath': in the view of the philosopher Luce Irigaray, this characterises the late twentieth century and beyond. Irigaray's idea is a variation of the threefold scheme of Christian history of the medieval theologian Joachim da Fiore: the Age of the Father (the Old Testament, the Law), the Age of the Son (the New Testament, freedom from the Law), and the Age of the Spirit (a utopian age of universal love). Like the Age of the Spirit, Irigaray's 'Age of the Breath' potentially transcends major limitations of history, specifically on issues of gender and all that follows from differently conceived relations between men and women. Breath is central to this in her reworking of a major philosophical predecessor, Martin Heidegger.2 Heidegger is admired: he thought radically, working not only from what had already been thought but attempting to see nakedly from the bases of thinking. Irigaray's critique is not of Heidegger himself, but of Heidegger as representative of even the best in the tradition of Western philosophy, limited by its unrecognised assumption of the thinking subject as male. For Heidegger the primary element is earth—solid, and for Irigaray, masculine. For Irigaray more primary, more utterly essential to Being, is the element of air—fluid, and feminine; the basis of life, the substance of the breath.

One need not accept Irigaray's arguments about gender to see the interest of her claim and the fecundity of its ramifications. Breathing can be recognised (often elicited in retrospective analysis) as a major issue in many areas of twentieth- and twenty-first-century thinking: in philosophy, in feminism, in the arts, in psychoanalysis, in education, in religion, in politics, and in cultural geography, especially ecological issues including the contemporary global problems of air pollution and climate change. As with other conditions of life so axiomatic that attention has often scarcely been paid to them, recent writing in many areas, by bringing breath more into view, opens up a wide variety of new perspectives. In the current context of a global breathing-illness pandemic, COVID-19, with all that has exposed about global health issues and national and international relations, and with myriad implications as yet far from fully recognised, it can hardly be contested that Irigaray's characterisation of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has been prescient.

Many areas of thought elicit a related sense of the period, sometimes from quite different starting points. In philosophy, Peter Sloterdijk's Terror from the Air argues that the use of poison gas in World War I was a fundamental reorientation of warfare, attacking not the enemy's body but the enemy's breathing environment. Extended in other terrors of atmospheric violence, from the gas chambers of the extermination camps of World War II to recent attempts to control the weather for military purposes, this has brought the relation of human beings to the atmosphere on which life depends, formerly taken for granted, newly into consciousness. It has also generated a new counter-awareness of the need for atmospheric hygiene and techniques for monitoring and maintaining air quality. The issue of poison gas is only one element in Sloterdijk's argument. He presents the twentieth century as an 'age of explication', meaning that many aspects of existence formerly tacit are brought to more conscious notice and newly explored. As with Irigaray, a central focus is air and breathing, though brought to attention by a quite different route.

Sloterdijk's extension of his argument to include the arts, with Surrealism seen as initiating modes of art as 'atmo-terrorism' designed to attack audiences, has proved less persuasive than his central thesis, and can be detached from his fundamental claim about an age of explication. With the arts Sloterdijk's thesis might more convincingly be extended to the theatre, to the twentieth century's revival of theatrical traditions less verbal, less cerebral, most obviously in the misleadingly named 'theatre of cruelty' of Antonin Artaud, in which the issue is not cruelty in any ordinary sense but the visceral nature of fully theatrical experience. It is a mode of theatre in which text is recognised as only one element, with movement, dance, costume, setting, lighting, but above all the body of the actor in all the viscerality of its emotional experience: the blood, the breath. The total art work with its address to the whole mind–body; but activated not with the familiar defamiliarisation of Brecht, addressing the detached intellect, but with what is permanently unfamiliar to the composed social being: myth, by which, 'using breathing's hieroglyphics', the audience is assaulted, disconcerted, disturbed, as by anxiety, fear, the erotic. Artaud's ideal is more truly an aesthetic 'atmo-terrorism' than Sloterdijk's Surrealism.

Sloterdijk's 'age of explication' thesis might more comprehensively be extended not to what the arts are in the twentieth century and beyond but how they are understood, with explication—an ever-increasing sophistication of consciously-applied critical techniques—replacing education through practice (the teaching of rhetoric, drawing, musical performance), with its concomitant address to cultivated intuition. Nevertheless, twentieth-century art has thematised breathing, most famously in Samuel Beckett's textless playlet-cum-happening, Breath, written originally (with Beckettian humour) for Kenneth Tynan's

erotic review, Oh! Calcutta! (1969). A recent study has shown the resonance of Beckett's birth-cry to death-rattle encapsulation in a range of creative work before and after Beckett, including ways in which breathing can be presented in new modes of visual art (often with associated new problems for art criticism about the very nature of art), from happenings, performance-art, and anti-art to conceptual art and work in more traditional modes.

Breathing can also be seen as foregrounded in relation to Lacanian psychoanalysis, drawing on Lacan's seminars on anxiety of 1962–1963. The fundamental idea of this series is that the object of anxiety is not known: anxiety is fear without focus. Lacan calls the hidden provocation 'object (petit) a' (autre/other). While the syndrome comes into being through post-Freudian Lacanian norms (primary deprivations of desire) which to the non-believer may sound unpersuasive if not fantastical, the syndrome itself—fear without focus, dependent on desire concealed by displacement—may be recognised outside specifically Lacanian frameworks of origin. Given the obvious relation of anxiety to breathing (constricted breathing, suffocation, as symptom or effect) it is surprising that Lacan himself has so little to say about breath—little more than a brief serio-comic episode on the conception of Christ by the entry of the breath of the Holy Spirit (spiritus of the Sanctus Spiritus) through the Virgin's ear, in which he relates the (divine) mouth to other orifices and the (divine) breath to other excretions.

In Staying Alive Aranye Fradenburg includes an extended discussion of Lacan on anxiety which suggests what he might have said about breath.11 A passionately-written anti-utilitarian defence of the arts as fundamental to the possibilities of humane living, the book is also a deeply well-informed critique of the contemporary university as semi-automated learning-factory, in which the aim is not knowledge and understanding but certification as a passport to employment. Exchange between intellectuals (albeit a great deal of what passes for this in universities is a parody of the real thing), real exchange, models a humane community. This is reflected in the organisation of Staying Alive, in which Fradenburg is in dialogue with an interactive counterpoint of related views ('fugues'). It is a mode that conveys a human presence relating felt thought to the subtle, mysterious, even bizarre—those aspects of human experience to which the arts are addressed, which are antithetical to the antiseptic of institutional bureaucracy.

In the chapter specifically concerned with Lacan and breathing, Fradenburg takes the highly interpretable objet a to be a 'conceptualization of the embodied mind's experience of change' (Staying Alive, 164), an index therefore of the crucial presence of the body in intellectual activities, which are often (wrongly) understood as not shaped by their basis in corporeality. As the primary experience of change, respiration, suddenly independent at the trauma of birth (thrust from a protected to a vulnerable condition—to anxiety), helps us to think, she argues, about the psychosomatic nature of rhetorical structures—the not unusual modern argument that writing is from the body, which when (as here) performed as well as affirmed requires an active and sympathetic reader. In Ruth Evans' response objet a, as reconceived by Fradenburg, becomes breath as a catalyst that sets off love: respiratory shapes in literary language (Frank O'Hara, Margery Kempe) brought off the page by real interaction with a responsive reader; breath heard and seen in the work of performanceartists (the duo, Smith/Stewart). Evans exemplifies the claim made from various perspectives by the whole book: the arts (and not the arts alone, but the arts understood in relation to contemporary conceptions of the life sciences as comparably interpretable), the arts are as necessary to living as breath.

One aspect of the fundamental issue Fradenburg addresses—'staying alive' in an academic context—involves escaping norms of academic 'professionalism' which encourage people to act as semi-automata, minds without bodies, not as human beings emotionally as well as intellectually responsive to interpretive complexity. In the liberal arts some traditions of criticism connecting literary study with life values and experience continue to recognise interactions between culturally situated and individually idiosyncratic readers from whom art requires active, engaged responses. In academic contexts, however, these have often been displaced by a pseudo-science of scholarship designed to demonstrate supposed objective presence (in a text, in a context) analogous, as Fradenburg argues, to a superseded notion of 'hard' science. Fradenburg aims to reverse this dehumanising process, which funding difficulties created by the COVID-19 pandemic have now newly intensified in universities worldwide. As institutions seek to fund their activities by moves to online learning that do away with people meeting together physically, with all the interpretable signals of actual life such meetings entail, and replace these with virtual meetings significantly evacuated of human presence—the living, breathing, emotionally-signalling body—the breathing illness potentially contributes several turns of the screw to intellectual-emotional suffocation. But, like properly holistic medicine, teaching in the Arts and Humanities must engage, Fradenburg argues, with the embodied mind.

Philosophy, feminism, the arts, psychoanalysis, structures and practices of higher education: and the editors of a recent collection on air and breathing offer re-orientations in yet more directions. Like Irigaray, they begin from a critique of Western philosophy (tendentiously exemplified by a reading of a famous passage of Descartes), though they also acknowledge predecessors in Western tradition: apart from Irigaray, Gaston Bachelard, Elias Canetti, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas. The collection draws positively too on the place of disciplines of breathing in ancient Chinese philosophy (the Daoist philosopher traditionally known as Chuang Tzu, now Zhuang Zhou), modern Sufism (the Sufi master, Inayat Khan), and (again like Irigaray) in Eastern religious and spiritual traditions. From this they propose a 'respiratory philosophy' based in more conscious attention to and practice of breathing. If their critique of the Western philosophical tradition seems less substantial than Irigaray's this is in part because it is simpler. Whereas Irigaray grapples—tentatively, speculatively—with a profound problem of ontological consciousness in Heidegger, they convict Descartes of straightforward error: his supposed new beginning ignores his breathing. Descartes, one imagines, would have thought this critique readily answered: the observation is correct, but has no bearing on his reorientation of thinking. Descartes' writings began a new phase of Western philosophy not because he, and the most powerful minds of succeeding centuries, failed to identify this supposed omission, but because of his work's genuine and powerful originality. (Irigaray's new beginning is quite different: fundamentally she agrees with Heidegger about the aims and methods of philosophy, but plausibly— like Heidegger himself—looks to a new place for a first ground. The questioning, tentative and often syntactically inconclusive openness of her critique also recognises—as did Heidegger—that a new mode of thinking requires new modes of expression.)

That the critique of Descartes is tendentious does not, however, impugn the renewed and new attention to breathing drawn from it, the validity of which can be best considered in terms of its results. Much of the new reading in the collection is concerned with issues and figures in Western culture examined afresh in relation to theories and practices that variously foreground breathing from a range of Eastern traditions. The stress on practice is recurrent. The new philosophy is a new way of being: not on our lips only but in our lives also. This is exemplified by a discussion of Derrida's exploration of breath in Artaud, background to a new way of performing philosophy: in their different spheres both

Artaud and Derrida match new ideas with new modes of expression. Similarly with a phenomenology of breathing illnesses: it requires a new imagination of mind–body integration; a holistic understanding of the subjective experience of illness complementary to objective clinical analysis, treating the whole person in his or her context.

The collection as a whole, like Sloterdijk's Terror from the Air, and much other recent writing on breath, breathing and breathlessness, recognises ramifications that are international and urgently relevant, as indexed by the relatively new focus of the World Health Organisation on air quality (http://www.who.int/airpollution/en/). As well as involving elements of individual choice—the choice to evolve and exercise a 'respiratory philosophy'—there is a larger sense in which 'atmospheres of breathing' affect health issues with the widest social ramifications. Choice can be exercised about these only by international political co-operation, and through negotiations in which the principal sufferers are often those with least political and economic power. Nevertheless, understanding that air pollution is a major cause of poor health—not only of breathing illnesses directly but also of heart disease and strokes—underlies efforts to clean up the polluted cities of developing industrial economies. Along with its consequences in climate change it also underlies the drive for clean air legislation in many parts of the world, with its potentially radical consequences for how we all live.

A comparably international perspective on the twentieth century and beyond as an 'age of the breath' in religion has two prominent and very different strands: Christian Pentecostalism, emphasising direct personal experience of God through baptism by the descent of the Holy Spirit, the breath of God; and the discovery in the West of ancient practices derived from the Sutras of Patañjali (ca. 400 BCE to 400 CE), texts connected with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, concerned with disciplines of breathing in relation to spiritual awareness. In the second of these areas Irigaray is again a significant figure, though interest in the Sútras in European culture dates from earlier, one of the most prominent early translators, Charles Johnston, being a member of the late nineteenth-century literary and theosophical circle which included the poet W. B. Yeats.

Irigaray's Between East and West presents the issue of learning new practices of breathing as fundamental to a positive redirection of consciousness.16 Only through this new practice, bringing into being a new relation of the mind to the body, Irigaray argues, is it possible to move beyond what she presents as the destructive elements of Western metaphysics and the spiritually empty (male) struggle to dominate nature: its aim is a new relation between the sexes, new possibilities of community, and the coexistence of diverse communities required by contemporary societies. Irigaray's argument has the strength of her training in Western intellectual traditions and their modes of critique complemented by profound reorientation through her own lived and evolved knowledge of Indian spiritual practices. She writes, that is, from a complementary basis of intellectual analysis and whole-person experience. While Irigaray's specific arguments about gender and community are her own, her fundamental approach is congruent with a general tendency in contemporary Western societies, more than ever conscious of religious diversity and the cultural bases of belief, to value religion less in terms of faith and doctrine and more in terms of spiritual knowledge and practice.

Pentecostalism is quite different—a version of an antithetical strand in contemporary religions, the return to renewed fundamentalisms, Christian, Muslim, and Hindu. The understanding of the Christian God as a triune figure, Father-Son-Spirit, means that breath, and the crucial multivalent terms—Hebrew ruach, Greek pneuma, Latin spiritus—have always been central to Christianity. Disciplines of breathing,

though more prominent in Eastern religions, have also been present in many periods of the history of Christian prayer—in the prayers of medieval mystics,19 in the practices of prayer proposed in the widely-distributed Spiritual Exercises (1541) of St Ignatius of Loyola, and in the methods recommended for saying the 'Jesus prayer' (sixth-century) from the quite different background of Eastern Orthodoxy. This became widely known in Western Christendom through the nineteenth-century compilation, The Way of the Pilgrim, which, after its translation in the 1930s, became one of the most widely-circulated books about Christian practices of prayer, conveying something of its background in an eighteenth-century collection of fourth- to fifteenth-century texts, the Philokalia, the most significant and authoritative compilation in Orthodoxy after the Bible. Here too psychosomatic techniques of prayer, based on a view of the body as 'an essential aspect of total personhood', emphasise the importance of disciplines of breathing.

Nevertheless, breathing disciplines are less evident in Christian practices of prayer and meditation than in those of Eastern religions. Even the visitation of the Holy Spirit, the breath of God, though important in the scriptural account of the accomplishment of Christ's mission of salvation (Resurrection, Ascension, Descent of the Spirit), became suddenly prominent in a new way in the early twentieth century. Now a worldwide church with an estimated 280 million adherents in Africa, India, the Americas, Europe, and Scandinavia, Pentecostalism takes its origin and much of its character from African American charismatics meeting in Los Angeles in 1906. Central to Pentecostal belief is baptism by the Holy Spirit, the breath of God, characteristic manifestations of which are the mutually-inspired in-and-out-breathings of congregational communities in whooping, shouting, laughing, singing, and speaking in tongues. It is a religion with political implications: unstructured forms of worship in which any member of a congregation can take the lead model nonhierarchical forms of society in the world beyond the church. One recent account of black Pentecostalism sees it as rejecting the whole of Western civilisation as fundamentally white supremacist and hetero-patriarchal, in its intellectual frameworks (philosophy, theology) as well as its social and political structures; its positive aim as to imagine 'otherwise' modalities and epistemologies, which connect the movement with whatever is broadly non-heteronormative and liberationist.

Stressing embodied thinking, this account, though ostensibly a radical rejection of Western traditions, can, nevertheless, be seen as congruent with other contemporary critiques of dualist mind–body modes of thought. How difficult it is to think embodied experience, however, is strikingly demonstrated by the account's contrast between an experiential narrative of breathing and emotion in episodes from two Pentecostal sermons, incorporating community responses, and a 'scientific' version of the relationship between breathing and emotion. The two approaches are so radically different that the language of the scientific account positively excludes the mode of what is to be conveyed in the Pentecostal experience. The associated critique of major European and Scandinavian theologians of Pneumatology and the Pentecostal-Charismatic (Jürgen Moltmann, Veli-Matti Kärkäinen)—that they exclude black Pentecostalism because they are unable to deal with the physicality of its breathing—may be weakened by overworked invocations of 'otherwise' possibilities; but the book certainly succeeds in avoiding the all too usual intellectual's embarrassment about emotion and in illustrating the difficulties of intellectualising about bodily experience. As with Irigaray on Heidegger, as with Fradenburg on Lacan, as with Derrida's interaction with Artaud, it indicates the need for new modes of intellectual performance to match and engage with more embodied conceptions of intellectual experience.

As with breathing and air pollution, the issue is not only how to think but also how to live. Pentecostal practices of worship imply practices of social organisation, particularly because in its early twentieth-century beginnings the co-breathing of brothers and sisters in sharing the spirit recognised no racial limitations: black and white members of a congregation prayed together, contravening then current segregation laws in the southern states of the USA. Pentecostalism was therefore an early example of political movements in which breathing becomes a metaphor for freedom, constriction of breathing a metaphor for oppression.

'I can't breathe': the last words of Eric Garner, an African American who died as the result of a prohibited chokehold applied during arrest by police in New York in July 2014. 'I can't breathe': also the last words of George Floyd, an African American who died as the result of violent arrest by police in Minneapolis in May 2020. As a result of the death of George Floyd there were demonstrations against police brutality, and more generally against racial oppression, in every state of the USA, and internationally. 'I can't breathe': the words originally associated with protests against the killing of Eric Garner, after the death of George Floyd became the slogan-symbol of an international movement against racism and racial oppression, Black Lives Matter.

Even before the death of George Floyd the wider political implications of the words had been developed by the political theorist, Achille Mbembe.26 'Caught in the stranglehold of injustice and inequality, much of humanity is threatened by a great chokehold' (§2): in terms that refer back to the death of Eric Garner but are also prescient of the events that gave rise to Black Lives Matter, Mbembe interprets the international inequalities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic as quasi-apocalyptic signs. Dehumanising digital communication; oppressive exploitation of postcolonial and developing communities; destructive exploitation of nature, all on an international scale: the political metaphors of oppression and the literal consequences of polluted environments point in the same direction. They are signs of the need to return to every living thing—human, plant, and animal—the space and conditions required for its breathing.

The Life of Breath Project
This book was inspired by the Life of Breath project (https://lifeofbreath. org/), a collaborative interdisciplinary study based at the Universities of Durham and Bristol, UK, and funded by the Wellcome Trust. The project has brought together researchers in arts and humanities, social science and clinical science, healthcare professionals, activists and also 'experts by experience'—those with personal experience of breathing-related diseases. It takes up the complex, mysterious yet crucial aspects of experience connected with breath and breathlessness. It speaks to the present as an 'age of breath'. At the same time it addresses the relative invisibility of breath within the medical community, the silences surrounding breathlessness and breathing illnesses, and the continuing need for language and ways of expressing breath and its lack—needs so powerfully evoked by thinkers and writers from the late twentieth century onwards.

The project was founded on the proposition that breathing and breathlessness can only be understood fully through the insights of cultural, historical, and phenomenological sources, and through incorporating perspectives derived from the arts and humanities into the clinical understanding of the physical symptom of breathlessness. By transforming understandings of breath and breathlessness the research aimed to reduce stigma and empower those who live with breathing illnesses. It also aimed to

offer new possibilities for therapy and the management of diseases for which breathlessness is the primary symptom.

The integration of cultural and clinical understandings has been central to the Life of Breath as a 'critical medical humanities' project. While medical humanities was for many years associated with broadening the education of clinicians, in particular medical students, it is now recognised that the humanities also have a key role to play in influencing the evidence base for clinical interventions that goes far beyond enhancing the empathy of practitioners. 'Critical' medical humanities is characterised by interdisciplinarity, ensuring that knowledge and methods from arts and humanities as well as social sciences are mobilised to understand and address health problems in ways that are integrated with clinical knowledge. The force of 'critical' asserts the value of the humanities in calling attention to the richness and importance of the contexts in which lives are lived and illness experienced. The arts serve both to reflect and to illuminate experience: they play crucial roles in offering language and other forms of expression to articulate experience and frameworks for understanding.

The Life of Breath project took up the approach and methods of critical medical humanities to explore breath and breathlessness from an interdisciplinary perspective alongside the insights of those who live with breathlessness. One aim was to use the outcomes of research drawing on medical humanities perspectives to inform and improve clinical practice, expanding the evidence base, addressing the lack of knowledge surrounding the embodied experience of breathing and breathlessness, and exploring how this connects with cultural attitudes and assumptions concerning breath. Research strands spanned varying cultural conceptions of breath, the medical history of breathlessness, the development of a phenomenology of breathing, including through work with trained and aware or 'interesting' breathers (diving, exercising, singing, playing a wind instrument, and even sleeping), and the experience of clinical breathlessness, with a focus on the ways in which the clinical encounter shapes notions of breathlessness and the problems of 'symptom discordance', the mismatch between objective measurements of lung function and patients' experience of breathlessness.

Though common to many diseases, chronic breathlessness is most often caused by the condition known as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), the third most common cause of death globally. In western countries, COPD is frequently caused by smoking, which is highly stigmatised. Physical constraints which are consequences of COPD are often compounded by shame, with the result that breathlessness sufferers hide away from society and may feel undeserving of help. Conditions causing chronic breathlessness are also typically associated with older age groups and with low socio-economic status. Partly because of this, research into respiratory diseases has had few energetic champions to redress the pressing need for improved funding and political action.

The COVID-19 pandemic has, however, brought breathlessness into sharp relief with peculiar global urgency. The Life of Breath project thus seems eerily prescient. In 2015 when the project began it was on the basis that breathing illnesses were relatively unnoticed and research into them was underfunded. In 2017 when the essays in this volume were commissioned, in 2018 when the contributors met together to hear and engage with each other's work, in 2019 when the essays were completed, that situation had not substantially changed. In 2020, as the editors worked on putting the volume finally together, and in 2021, as the volume goes to press, the pandemic has transformed the world. A virus that literally takes away our breath has caused many thousands of deaths—at the time of writing (late February 2021) in the UK over 120,000 people, in the USA over 510,000, and globally over 2,520,000,

with over 110 million cases confirmed worldwide. The illness has devastated the lives of individuals, families, and communities. Its as yet incalculable but evidently huge repercussions are a primary preoccupation of medical research, national governments, and international relations and organisations. Attempts to limit the spread of the virus have driven economies and businesses to ruin, and radically changed how we live, work, and relate to each other. Breath—and its lack—now seem more than ever to signal the ways in which human beings are united: every act of care taken not to spread the virus contributes to the common good, every act of carelessness to the common suffering. It has also shown how we are different. 'We're all in this together' has been a common statement of solidarity by politicians, but COVID-19 has emphasised that some are more vulnerable than others, in Europe and the USA especially Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities. COVID-19 has underlined the key role of social deprivation in making people more vulnerable to ill health and shown that the poorest communities are often among those that have suffered the most. While 'conspiration', 'breathing together', is a unifying theme of this book, so too is its converse: as the Life of Breath project has also shown, at the individual level obstructed or difficult breath is a profoundly isolating and lonely experience.

When the Life of Breath project group welcomed contributors to this book to Durham in 2018 to reflect on and initiate a critical medical humanities account of breath in Western culture, a world so engaged with breath was unthinkable. In our transformed world, it might seem that the rationale for this book is less urgent. If everyone is now talking about breath, can we still assert its absence in our culture and the need to raise awareness about it? In fact people are still not really talking about breath or breathlessness, except in a specific context. Major restrictions on the lives of people around the world may be in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, yet the focus of attention is not on the symptom of breathlessness itself but rather on ways of preventing the spread of the virus and ways in which lives have changed. Paradoxically, COVID-19 seems to be deflecting attention from the articulation of what breath means, and how we cope with its lack in less extreme, more everyday contexts. Breath and breathlessness are subjects with powerful contemporary resonance, literal and metaphorical. Nevertheless, we do not have adequate terms and conceptions with which to discuss the actual experience of illnesses of the breath.

This theme of invisibility was a key stimulus to the development of the Life of Breath project. A major aim was to fill a gap in critical writing and awareness of breath and breathlessness in Western thought because the lack of articulation of the meanings and significance of breath can adversely affect those who suffer from breathlessness. Research undertaken by the project emphasised the negative consequences of the difficulty of explaining or expressing breathlessness for those who suffer from it, for societal understanding of it, and for political investment in addressing the growing incidence of lung disease. Findings highlighted the lack of language to express breathlessness, its 'incommunicable' quality, its isolating effects on sufferers, who experience an absence of social connection and a 'shrinking lifeworld'. They revealed too the neglect and underfunding of the condition from a research perspective, with the result that the mortality rate across the last decade has remained static, by contrast to that for heart disease, which has reduced by 15%, reflecting significant material and scientific investment. Research benefited from bringing together analysis of lived experience from empirical field work with philosophical phenomenology and literary insights to show that breathlessness is invisible in a complex range of interconnected ways that need to be addressed not just by clinicians but by changes of attitude

in politics and society. This change of attitudes requires enhanced awareness and understanding of deep-rooted, culturally driven ideas and assumptions about breath.

The invisibility of breath, then, may be considered in relation to the self, society, and the sphere of policy, where evidence and political will are needed to make real changes for people whose breath is problematic. Individual experience of breathing, like many important bodily functions, occurs largely in the background and is not usually the object of conscious awareness. The philosopher-physician Drew Leder describes these functions as aspects of the 'recessive body', that is, the body outside our conscious influence. However, unlike other 'recessive' functions, such as the cardiac or gastrointestinal systems, we have some control over breathing. And breathing becomes more conscious as it is taxed by high levels of physical exertion. This provides some experience of breathlessness but, as Havi Carel emphasises, it does not replicate the existential fear of pathological breathlessness: 'it is not like running for a bus; it is not like hiking in high altitude; it's more what I imagine dying is like'. Carel, who herself suffers from chronic breathlessness, speaks of it as expressible only through comparisons such as 'like dying' or 'like drowning'. Breathlessness is 'an overwhelming sensation, to which we are deeply sensitive, but it is also behaviourally subtle, and so often invisible to others'.

Breath and breathlessness were brought into focus by the Life of Breath project through co-produced and engaged research activities, externally focussed communications, an exhibition and public events, and hence, the creation of a diverse and unprecedented community, including expertsby-experience, healthcare professionals, artists, and academics from a range of disciplines dedicated to exploring breathing and breathlessness in their own right. A research partnership with British Lung Foundation 'Breathe Easy' support groups for people with respiratory illness both informed the research and led directly into the development of creative writing, singing, and dance programmes which explored the potential of the arts to help people live well with breathlessness. These initiatives led in turn to the creation of online resources for breathlessness sufferers, made freely available on the project website and recommended in national health guidance. Further work addressed the culture of pulmonary rehabilitation, and the barriers presented by clinical settings and language, while collaboration with clinicians built on insights into the cultural formation of experience and the deep connections between breath and embodiment. This generated new hypotheses concerning the sensation of breathlessness, the cultural contexts that shape the experience of breathlessness, and the problem of symptom discordance.

Central to the project's aim of transforming public understanding of breath and breathlessness was the curation of the public exhibition Catch Your Breath. The first exhibition ever to focus on breathing and breathlessness, Catch Your Breath drew on the project's research both to raise public awareness and challenge individuals to think differently about a bodily activity often taken for granted. The exhibition (running from November 2018 to February 2020) was hosted by venues academic, medical, and public: Palace Green University Library, Durham, the Royal College of Physicians, London, Southmead Hospital, Bristol, and Bristol Central Library. A smaller version toured libraries and scientific and medical conferences. Each venue attracted different communities and was accompanied by public events ranging from lectures and poetry readings to interactive activities, writing workshops, and mindfulness breathing classes. The exhibition included literary and cultural artefacts from medieval manuscripts to contemporary glass sculptures and short films, and newly commissioned interactive displays exploring the embodied experience of breathing. Through the themes of visibility and invisibility, the exhibition traced historical and cultural connections between breath, body, mind, creativity, and spiritual

inspiration. Cultural, religious, and literary conceptions of breath and breathlessness from the classical period to the present were set alongside the medical history of breathlessness, its diagnosis and treatments, the histories of tobacco and air pollution, and the narratives of breathers themselves.

Another focal point of the project's exploration of invisibility was a 'Breath Lab', which brought together those with lived experience of breathlessness, their families and carers, clinicians, and policy-makers to explore the 'language of breathlessness'.43 Discussion revealed the difficulty of describing breathlessness. Whereas a wide range of words existed to convey the 'character' of pain, there were few words to characterize breathlessness. The language of breathlessness seemed to have been usurped by the clinical context: the three 'characters' employed by clinicians, 'air hunger', 'the work of breathing' and 'tightness', left those suffering from breathing illnesses dissatisfied and struggling to find more accurate ways to express their experience. Life of Breath researchers also found that similar linguistic issues render clinical questionnaire tools for assessing the sensory experience of breathlessness confusing and difficult for patients. Clinical language also inhibited those suffering from breathlessness from taking up opportunities for pulmonary rehabilitation. For the participants in the 'Breath Lab', the inability to find words to describe their experience was not only frustrating but also compounded the invisibility to others that defined their experience. Just as the ability to breathe easily facilitates ordinary social life, so breathing illness inhibits normal social interaction. Those with lived experience of breathlessness described stratagems they adopt to avoid being seen to struggle for breath in public, actions also prompted by the stigma they perceive as associated with their condition on account of its negative connections with smoking, age, and social deprivation.

Language and its lack, the Life of Breath project suggested, are at the heart of the problem of the invisibility of those experiencing breathlessness. The lack of language to express what breathing means, how it feels, and especially what it is like not to be able to breathe, renders understanding opaque for people with breathlessness and for those around them. The inadequacies of the abstract, detached language of the clinic removes agency from those who struggle to breathe and be in the world. Jean-Paul Sartre's characterisation of the nexus of language, body, and the Other captures such disengagement:

> Language by revealing to us abstractly the principal structures of our body-for-others ... impels us to place our alleged mission wholly in the hands of the Other. We resign ourselves to seeing ourselves through the Other's eyes; this means that we attempt to learn our being through the revelations of language. Thus there appears a whole system of verbal correspondence by which we cause our body to be designated for us as it is for the Other by utilizing these designations to denote our body as it is for us.

Those experiencing breathlessness found it frustrating and shaming, as well as inaccurate, that their experience was articulated only through clinical terms, or the real or imagined disparagement of others. They were also seeking ways of articulating this experience that made sense to themselves. For one support group, working with a writer-in-residence at the Catch Your Breath exhibition to produce poetry expressing their experience was revelatory. They described their 'gratitude' at being offered, through the skill of the writer, metaphors that enabled them to find ways of explaining what breathlessness meant for them:

> We have the thoughts.
> Mostly hidden.
> But words?

> Denied, or rather not asked for
> Over the millennia.
> (From 'A Chance', by Jill Gladstone).

This book explores the language and conceptions that have been used in relation to breath and breathlessness 'over the millennia' from the classical period to the present, and the richness and power of ideas associated with them. It is one step in the larger project of rendering the invisible visible.

The Life of Breath: From Classical to Contemporary

The imaginative worlds of literature from the classical period onwards demonstrate the complex significance and symbolic power of breath and breathlessness across time, illustrating both cultural shifts and continuities. Breath and breathlessness are flashpoints in a range of discourses, complex terms linked to ideas of health and life and to their converse, illness and death. Breath can signal the most fundamental aspects of human existence—and the most ephemeral.

While breath and breathing have never been such resonant and urgent subjects as they are now, they have not been the subject of systematic cultural or literary study. Studies have focused on particular topics related to breathing—allergy, asthma, the air and pollution, smoking. This collection, the first of its kind, adopts a wider perspective, tracing the origins and development of ideas concerning breath and breathlessness to explore their imaginative power and to demonstrate how literary texts and the cultural discourses that shape them reflect and reflect upon current ideas, understandings, assumptions, and preconceptions.

The collection was developed through an invited international conference, which brought together contributors to tease out cultural attitudes and understandings, and to probe the imaginative and affective power of ideas connected with breath across time. Discussion and dialogue were informed by the clinical, sociological, and empirical work of other members of the project team as well as by researchers across a range of literary and cultural disciplines. The volume also draws on The Arts of Breath, a series of public workshop-performances, lectures, and interviews exploring breath in creative arts contexts and forms—poetry, fiction, drama, solo and choral singing, and dance. These events laid the foundations for a volume reflecting the full trajectory of historical ideas of breath and breathlessness, their cultural and creative significance, and their resonances for contemporary understanding and experience.

The book is structured chronologically to present a wide range of cultural reflections within a framework of historical development—classical, medieval, and early modern to the present, with the period from the late sixteenth century to the present represented by some exemplification from each half-century, and over a range of literary, scientific, and cultural discourses, because, with the development of science in every area (but particularly with the chemistry of air, the physiology of breathing, and the more general comprehension and treatment of illness and disease), understandings shifted more quickly in this period. Within this structure contributors trace connections, contrasts, and continuities, with a view also to speaking to current experience of breathing, normal and pathological. The history of breath is not linear: rather, it circles and loops around essential, recurring, often difficult concepts. It is written deeply into religious belief—and into concepts of nature and being. It is inextricable from notions of spirit, inspiration, voice, and movement. It underpins the performing arts— poetry, music, drama, and dance. Its lack—breathlessness—can signal profound emotion but also illness and death. Breath may liberate, but also poison, infect, and contaminate. Breath is longed for, its purity

guarded, and its loss feared: synonymous with life and being, it connects body, psyche, and world. While the volume focuses on writing in English and the western cultural discourses that underpin it, individual essays look beyond—to earlier and other literatures and discourses, to other nations and continents, to different epochs and modes of thinking.

The presence and meanings of breath are elicited in a variety of ways. One need not be a Nietzschean to accept in some form the famous proposition of Nietzsche that 'Against positivism, which goes no further than the phenomenon and says, "there are only facts", I would say: no, facts are precisely what there are not, only interpretations. We can establish no fact "in itself"'. The issue with critical medical humanities is where and how to look for interpretations. Its typical terms for method have anti-methodological implications of unpredictability: entanglement, entwining, imbrication (where the usage has left behind the word's origin in geometric patterning [tiling] to imply interactions of a more free-wheeling kind). Its 'weaving' voices may be on different wavelengths. Its 'dialogic' voices may be speaking at a tangent to each other. In its 'polyphony' dissonances can be passing or unresolved (Palestrina or Ligeti). In its 'heteroglossia' multiple languages may understand each other and communicate, or speak in terms that profoundly complicate if not defy translation and harmonisation (Pentecost or Babel). Binary oppositions are more than superseded: they are extended to a dissolution of boundaries: interdisciplinary becomes 'post-disciplinary'. The interaction of a range of disciplines—arts and humanities and social science with biomedical science and medical practice—often involves experiments in interpretation, taking the view that nothing has meaning in and of itself but only within some context or mode of understanding which more or less inflects its meanings. While in some modern philosophies of science this is seen as apparent within science itself (Michael Polanyi, Paul Feyerabend, Thomas Kuhn), the kinds of contextual and cultural interpretations offered by arts and humanities and social science disciplines are characteristically of a different kind. In this collection they are seen, for example, in complexities of history and usage of multivalent words, the complexities of how contexts that inflect interpretation may be assumed, or implied, or change over time, and how meanings arise not only from the reconstructed past and the actual present but also from the accreted history of meanings. As the Romantic-period polymath Friedrich Schlegel puts it, 'every great work, of whatever kind, knows more than it says': in new contexts works may acquire new meanings, ideas may acquire new applications that were not visible to their author, originator, or earlier interpretive communities.

The volume takes as its starting point classical literature, philosophy, and medical theory from Homer to Galen, which lay the foundations for much later thought, through the Middle Ages and beyond. Anthony Long demonstrates the long roots of the connections between breath, mind, and body and the startling contemporaneity of ancient ideas concerning breath. Breath and breathing are essential concepts in Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy: breath is a fundamental principle of both individual life and the universe. Stoic philosophers took up the notion of pneuma or vital spirit, air and fire, the active generative principle of the universe, which was connected by Galen with the individual physiology of breath and breathing. Late classical philosophy also developed radical ideas of 'conspiration', the subject of Phillip Horky's essay. This notion of the reciprocal breathing of human and divine came to be central not only to classical cosmology but also to early Christian thought. As Thomas Hunt shows, Christian theology drew on both classical concepts of pneuma, the life-giving spirit, and Hebrew notions of ruach, the breath of God, to develop and debate conceptions of the Holy Spirit—conceptions that had political resonances, relating to ideas of order and mastery. From the start, concepts of air, life, spirit, psyche and soul, external and internal pneuma, interweave: blurring into each other, they provoke dynamic

responses embedded in changing notions of vitality, consciousness, and power, while the idea of co-breathing resonates with later notions of the interdependence of human and natural worlds.

Medieval medical theory was deeply rooted in classical thought and its Arabic reworkings, invoking the notion of the vital spirits to explain the physiology of the emotions and the intersection of thought with feeling. Corinne Saunders explores how the interrelated ideas of breath and vital spirits underpin and shape representations of affective experience in medieval imaginative texts, from popular romances to the medically alert fictions of Chaucer, arguing that representations that may seem to modern readers purely conventional are rooted in the medieval physiology of the breath. A similar understanding of the apparently conventional as physiological can also be seen, she argues, in devotional and visionary works, in which the concepts of vital spirits and the Holy Spirit intersect, giving breath a peculiar force. The Book of Margery Kempe offers an extended narrative of these intersections of physical and spiritual in Kempe's deeply embodied piety. Medieval physiological models provide a context and framework for Kempe's experience allowing the reader to place it not simply as performative or conventional but as rooted in learned ideas that were passing into general currency. The play of breath in tears, sighs, and swoons writes feeling on the body, creating a living tapestry of emotional experience from romantic love to mystical vision. Denis Renevey explores the possibility that medieval mystical experience was in part rooted in 'volitional breathing' resulting in changes to consciousness, drawing, in the absence of evidence in mystical texts themselves, on the insights of professional brass-players, eastern spiritual practices and the breathing techniques of 'new age' therapies. The repetition of prayers such as that on the Name of Jesus, he suggests, may have allowed for the conscious manipulation of the deep connection between breath and consciousness. At the same time, as Carole Rawcliffe shows, consciousness of the dangers of breathing infected air manifested itself in actions designed to improve air quality in medieval cities in a period repeatedly threatened by plague and epidemic. Being in the world depended not only on the movement of the bodily spirits but also on the purity of the air breathed in to form the vital spirits and influence the health of mind and body.

In turning from the medieval period to the early modern, the collection explores how, over the following centuries, these notions endured but took on new forms as understandings of physiology, disease, and the spiritual changed and developed. Katherine Craik and Stephen Chapman offer a novel perspective on present-day breathlessness by considering this within the unfamiliar context of early modern literature and culture. They argue that cross-disciplinary study can work not only by applying disciplines of interpretation from the arts and humanities to medicine but also in the other direction: medical science can shed new light on Shakespeare. As they demonstrate in relation to King Lear, early modern writing took up traditions of thought in which there was no simple separation between physiology and metaphysics. Breath—and its loss—define individual identity, but also human relationality, presaging the ways that breathlessness shapes not only its sufferers but also those who 'con-spire' with and care for them. Breath, fundamental to life, connecting mind and body, opens onto profound—and timeless—ethical questions. The early modern period retained the connection of breath with devotion and spiritual inspiration, enacted and sought after in highly physical affective encounters; it also extended physiological and psychological theories concerning the emotions. Naya Tsentourou revisits treatises on the passions to elucidate the place of breath within the early modern history of emotion, with a particular focus on the sigh, a response signalling overwhelming emotion that deregulates and disrupts. Science and art, thinking and feeling, form and meaning, intersect and clash as writers engage with the disruptive emotional valences of breath. Intertextual references to emotional breathing blur the

distinction between patient and physician: bodies and texts become spaces where the detached witness conspires with the lovesick subject, and in turn, with the reader. Early Christian debate concerning the relations between breath, soul, and the Holy Spirit was reanimated in the political context of questions of the divine right of kings, exploited, as Patrick Gray shows, by John Donne in his sermon on a text from the Lamentations of Jeremiah, 'the breath of our nostrils'. Here, through Donne's complex play with Hebrew terms signifying life, spirit, and soul, breath becomes deeply ambiguous, its valences dependent on both political and religious interpretation.

Eighteenth-century medical and scientific discoveries complicated long-standing ideas of the connection between interior and exterior, individual and environment through new understandings of the nature of air and debates surrounding its potential role in disease. Rina Knoeff probes the medical, cultural, and imaginative effects of these, which were taken up in theories of pathology and environment, leading to new emphases on the importance of exercise, clean air, and landscape, both interior and exterior, and shaping artistic consumption. Ideas connecting breath with well-being were closely allied to understandings of embodied emotional experience. Gillian Skinner explores the formative role of breath and breathlessness in eighteenth-century notions of sensibility, in particular feminine sensibility, and in the literary genre of sentimental fiction these inspired. Again, images of sudden loss of breath—fainting and swooning—recur, brought out with peculiar force in Frances Burney's epistolary novel Evelina where the writing of emotion on the body and on the page intersect. Attention to the breath reveals a proto-feminist heroine, actively involved in scenarios that both challenge her capacity for moral conduct and demonstrate her power to act. At the same time, there were threats related to breathlessness, including, as Andrew Russell shows, through the introduction of a new and powerful material agent, tobacco, a primary cause of breathing illnesses worldwide, with profound and enduring effects on health and medicine. Adding smoke to breath instituted a culture fuelled by the perceived intellectual and creative possibilities of tobacco. Russell argues that the arrival in Europe of tobacco, with its ability to change processes of cognition, influenced literary developments, including the 'poetry of attention', with its interest in minute detail, and the distinctive 'it'-narratives of the period, which emphasise the division between self and other. In tobacco, with its apparent offer of inspiration from heightened experience, promise and danger combined.

Cultural and literary conceptions of breath were similarly dualistic—on the one hand, opening onto the sublime, and on the other, signalling human frailty. The concept of divine, life-giving breath retained its connections with Christianity, as in the familiar Victorian hymn, 'Breathe on me, breath of God', but was also extended. Romantic writers developed a theory of inspired composition rooted in nature rather than the supernatural, with the metaphor of a 'correspondent breeze', a quasi-divine breath whose power operates through the poet. As Clark Lawlor shows, such notions of inspiration were both shadowed and enhanced by the threat of the loss of breath and the fading out of vitality through illness, in particular, the Romantic disease of tuberculosis, more commonly known as 'consumption' owing to its effects on the body. Consumption was 'fashionable', a disease that in the popular imagination illuminated the spirit as the body wasted, and which became a powerful artistic and literary topos, while in reality mortality was marked all too acutely on the consumptive breath. In Romantic constructions of consumption, ancient connections of breath with death, life, spirit and genius take on new force, heightened by the experience of breathlessness.

Nineteenth-century writers sustained such images of consumption, with their complex interweaving of respiratory difficulty with intensity of life. The industrial revolution also brought a new interest in the possibility that disease could be carried by air and inhaled, and in new subjects connected with breath and illness: emphysema and other diseases caused by, for example, cotton processing and mining. Victorian engagement with breath in relation to industrial shifts was marked by duality. Progress could seem to signal movement towards immortality, as Francis O'Gorman demonstrates in relation to the invention of the mechanically powered pipe organ—an instrument with seemingly endless breath, which inspired new literary engagements with the eternal. Yet the contrast with limited human breath also signalled the frailty of human life, the limits of possibility and the inevitability of death. A similar duality characterised the ways that the nineteenth century engaged with the effects of industrialisation on the natural environment, which had severe negative consequences for breathing, most marked in the phenomenon of London fog. Christine Corton explores how, in literature and culture, this densely polluted air came to be represented as food, a soup that was inhaled and ingested—a metaphor that paradoxically appeared to celebrate this aspect of London, perhaps delaying legislation for clean air, even as fog's breath-damaging qualities were acutely recognised by Victorian medicine, as contemporary records and reports connecting high mortality rates with dense fogs demonstrate. The intersection of ideas of poison and nutrition offered rich and enduring creative possibilities for both writers and artists. Alongside this emphasis on the relation between air and illness, at the fin de siècle, as Fraser Riddell shows, new sexological discourses placed the breathing body centre stage. In both aesthetic theory and poetry, the ideas of consumptive wasting, lung disease, and air that kills came together to shape queer notions of embodiment that highlighted forbidden but all-consuming and inspiring experiences of materiality, loss, and desire. Breath and breathlessness animated treatments of the homosexual subject.

Modernism acted as a crucible for ideas of breath and breathlessness. Within a context of dramatic scientific, intellectual, cultural, and aesthetic shifts, new forms of writing emerged to which breath was central in radically different ways. The notion of divine, life-giving breath was questioned and complicated in a world where religious faith was profoundly challenged. New developments in medicine and psychoanalysis extended and altered understandings of body, mind, and affect, and their connections. As Arthur Rose and Oriana Walker argue, breath played a complex role in psychoanalysis from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s, as a potential signifier of psychic experience, and as a psycho-physical variable in its own right for the theorists who followed and challenged the founders of the discipline. Breath becomes an 'uncanny object' and a key to the unconscious: it also continues as a focus for debates concerning vitality, materiality, spirit, and consciousness. Breath and its politics illuminate in new ways the histories of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. At the same time, changes in relation to the lived environment led to new ideas of breathing in the world. Abbie Garrington explores the encounter of science, culture, and art in modernist attitudes to mountaineering, an activity that tested the limits and possibilities of breath, engaging with deeply ingrained ideals of masculinity and bodily endurance. New developments in the oxygen rig, like the Victorian invention of the mechanical organ, promised more enduring breath, yet also pointed to man's limits on the mountains, challenging ideas of heroism. Such possibilities and paradoxes contributed to the new poetic breath of modernism, as did new questions concerning the relation of mind and body. Taking up William James's idea of 'consciousness-as-breath', Marco Bernini probes Samuel Beckett's interweaving of physiology and psychology in representations across his oeuvre of breath as intimately bound up with mind, revealing the workings and textures of consciousness and prefiguring more recent ideas of embodied cognition. The long-standing connection between breath and inspiration was newly rewritten not only in European

thought but also by American poets from Walt Whitman to the Black Mountain School, who located the formal and rhetorical structures of poetry in the rhythms of breathing. David Fuller takes up the subject of breath in poetry and aesthetic theory in America with a particular focus on Charles Olson's concept of the breath-line and the related experiments with poetic form of William Carlos Williams, setting these experiments alongside those of the German poet Paul Celan, whose poetry and poetics of difficulty enact a 'breathturn', a profound change of direction, a new beginning, in response to the chilling questions for art raised by the cataclysm of World War II. The poetry of breath is necessarily embodied, intimately connected with the voice, a topic Fuller also addresses through consideration of the implications of and need for reading poetry aloud. Twenty-first-century poetics, as Stefanie Heine shows, has returned to the 'pneumatic turn' of the 1950s and 1960s. The contemporary African American writer M. NourbeSe Philip develops from Olson her own ideas of respirational poetics, beginning from the ethically positive idea of pre-natal 'conspiration', a mother breathing for her unborn child. Heine elaborates Philip's exemplification of a poetics of fragmentation in her anti-narrative narrative poem, Zang!, which engages with and radically remakes Olson's interests in the syllable and in word-materials taken over from a problematic 'mother-text', a case report related to a massacre of African captives thrown overboard from a slave-trading ship in the late eighteenth century in order to collect insurance on the 'cargo'. Philip's 'conspiration' is also a deconstruction of language, speaking to the violent silencing of the voices which Zang! evokes and to conspiration/conspiracy against black lives.

Modern technology has yielded new possibilities of realising breath in art. The contemporary visual artist Jayne Wilton has drawn on the possibilities offered by modern technology to examine the relationship between breather and spectator, individual and environment. Her work translates breathing into art, rendering the unseen visible—an extraordinary moment in the long history of the art of breath and breathlessness, which reaches back to primitive art and is refigured across cultural epochs. Wilton's work engages directly with sufferers from breathlessness, a refiguring of conspiration that challenges comfortable assumptions but also shows the potential of the arts to articulate embodied experience. The potential unease and violence of conspiration are presented in a radical new light by the contemporary English poet Michael Symmons Roberts, whose novel Breath (2006) explores a lung transplant that also becomes a deeply political act within a context of civil war. Breath opens onto questions of the intersection of mind and body, identity and consciousness, spirit and voice. These issues emerge across Symmons Roberts' writing, which is also concerned with how the poet, poem, and reader may realise structures of breathing implied by the printed page. In the arts of breath, frailty and resilience meet.

As Peter Adey shows in his After word, across the book themes and issues interweave: the body and pathology, vitality and emotion, soul and spirit, inspiration and creation, conspiration and community, politics and environment, nature and technology, voice and silence, and, above all, identity and consciousness. He also returns to the contexts in which the book was completed of an international breathing illness pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement. As he suggests, the movements, meanings, vocalisations, and violences of breath are among the defining moments of our time. Lives, beings, and imaginings are inextricably bound up—for better or worse—with breathing in the world. From the ancient world to the present, philosophy, literature, and the cultures they reflect and shape write the life of breath. <>

THE VAKATAKA HERITAGE: INDIAN CULTURE AT THE CROSSROADS edited by Hans T. Bakker [Gonda Indological Studies, Brill, 9789069801483]

In what is often considered to be the heyday of classical Indian culture, the 4th and 5th centuries AD, the dynasty of the Vākāṭakas emerged as one of the major patrons of religion and art. Covering the greater part of the northern Deccan, the Vākāṭaka kingdoms were situated at the crossroads of the main north-south and west-east caravan routes.

This situation in the heart of the South-Asian subcontinent may partly explain the prosperity of the Vākāṭaka kingdoms and certainly accounts for their cultural diversity and richness, to which the Hindu temples on and around the Rāmagiri (Ramtek Hill) and the Buddhist Caves at Ajanta still bear witness. Here, at the crossroads of the Indo-Aryan north and Dravidian south, the northern culture of the Gupta kingdom reached the Deccan and developed a character of its own. The articles collected in this volume intend to augment our knowledge of how the Vākāṭaka culture came into being, which forces and influences contributed to its flourishing, and how its achievements informed the historical and cultural developments after its fall.

Richly illustrated contributions address the Vākāṭaka Heritage from a variety of disciplines: history (Kulke, von Stietencron), archaeology (Kennet), numismatics (Raven), political and religious history (Willis, Bakker), iconography (Brown, Yokochi), and art history (Williams, Spink, Wood, Stadtner, and Nigam).

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In what is often considered to be the heyday of classical Indian culture, the 4th and 5th centuries, the dynasty of the Vákátakas emerged as one of the major patrons of religion and art. Covering the greater part of the northern Deccan, the Váktaka kingdoms were situated at the crossroads of the ma^n north-south and west-east caravan routes. The highway from Prayága (Allahabad), via Vidi^d (Beshnagar) in Malwa, to Pratisthána (Paithan) at the upper course of the Godávar^ River, ran through the Western Vákátaka kingdom along Ajanta; the other north-south highway, running from Kausámbi (Kosam) to the Krsná-Godávari Delta passed the capital of the Eastern Vákátakas, Nandivardhana/Pravarapura (Nagardhan/Mansar). These two north-south routes were intersected by the west-east road that connected the ports at the Arabian Sea, Súr^draka (Sopara) and Kalyána (Kalyan), with the hinterland; this highway ran through the kingdoms of the Western and Eastern Vákátakas and ended in Sarabhapura (Malhar?) and Sr^pura (Sirpur) in Daksina Kosala (Chhattisgarh State).

This situation in the heart of the South-Asian subcontinent may partly explain the prosperity of the Vákátaka kingdoms and certainly accounts for their cultural diversity and richness, to which the Hindu temples on and around the Rámagiri (Ramtek Hill) and the Buddhist Caves in Ajanta still bear witness. Here, at the crossroads of the Indo-Aryan north and Dravidian south, the northern culture of the Gupta kingdom reached the Deccan and developed a character of its own. The major religions of the times, Buddhism, Bhagavatism and Mahesvarism, all had important settlements in the Vákátaka kingdoms; constructions in stone, brick or rock testify to the high standards of the arts reached in Central India by the middle of the 5th century.

With the collapse of the Vákátaka and Gupta dynasties at the turn of the 5th century an era came to an end. At this juncture, at the crossroads of the Classical and Early Medieval Periods, so to speak, the culture of the Vákátaka realm diffused to west and east (Mandasor, Tala), north and south (Nachna, Badami). Studying Vákátaka history, religion and arts therefore means studying the foundations of the political, religious and artistic achievements of the early

Indian Middle Ages, which emerged in a gradual process of cultural diffusion and change.

The articles collected in this volume grew out of the papers and discussions presented in a colloquium held at Groningen from 6 to 8 June, 2002. The colloquium was intended to augment our knowledge of how the Vákátaka culture came into being, which forces and influences contributed to its flourishing, and how its achievements informed the historical and cultural developments after its fall. The specialists' answers are arranged by and large in accordance with this broad question.

Hermann KULKE investigates the historical background from which the Vákátakas emerged and establishes that we should think of the Vákátakas as two different, largely autonomous kingdoms: the Eastern and Western Vákátakas. He shows how the state of the Eastern Vákátaka can be seen as a transition from which the early medieval kingdoms emerged. Derek KENNET provides a critical assessment of the archaeological state of affairs on which much of our knowledge concerning the Vákátakas is based and argues that `urban decay' in the period may be due to a methodological illusion. Ellen RAVEN addresses the moot question of the absence of Vakátaka gold coinage and points out the relationship of the copper coins ascribed to the Eastern Vákátakas with coins found in Eastern Malwa. The Malwa connection is further elaborated in the contribution of Michael WILLIS, who focuses on Udayagiri and develops an integral picture of how under Candragupta II, father of the Vákátaka queen Prabhávatiguptá, this hill was reshaped into a sacred landscape that reflected the king's greatness in

astronomical and religious terms. Robert BROWN reexamines the iconography of several images found in the Eastern Vákátaka kingdom and points to Andhra as a possible source of inspiration. Hans BAKKER gives an assessment of the excavations in Mansar and speculates on a funerary monument of Prabhávatiguptá. The Western Vákátakas and their main monuments in Ajanta are the subject of the following three contributions. Walter SPINK focuses on the doorways of the Ajanta caves and argues in his inimitable way how their development can present us with clues for a relative chronology. The absolute (short) chronology underlying Spink's work is put to question in an open letter by Heinrich VON STIETENCRON. Leela WOOD presents an interpretation of Ajanta Cave 17 and shows how the epigraphs and the art of the Vihára reflect one another and form an integral whole. The last four contributions address the theme of how the Vákátaka heritage lived on in 6th-century artistic developments. Joanna WILLIAMS looks at Mandasor in western Malwa, Laxmi Shankar NIGAM surveys Vákátaka influences in the art of Daksina Kosala, whereas Donald STADTNER investigates how this process of cultural diffusion may actually have taken place. Vuko YOKOCHI, finally, demonstrates on the basis of the Mahisásuramardini icon, how a model developed in the Vákátaka realm mixes with a similar model of the Gupta north and eventually informs the iconography of the buffalo-slaying goddess throughout India. As such it epitomizes, as it were, the theme of this volume: the Vákátaka heritage, Indian culture at the crossroads.

Hans Bakker   All Souls College, 25 March 2004

Some Thoughts on State and State Formation under the Eastern Vákátakas by Hermann Kulke, Kiel

When Hans Bakker invited me to the Groningen Oriental Studies Colloquium or the Vakatakas, I gladly agreed to his suggestion to talk on aspects of state formation under the Vakatakas. But, as I have to admit frankly, I was rather unaware of the pitfalls of such an undertaking. So far I followed the conventional perception of the greatness of the Vakatakas as successors of the erstwhile pan-central Indian Sátavahanas and as counterparts and temporary allies of the Imperial Guptas. Despite several controversies, e.g. on their original home arid details of their chronology, the history of their two branches appeared to be firmly based on the corpus of their inscriptions, exemplarily edited by V.V. Mirashi in 1963 (CII V) and complemented by more recent discoveries. Above all, their culture is perceived as an unparalleled synthesis of Ajanta's Buddhist marvels and the creation of Rámagiri as a unique monument of late classic Hindu kingship.

But in the course of my attempt to detect features of the administrative structure of the Vakatakas state I felt increasingly troubled about their imperial greatness, particularly in view of the existence of the two so-called branches of the Vakatakas. Today most likely nobody would subscribe to K.P. Jayaswal's statement, which he made during the first heydays of Indian national historiography in the mid-thirties, that in the early 5th century the Eastern Vakataka king Pravarasena II was the lord paramount of the whole of India. In central Indian history, however, their imperial greatness seems to have lost nothing of its fame as one can realise, e.g., from Walter Spin's unsurpassable, recent statement about Harisena of the so-called Western or Vatsagulma Branch: `Already the lord of vast domains when he came to power in 460, by the time of his unexpected death in 477 he controlled all of central India from the western to the eastern sea. Possibly the most illustrious ruler in the world of his own days.' For Mirashi, too, Harisena `became the undisputed suzerain of the entire country extending from Malwa

in the north to Kuntala in the south and from the Arabian Sea in the west to the Bay of Bengal in the east.' Ajay Mitra Shastri on the one hand contradicts these estimations as they are based merely on the `otherwise unsubstantiated statement of Harisena's court poet.' But on the other hand, Shastri, too, asserted already under Pravarasena I 'a mighty imperial fabric,' which in course of its development gained the `status of one of the greatest political powers with a pan-Indian image and impact.'

A more general problem, well known of course from other local and regional histories, is the rather uncritical treatment of the ahankara-like eulogies of inscriptions by modern historians. A.M. Shastri, for instance, quotes at length from Varahadeva's famous Ajanta inscription (CII V, 107ff.) in order to prove the greatness of Vindhyasakti I, the founder king of the Vakatakas. Passages like 'he [Vandhyasakt^] augmented his valour by fighting great battles,' `when enraged, he was irresistible even by gods,' `he had acquired the whole world by the powers of his arms,' `he had humbled his foes' furnish for Shastri 'a vivid but general account of his [Vindhyasakti's] military successes.' Although Shastri admits that `these eulogizing adjectives are vague and do not specify the enemies defeated by him [they do show that] he was constantly engaged in military activities for carving out and expanding his empire.' The gravity of this kind of misleading source interpretation is emphasized by the fact that Varahadeva's inscription was not even a contemporary eulogy of Vindhyasakti but was composed about 200 years after the latter's death. It has its value, e.g. for a study of Sanskrit poetry of late 5th century, but is insignificant for the political history of the Vakatakas in the early 4th century. It appears that much of the modern imagination of the political greatness of the Vakatakas, particularly of their early history, is based not only on eulogies of contemporary kings but on hagiographic-like prasastis, composed generations after the imagined `events' had taken place and finally inflated by modern historians.

However, it was the division of the Vákátaka kingdom into so-called branches rather than the historiographical construct of an alleged imperial greatness which creates problems. After all, it is well attested by literary traditions of the Purgsnas, and since 1939 by epigraphical sources, that Pravarasena I (ca. 275-335), its second ruler and most likely its veritable founder, parcelled out his kingdom to his sons. Two of them, Sarvasena I and Rudrasena I (for his prematurely deceased father Gautamiputra) established kingdoms which obviously continued to exist independently till their very end in the late 5th century. Historians in fact do agree on this matter. Thus D.C. Sircar spoke of 'the division of Pravarasena's empire,i and A.M. Shastri was inclined to believe that Pravarasena I had partitioned the kingdom.' B.N. Mukherjee remarked that 'the rule of the original family of Vindhyasakti ended [...] with the foundation of at least two kingdoms by two branches of the Vakatakas after the end of Pravira's [= Pravarasena's] rule. c 15 Hans Bakker assumes that the actual division of the united Vakataka kingdom occurred under the impact of Samudragupta's southern expansion. But historians usually refrain from explaining what happened to the Vakátaka kingdom after Pravarasena I. Generally speaking, there are at least three possible `models.' First, the kingdom continued to exist in one way or another, despite its division and existence of two `branches'; second, one of the two branches remained dominant or they subjugated each other temporarily, thus reestablishing the unity though with shifting centres; third, the so-called branches became and remained independent kingdoms.

To my knowledge, the overwhelming majority of Vakataka historians tends to favour the first interpretation. They speak of the Vakataka kingdom (in singular) and its two branches, usually named after their respective capitals Nandivardhana and Vatsagulma. In this context A.S. Altekar offered the seemingly plausible explanation that Pravarasena appointed his sons `as viceroys over different provinces

of the rapidly extending empire and they became independent after the death of the father, thereby considerably weakening the power of the Central Government.' But he is silent, as in fact all other adherents of this `model,' about the nature and the locality of the supposed `Central Government.'

The second `model' finds its expression in the distinction between the `senior (or main) branch' of Nandivardhana and the `junior branch' of Vatsagulma. A.S. Altekar for instance designated Vatsagulma as a `subsidiary dynasty,' whereas D.C. Sircar referred to Nandivardhana as 'main branch' and Vatsagulma as `collateral branch.' These distinctions are certainly justified in dynastic terms, as both

branches traced their origin to the mutual ancestor Vindhyasakti I, who established the erstwhile unified dynasty. In view of the much greater number of inscriptions in comparison to those of Vatsagulma as well as their archaeologically much better documented centre around their capital Nandivardhana, it may even be quite understandable to designate Nandivardhana as the `main branch' of the Vákátaka. And a dynasty may, of course, split into two branches. Politically, however, a kingdom will continue to exist under these circumstances only if one of its dynastic branches lays claim to a kind of predominance or even hegemony and is able to enforce this claim at least temporarily. But none of the Vakataka branches appear to have ever demanded a status of seniority. Instead, after their division, rulers of both dynastic branches edited their inscriptions as `Mahárájas of the Vakatakas,' thus clearly demonstrating their relations, but also their mutual independence.

History offered at least one opportunity to each branch to change this dynastic balance in its favour. The marriage of Rudrasena II with the Gupta princess PrabhSvatiguptá, her long reign as dowager queen and the successful and even longer rule of her son Pravarasena II strengthened the Vakatakas of Nandivardhana to such an extent that Vatsagulma temporarily may even have become `subordinate to the eastern kingdom.' But although Pravarasena extended the area of his land donations to Brahmins considerably towards the west, he avoided to encroach on the heartland of Vatsagulma and to establish there a kind of `ritual sovereignty' through land donations and the construction of temples. His and his mother's impressive `religious policy' was instead clearly limited to their Nandivardhana kingdom and focussed on their `state sanctuary' of Ramagiri.

A similar situation occurred during the period of temporary predominance of the Vatsagulmas under Harisena in the late 5th century. In the Ajanta inscription of his minister Varahadeva he is praised for having subdued seven kingdoms in Central India. But here, too, we hear nothing about the reestablishment of a `united' Vakataka kingdom under his rule, although Bakker assumes that 'one of the first victims [of Harisena] might have been his eastern kinsman Narendrasena.' But Harisena, too, is not known for having extended his predominance into the realm of his eastern relatives by religious donations.

The much disputed Mandhal inscription of Prthivisena II, whose father Narendrasena had to face Harisena's expansionism, contains another interesting information about the relationship of the two Vakataka branches. It reports that 'the royal fortune of his [Narendrasena's] house [vamsa] to which he initially had succeeded, was taken away from him by a kinsman who possessed virtue.' ^ few lines later of the same inscription, Prthivisena is praised as 'the resurrec tor of the sunken family [vamsa].' We are not concerned here with details of a possible war between Vatsagulma and Nandivardhana. What matters in our context is the fact that the term vamsa, which Bakker translates as `house' and `family,' is

also the usual term for `dynasty.' It refers strictly to the Nandivardhana dynasty of Prthivtsena II and not to an allegedly united `Vákátaka dynasty.'

The inscriptions of both so-called branches of the Vákátakas thus neither contain any hint at a united dynasty nor at the quest for some kind of superiority by one of the two branches. We may therefore come to the conclusion that, despite the consanguinity of their rulers and alternating temporary predominance of one of the `branches,' they ruled over two separate and independent kingdoms throughout their history after Pravarasena I's death. Despite the continuation of certain dynastic relations (e.g. in the correspondence between both dynasties), their political and even cultural relationship differed in no way from normal relations between other independent kingdoms, however, with one possible distinction. Even in periods of predominance of one of the two kingdoms, none of them appears to have ever thought of extinguishing their temporarily subordinate relatives. But even this distinction does not suffice to speak of one kingdom with two branches. On the contrary, the fact that the Vakátakas of Nandivardhana and Vatsagulma, despite their temporary predominance, preferred to retain the identity of their own vamsas, is an additional `proof' of the existence of two independent Vákátaka kingdoms. <>

GLOBAL TANTRA: RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND NATIONALISM IN COLONIAL MODERNITY BY Julian Strube [AAR Religion, Culture, and History, Oxford University Press, 9780197627112]

Tantra has formed an integral part of Asian religious history for centuries, but since "Arthur Avalon" introduced the concept to a global readership in the early twentieth century, Tantric traditions have exploded in popularity. While it was long believed that Sir John Woodroffe stood behind Avalon, it was in fact mainly a collaboration between learned South Asians. Julian Strube considers Tantra from the Indian perspective, offering rare insight into the active roles that Indians have played in its globalization and re-negotiation in local Indian contexts.

In the early twentieth century, Avalon's publications were crucial to Tantra's visibility in academia and the recognition of Tantra's vital role in South Asian culture. South Asian religious, social, and political life is inexorably intertwined with various Tantric scriptures and traditions, especially in Shaiva and Shakta contexts. In Bengal, Tantra was central to cultural dynamics including Vaishnava and Muslim currents, as well as universalist tendencies incorporating Christianity and esoteric movements such as New Thought, Spiritualism, and Theosophy.

GLOBAL TANTRA contextualizes struggles about orthodoxy and reform in Bengal, and explores the global connections that shaped them. The study elides boundaries between academic disciplines as well as historical and regional contexts, providing insights into global debates about religion, science, esotericism, race, and national identity.

Review

"**GLOBAL TANTRA** is an important and original book that shows the complex exchanges and entanglements between East and West that helped shape the modern category of "Tantra." Strube sheds new light on the key role played by movements such as the Theosophical Society and authors such as John Woodroffe and his Indian collaborators. The book should be of real interest both to general readers and to scholars of religious studies, South Asian studies, globalization studies, and other disciplines." -- Hugh B. Urban, Distinguished Professor, Department of Comparative Studies, The Ohio State University

"In Julian Strube's delightful book, the modern manifestations of Tantra shimmer like beads of dew on a sun-drenched spiderweb; the critical eye wanders and wonders in turn. Here are the Theosophists, there are the Spiritualists; now the Orientalists, then the Brahmos; look at the Mesmerists and the Aryas, the nationalists and the feminist emancipators; Oxford comparativists and their neglected counterparts in Bengal's district towns. But wait, Global Tantra also reminds us that Indra's Net is an illusion. To look for modern Tantra you will have to look elsewhere, again and again." -- Brian A. Hatcher, author of *Hinduism Before Reform*

"Julian Strube's reconstruction of Tantra in colonial Bengal offers fascinating new vistas of the recent religious history of the Indian subcontinent. It places the debates on Tantra in a global context by thoroughly investigating Bengali and English sources side by side with all their internal implications and international ramifications. Further throwing open the black box called Arthur Avalon, Strube redistributes agency among Bengali and international players, making the story more Bengali and more global at the same time. This book, in its unpretentious and appealing style, has the potential to lift the state of the art in the colonial history of Tantra to a new level." -- Hans Harder, Professor of Modern South Asian Languages and Literatures, South Asia Institute at Heidelberg University, Germany

CONTENTS

Agency under Colonialism: The Case of Theosophy

Theosophy is an outstanding example of how a substantiated global perspective can lead to radically different insights into these intricate developments. In recent years, Theosophy played a central role in debates about the notion of "Western esotericism" and its relation to broader issues of global history, (post)colonialism, and comparativism. Several attempts have been made to address the theoretical-methodological shortcomings and ideological ramifications of its "Western" demarcation.1 This elicited what I refer to as the "diffusionist reacti^n." In a recent article, Pouter Hanegraaff describes the "globalization of esotericism" as a diffusion of "Western esotericism" into a world populated by passive recipients. Asserting that "originally European esoteric or occultist ideas and practices have now spread all over the globe;' Hanegraaff holds that there have been "mutations" of those ideas that "traveled back to the West, only to be (mis)understood there as the 'authentic' voices of non-Western spiritualities." In this model, "non-Western" reactions to European ideas are merely inauthentic "mutations" produced by "Westernized" individuals. Consequently, Hanegraaff insists on an investigation of the "globalization of Western (!) es^tericism."

This model is misleading for a number of reasons, among which I would like to single out a more historical and a more theoretical one. First, the category of "Western esotericism" is itself a polemical identity marker that, as I have demonstrated elsewhere, was employed by nineteenth-century occultists who rejected the "Eastern" orientation of the recently founded Theosophical Society in the 1880s.167 In France, it was the Theosophical Society that had stimulated the emergence of occultist orders at the same time, and prominent French occultists such as Papus (i.e., Gerard Encausse, 1865-1916) coined the notion of esoterisme occidental precisely as a polemical counterpart to the "aberrations" of Theosophy. A similar development took place in what has been termed the "Hermetic reaction" in English-speaking nations. Evidently, the notion of "Western esotericism" emerged as a reaction to global developments, and hence Within a global context. That it is nowadays used as the demarcation of an academic field of study raises a number of problems, not only because it is a polemical "insider" concept but also because its very context of emergence highlights its global dimension.

This leads us to the second reason pertaining to broader theoretical and methodological questions revolving around the idea of European diffusionism. As Chakrabarty has argued, the idea of "first in Europe, then elsewhere" lies at the heart of the assumption that "non-Western" societies must always be passive recipients of European knowledge. One result of this assumption is that scholars of "Western esotericism" do not engage with any "non-Western" sources or scholarship devoted to them. This is not the result of ill intent, but it must be viewed as the "result of a much more complex theoretical condition under which historical knowledge is produced." Although many disciplines have reflected on this issue in the past decades, the study of esotericism remains largely unaffected by this. The idea prevails that esotericism has emerged in the West and then spread to the Rest.

Dwelling on the case of Western esotericism is especially instructive for ongoing discussions about how scholars should deal with the issues of colonialism and orientalism. The many contradictions and ambiguities resulting from these issues manifest forcefully in the context of Theosophy. In contrast to most other Westerners, the Theosophists did indeed look up to India as the origin of ancient esoteric wisdom. At the same time, this admiration for "the East" was rooted in the orientalist ideas that

operated within, and often served to legitimize, colonialism. Often they were more or less implicitly reproduced by the Theosophists. This repeatedly erupted in open conflicts, both among Western Theosophists and between them and their Indian interlocutors. In the 1890s, a dispute between Annie Besant and William Quan Judge revolved around the Theosophical leaders' relationship to their Indian partners and informants. While Judge proclaimed the superiority of "Western occultism," Besant defended its "Eastern" variant. This conflict was one factor that contributed to a widespread disillusion among Indian Theosophists, and sometimes to open criticism of the racial dynamics within the Society.

Another factor was the debunking of the so-called Mahatma letters in the middle of the 1880s. The Theosophical leaders had significantly based their authority on instructions that they allegedly received from hidden Indian "adepts," referred to as the Mahatmas or Masters. When a report by the Society for Psychical Research—a Spiritualist organization with a high reputation among prominent academic scholars—concluded that the Mahatma letters were forgeries, this plunged the Theosophical Society into a deep crisis.174 It also laid bare one of the most ambivalent aspects of Theosophical knowledge production and its relation to Indians, as it now appeared that the leaders were presenting their own ideas as those of Eastern initiates.

Not least because of the hugely ambiguous Theosophical race doctrine, racial stereotypes and racial hierarchies were by no means absent from the Society. Christopher Partridge has argued that the orientalism of Theosophists, however benevolent in intention, "happened within the context of Western political dominance and colonial expansionism." While the specifics of orientalist attitudes among Theosophists might be subject to debate, "in the final analysis it was Orientalism and functioned, as all Orientalism does, as a form of c^l^nialism." Partridge's argument is an important one, but it tends to obscure the complexity of the relationship between Western and "non-Western" Theosophists in ways similar to its other extreme, the notion of "positive orientalism" that is widespread in "Western es^tericism." Surely a distinction can and should be made between outright malicious and derogatory forms of orientalism and the romantic admiration for "India' that characterized Theosophy. Yet "positive" images of "Orientals" as spiritual bearers of ancient wisdom are inexorably intertwined with notions of being effeminate, static, childlike, degenerate, and so on. As Sanjay Subrahmanyam has cautioned, criticism of postcolonial perspectives focusing on the oppressive structures of orientalism should not lead to naive perceptions of "good Orientalists." In the case of Theosophy, it is impossible to strictly differentiate, as Isaac Lubelsky does, between a somehow harmless "racial discourse" and more dangerous "racial politics" This is so not only because the two are inextricably linked but also because Theosophy was, as Mark Bevir has shown, a highly political endeavor despite its ostensive apolitical stance.

Gauri Viswanathan has focused on these tensions in some detail and interpreted the role of the Theosophical Mahatmas as a form of "ventriloquism" that appropriated (allegedly) Indian voices to effectively spread and legitimize the ideas of the Westerners behind them. At least to a large degree, this "ordinary business of occultism" was a mirror image of colonial adminstration. While this certainly highlights very relevant aspects that every historian of Theosophy should be mindful of, Viswanathan too tends to overemphasize the colonial-oppressive structures within Theosophy, while neglecting the exceptional agency that it offered to Indian members. This becomes perhaps most clear in light of the fact that Viswanathan, like other historians of Theosophy, focuses only on white, Western Theosophists

and Anglophone sources without paying any close attention to "non-Western" Theosophists. Surely it is difficult to view Theosophy in more complex ways from such an angle.

In order to paint a more comprehensive picture, it is imperative to take into full account the Indians who were members or interlocutors of Theosophy. Although the colonial framework in which they moved was certainly an unequal one, Theosophy provided the colonized with an agency that was arguably unique. This is another aspect of Theosophical orientalism, which, as Baier has pointed out, stimulated a vivid exchange of ideas and mutual associations of traditions, for instance of fringe sciences and yogic practices. It also entailed the striving for direct contact with Indians, a fact that the latter, as we will see in the following chapters, explicitly noted when they highlighted differences between the attitudes of colonial administrators and orientalist scholars on the one hand, and Theosophists on the other. Baier, then, concludes that "Theosophical orientalism" was not based on a "static juxtaposition of fast and West but instead established a community of intercultural learners."

These Theosophical "welcome structures" had concrete and significant sociopolitical ramifications. Van der Veer has highlighted that Theosophy, as well as Spiritualism, "played a significant role in the development of radical, anticolonial politics both in Britain and India." Similarly, Green remarked that the "global occult" created "new forms of sociability that, in their more radical and transgressive expressions, overturned familiar hierarchies of empire, race, and gender." He noted, however, that occultists did abuse "the social power that their claims of mastery over hidden forces undoubtedly afforded them" and that even "progressive occultisms were involved in co-opting the cultural heritage of the colonial world." Again, it becomes apparent that for all its romantic admiration for India, Theosophy was a decidedly political movement that was deeply enmeshed in the context of colonialism and must be approached as such. If scholars of esotericism are eager to point out its modernity, they must come to terms with its colonial context.

This directly pertains to the question of the language of esotericism, both with regard to its use by historical actors and within present-day scholarship. Hanegraaff, for instance, has insisted that an investigation of esotericism outside "the West" would constitute a "terminological imperialism if we now tried to project this terminology on to the rest of the world" Indeed, some Indian scholars, such as Ashis Nandy and Vinay Lal, have criticized global history for being a masked imperialistic project. In the words of Fischer-Tine, these critics "stress the uniqueness and incommensurability of South Asia and its past, rather than its embeddedness in broader global structures or processes." This is exactly what global history wants to overcome, a goal that can be achieved only if all participants in global exchanges are investigated in their own right. Surely the solution to the historical fact of colonial conquest and oppression cannot be a retreat to "indigenous" historiographies, as this would blatantly reproduce the strict binaries that non-Eurocentric scholarship should complicate and unravel. This is where a genealogical perspective proves to be specifically helpful: it is a matter of fact that "non-Western" actors have used the language of esotericism to describe their practices and ideas since it emerged in the nineteenth century. As in the case of religion, esotericism was and is used globally, and quarrels about its "Western specificity" arise only when one insists on its origins in Europe and links this claim with one of ownership, the prerequisite for export. In this light, warnings of "terminological imperialism" are manifestly self-contradictory.

Reflecting on the act of translation is thus crucial for proposing a resolution to the politically connoted conflict between "indigenous" and "global" approaches. Lydia Liu has argued that translation should not

be viewed as the production of equivalents in two different languages, but that the equivalence of two terms becomes possible and is, in fact, produced in a specific historical context. This is not simply the outcome of either innovation within "indigenous tradition" or foreign impact; neither is it a rupture between tradition and modernity, but a product of cross-cultural interpretation. Instead of assuming the incommensurability between languages, but also instead of assuming the complete translatability of concepts, Liu proposes to understand translation as a historical pragmatic practice. An investigation of that translingual practice, then, focuses on the conditions for the possibility of translation.

Liu's perspective helps to explain the "global circulatory networks of translated knowledge" that were shaped by different actors despite the power asymmetries inherent in the colonial context. 194 What can be observed in the following chapters is not a meeting of Eastern and Western religion or esotericism. Rather, different understandings of religion and/or esotericism were produced and constantly negotiated through global exchanges throughout the nineteenth century. Theosophy provided an exceptional structural basis for such exchanges, as it actively sought contact with "non-Western" people and created a platform that, as in the case of the Bengali intervention, opened up global lines of communication.

Outline of the Chapters

Tracing the work of Arthur Avalon back to Shivachandrás efforts and the exchange in the Theosophist reveals a network of individuals with vastly different backgrounds, including the Bengali authors, their Theosophical interlocutors, Woodroffe, and the members of Shivachandrás society. The main goal of this book is to shed light on the Bengali context in which the project of Arthur Avalon emerged, rather than focusing on the project itself or Woodroffe as an individual. To this end, the book will depart from the global exchanges that manifest in the Theosophist debate, circling closer and closer into the regional and local contexts connected to it, before finally contextualizing the emergence of Arthur Avalon against that background. As I have identified the Bengali intervention as a pivotal moment in the global propagation of positive understandings of Tantra, the first chapter will open up the frame of this book by introducing three of the main strands that meet in the nodal point of the Theosophist exchange: the emergence of the Theosophical Society and its relocation to India, the regional background of Bengali Tantra, and an outlook on the Avalon project and its implication for Indological and South Asianist scholarship until today. The main protagonist and guiding thread of this overview is Baradakanta.

Chapter 2 details the entrance of Theosophy into the Indian intellectual landscape. I demonstrate how core ideas of Theosophists and Bengali actors were shaped by a shared global background, which prepared the structures of exchange that facilitated an influential and lasting encounter. This background was marked by social reformism and the notion of "Aryan" in relation to the search for the origin of religion. Focusing on diverse engagements between Theosophy and members of the Arya and Brahma Samaj, I provide examples of disagreement and skepticism, but also of the widespread opinion that Theosophists radically differed from other Westerners because of their self-proclaimed willingness to learn from Indians. When the Theosophical Society was established in Bengal in 1882, Blavatsky and her de facto coleader Henry Steel Olcott were enthusiastically welcomed by the Calcutta intelligentsia. This enthusiasm was fueled by the Theosophists' ostentatious denunciation of English education and their reverence for the "science" of the ancient Aryan rishis.

At the core of that science stood yoga. Chapter 3 demonstrates that perceptions of yoga as an occult science prepared the setting for the entry of the Bengali authors in the 1880s. The Theosophical conceptualization of yoga was highly ambivalent, as it attempted to map yoga on occultist concepts, idiosyncratically differentiating between Hatha and Raja Yoga. However, this process was mutual and significantly determined by Indian viewpoints. Baradakanta claimed the superiority of Indian occult science over Western mesmerism, and several Indians, including Dayananda, turned their backs on the Theosophists not least because of disagreements about understandings of yoga. The crucial point is that the Theosophists' conceptualization of yoga was not fixed but subject to controversies among learned Indians. It is in that context that the Bengali intervention introduced Tantric elements into Theosophical understandings of yoga. Following Dayananda, Theosophists tended to look down on Hatha Yoga as gross and exoteric and praised Raja Yoga as subtle and esoteric. A rejection of Tantra as "black magic" used to go hand in hand with the rejection of Hatha Yoga, but Baradakanta and other Bengali authors established concepts such as kundalini, chakras, and related Tantric elements as an integral part of Theosophical understandings of yoga. The controversies revolving around these interpretations allow for instructive insights into the ambiguous power dynamics between Western Theosophists and their Indian partners, as well as into the problems of translating and comparing notions such as occultism, occult sciences, and yoga.

The Theosophists and their interlocutors were driven by a wish to "revive" the Aryan wisdom that should form the basis of a new age. Yet they also promoted decidedly "reformist" ideas that highlight the necessity to explore the meanings of the notions of reform and revival. In chapter 4, the emergence of Spiritualism in Bengal will help to flesh out the role of Tantra in social reformist programs that were characteristic of Bengali Spiritualists, as elsewhere across the globe. I will discuss prominent figures such as Pyarichand Mitra and Shishirkumar Ghosh, who extensively and creatively engaged with Theosophy, Spiritualism, New Thought, and Transcendentalism. This serves to demonstrate that Theosophy was indeed a main factor in these exchanges, but that Bengali intellectuals maintained global correspondences beyond Theosophy and that they engaged with the respective ideas independently and actively. It will become obvious that Tantra played a key role in these processes and that its discussion within Spiritualist contexts allows for instructive contrasts with Bengali Theosophists such as Baradakanta.

Chapter 5 will further illustrate that demarcations between reformism and revivalism are anything but clear, and indeed often are more misleading than helpful. The focus will rest on the ambiguous role of Theosophy within "Hindu revivalism," as contemporaries perceived the Society as part of the "revivalist" camp, while it clearly harbored "typically reformist" ideas. First, I will open up a diachronic perspective on this ambiguity by discussing the ^ahánir^ana Tantra and its reception since the eighteenth century. This will provide insights into why Tantra played such a prominent role in the debates about revival and reform: it was central to the debates about sanatana dharma and related struggles about Hindu identity. So-called orthodox efforts were usually decisively marked by reformist agendas, while reformists often shared the same notions of sanatana dharma and a revival of Aryan civilization. What emerges is the deep involvement of the Theosophical Society in these debates, which had developed since the early colonial period.

Chapter 6 will further zoom into the local Bengali context and explore the thought and activities of Shivachandra, which were shaped by the intellectual atmosphere of his hometown, Kumarkhali, and the famous Baul circle around Kangal Harinath. Taken out of school by his father because of the supposedly

negative influence of English education, Shivachandra was educated at Navadvip, Benares, and Calcutta. His rejection of English education and defense of what he regarded as orthodoxy led him to the foundation of the Sarvamangala Sabha. The society proclaimed opposition to Western material science (jarabijnán), promotion of the "eternal Vedic dharma" (sanatan vaidik dharma), and a struggle against "the propaganda of Western materialist capitalists" (pascatyer dhanatántrik1diger annadás'kuler apapracar). Shi^achandrás Tantratattva was essential to these efforts and is hence examined particularly with regard to his understanding of Tantra as sanátan dharma, as well as to the conceptualization of sádhana in relation to science.

Nationalist tendencies emerge as an outstanding feature of these contexts. Hence chapter 7 explores the activities of Shivachandra and his associates in the context of the Swadeshi movement and the relationship between science, education, and nationalism more generally. It also turns to the writings of Shashadhar, and his concept of a "spiritual science" (adhyatmabijñán) in particular, in order to demonstrate that Bengali debates about the relationship between religion and science paralleled, and were inherently intertwined with, debates that could also be observed in the Theosophical context as well as in the writings of Avalon. Another direct link to the latter will be explored through one of Woodroffe's closest partners and another disciple of Shivachandra: Pramathanath Mukhopadhyay, the later Swami Pratyagatmananda Saraswati. Special attention will be paid to his concept of "national education" and the role of Tantra for the regeneration and eventual emancipation of India.

Chapter 8 surveys how the aspects discussed in the previous chapters resurfaced in the writings of Avalon and informed Woodroffe's understanding of Tantra. The latter's relationship to Shivachandra and the broader personal network behind Avalon will be inspected in some detail, also with regard to the role of Theosophy and the colonial elite in Calcutta. On that basis, I analyze the Avalon and Woodroffe writings by first foregrounding the relationship between religion and science, and how the notions of occultism and esotericism were employed to transgress what was perceived as the destructive division between them. Second, I show that Woodroffe's adamant advocacy of national education and an awakening of Indias shakti directly mirrored the ideas of his Bengali associates. Third, these notions were closely linked to universalist approaches to religion, as they presumed the existence of the same esoteric doctrine at the core of every great tradition—a perception that was linked to Catholicism by Bengali Tantrikas before Woodroffe would state similar ideas.

In sum, these chapters will reveal a complex picture of fascinating exchanges that defy clear boundaries. What will emerge, most fundamentally, is the historiographical need to relate global, regional, and local developments in order to understand the multidirectional, unstable, and ever-changing negotiations that shaped different modern understandings of Tantra, and by extension of the meaning and role of religion in modernity. <>

HANDBOOK OF HINDUISM IN EUROPE (2 VOLS) edited by Knut A. Jacobsen and Ferdinando Sardella [Series: Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 2 South Asia, Brill, 9789004429420]

HANDBOOK OF HINDUISM IN EUROPE portrays and analyses how Hindu traditions have expanded across the continent, and presents the main Hindu communities, religious groups, forms, practices and teachings. The Handbook does this in two parts, Part One covers historical and thematic topics which are of importance for understanding Hinduism in Europe as a whole and Part Two has chapters on Hindu traditions in every country in Europe. Hindu traditions have a long history of interaction with Europe, but the developments during the last fifty years represent a new phase. Globalization and increased ease of communication have led to the presence of a great plurality of Hindu traditions. Hinduism has become one of the major religions in Europe and is present in every country of the continent.

CONTENTS

In these two volumes on Hindu traditions in Europe we have tried to cover the most important topics and across all the countries of Europe. Europe is understood in this book as a geographical space that is larger than the political entity of the European Union (EU), which only includes member states and not all of Europe.

Part 1 covers historical and thematic topics that are of importance for understanding Hinduism in Europe as a whole. These topics include: the translation of Hindu texts into European languages; Hinduism and the Catholic Church; Protestant views on Hinduism and their impact; the impact of German Indology; Hinduism and the impact of Western Esotericism; Hindu soldiers in Europe during World War I; Hindu gurus in Europe; temples and processions; movements, groups, and organisations with a greater European presence, such as the Sri Lankan Tamils, Swaminarayan, Ramakrishna Mission, ISKCON, Brahma Kumaris, Vedānta, Āyurveda, and the great variety of yoga traditions; the presence of Hindutva in Europe; Hinduism and education; Hindu children; and Hindu tropes in European culture and languages.

Hinduism as a religious presence in Europe is rapidly expanding across the Continent. In Part 2 we have included chapters on every country in Europe with the exception of the microstates including the larger microstate Luxembourg. The further microstates of Europe are Andorra, Monaco, Liechtenstein, San Marino, and the Holy See (Vatican), which have less than 100,000 inhabitants. The Republic of Cyprus is also not covered. The southern part is member of the EU but the United Nations considers Cyprus as being part of Asia. Although Gibraltar has a Hindu population, mostly of Sindhi origin, who has had a presence there since the middle of the nineteenth century and who in 2000 inaugurated the only Hindu temple there, it is a British Overseas Territory and is not covered in a separate article. British and French overseas territories outside of Europe are also not included as they geographically belong to other continents. Réunion island has a significant Hindu population and is part of France, but it is an overseas territory and is geographically part of Africa. Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan are considered part of Asia and are not included, but Russia and Turkey, which are partly in Europe and partly in Asia, are included and have separate articles.

A note on diacritics and style: We have included diacritics on words, concepts, and texts from South Asian languages, but mostly not on place names and not on modern (post-1850) South Asian figures and organisations. So Brāhmo Samāj (founded 1828) is spelled with diacritics, but Arya Samaj (founded 1875) is spelled without them. We have allowed for both Sanskrit and vernacular spellings such as Rām and Rāma, *yug* and *yuga*. Yoga refers to the philosophical system, yoga in lower case refers to the general phenomenon. In the book the terms ISKCON and Hare Krishna are used interchangeable. The numerous European languages have different traditions of writing terms and names from South Asian languages and some variety of spellings can be found in the book, especially in quotations from these languages.

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The chapters in the *Handbook of Hinduism in Europe* trace the complex histories of a plurality of Hindu traditions in Europe and describe and analyse their current manifestations on the continent. The book is defined by space and religion: the manifestations of Hindu religious traditions in the geographical space called Europe.[1] The chapters included in these volumes analyse: the religion of Hindus from South Asia who have settled in Europe and their establishment of a number of different Hindu religious traditions on the continent; some Europeans' responses to Hindu traditions, which include adoptions of ideas and practices and conversions to Hinduism; and some influences Hindu traditions have had on European culture. The chapters map the current state of Hinduism in different European countries. There are strikingly different histories among the various European countries because of different historical, political, and economic relations to South Asia. Some European countries, such as Britain, Portugal, France, Netherlands, and Denmark, were colonial powers with colonies or trading stations in South Asia, and South Asians were also moved (as indentured labour) or were able to move within the different colonial empires. The Netherlands had a colony in Surinam, South America, with South Asian indentured labourers, many of whom moved to the Netherlands in the postcolonial period. Indians from Goa worked in the Portuguese colonies in Africa, and they moved from there to Portugal. The largest population of South Asians in Europe is of course in Britain, which is also a result of colonial rule and postcolonial migrations. In the postcolonial period, some countries have attracted larger numbers of migrants due to different reasons, such as economic and educational, as well as due to both push and pull factors.

The volumes present the current state of knowledge of the Hindu presence in Europe in two parts. Part one portrays pan-European histories and developments and presents: histories of the encounters of groups, associations, and institutions in the European geographical context; translations and publications of Hindu texts; traditions of interpretations; Hindu gurus in Europe; Hindu soldiers in Europe during World War I; religious organisations and traditions with a pan-European presence, such as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Swaminarayan, Brahma Kumaris, Vedānta, and the numerous traditions of yoga; the Hindu traditions of particular migrant groups such as the Īḻattamiḻs (the group of Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka claiming descent from the Jaffna Kingdom); and ritual practices such as temple Hinduism and procession. Part two details the situation in every country in Europe. The material gives opportunities for reflections on the Hindu communities and traditions in Europe, encounters with Hindu traditions in Europe, and the current state of Hinduism in Europe.

The European encounter with Hindu religious traditions is both old and new. Contact between Greece and India goes back several thousand years. Alexander the Great and his army reached as far as today's Pakistan, and Greek kingdoms existed in that area in the centuries after his arrival. *Indica* by the Greek Megasthenes (350–290 BCE) was an important source for ideas about India in early Europe. India's influences on Greek culture have been difficult to prove—as have Greek influences on ancient India—but the literature on the topic is enormous (see Karttunen 1987, 2007, 2015). However, this is not the main topic of these volumes, which focus on the modern period and the contemporary situation (however, see chapter 2 by Karttunen and chapter 40 by Papageorgiou and Ziaka: 1042–1046,). Although the European encounter with Hinduism is many centuries old, the last few decades have been characterised by some new developments and mark a new phase in the growth of Hinduism on the continent. Some Hindu traditions are now found in every European country. In the last decades, Hinduism has been emerging as a pan-European religion, with a growing population of Hindus originating from South Asia as well as a small but growing number of converts and followers from non-Hindu backgrounds. The chapters in these volumes show that Hinduism has had a different history in Western and Eastern Europe, and the situation is still strikingly dissimilar. Western Europe has large Hindu populations from India and Sri Lanka, and smaller populations of Hindus from Nepal and Afghanistan and other South Asian countries, and "twice migrant" Hindus from East Africa and other countries, and hundreds of Hindu temples have been established there, which have given a growing number of Hindu deities' permanent homes in Europe. A recent development is the increasing number of costly "display temples" built from the ground up in accordance with South Asian temple architecture. These places have become sacred sites, and pilgrimage traditions have been established to several Hindu temples and sacred complexes in Western Europe. In Eastern Europe, however, followers of new Hindu religious movements have been the dominant trend, with ISKCON establishing temples and even pilgrimage places (see the chapter on Hungary). The chapters in the volumes document and analyse this consolidation of Hinduism in Western Europe and the new emergence of Hinduism in Eastern Europe.

Migration and Diasporas

The spread of Hindu traditions to Europe has taken place in two ways in particular: by the migration of Hindus of South Asian ancestry to Europe and by Europeans who have become followers of Hindu teachings, often those of particular gurus.

The migration of Hindus to Europe from South Asia and from other areas with settlements of South Asians has undoubtedly been the most significant factor for the expansion of Hindu traditions in Europe. The migration of Hindus to Europe has made many Hindu ritual practices and large numbers of places of worship part of the religious life and landscape of Europe. The number of Hindus with South Asian ancestry in Europe is currently probably one and a half to two million. The numbers are growing in Europe, but the preferred choice of destination for the migration of Indians in the last decades has been the United States, not Europe.

Hindu immigrant populations in Europe, as well as their descendants, are often discussed in academic literature in terms of Hindu diaspora communities, and the concept of diaspora is also widely used in these volumes. The term diaspora signifies a minority situation and relates to space in the sense of living in a place that is not one's ancestral home. The diaspora concept should be understood as simply meaning a geographical dispersion of people. Some connection to the ancestral home country is usually recognised. This connection to a different place than that in which they reside often constitutes a part of

their identity, but the strength of this connection varies between individuals, from political engagement in the countries of origin, which might be encouraged by political movements that seek support from the diaspora, as is the case with the current Hindu nationalist organisations, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP),[2] to complete assimilation into the new country. Many do attempt to transfer their connection to an ancestral home to new generations, since this connection is also about family history and family connections and kinship and not primarily about political engagement. In terms of meanings ascribed to the diaspora context, there are great differences between the generations, and especially for the first-generation migrants, religion and places of worship are important for creating arenas for performing the values and culture of the country of origin and for transferring these to future generations. However, the coming generations might be less interested in maintaining this relation to their parents' country of origin, since they have grown up in Europe and might be more interested in understanding, refashioning, and promoting themselves in the European context; this might also hold true in relation to their religion. The secular cultures of many European countries probably also influence these generations' understanding of the Hindu traditions of their parents. The second, third, etc. generations often do not feel culturally at home in South Asia but identify with their European countries.

South Asian Hindu diasporas are usually considered to have been created in two main periods: before independent India (1947) and after. The first period of South Asian Hindu diasporas was while they were under colonial rule, and it primarily involved the movement of Hindus from India to other colonies, but Hindus also travelled to the European continent. The transfer of Hindus to other colonies occurred under the indentured labour system after the Slavery Abolition Act was passed in the British parliament in 1833 (van der Veer and Vertovec 1991: 149; Vertovec 2000). Under the Indian indenture system, contract workers from India were moved to Mauritius, Trinidad, Guyana, Surinam, Jamaica, Fiji, South Africa, and East Africa, and people also moved to countries such as Burma and Malaysia due to other labour schemes. Other significant groups that moved were merchants, businessmen, clerks, and other nonlabouring professionals who followed in the wake of indentured labour migration from South Asia (to East Africa, Central Africa, South Africa, Mauritius, and Fiji) and colonial administrators (to Burma, East Africa, and so on) (Vertovec 2000: 15). A number of individuals also visited and settled in Europe during the first period, but the Hindu communities in Europe at that time were nevertheless quite small and few in number. Before 1950 only around 8,000 Indians lived in Britain (Chatterji and Washbrook 2013), the most important country for Hindu migrants in Europe. In addition, the majority of the early migrants were Muslims and Sikhs, not Hindus.

The movement of South Asians to Britain dates back to at least the early seventeenth century, and "by the mid-nineteenth century, tens of thousands of Indian men and women of all social and economic classes had made the passage to Britain" (Fisher 2013: 123). However, most of these migrants and visitors returned to India after a short time. Still, Fisher notes that a number of them also remained in Britain for years, and some remained there for the rest of their lives as settlers (ibid.). Few of these settlers were Hindus. Fisher notes, in the case of Britain, that many got married, mostly to Britons rather than to other Indians, and had children, and the Indian identities of their descendants became more diffuse (ibid.). Similar situations to the one in Britain were probably also found in other European countries with trading stations or colonial settlements in India, such as France, Portugal, and Denmark, although on a much smaller scale. Indian sailors ("lascars") worked on European ships, and there were Indians in a number of European harbours as early as the eighteenth century. In Denmark, a Tamil man

brought to Copenhagen in the early eighteenth century found a Tamil wife there, and they both returned to India afterward (Jacobsen 2006). Fisher notes that many of these early Indians who settled in Britain appear to have converted to Christianity as part of their assimilation into British culture and society (Fisher 2013: 127). Many Indian converts would also travel from India to Europe for further education; some returned to India while others settled in Europe.

In spite of these early visitors and settlers, Hindu diaspora communities in Europe have mainly been created in the second period, after Indian independence (1947). This has involved migration in order to take advantage of employment and educational opportunities, prospects for prestige, marriage, and family reunions, and—especially for Hindus from Sri Lanka—to evade political persecution and war. During the first decades after Indian independence, Britain was the most important destination, but Hindus were quite few in number until the middle of the 1960s (Knott 1991: 95). In 1961 around 150,000 Indians lived in Britain (Visram 2015), but the majority of them were probably Sikhs and Muslims. During the most recent decades a number of other European countries have also become important destinations for Hindu migration. The largest Hindu populations in Europe are in Britain, the Netherlands, Italy, France, and Germany. Strong migration, especially from India to a number of European countries, over the last few years means that estimations of the number of Hindus in Europe will have to be revised annually. In addition, irregular migration means that the total number of Hindus in Europe is difficult to estimate. Also, in most countries religious identity is not part of the state census.

Hindu Temples and Sacred Sites

Hindu migrants and their descendants have made temple Hinduism the dominant form of Hinduism in Europe. In many countries, small ISKCON temples were probably the earliest Hindu temples. Economic support for temples and temple priests is an important part of the economy of Hindu religion in Europe. These temples function as religious centres as well as community centres (see chapter 11 on Temple Hinduism in Europe). A number of new temples have been and are being built according to South Asian temple architecture, but the majority of the temples are in buildings originally built for other purposes. The presence of Hindu temples in Europe brought a new awareness of Hinduism as a ritual tradition and living religion and not just an ancient heritage, a textual phenomenon, or philosophical teachings associated with gurus. The earliest Hindu places of worship in Europe were probably those established in Spain (in the Canary Islands) as early as the second half of the nineteenth century (Díes de Velasco 2010: 248). Hindus were presented in colonial exhibitions in Jardin d'Acclimatation in Paris in 1902 and 1906, during which a temporary Hindu temple was built (see the chapter on France). Several centres were apparently established in Europe by Hindu religious movements in the 1920s and 1930s, but they did not last. The Ramakrishna Mission was active in Geneva,[3] the Gaudiya Mission Society of London was opened in 1933 (Bryant and Ekstrand 2004), and similar Gaudiya missionary activity took place in Germany as well (Sardella 2013). In 1949 the Ramakrishna Mission opened one of the first permanent, public places of Hindu worship in Britain (Burghart 1987), which was perhaps the earliest long-term public Hindu temple in the country. Before the 1960s, the majority of Hindu migrants to Europe were single males, and they saw the practice of religion as reserved for home visits to India (Knott 1991: 96). After Britain's 1962 Immigration Act, which encouraged family reunification, Hinduism in Britain became a religion for families. This led ultimately to the establishment of more public places of worship. Women maintained domestic Hindu practices, but the templeisation of Hinduism typical of the diaspora led to the increased male dominance of rituals (Baumann 2009). The first Hindu temple in Britain organised by Hindu immigrants was apparently opened in 1967 (Nesbitt 2006: 199). ISKCON's Radha Krishna Temple

in central London was opened in 1969, helped by the Beatles' George Harrison. In 1973 Harrison bought Bhaktivedanta Manor (Piggott's Manor in the Hertfordshire village of Aldenham) and donated it to ISKCON. In 1991 the number of Hindu temples and established religious groups in Britain was estimated to be 100 (Knott 1991: 97). Since then, probably at least an additional 100 temples have opened. In Continental Europe, the growth of temples has also been strong. Most Hindu temples in Continental Europe are found in Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, and the Scandinavian countries. Germany had four temples in 1989 and twenty in 1999, and in 2003, there were twenty-five Hindu temples alone maintained by Sri Lankan Tamils (Baumann 2006: 132). There are currently perhaps between fifty and one hundred temples in Germany. In Paris, where most of the French Hindus live, there were eleven Tamil Hindu temples in 2014 (Goreau 2014: 224), but currently the total number in France is probably less than twenty; in Switzerland twenty Hindu temples were established between the 1990s and early 2000s (Eulberg 2014: 118; Baumann 2009: 161), and in Norway the number of Hindu temples in 2018 was fifteen, with a new temple opening on average every second year (Jacobsen 2018). No exact total numbers are available, but there are perhaps around 400 Hindu temples in Europe.

Hindus have also established a number of Hindu sacred sites in Europe, which have become objects of pilgrimage travel and make up a sacred geography. Hindu pilgrimage places in Europe are of two types: first, places associated with Hindu gurus or disciples or particular places where their teachings have been established in noteworthy ways, and second, Hindu temples. At the pilgrimage places associated with Hindu gurus or disciples there are also temples, but in those cases, it is not the temple alone that is the reason for them becoming pilgrimage sites. The temple pilgrimage sites are often costly "display temples" built from the ground up in accordance with South Asian temple architecture. Another reason for a temple becoming a pilgrimage place may be that it is older than the others and is considered particularly "authentic" for some reason (see Jacobsen forthcoming). The *maṭh*s are centres for contemplative religious life for Hindu monks and nuns, and they are associated with the teachings of a guru and are often placed in rural areas surrounded by natural beauty, in contrast to the temples, which are usually located in urban areas. Some of the *maṭhs* in Europe have connections to centres in India or Sri Lanka, others have emerged based on activities of South Asian gurus who have settled in Europe. The gurus are mostly of South Asian ancestral background while the disciples are mostly people with European ancestral background, but there are exceptions. Important examples of the first kind are the Skanda Vale in South Wales, which receives around 90 000 pilgrims annually, the majority of them being Īḻam Tamils (Sri Lankan Tamils) and persons with Gujarati background living in Britain (Geaves 2007: 223), and the Krishna Valley ISKCON community in Hungary that was founded in 1994. Examples of the second kind are the Sri Kamadchi Ampal Temple in Hamm in Germany, which is the largest Hindu temple in Continental Europe, and the Highgatehill Murukaṉ temple in Britain. There are hardly any non-Tamil Hindu visitors to these Tamil Hindu temples on regular worship days, but during the festivals there are a number of non-Tamil Hindu visitors (Wilke 2013), which illustrates the inclusiveness of the Hindu pilgrimage traditions. The emergence of new Hindu pilgrimage sites has become a worldwide phenomenon, and Hindu sacred sites in Europe and the subsequent pilgrimage travel to these European sites have become part of Hinduism. The formation of new Hindu sacred sites in Europe and pilgrimage travel to them is not a surprise. It illustrates the importance of sacred sites and the process of the geographical expansion of Hinduism. It is a reminder of the historical process of the geographical expansion of Hindu traditions in India and South Asia (Jacobsen 2013). The religious narratives of

Hinduism are believed to have taken place on earth, in India and South Asia (Eck 2012; Jacobsen 2013), but as Hindus continue to migrate to other continents, such narratives also take place in new countries. Consequently, Hinduism does not seem to be bound to India as a sacred geography, as is sometimes claimed, but Hindus connect to space in a way that sacralises sites wherever Hindus live, including in Europe (see Jacobsen forthcoming).

Hinduism in Europe is mostly a decentralised religion, with each temple being an independent organisation with its own board and committee. The plurality of Hindu traditions and their different regional and national backgrounds are often reflected in the temple organisations. Sri Lankan Hindu Tamils organise their own temples and so do Indian Hindus from different regions. This is due to differences in national origin, languages, and religious and iconographic traditions, and because the temples also function as community centres.

*Saṃpradāya*s, Gurus, and Monastic Institutions in Europe

Some Hindu *saṃpradāya*s have a strong presence in Europe, foremost among them, especially in Britain, is Swaminarayan (see chapter 14). Other well-organised groups in Europe are ISKCON, the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and Brahma Kumaris. Among these, the Ramakrishna Math and Mission has the longest presence, and ISKCON is organised in the greatest number of countries. ISKCON is the dominant form of Hinduism in some East European countries (see the chapters on East European countries in part two). The case of ISKCON illustrates that Hindu gurus and their ideas and organisations have attracted a significant number of European followers. ISKCON is unique in the sense of its commitment to a Hindu god and to a Hindu identity, while many other guru movements often focus on spiritual methods and devotees' well-being rather than Hindu worldviews or identities. This is the case with many of the yoga and meditation movements. Some of these movements, such as the Art of Living Foundation, have followers in almost every country in Europe. *Āsana* (posture) yoga has had an enormous success globally over the last decades, including in Europe. Yoga's history in Europe goes back to the early decades of the twentieth century, but its current popularity is unprecedented (see chapter 18 on Yoga in Europe).

As a consequence, several distinct forms of Hinduism exist in Europe. The religion of temple Hinduism and the followers of Hindu gurus manifest and generate different styles of Hindu religion; similarly, diaspora Hinduism and Western followers of Hindu teachings often manifest different forms. Diaspora Hinduism is typically temple oriented, while Western followers of Hindu teachings are typically guru oriented. However, there are also many elements that overlap, and this is increasingly the case due to globalisation and also because of the growth of the consumerist middle class in India. In addition, ISKCON, the main organisation of converts to Hinduism in Europe, is a form of temple Hinduism, so these are not clear dichotomies. Still, Western followers and converts do constitute one identifiable dimension of Hinduism in Europe. In many countries they preceded the arrival of great numbers of migrants from South Asia, or their traditions developed side by side. The institution of the Hindu guru as an enlightened and divine individual also seems to have inspired some Europeans to establish themselves as similar types of spiritual leaders (see chapters in these volumes).

It has been common for scholars of religion and Indologists to argue for a polythetic approach when studying Hinduism. Hinduism is a mosaic of traditions, ideas, concepts, and activities. In addition, Hindu can be understood as an ethnic, cultural, and religious category. This approach suggests that a cluster of

qualities can be identified, each of which is important but not essential to all forms of Hinduism, that take into account Hindu practices, tropes, world views, and life views. Hinduism thus may also include people who are attracted to some of the elements such as yoga, Āyurvedic medicine and treatment methods, belief in reincarnation, the use of Hindu tropes such as karma, and even Hindu symbols (see chapter 26 on floating Hindu tropes in European culture and languages). This polythetic understanding makes the presence of Hinduism much greater than the specific presence of Hindus of South Asian ancestry in Europe and European followers of Hindu gurus. Hinduism is in this way also becoming an integral part of European culture, and many of the chapters in these volumes also describe and analyse this larger presence.

Early movements based on Hindu ideas that had an impact in Europe were the followers of Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission (see chapter 15 by Beckerlegge), Vedānta philosophy (see chapter 19 by Hurst), and not least, the Theosophical Society (see chapter 8 by Strube). Julian Strube shows how the Theosophical Society, as well as the different individuals and currents it inspired, played a major role in contemporary understandings of "Hinduism" in Europe and that the reception of Indian ideas in Europe had an important part in what is labelled "Western Esotericism." Western Esotericism played a role in popularising concepts (often transformed or misunderstood) from the Hindu traditions, such as *karma, cakra, tantra*, or *kuṇḍalinī*, and making them integral parts of modern spiritual or health cultures. European or American interpretations of yoga and tantra were inherently intertwined with the context of esotericism. When the "New Age" movement emerged in the 1960s, Western Esotericism had already transformed many of its Indian ideas. However, by that time, new Hindu gurus had started to make an impact. Hindu gurus began to gain a new following in Europe in the 1950s, but they did not become popular until the 1960s. Hindu gurus visited Europe, and many Western followers and spiritual seekers visited India. Hindu ascetics (the *guru* and the *sādhu*) started to attract Western youth, who travelled to India in search of spiritual India. Many of these young people brought ideas about Indian gurus and Indian spirituality back to Europe. Western followers of Sathya Sai Baba, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (Osho), and others promoted their thoughts in European environments. Kriya yoga schools promoted by disciples of Paramahansa Yogananda (1893–1952), who had settled in Los Angeles in the Unites States, were among the earliest and were founded in Switzerland in 1952 (see chapter 62 by Baumann). Yogananda's book *Autobiography of a Yogi* introduced Hindu spiritual ideas to many Europeans. The aforementioned George Harrison received a copy of the book from the musician Ravi Shankar when Harrison was learning how to play the sitar (Oliver 2015), and on the cover of the *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* record (released in 1967), in the montage of faces, are two Hindu gurus: Paramahansa Yogananda and Vivekananda. Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi* and Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga* were probably the two most influential books by Indian gurus to fashion the idea of spiritual India in Europe before a wave of new Hindu gurus started to visit Europe from the 1960s onward. European Indologists and religion scholars had of course prepared the ground for these gurus through their romantic ideas of India and its spirituality, foremost among them was probably Max Müller (see Müller 1878, 1883, 1899), but many Indologists, most taking a more sober scholarly approach and with different interests and intentions, also contributed to this (on German Indology in particular, see the chapter by Adluri and Bagchee). Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada, Sri Chinmoy, and Guru Maharaj were central gurus in the first wave of gurus arriving in the 1960s, and they visited many European countries. The popularity of yoga brought Europeans to India to attend yoga education sessions with yoga gurus such as Sivananda, Satyananda Saraswati, B.K.S. Iyengar, Pattabhi Jois, and numerous others,

and many started yoga schools when they returned to Europe. Some of the ascetic orders began to accept Western monks, primarily the Rāmānandīs, and more recently some of the traditional Akhāṛās have also started to initiate Western disciples. The Kumbha melās have increasingly functioned as places for the initiation of Europeans who want to follow Hindu traditions.

There are a number of Hindu monastic institutions in Europe with European Hindu monks. One of the larger ones is the Gitananda Ashram that is close to Savona in Italy and is reported to have around twenty monks and nuns. It is based on the teachings of Swami Gitananda Giri (1907–93) and was founded in 1984 by Sri Svami Yogananda Giri who, according to *Hinduism Today*, "has become Italy's foremost Hindu spiritual figure, and today his temple is a pilgrimage place for all Europeans." Skanda Vale in Wales, founded by the Hindu guru Subramaniyam (1929–2007), originally from Sri Lanka, has twenty-four monks and nuns, most of European origin, while a significant number of the visiting Hindu pilgrims are Sri Lankan Hindus. In Omkarananda Ashram in Winterthur, not far from Zürich, Switzerland, live some twenty-five monks and nuns. Paramahamsa Omkarananda Saraswati (b. 1930 in South India) was initiated by Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh in 1937, but according to *Hinduism Today*: "In 1966 the young swami was inwardly directed to teach seekers in Europe. He founded his first European center in Switzerland; later he established a major ashram in Austria, with centers in Germany, England and France. Ultimately he initiated nearly two hundred sannyasins and sannyasinis, who have faithfully run his centers since his mahasamadhi in Austria in 2000." Vedānta Centres in Europe are found in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Britain, Switzerland, and Russia (see also chapter 15 by Beckerlegge and chapter 19 by Suthren Hirst). Many of these also serve as small monasteries, and they are headed by one of the Ramakrishna Mission's *saṃnyāsin*s. The Centre Védantique monastery in Gretz-Armainvilliers, France, twenty miles southeast of Paris, was founded in 1948, and since 1990, it has been led by Swami Veetamohananda from Bengal, but most of the followers are French. According to Veetamohananda, "Europeans admire the Hindu ideals of tolerance and calmness and therefore accept Hinduism readily." The article in *Hinduism Today* about the monastery claims, "visitors come from all over Europe for the ceremonies and feasts, for lectures and interfaith gatherings, to see Swami or participate in the Hindu form of communal life." Several monks live in the *āśrama*. While these are some of the largest, there are a number of other Hindu monastic institutions in Europe (see the articles on the different countries in these volumes).

Western followers of Hindu traditions, it has been argued, often "created a religion in their own image and were attracted only to selected aspects of Indian religion and thought" (Geaves 2007: 80). The interests of Western followers were often focused on the traditions of religious thought and the traditions of the *saṃnyāsin*s. They have often been followers of specific Hindu *saṃpradāya*s. Ron Geaves is probably right in his complaint that the academic study of converts to Hindu traditions as part of "new religious movements" tended to distort the fact that the movements they joined most often were part of Hindu *saṃpradāya*s (Geaves 2007: 80). Their connection to Hindu traditional structures was often missed. ISKCON is, for example, a group within the tradition of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, which is not a new movement but has its origin in the figure of Caitanya (1486–1534) and the writings of his disciples, the Gosvāmis, but with a large number of gurus.

Access to Indian languages was important in order to make Hinduism known, and Indology played an essential role in making the texts of Hinduism available in European languages. Travel reports from India, colonialist knowledge production, academic scholarship on textual traditions, anthropological studies,

and missionaries and novelists, all contributed to the information and misinformation about Hindu religious traditions. The understanding of Hindu religion has been weak in Christian Europe, and the misinterpretations of followers of Hinduism in the European environment illustrate how little knowledge of Hinduism there was, as well as the prejudices involved. Often there was an inability to understand the followers as people who adhered to the Hindu religion; instead, they were understood as Western religious deviants and representatives of a "new religious movement," although their religion was new only in the West. A real change in understanding came only when South Asian Hindus started to settle in Europe in greater numbers. The arrival of Hindus in Europe, and the establishment of temples and their ritual traditions in public spaces, added new dimensions to Hinduism in Europe, and they brought the plurality of traditions of living Hinduism to the Continent.

Concerning the study of Hindus in Britain, the largest Hindu population in Europe, Geaves argues that the picture of Hinduism has been distorted not only by the disregard for the Hindu converts' connection to *saṃpradāya*s but also by the dominance of the Gujaratis from East Africa, which led to an exaggerated interest in research on Gujarati Vaiṣṇavism and in the *saṃpradāya*s of those who had relocated to the West from Africa. According to Geaves: "There is little study of the diaspora communities that have arrived direct from India and even less of non-Indian Hinduism, as, for example in Tamil communities from Sri Lanka, Mauritius or South-East Asia. Consequently the distorted Western reproduction of Hinduism with its Orientalist undertones has never been seriously challenged by studies of the British Hindu community" (Geaves 2007: 82). However, it is important to point out that these distortions have not been dominant in the studies of Hindu traditions in Continental Europe, which constitute a significant part of the scholarship on Hinduism in Europe, and which have focused primarily on Sri Lankan Tamil Hindus. The Sri Lankan Tamil Hindus have been the largest group of Hindus in many of these countries. With new scholarship focusing especially on the Hindu traditions of Sri Lankan Tamils in Britain (David 2012; Jones 2013, 2015, 2016) the situation has changed (see also the chapters in these volumes). One unique case in Europe is the Surinamese Hindus who are the dominant group in the Netherlands (see chapter 50 by Swamy). The approach in the chapters in these volumes is on Hindu traditions in Europe as pluralistic and as having: backgrounds from many countries in Asia and beyond, strong traditions of temple worship, and a significant number of followers of teachings of different Hindu gurus. In addition, yoga has become a main point of contact with Hindu ideas, concepts, and practices for many people. Hindu traditions in Europe are dynamic and a subject that continues to develop.

Public Representations

In the United States, public representations of Hinduism have become increasingly contested (see Zavos et al. 2012), but in Europe this is less so. In Europe, ISKCON in particular has demonstrated an interest in umbrella initiatives that seek to represent Hindus in broader arenas (see the chapters on Hinduism and Public Space, and Hindu Umbrella Organisations). ISKCON has become engaged in the representation of Hinduism in Europe, especially in the arena of education in Britain and in the Hindu Forum of Europe. Prema Kurien has, in the case of the United States, noted that "the political activism of Hindu Indian Americans in the US is not just a reflection of 'homeland politics' but that it is also 'made in America' as a response to the realities they confront in the US" (Kurien 2012: 97). In the United States there are a large number of Hindu umbrella organisations, both branches of the Sangh Parivar (RSS, VHP, and BJP) and organisations interested in promoting Hinduism under an "Indic," "Dharmic," or "Vedic" identity. This contrasts with the situation in Europe. The strong Hindu diaspora

in the United States might eventually also have an influence on Hinduism in Europe, but one significant difference between Hinduism in Europe and in the United States is the dominance of Indian Hindus in the United States (Kurien 2012) and a greater parity between the plurality of Hindu traditions in Europe. The absence of the dominance of Indian Hindus is mainly due to the strong presence of Sri Lankan Tamil Hindus in many European countries. Indian Hindus are also a minority in the Netherlands, as Hindus from Suriname dominate. Hindus in Europe have also arrived from a number of other countries, such as Nepal, Mauritius, Malaysia, Singapore, Trinidad, and so on. In many European nations, Indian Hindus are in the minority among Hindus. In Britain the situation has been unique, with Hindus from East Africa forming the majority, but there has also been a large inflow of Tamils from Sri Lanka and their many temples have increasingly been shaping Hinduism in Britain (see chapter 65 on the United Kingdom). One consequence of this plurality of Hindu traditions is that *hindutva* and Hindu nationalism (which in reality is a nationalism limited mainly to Indian Hindus or Hindus with an Indian background) have been less able to influence Hinduism and the public representation of Hinduism in Europe than in the United States. The only nation where they have had a significant presence is in Britain. By the end of the 1990s, in Britain there were twelve branches of the VHP and sixty branches of the RSS (Brown 2006: 167). For Sri Lankan Hindus, however, the idea of *hindutva* is of no concern and is perceived as relating to politics in India. The RSS does nevertheless have branches, called Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) in a number of European countries. In some countries in Europe, Sikhs constitute a significant percentage of the Indian diaspora, which also limits the influence of the RSS. Conflicts similar to those in the United States, such as the California Textbook Controversy and the mobilisation against religion scholars (see Brown 2006: 168–69), have not taken place in Europe. This does not mean it might not happen in the future as the Indian Hindu diaspora in the United States increases its global influence. But for now, the absence of the dominance of any single group characterises European Hinduism. <>

MANY MAHABHÁRATAS edited by Nell Shapiro Hawley, Sohini Pillai [SUNY Series in Hindu Studies, SUNY State University of New York Press, 9781438482415]

MANY MAHĀBHĀRATAS is an introduction to the spectacular and long-lived diversity of Mahābhārata literature in South Asia. This diversity begins with the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*, an early epic poem that narrates the events of a catastrophic fratricidal war. Along the way, it draws in nearly everything else in Hindu mythology, philosophy, and story literature. The magnitude of its scope and the relentless complexity of its worldview primed the Mahābhārata for uncountable tellings in South Asia and beyond. For two thousand years, the instinctive approach to the Mahābhārata has been not to consume it but to create it anew.

The many Mahābhāratas of this book come from the first century to the twenty-first. They are composed in nine different languages--Apabhramsha, Bengali, English, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Tamil, and Telugu. Early chapters illuminate themes of retelling within the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* itself, demonstrating that the story's propensity for regeneration emerges from within. The majority of the book, however, reaches far beyond the Sanskrit epic. Readers dive into classical dramas, premodern vernacular poems, regional performance traditions, commentaries, graphic

novels, political essays, novels, and contemporary theater productions--all of them Mahābhāratas.

Because of its historical and linguistic breadth, its commitment to primary sources, and its exploration of multiplicity and diversity as essential features of the Mahābhārata's long life in South Asia, **MANY MAHĀBHĀRATAS** constitutes a major contribution to the study of South Asian literature and offers a landmark view of the field of Mahābhārata studies.

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Why would a scholar of the Rámáyana tradition agree to write a foreword for a volume about diverse tellings of the Mahábhárata tradition, a work that she labeled "the other epic" decades ago when she studied it in a graduate seminar? After all, as many have pointed out, in Sanskrit literary culture, the two texts do not even fall into the same category: Valmiki's Rámáyana is celebrated as the first Sanskrit kávya (ornate work of narrative poetry), while the Sanskrit Mahábhárata is often viewed as itihasa (history). Moreover, the two texts differ in other ways as well. David Shulman sees the Ramáyana as characterized by the "poetics of perfection" but the Mahabhárata as informed by the "poetics of dilemma." Sheldon Pollock contrasts how each text describes its particular brand of conflict, arguing that Rama's enemy, Rávana, is "othered," but that the Kaurava and ^andava antagonists are "brothered" since they share familial bonds.

Yet rather than perceiving the two as irreconcilable, let us consider that encountering the Mahábhárata and Rámáyana narrative traditions in tandem yields two different—but complementary—kinds of insights about the "big questions" of existence. Moreover, as Gary Tubb reminds us, both texts are ákhyana (story literature), which "edifies gently, after the fashion of a helpful friend, by presenting interesting examples of what fruit befell the actions of others in the past." While the Rámáyana serves as a narrative of ideals, the Mahábhárata presents a more realistic reflection of how elites wield power and resort to violence. Today, when political leaders in many countries propagate untruths, scapegoat minorities, and engage in corruption of unprecedented magnitude, edification from narratives that have stood the test of time should be welcomed. They provide "examples of what fruit befell the actions of others in the past;' but because they continue to be retold and reinterpreted, they also allow us to ask new questions.

Before moving to some of the riches of the volume you are reading, permit me to comment on a little-known retelling of a Mahábhárata episode that serves as an example of how a new telling can prompt reflection on a timely issue—in this case, how society perceives transgender individuals. Muthal Naidoo, a South African of Indian descent, wrote Flight from the Mahabharath in the early 1990s. The play represents an effort to dramatize the dangers that ensue when an entrenched class divides other humans into essentialized groups in order to rob them of agency. Naidoo's play, which rests on the premise that specific genres allow characters more or less freedom to act, presents differences in gender, caste, and sexuality through the lens of a nearly all-female cast filled with characters from the Mahábhárata narrative. Using a play within her play, Naidoo imaginatively recasts an Indian narrative to critique the ideologies of apartheid while remaining beyond the radar screen of government censors. I chose this play to illustrate how a fresh interpretation can open up a narrative. It is not new to condemn the Sanskrit Mahábhárata for limiting women to the roles ^f wives and mothers, but Naidoo's play

innovates by making such criticism the starting point of her story, thereby broadening the scope and depth of the Mahábhárata tradition.

Naidoo's play opens as Draupadi leads a group of women out of the "Epic." No longer do they intend to remain in a narrative that has locked hem into gender roles that impel them to bear and raise sons but deprive them of the ability to prevent their boys from dying in wars provoked by their fathers. Fleeing the Epic, they enter the genre of drama. Upon arrival, they quickly change from saris to less constrictive garb and celebrate their ability as women to take control over their own lives. Yet challenges to their self-contained new world soon emerge. Two men dressed as women appear and ask to join this new created place: Brhannada (Arjuna in makeup, jewelry, and a dancer's clothing, with a grammatically female name) and Sikhandin (Princess Ambá, reborn male in order to slay Bhisma). The two insist that the Epic has victimized not only Draupadi and her women companions bill them as well. They demonstrate that they have rejected masculinity by pointing out that they have vowed henceforth never to shed blood. After arguing about whether to admit the two to the world that the women have worked so hard to create, the women finally decide to let the two join them.

Immediately another dilemma arises. Since epic plots rest on conflict chat leads to war, how can the cast of the drama reject Epic patriarchy, which glorifies violence? Subhadrá asks whether removing violence will drain an epic of its excitement. Brhannadá responds by offering to teach the women martial arts so as to free them from depending on men for Protection. Agreeing to learn self-defense, the women adopt the proposal of Rádhá (Karna's foster mother) to rid their drama of heroes and villains, to avoid complicity in the glorification of bloodshed. The drama's director, Draupadi, now announces that they can free themselves from Epic constraints by retelling their stories such that they align with the new identities they have embraced. Draupadi plans to alter her story so that her sole husband is Arjuna, airbrushing away her other four—but Sikhandin quickly jumps in and changes Draupadi's svayamvara (bride-groom choice ceremony) into a dance competition to showcase Brhannadá's skills. Draupadi now realizes that the women's stories are interdependent; changing one means changing others. Indeed, Brhannadá eagerly rejects his (or her) Epic roles as Arjuna the warrior and Arjuna the husband, but Brhannadá's plan means that Draupadi cannot enact her own. Since Brhannadá left the Epic in order to escape both warfare and wife, he (or she) threatens to withdraw from the drama. Immediately, Draupadi withdraws, too. The play continues without them. What's more, the Mahabharatas male roles are now played by women in disguise. During the scene in the assembly hall, the actress playing Duryodhana pulls off Draupada's sari—but Draupadi, having left the scene, is now played by Sikhandin. Although many tellings of this episode show Krsna saving Draupadi from humiliation by lengthening her sari indefinitely, no divine intervention occurs here. Instead, Duryodhana strips off her sari and attempts to shame her by placing her on his lap. When Sikhandin's wig falls off, Duryodhana discovers that "she" is a man, and flees in homophobic terror. By the next scene, Brhannadá has rejoined the drama and narrates Arjuna's story: male gender constructs, Brhannnadá says, were forced on Arjuna since boyhood; he escaped gender entrapment only when he took on the guise of Brhannadá, in effect "coming out of the closet." This admission incites a debate with Sikhandin about the best way to win respect for same-sex love. Sikhandin argues that if all the cast members recount their stories, they will form a community where they all accept one another. Disagreeing, Brhannadá proposes to make Vyasa's authority serve their cause. Since the author created characters that depart from heterosexuality, people will realize that "Vyása invented transsexuality" and accept it? When Draupadi overhears the debate, she realizes that the two are lovers, and returns to the Epic. After more challenges to the drama, Draupadi, returns from

the Epic and admits she had been duped by patriarchal notions of romance to believe that she should marry only a successful warrior. Her experiences in the drama, she says, enabled her to see through such constructs. The cast welcomes her back and the play ends with singing and dancing to music of the rainbow nation, South Africa. The twists and turns of Mahabhárata and Ramayana traditions multiply as one moves past the prodigious Sanskrit telling to encompass each story's many tellings in different genres, regional languages, and performance traditions—including works such as Muthal Naidoo's play, which was written in English from South Africa. Over time, rigid boundaries between and within narrative traditions become more permeable. That accounts for the Sanskrit Mahabhdrata's brief account of how Bhima searches for a saugandhika flower to give Draupadi and, along the way, encounters his half-brother, Hanumán—Ráma's devotee and a major figure in the Rámáyana in his own right (3.3.146-50). Kattayam Tampurán (ca. 1675-1725) transforms this short incident into the nightlong Kalyanasaugandhikam ("The Flower of Good Fortune"), a beloved work from the Kathakali dance-drama repertoire in southeast coastal India. Both the textual account and the dance-drama center on this encounter between Bhima and Hanumán, each a hero in a separate text but through whose interaction boundaries between narrative traditions appear more elastic. Another example is a Tamil epistolary story published in 1948 by Kumudini, nor de plume of Ranganayaki Thatham (1905-1986). Adopting the voice of a ráksasi (demoness), a grandmother proposes that her granddaughter Hidimba (a ráksasi from the Mahábhárata) would make a good bride for the grandson of Rávana's brother, Kumbhakarna (a ráksasa or "demon" from the Rámáyana). The story's humor derives from the fantastical notion of a marital alliance between nonhuman characters from two different texts. In this way, hard and fast distinctions between these two narrative traditions begin to lose their bite.

Readers, I heartily commend Many Mahábháratas to you for its range of essays by authors trained in diverse academic disciplines, including literature (literary theory, poetics, Sanskrit aesthetics), theater and performance studies, gender studies, politics, and history. When we compare it to a volume of similar scope from 1991, Essays on the Mahábhárata (edited by Arvind Sharma), we see striking shifts in the field. Many Mahábhdratas marks a moment in South Asian studies when a new generation of scholars has emerged—a number of them at early stages of their careers, which bodes well for future research on the Mahabharata tradition. In addition, the volume's purview not only includes new essays on the Sanskrit Mahábharata but moves beyond it to analyze the richness of Mahabharata-inspired Sanskrit dramas, among them some rich examples of classical kduya. Essays on regional and vernacular Mahabharatas demonstrate the breadth of retellings that emerged between the ninth century and the eighteenth. The volume's prioritizing of less accessible Mahabharatas provides a service to those exploring texts about which little has been written in English. The section on modern Mahabharatas provides a selective yet wide-ranging orientation to materials such as graphic novels, nineteenth-century debates about Indian history, nationalism, and modernism, as well as postcolonial representations of Draupadi and Ekalavya. This volume demonstrates not only the ongoing energy and creativity of the Mahabharata tradition but also the energy and creativity of those who study it. I invite you to enjoy the feast of Mahabharatas that follows. <>

POEMS FROM THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB by Guru Nanak, translated by Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh [Murty Classical Library of India, Harvard University Press, 9780674258518]

Guru Nanak (1469–1539), a native of Panjab, founded the Sikh religion. His vast corpus of nearly a thousand hymns forms the core of the **GURU GRANTH SAHIB**, the Sikhs' sacred book of ethics, philosophy, and theology. The scripture was expanded and enriched by his nine successors, and Sikhs continue to revere it today as the embodiment of their tradition. **POEMS FROM THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB** offers a compilation of spiritual lyrics showcasing the range and depth of Guru Nanak's literary style while conveying his pluralistic vision of the singular divine and his central values of equality, inclusivity, and civic action. This new English translation includes celebrated long hymns such as "Alphabet on the Board" and "Ballad of Hope" alongside innovative shorter poems like "The Hours." It is presented here alongside the original text in Gurmukhi, the script developed by the Guru himself.

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Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak, the founder of the religion of the Sikhs, was born in 1469 in Panjab, a region resounding with the songs of Bhagats and Sufis, lovers of god from various Indic and Islamic traditions. He died in his native Panjab in 1539. His vast literary corpus-974 hymns are recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib (GGS), the scripture of the Sikhs—embodies his pluralistic vision of the singular divine (ikka) in a multiethnic, multilinguistic, and multireligious world.

Although historical documentation on Guru Nanak is largely lacking, his life story is deeply imprinted in the collective memory of the Sikhs. Basic sources for his biography include Sikh scripture, the works of the earliest Sikh theologian, Bhai Gurdas (1551-1636), and popular stories (sakh^s) about Guru Nanak's birth and life (janam) that began to circulate shortly after his death. Quasi-mythic in nature, many of these Jan^ms^kh^s set the stage for Guru Nanak's compositions. As they highlight his core values, they shaped and crystallized them for future generations.

Our sources uniformly portray Guru Nanak as a spiritual person who was born into the Khatri mercantile community in the village of Talvandi (now in Pakistan), married Sulakhni, and had two sons. He was close to his older sister Nanaki. After her marriage he even lived in her home in Sultanpur Lodi, where he worked in the employ of its Muslim governor. In Sultanpur he experienced a religious

revelation, and thereafter traveled with his Muslim companion, Bhai Mardana, to places far beyond the Panjab, visiting sacred sites and meeting with diverse groups of Hindus, Muslims, siddhas (perfected yogis), Buddhists, and Jams. While Bhai Mardana strummed on his rabab, a divinely inspired Nanak would burst into song. Bhai Gurdas describes Guru Nanak as carrying a small volume with him, most likely a manuscript of his own hymns. Eventually, Guru Nanak established a town named Kartarpur on the banks of the Ravi River, where he settled down. The men and women who gathered around Guru Nanak to hear and sing his sublime poetry and practice the values of equality, civic action, and inclusivity formed the first Sikh community.

Guru Nanak was fully conscious of the novelty of his message and practice, and therefore sought to build an infrastructure that would provide momentum for later generations. Before his death he appointed his disciple Lahina as successor: he gave Lahina his book of verse and named him Angad, a limb (añga) of his own. A bodily link with poetry is underscored in several biographical stories about Guru Nanak. In one he is bathing with a jug of water, watched by his future successor, Guru Angad. Pointing to a blue-black patch of skin on his ribcage, Guru Nanak explains to Angad that the night before a young shepherd was reciting his hymns Arati and S^hilá (chapter i) on ground covered with thorny bushes, and Nanak was accidentally bruised brushing against them. That the Guru was embodied, physically present, in his verse is strikingly conveyed. Along with Guru Angad, the viewer perceives the porous nature of Guru Nanak's body—its fusion with his intangible word. In another memorable illustration from the late nineteenth century, Guru Nanak is seen wearing an outfit with verses from the GGS and the holy Qur'an inscribed all over the front and sleeves. In multiple ways, then, in both word and image, the first Sikh Guru is presented effacing divisions: between himself (gurú) and his poetry (báni), between Sikh and Muslim, body and spirit, language and reality, the temporal and the timeless.

The Guru Granth Sahib

Guru Nanak's nine successors, the living gurus from Guru Angad (1504-1552) to Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708), carried on his spiritual legacy. The second Guru added his writings to the ones he inherited and passed them on to the next. With the third, Guru Amar Das (1479-1574), there is actual evidence of a sacred anthology in the making: two volumes in the Gurmukhi script created under his supervision in the town of Goindval are still extant. For his successor he chose his daughter Bibi Bhani's husband, Ram Das (1534-1581), who continued to compose hymns and foster the self-consciousness of the Sikhs. Their son Arjan, the poetically accomplished fifth Guru (1563-1606), produced the authoritative collection that has become known as the Guru Granth Sahib (lit. "the honored Guru in book form").

Since the fellowship of Sikhs had increased numerically and spread geographically from the early days of Guru Nanak, a central canon was needed to guide their spiritual and moral life. Guru Arjan made selections from the works of the preceding four gurus, from his own expansive repertoire, and from the compositions of Hindu and Muslim saints that were a part of his broader South Asian heritage. With Bhai Gurdas as his scribe, Guru Arjan methodically compiled this entire literary heritage in a single volume, and ceremoniously installed it in 1604 in a specially constructed building, the Golden Temple in Amritsar. This text is known as the Kartarpur volume. Based on it, the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, prepared the Damdami volume that added the hymns of the ninth Guru, his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur (16211675). This is the final canonical version of the GGS.8 The tenth teacher ended the line of succession by investing the role of guru in the scripture itself. Ever since, Sikhs revere the GGS as the

embodiment of their gurus. The sacred book constitutes the core of Sikh ethics, philosophy, and aesthetics and presides at all their public and private ceremonies, rituals, and worship.

This textual corpus contains not only the verses of the Sikh Gurus but also those of several Hindu and Muslim holy men. The compositions span five centuries and geographical regions across the Indian subcontinent, bringing together a range of religions, cultures, ethnicities, languages, and musical measures. Here we find one of the earliest compilations of Kabir's poems, as well as the earliest extant example of Panjabi poetry by Shaikh Farid, one of the founding fathers of the popular Chishti Sufi order in India. The various authors exalt the divine One in a kaleidoscope of images, allusions, and symbols; they also offer compelling critiques of the ancient caste system, untouchability, religious divisions, and basic human degradation. Since it records the

compositions of some of the founding voices of several Indian religious traditions like Kabir and Shaikh Farid, some for the first time, the GGS serves as an important historical archive.

Guru Nanak's Poetry and Philosophy

Most of Guru Nanak's 974 hymns appear in nineteen of the thirty-one sections of the GGS, based on the traditional Indian musical system, the system of ragas. Each raga has its specific characteristics: a season prescribed for its singing, time of the day, an emotional mood, and a particular cultural climate, as each melody evolved in a specific region. Sometimes a variant or style of the raga is also indicated by the termgharu (lit. "house") followed by a numeral. Besides classical modes, Guru Nanak's hymns draw upon folk-music patterns with simpler beats, popular tunes, and regional devotional (bhakti) and Sufi forms with their rhythms and melodies. What matters most is spiritual efficacy: "We may win acclaim singing ragas, but without the name our mind is false and corrupt," he says. Guru Nanak's aesthetic consists of hearing, singing, and rejoicing in the infinite ensemble of vibrations: individual (the heartbeat of every species), social (of every class, caste, ethnicity), and of the ever-expanding multiverse. After all, it is the singular divine who plays the stringed kiñguri instrument in each heart.

Guru Nanak's lyrics embrace the One in a variety of personal relations as well, including father, mother, brother, friend, lover, husband: "You are our mother, father, near and far; you permeate each of us." Particularly striking is his maternal imagery, which celebrates the infinite One through the processes of gestation, birthing, and lactation. In multiple ways he offers exciting possibilities of relating sensuously with the transcendent One: the joy and the enjoyer, the bride in her wedding dress and the groom on the nuptial bed, the fisherman and the fish, the waters and the trap, the weight holding the net as well as the lost ruby swallowed by the fish. Guru Nanak's paradoxes break the conventional mode of thinking, and his metaphors expand the human experience.

Vismádu (wondrous joy) is the abiding mood of Guru Nanak's wide-ranging corpus. In a passage from the ballad in Asa raga his astonishment rings aloud over and over: "vismádu rúpa vismádu rañga ... vismádu dharati vismádu kháni ("Wondrous the forms, wondrous all the hues ... wondrous this earth, wondrous its species"). The boundless One is physically seen, heard, smelled, and felt in every bit of the finite world. As the boundaries of an entity collapse, the Guru's wonder moves on to the next, and so he stays perpetually inebriated: "You are One, but with so many forms, says Nanak, I just can't grasp yourwonders." The feel of absolute unity in its magnificent diversity keeps the magic going.

Guru Nanak also presents the image of a modern instructor. He prescribes no rules, gives no doctrinal or epistemic system to follow; instead, he motivates listeners and readers to search for themselves,

think about the choices they make, and perform actions mindfully. At the opening of his Japuji he names the One being as truth, but immediately asks: "How to be true? How to break the wall of lies?" Poetically he questions, challenges, overturns assumptions. A pungent juxtaposition of images jolts readers from placid acceptance of moral codes of purity and pollution sanctioned by society for millennia: "If the outfit is stained with blood we call it polluted, and those who suck the blood of humans we call pure-minded?" He provokes his readers to think anew and match their actions to their thoughts. Wit and sarcasm enrich his interactive style.

Guru Nanak's vivid imagery from the domestic, economic, and political spheres reinforces his world-affirming, action- oriented philosophy. Religiosity is not separated from the material, the practical, or the public; there is nothing pejorative about making business deals, trading, and earning profit. Commercial language with its "principle," "profit," "loss; and soon, is extensive in Guru Nanak's canon. Having worked in granaries, he was familiar with it and uses its lexicon with an innate force. Importantly, he opens up the commercial infrastructure equally for all members of his society: "We are all peddlers of our merchant, the heavyweight owner." The stratified caste system is upended; Vaishyas are not the only ones to be involved in business. Commerce is beneficial for every individual and for the larger community.

In his life-affirming philosophy, the timeless One actively functions in and through the various tenses of time: "true in the beginning, true across the ages, true now also, Nanak, true forevermore." His corpus vividly conveys his fascination with time, for he constantly draws attention to temporality and the role and responsibility of humans as they passage through time—cosmic, personal, chronological, historical, timeless. He innovatively utilizes genres based on time like "The Hours," "Days of the Lunar Month," and "Song of the Twelve Months" that were shared by devotional poets in North India. Indeed, as this volume exemplifies, time clicks thematically and stylistically throughout his works.

The Selection

Guru Nanak's literary corpus is enormous, and my objective in the selection process has been to gather the range and depth of Guru Nanak's voice. I also wanted to maintain the poetic sanctity of both the collective liturgical hymns and the várs, and as a result a few of the compositions of his successors are included in chapters 1 and 2, in the same format as they appear in the original GGS text. Several of Guru Nanak's long and popular hymns are presented here in full: "Morning Hymn" (japuji), "Alphabet on the Board" (Pati likhi), "Dialogue with the Siddhas" (Siddha gosti), "Song of the Twelve Months" (Bárahmáha), "Days of the Lunar Month" (Thitiñ), and "Ballad of Hope" (Asa di var), as are his shorter poems with special motifs like "The Hours" (Pahare), "Songs of Mourning" (Aláhniáñ), "Verses on Emperor Babur" (Bahrani), "The Graceless" (Gacaji),

and "The Graceful" (Sucaji). This compilation should serve as an accessible resource for the study of the first Guru's spirituality and literary style.

Chapter 1 contains Guru Nanak's hymns recited during morning and evening worship, going back to the daily practice established in the first Sikh community at Kartarpur. According to Bhai Gurdas, "In the morning Japu was recited, and in the evening Arati and Sohilá.." Guru Nanak's "Morning Hymn," Japaji (japa meaning "recitation, repetition" + ji, a suffix of respect), metamorphoses chronological time into timeless ambrosia, amrita velá (stanza 4), suggesting that the invigorated consciousness of early morning be kept perpetually alive. The epilogue to the Japuji by the second Guru highlights the organic texture of

Sikh scripture: through their enjoined cadences of words and rhythm, their warm sense of kinship, and their spiritual joy, the different gurus become one voice in the GGS.

"That Gate" (So darn), recited during the reflective period of dusk, is a collection of nine hymns in different ragas—four by Guru Nanak, three by Guru Ram Das, and two by Guru Arjan. This evening hymn begins by reprising, with slight differences, stanza 27 from the Japuji. Sohila, meaning "praise," is recited before going to bed, and at the cremation ground when there is a death in the family. Paradoxically, Guru Nanak depicts the dark experienced in the cycle of human existence in the musical measure of light (Gauri Dipaki raga, or "Gauri of Light"). With its wedding metaphors, the hymn synchronizes the polar rites of marriage and death. In public and private worship it is recited as the GGS is put to rest for the night, with its "worship" (aratf) segment being especially festive. At the Golden Temple in Amritsar, for instance, the Arati sung by the congregation sonorously fills the air as the GGS is taken in a gold and silver palanquin from the central shrine for its nightly rest. The ceremonial opening of the GGS every morning and its closing to rest at night celebrate the existential dimension of time with its constant change, movement, and succession.

Chapter 2 contains the ballad in Asa raga. In many places of worship this composition has become a part of the daily morning liturgy. The rhythmically repeated chime of its moral guidelines directs the actions that singers and listeners do over the course of the day.

Chapter 3 comprises the Siddhagosti. This composition in seventy-three stanzas recounts Guru Nanak's discourse (gosti) with perfected yogis during his travels. Naths and the siddhas appear interchangeably in his work, though technically they were two different ascetic sects. The text mentions historical interlocutors who predate Guru Nanak by several centuries. The location of the dialogue, its time frame, and the speakers are not explicit; nevertheless, Guru Nanak's synchronization of time with the timeless One comes out robustly in this dialogical format. Taking on yogic diction, he invests the transient clothes of the yogis, their earrings, and the items they carry with everlasting spirituality.

Chapter 4 is a selection of Guru Nanak's thematic compositions. "The Hours" (Pahare) draws upon a traditional poetic form based on the Indian time frame in which night and day were each divided into four quarters or watches (paharu). The hymn charts chronological time through the passage of gestation, infancy, youth, and old age.

"The Days of the Lunar Month" (Thitih) in twenty stanzas is a paean to the divine glory felt intensely each day of the month. It is composed in a poetic form based on the monthly cycle of lunar days (thitz), different from solar days (vára). The poem starts with ekama, the first day of lunar fortnight, and proceeds to amavasa, night of the new moon.

His "Song of the Twelve Months" is in the barahmasa genre,35 "one of the chief carriers of a shared poetic language of emotions-and-the seasons in North India "36 Guru Nanak's hymn in seventeen sestets synthesizes the universal and personal dimensions of lived time through the psychological and spiritual journey of a young woman longing for her divine beloved over the twelve months of the year.

In his "Songs of Mourning" Guru Nanak movingly utilizes the folk genre of the dirge (alahnian). Traditionally, dirges were sung by a chorus of women eulogizing the dead person as part of mourning customs. The group of women would gather for several days at the house of the dead person and wail, beating their breasts and thighs. Guru Nanak shifts the entire scenario by making readers squarely

confront and overcome the much-feared phenomenon, and rejoice in the splendor of this world. His conclusion: "This world is sheer magic" (baji hai ehu samsáro), because it is the maker's "infinite form" (rúpu apáro).

The four "Verses on Emperor Babur" bring attention to historical time. These have collectively come down in Sikh literature as aberrant: three in Asa raga and the fourth in Tilang raga. Guru Nanak witnessed Emperor Babur's conquest of the relatively peaceful regime of the Lodi Sultans, and his establishment of the Mughal Empire in 1526. As Harbans Singh notes, these hymns by Guru Nanak are "unexcelled for their power of expression and moral keenness. His poetry has important social meaning. Nowhere else in contemporary literature are the issues of the medieval Indian situation comprehended with such clarity or presented in tones of greater urgency."

Guru Nanak's "Alphabet on the Board" has its own historical significance. As discussed earlier, this thirty-live-stanza acrostic traces the new Gurmukhi alphabet in which the GGS was recorded.

"The Graceless" and "The Graceful" express the two poles of the moral axis central in Guru Nanak's work, the gurmukhi and the manmukhi. The "guru-facing" (whose faces, or mukha, are turned to the guru), like a graceful woman, see, hear, breathe, and taste the presence of the timeless One. Those facing (mukha) their self (mans, which in Panjabi means both mind and heart) are their antithesis. Like a graceless woman, the "self-facing" manmukhi have no feel for the universal One.

Chapter 5 is a collection of Guru Nanak's compositions arranged according to various ragas in which they are to be sung and played. These selections are drawn from the middle section of the GGS that constitutes the main body of the scriptural text. The literary textures of his compositions are in harmony with their melodic systematization based on seasons and times of the day. Keeping with the musical melody, his hymns in Basant raga, for instance, bloom with the glory of the spring and celebrate the infinite One as a tiny bumblebee, delicious fruit, and lush vine—all at once. Guru Nanak's hymns set in nineteen of the thirty-one GGS ragas, illustrate his wide range of poetic and musical artistry.

Overall, Guru Nanak's literary repertoire demonstrates his abundant knowledge of texts, myths, ideologies, social codes, musical modes, and practices current in medieval North India, and these selections sample that vibrant spectrum. They convey his joyous exaltation of the wondrous One, his pathos at the devastation of Hindu and Muslim masses by Babur's men, his pungent critique of the dogmatic and the religious elites, his exhortation to recognize the universal One, and his sensuous feel for the transcendent divine in every finite form. Poetry is universal, Aristotle said, and Guru Nanak's lyrical oeuvre with its pluralistic values, diction, genres, and styles calls for resonance within and among traditions. His timeless melodies intersect with concrete historical moments, and in today's global society with its escalating divisions and polarizations, they can serve cultural, political, psychological, social, spiritual, and environmental needs.

Unfortunately, the walls of today were also a harsh reality during his lifetime. In a sad tone Guru Nanak wonders, "What can the poor Veda or Kateb do when nobody recognizes the singular One?" "Veda" is his metonym for the entire Indic tradition, not just the Veda, but also the Puranas, the sastras, and the smrtis. The "Kateb" is its Islamic counterpart—the holy Qur'an and also the Tawrut (Torah), the Zabur (Psalms), and the Injil (Gospel). Clearly, the problem of "inter" and "intra" religious conflicts does not lie in the texts but in us humans, who neither reflect (bicárai) on them nor recognize (busjhehi) the singular One (ikka eka). <>

TANTRIC TEACHINGS OF THE KĀLIKĀ PURĀṆA by Karel R. van Kooij [Series: Brill's Indological Library, Brill, 9789004470293]

At a lonely place, in a remote hermitage somewhere in the Himālaya, the god Śiva is teaching Tantric worship to his humiliated sons, who want to regain their divine status: "You should worship the goddess Mahāmāyā Kālikā". Remarkable are his 'talks' about preliminary rituals, mudrās, and animal as well as human sacrifice. The Tantric Teachings form the inner core of the Kālikā Purāna, i.e. 'Old Stories about Kālikā', composed by a learned Brāhmin about a thousand years ago in Kāmarūpa (Assam). Careful listening to the text has been my first priority when presenting the relevant passages in text and translation.

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A Neglected Manuscript

One hitherto almost neglected manuscript of the Kãlikã Purã^a (kP) deserves our first attention, because its colophon might contain a key to a more firmly dating of the text. The manuscript is in the possession of the Calcutta Sanskrit College Library, where it was stored long ago. In the Catalogue of 1902 it is described as follows: the script is Niãri, which might be another term for Newãri writing. The scribal colophon, again according to the Catalogue, gives the surprising date of '202 Nepal Era'. If the date would be correct, the manuscript would have been written in 1081/2 CE in Nepal. It would establish a firm terminus ante quem for the final redaction of the text, because it would mean that the kP reached Kathmandu Valley before that time. However, its authenticity is not evident.

Hazra made a brief note of the manuscript without discussing the date given in the colophon (Hazra 1963 ii, 195, note 421). The editor of the critical edition, B.N. Shastri (1991,19) just noticed the manuscript without further comments.

According to the Catalogue of 1902, the writing material is "country-made colourless paper", not the expected palm-leaf. As is well known, paper became the accepted writing material in Nepal only from the 14th century onward. This fact alone may explain why the colophon did not receive proper attention. Are manuscript and scribal colophon to be trusted? The possibility that an old palm-leaf

manuscript had been copied on paper including the original scribal colophon cannot be ruled out. Copying old manuscripts while keeping the original scribal colophon is attested in Nepal from the time of Jayasthiti Malla (1382–1395) onwards and was not uncommon elsewhere in South Asia. A proper examination of the Calcutta manuscript, verification of its contents, sort of paper, script and style, or styles, of writing are urgently needed. "Appearance: very old, worn out, torn, and worm-eaten throughout" is all what the Catalogue has to say about the condition of the paper.

Taking the scribal colophon at face value for the moment, it is worthwhile to look at it more closely. In my reading of the colophon the scribe seems to declare that

> in the year two hundred and four [*my reading, see the text below] of the Nepal era, in the dark half in the month of Caitra, under the Bear, in the second half of Ārdra, on Thursday, under the conjunction of Vaidhati, on Visnu's day, he wrote this named Kālikā uninterrupted, together with K^^^anātha, always bowing to the feet of his parents, honoured by all good people.

The words nepālābdaga^a^ vai may be read as nepālābdagahane and refer to the standard Nepal era. The date is given in words instead of numbers. As yuga usually represents the number 4—rarely 2—, kha equals 0, and svanayana 2, the date should be read as 204. Inverse reading is the general rule in case of word-numerals. If my interpretation is correct, the text of the kP must have been copied in Nepal on palm-leaf in the year 1082/3 CE. In that case, this 'first' Nepalese manuscript was no doubt preserved with great care and esteem, and may have served as a 'mother copy' fora lineage of KP manuscripts produced afterwards in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur.

Taking the Calcutta manuscript as a genuine copy of an old palm-leaf manuscript, a further examination of its colophon is worthwhile as it yields intriguing information about the personages behind the production of this Nepalese 'mother-copy'. The text of the scribal colophon as rendered in the Catalogue seems to say that the "son of ^hyākadeva, the excellent brāhmin, together with Šrï K^^^adeva" was [initiated] by the chiefs of pa^^its (pa^^itamukhakai^) into the procedure (krama) called Kālikā (kālikākhyā^ kramadhā---nā^), for his own sake (....) he had to be purified by the wise (budhai^ šodhayatām) ... for I do not know what is pure and impure (šuddhāšuddha^ najānāmi). Although the text is defective at crucial places, the roles of K^^^anātha, son of ^hyākadeva, and Šrï K^^^adeva are significant. The former was apparently a prominent brāhmin, possibly responsible for the copying project. The honorific Šrï applied to the name of K^^^adeva suggests a scribe's name, as this honorific often does, and is possibly the name of someone of a k^atriya lineage. Considering their names, both are Vai^^avas, which is in accordance with the religious adherence of the kp. The mention of an initiation into a School (krama) called Kālikā, suggests a link with the Kālïkrama, a Tantric school that was at home in Nepal, as well as in Kashmir in this period of time.

In order to find out whether the kp could have reached Kathmandu at such an early date, a possible route should be outlined, which the text followed all the way from Kāmarüpa, the land of its origin, to its destination Kathmandu. On this route Mithilā would have occupied an important intermediate station, as in the past this region served as a 'gateway' to Nepal.8 Hazra (1963, 35) argued that brāhmins from Mithilā9 serving at the court of Kāmarüpa composed the kp at a time when the Kāmarüpa Pāla dynasty was in power. Following K.L. Barua and others, it has recently been proposed that the kp could have been produced under the authority and patronage of its most celebrated king Dharmapāla, one of the last kings of this dynasty, who possibly ruled in the eleventh century c e.10 Indeed, his change from

Šaivism to Vai^^avism, which is recorded in an inscription from ca. 1100 (Hazra 1963, 31 note 95), would almost certainly have led to the appointment of new, Vai^^ava, court-priests. The kp with its strong emphasis on Vi^^u and Mahãmãyã, and its derogation of Šaiva Tantrics would fit the religious transition made by this king very well. However, the supposed time of Dharmapãla's rule is hardly compatible to the date of 1082/3 ce given in the scribal colophon of the old Nepalese manuscript under discussion, which must have been copied after Maithila brãhmins had arrived in Kathmandu and had found a patron.

As far as the Kathmandu valley is concerned, it is from the time of the early Mallas onwards, i.e. ca. 1200 c e, that brãhmins from Mithilã occupied high positions at the courts of Kathmandu and Bhaktapur, and actively copied Sanskrit texts in their own Mithilã script, also of the kp as we shall see below. The original text of the kp may have favourably been received in Kathmandu, and copied, when the Mallas came to power. The date of 1082/3 ce in the colophon, however, is too early. At that time the Thakuri dynasty was still ruling. This scenario does not fit unless we are allowed to read the date from left to right, and speculate that the scribe meant 402 Nepal Era, i.e. 1280/1 CE.

Another option would be to place the composition of the kp within a larger time frame, and assume that the kp was a product of a period when Tantric works and teachings freely travelled in an area stretching from Kãmarüpa, to Nepal and Kashmir. Being one of the four great sacred 'seats' (pi^ha) of both Hindu and Buddhist Tantrism, the fame of Kãmarüpa had spread to Kashmir already at the time the Trika school flourished, and was well known to its foremost representative Abhinavagupta (Dyczkowski 2004, 103–104). Tantric masters such as Matsyendranãtha lived in Kãmarüpa, while his reputation had spread as far as Kashmir. Tantric priests and preceptors must have moved from one place to another and also from one court to another, looking for patronage. This cultural exchange may have brought about a kind of Tantric culture in the whole area particularly in the ninth to twelfth centuries ce, the period that the Kãmarüpa Pãlas were in power. The KP is an important testimony to Kãmarüpa's Tantric reputation in giving a full description of a mystical—or mythical—journey through this 'sacred' land, and including a whole section on 'common' Tantric rituals, taught by Šiva acting as a Tantric ãcãrya, although the Vai^^ava 'upper layer' of the whole text is undeniable. Considering the strength of Tantric culture in the region, and the character of the text, the KP might have been composed at the court of one of the Kãmarüpa Pãla kings, and was introduced in Nepal afterwards. It is hard to be more precise.

After the Kãmarüpa Pãla dynasty had come to an end—in the thirteenth and fourteenth century—the kingdom fell into the hands of the Ahom kings. The region became part of another large Tantric area stretching from Assam, Bengal to parts of present Orissa. Tantric and Šãkta centres shifted accordingly. The sacred pashas of Kãmarüpa, including the centres of worship of the goddess Kãmãkhyã were moved close to new capitals such as Gauhati and elsewhere. Considering the many manuscripts that were produced, particularly in Bengal, the kp had apparently found a new home, and is from now on commented upon by Bengal authors.

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The narrative structure outlined above reveals four 'shells' or 'layers', marked by a change of speakers, locations and audiences, each defining the range and limits of the 'message' of the speaker.

The fourth, innermost shell contains the Tantric Teachings, presented by Šiva acting as a Tantric ācārya, who explains Tantric sādhana to his sons, who are figuring as his sādhakas. They meet at his hermitage on Mt. Nã^aka, situated in an inaccessible and remote place. The first part of Šiva's teachings, called 'Mahãmãyãkalpa' and 'Vai^^avïtantra', is based upon an unidentified Tantric source, called Bhairavatantra. The detailed information about all aspects of 'common' Tantric worship, blood- and human sacrifice (balidãna) included, is noteworthy. An elaborate account on Durgãpüjã follows, partly related by the chief speaker, Mãrka^^eya. It is obviously a celebrated and popular portion of Šiva's talk, as festival and legends returned yearly, as they still do. Next comes a set of sãdhanas for the five-fold goddess Kãmãkhyã, who is extolled as the supreme goddess. After concluding this part of the Tantric Teachings, Šiva proceeds with a series of special treatises, which look like a kind of priestly manuals. They deal with preliminary worship, ritual behaviour, mantras and their applications, and also blood- and human sacrifice. Šiva's portion is concluded with a report of a pilgrimage to Kãmarüpa. The Tantric material presented in this innermost shell is—mainly—meant for sādhakas but adapted and abridged, the text says, since the sage Aurva is actually relating everything to king Sagara and his court.

Aurva's contribution forms the third shell, enclosing, but much larger than, the Tantric section. This muni impersonates the royal priest who is teaching a king about good conduct and royal duties (dharmašãstra) on the occasion of his coronation. These 'lessons' illustrate the didactic, 'civilising' function of this Purana. As to the location, the conversation takes place at the royal palace of the mythical king Sagara. The audience consists of Sagara and his court. Aurva links on to the Satï-Kãlikã story, starting with the ardhanãrïšvara myth, which he interprets as the ultimate example of a perfect relation between husband and wife, only to continue with the story of Vetãla and Bhairava and their attempt to regain their divine status, which is interpreted as another example of right behaviour.

The second shell is the contribution of the seer Mãrka^^eya, who is the chief narrator of the Purã^a. His 'talk' envelops both Aurva's and Šiva's texts. He is addressing a meeting of rsis somewhere in the Himãlayan region. The famous seer, who took care of other major Vi^^u Purã^as as well, made the whole text into a real Purã^a. It is he who relates the long Satï story culminating in the "kãlikãcaritam", which has given the Purã^a its name. This authority also relates the story of Naraka, son of Vi^^u and reputed first king of Prãgjyoti^a. The episode forms a semi-historical component in his 'talk', since the Pãla kings of Kãmarüpa traced their royal lineage back to this divine hero. Mãrka^^eya also takes care of the section on Durgãpüjã, thereby following his own Mãrka^^eya Purã^a, and also of the final episode about the offspring of Bhairava and Vetãla. He concludes with paying homage to Kãlikã and praising the Kãlikã Purã^a.

Finally, the brãhmin composer with his Sanskrit background and possibly of a Mithilã lineage folds the outermost shell around the preceding ones, confessing his Vai^^ava Šãkta adherence. He almost certainly worked fora king of the Pãla dynasty of Kãmarüpa. This royal 'pandit' can be held responsible for the final result, adding both ma^gala- and closing verses. He selected his sources carefully, and imposed his Vai^^ava orientation on the whole text throughout, not refraining from inserting verses of his own. These four shells define the scope and character of each contribution.

The whole narrative structure might be rendered as follows:

> Composition
> Brãhmin to yogins: Mangala colophon (1, 1–3 and 90, 33—end)

Old Tales, Mythology
Mãrkasheya to the rsis: Satï, Kãlikã (1–46) postscript (88, 65–90, 33)
Royal Duties
Aurva to king Sagara: Ardhanãrïšvara, Vetãla-Bhairava story (46–52) ....
Kãmarüpa pïtha (76–81), Royal Festivals (82–88, 65)
Tantric Teachings
Šiva to Vetãla and Bhairava: Vaisaavïtantra or
Mahãmãyãkalpa (52–56), Uttaratantra (57–59),
Durgãpüjã (59–61), Kãmãkhyã (61–65),
Ritual Manuals (65–76) <>

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF HINDU TANTRIC DEITIES, VOLUME 1: THE PANTHEON OF THE MANTRAMAHODADHI; THE ICONOGRAPHY OF HINDU TANTRIC DEITIES, VOLUME 2: THE PANTHEONS OF THE PRAPANCASARA AND THE SARADATILAKA by Gudrun Bühnemann [Series: Gonda Indological Studies, Brill (Egebert Forsten), 9789069801193]

VOLUME I: THE PANTHEON OF THE MANTRAMAHODADHI focuses on the iconography of 108 deities described in the sixteenth-century Mantramahodadhi, which addresses topics related to Tantra, and specifically mantraśāstra, like the function and structure of the deity descriptions (dhyāna) and the interpretations given to the iconographic attributes. All the deities are presented separately and each entry includes the Sanskrit text in transliteration, a literal translation and notes on the iconography, including information from other Sanskrit texts. With line drawings.

VOLUME II: THE PANTHEONS OF THE PRAPAÑCASĀRA AND THE SĀRADĀTILAKA compares for the first time deity descriptions extracted from different printed editions of two earlier texts, the anonymous Prapañcasāra (c. 10th century) and the Śāradātilaka (c. 10th-11th centuries). The Sanksrit text is presented with a literal translation and remarks on the iconography. A new edition and translation of important chapters (cosmogony and yoga) of the Śāradātilaka is included as appendix. With illustrations. All volumes of the print edition will become available in individual e-books: 9789004531222 (volume 1) - 9789004531239

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VOLUME I: THE PANTHEON OF THE MANTRAMAHODADHI

VOLUME I: THE PANTHEON OF THE MANTRAMAHODADHI

The Mantramahodadhi in Context

Material for the study of Tantric iconography can be classified as archaeological or literary. The literary materials range from poetic texts to inscriptions. Important textual materials fall into three broad categories:

1. texts styled as Tantras (sometimes also called Agamas or Samhitas), including sections of the Purana literature, belonging to dhirious traditions, time periods and geographical areas;
2. compendiums of (Tantric) ritual and works of a similar nature, which extract deity descriptions from the texts in category 1;

3. texts on sculpture and architecture (silpasastra), which incorporate the deity descriptions mostly from works of categories 1 or 2.

The sixteenth-century Mantramahodadhi (hereafter MM) is a compendium that addresses topics related to Tantra, and specifically to mantrasastra. Its author, Mahidhara, intended to gather into a single book the ritual practices connected to a large number of deities described in the Tantras. The book belongs to a tradition of compendiums which differ from one another in the selection of the deities included and the order in which the deities appear. Due to its clear and well-structured presentation and the broad range of topics covered, the MM, along with its author's commentary, continues to enjoy considerable popularity throughout India. Its popularity rivals Krsnananda Agamavagisa's Tantrasara, which was most likely written one century later. The MM is quoted as an authority in Bhaskararaya Makhindra's Trcabhaskara, written in 1708 and also served as a major textual source for Mahavaraya Vaidya's late nineteenth-century Mantramaharnava.

In this section I would like to outline compendiums of a similar nature that I have frequently referred to in this book. The Prapancasara (PS), a work in the South Indian smarta tradition, is among the earlier compendiums of this kind. It is traditionally attributed to the philosopher Samara, but was compiled most likely in the tenth century. The text addresses deities such as Surya, Laksml, Durga, Ganesa, Visnu and Siva, but does not mention forms of ^ara, who attained great importance in later texts such as the MM. The PS is extensively quoted in many other texts, including Srikumara's ca. sixteenth-century Silparatna.

Laksmaadesika's famous Sarvapalaka (SA), most likely written at the end of the tenth century or in the first part of the eleventh century, is based on the PS, but is written more clearly than the earlier text. Its most important commentary is the Padarthadirsa by the Maharashtrian Raghadhibhatta, who completed it in Varanasi on December 15, 1493 CE. The deities described in the ST are for the most part also found in the PS, but they often appear in a different sequence and with additional iconographic forms. Since the deity descriptions in the PS and the ST are the subject of Volume Two of this study, I shall discuss these texts, their authors and dates of composition in the introduction to Volume Two.

The Tantrasarasamgraha (TSS) is a compilation by Narayana, a Kerala Brahmin who resided in Sivasmra on the banks of the river Nila. He was the son of Arayang and his wife Uma. The work is divided into thirty-two chapters. It is popularly known as the Visanarayaniya, since its initial ten chapters deal with poisons (visa). Goudriaan 1977: 160 states that this work is not identical to the Arayaniya quoted by Raghavabhatta in his commentary on the ST; however, this turns out to be incorrect. The work referred to and cited by Raghadhi is indeed the TSS. Since Raghadhi completed his commentary in 1483, the TSS can safely be assigned to the fifteenth century (eliminating the possibility of the sixteenth century) or earlier. The TSS was printed with an anonymous commentary (vyakhya), which contains valuable information and may be the work of the author himself.

The Mantrapada (pada 2, patalas 15-52) is part of Isanasivagurudevamisra's Isanasivagurudevapaddhati (ISP), which is also known as the Tantrapaddhati. The ^SP is a Saiva manual of temple worship and was assigned to the last part of the eleventh (Dived) or to the twelfth century (Unni 1987: 9); (at least part of) the Mantrapada, however, is of a much later date. The Mantrapada describes the goddesses ^atangi (chapter 26.120) and Dhumavati (chapter 47.61), who later figure in the Tantric group of Mana^idya goddesses. The texts (which also include the PS) quoted in the ISP with its Mantrapada section are listed in Dviveda 1995: 189-190. Most chapters in the Mantrapada correspond to chapters in the TSS. Of

special interest is the adaptation of Buddhist Tantric mantras and rituals in both texts: the worship of Vasudhara is addressed in chapter 26.1-65 of the Mantrapada and in TSS 22.19-41, and the mantras of Yamantaka/Yama in chapter 47.1f. of the Mantrapada and in TSS 17.9f. The relationship between the Mantrapada of the ISP and ^arayana's TSS was first discussed by Goudriaan 1977: 158-160 and Goudriaan in Goudriaan/Gupta 1981: 128. Goudriaan considered it possible that either chapters 15-38 of the Mantrapada are recast in the TSS, and chapters 39-52 of the Mantrapada are based on the TSS, or that both the Mantrapada and the TSS are based on one source. In the meantime, Unni 1987: 21-22 has demonstrated that chapter 41.2 of the Mantrapada clearly refers to the TSS (cited as the ^ rayaniya) and that the TSS is among the sources used in the Mantrapada.

A less encyclopaedic work of the same category is the Phetkarinitantra (or Phetkariya) which is of uncertain date. The text was assigned to the thirteenth century by Bharati 1965: 60 without evidence. Among the deities in this work are Kukkuta, Ucchistacandalini, Dhtlmavati and forms of Kali and Durga.

A text whose content closely follows that of the PS is the Prapaficasasarasarasamgraha (PASS) by GIrvanendra Yati or Girvanendra Sarasvati. This text is apparently also known by the name Prapancasarasamgraha. Even though Girvanendra basically follows the PS, he quotes extensively from the ^antrasara, the (Prayoga-) ^ramadipika commentary on the PS, "the Sanatkumariya," the Saradatilaka and Visnudeva's Mantradevata^rakasika. Girvanendra's date is given as 1450 by Dasgupta 1922, volume 2: 52, note 2, most likely based on the assumption that he was the teacher of Bodhendra, who wrote the Advaitabhasana, and of Nrsimhasrama, who wrote the Advaitadipika. Potter 1983: 354 assigns the year 1530 to Gir^anendra, whereas Thangaswami 1980: 334 suggests the period from 1600 to 1700. The PSSS is divided into the purvabhaga, consisting of chapters 7-17 (pp. 1-522), the uttarabhaga, comprising chapters 18-32 (pp. 523-938), and an appendix, the Anubandha (pp. 939-992). I will address this text in more detail in Volume Two of this study.

The Tantrasara (TS) by Krsnananda Ágamavagisa is an important compendium written after the MM, most likely in the seventeenth century. The iconography of this text, which attained great popularity in Bengal, was studied by D.C. Sircar 1972-1973 and P. Pal 1981. While closely examining the TS I noticed that it relies heavily on the ST, which it calls "the Sarada" or "the Nibandha," and whose descriptions it frequently quotes without attribution. The work also contains long extracts from the Phetkárinitantra. The corrupted text of the TS should be re-edited to reconcile these citations with the original texts.

The Srividyarnavatantra (VT) is a voluminous work on mantrasastra that is attributed to Vidyaranya Yati, a North Indian of uncertain identity. The book consists of lengthy quotations from Tantric texts such as the Daksina-murti-Samhita, the Tantraraja, the ST and the Kularinavatantra, along with the compiler's brief explanatory notes. The text consists of two parts: chapters (svasa) 1-18 (volume 1, pp. 1-545) form the Aurvardha and chapters 19-36 (volume 2, pp. 1-914), the uttarardha. I refer to the work by citing the volume number and page number. The SVT in all likelihood quotes the ^^9 and therefore would be later than 1588.10 Its latest possible date of composition is the year 1726, the date of an extant manuscript of the text.11 The vast amount of material found in the SVT, which was outlined in a pamphlet by Sastri 1944, deserves careful study.

The Merutantra (MT) is a later compendium which must have been written before 1708, the date of composition of Bhaskararaya Makhindra's Trcabhaskara, in which the MT is quoted (e.g., p. 137, 7-8; p.

145, 25). 13 Finally, mention should be made of the Bengali compilation Pranat^sini (PrT) by Ramatosana Vidyalamkara, written in 1820.

In the texts discussed thus far, the iconographic descriptions appear after an explanation of the deities' mantras, which are usually in coded language to conceal them from the uninitiated, and within descriptions of rites in which these mantras are used (mantraprayoga). Often outlined are the so-called satkarman rites of magic (abhicara), which include subjugation (vas^karana), immobilization (stambhana) and liquidation (marana). The deity descriptions aid the devotee's visualization (dhyana) of the deity during ritual worship (puja). They were not written for the purpose of image making, unlike the texts on sculpture (silpasastra), but have nevertheless influenced texts on fine arts.

The descriptions of the deities in the compendiums are most likely extracted from individual Tantras that advocate the cult of particular deities. Since they stem from various sources, traditions and time periods, these extracts do not constitute a unified interrelated pantheon which is to be worshipped by one devotee in its entirety. I use the word "pantheon" here in the sense of all the deities described in a text. The textual sources of the compendiums are rarely specified by name. At times one encounters fragments of lost or unedited texts. It is usually not easy to identify such citations.

Since mantras are not to be selected from books by persons other than qualified preceptors, the compendiums must have functioned as reference works for preceptors, who selected mantras of a particular deity for themselves or their disciples. I have observed that the SVT is currently being used in this way by Tantric preceptors in Maharashtra, India.

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VOLUME II: THE PANTHEONS OF THE PRAPAÑCASĀRA AND THE SĀRADĀTILAKA

Tradition ascribes the PS to the famous philosopher Samkara who flourished between 650 and 800 CE. Dviveda 1995: 199 recently affirmed this view, arguing that the PS does not contradict Samkara's Advaita doctrine and that it therefore would not be necessary to assume that Samkara is not the author of the PS. The PS was included in the South Indian edition of Samkara's Works (1913). The colophon of this edition identifies the author as Samkara Bhagavat, a disciple of Govinda Bhagavat, while PrapancasaraSharana, p. 1, 13 refers to him as Bhagavat Samkaracarya. Hacker 1947 (1978): 181 provided evidence that all works ascribed to Samkara Bhagavat are most likely works of the great Vedantin, whereas those attributed to Samkara Acarya in their colophons are most likely spurious. It is unlikely that the South Indian edition of Samkara's Works (1913) is based on a critical examination of available manuscripts. The author's name in the colophon of the text may have been inserted by the editor.

A Nepalese manuscript of the PS, quoted in Avalon's postscript to his revised edition of the PS, p. 70; Sadhavacarya (second half of the fourteenth century) in his commentary (vyakhya) entitled Tatparyadipika on the Sutasamhita, volume 1, p. 54, 8; and Ragha^abhatta in his commentary on the ST, p. 737, 22, refer to the PS's author as acaryah, using the respectful plural form. The PS, in contrast, presents itself as a discourse delivered by Mahavishnu to Brahma. Verse 36.62 clearly identifies Mahavisnu as the author of the Tantra.

The Structure of the Text

The PS has been identified as a work in the South Indian smarta tradition (Sanderson 1990: 35, note 21, Khanna 1986: 75) and has been called 'a smarta-ized Tantric manual' (Khanna 1986: 59). The PS does not belong to a specific Tantric tradition. It is a work on mantrasastra describing the Tantric worship of deities with mantras, visualization and ritual practices. In addition, the initial chapters of the text address topics of a more philosophical nature. ^ special feature of the text is that it frequently inserts (often lengthy) hymns of praise (stotra) to the deities described. This feature is also found in the ST, but is absent in other texts such as the Mantramahodadhi.

A work entitled Prapancasara is number twenty-eight in a group of sixty-four texts assigned to the Rathakranta division of Tantras, 21 given in a recent list from the Mahasiddhisaratantra (Kaviraj 1972: 19, 22). It is number twenty-six in a list ascribed to the Mahasiddhasaratantra printed in Avalon's introduction to Woodroffe 1914, part 1: 72, 74. It is uncertain whether this text is identical to our PS. Moreover, the list also includes late texts such as the Merutantra and the Mahanirvanatantra and therefore cannot provide any evidence as to the date of composition of the PS.

The title Prapancasara can be interpreted as 'the Essence (sara) of the Universe' (prapanca). In the introduction to his edition of the PS, p. 4, Avalon states that the PS may be an abridged version (sara) of an older work entitled Prapancapancaka. Such a work has not yet been discovered.

The contents of the individual chapters of the PS are given below, following the North Indian edition's division of the text into thirty-six chapters. The numbers prefixed to the deity names from chapter 6 onward refer to their descriptions in section 1.2 of this book.

Chapter 1: The creation; the nature of purusa and matter (prakrti, pradhana); the twentysafive constituents (tattva); the evolution of prakrti, identified with the energy/Sakti, from her form as a drop (bindu) of energy into resonance/sound (nada) and grosser manifestations

Chapter 2: The development of the embryo and infant; the kundalini

Chapter 3: The division of the alphabet

Chapter 4: The seed syllable hrim and the kundalini

Chapters 5-6: The initiation (diksa), including the fire ritual (homa); chapter 6: 1 Agni (Krsanu)

Chapters 7: The alphabet deities; 2 Sarasvati (Bharati) and 3 Ardhanarisvara; the prapancayaga

Chapter 8: The pranagnih^ma; 4 Sarasvati 1 (Bharati) and 5 Sarasvati 2 (Bhasa rati)

Chapter 9: 6 Tripurabhairavi

Chapter 10: On mulaprakrti; 7 Bhuvanesvaari (Ambika)

Chapter 11: The yantra and rituals connected to 7 Bhuvane^^ari (Ambika)

Chapter 12: Mantras of Sri (Laksmi); 8 Sri 1(Laksmi), 9 Sri 2, 10 Mahalaksmi (Rama) and 11 Sri 3

Chapter 13: 12 Triputa, 13 Dharani, 14 Tvarita (Kairati), 15 Vajraprastarini (Nitya) and 16 Nityaklinna (Parvati)

Chapter 14: Mantras of Durga; 17 Durga, 18 Vanadurga 1, 19 Vanadurga 2, 20 Vanadurga 3 (Katyayani) and 21 S^linidurga

Chapter 15: 22 Surya-Bhuvane^^, 23 ^rdhambikesa and 24a—b Surya

Chapter 16: 25 Candra (Soma), 26 Agni 1, 27 Agni 2 and 28 Agni 3 (as^^krti)

Chapter 17:23 Mantras of Ganapati; 29 Mahaganapati (Ganadhipa), 30 Vighnaraja and 31a—b Ksipra(prasadana-) Ganapati

Chapter 18: 32 Kama (Manmatha), 33 Krsna, 34 Balagovinda, 35 Mukunda and 36 Vasudeva

Chapter 19: On yoga; 37 Visnu

Chapter 20: 38 Narayana (Mukunda)

Chapter 21: The diagrams of the twelve zodiac signs (rasi)

Chapter 22: 39 Visnu (Hari) and 40 (Sudarsana-) Cakra-Hari

Chapter 23: 41 Purusottama (Trailokyamohana)

Chapter 24: 42 Srikara (Visnu), 43 Mahavaaraha, 44 Varaha 1, 45 Varaha 2 and 46 Varaha 3

Chapter 25: Mantras of Narasimha; 47 Narasimha 1, 48 Narasimha 2 and 49 Narasimha 3

Chapter 26: 50 Visvarupa-Visnu

Chapter 27: Mantras of Siva; 51 SadaSiva (^arvaatisa), 52 Mahesa, 53 Hara and 54 Parvatisa

Chapter 28: Mantras of Siva continued; 55 Daksinamurti (Bhava), 56 Aghosararudra and 57 Mrtyumjayarudra

Chapter 29: Mantras of Siva continued; 58 Umesa, 59 Ardhanarisvaara and 60 Candesvara

Chapter 30: The Gayatri mantra; 61 Gayatri (Tarini)

Chapter 31: The Tristubh mantra; 62 ^atyayani (Durga)

Chapter 32: The lavanamantra; 63 Agni, 64 Ratri (Yamavati), 65 Durga (^atyayani) and 66 Bhadrakari

Chapter 33: The Anustubh mantra; 67 Tryambaka-Rudra, 68 Samvadasa Agni/Samjnana/Agni and 69 Varuna

Chapter 34: On yantras; 70 Gauri (Parvati), 71 Bhu and Sri, 72 Annapurna, 73 Vaisravana (Kubera), 74 Brhaspati, 75 Sukra, 76 Vyasa and 77 Asvarudha

Chapter 35: On pranapratistha; 78 Pranasakti

Chapter 36: Means to secure offspring; characteristics of the preceptor and the disciple; duties of the disciple

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The Author Laksmanadesika and his Work

According to the author's statements in ST 25.83-86,1 Laksmanadeika's father was SrIkrsna; his grandfather had the title Acarya Pandita and his great-grandfather was Mahabala, who authored the work Muktiphala. Laksmanadesika or Laksmanadesikendra is also called Laksmanacasarya. Based on the information gathered from the ST we can reconstruct Laksmanadeika's genealogy as follows:

great-grandfather —   Mahabala
                  *
grandfather —   Ácarya-Pandita
                  *
father —   Srikrsna
                  *

                       Laksmanadesika (Laksmanadesikendra, Laksmanacarya)

Raghavabhatta (RB) considers Laksmanadesika a disciple of Utpalacarya. In his commentary Padarthadarsa, p. 12, 19 on ST 1.3 5 he gives the following lineage of Laksmanadeika's teachers, quoting part of a verse in Arya metre from an unidentified source:

paramesthiguru —   Sri-kantha

paraparaguru —   Vasumat

paramaguru — Somananda

guru —   Utpalacárya
              Laksmana

Raghava, p. 12, 20 also provides the second part of the above-mentioned rya verse, which specifies Laksmana (identified as Laksmanadesika?) as the teacher of Abhinavagupta, who in turn was the teacher of Ksemaraja.

Laksmana

*

Abhinavagupta

*

Ksemaraja

We know that Laksmanagupta was one of Abhinavagupta's teachers. This Laksmanagupta is identified as Laksmanadefika, author of the ST, by J. Woodroffe 1929: 371 and Rastogi 1979: 129, 131. Rastogi further identifies Vasumat as Vasugupta, based on the above-mentioned verse fragments quoted by RB, one of which he presents in a modified form. Rastogi 1979: 149proceeds to identify Laksmanagupta's lost "Srisastra" as Laksmanadeika's ST. He takes Laksmanadeika's great-grandfather Mahabala, who, according to ST 25.83, wrote the work Muktiphala, to be Mahabala, the author of the Rahasyagarbhastotra and the great-grandfather of Bhatta Utpala on the daughter's side (Rastogi 1979: 149). Rastogi's identifications follow in tabular form along with the dates he provides for the different authors:

Srikantha

*

Vasumat — identified as Vasugupta (circa 800-850 CE) by Rastogi 1979: 129

*

Somananda (circa 875-925 CE)

*

Utpalacarya — identified as Utpala (circa 900-950 CE) by Rastogi 1979: 129

*

Laksmanadesika — identified as Laksmanagupta (circa 925-975 CE) by Rastogi 1979:129

*

Abhinavagupta (circa 950-1020 CE)

*

Ksemaraja (circa 975-1025 CE)

The Structure of the Text

The Saradatilaka, "the Forehead Mark of Sarada (Sarasvati)," is divided into twenty-five chapters, the number twenty-five corresponding to the number of constituents (tattva) of the Samkhya system (cf. ST 25.87). According to RB, p. 916, 13-16 on ST 25.87, the first chapter represents the matter (mulaprakrti), since it deals with creation. The following twenty-three chapters deal with prakrti-vikrti and the final chapter on yoga deals with purusa, surpassing both prakrti and vikrti. The work professes to provide us with "the essence of the Tantras" (1.4) and rites (vidhi) for yantras and mantras along with their presiding seers, metres and deities (1.5). It calls itself a Tantra (1.5d). A characteristic of the ST is that, like the PS, it includes long hymns of praise (stotra) to the deities described. There are small differences between the texts of ST1 and T2 ranging from about one to seven additional verses per chapter. The total number of verses is 3461 for ST1 and 3519 for ST2.

The contents of the individual chapters of the ST are:

Chapter 1: Cosmogony, including a section on the development of the embryo Chapter 2: Evolution of sound; mantras and their purification by certain diagrams; places for mantra practice; the practitioner's diet; the qualifications of the preceptor and the disciple

Chapter 3: Rites preceding the initiation (diksa)

Chapter 4: The initiation

Chapter 5: The initiation continued; fire ritual (homa); 1 Agni

Chapter 6: The alphabet and alphabet deities; 2 Sarasvati 1, 3 Sarasvati 2, 4 Sarasvati 3, 5 Sarada., 6 Ardhanarisvara, 7 Ardhalaksmihari, 8 Jagadisvari (Visvajanani), 9 Jagatsvamin^, 10 Samastajanani and 11 Sammohani; the pra^ancayaga and other rituals

Chapter 7: The alphabet deities continued; 12 Varnesvari (^agisvari), 13 Vac (Vagdevata), 14 Vagdevata, 15 Vani, 16 Vagadhidevata and 17 Vagadhisa

Chapter 8: Mantras of Sri (Laksmi); 18 Sri 1, 19 Sri 2, 20 Kamala (Sri 3), 21 Mahalaksmi 1 and 22 Mahalaksmi 2

Chapter 9: Mantras of Bhuvanesvarl; 23 Bhuvanesvari (Bhuvanesi), 24 Am-bika 1, 25 Ambika 2 (Haravadhu) and 26 Adibhuvanesvari

Chapter 10: 27 Tvarita (Kairati), 28 Trikantaki, 29 Nitya 1, 30 Nitya 2, 31 Vajraprastarini, 32 Triputa, 33 Asvarudha, 34 Annapurn and 35 Padmavati

Chapter 11: Mantras of Durga; 36 Durga, 37 Mahisamardini, 38 Jayadurga, 39 Sulinidurga, 40 Vanadurga 1 (Vindhyanivasini) and 41 Vanadurga 2

Chapter 12: 42 Tripurabhairavi and 43 Matangi (Rajamatangi)

Chapter 13: 44 Ganapati (Ekaksara-Ganapati), 45 Mahaganapati, 46 Viriganapati, 47 Saktiganapati, 48 Bhogatilola-Ganapati, 49a—b Ksipraprasadana Ganapati, 50 Heramba-Ganapati and 51 Subrahmanya

Chapter 14: 52 Candramas (Soma), 53a—b Surya, 54 Martandabhairava, 55 Ardhambikesa, 56 Agni and 57 Turagagni

Chapter 15: 58 Visnu 1 (Harayana), 59 Visnu 2 (Vasudeva), 60 Laksmivasudeva, 61 Dadhivamana, 62 Hayagriva, 63 Raghava (Rama), 64 Adivaraha and 65 Vasudha

Chapter 16: 66 Narasimha 1, 67 Narasimha 2, 68 Narasimha 3, 69 Narasimha 4 and 70 (Sudarsana-) Cakraru^a-Hari

Chapter 17: 71 Sripurusottama, 72 Srikara-Hari, 73 Krsna (Govinda) and 74 Kama (Makaradhvaja)

Chapter 18: Mantras of Siva; 75 Mahesa, 76 Umapati, 77 Sadasiva, 78 Isa and 79 Mrtyumjaya

Chapter 19: Mantras of Siva continued; 80 Daksinamurti 1, 81 Daksinam^rti 2, 82 Nilakantha, 83 Ardhanarsvara (Ardhambikesa), 84 Tumburu and 85 Khadgaravana

Chapter 20: Mantras of Siva continued; 86 Aghorarudra (Aghorastra), 87 Pasupati (Pasupatastra), 88 Ksetrapala (Ksetresa), 89 Vatuka-Bhairadhi 1 (Apaduddharana-Bhairava), 90 Vatuka-Bhairadhi 2, 91 Vatuka-Bhairadhi 3 and 92 Candesvaara

Chapter 21: 93 Savitri (Gayatri) and 94 Durga

Chapter 22: Magical weapons; 95 Agni (Vahni), 96 Ratri (Yamavati), 97 Durga and 98 Bhadrakali

Chapter 23: 99 Tryambaka, 100 Varuna and 101 Pranasakti; m^dras of invocation, etc.; rosaries; the six rites beginning with appeasement and their characteristics

Chapter 24: Different yantras

Chapter 25: On yoga; colophon

Phatak 1995 draws our attention to an approximately 400 year old palm-leaf manuscript of the S^ in Tulu script, containing as many as thirty-six chapters. The incomplete manuscript is now preserved in the Oriental Research Institute of the University of Mysore. It covers chapters 10-25, with chapters 1-9 missing. The numbers of the extant folios begin with 113 and end with 229, but eight folios in the middle are missing. At the end of chapter 24 the manuscript signals the end of the "earlier part" (purvabhaga) of the text. This is followed by chapter 25, to which the additional chapters listed below are appended. Their titles are provided either from the colophons of the individual chapters or from the initial verses of the chapters. From the chapter titles, which deal with medicine and rites of magic, it appears as though they originally were not part of the ST.

Chapter 26: Means to attain offspring (samtanasiddhi)

Chapter 27: Medical treatment of children (balacikitsa)

Chapter 28: Treatment for evil demons attacking children (grahacikitsa)

Chapter 29: Countering the effects of poison (^isasanti)

Chapter 30: Countering the effects of poison from scorpions, spiders, etc. (vrscikalutadivisasanti)

Chapter 31: Rites of subjugation (vasyakriya)

Chapter 32: Immobilization (stambhana)

Chapter 33: Causing dislike (vidvesa)

Chapter 34: Folios 223-226, which give the title of the chapter, are missing

Chapter 35: Eradication (uccatana)

Chapter 36: Colophon missing; deals with various mantras

The first two chapters of the ST are of special importance since they present the theoretical framework of the text. Each of the two chapters deserves a separate treatment, which is beyond the scope of the present work. I have prepared a new edition and translation of chapter 1 in appendix 2, but have limited my explanatory notes to a minimum. I refer the reader to Padoux 1990, who frequently bases himself on this section of the ST. Chapter 1 of the ST presents an account of creation and explains how the kundalini creates the different mantras corresponding to different deities. Chapter 25 of the ST, on yoga, which also provides information on Laksmanadeika's genealogy, contains valuable information on astañgayoga, kundaliniyoga and the hamsah mantra. Since it is comparatively short, I have included a new edition of the chapter and a translation in appendix 3. <>

THE UBIQUITOUS SIVA VOLUME I: SOMANANDA'S SIVADRSTI AND HIS TANTRIC INTERLOCUTORS edited and translated by John Nemec [AAR Religion in Translation, Oxford University Press, 9780199795451]

John Nemec examines the beginnings of the non-dual tantric philosophy of the famed Pratyabhijña or "Recognition [of God]" School of tenth-century Kashmir, the tradition most closely associated with Kashmiri Shaivism. In doing so it offers, for the very first time, a critical edition and annotated translation of a large portion of the first Pratyabhijña text ever composed, the Sivadrsti of Somananda. In an extended introduction, Nemec argues that the author presents a unique form of non-dualism, a strict pantheism that declares all beings and entities found in the universe to be fully identical with the active and willful god Siva. This view stands in contrast to the philosophically more flexible panentheism of both his disciple and commentator, Utpaladeva, and the very few other Saiva tantric works that were extant in the author's day. Nemec also argues that the text was written for the author's fellow tantric initiates, not for a wider audience. This can be adduced from the structure of the work, the opponents the author addresses, and various other editorial strategies. Even the author's famous and vociferous arguments against the non-tantric Hindu grammarians may be shown to have been ultimately directed at an opposing Hindu tantric school that subscribed to many of the grammarians' philosophical views. Included in the volume is a critical edition and annotated translation of the first three (of seven) chapters of the text, along with the corresponding chapters of the commentary. These are the chapters in which Somananda formulates his arguments against opposing tantric authors and schools of thought. None of the materials made available in the present volume has ever been translated into English, apart from a brief rendering of the first chapter that was published without the commentary in 1957. None of the commentary has previously been translated into any language at all.

Reviews

"This praiseworthy work will guide many scholars in this field."--*Religious Studies Review*

By the end of the eighth century, and possibly as early as the late seventh century, the beginnings of a rich and diverse post-scriptural tradition of philosophical, yogic, and ritual exegesis that was based in, but reached beyond, the confines of the myriad scriptural sources of the esoteric Saiva tantras had emerged in the Indian sub-continent. The Brahmins who authored these works sought to interpret and explain the vast canon of tantric scripture through the production of a wide array of reflections on those esoteric scriptures. These post-scriptural works served a variety of ends. Some sought primarily to engage mainstream Hindu and Buddhist philosophical schools; others sought to codify and explain yogic practice; still others constructed philosophical expressions of the religious principles of scripture; and, finally, some sought to explain tantric ritual by mapping the proper manner of its performance and by offering theoretical explanations to account for its efficacy, meaning, and significance. Along the way, the post-scriptural authors regularly departed significantly from the focus of their sources by marginalizing the culture of visionary experience found in the tantric scriptures in preference of teachings more closely associated with liberating gnosis (jnana), which could reasonably be expected to find greater support in mainstream social circles.

A landmark in the development of the post-scriptural writings may by identified with the composition of the Śivadṛṣṭi (SD) by one Somananda (fl. c. 900-950), the Brahmin and Sakta Saiva tantrika who is the subject of the present book. Living and writing in Kashmir, then a major center of tantrism, Somananda not only founded the highly influential Pratyabhijna school, the philosophical tradition most commonly associated with "Kashmiri Shaivism," but he was also a pioneer of the post-scriptural Trika, a tradition of

exegesis that is closely tied to the writings of the great polymath Abhinavagupta (fl. c. 975—1025), Somananda's great-grand-disciple through a preceptorial lineage passing from Somananda through Utpaladeva (fl. c. 925-975) and Laksmanagupta (fl. c. 950-1000) to Abhinavagupta himself.

With the production of his Si^^drsti was born a dramatic, and new, interpretation of the nature of the divine, and the relationship of the divine to the manifested universe in which humans struggle to navigate their way through samsara, the world of transmigration. Not only was Somananda's vision among the very first tantric post-scriptural expressions of a philosophical non-dualism, but it was a radical form of non-dualism that imagined and articulated, in vivid terms, the presence of an active, engaged G^d— Siva—who personally and directly enacted the activities of the universe. Siva was said both to embody the very nature of all the various agents found in the universe and to perform through them the innumerable human and other acts occurring in the world as we know it. The work, then, as we shall see, was strictly and thoroughly pantheistic. It denied the existence of any difference whatsoever in the nature of Siva, the universe, and the agents acting within it. This view was developed, moreover, via the innovation of a theory that conceptualized, in a novel manner, the universe as a flow of power (sakti) that was controlled by Siva himself. And while many of the unique philosophical and theological contributions of the Śivadṛṣṭi did not find their way into the long tradition of Kashmiri tantric philosophy subsequent to and based on Somananda's work, the text and its author indisputably served to inspire a long tradition of tantric non-dualism, one that proved to have a pan-Indian appeal and influence that extends from the Kashmir Valley of the tenth century to contemporary times.

About This Book

Despite the significance of the Śivadṛṣṭi in the history of Saiva post-scriptural writing, the text, as well as its author, remains something of an enigma, as the Śivadṛṣṭi has in the main found itself neglected by detailed study. In particular, no complete and unbroken translation of the work exists, despite the publication of an edition of the work in the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies (KSTS) some three-quarters of a century ago, in 1934. One suspects that the reasons for this neglect are various, and stem in part from the fact that the Pratyabhijna captured the attention of modern scholarship first in the form of the study of Abhinavagupta, whose exegetical and philosophical writings gained notoriety both for their synthetic and encyclopedic brilliance, but also because the author was well known for his writings on aesthetics, through which not just a few scholars gained awareness of the tantric philosophical and yogic writings in question.

It may also be traced to the fact that the svarapratabhjnakárikas (IPK), a work of Somananda's immediate disciple Utpaladeva, coupled with that author's pair of auto-commentaries, the isvarapratyabhijnakarikavrtti (IPVr) and the Is^arapratyabhijna-tika or -vivrti ('PT), essentially supplanted the philosophy of the Śivadṛṣṭi and gained acceptance as the normative expression of Pratyabhijñá philosophy from a relatively early date.

Finally, the scholarly accounts of the Pratyabhijna available in the secondary literature—and the paucity of writing dedicated to the study of the Śivadṛṣṭi —mirror a practice found in the writings of the historical authors of the Pratyabhijña : the references to Somananda in the literature are severely limited and conceptually circumscribed, for the Śivadṛṣṭi is quoted in a relatively sparing, decidedly selective and, when it comes to making philosophical arguments, superficial manner. Somananda's magnum opus, then, holds a curious place in the history of post-scriptural thought. As the first work of the Pratyabhijna, the

Śivadṛṣṭi may be identified as the root text of an influential and important philosophical tradition. Yet the work is poorly understood and rarely read by contemporary scholars or students of Hindu tantrism, just as it was quickly passed over in preference to the IPK in the history of the tradition itself.

More than the mere privilege of chronological primacy distinguishes the Śivadṛṣṭi i for sustained analysis, however, as its mere status as the original work of the Pratyabhijna hardly suffices fully to justify its study. And the present volume is neither directed nor justified by any wish to discover the "original" or "true" form of Pratyabhijna philosophy. Rather, the present book is shaped by the following pair of principles. First, a close study of the Śivadṛṣṭi can shed light on a single moment in the intellectual history of Kashmir. Written at the turn of the tenth century, the Śivadṛṣṭi was a pioneering work of non-dual tantric philosophy. It offered a novel philosophical vision, one that differed in important ways from the relatively few post-scriptural tantric works that existed in Somananda's time. A study of the Śivadṛṣṭi therefore helps to illuminate a formative moment in the development of tantric thought in Kashmir.

Second, a thoroughgoing study of the Śivadṛṣṭi, when read next to the other, subsequent writings in the history of the Pratyabhijña , will aid our understanding of how the tradition developed and changed over time. A comparison of the writings of the various authors of the Pratyabhijña reveals the fact that these authors each made unique philosophical contributions, even if all the authors of the Pratyabhijña subscribed to a common set of essential tenets and a shared spirit of the tradition. Attention to such diachronic developments in ^ratyabhijna thought will therefore help us to understand how this school of thought incorporated the individual perspectives of the particular authors who represented it. In other words, a close reading of the Śivadṛṣṭi gives important insight into the development of a tradition that self-consciously understood its authors to furnish historically situated treatises on the nature of the world of transmigration and the path to spiritual liberation.

Based on this pair of guiding principles, the present work looks in two directions. It looks, first, to the contemporaneous traditions of tantric post-scriptural writings in order to understand the intellectual context in which Somananda wrote, thereby allowing one to identify the particular contributions the author made to the history of tantric post-scriptural writing. And, second, it looks to the writings of Somananda's disciple, Utpaladeva—not only to his commentary on the Šivad^^^i, the Sivadrstivrtti (SDVr), a.k.a. the Padasañgati, but also to his IPK and IPVr—to begin to chart the ways in which the ideas presented in the Si^^drsti were taken up by the later Pratyabhijna authors.

The particular challenges associated with such a study are various, though they are not unique to the study of Saiva post-scriptural materials. First, the usual problems associated with textual transmission occur, and these must be solved by an examination of manuscript sources. Although the published KSTS edition of the Śivadṛṣṭi offers a solid foundation on which to build one's understanding of Somananda's masterwork, we have examined six additional manuscripts that were not consulted for that edition. In doing so, numerous divergences between the readings of these manuscripts and the KSTS edition became readily evident. More important, some of these variants have helped to solve textual riddles in the published edition, where occasional passages appear in a nearly incomprehensible form, in unidiomatic Sanskrit, or merely in awkward grammatical constructions. For the readings of the six manuscripts may sometimes be shown to be more complete or more accurate than the ones found in the KSTS edition. (We regularly note all the readings of all the manuscripts and of the KSTS edition, however, so that those who read Sanskrit can come to their own conclusions regarding what

Somananda might have written.) This is to say that to access Somananda's thought requires us to pay attention to the manuscripts that have transmitted his Śivadṛṣṭi to us over time. A second challenge relates to the manner in which Somananda's thought has been understood and interpreted in the secondary literature. Simply, the Śivadṛṣṭi has regularly been read through the lens of the IPK and its commentaries, because of which a nearly perfectly synchronic presentation of Pratyabhijna thought has dominated our understanding of the school's philosophy to date. Thus, for example, Gnoli suggested that "the doctrine set out in the Śivadṛṣṭi does not differ from the theories established by Utpaladeva in his [isvarapratyabhijna-]káriktis," a statement that has essentially remained unchallenged in the more than five decades since it was made. This is so despite the fact that it is true only with regard to the spirit of the authors' works and not with regard to Somananda's and Utpaladeva's individual formulations of Pratyabhijna philosophy.

In an effort judiciously to disaggregate our understanding of Somananda's Pratyabhijña from that of his more renowned disciple, the present work therefore includes an unbroken translation of the accompanying passages of Utpaladeva's SDVr, none of which have been translated into any European or Indian language prior to the present rendering. It also includes a critical analysis of the similarities and differences between the writings of the two authors, the latter spoken of primarily in terms of Somananda's unique contributions. The full history of the development of the Pratyabhijña remains to be written, however, for although extensive reference is made to the IPK and IPVr in the present analysis of the differences between the writings of Utpaladeva and Somnanda, the ways in which and degree to which Abhinavagupta and those who follow him in the lineage of the Pratyabhijña adopt the ideas of one or the other of the two authors remains something of an open question, one that demands a full-length study.

Finally, a third challenge to understanding the Śivadṛṣṭi sti and its place in Indian intellectual history arises from the very nature of the work itself. ^ famously difficult text, the Si^adrsti taxes the knowledge of its readers by addressing a wide range of topics and opposing schools of thought. The lack, moreover, of any extant commentary after the middle of the fourth chapter (of seven) of the work renders the task of interpreting these passages rather more challenging than it might have been. To address every issue of concern to Somananda, then, would require one to treat a range of issues associated with the gamut of philosophical and tantric schools extant in Somananda's day, all through the medium of that author's complex, terse, and relatively inaccessible verse.

Given the diversity of themes and opposing schools with which Somananda deals, I have chosen to treat the matters at hand serially rather than simultaneously. The editorial decision here employed is one of identifying and selecting the peculiarly tantric expressions of the Si^^drsti, and in so doing treating the particular arguments that Somananda directed toward his tantric interlocutors. These are found primarily in the first three chapters of the work, all of which are offered herein in an unbroken, annotated translation, along with (as already mentioned) an unbroken translation of the corresponding portions of the SDVr. Now, although the materials found in the subsequent three chapters of the text are in many ways related to those of the first three—they answer a series of concerns mentioned or implied in the first part of the text—they also address a set of issues that bring Somananda into substantial contact with the philosophical writings of various mainstream, as opposed to tantric, philosophical schools, notably the philosophy of the Buddhist Vijñanavadins and the Buddhist epistemologist Dharmakirti in particular. The seventh and last chapter, in turn, deals with tantric

religious practices, and it will be discussed in some detail in what follows. The reader should therefore understand the present volume to constitute the first installment of a larger project—namely, the production of a complete edition and annotated translation of the Śivadṛṣṭi in seven chapters, along with all of the extant passages of the SDVr.

In the course of examining Somananda's interaction with his tantric interlocutors, I address three issues in the remainder of the present Introduction. First, I examine the substance of the arguments of the Śivadṛṣṭi, and in doing so I demonstrate the ways in which the Si^adrsti articulates a monism that is strictly pantheistic. Somananda repeatedly shows himself to be emphatically opposed to the conception of any difference whatsoever between Siva and the universe he creates, so much so that he repeatedly argues that any and every entity found in the world is fully equal to Siva himself. Central to this notion is Somananda's striking and sweeping theory that Siva's power of will (iccha) precedes and shapes all cognitions and actions, be they those of humans or other beings who are subjected to the rounds of transmigration and rebirth, of the various apparently inanimate objects and entities that populate the universe, down to the mundane pot, or even of Siva himself.

Second, I detail Somananda's interaction with the various tantric schools, texts, and authors of his day, including the dualist Saiva Siddhantins, the Spanda School, the Krama, and the Trika. (I also discuss in passing the two mainstream philosophical schools with which one must be familiar in order fully to understand the selections of the Śivadṛṣṭi and SDVr here offered, those of the Buddhist Vijñanavadins and the Buddhist epistemologist DharmakIrti in particular, and the Hindu grammarians as represented by the writings of Bhartrhari.) Such a study is indispensable to understanding Somananda's text, for while it has been known for some time that the Śivad^^^i shows itself to be close, in particular, to the Trika, as well as the Krama, the full contours of these interactions have yet to be mapped. This lacuna in the scholarly literature may be seen most notably with the influence of the Trika Vnabhairvaa (VBh) on the Śivadṛṣṭi, an influence felt most palpably in the seventh chapter, but also throughout the text, which often echoes the VBh in articulating its pantheism. I also include a summary examination of the Trika and other technical terminology found in the Śivadṛṣṭi, this as an accompaniment to an analysis of the differences between the Śivadṛṣṭi, on the one hand, and the IPK, IPVr, and SDVr of Somananda's disciple and commentator, Utpaladeva, on the other.

The latter's monism differs in significant ways from that of his teacher. In particular, I argue that the monism of the IPK and IPVr involves a panentheism that recognizes the identity of Siva with the universe he creates, but at the same time reserves a transcendent place for the creator god. For, contra Somananda's pantheistic Śivadṛṣṭi, Utpaladeva allows for a form of Siva that in some sense stands simultaneously apart from the universe he creates. Along the way Utpaladeva also marginalizes Somananda's concept of divine will, a philosophical tenet that, although it is a hallmark of the Si^adrsti, is essentially erased from the IPK and IPVr.

Third, I will argue that the Si^adrsti was directed toward an audience of insiders, as opposed to the wider learned community to which the IPK and IPVr are directed, just as Somananda's interlocutors are themselves primarily, though not exclusively, his fellow tantrikas and the tantric scriptures with which they engage. Most important, in this regard, are the extended and vociferous arguments Somananda puts forward to oppose the philosophy of the grammarians in the second chapter of the D. These famous arguments have perplexed modern scholars, who could not understand why Somananda would attack a

school and an author so readily embraced by his immediate disciple, Utpaladeva. I will show that Somdnanda's arguments against Bhartrhari's Vakyapadiya (VP) and the commentary on the first chapter (kanda) of that work, the Vakapadiyavitti (VPVr), are linked to his repudiation of a Sakta tantric school that invoked the grammarians to justify the view that the goddess, and not Siva, is supreme.

The remainder of the Introduction to the Translation is divided into four parts. In the first part (sections 3 and 4), I survey Somdnanda's writings and discuss his biography. Following this is a detailed study of Somananda's philosophical vision and a comparison of it with Utpaladeva's Pratyabhijña (sections 5, 6, 7, and 8). Included in this part is an examination of the differences between the writings of Somananda and Utpaladeva, which is divided into two subsections. The first subsection maps the ways in which Utpaladeva's IPK and IPVr diverge from the D. The second subsection examines the divergences between the Śivadṛṣṭi and the SDVr, which are characterized primarily by a difference in terminology: Utpaladeva borrows substantially in his SDVr not only from the nomenclature of the Hindu grammarians but also from that of the Buddhist idealists and the Buddhist epistemologist Dharmakirti in particular, while Somananda's Šivad^^^i does not. Also included is the aforementioned study of the use of Trika and other technical terminology by Somananda and Utpaladeva, followed by a detailed examination of the influence of the VBh on Somananda's work.

Next, I examine Somananda's interaction with contemporaneous tantric schools in sections 9-14. In section 9, I identify the various tantric post-scriptural schools that existed in Kashmir in S^mananda's day and consider the degree to which these traditions were developed at this early moment in the history of the production of tantric post-scriptural works. This is followed by five sections, each dealing with one of the various tantric or philosophical schools with which Somananda engaged: the Spanda, the Krama, the Saiva Siddhanta, the Grammarians, and the goddess-centered Sakta school. After a concluding section (section 15), a fourth and final part of the Introduction describes the manuscripts consulted for the critical edition of the Śivadṛṣṭi and SDVr (section 16); explains the relationship of the manuscripts and the editorial process I used in developing the critical edition (section 17); and describes the various problems encountered and strategies used in crafting the translation (section 18).

Finally, a word should here be said about the various ways in which the reader may wish to engage the present volume. If it is true that this book addresses a number of issues in the study of tantric post-scriptural writing and employs a number of methods to access the materials in question—including the production of a critical edition of the relevant passages of the Śivadṛṣṭi and SDVr, an annotated translation of the same, and a critical study of the ideas represented in the text and commentary—it is similarly true that each reader will approach the work with his or her peculiar interests and concerns. The nonspecialist reader should know that this volume is constructed in a manner that is meant to meet his or her needs and interests. The translation, as will be discussed in more detail below (section 18), is written so as to appeal to the general reader, and many of the notes to the text are included further to explain the ideas espoused by Somananda and his commentator.

The scholar of Sanskrit may wish frequently to consult the critical edition of the work while reading the translation, as he or she will likely wish to take in the textual and historical arguments and references made in the present Introduction and in the various notes to the translation. The nonspecialist reader may wish instead merely to glance at the portions of the Introduction relevant to his or her interests— such as those that deal with Somananda's philosophical ideas, for instance—and, perhaps, focus attention

on the translations included herein. It is therefore my hope and intention that the nonspecialist reader will be able to make use of the translations without being distracted by the rather more technical textual and historical arguments and notes found in this volume, while, simultaneously, the Sanskritist and the scholar of premodern South Asian religions alike will find all the relevant historical and textual detail herein sufficiently and properly to locate the Śivadṛṣṭi and its author in the history of tantric Saivism and in the wider history of premodern Indian religions. <>

THE UBIQUITOUS SIVA VOLUME II: SOMANANDA'S SIVADRSTI AND HIS PHILOSOPHICAL INTERLOCUTORS edited and translated by John Nemec [AAR Religion in Translation, Oxford University Press, 9780197566725]

This is a sequel to a volume published in 2011 by OUP under the title *The Ubiquitous Śiva: Somānanda's Śivadṛṣṭi and his Tantric Interlocutors*. The first volume offered an introduction, critical edition, and annotated translation of the first three chapters of the Śivadṛṣṭi of Somānanda, along with its principal commentary, the *Śivadṛṣṭivṛtti*, written by Utpaladeva. It dealt primarily with Śaiva theology and the religious views of competing esoteric traditions. The present volume presents the fourth chapter of the *Śivadṛṣṭi* and *Śivadṛṣṭivṛtti* and addresses a fresh set of issues that engage a distinct family of opposing schools and authors of mainstream Indian philosophical traditions.

In this fourth chapter, Somānanda and Utpaladeva engage logical and philosophical works that exerted tremendous influence in the Indian subcontinent in its premodernity. Among the authors and schools addressed by Somānanda in this chapter are the Buddhist Epistemologists, and Dharmakīrti in particular; the Hindu school of hermeneutics, i.e., the Mīmāṃsā; the Hindu realist schools of the logic- and debate-oriented Nyāya and their ontologically-oriented partners, the Vaiśeṣika; and the Hindu, dualist Sāṃkhya and Yoga schools.

Throughout this chapter, Somānanda endeavors to explain his brand of Śaivism philosophically. Somānanda challenges his philosophical interlocutors with a single over-arching argument: he suggests that their views cannot cohere—they cannot be explained logically—unless their authors accept the Śaiva non-duality for which he advocates. The argument he offers, despite its historical influence, remains virtually unstudied. *The Ubiquitous Śiva Volume II* offers the first English translation of Chapter Four of the *Śivadṛṣṭi* and *Śivadṛṣṭivṛtti* along with an introduction and critical edition.

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Bibliography

The present volume offers a critical edition and annotated translation of the fourth chapter, or ahnika, of the Śivadṛṣṭi (SD) of Somananda (fl. ca. 900950), along with the extant passages of the commentary thereon of his immediate disciple, Utpaladeva (fl. ca. 925-975), the Sivadrstivrtti (SDVr). This is, of course, a sequel volume. Its predecessor, published with OUP in 2011, included a critical edition and translation of the first three chapters of the D and SDVr, along with an analytical introduction discussing Somananda's biography, his lineage, the Pratyabhijña ("Recognition") school of philosophical thought that he founded, and the intellectual and cultural milieu of the Kashmir Valley in which he lived and wrote. Relying on the contextual information elaborated in the first, the present volume more narrowly examines only the relevant passages of the Śivadṛṣṭi and SDVr. In doing so it stands witness to a fundamental change of focus in Somananda's magnum opus: the first chapters of the Si^adrsti, while they offered a precis of his theological views (chapter one), were substantially comprised of the author's critiques of competing schools of thought, including a proximate, esoteric Saiva school—that of the goddess-centered Saktas (chapter three)—and the philosophy of the linguistic monism of the Grammarian Bhartrhari that influenced it, which Somananda famously and thoroughly attacked in Šivad^^^i chapter two.

The fourth ahnika offers a self-conscious shift in the focus of the Śivadṛṣṭi in two senses. First, Sománanda here turns his attention away from the milieu of Saiva esoteric traditions—his "tantric interlocutors," as they were labeled in the first volume—in order directly to engage selected mainstream schools of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy. Second, as Utpaladeva indicates in his commentary on Śivadṛṣṭi 4.1-2ab, Somananda also shifts his mode of discourse from one of identifying the shortcomings in others' positions and anticipating opponents' criticisms of his own to one primarily of developing constructive arguments meant to illustrate positively (vidhimukhena) the logical necessity of his settled opinion (siddhanta) that everything is of the nature of Siva.

These "positive" arguments regularly come in the form of interrogating the philosophical positions of others, with Somananda arguing that a proper understanding thereof proves the logical necessity of his own. That is, Somananda argues implicitly and explicitly that his opponents cannot formulate their own philosophical positions unless they implicitly accept his Sai^a ontology of unity in doing so. Four philosophical schools are engaged extensively, each well established in the subcontinent in its premodernity and well-known outside tantric circles of practice and thought. These include: Buddhist Epistemology and the writings of Dharmakirti in particular, and the Sankhya, Nyaya-Vaisesika, and Mimamsa schools of Hindu philosophy. In what follows, I summarily review Somananda's engagements with each, after first identifying what I argue he presents formally as his settled opinion or siddhanta.

Somananda's Siddhanta

The view for which Somananda advocates herein is fundamentally an ontological one? And his proposition, that all things in the universe are in their very nature identical with the one and unitary Siva, who exists in the form of consciousness, is presented on the order of a formal syllogism that is structured as follows.

1. All phenomena in the world are possessed of Siva-nature,
2. because all phenomena in the world are possessed of causal efficacy.

3. Whatever has causal efficacy exists as a power or capacity that is controlled by an agent—what is Siva-nature. This is so in the manner that a king directs those who serve him, for example, or the god of the dualist Saivas deploys the power of illusion (moha) and karmic equanimity respectively to create the world and to grace some among those dwelling within it with liberation.

4. Since all phenomena in the world are, indeed, possessed of causal efficacy, which is the mark of Siva-nature (this inasmuch as the phenomena are identified ontologically with Siva by virtue of being his very powers or Saktis),

5. therefore all phenomena in the world are powers or capacities of one who controls them—Siva—, which is to say they are possessed of Siva-nature.

While neither Somananda nor Utpaladeva explicitly characterize them as such, I propose that the opening passages of the present ahnika communicate all these five standard components of the well-known syllogism of the Nyaya. Thus:

The thesis or pratijna, i.e., number (1) as listed, is offered at Śivadṛṣṭi 4.1ab, where Somananda says that everything is of the nature of Siva (sarvam sivatmakam)

The reason or hetu (2) is furnished immediately following, at Śivadṛṣṭi 4.1c-d, where Somananda says that nothing found in the world is "incapable" or asakti, and only a real thing (vastu) could be sakta.

The example or udaharana (3) is offered at Śivadṛṣṭi 4.4, where Somananda says that all things, although capable of producing their own effects, are dependent for their efficacy on the one who deploys them toward some end, like a king who directs those who serve him or like Isvara, according to the Saiva Siddhanta, deploys powers to create the universe and liberate bound souls. Somananda also further elaborates his understanding of the particular relationship of a capacity for causal efficacy to the agent who controls it, after he identifies the hetu and prior to the udaharana, viz., at Śivadṛṣṭi 4.1d-3. We shall return to this key passage momentarily.

The "application" or upanaya (4) is proffered at Śivadṛṣṭi 4.5: Somananda there states that Siva alone, who is absolutely one—unique—engages in various ways with his powers or capacities, which are by their very natures the many (capable) entities in the universe; and he does so, Somananda suggests, because he is uniquely and fully identified with those powers or capacities.

Finally, the conclusion or nigamana (5) is stated at Śivadṛṣṭi 4.6-7ab: all entities in the world are existent inasmuch as all entities are capable, and as such they are real in the ultimate sense of being Siva, who is fully identified with the capacities themselves.

The warrant that justifies the formal structure of this syllogism is identified at Śivadṛṣṭi 4.1d-3. It is this, namely, that the very existence of multiple capable entities in the world, what can be known ostensibly, demands the existence of an organizing agent who commands and controls them, lest all things be themselves utterly independent. This is so because action of any sort, on Somananda's view, is predicated on intention: an agent of action must exist who wishes to perform the act or acts in question. And each capable entity must be understood to be kept to a discrete and designated sphere, a circumscribed scope of action, lest everything be capable of doing anything. Only the existence of a single and fully independent agent who controls these entities guarantees not only that the range of their

respective capacities is circumscribed, but also that they may be mutually coordinated and set in motion. All capable entities, in a word, must be understood to be placed in and partake of such a structural matrix, such that superior capacities bind or restrain subordinate ones, all in a unitary and controlled hierarchy. Otherwise, there would be no way logically to understand a plural number of powers or capacities to function in a coordinated manner.

This—what is a theological claim made by way of this logical claim—is in fact fundamental to the entire thread of arguments in the present chapter of the Śivadṛṣṭi. The claim is, moreover, not only that multiplicity can only exist by way of unity, but also that the very evidence for unity is the readily apparent multiplicity in the universe, which one experiences—knows—habitually in quotidian experience! For the fact that everything that is knowable performs some action and effects some result—at the very least anything knowable in consciousness is capable of making itself thus known—suggests not only that all that can be experienced is real, but that all phenomena require a place in this structured hierarchy and must be associated with a single agent who orders and controls them. In a word, all must be identified with the one Siva as his powers, Somananda argues, for only this non-dual identification can explain the mutual interrelation and functioning of the multiple capable entities that ostensively may be said to exist.

This thesis and its syllogistic components are tested repeatedly in the fourth ahnika against the views of Somananda's philosophical interlocutors and with respect to a range of philosophical issues. Thus he may be said to offer a positive account for his philosophical position by way of criticizing the limits of his opponents' views, illustrating how they must presuppose his Saiva non-duality in order to justify their particular treatments of particular philosophical problems, including, among other concerns, the nature of language and its denotative capacity; a proper understanding of causality, mereology, and the nature of perception; and an examination of the grounds on which one can justify or explain inferential reasoning. It is to these particular arguments that we now turn.

Conclusion

The preceding survey of the contents of the fourth ahnika equips one for further reflection on the structure of the Śivadṛṣṭi as a whole, so too the arc of its philosophical narrative. We have noted, already, that the fourth ahnika—at least as Utpaladeva understands it—stands as a fulcrum, a moment of transition from the critique of others' views found among the opening chapters to the positive articulation of Somananda's own. This may be said to be so notwithstanding the fact that the bulk of the ahnika serves to criticize the views of other schools, because those criticisms in fact illustrate the logical necessity of the existence of Somananda's own ontological (and epistemological) non-dualism, as we have repeatedly seen.

Now, much remains to be deciphered and explained in the succeeding three chapters of Somananda's masterwork. And yet, a clearer synoptic vision of the Śivadṛṣṭi in its overarching structure is more readily evident from our present vantage point, past the half-way point in the text and beyond the boundary where all commentarial works are lost to us. What we see is a book that opens and closes with particular sectarian concerns, the first ahnika outlining Somananda's theological vision in clearly Saiva terms, the last ahnika articulating the manner of practice that his philosophical vision demands. Between these bookends are a series of áhnikas that deal with opponents' philosophical views.

Here, something of the trajectory of the philosophical concerns in the text becomes evident. Central to Somananda's philosophical project is the notion that proof of the supremacy of his settled opinion (siddhanta) is found in a proper analysis of the appearance of multiple entities in the universe. Such entities are real on Somananda's view, to be sure; he never countenances their unreality. Indeed, his insistence on the real existence of the world as it is experienced in quotidian life not only explains his apparent sympathy for his Mimamsaka counterparts but also justifies, on his view, his entire philosophical project: it is only Saiva non-dualism that can account logically for the existence of the apparently multiple universe experienced in quotidian life. The warrant of the syllogism he offers at the opening of the ahnika, in other words, stands as the philosophical bedrock of his thought. Explain everyday reality in a manner that conforms to mundane experience, he intimates, or hang up your philosophical spurs.

This direction leads Somananda to examine in detail the world of phenomena as powers. It explains, that is, his concern with the philosophy of the Saktas, as is in evidence in the third ahnika, so too his detailed critique of Bhartrhari in the second, he also being one who concerned himself with powers. It likewise explains his engagement with Buddhist epistemology as seen in the present ahnika (and elsewhere in the text, as well). In each case, Somananda ponders how one might explain the mutual interaction of disparate forces—phenomena—in the universe, such that they may, indeed, be said to be real and, as important, to cohere as a (dynamic) system; he is intensely concerned, that is, with the explanation of the existence of multiple capable (sakta) entities that can perform various and varied activities, and yet can also stand in mutual relation, such that one does not unduly impinge on another's innate capacities. As we have seen, for Somananda such a model demands the existence not only of a coherent whole, a system or order, but also one that must culminate in the unitary presence of a single controlling agent who exists as the powers or capacities.

The Saktas could not account for such coherence, he argued, because they failed to countenance the existence of a supreme agent who would direct and order the powers and thus justify their mutual co-presence in the universe. Neither could Bhartrhari explain the same, Somananda argued, for while Bhartrhari acknowledged the existence of a supreme agent pasyanti—it was one, on Somananda's view, conceived in a manner that failed fully to embrace unity, pasyanti standing instead only at the ontological level of a subtle subject-object duality and thus unable fully to countenance the existence of a single, supreme agency that could coordinate and direct and embody the empowered entities. Finally, Somananda argues, implicitly at least, that the Buddhist Epistemologists cannot explain the co-presence of multiple forces or powers, because they fail to conceive of any manner by which they may logically be understood to interact systematically, as a complex whole. This failure, moreover, is rooted in an inability to understand the true power of all phenomena, viz., to make themselves known to a unitary agent who is identified with and cognizes them.

Now, Somananda's concern for logically proving the existence of a unity in—or, rather, existing as—the many is in further evidence in the ahnikas of the Śivadṛṣṭi subsequent to the present one, as mentioned. And yet, to reiterate, much work remains to be completed in the effort to interpret these later chapters, what amounts, as it did in the present chapter (particularly after the commentary is lost), to a project of recovery that is grounded in a painstaking semantic decipherment of Somananda's terse and telegraphic verses. With the edition and translation of the present ahnika, then, only a part of the project of understanding the Śivadṛṣṭi in its full range of meaning has come to fruition, just as it can only

be with a final engagement with Somananda's Śivadṛṣṭi that the total reach of his thought might be fully appreciated.

At present, however, one may already note what was not evident prior to the present study, namely that Somananda was rather more intensely interested in the philosophy of Buddhist epistemology than was previously known. Indeed, Dharmaklrti absolutely pervades the fourth chapter of the Śivadṛṣṭi and SDVr, looming as his thought does in nearly every corner of the ahnika, even in Somananda's treatment of Sañkhya and Mimamsaka philosophical formulations. More than this, Somananda engages Dharmakirti's philosophy in a manner that prefigures Utpaladeva's (more celebrated) treatment of the same. His understanding of memory and "recognition" pratyabhijna), for example (and as we have seen), anticipates, in its essential contours, at least, Utpaladeva's very dispute with the same Buddhist school. Even if Somananda fronts theological vocabulary and concerns in the Śivadṛṣṭi precisely the opposite tack as the one in evidence in the IPA, moreover, it is nevertheless the case that a deeper understanding of the middle and late chapters of the Śivadṛṣṭi (perhaps minus the seventh, which, as noted, largely examines Saiva practice) illustrates a degree of consistency in Pratyabhijña thought that has not yet been noted or adequately appreciated, inasmuch as all the major authors of the tradition held Buddhist Epistemology close in mind and developed sometimes surprisingly consistent arguments against the same.

This is to say that the fourth ahnika sheds further light on precisely what was anticipated (perhaps uncontroversially) in the first volume of **THE UBIQUITOUS SIVA**, namely, that it is to Bhartrhari, and the Buddhists that much intellectual debt is owed in the history of Saiva philosophy in Kashmir. Indeed, it is in the context of explaining the existence of a world of multiple capable entities and with his insistence on the logical necessity of the existence of a single, unitary, and ultimate agent Siva, precisely the one who is promoted in Saiva sectarian and esoteric works—that he engages these authors and their ideas, and those who follow them in their thinking. Simply put, the Śivadṛṣṭi offers a thoroughly complex instance of Hindu-Buddhist debate, one registering and critiquing the views of a range of esoteric and "orthodox" philosophical and sectarian traditions along the way.

It is increasingly clear that, however challenging it is to read and interpret, Somananda's magnum opus must be counted among the landmark works in the history of Indian philosophy. For the SD not only offers an important window into the intellectual history of the Valley of Kashmir around the turn of the second millennium, but—and we are now in a position to say so more clearly than ever before—it also boasts of a clear and substantial legacy one often found in the writings of Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta, which owe more to Somananda's intellectual project than was previously known. As abstrusely as Somananda's philosophical contributions might present themselves to contemporary scholars of Indian religion and philosophy, then (appearing as they do largely in the sections of the Śivadṛṣṭi for which no commentaries remain extant), and even while their full scope remains yet to be recovered, the fact that their influence was and is felt across Indian intellectual history signals they merit a fuller integration into the scholarly account of the history of Saiva—and Kashmiri, and Indian—intellectual history. One hopes the present contribution will serve to further that very endeavor. <>

SABDA READER: LANGUAGE IN CLASSICAL INDIAN THOUGHT translated and edited by Johannes Bronkhorst [Historical Sourcebooks in Classical Indian Thought, Columbia University Press, 9780231189408]

The Historical Sourcebooks in Classical Indian Thought series provides text-based introductions to the most important forms of classical Indian thought, from epistemology, rhetoric, and hermeneutics to astral science, yoga, and medicine. Each volume offers fresh translations of key works, headnotes that orient the reader to the selections, a comprehensive introduction analyzing the major lines of development of the discipline, and exegetical and text-critical endnotes as well as extensive bibliography. A unique feature, the reconstruction of the principal intellectual debates in the given discipline, clarifies the arguments and captures the dynamism that marked classical thought. Designed to be fully accessible to comparativists and interested general readers, the Historical Sourcebooks also offer authoritative commentary for advanced students and scholars.

Language (śabda) occupied a central yet often unacknowledged place in classical Indian philosophical thought. Foundational thinkers considered topics such as the nature of language, its relationship to reality, the nature and existence of linguistic units and their capacity to convey meaning, and the role of language in the interpretation of sacred writings. The first reader on language in—and the language of—classical Indian philosophy, A Śabda Reader offers a comprehensive and pedagogically valuable treatment of this topic and its importance to Indian philosophical thought.

A ŚABDA READER brings together newly translated passages by authors from a variety of traditions—Brahmin, Buddhist, Jaina—representing a number of schools of thought. It illuminates issues such as how Brahmanical thinkers understood the Veda and conceived of Sanskrit; how Buddhist thinkers came to assign importance to language's link to phenomenal reality; how Jains saw language as strictly material; the possibility of self-contradictory sentences; and how words affect thought. Throughout, the volume shows that linguistic presuppositions and implicit notions about language often play as significant a role as explicit ideas and formal theories. Including an introduction that places the texts and ideas in their historical and cultural context, A ŚABDA READER sheds light on a crucial aspect of classical Indian thought and in so doing deepens our understanding of the philosophy of language.

Review
Johannes Bronkhorst is a master of the field of Indian theories of language, and he brings his lifelong expertise to provide comprehensive coverage and lucid access to scientific thinking about language from Sanskrit classics including traditions of Sanskrit grammarians, Buddhist and Jain philosophers, Yoga, Vedānta, Mīmāṃsā, Hindu logicians, and Sanskrit poetics. A Śabda Reader is going to become essential reading for anyone interested in Indian theories of language. -- Madhav M. Deshpande, author of The Meaning of Nouns: Semantic Theory in Classical and Medieval India

A Śabda Reader provides a comprehensive survey of what arguably was the world's richest speculation on language and its nature. It was a direct exposure to this tradition in the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries that prompted the emergence of modern linguistics. Part I presents an overview of a wide spectrum of topics, whereas Part II lets the Indian mind speak for itself: it offers a comprehensive selection of passages translated from their originals. The lucid nature of the exposition makes the contents easily accessible to nonspecialists and highly informative to specialists trained in South Asian languages. -- Piotr Balcerowicz, author of *Early Asceticism in India: Ājīvikism and Jainism*

Never before has Indian philosophy of language been made accessible in such comprehensive, penetrating, and masterly fashion. Containing an original selection and careful translation of passages from around fifty different texts in Sanskrit, Vedic, and Pali, *A Śabda Reader* is an indispensable guide and sourcebook for students and scholars of India's long, rich, and dynamic intellectual history. -- Jan E.M. Houben, Professor of Sanskrit at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, PSL Université Paris

When in the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa the goddess Vāc ('Language') says to the gods that she will take leave from them in the attempt of rescuing the stolen sacrifice, the gods were upset: 'No, you will not go: how could we do without Vāc?' In no other tradition did speculation on language have such a strong impact on philosophical thought as in premodern India. Both Brahmanical and Buddhist philosophers, in spite of their radically conflicting views on language (a marvelous reality from which we derive ultramundane and mundane knowledge for the former; a highly dangerous and deceptive tool for the latter) brilliantly contributed to its investigation. Exploring the labyrinthine world of Indian linguistic thought, led by the firm hand of Johannes Bronkhorst, means entering Indian philosophy as a whole through the main door. -- Raffaele Torella, author of *The Philosophical Traditions of India: An Appraisal*

A valuable resource for a wide range of readers from non-Indological philosophers of language to Sanskrit specialists. — *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*

CONTENTS

While I was preparing this book, it soon became clear that much of what should be covered by the subtitle Language in Classical Indian Thought does not easily lend itself to presentation in the format of a reader. Too many topics in this area have been understudied and are far from being correctly understood by modern scholarship. The texts are often technical and obscure, and they frequently create more confusion than understanding at a first reading. Even longtime study does not always guarantee a full grasp of these texts.

I try to resolve this difficulty in the following manner. A number of topics that are crucial for an understanding of the historical role of language in Indian thought can only be hinted at in this reader (mainly in the introduction). Some of these have received fuller treatment in my book How the Brahmins Won (Brill 2016; esp. §§ II^.4, III.3-4). Readers who look for fuller documentation are advised to refer to that publication.

In the present volume, the sections of the introduction (part I) correspond by and large to the sections of the reader (part II), in the sense that, for example, section I.1 and II.1 deal, on the whole, with the same or similar topics. This correspondence is not, however, perfect. An example is section I.3, which deals with the grammarian Patañjali, whereas section 11.3 presents passages from both Patañjali's work and more recent texts that deal with the same or similar issues.

Readers may further keep in mind that in this volume I have tried to resist the temptation of cherrypicking, i.e., of choosing topics on the basis of their similarity to or relevance for modern language philosophy. On the contrary, I have tried to bring out the importance that language has in Indian thought in many or most of its forms, irrespective of whether the Indian notions might or should interest a modern philosopher.

General Observations About Philosophy in India

The most serious mistake a modern reader can make is to assume that Indian philosophers were just like modern philosophers, the main difference being that they lived many centuries ago, in India, and expressed themselves in different languages, mainly Sanskrit. This would be overlooking the fact that most human activities, including philosophizing, are profoundly embedded in the beliefs, presuppositions, and expectations that characterize the culture and the period in which they take place. The French historian Lucien Febvre used in this connection the expression outillage mental, "mental equipment," different for people living in different ages. Atheism in the modern sense of the term, Febvre points out in his book Le probleme de l'incroyance au XVIe siecle, was simply unthinkable in sixteenth-century Europe: people did not have the mental equipment to conceive of it.

Quite independently of the question whether Febvre's claim is correct in its full generality, this example should discourage us from entering too easily into a discussion with Indian thinkers on our terms. Like the Europeans of the sixteenth century, they had many beliefs, presuppositions, and expectations of which they were perhaps not or only partly aware, and for them too there may have been ideas they could not conceive of. More precisely perhaps, they might have understood those new ideas if someone had presented them, but since this did not happen, the ideas never crossed their minds.

Febvre's observation concerns a belief that seemed essential to thinkers of sixteenth-century Europe: the existence of (a) God. Thinkers of classical India were less convinced that there is only one possible position on this particular issue; many of them felt quite comfortable with the idea of a world without creator God. Among their presuppositions we rather find the deep conviction that language and reality are deeply intertwined. Language is for them rarely, if ever, a marginal philosophical issue. Quite the contrary: more often than not, ideas about language are the very basis of their philosophies. The remainder of this book will illustrate this.

This takes us back to the relation between classical Indian and modern philosophers, and to the rather obvious observation that a discussion with a philosopher who lived many centuries ago is bound to be a one-sided affair. The ancient philosopher may have had all the intelligence needed to come to terms with ideas that a modern philosopher might propose to him, but alas, he is dead. The modern scholar is in a more advantageous position: he can learn to understand the ancient thinkers on their own terms, if only he is open to it and willing to make the effort. This too will be attempted in this book.

Philosophy in India, then, was not carried out by philosophers who had no prior concern with language. Most of the participants were either Brahmans or Buddhists. (The Jainas, who will also figure in this book, played a relatively minor and sometimes intermediary role.) Neither Brahmans nor Buddhists were independent observers where language was concerned. Both approached this field with strong, though different, convictions.

Consider first the Brahmans. In their own self-understanding, these men (women were not expected to recite the Veda) owed their Brahmanical status to the fact that they knew part of the Veda by heart and recited it at appropriate occasions. The Veda is a corpus of texts, portions of which were meant to be recited at ritual occasions. This recitation was, and to some extent still is, believed to contribute to the efficacy of the ritual concerned. In other words, Brahmans believed that they possessed verbal utterances that had an effect in the world. At first sight this is not particularly surprising. All language users utter words and sentences with the expectation that this may have an effect in the world. But for

most language users, this effect comes about through the intermediary of those who hear and understand their words and sentences. We can order or request others to do something, or influence others to act and behave in accordance with our wishes by means of other verbal messages.

This was not the way Brahmans believed their sacred formulas affected the world. Sacred formulas, called mantras in the Indian context, were believed to affect the world without the intermediary of other beings, whether human or nonhuman. Mantras work directly, on condition that they are correctly pronounced (in the right circumstances, of course). This efficacy is at least in part due to their language, the one that came to be called Sanskrit, but which early Brahmanical users and thinkers merely considered the correct use of words. Underlying the Brahmans' ritual activity is the conviction that Sanskrit can have a direct effect on the world, because Sanskrit and reality are related in ways other languages (considered "incorrect use of words") are not. Brahmanical myths even explain that the world was created in accordance with the words of the Veda.

The Veda, then, is a corpus of texts containing mantras that have an effect on the world without the intermediary of a hearer. For many Brahmans, the Vedic mantras, and more generally the whole Veda, have no initial speaker either. The Veda has no author, and is therefore pure, self-existent speech. Having no author implies that it has no beginning in time. It is therefore beginningless, eternal speech. Being pure speech, not soiled by the interference of an author (who may conceivably be ill informed, or ill intentioned), the statements and injunctions of the Veda cannot but be reliable, if only we can interpret them objectively. This belief is behind the need felt to develop a method to find an objective interpretation of the Veda. Reflections about the interpretation of Sanskrit sentences in general did not lag behind, and continued until recent times.

Let us return for a moment to the centrality of Sanskrit in Brahmanical linguistic thought. This belief is so fundamental that it is easily overlooked in modern scholarship. It influenced all Brahmanical thought about language, and about much else. As a matter of fact, languages other than Sanskrit were rarely, if ever, taken into consideration by Brahmanical thinkers. Their linguistic thought concerned a privileged language, from their point of view the only correct one, the only language also that has a natural and intimate link with reality. One exaggerates but little when stating that much of Brahmanical thought is an inquiry into the consequences of this belief.

Unlike Brahmanism, Buddhism did not start out with any identifiable implicit or explicit convictions about language. The message of the Buddha was spread in local languages, being adjusted or translated where necessary. Language did come to play an important role in Buddhist thought, but not until a few centuries after the death of the Buddha, and initially in a region far removed from where he had preached. Gandhára, a region in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent (in present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan), witnessed a thorough rethinking of Buddhist teaching. The philosophy there created saw the world as essentially atomic and momentary in nature, as made up of ultimate momentary constituents called dharmas. To be more precise, these momentary dharmas occur in sequences, in which each succeeding dharma is determined by the immediately preceding one. This is also true of mental processes, which are thought of in the same unilinear fashion. Thinkers went one step further and looked upon these dharmas as the only really existing things. Things made up of dharmas—which includes all things we are acquainted with, such as chariots, houses, etc.—not being dharmas themselves, did not really exist.

So far language plays no role in the philosophical vision elaborated by the Buddhist scholiasts of northwestern India. It does play a role in explaining that we believe we live in a world of chariots, houses, and much else that does not really exist; only dharmas exist. All these ultimately nonexisting "things" are nothing but words. Stated differently, we are tricked by language into thinking that we live in a world populated by objects that do not really exist.

The Buddhist philosophy of northwestern India spread in subsequent centuries all over the subcontinent and beyond, and underwent many developments. However, the conviction that we live in an unreal world, and that this unreal world has a close link with language, remained a characteristic of Buddhist thought.

It follows from the above that Brahmanical and Buddhist thinkers, though starting from altogether different positions and without influencing each other during the early period, arrived at very similar conclusions. Both now believed that there was an intimate link between the world of our experience and language. Both accepted, each in their own way, that our common-sense world has been created by language.

There were important differences, of course. Brahmanical thinkers thought that language was close to the real world; Buddhists thought that it was close to the ultimately unreal, imaginary, world of our experience. Brahmins did not talk about language in general, only about Sanskrit, for them the only real language; Buddhist thinkers did not privilege one language, at least not initially.

Brahmanical and Buddhist thinkers came to interact in subsequent centuries. This led to a refinement of their positions, and sometimes to large-scale borrowing. The Buddhist notion of the unreality of our common-sense world did not initially agree with Brahmanical conceptions of the world. However, roughly from the middle of the first millennium CE onward this notion found favor with at least some Brahmanical thinkers, who adjusted it to their needs. In doing so, they also reserved a place for language (the Sanskrit language, of course), which had to play a role, here too, to explain our common-sense world.

But Brahmanical thought had already much earlier borrowed a notion of linguistic philosophy from Buddhism. The Buddhist philosophy created in northwestern India had put much emphasis on ontology: what exists and what does not exist? It had come to the conclusion that, apart from dharmas, nothing exists at all. For reasons that can only be conjectured, these Buddhists had not been happy to draw the seemingly inevitable conclusion that words and other linguistic units do not really exist, the way chariots and houses do not really exist. To avoid this, they had introduced three (or perhaps originally two; the earliest sources are not clear) dharmas that stood for linguistic units: speech sounds, words, and sentences. Words and other linguistic units therefore really exist, even in the reductionist ontology of early Buddhist scholasticism. This idea was not without appeal to certain Brahmanical thinkers. In their discussions of words and the like they were confronted with some fundamental questions: If words are no more than successions of sounds that do not coexist simultaneously, then whole words do not exist. Similar considerations apply to speech sounds and sentences. A number of Brahmanical thinkers adopted the Buddhist solution by postulating that beside the sequence of succeeding speech sounds there was another existing entity, the word. In this way Brahmanism came into the possession of what they called the sphota, probably the bestknown notion from grammatical philosophy. <>

Vedic Cosmology and Ethics: Selected Studies by Henk Bodewitz, edited by Dory Heilijgers, Jan Houben, Karel van Kooij [Gonda Indological Studies, Brill, 9789004398641]

How did 'Vedic man' think about the destiny of man after death and related ethical issues? That heaven was the abode of the gods was undisputed, but was it also accessible to man in his pursuit of immortality? Was there a realm of the deceased or a hell? What terms were used to indicate these 'yonder worlds'? What is their location in the cosmos and which cosmographic classifications are at the root of these concepts? The articles by Henk Bodewitz collected in this volume, published over a period of 45 years, between 1969 and 2013, deal with these issues on the basis of a systematic philological study of early Vedic texts, from the Ṛgveda to various Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇykas and Upaniṣads.

Contents

The present book contains a collection of articles by Henk Bodewitz concerning Vedic thinking about the destiny of man after death and related ethical issues. That heaven was the abode of the gods was undisputed, but was it also accessible to man in his pursuit of immortality? Was there a realm of the deceased or a hell? What terms were used to indicate these yonder worlds? What is their location in the cosmos and which cosmographic classifications are at the root of these concepts? Which paths lead to the hereafter and what is here the function of Vedic ritual in competition with knowledge? Who is qualified for which world? What ideas underlie the doctrine of karman, rebirth, and salvation? And to what extent do certain ideas originate in circles different from those of the Brahmin priests? These and

other questions have challenged Bodewitz to a critical study and an in-depth investigation of Vedic texts, from the oldest to the younger ones, and to present what the texts are saying irrespective of large theoretical issues that have been formulated about the topic.

Ethical aspects became the main subject of his more recent studies. In the opening sentence of his article "The Vedic concepts agas and énas" (2006b, ch. 21 in this volume), we read: "Some years ago I planned to write a monograph on virtues and vices, merits and demerits, and good karman and sins in the Veda, but soon discovered that several preliminary studies would be required." He had already written two articles on merits and demerits in the early 1990s, and four more were to follow including the article just mentioned.

In appreciation of Henk Bodewitz's work, we decided to realize his original plan to write a monograph on vices and merits in the Veda, and to extend it to his earlier research on how Vedic texts represent and refer to "yonder world" with its two extremes, "heaven" and "hell," as these may—or may not—result or be expected to result from merits and demerits in this life.

For this purpose, and in consultation with the author, we have selected twenty-three articles and classified these in two major parts with the themes Yonder World (seventeen articles) and Vices and Virtues (six articles). Within these two parts, the articles are arranged chronologically, with the exception of "The Hindu doctrine of transmigration: its origin and background." This article, originally intended as a lecture for a larger Dutch audience, viz. the members of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) in 1992, was later on adapted for publication in a scientific journal (1997–1998). It turns out to be, in its last version, an excellent introduction to "Vedic cosmology and ethics," more particularly to the two themes of this book, Yonder World and Vices and Virtues. Because of its more general character, it is accessible to non-Vedic specialists as well and it is placed as the introductory article.

Articles 2 and 3 are written in German. To accommodate the readers not familiar with German, it was decided to translate these articles into English, including citations of and references to Geldner's German translation of the Rgveda and those of other translations of Vedic texts not into English. These translations are included as Appendix 1 and 2. In the English articles, the citations in other than English languages are maintained in the original language, mainly German and French.

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The Hindu Doctrine of Transmigration: Its Origin and Background

In 1873 W.D. Whitney, the pioneer of American Indology, called the origin of the doctrine of transmigration "one of the most difficult questions in the religious history of India". Richard Salomon (1982, 410) denotes it as "the single greatest problem of Indological studies" in a review of Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions (edited by Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty) in 1980. The latter publication was the outcome of three conferences held in 1976–1978 on the subject. These conferences raised rather than solved problems. I quote from the Introduction of the mentioned book: "Much of our time at the first conference ... was devoted to a lively but ultimately vain attempt to define what we meant by karma and rebirth. The unspoken conclusion was that we had a sufficiently strong idea of the parameters of the topic to go ahead and study it, in the hope that perhaps then we would be able to see

more clearly precisely what we had studied (rather like the woman who said to Abraham Lincoln, 'How do I know what I think 'til I hear what I say?')". Indeed a very practical approach.

The next problem raised by O'Flaherty's colleagues was the question of "Abstract Theory versus Historical Explanation". After lengthy discus sions they decided to follow both approaches. Again a very pragmatic solution. However, O'Flaherty's survey of the discussions on "The Historical Origins of the Karma Theory" (6 pages) shows that a solution of the problem was hardly reached.

The historical origins were only treated in the first conference. O'Flaherty concludes her survey of the divergent views with the resigned statement: "Rather than looking for one central 'source' which was then embroidered by 'secondary influences' like a river fed by tributary streams, it would be better to picture the intellectual fountainhead of ancient India as a watershed consisting of many streams—each one an incalculably archaic source of contributing doctrines—Vedic, Ãjïvaka [i.e. materialistic], Jaina, Dravidian, and tribal" (. This metaphor actually amounts to the conclusion: "God may know what is the origin."

Then Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty instigated the American Herman W. Tull to publish his thesis of 1985 in 1989 in a series edited by her, under the title The Vedic Origins of Karma. After reading this book my conclusion was that more than a century after Whitney's statement the problems still were not satisfactorily solved.

I will not waste time with theoretical definitions. Rebirth or transmigration (Sanskrit sari^sãra) belongs together with karman (the deeds which cause this rebirth and determine its nature) and with mok^a (the release from the cycle of rebirths) to one complex of concepts which mostly are studied together. So I cannot confine myself to the origin of rebirth as an isolated phenomenon.

The origin and background of this complex have raised several questions. It will be clear that I cannot answer all of them. Was the doctrine of karman originally a theory of causality which explained how every action has results? Did it function as a theodicy, an explanation of the evil in this world? Why did pessimism about life on earth arise, whereas originally the Vedic Indians liked this life? And above all: how did one arrive at the idea that man would return on earth? Many Indologists have regarded the repeated return of sun and moon as the basis of rebirth. However, this phenomenon is too universal. The typically Indian concept of cyclic time and of cyclic mundane periods (the yugas) is later than the doctrine of rebirth and therefore cannot serve as its starting point.

What have been the opinions of Indologists during the last thirty-five years?

In Gonda's handbook (1960, 207) we find an incoherent enumeration of possible origins, introduced with the statement "Über die Ursprünge dieser für die ganze Folgezeit äußerst wichtigen Lehre lassen sich nur Mutmaßungen äußern" and concluded with "alle diese Faktoren haben zu ihrem Aufkommen und ihrer Verbreitung ohne Zweifel das Ihrige beigetragen. Vermutungen fiber nicht-arischen Ursprung ... sind spekulativ." In the second edition (19782, 207) the formulation of the problem was hardly modified.

In 1980 O'Flaherty, as we have seen, chose a more attractive phrasing of the problem without adding anything new. In the eleven pages of the rather unsatisfactory bibliography some important publications (especially about the origin) are missing, e.g. Paul Horsch (1971).

According to Horsch the doctrine developed out of Vedic thought, i.e. from the ideas of the Aryans who invaded India somewhere in the second millennium BCE.

In the same year 1971 Hyla Stunz Converse obtained her doctorate at Columbia University with a voluminous, but controversial and not completely satisfactory thesis in which everything new, creative and interesting was attributed to non-Aryans, proto-Dravidians and proto-Jains (three categories which would amount to the same). This thesis was not included in the mentioned bibliography.

Herman Tull, who defended the Vedic origin in 1989, refers to Paul Horsch (who did the same), but is silent on Converse. It is obvious that a real discussion of all the issues is still missing.3 It was a surprise to me to see my guru Gonda quoted in support of the Aryan as well as the non-Aryan origin in the theses of Tull (passim) and Converse. Gonda was rather cautious in his formulation of the problem of change and continuity in Ancient India and in this connection he acknowledged the process of adaptation that continuously took place, but I am sure that his predilection concerned the continuity and the Vedic origin and that he would have tried to prove it, if he had thought it were possible to do so.

Since Horsch quoted almost all the available literature I use his article as a starting point. Horsch was primarily interested in the population and culture which would have developed the theory, rather than in the possible causes of the relevant ideas. He rejected the non-Aryan origins or even influences and thought "daß es sich dennoch um eine echte vedische Entwicklung handelt, deren Stufen bis in alle Einzelheiten eruiert werden können" (1971, 100). The non-Aryan influence would be entirely absent and apparently he equated the non-Aryans with primitive tribals. His observation: "Wo die Seelenwanderung bei den heutigen Primitivvölkern Indiens auftritt, weist sie deutlich hinduistischen Einfluss auf" (104, n. 9) seems to be based on the following way of reasoning: Since the modern, primitive tribals have adopted the doctrine from Hinduism, the Vedic, Aryan precursors of the Hindus cannot have adopted it from the primitive tribals in the most ancient period.

However, the situation is more complicated than sketched by Horsch. What is the meaning of the term Aryan in a discussion on ethnicity? Were the people who called themselves Aryans belonging to one, homogeneous race during the whole Vedic period? During the last decades (i.a. due to the results of archaeology) several Indologists have assumed that a process of acculturation took place in the most exciting period from about 1500 to 500 BCE. The denomination Aryan still referred to a linguistic and cultural unity, but this unity was no more racial (if it ever had been so) and linguistic borrowings seem to have been accompanied with other external influences. Unfortunately, it is difficult to decide how far the acculturation between the original Aryans and the autochthonous population (probably not exclusively consisting of primitive tribals) extended. Anyhow it is evident that developments within Vedism, resulting in the emergence of Hinduism, cannot exclusively be attributed to purely internal developments of the Aryan ideas (at least if Aryan is taken as Indo-European). The antithesis between Vedic and autochthonous is too simplistic, especially if we examine the late Vedic period.

Starting from the Vedic texts (indeed almost the only reliable, extensive material) Horsch tried to trace the source of all later developments in Vedism. A gradual evolution were discernible. However, it is as well possible that gradually external influences penetrated. This means that the philological proof of traceable developments may be less hard than philologists are used to assume. When speaking of external influences I do not follow the strict opposition of Vedic/Aryan and autochthonous/non-Aryan. The real opposition is between traditional, orthodox Vedism characterized by ritualism, and non-

orthodox movements which need not have been entirely non-Aryan. Against Herman Tull's thesis of the Vedic origin of the doctrines under discussion it may be argued that Tull connects everything with Vedic ritualism and that the doctrine of karman (interpreted by him as originating from ritual) almost forms his single concern. <>

THE LUMINOUS WAY TO THE EAST: TEXTS AND HISTORY OF THE FIRST ENCOUNTER OF CHRISTIANITY WITH CHINA by Matteo Nicolini-Zani [AAR Religion in Translation, Oxford University Press, 9780197609644]

THE LUMINOUS WAY TO THE EAST offers a comprehensive survey of the historical, literary, epigraphic, and archaeological sources of the first stage of the Christian mission to China. It explores the complex and multifaceted process of the interaction with the different cultural and religious milieux that the Church of the East experienced in its diffusion throughout Central Asia and into China during the first millennium.

Matteo Nicolini-Zani provides an overview of the Christian presence in China during the Tang dynasty (618-907) by reconstructing the composition and organization of Christian communities, the geographical location of Christian monasteries, and the related historical events attested by the sources. Through a new and richly annotated English translation of the Chinese Christian texts produced in Tang China, the volume provides a documented look at what was the earliest, and perhaps the most extraordinary, encounter of Christianity with Chinese culture and religions (Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism). It shows how East Syriac Christianity in its eastward expansion along the Silk Road from Persia to China was open to the adoption of other languages and imagery and was able to enculturate the Christian teaching into new cultural and religious forms without losing its identity.

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The report that Marco Polo (1254-1324) made of his travels in Asia between the years 1271 and 1295 includes a story "which is fitting to tell" about a meeting that took place around 1288 in Fuzhou (Fugiu in his account), a city in Southern China, with "a certain manner of people whose religion no one understands." Marco and his uncle Maffei visited them, talked with them, and questioned them about their customs and beliefs, and soon

they found that they held the Christian religion. For they had books, and these Masters Mafeu and Marc reading in them began to interpret the writing and to translate from word to word and from tongue to tongue, so that they found it to be the words of the Psalter. Then they asked them whence they had that religion and rule. And they answered and said: "From our ancestors." And thus they had in a certain temple of theirs three figures painted, who had been three apostles of the seventy who had gone preaching through the world; and they said that those had taught their ancestors in that religion long ago, and that that faith had already been preserved among them for seven hundred years; but for a long time they had been without teaching and so were ignorant of the chief things. "Yet we hold this from our predecessors, namely that according to our books we celebrate and do reverence to these three, namely the

apostles." Then Masters Mafeu and Marc said: "You are Christians and we are likewise Christians. of its missionary duty, and its story therefore has an intrinsic interest which is lacking in the case of the later mission. It is a story of the meeting of two profoundly dissimilar cultures.... Although they failed to make a significant impact on Chinese ways of thought, the Nestorians in Tang China ... at least tried to communicate with the Chinese among whom they lived.

In the pages immediately preceding the translation of the texts (Chapter 3), I describe their form and content, highlighting and analyzing the most original elements and summarizing what published studies say about the origin of these documents and how they were discovered.

The documents, however, can only be read against the background of the historical and political events that the Christian communities experienced in the Chinese Tang Empire. Therefore, the preceding chapter (Chapter 2) offers a summary of the historical data that have come down to us and are attested to by the sources, together with my attempt to reconstruct the locations, organization, and denominations of Christianity in China between about 635 and 845.

Finally, I did not think it possible to isolate Tang Christianity in China from the place it originated, with which the Chinese periphery always maintained close ties. The Christian presence in China is in fact the point of arrival of the Church of the East's long process of expansion along the Silk Road from Persia, where it began, throughout Central Asia. For this reason I thought it useful to introduce a further chapter (Chapter 1) in which I briefly describe the extraordinary missionary dynamism of the Church of the East from the Middle to the Far East, presenting the archaeological and literary findings we possess and focusing on how East Syriac Christianity—significantly defined as "a Christianity of mission and cultural mediation"—entered into dialogue with the religious traditions of Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism encountered on the caravan routes of Central Asia.

This, in short, is the structure of the book, which deliberately does not end with a conclusion. The objective of this work is not to determine whether or not the encounter between Christianity and ancient Chinese culture described and evaluated in the following pages is a model for a truly Chinese Christianity. I hope that scholars in fields such as missiology and intercultural dialogue will find in this introductory study source material for developing new reflections. Their insights will undoubtedly echo the numerous questions that are raised by the dialogue between Christianity and Asian cultures and religions and that today are perhaps being addressed more consciously than they were in the past. I am convinced that the experience of Christians in the Tang period can stimulate contemporary theologians, particularly in China, to formulate a Sino-Christian theology, one that speaks a language that is genuinely Chinese.

Some difficulties may be encountered in reading this book because of references to unfamiliar historical events within which Tang Christianity is located, the frequent use of terms in Asian languages (Syriac, Persian, Sogdian, Chinese, and Sanskrit), the cultural distance of the language used in the documents translated here, or the repeated references within these documents to philosophical and religious traditions which, despite studies that have been done on Chinese Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism, remain relatively unfamiliar in much of the West.

I hope, however, that curiosity, a willingness to listen, and a desire for knowledge and encounter (and therefore of empathy) will enable readers to surmount these difficulties. That same feeling of empathy, after all, was what prompted the Venetian merchants who traveled at the end of the thirteenth century

to recognize their Chinese brothers, convinced that they were the heirs of the ancient East Syriac Christian tradition: "Vos estis christiani et nos sumus similiter christiani," said Marco and Maffeo to the Christians of Fuzhou. May this same feeling of empathy also be shared by those who now set out with me along the route of the "Luminous Way in the first millennium.

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The discovery, now almost four hundred years ago, of the bilingual Chinese-Syriac monumental stele caused almost as great a stir in the world of learning at that time as did the discovery of the first Dead Sea scrolls in 1947. In both cases, so astonishing and unexpected were these two finds that at first some scholars refused to believe that the artifacts in question were genuine. Such doubts, however, were soon dispelled, but the newly gained information in both cases demanded a complete rethinking of previous perceptions, whether it was of the development of the Hebrew text of the Bible, or in the case of the Xi'an stele, of the history of the eastern expansion of Christianity. Who would ever have imagined that the year in which Damascus fell to the invading Arab armies was also the year when a group of monks from the Church of the East turned up at the seat of the Tang court? A precise date for this event, "the ninth year of the Zhenguan era," corresponding to 635 CE, is explicitly given in the beautifully inscribed text of the Xi'an stele, itself erected in 781.

With the subsequent discovery of Christian texts in Chinese from the Tang period, and the very recent discovery. of a second stone monument, the Luoyang pillar dating from 815, a considerable amount of information about the presence and character of Chinese Christianity in the Tang period is now available, and quite a number of presentations of the documents for a wider public have been made. This textual evidence, provided by the two monuments and by a number of literary texts, is, however, no easy task for the historian to evaluate, and many of those who have attempted this have not always been true to the Latin author Tacitus's ideal for the historian that he or she should write sine ira et studio, instead doing so from the viewpoint of some particular Western perspective. This situation makes the appearance of the present English translation of Matteo Nicolini-Zani's La via radiosa per tbriente, in its revised and expanded form, so very welcome. Being a scholar possessing a deep familiarity with both the primary sources and the (now very extensive) secondary literature, Matteo Nicolini-Zani is eminently well placed to provide a reliable and well-balanced introduction to, and translation of, the various materials in Chinese that are available. Furthermore, he has done this in a manner which very successfully caters both for a general readership and for an academic one: the general reader can skip the footnotes, while scholars will be immensely grateful for the richness of, and the wide learning displayed by, this annotation.

In the first half of the book the author has provided an excellent introduction to the wider background of the texts and their place both within the history of the Church of the East and within that of the Tang period. This is followed by a very helpful guide to the texts themselves and to the documents containing them, for some of which the provenance is problematic. Finally come authoritative translations of the Xi'an stele and of five further texts, the last of which is also to be found on the Luoyang pillar. All are provided with helpful annotation, and in many cases this illuminatingly brings out the ways in which Buddhist terminology was borrowed by the authors of the texts.

At a time when China is one of the places in the world where Christianity is expanding, it is particularly important that modern Chinese Christians should become aware of this earlier presence of an

eastern— and Sinicized—form of Christianity in their country during the Tang period. For them, and for everyone else, the present book provides a reliable and comprehensive guide both to the texts themselves and to their historical and cultural background. May it be widely read! —Sebastian Brock

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The Content of the Texts

Transmission, translation, transformation? This question raised about the Manichaean texts in Chinese can also serve as an appropriate guideline for evaluating the Sino-Christian texts of the Tang era. Since they are the first theological, spiritual, and liturgical works in Chinese, they have been the object of much attention by historians of Chinese Christianity and by missiologists.

Scholars interested in the doctrinal and theological content of these texts have adopted many different approaches in their investigations. One will notice, however, that their underlying question has thus far not been articulated all that clearly. We might put it this way: With their massive adoption of terms and ideas borrowed from Buddhism, Daoism, and Manichaeism, do these documents testify to an effective model of inculturation or do they rather confirm a drift toward unwarranted syncretism?

Already in 1939 John Foster had effectively expressed an important general opinion:

> Terms belonging to the other religions are used throughout [the Tang Christian texts], the Buddhist being the most important. But it is not syncretism. Rather it is a borrowing of terminology, and a relation of doctrine to a familiar background of thought, as the only way of expressing Christian truth in its far-eastern environment.

Over time, numerous studies by Chinese184 and Western scholars have confirmed and corroborated this judgment. A particularly decisive contribution has recently been made by scholars engaged in lexical research, which is conducted with increasingly appropriate linguistic methodologies. These scholars have offered a careful etymological analysis of the vocabulary of Tang Christianity with its Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist background, together with a study of the translation techniques used by the Christian authors.

Similarly, beginning with the Christian vocabulary used in texts whose authenticity has been established, such as those on the Christian stele, the Hymn in Praise of the Salvation Achieved through the Three MaJesties of the Luminous Teaching and the Book of the Luminous Teaching of Da Qin on Revealing the Origin and Reaching the Foundation, Chen Huaiyu concludes that "the Chinese translations of the scriptures of the Luminous Teaching are accurate and orthodox. Although they use many technical terms borrowed from the Buddhist scriptures, they strictly reflect Christian principles." At least for the Christian Trinitarian hymn, the same scholar offered a convincing demonstration of his conclusion by carefully comparing the Syriac and Sogdian text of the hymn with the Chinese text.

Huang Xianian also sees the Christian message of the Jingjiao texts being conveyed by recourse to the terminology of other religions, primarily Buddhism. As he writes, "Buddhism became the vehicle for the entry of Christianity into China." In other words:

> With regard to the Nestorian experiment we see. . . how a meta-cosmic religion [namely, Christianity] develops a new Asian identity within the idiom and the ethos of another meta-cosmic religion [namely, Buddhism]. Thus Christian soteriology was formulated within the terminological framework of the Buddhist or Daoist

Weltanschauung by using the Dao- or Buddha/Avalokitesvara/Guanyin-model to develop a "Buddho-Daoist" Christology.

We have here an entirely modern Christian approach to other religions, a method of evangelization based on interreligious dialogue that was virtually unknown in the subsequent history of Christian missionary activity in China. Matted Ricci and the first Jesuit missionaries of the seventeenth century introduced a form of dialogue that was primarily intercultural. Through a serious study of Chinese culture, they looked for a way to be accepted and to found Christian communities that were not cut off from Chinese culture. Their attitude toward religions was different from that of the missionaries of the Church of the East. Although they saw many similarities between Christianity and other religions, their attitude toward them was fundamentally negative. Thus, while they adapted Christian teaching and practice to other cultures (in the Chinese case, to Confucian culture), assuming the values and models of these cultures to the point of introducing them into their catechisms, they were strenuously opposed to their religious vision and practice. Daoism, Buddhism, and, even more so, Chinese popular cults were systematically attacked as idolatrous practices. The reasons for their differing vision of culture and religion were theological: culture was seen as assimilable, as a means of evangelization; other religions, however, were considered superstitious cults without any salvific value. Christianity had surpassed them, and they were now obstacles to the search for truth.

The positive view toward another religious vision and practice and occasional adoption of it by the Church of the East, which has been more properly called inreligionization (as opposed to inculturation), has produced texts, significantly the supposedly later ones, in which the key terms all belong to the religious sphere of Buddhism and Daoism, and their content features a strongly indigenized theology. It is therefore common to find in the historical studies of these texts the belief that the texts that were judged to be first—the Discourse on the One God and the Book of the Lord Messiah—"expound a Christology and a soteriology that are quintessentially Christian, while the later texts virtually ignore the crucifixion in favor of a Christology and soteriology that could be more aptly described as Daoist or Manichaean"—or, I might add, Buddhist. That is, one notices in the texts an evolution from a type of "canonicalizing" transmission, one that tries to remain faithful to the original models and that is characteristic of the first period and marked by the preservation of biblical elements and Christian tradition, to a type of "indigenizing" transmission that is characteristic of the later period and marked by the abandonment of the original and canonical theological nucleus and by the tendency to rely more and more on the categories of thought proper to Buddhism and Daoism. According to some authors, this seeming absorption of Christianity into Chinese religious systems was also one of the reasons for the disappearance of the Church of the East in China.

One possibility worthy of consideration is that in the eyes of the Chinese, Tang Christianity, clad, as it were, in Buddhist robes, could appear as one of the many heterodox schools or heretical sects of Buddhist or Daoist derivation that had been flourishing in China for some centuries.196 There are data that would support such a reading. One of these is the application of the name Messiah (mishihe to one of the ninety-six "heterodox ways" (waidao) listed in the Laozi huahu Jing (Book on Laozi's Conversion of the Barbarians), a Daoist scripture completed in the Kaiyuan era (71341) that has come down to us through a fragmentary manuscript created in Dunhuang (S. 6963) in the first half of the eighth century.

Another intriguing text is a fragment (S. 6551), written around 930, that records the preaching of a Buddhist monk in Turfan. In this source too, Christianity, which is called the "Persian" heresy, is included among the ninety-six "heterodox ways": paucity and one-sidedness of the material available to us.

Specific and precise studies on individual documents are therefore to be preferred to general reconstructions.

More fundamentally, then, the evaluation of the content of the Christian texts of the Tang era must be brought back to the dialectic to which I referred at the beginning. That is to say, in every work of linguistic and cultural transmission, which results in the translation of original works and the creation of new texts, there is always a process of transformation, and transformation requires flexibility. As Max Deeg pointed out, the Chinese Christian texts of the Tang period "can help us better understand the degree of flexibility and cultural adaptation of the `translation' of Christianity into another culture that had a high sense and pride in its own cultural level, which is not found.. . anywhere else in the history of religious translation."

Above all, the discussion should be less influenced by Western hermeneutical models, as has been the case until now, and more open to hermeneutical models born in the East, that is, in the setting in which this form of Christianity developed and with which it interacted. In this regard, it has recently been wisely observed that doctrinal questions [linked with Tang Christianity] ... cannot assume Western and European norms of heresy, orthodoxy and syncretism. Instead, we must begin with the East Syrian Christians' understanding of themselves and their mission, and relate this to the context from which they came, as well as the one in which they worked.

To the extent that it became Chinese, Tang Christianity could not help inserting itself into, and to some extent making its own, a hermeneutical approach typical of all Asian religious experiences, but particularly evident in Buddhism, in which there is a tendency toward hybridization, that is, adaptation and deep interaction with the encountered cultural context and with experiences other than one's own, without fear of assuming those elements that a priori are seen as possible ways of enriching one's own tradition. To be more precise, this is a matter of selective integration: not everything is Those who convert to Buddha, which Buddha do they convert to? He is neither the Mani Buddha [moni fo] nor the Persian Buddha [Bosi fo]], nor the Fire-God Buddha [huoxian fo], but the Sakyamuni Buddha.... In India [i.e., the West] there are ninety-six kinds of heterodox ways [waidao], among which are the [ways] of Persia [Bosi], of Mani [moni], of the fire god [huoxian, i.e., Zoroastrianism] ...

In addition, the imperial edict contained in the Yuanzhao's Buddhist catalogue of 799-800 that refers to the collaboration of the Christian monk Adam/Jingjing with the Buddhist monk Prajña was aimed at making a clear distinction between the two religious doctrines:

> Since the sañgharama of Sakyamuni [i.e., the Buddhist monasteries] and the monasteries of Da Qin [i.e., the Christian monasteries] are distinct from each other, and since their customs and doctrines are completely different, Jingjing shall hand down the teaching of the Messiah [mishihe Liao] and the sramana sons of Sakyamuni [i.e., the Buddhist monks] shall spread the sutras of Buddha. We wish that the [two] doctrines be kept distinct and that people do not interfere with each other. Orthodoxy and heterodoxy are two different things, just as the rivers Jing and Wei have two different courses.

In view of these assessments, however, a number of questions and observations may be raised. The fundamental questions we must always keep in mind are the following: Do we have sufficient data to evaluate the theological and doctrinal quality of the preaching of the monks of the Church of the East in China from the few documents that have come down to us, documents, moreover, that are not always reliable from the textual point of view? Do these same documents allow us to quantify the degree of the

assimilation of Chinese cultural and philosophical-religious elements into the Christian theological system? In other words, our evaluation of the Church of the East's missionary activity in China must always consider the assimilated, and such integration never occurs indiscriminately; it involves only those elements of other religious traditions that are felt to be compatible with one's own religious tradition.

Thus, for example, Chinese Buddhism assimilated many Daoist philosophical and religious elements, considering them to be the expression of truth at a lower level than Buddhist truth, but useful for its adaptation to the Chinese context. At the basis of this attitude is the so-called doctrine of skillful means (upayakausalya), that is, the adaptation of Buddhist teaching to the cultural, intellectual, and religious situation of its audience. This key doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism is one of the reasons for the rapid spread of Buddhism throughout Central and Eastern Asia, making it possible to reformulate the Buddhist message within cultures extremely different from those present in India, where Buddhism originated and first proliferated.

This penchant for harmonizing diversity, which is a cultural constant on the Asian scene, is perhaps more clearly expressed in the culture of China, which is characterized by a pervasive "taste for harmony." By embracing this hermeneutical approach, it was possible to overcome the fear of diversity, the suspicion that the other's otherness is a threat to one's own idenity.

It has now become evident that within this hermeneutical scheme it is no longer possible to speak of an either/or with regard to the transmission or transformation of the Christian message in the Chinese cultural and religious context. Rather, both processes will always take place together. This being the case, the Western and Christian hermeneutical categories of syncretism, distortion, and heresy are no longer relevant. <>

THE CHINESE LIBERAL SPIRIT: SELECTED WRITINGS OF XU FUGUAN translated and edited by David Elstein [State University of New York Press, 9781438487175]

Xu Fuguan (1903–1982) was one of the most important Confucian scholars of the twentieth century. A key figure in the Nationalist Party, Xu was involved in the Chinese civil war after World War II and in the early years of the Nationalist government in Taiwan. He never ceased to believe that democracy was the way forward for the Chinese nation. Making his ethical and political thought accessible to English-speaking readers for the first time, these essays analyze the source of morality and how morality must be realized in democratic government; they also provide a sharp contrast to the claim that democracy is not suitable for China—or that Confucian government should be meritocracy, not democracy. They also share the reflections of a man who lived through the Chinese revolution and remained strongly critical of the governments in both the People's Republic of China and Taiwan.

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Some explanation ought to be offered for an entire book dedicated to ^u Fuguan's thought, who is not the most prominent New Ruist thinker. He is by no means a household name in Chinese communities, and I would speculate that his writings are not frequently read in philosophy classes. He never had the ambition to develop the kind of philosophical system that his contemporaries Tang Junyi and Mou Zongsan did. While like other scholars of the period (including the two just mentioned), he wrote voluminously, he never published anything in English, other than the jointly authored "Declaration on Behalf of Chinese Culture Respectfully Announced to the People of the World," and how much of this document his contributions represent is not clear. The present volume represents the first appearance of any of his individually authored works in English.

The question, then, is why we should be interested in the thought of this particular twentieth-century Chinese scholar. I will answer that in several ways. First, due to his background he had greater connections with the significant historical and political figures of the time than most scholars. I would surmise not many had personal relationships with both Mao Zedong and Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek). As a general in the Nationalist (GMD) army, he had a closer look at the military and political situation than most. Xu's writings thus provide an intriguing perspective on the fall of mainland China and the early years of GMD rule of Taiwan.

Second, ^u is both more accessible and more congenial philosophically for most modern English speakers than Mou or Tang, his contem poraries who are more widely studied in the Sinophone academic world. Both were fond of neologisms based on classical Chinese works, frequently reference nearly the entire history of Chinese thought, and constructed their philosophical systems in response to dense German philosophers (Kant in Mou's case, Hegel in Tang's). Without significant acquaintance with these philosophers, as well most of the history of Chinese philosophy, it is very difficult to understand their systems, which tend toward elaborate metaphysics. ^u was very critical of this metaphysical turn, arguing that it misconstrues Chinese thought. While his works are not always easy—the frequency of

classical Chinese quotations from a wide variety of sources being the most troublesome for the translator—he generally is more approachable for the reader. This is surely in part because most of what is translated here was published in semipopular journals that aimed to reach an audience outside of academia.

Philosophically, his rejection of metaphysics means he turns out to have more in common with the more ontologically reserved positions common in Anglo-American philosophy. ^u is not committed to naturalism at all; it is difficult to pin down his position precisely, but certainly he believes that there are truths that are neither logical nor scientific. Yet he is closer to that than many other representatives of New Ruism, and it is not hard to see how his thought could be modified to fit within a naturalistic worldview. In his rejection of anything like divine revelation as a source for morality, he shares a great deal with many modern Western ethical philosophers.

Finally, ^u is an excellent representative of the dominant New Ruist view of democracy, a view which only recently has found any representation in Anglophone works on Ruist political thought. The interpretations of Ruist political thought that get the most attention are mainly antidemocratic to some degree, strongly critical of a focus on individual freedom, and favor a significant meritocratic component to government to avoid the problems of voter ignorance and bias. ^u rejects all of these positions. He was an unfailing supporter of more democracy in Taiwan (and China, eventually), he strongly believed in the importance of individual freedom (while having grave reservations about liberalism in the British tradition in particular), and having lived in such an environment, he was highly suspicious of any claims to meritocratic rule. Instead, his interpretation of Ruism is that it requires democracy. It would not be too strong to say modern liberal democratic institutions at long last provide the environment where it would be possible to realize Ruist political goals.

I have found his arguments here fascinating and incisive, and while he may be overly optimistic about the reality of democracy, his claims are worth serious consideration. At the very least, as someone well acquainted with life in a dictatorship that claimed to be governing in the people's best interests, his criticisms of it deserve attention by anyone who thinks meritocratic government is a realistic possibility. Scholars who hope for that should perhaps be careful what they wish for: Xu's own life illustrates that those in power often don't look kindly on criticism from intellectuals.

My Father by Hsu Woo-Chun

My father, Professor Xu Fuguan, was one of the leading members of the New Ruist movement of the twentieth century. His life, faith, and learning were strongly related to the modern history of China.

My father was born on January 31st, 1903, in a poor hill village in Xishui county about 120km south of Wuhan, China. He received rigorous Chinese classical training until twenty-three, then attended a military academy in Japan, where he was highly attracted to socialism.

He was commissioned Major in 1932, fought the Japanese in the field, and was promoted to Major General. In 1943, he was stationed in Yan'an for five months as the KMT's CCP liaison officer, where he got to know Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in person. After he returned to Chongqing, President Jiang

Jieshi was impressed by his report and assigned him to his staff. He was then associated closely with Jiang through the 1940s.

More than 90 percent of Chinese were farmers at that time, and my father suggested repeatedly to Jiang that the KMT needed to understand the farmers and fulfill the farmers' needs. He proposed a "Land for Farmers" plan, which regulated the amount of land each landlord could own, with the requirement to sell extra land to tenants at an affordable price. The "Land for Farmers" Plan was implemented in Taiwan in 1953, thus changing the social structure, setting the foundation for later industrialization, and strengthening KMT rule in Taiwan.

Chinese people suffered the most from civil wars, and therefore my father believed that China must adopt the democratic system so that power could be transferred peacefully. However, Jiang Jieshi considered consolidating power as the top priority in Taiwan. Jiang also designated his son Jiang Jingguo to be his successor and asked my father to pledge loyalty to his son, which was completely against my father's will. My father cut himself off from Jiang, found a teaching job in college in 1952, relocated to Tunghai University in 1955, and started his academic career at the age of fifty-two.

My father wrote and published commentaries, offering his observations, comments, and suggestions on political, social, and cultural issues from 1949 on. He was the most respected and popular commentator of the time. However, his insistence on democracy irritated the KMT. The KMT kicked him out of the party in 1957; then, with the cooperation with Tunghai University, forced my father to retire at the age of sixty-six in 1969, and cut my father off from any academic position in Taiwan, effectively exiling him to Hong Kong in 1970. Because my father did not have regular academic positions in Hong Kong, his main income source was writing. He left more than one thousand commentaries, more than half of which were written in Hong Kong.

I was asked to resign from a Taiwan chemical research institute in 1979 without being told why, and then took a marketing position with a petroleum company in Hong Kong in 1980. That was the first time I got to see my father often since I left home for college in 1954, for almost two years. We carried on conversation in Xishui dialect, exchanging views and ideas freely, mostly about China. His position was firm and clear that the fate and well-being of the Chinese people is the most important issue, and personal feelings should be left aside. He believed Deng Xiaoping was the right man to reconstruct China, and suggested that China needed to resume the private property system. However, whenever I asked him why he did not take up Beijing's invitation to visit, he just changed the subject without answering. That was nothing unusual to me at that time, because he never talked about his own life, and we respected his privacy.

When my father was last hospitalized in Taibei in February 1982, the KMT offered full care. My father wished to leave as a free man, so we did not accept the KMT's offer and held a family service instead. A four-star general in full uniform offered his condolences. My father retired from the army in 1946. How, where, and when did they cross paths with each other?

After my retirement in 2001, by reading my father's commentary articles and from memories and documents, I came to have a better picture of my father's life. He was a man who stood by the people and tried his best for them. And I believe that the major difference between his academic works and the

other scholars' is his believing that a true Ruist should take the well-being of the people as the first priority, not the perfection of academic research.

Among other things, I found that I lost my Taiwan research job in 1979 because I am Xu Fuguan's son. And my father did not visit Beijing to protect me from the KMT. I wish I could say to him: "Please just do as you wish, Daddy."

I want to sincerely acknowledge Professor Elstein's great effort in introducing my father's works to the Western world. <>

PROTEST AND RESISTANCE IN THE CHINESE PARTY STATE edited by Hank Johnston and Sheldon Zhang [Rowman & Littlefield, 9781538165003]

Although contemporary China is a repressive state, protests and demonstrations have increased almost tenfold between 2005 and 2015. This is an astounding statistic when one considers that Marxist-Leninist regimes of the past tolerated little or no public dissent. How can protests become more common as the state becomes more repressive? This collection helps to answer this compelling question through in-depth analyses of several Chinese protest movements and state responses. The chapters examine the opportunities and constraints for protest mobilization, and explains their importance for understanding contemporary Chinese society.

Review

"This timely volume provides us with a detailed overview of the changing landscape of social contention in China. As this book makes clear, after a surge that started in the 1990s and peaked in 2014, protest has declined under Xi Jinping's increasingly repressive watch. The individual chapters present both a systematic assessment of the development and characteristics of rural and urban protest in China during this period and a set of fascinating accounts of the multi-faceted contentious politics under China's techno-authoritarian regime from the petitioning tactics of forced Three-Gorges-Dam migrants to bureaucrat-assisted contention and the extraordinary tenacity of Hong Kong's anti-extradition movement."—Hanspeter Kriesi, European University Institute

"Protest and Resistance in the Chinese Party State provides a long overdue update on the state of contentious politics in China. Drawing from social movement theory and leavened by China-specific events and circumstances, the chapters in this volume provide a rich array of conceptual lenses and analytical approaches to understanding mobilization and protest in China up to and including the Xi Jinping era. This volume helps us appreciate the changes wrought and continuities preserved—in the era of high-tech surveillance and increased political illiberalism in China and within the international authoritarian turn more broadly."—Andrew Mertha, Johns Hopkins University

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Foreword
Hank Johnston (San Diego State University)
PART I: THE PROTEST LANDSCAPE

This volume is the third in the Hansen Collection of Peace and Nonviolence Research. It has been my honor to occupy San Diego State University's (SDSU) Hansen Chair of Peace and Nonviolence for the past five years. The social science of protest, nonviolence resistance, and—the other side of the coin—how protest descends into violent confrontation are important foci in understanding contemporary societies. The appointment afforded generous resources to address contemporary topics about peace and nonviolence and, broadly, to promote world peace through scholarship and academic engagement. Supporting a collection of research monographs on these topics is one part of a robust Hansen program on our campus. Sponsoring conferences is another dimension of the program, and this volume is based on a conference on nonviolent resistance in nondemocracies and authoritarian states held at SDSU in 2019. I am grateful to the Hansen Foundation and its trustee, Anton Dimitroff, for supporting these conferences.

This volume in the series touches on an area of study that has come to the foreground of contentious politics research recently: the challenges to democracy that one-party authoritarian systems of governance pose. It is a theme, I believe, that will gain momentum in the coming decades of the twenty-first century and, especially, the violence-nonviolence dynamic as states employ more intensive modes of policing and surveillance based on new technologies. These are topics that are highly relevant because democracies are challenged in the twenty-first century, and insights from contemporary China are

compelling because protests there wax and wane and because state methods of social control are sophisticated and intrusive.

Although a focus on China has always been present in the contentious politics field, the preponderance of research concentrates on the democracies of the West, where protest is normatively accepted, frequent, and protected by law. The goal of this volume is to cast a brighter light on the protest horizon in China, which broadened significantly during the 1990s and continued to expand in unprecedented numbers until 2012. Then, limited by Xi Jinping's more authoritarian approach to governance, the number of protests events began to diminish. Many protests in China are small expressions of anger at officials and local governments, mostly nonviolent, and never directly challenging the authority of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The vast majority of them remain relatively constrained events or campaigns. The Hansen-SDSU conference in 2019 hosted a thematic thread of several sessions focusing on the unique repertorial characteristics of protests in China and their relations to the state. This collection is partly the fruit of that initiative. A stronger synergy of the social movement field and China-area research has been underway for more than a decade, and our intention is to contribute to its enrichment.

When China began its modernization after the death of Mao Zedong, events of "mass incidents" and "troublemaking" were quite limited, but as the economy and society opened and modernized, protests increased rapidly. Chih-Jou Jay Chen has constructed an important data set of protest events in China. His finds that there was an increase in collective-action events between 2005 and 2014 at a rate of 9.5 times (see chapter 2). Another study estimated that the number of protests in 2010 could have been as high as 230,000. Although most were small gatherings at a village police headquarters or party offices to voice complaints or deliver petitions, these totals also included larger protests against chemical plants and toxic waste incinerators. Chef's chapter shows that the number of large protests (more than one thousand participants) increased during the same period. He refers to China as a "protest society," recasting the term popularized twenty-five years ago by David Meyer and Sidney Tarrow regarding Western democracies, "social movement societies."

To contextualize these numbers, we can consider protest figures from the U.S., where politics was especially contentious during the Trump administration. In the first three years after his election, there were an estimated 16,500 protests, with about 11.7 million total participants, including the massive Women's Marches at the outset of the new administration with 3 to 5 million participants. More recently, the wave of Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in 2020 sparked by the killing of George Floyd during an arrest by the Minneapolis police, peaked on June 6, 2020, when five hundred thousand people mobilized on a single day. One study suggests that as many as 26 million people participated in 2020 BLM campaign, which would make it the largest social movement in the history of the U.S. While the absolute number of protests events in China and the U.S. may be comparable, participation in China is more constrained, and overall figures for participation are not available.

We can be certain that on a per-population basis, protest rates are not as high. Mass protests characteristic of BLM—campaigns that span the country—are highly unlikely in China. Protesters there have a keen awareness of what we could characterize as the KISS principle: Keep it small and segmented. Protests there are self-limited. Large events and campaigns that potentially could extend in geographic scope—suggesting major faults in CCP leadership—would be severely repressed in China as threatening to the party's power.

Another way to contextualize the high number of protests in China is with comparisons with other communist party regimes. In the Leninist regimes of the twentieth century, high levels of repression and surveillance meant that social movements and citizen protest campaigns—at least as we know them in the West—were not common. Like China, the organization of society and civic life in the Soviet Union, East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and the other Eastern bloc countries was highly constrained, less open, and widely surveilled. The development of any independent civil society groups or organizations was seen as highly suspicious. When large movements did occur, they were crushed by state repression: Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) and martial law in Poland (1981)—state responses reminiscent of Tiananmen Square. China, like the communist states of Eastern Europe, monitors any networked relations among groups and individuals who might express shared collective grievances. For social movement theorists, China stands out today when seen in the context of protest incidence from the Cold War era. The high levels of protest in China raise questions about different configurations of repertorial characteristics that might operate there, which are major thematic threads developed in this collection of research.

I close with the observation that the twenty-first century will be China's century. Researchers of contemporary societies must pay attention to its model of governance, state security, and geopolitics to fully understand trends in the future. One of these trends is especially portentous: how the People's Republic of China applies cutting-edge surveillance technologies with goal of maintaining social harmony. Digital technologies are unprecedented in their potential for monitoring citizens, and Chinese party-state uses social media strategies to shape public opinion and promote official perspectives and propaganda intensively. It also applies them extensively for social control. The need for social scientists to comprehend and analyze these trends is compelling. Moreover, as political parties in Poland, Hungry, Turkey, Brazil, and the U.S. erode both the rule of law and the institutional protections characteristic of liberal democracies, this weakening of citizen protections opens the door even more for the use of digital surveillance. Johnston and Zhang's introduction discusses the chilling implications of real-time virtual surveillance in which, hypothetically, a smartphone could capture a frown on someone's face when a story comes across a WeChat feed. If the story is about Xi Jinping, we might have a "face crime," to borrow from the Orwellian newspeak lexicon. In the early 2020s, this kind of monolithic and coordinated web of surveillance does yet not exist. The People's Republic of China is not alone in the use of new surveillance technologies, but today it seeks to take a global lead in their application.—Hank Johnston, Professor of Sociology, San Diego State University. December 22, 2021 <>

AMITAV GHOSH'S CULTURE CHROMOSOME: ANTHROPOLOGY, EPISTEMOLOGY, ETHICS, SPACE
edited by Asis De and Alessandro Vescovi [Series: Cross/Cultures, Brill, 9789004404311]

An Indian Bengali by birth, Amitav Ghosh has established himself as a major voice in what is often called world literature, addressing issues such as the post-colonial and neo-colonial predicaments, the plight of the subalterns, the origin of globalisation and capitalism, and lately ecology and migration. The volume is therefore divided according to the four domains that lie at the heart of Ghosh's writing practice: anthropology, epistemology, ethics and space. In this volume, a number of scholars from all over the world have come together to shed new light on the works and poetics of Amitav Ghosh according to the epistemic frameworks that form the bedrock of his fiction.

Contributors: Safoora Arbab, Carlotta Beretta, Lucio De Capitani, Asis De, Lenka Filipova, Letizia Garofalo, Swapna Gopinath, Evelyne Hanquart-Turner, Sabine Lauret-Taft, Carol Leon, Kuldeep Mathur, Fiona Moolla, Sambit Panigrahi, Madhsumita Pati, Murari Prasad, Luca Raimondi, Pabitra Kumar Rana, Ilaria Rigoli, Sneharika Roy, John Thieme, Alessandro Vescovi.

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Like the setting of his novel The Hungry Tide (2004), Amitav Ghosh's writing exists at the confluence of various currents. It discovers connections between supposedly disparate cultures and languages, and it travels seamlessly between places and peoples that have been divided by political geographies. Lenka Filipova's essay on The Hungry Tide in the present volume views place as "social process," regarding such a view as a necessary adjunct for understanding locations in the context of environmentalism, and the novel's supposedly remote "natural" setting, the amphibious Sundarbans region of West Bengal, is seen to be a heavily populated area where human and non- human forces come together in complex and often competing ways. Such interactions lie at the heart of all Ghosh's work, whether set in contemporary social milieus or, as is often the case in his writing, spanning different periods of history. Primarily a novelist, Ghosh is also variously a social anthropologist, a subaltern historian, an excavator of linguistic genealogies and an environmentalist. In this "Foreword," I endeavour to illustrate the multi-faceted nature of his work, with reference to some of the essays included in this collection. I conclude with comments on the problematics of Ghosh's position as a writer who challenges received historiography by demonstrating the alternative world- views present in pluralist subaltern discursive systems, but frames this critique in a literary English that enables it to reach a global audience, and a reflection on his questioning the value of narrative fiction in his 2016 book on climate change, The Great Derangement.

Amitav Ghosh's Culture Chromosome offers a stimulating selection of essays on major issues in Ghosh's increasingly impressive oeuvre, an oeuvre which moves between fiction and fact to address subjects ranging from the iniquities of mercantile colonialism to contemporary climate change. Coming from an academic background, Ghosh produces researched fiction, while distancing himself from fashionable schools of theory, such as the Subaltern Studies project, with which his work demonstrates more than a passing acquaintance. Although his writing usually, though not always, sidesteps overt

engagement with politics, it addresses many of the most urgent issues of our times. Whether set in the past or present or moving between eras, it demonstrates the extent to which cultures that are usually seen as discrete have interacted with one another, particularly through the medium of language, and it puts flesh on the barebones of ethical debates by dramatizing them in narratives characterized by an imaginative empathy for their characters. In her essay on Ghosh's Ibis trilogy (Sea of Poppies 2008, River of Smoke 2011, and Flood of Fire 2015) in the present collection, Sneharika Roy examines the novels' use of Adam Smith's moral philosophy, arguing that its misappropriation as a justification for colonial exploitation perverts its transcultural humanism. Roy cites Smith's view that "Individuals are not autonomous economic agents but interdependent social actors whose actions have a direct impact on others" and a stress on such mutualities is a constant in Ghosh's work. His characters, while vivid in themselves, can frequently also be read as allegorical embodiments of larger issues and ideas.

Ghosh's first novel, The Circle of Reason (1986) established the parameters for much of his subsequent epistemological probing by arguing, as the title makes clear, for the circularity of reason and a humanism that goes beyond the limits of linear- based Western "universalism." The text associates such humanism with the weaver protagonist Alu's occupation and a central passage on the romance of "cloth" concludes with a panegyric on the loom as a trope for a culture of planetary interconnectedness that resists the dehumanizing aspects of industrial capitalism and by inference, globalization in its contemporary technological incarnation:

Man at the loom is the finest example of Mechanical man; a creature who makes his own world as no other can, with his mind. The machine is man's curse and his salvation, and no machine has created man as much as the loom. It has created not separate worlds but one.

Three decades after its first publication, The Circle of Reason may seem little more than a curtain raiser to Ghosh's best work, but its cross- cultural humanism, its focus on the fortunes of a subaltern protagonist, its travelling poetics and its interrogation of teleological notions of progress staked out the ground for much of his subsequent writing.

Ghosh's distrust of political geography lies at the heart of his widely acclaimed second novel, The Shadow Lines (1988), which dramatizes the deadly personal consequences of the arbitrarily drawn lines that imposed national borders at the time of the Partition of the subcontinent. Towards the end, revisiting the past in memory, the narrator ponders the extent to which space is cognitively imagined by different people and communities. He remembers riots, triggered by the temporary disappearance of an alleged relic of the Prophet Mohammed's hair from a mosque near Srinagar in Kashmir, which occurred in Khulna in East Pakistan in the first days of 1964. Reflecting on these events years afterwards, he uses his compass to draw a circle on a map in an old colonial atlas. In one sense, this circle constructs a highly subjective geography, but again it is at odds with the linear discourse that characterizes post-Enlightenment Western thought. It begins with its point in Khulna and its tip on Srinagar and the narrator is prompted to draw it by the realization that Khulna is about 1,200 miles from Srinagar, "about as far from Srinagar as Tokyo is from Beijing, or Moscow from Venice, or Washington from Havana, or Cairo from Naples." He goes on to find that his circle has covered an area that includes places as far

apart as "the Pakistani half of Punjab [...], Kandy, in Sri Lanka, [and] the Yangtze Kiang, passing within sight of the Great Wall of China." This palimpsest— his circle overwrites the geography of the atlas's map— strikes him as "remarkable" and he feels it is an exercise in "learn[ing] the meaning of distance." It prompts him to describe another circle, another palimpsest, in the atlas. This time he puts Milan at the centre, and places 1,200 miles away from it on the circumference. He finds he has created "another amazing circle" which encompasses Helsinki, Sundsvall in Sweden, Mold in Norway, "a great empty stretch of the Atlantic Ocean," Casablanca, the Algerian Sahara, Libya, Egypt, Crete, Rhodes, parts of Turkey, the Black Sea, Crimea, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Estonia, before returning to Helsinki.5 All these places are as close to Milan as Khulna is to Srinagar and yet, even in an increasingly globalized world, their destinies are less umbilically linked. In short, through a very personal act of cartographical invention he has fashioned an imaginative cartography that is every bit as logical or, seen from another point of view, every bit as absurd as the borders drawn at Partition, but with none of its lethal consequences. Again, the emphasis is on an alternative hermeneutics that challenges received orthodoxies, but here Ghosh avoids explicit political commentary in favour of dramatizing the consequences of Partition through the narrator's account of how it impacted on his family and how, through memory, it has affected his responses. The novel's humanism stresses the extent to which supposedly separate cultures mirror one another, but once more its approach moves away from Western "universalism" in favour of a perspective that has more affinities with sub- continental value-systems, particularly the humanism of such Bengali artists as Rabindranath Tagore, whom Ghosh acknowledges as an influence, and Satyajit Ray, whom he has referred to having profoundly affected his "way of looking at things."

Ghosh's next book, In an Antique Land (1992), is sub- titled a "history in the guise of a traveller's tale," but, as Alessandro Vescovi's essay in the present volume makes clear, it is a generically unstable work that has affinities with the novel. It was an offshoot of Ghosh's work for his Oxford doctorate, Kinship in Relation to the Economic and Social Organization of an Egyptian Village Community (1981), and it moves between past and present to foreground the interconnectedness of cultures across the Arabian Sea. The historical sections suggest that prior to the European conquest, there was a flourishing trading network between the eastern Mediterranean and the west coast of India, a travelling culture of accommodation that was a world away from the later trading practices of colonial mercantilism and contemporary global capitalism. The demise of this pre- Enlightenment network came with the advent of Portuguese colonization, which took control of the Indian Ocean trade by naked aggression, refusing any attempts at co- operation. In parallel with this, in the historical sections of the text, the narrator endeavours to ascertain the identity of the "slave" of a medieval trader, whose presence he has come across as a fugitive trace in a medieval manuscript.

This historical material is complemented by an account of a contemporary Ghosh-like narrator's time spent researching in an Egyptian village. These sections serve to foreground the narrator's own subject-position, implicitly exposing the tendency of classic anthropologists and ethnographers to obscure the observer effect, their personal implication in the events and situations on which they are commenting. Similarly, the narrator highlights his own role as the author- researcher who is trying to discover the identity of the "slave." Gradually it becomes clear that there are commonalities in his divergent narratives— commonalities both between India and Egypt and across eras.

The narrator clings to the belief that a gentler dialogic network of exchange, analogous to the fluidity of the pre- conquest Indian Ocean trade, still exists in fellaheen Egypt, but the social realities of the village world in which he is living challenge his idealism. In a conversation with the local Imam, he finds himself drawn into an argument over which of their two nations can claim superiority in the technology of modern warfare. The longing for a culture that conforms to his imagined version of the pre- colonial Indian Ocean trade remains, but the reality of his exchanges with the Imam exposes this as romantic nostalgia. Nevertheless, In an Antique Land aspires towards the possibility of a more genuinely egalitarian social order that transcends asymmetrical power relations.

On the surface, Ghosh's third novel, The Calcutta Chromosome (1996), is generically very different from In an Antique Land, but it too moves freely between past and present, interweaving fact and imaginative fiction to provide a speculative, but persuasive subaltern alternative to elite historiography. It fuses researched detail about the history of malaria research, particularly information taken from the Memoirs (1923) of the scientist Ronald Ross, who was awarded the 1902 Nobel Prize for Medicine for his work on the mosquito parasite, with a complementary contemporary narrative centred on a latetwentieth- century quester's attempt to confirm his suspicions that Ross's laboratory assistants were the agents responsible for his scientific discoveries. The novel frequently speaks of "crossing over," a term which it invests with various possible meanings and its crossovers are multiple. As Murari Prasad points out in his essay in the present collection, The Calcutta Chromosome is both a generic hybrid, bringing together elements from the detective novel, science fiction, cyberpunk, and historiography, and a work that merges the time- frames of its late nineteenth- century and late twentieth- century narratives. Beyond this, the most radical crossover is the supposed transference of personalities across cultures and periods. With this, as I have argued elsewhere, comes the realization that the novel's supposed discoverers are actually being discovered, as readers find that they, too, are caught up in a tangled hermeneutical web of interpretation that undermines the very notion of autonomous selfhood. This is perhaps the most radical instance of Ghosh's recurrent representations of the interrelations of supposedly discrete peoples and places.

Four of Ghosh's subsequent novels— The Glass Palace (2000) and the three parts of his Ibis trilogy— also incorporate historical research into sharply realized imaginative fiction. However, as with all historical fiction, the past is inevitably written in the present and Ghosh repeatedly nudges his readers towards making connections with contemporary social situations. This is especially marked in the trilogy, which follows In an Antique Land in showing the diversity of the maritime culture of the Indian Ocean, particularly demonstrating this through sustained examples of the miscellany of language forms that flourished in and around the Ocean in the nineteenth century. Ghosh's fascination with linguistic variants and etymologies, which is manifest throughout his work, finds its fullest expression in the trilogy. Earlier, in The Calcutta Chromosome, there is a passage where Ronald Ross is working in Secunderabad, a British cantonment adjacent to Hyderabad, and has a houseboy named Lutchman. He is visited by a fellow- Englishman, Grigson, who is working for the Linguistic Survey of India. Grigson is a kind of Henry Higgins figure— someone whose expertise makes him feel that an Indian's way of speaking absolutely classifies him— and his phonetic expertise enables him to detect that Lutchman is not who he seems to be. Grigson deduces that Lutchman is from further north in India from his "unvoiced labials and retroflex dentals" and, pretending he can only speak "pidgin Hindustani," he traps Lutchman by getting him to pronounce the loan- word "lantern," which Lutchman renders as "lalten." From this, Grigson, who is aware of variant Indian forms of Lutchman's name— the text mentions Lokhkhan and

Lakshman— realizes his real name is Laakhan. In short, then, a specific linguistic detail reveals that Lutchman is from another place; and this is typical of the way names are used in the novel: as an index of shifting identities. Names are at the centre of the novel's investigation of a network of traces that not only challenges the colonial historical record, but also suggests the possibility that a subaltern- centred Indian epistemological system may be more powerful. Thus the episode can be seen as metatextual in that it is analogous to the kind of detective- work that is being conducted in the novel as a whole and there is a similarly metonymic use of language in the first two parts of the Ibis trilogy.

Sea of Poppies self- consciously foregrounds the inclusiveness of the diverse repertory of languages to be heard on the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal and its littoral, at one point referring to these as an "anarchic medley." This medley includes Bhojpuri, an archaic form of Bengali, a particular variant of Indian- English, a range of nautical discourse that includes Laskari and pidgin, Anglo- Indian speech, the francophone English of a particular character, crosscultural puns and, framing all of these, the literary English, which is the narrative medium of the novel. The assortment of tongues employed suggests both the resilience of the subaltern discourses that exist beneath the colonial superstructure and, in the case of Laskari and pidgin in particular, the emergence of new hybridized languages that challenge imperialism's monolingualism, though it could be argued that this is partly undermined by the novel's obvious relish for parading its linguistic virtuosity and the privileging of standard English as the narrative voice. Amid this medley of voices, Laskari has a particular resonance, as a "motley tongue, spoken nowhere but on the water," which serves as an Asian lingua franca that enables people from different backgrounds to communicate. Again, this seems central to the novel's particular brand of Oceanic poetics. The "anarchic medley" of Sea of Poppies is a plausible transcription of the pluralism of nineteenth- century maritime speech rooted in forms particular to the Indian Ocean. Whether or not this medley reflects an actual nineteenth- century "reality" is hard to gauge, but its linguistic polyphony is a strategy that negates the monocultural assumptions implicit in imperial control. The novel seems both to be documenting the metonymic realities of subaltern life at this defining moment in the history of the British Empire and suggesting the possibility of new communities coming into being.

It is, though, in River of Smoke (2011), the second part of the trilogy, that Ghosh's linguistic virtuosity and fascination with etymologies is at its most pronounced, and Sabine Lauret- Taft's essay in the present volume demonstrates how his anthropological depictions of the nineteenth- century multilingualism of the Indian Ocean is central to his critique of the hierarchical power relations that operated in the ocean's commercial transactions. After an opening chapter in which Ghosh self-consciously juxtaposes Bhojpuri with Mauritian French "Kreol," a language that has very obviously come into being at the crossroads of cultures, most of the main action of River of Smoke is set in and around Canton, with pidgin taking on a similar role to that accorded to Laskari in Sea of Poppies. Again, the plurality of languages and registers employed seems to operate both as a transcription of a supposed mimetic "reality" and to suggest that a polyphonic hotchpotch of voices is needed to bring alive the range of cultures coming together in Canton at this time, the period leading up to the Opium Wars. One of the characters, Neel Rattan Halder, has a compulsive interest in lexicography and the novel's representation of his predilection enables it to introduce elements of metalinguistic commentary on the verbal exuberance of the cultures being represented. Neel is the compiler of a so- called Chrestomathy, an anthology of passages that illustrates the cross- cultural pluralism of the social world being depicted, and this has a life that extends beyond the text. Ghosh's "Acknowledgments" invite readers to join in a hypertextual partnership by consulting the Chrestomathy on Ghosh's own website: amitavghosh.com. In

the novel itself, Neel's inspiration for the Chrestomathy is a glossary of pidgin entitled "Devil- Talk," which has been produced for Chinese use. His initial intention is to produce a Celestial Chrestomathy, a glossary of Chinese pidgin for English speakers, but, the "Acknowledgments" explain, this has given way to a more general guide, entitled the Ibis Chrestomathy, which acts as a supplement to the terms used in the first two parts of the Ibis trilogy, not Chinese- inflected pidgin. The guiding principle informing Neel's choice of items for inclusion is that they should have appeared in what he refers to as "the Oracle," the Oxford English Dictionary. So the Chrestomathy is a testament to the Asian loan words that have been "naturalized" in the English language and abundant examples, such as "loot," "punch" and "tatty" are offered (Ibis Chrestomathy).

Ghosh's stress on shared linguistic legacies clearly undermines essentialist notions of language and culture, but Neel's decision that inclusion in the OED should be the criterion for entries in the Chrestomathy is problematic, since it privileges a classic English reference source, albeit while directing attention to the Asian loan words that have found their way into its pages. And tellingly, Neel's decision to make the OED the ultimate authority is analogous to Ghosh's method in the novel. Again, the medley of languages and registers in River of Smoke makes for polyphony, but ultimately, as in Sea of Poppies, literary English is given pride of place. The novel's project is clearly revisionist, but it leaves the text ambiguously poised between a desire to project a multilingual subaltern experience and a style that encapsulates this in a medium suitable for the consumption of a global readership. I began this "Foreword" talking about the seamlessness of Ghosh's travelling approach to cultures and this holds good for all his work so far, but it is a seamlessness that ultimately depends on so- called standard English. So, like many other postcolonial novelists who appeal to an international audience, he finds himself caught in the double- bind of using the language of the former colonizer and the contemporary global elite while wishing to distance himself from their discursive hegemonies.

Ghosh has always been a novelist of ideas, though he has usually resisted tendentious conclusions in favour of a practice that dramatizes the potentially political. As Asis De and Alessandro Vescovi note in their "Introduction" to this volume, his sustained ethical engagement has meant that there are notable exceptions to this in his non- fiction, such as his pieces on the anti- Sikh riot in Delhi in 1984 and on nuclear weapons in India, and environmental issues are discussed on his blog, but his best- known work has usually adopted a more oblique novelistic approach. This is certainly not the case in his Jeremiad on climate change, The Great Derangement. Earlier, in The Hungry Tide, the fulllength work in which prior to The Great Derangement he had most obviously engaged with environmental issues, he had made it clear that the Sundarbans' eco- system and uniquely varied biodiversity are imperilled and brought the action to a conclusion in which the region is struck by a tsunami- like wave. Clearly, global warming may be responsible for these changes, but Ghosh leaves the question open by providing details of the devastating storms that have periodically struck the region. There is no such ambiguity in The Great Derangement. The text assembles a barrage of evidence on the harmful effects of climate change. This shift towards uncompromising polemic can perhaps be explained by a passage in which Ghosh questions realistic fiction's capacity to deal with environmental disasters, saying that realism depends on "the calculus of probability." It is built on a "scaffolding" that prevents it from "confront[ing] the centrality of the improbable" in the form of sudden disasters that stretch the bounds of credulity by contradicting gradualist notions of meteorological change. Such an attack on realist fiction is a sobering shift for a writer whose investment in meticulously realized detail, which reaches its apogee in the Ibis trilogy, has been a lynch- pin of his fictive practice, but The Great Derangement suggests the need for a new

ecopoetics that places the present's relationship with the future at its centre. Unlike much environmentally aware creative writing, the text is not dystopian, but it outlines a string of possible future disasters that direct attention back to the present, and in so doing provides a powerful clarion call for activism in the here and now. The underlying ethical premises are those that run through all of Ghosh's writing to date, but climate change has precipitated both a questioning of whether traditional narrative is equipped to deal with it and an accelerated intensity in the writing. The suggestion is that new generic forms are needed to complement new modes of cognition if an "unthinkable" human disaster is to be avoided. Anthropology, epistemology, ethics and environment, and space are the headings under which the essays in this volume are grouped and they seem central to this project. They are "domains" that lie at the heart of Ghosh's ethics and they come together in The Great Derangement's plea for a new planetary consciousness that both draws on and goes beyond fiction in its most commonly understood iterations.

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Anthropology

Anthropology is a starting point in the intellectual make- up of Amitav Ghosh, who holds a PhD in social anthropology from Oxford University and famously carried out his fieldwork in two villages of the Nile Delta. Over time the Indian writer lost interest in academic anthropology, because "it was about abstractions," which made people into "statistical irregularities," whereas he was more interested in the "predicament of the individual." However, the novelist's critique targets the way anthropological results are elaborated and published, not anthropological surveys and ethnographic field- work per se. Indeed, these have remained a hallmark of Ghosh's preparatory work for his books, particularly evident in In an Antique Land, The Hungry Tide, and Gun Island. In the years immediately following the author's graduation from Oxford, social anthropology underwent a major change, well documented in James Clifford's Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography; the traditional role of the anthropologist was challenged, and so was the alleged objectivity of ethnographies. Ghosh's farewell to academic writing and his commitment to fiction must be understood within this paradigmatic shift.

Fiona Moolla's essay "Time, Space, Love in Amitav Ghosh's The Glass Palace" explores a typical subject of anthropology, i.e. familial organization and the foundation of family ties. She argues that the familial and kinship relations deployed by Ghosh throughout his oeuvre are rooted in romantic love. This is particularly patent in The Glass Palace, which she uses as a case study. Unlike culture and heritage, love brings together people from different ethnicities, religions, castes, classes, generations, and nations. The centripetal force of love is contrasted with the disruptive forces of the empire, which produce wars, migration, and instability.

Ilaria Rigoli, in her "Neel's Bildungsroman: Ghosh's Model of Humanity as Embodied Difference in the Ibis Trilogy," traces a different use of anthropology. The Ibis trilogy, being a historical fiction, cannot be based on ethnographic surveys, and yet, Rigoli argues, the evolution of Neel as a character is modelled on the anthropological pattern of the rite of passage and on the literary pattern of the Bildungsroman. Neel, the former zamindar, is literally as well as metaphorically stripped of his possessions, secluded, and put to a number of tests before he can eventually grow into a complete man who faces his responsibilities in Canton.

Through an analysis of languages as power ploys, Sabine Lauret- Taft, in her "The Commerce of Languages in Amitav Ghosh's River of Smoke," tackles the subtle hierarchies of the colonial context; the novel reveals how languages foster the expression of one's cultural positioning in the globalized Indian Ocean marketplace. Focusing on the intricate inner workings of the Empire revealed in linguistic frictions, she contends that The River of Smoke tells the story of an ante- Marshall McLuhan "global village" where languages reflect the complex interplay of trade and power relations.

While Lauret- Taft works on the latest developments of Ghosh's thought about the position of individual predicaments within a composite world, Lucio De Capitani, in "Matters of the Spirit: Navigating between the Secular and the Religious in Amitav Ghosh's In an Antique Land," traces the origin of these ideas in In an Antique Land at a time when Ghosh himself— or that streamlined version of himself that is the protagonist of the "traveller's tale"— was negotiating his position within the debate between the secular and the religious. In this work, through the narration of his experience as a fieldworker in Egypt, Ghosh tries to imagine a common space of compromise that can accommodate both religious and secular perspectives, where a shared intellectual effort of creativity and dissent can survive and critically oppose "supremacist" ideologies.

During the ten years that Amitav Ghosh spent on the Ibis project, the focus of his attention shifted from Mauritius to China. In a recent video interview the novelist admitted that when he wrote Sea of Poppies he had no idea that the project would take him to China rather than Mauritius, where he had indeed spent time doing archival research. Thus the theme of indentured labour, which was a major one in the first novel, was only partly resumed in the second and almost forgotten in the third. Kuldeep Mathur, in "Cultural Plurality and Migration in Amitav Ghosh's Ibis trilogy," explores this theme throughout the trilogy comparing Ghosh's work with other migrants' narratives and highlighting the migrants' survival strategies: among these, the new cultural symbiosis, the re- invention of identities, new attitudes to religion and food. All these, Mathur contends, may be taken as examples of negotiations or "third spaces" that pave the way to new cultural possibilities.

Epistemology

Epistemology is yet another crucial tenet of Ghosh's reflection, and it could not be otherwise for a novelist who invests so much energy and time in research. In the much- quoted epistolary exchange with Dipesh Chakrabarty and in The Great Derangement (2016), Ghosh blames the dichotomy between humanities and hard sciences that originated in the European Enlightenment and coincided with notions like free trade, colonialism, racism, and carbon economy. Ghosh's ideas on this point chime in with the influential Delhi- based scholar J. P. S. Uberoi, who developed his denunciation of Western epistemology in the years when young Amitav was attending university in the Indian capital. Ghosh's critique of what he once defined "this relentless search for exhaustiveness" is variously deployed throughout his oeuvre from The Circle of Reason (1986) to Gun Island (2019). As early as in The Shadow Lines, Tridib exhorted his young protegé not only to learn things, but to imagine "with precision" the things he learnt. Subsequently, every fictional book of Ghosh is firmly grounded in research. His fiction serves both to publish new findings and to help readers to imagine them. Moreover, Ghosh often adds a reflection upon different ways of knowing; indeed sometimes publication of research findings, imagination, and reflection are blended in a story so as to be barely distinguishable from one another and from the plot. Such is the case with the Ibis trilogy, but also with The Hungry Tide and Gun Island. Indeed the novel as a genre offers a way of appraising the world that is complementary to that of traditional sciences in that

it is preoccupied with complexity and not limited by the narrowness of the scope of each scientific discipline. Having humanism as its primary concern, the narrative of Ghosh connects knowledge to people rather than to an abstract disciplinary network; this allows him to bring historicity to fields as diverse as meteorology and urban planning and to gauge the impact of ideologies, disciplines, and practices on different communities.

Amitav Ghosh has often been quite uncomfortable with boundaries, including those that separate fiction and non- fiction. However, he has also often pointed out that In an Antique Land is not a novel, even if quite a few scholars treated it as such. In "I Met Two Narrators from an Antique Land: A Narratological Reading of Amitav Ghosh's Travelogue," Alessandro Vescovi bridges anthropology and epistemology as he investigates the novelistic strategies that are deployed in the travelogue, coming to the conclusion that the text— in line with the revision of anthropology that was going on in those years— constructs different selves that are all named "Amitav Ghosh," but remain rather distinct from one another in their attitudes and capacities. Although Ghosh is very precise in collecting data from his sources, he is loath to sacrifice complexity and emotions to exactitude, or even clarity, at the time of writing. Thus in In an Antique Land he conflates an eminently anthropological discourse, with a sort of autobiographical Bildungsroman, a historical survey and a political appraisal of the situation in the Middle East at the time of the first Gulf War.

Carlotta Beretta's "A Sense of History: The Poetics of Opium in the Ibis Trilogy" traces Ghosh's humanism back to his Bengali cultural heritage and reads the Ibis trilogy against the tradition of the European historical novel. She argues that the novelist subtly chooses the points of view of people who are variously employed in the opium manufacture and trade rather than that of a single character in order to create a "sense of history." The expression, modelled on the more common "sense of place," nicely captures one of Ghosh's arresting and yet elusive characteristics, i.e. the ability to depict a scenario where all characters are subjected to the same historical forces and view them from different perspectives.

"Reclaiming History: Amitav Ghosh's The Calcutta Chromosome" by Murari Prasad tackles the epistemological issues connected to imperial history in The Calcutta Chromosome. While the opium trade is obviously a susceptible spot in the narrative of the imperial project, life science research, one might think, should be free of ideological manipulation. This is hardly the case, as Prasad demonstrates in his contribution. The Calcutta Chromosome focuses on offering a counter- hegemonic narrative that subverts the imperial perspective on medical historiography. The novel questions the authenticity of Sir Ronald Ross's malarial research in the nineteenth century, and provocatively offers a counter- narrative that, albeit fictional, is no more incredible or biased than official history.

On a different level, Letizia Garofalo reads The Calcutta Chromosome through Paul Feyerabend in her "Amitav Ghosh on the Edge of Science: Epistemological Anarchism and The Calcutta Chromosome." According to Feyerabend, "theoretical anarchism," i.e. a method which encourages a variety of different opinions, is the only method compatible with a humanistic outlook. Garofalo claims that The Calcutta Chromosome perfectly embodies in literary form the idea of theoretical scientific anarchism. In particular, The Chromosome chimes with Feyerabend's idea that other forms of human cultural expression and unconventional knowledge have equal if not better chances to achieve revolutionary discoveries.

Safoora Arbab's "Silence, Subversion and the Subaltern in Amitav Ghosh's The Calcutta Chromosome" focuses on another aspect of the novel, namely the multiple uses of silence. Silence as resistance, or even subversion, has been brought together before in connection with this novel,30 but Arbab takes the discussion one step further: moving from Jaques Derrida's famous essay on "Différance"31 (1982), she contends that silence is not only a negative, opposing stance, but also a ploy used to create an alternative semiosis whereby silence becomes a polysemic signifier at both aesthetic and ethical levels, strictly connected with the polyphonic essence of life itself.

Ethics

Ethics, mostly in connection with the environment, is, so to speak, the necessary consequence of an epistemology that aims at truth rather than control, at understanding connections rather than dissecting bodies. Thus environmental justice is coterminous with social justice, as Ghosh clearly states in The Great Derangement, the latest non- fiction that encompasses fields as diverse as biology, climatology, social sciences, history and literary criticism. The Great Derangement and the worldwide book tour that followed its launch come as an important stance in the debate over climate change, but as little surprise to Ghosh's readers, who welcomed his contributions on the anti- Sikh riot in Delhi in 1984 ("The Ghost of Mrs Gandhi"), nuclear weapons in India (Countdown, 1999), Bush's war on terror in The New Yorker in the aftermath of 9/ 11, along with other articles posted on his blog, where he also discussed environmental problems. Nor is ethical commitment restricted to non- fiction. Ghosh's novels grapple with ethical issues too; in many ways, every novel and every protagonist in the novels poses critical ethical concerns, from Balaram's obsession with cleanliness in The Circle of Reason to Kesri Singh's dilemma in Flood of Fire whether to remain loyal to the detested British army or flee towards Mauritius.

There are two main characteristics of Ghosh's engagement with ethics that must be recorded here: we shall call the first "fair objectivity" and the second "disembodiment." By "fair objectivity" we refer to a particular way of looking at every side of a problem, considering and assessing all possible viewpoints. Thus, no ethical issue is ever decided upon without considering all the implications, and likewise, no major character, even the most heroic, is ever either completely good or completely evil. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to understand the position of the implied author regarding some issues discussed in the novels; e.g., we know that Ghosh's father, who was a soldier in the British army during WW2, remained loyal to it and never joined the INA , unlike many of his comrades. Arjun in The Glass Palace, facing the same dilemma, opts for the anti- English army: what should we think of Arjun's decision? Was he withdrawing a loyalty already pledged and taking unfair advantage of the difficult position of the English, or was he for the first time making the right choice? The novel does not offer an answer. The discussion between Piya and Kanai on ecology and justice after the slaughter of the tiger in The Hungry Tide is another case of "fair objectivity," whereby the debate is closed without a winner. In fact, "fair objectivity" prevents Ghosh from creating truly evil characters; in the whole Ibis trilogy there is only one real villain, Bhyro Singh, while even Mr Burnham is sometimes viewed with sympathy.

The second characteristic is "disembodiment," by which we mean a kind of disunion between a certain behaviour and the character that adopts it. Like Dante, who condemned so many people of his age to hell, but still sympathized with most of them, Ghosh, too, aims his criticism at social practices or policies like racism, classism, and colonialism, but appears forbearing with most of his characters. Thus, in The Hungry Tide, Ghosh does not blame the villagers who kill the tiger, nor the folk who make a living exploiting the protected area of the forest. Likewise, in The Glass Palace, he cannot bring himself to pass

judgement on Rajkumar's work as a recruiter of indentured labourers. Ghosh's ethics therefore is illustrated through fictional characters in the narratives, but avoids the trap of the thesis- novel, or propaganda-novel.

Sneharika Roy's essay, "The Adam Smith Problem in the Ibis Trilogy: Self-Interest, Empathy, and Hermeneutic Irony," addresses one of the most poignant issues of the Ibis trilogy, viz. the relationship between capitalism, liberalism, and colonialism seen in their historical context through the reading of Adam Smith. Indeed, Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations (1776) is the central locus of ideological conflict in the Ibis trilogy. Roy's essay revisits the so- called "Adam Smith's Problem" arguing that, in the trilogy, those who evoke Smith are in fact referring to a (common) misreading of the philosopher's ideas, which reduce his political economy to the "invisible hand." The implied author, on the contrary, far from advocating communism, is referring to the more humane and healthy interpretation of Smith's economic philosophy.

Focussing on one single character and its connection with ethics, Pabitra Kumar Rana's "From Mem to Mistress: The Curious Case of Mrs Burnham in Amitav Ghosh's Flood of Fire" concentrates on the character of Mrs Burnham and her sudden change at the end of the trilogy, which he reads through Sigmund Freud and Jaques Lacan. The memsahib, he contends, by having an extramarital affair with Zachary, is both a victim of the colonial system that framed her into an inhuman position and a symbol of the hypocrisy and intrinsic weakness of the empire.

Evelyne Hanquart- Turner's "The Perversity of Flowers: Amitav Ghosh's Sea of Poppies" focuses on flowers, a topic hardly ever present in Ghosh's novels before the Ibis trilogy. Flowers, she argues, lie at the crossroads of multiple forces such as the Hindu tradition, international trade, thirst for scientific discoveries, and obviously ecology. Both ethically and aesthetically, they are a very powerful symbol for botany and colonialism in general. The cultivation of indigo, tea, and poppies was a primary colonial drive for the control of the land and influenced the lives of uncountable peasants, especially in northern India. The colonial attitude towards plants was very much part of the global power relations of the Victorian age.

Lenka Filipova's essay entitled "Place as Process in Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide" considers Ursula Heise's (2008) critique of local environmentalism— something parochial, essentialist, and deprived of a cosmopolitan concern for the Earth in general— in the light of the scenario delineated by The Hungry Tide. This novel, with its solid sense of place, is indeed addressing environmental questions from a very specific point of view. Does it foster essentialism and parochialism? Lenka's answer is in the negative, as she argues that Ghosh understands the Sundarbans as a form of relational becoming— a process— that draws attention to the specificity of place and the complexity of its ecological relations and entanglements of the human and the non- human. Ghosh's narrative also has the potential to counter the dominant narratives of the centralized state, the international capital, and even different forms of ecocosmopolitanism that disregard this specificity.

Space

The essay by Lenka Filipova that brings the previous section to a close is also a perfect introduction to the category of space as it shows how ethics and space are connected in Ghosh's Weltanschauung. Though often regarded as a separate category, space is more than that; it is akin to the notions discussed above— knowledge, ethics, and even anthropology. One of the characteristics of Ghosh's

poetics is the conflation of different discourses into one narrative, highlighting the relations between things, as opposed to studying phenomena in isolation, which is the standard procedure of hard sciences. Space is the bedrock of narrative and besides its narratological implications, in Ghosh's novels it is relevant on at least three levels: political, realistic and symbolic.

The political level is about who controls whose space? Space conflicts are played out in all of Ghosh's novels in the shape of actual battles and wars, or colonialism, or even petty disputes. Beside control, another political issue often raised by Ghosh is the practicability of spaces, i.e. whether public spaces can be used to travel, to import and export goods and cultures, an issue addressed throughout In an Antique Land. At the realistic level, space is sometimes described for its own sake, i.e. to illustrate its peculiarity or its beauty, which happens especially in The Hungry Tide, but also in connection with the culture of the people who inhabit a particular site. Such is the case of village spaces— like the ones in Egypt (In an Antique Land), in Ratnagiri (The Glass Palace), in Lusibari (The Hungry Tide), and in the Ibis trilogy— or bounded spaces— such as the cellars in The Shadow Lines, the teak and gum plantations in The Glass Palace, the ships in the Ibis trilogy, the Venetian ghetto in Gun Island. All these spaces reflect a number of social interactions that the anthropologist notes and the novelist describes.

The symbolic level is almost always disguised as realistic, so much so that it might be more proper to talk about a symbolic use of realistic places. The Geniza in In an Antique Land is a case in point, being a historical place, but certainly not the only one; other interesting symbolic places may be— randomly— Renupur Station in The Calcutta Chromosome, mohonas in The Hungry Tide, the ships, and especially the dabusa (tween deck) of the Ibis in the trilogy, the floating city in Canton, the shrine island in Gun Island. This is not the place to chalk out a list— which any reader can easily expand— we just wish to point out the fascination of Ghosh with waterscapes, which almost always carry symbolic meanings, be they lakes (The Shadow Lines), rivers (The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide, River of Smoke), or the sea (The Circle of Reason, Ibis trilogy, Gun Island). Space may sometimes become uncanny and water enhances this effect; indeed The Calcutta Chromosome's dystopic atmosphere is enhanced by the fact that the Hooghly no longer flows through Calcutta, in The Hungry Tide the waterscape grapples with dangers, and Venice in Gun Island is made uncanny by the acqua alta.

The Glass Palace, the first of Ghosh's historical novels on the radical transformation of the socio-political scenario in South Asia, deals with the expansion and decline of the Empire and the ensuing postcolonial predicament. Asis De's contribution entitled "Transcultural Identity and Cosmopolitanism in The Glass Palace" shows that this novel foregrounds transcultural identity and a spirit of cultural cosmopolitanism. Far from being a simple nationalist assertion of ethnic identity in the face of aggressive colonial history, the novel is a chronicle of cultural hybridity during and after the colonial period in a part of South Asia, a saga musing on the erasure of borders between communities and cultures, and questioning the issue of cultural identity. To Ghosh, De argues, identity is always rooted in history and is more transnational than ethnic.

The Shadow Lines juxtaposes lived spaces with imaginary ones. The tension is best exemplified in the famous and hilarious scene when Tha'mma finds that her birthplace (Dhaka) is at odds with her never changed (Indian) citizenship. The old lady, however, is not the only one who imagines space in her own way. Swapna Gopinath in "Imagining Identities amidst Shifting Spatialities in Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines" follows each main character of the novel pointing out how s/ he negotiates between real spaces and imagined ones.

Sambit Panigrahi and Madhusmita Pati's essay "Ruptured Boundaries and Cosmopolitan Space: The Spatial Imagination of Amitav Ghosh in The Shadow Lines" deals with space at the symbolic level. The two scholars read the novel as an exposition of the defining postmodern notion of the fluidity of space. The novel, through its overt transnational character, explores the idea of the dissolution of space through its conceptual dismantlement of national boundaries across the globe. The middle- class characters appear to move freely throughout the world and lay claim to a new, postmodern, kind of citizenship.

In Luca Raimondi's essay entitled "Land, River, Sea: The Articulated Space of the Indian Ocean in Amitav Ghosh's Ibis Trilogy," the metaphor of the horizon surfaces again mediated by Sugata Bose's historical book A Hundred Horizons (2006). Raimondi traces the research work that lies behind the creation of the spaces described in the Ibis trilogy and highlights both the political significance of this choice and its symbolical value. Furthermore, he foregrounds the Indian Ocean as a space from which a postcolonial epic (a concept he derives from Franco Moretti's modern epic) may take form.

Carol Leon's "Horizonality in The Shadow Lines: Disrupting Borders and Boundaries" interprets the narrative space of The Shadow Lines through Bill Ashcroft's notion of horizonality, a way of looking at the world without succumbing to the hegemonic divisions of the Western gaze. With its modernist commitment to the conflation of space and time, Leon contends, the novel succeeds in debunking the horizons posited by the West with their bounding limits, and in offering an alternative vision.

As the critical discussion of Ghosh's oeuvre is shifting from a postcolonial perspective to a transnational and transcultural one, we hope that the essays collected here, with their diverse methodological approaches, will contribute to the continuous discussion and appreciation of the writer's works as well as to the reception of the issues raised by his writings— his novels in fact, as the essays in this volume address Ghosh's novels rather than his non- fiction. The culture chromosomes that make up Ghosh's literary genome are certainly not exhausted by this collection, which however endeavours to enumerate some of them, tracing their complex genealogies with a view to their further dissemination. Certainly, Ghosh will enrich the anglophone literary world in the days to come, and future research will open up new theoretical paradigms in the area of culture studies. Still, we hope this volume may offer to the scholars of Ghosh fresh perspectives on the novelist's understanding of human history, anthropology, ethics, politics of culture and spaces of human existence.

Ultimately, as we offer this volume to the readers, we wish to point out that in Ghosh's augury of a new "generation that will be able to look upon the world with clearer eyes" and to "rediscover their kinship with other beings" on this Earth, one may notice a cosmopolitan awareness akin to the spiritual cosmopolitanism of the great Bengali philosopher Swami Vivekananda, who wrote in his poem "To a Friend" (1897):

> These are His manifold forms before thee,
> Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God?
> Who loves all beings without distinction,
> He indeed is worshipping best his God.

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