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SPOTLIGHT 107

Wordtrade Reviews: Moral Empathy

Contents

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. <>

PARFIT: A PHILOSOPHER AND HIS MISSION TO SAVE MORALITY by David Edmonds, Zeb Soanes [Princeton University Press, 9780691225234]

From the bestselling coauthor of *Wittgenstein's Poker*, an entertaining and illuminating biography of a brilliant philosopher who tried to rescue morality from nihilism

Derek Parfit (1942–2017) is the most famous philosopher most people have never heard of. Widely regarded as one of the greatest moral thinkers of the past hundred years, Parfit was anything but a public intellectual. Yet his ideas have shaped the way philosophers think about things that affect us all: equality, altruism, what we owe to future generations, and even what it means to be a person. In *Parfit*,

David Edmonds presents the first biography of an intriguing, obsessive, and eccentric genius.

Believing that we should be less concerned with ourselves and more with the common good, Parfit dedicated himself to the pursuit of philosophical progress to an extraordinary degree. He always wore gray trousers and a white shirt so as not to lose precious time picking out clothes, he varied his diet as little as possible, and he had only one serious non-philosophical interest: taking photos of Oxford, Venice, and St. Petersburg. In the latter half of his life, he single-mindedly devoted himself to a desperate attempt to rescue secular morality—morality without God—by arguing that it has an objective, rational basis. For Parfit, the stakes could scarcely have been higher. If he couldn't demonstrate that there are objective facts about right and wrong, he believed, his life was futile and all our lives were meaningless.

Connecting Parfit's work and life and offering a clear introduction to his profound and challenging ideas, **PARFIT** is a powerful portrait of an extraordinary thinker who continues to have a remarkable influence on the world of ideas.

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What Matters

`What do you do?' the American nurse asked the Englishman, Derek Parfit. It was the autumn of 2014 and the philosopher was hospitalized in New Jersey. He was in a terrible state—having nearly died when his lungs packed up after a bout of violent coughing. He looked exhausted and showing every one of his seventy-one years. He could barely speak. A succession of concerned visitors had been in to visit the white-haired patient, and the nurse was intrigued.

`I work', he replied, in a raspy voice, 'on what matters'.

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On What Matters was the second and last of Parfit's books. The first was Reasons and Persons. So, only two books. But these two books are sufficient to have earned Parfit a reputation among political and moral philosophers as one of the greatest moral thinkers of the past century. It is not a unanimous judgement—he had trenchant critics—but it is widespread. Indeed, some go further, believing him to be the most important moral philosopher since his fellow British philosophers, John Stuart Mill (1806-73) and Henry Sidgwick (1838-1900).

That even one book appeared under his name came as a surprise to many who knew him. The word 'perfect' is thought to derive from the Middle English, parfit and Parfit, the ultimate perfectionist, was aptly named. His perfectionism would routinely cause him trouble—as when he repeatedly failed to meet publishing deadlines because the manuscript was not to his own satisfaction.

In the end, On What Matters was published in two volumes, weighing in at 1,440 pages (or 1,90o pages if you add the posthumously published Volume 3). Reasons and Persons is a mere featherweight, at 537 pages. Both Parfit's books have been described as enduring masterpieces. He also produced around fifty articles. He made seminal contributions on many topics, including equality, and 'personal identity': what, if anything, makes a person the same person through time. His ideas have very practical applications that affect us all; they change the way we think about punishment, about distribution of resources, about how we should plan for the future.

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This book is in part a portrait of university life and academic philosophy in the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, as well as a depiction of the unique institution, All Souls, in which Parfit spent almost all his adult years. But it is essentially a book about one man.

For a chronicler of his life, Parfit poses a puzzle. I began this book with a clear conception of what sort of person Parfit was. I felt I understood his personality, what made him tick, and why he behaved the way he behaved. But the more people I spoke to about him, particularly people who had known him before he became a philosopher, the more I came to believe that my original view must be fundamentally wrong. That involved some agonizing and rewriting. Yet certain stories about Parfit kept nagging me; in the end I changed my mind for a second time. There is, of course, something ironic about a biographer attempting to grapple with the nature of a person who made the case that identity is not what matters.

For a biographer, he is both a nightmare and a dream. His life was, from one perspective, entirely uneventful. It was a cloistered existence—literally cloistered, from the cloisters of Eton to the cloisters of Balliol, Oxford, of Harvard, ofAll Souls, Oxford. It involved reading, discussing, and writing philosophy papers and books. That makes for unexciting copy. On the other hand, he was, at least in the second half of his life, a highly eccentric man—loveable but idiosyncratic. I was inundated with anecdotes.

Marshalling all this information has posed a few challenges. Broadly, the book follows a standard chronological narrative. But from about 1970, various patterns began to emerge in Parfit's life. There were, for example, the annual photographic trips to Venice and St Petersburg. There were the regular teaching gigs at Harvard, New York University, and Rutgers. There were his students. To return to these subjects repeatedly would be unsatisfactory. So I've chosen to present some of the latter part of Parfit's life thematically.

It also seemed to me that this structure meshed appropriately with his life. His early decades were rich with activities, and interests, and curiosity in multiple domains. The latter decades were dominated by a small number of fixations, which became increasingly compartmentalized. The first half of his life contains a lot of life, the second half a lot of philosophy. Beyond the details of his philosophy, one of my fascinations with Derek is that he represents an extreme example of how it is possible to prioritize certain values above all others—in his case, the urge to solve important philosophical questions.

He spent the last twenty-five years of his life anguished by philosophical disagreements he had with other philosophers. In particular, he grew increasingly upset that many serious philosophers believed that there was no objective basis for morality. He felt that he had to demonstrate that secular morality—morality without God—was objective, and that it had rational foundations. Just as there were facts about animals and flowers, stones and waterfalls, books and laptops, so there were facts about morality.

He genuinely believed that if he failed to show this, his existence would have been futile. And not just his existence. If morality was not objective, all our lives were meaningless. The need to refute this, the need to save morality, was a heavy emotional as well as an intellectual burden. How he came to bear this burden, and how it shaped him from being a precocious and outgoing history student into a monastically inclined philosopher obsessed with solving the toughest moral questions, is the subject of this book.

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I must declare a personal connection to Derek Parfit. I did not know him well, but he was my dissertation co-supervisor in 1987, when I was studying for the Oxford BPhil degree. Since I am certain I would not have had the courage to ask him to supervise me, I assume the approach must have come from my other supervisor, Sabina Lovibond, my undergraduate teacher and a very different type of thinker. But Derek was an obvious choice. I had decided to focus my dissertation on some ethical issues to do with 'future people'—people not yet born—a sub-area of moral philosophy that Derek had done much to create. In the dissertation, I set myself the task of trying to solve the Asymmetry Problem—of which more later. I thought I'd cracked it. Derek disagreed.

Truth be told, I remember little of our meetings back then; there were probably only three or four. I recall my nervousness as I walked up the stone stairs of Staircase XI in the back quad in All Souls. For

some reason, I recall the sofa I sat upon. I remember his red tie. And his long, wavy, already white-ish hair, though he was then only in his forties.

I had, of course, read Reasons and Persons, published just three years earlier, and it had had the same exhilarating impact on me as it had on so many others. No doubt it also increased my trepidation of the great man. I need not have worried. He read my work carefully, argued with me patiently. That I was a mere graduate student did not seem to matter to him.

When I started on this book, I reread my dissertation, which begins with a short acknowledgement:

> I would like to express my warmest thanks to my co-supervisors, Sabina Lovibond and Derek Parfit. Once I had become accustomed to their uncanny, almost psychic ability to disagree with each other on every fundamental point, I gained much from their fair and detailed criticisms, and was encouraged by their tremendous enthusiasm.

Derek's enthusiasm for philosophy never wavered.

Our paths did not cross again for many years, though I often heard his disembodied voice. Although I took a job with the BBC, I still had a philosophical itch that I felt compelled to scratch, and so I began a parttime PhD. This time my topic was the philosophy of discrimination, and my supervisor was Janet Radcliffe Richards, Derek's partner. I would visit Janet at her Tufnell Park home in north London; our meetings were invariably punctuated by a phone-call from Oxford, and I could just about make out Derek's distinctive baritone/tenor voice. 'I can't talk, I'm with David Edmonds,' Janet would say, though I doubt Derek remembered me.

That was in the 1990s. In 2010, and with a reference from Janet, I joined the Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, a branch of the Oxford University philosophy faculty Janet had moved there in 2007.I am privileged to retain my association with the Centre as a Distinguished Research Fellow. In my first few years with Uehiro, I would visit weekly—and each time I went into my shared office I would glance at the four printed names on the door and receive a mini—dopamine kick. For, alongside my name and Janet's, was that of D. Parfit. He never actually showed up—preferring to work from home. But I occasionally boasted about this association of mine with a (never present) office-mate.

I should relate one other personal story—a truncated version of which appears in the Parfit obituary I wrote for The Times. In 2014, Prospect magazine ran a poll on the world's most important thinker. Their initial list included both Janet and Derek. Like most such lists, it was somewhat spurious, and Janet was perversely indignant that she had been included—blaming political correctness and affirmative action. In any case, I wrote to Prospect to ask whether they knew that two people in their poll were rather well acquainted. They did not, and a long-form article was commissioned—to which they gave the title, 'Reason and Romance: The World's Most Cerebral Marriage.

As research for the article, I arranged to visit both Janet and Derek in Tufnell Park. Derek tolerated, but found tedious, my personal ques

tions, but became more animated when we moved on to discussing philosophy. I had my laptop with me, and as he talked, I furiously typed notes.

Later, after completing a draft of the article, I sent it to Janet and Derek, because I wanted to ensure it contained no factual errors. It had taken me several days' grind, but I was satisfied, indeed proud, of it.

Then I went for a long walk with my wife. At some stage, as we reached the top of a hill, I glanced at my email messages on my mobile. There was a note from Derek:

> Dear David,
> I hope you're well.
> I attach a message. I fear that you won't like it, and apologize for that.
> Best wishes, Derek

Distraught, I rushed home, and opened the attachment, in which there was a request that I desist from publishing the article, and a lengthy list of mistakes and misinterpretations. My heart pounding, I began to read through the list. As I did so, anxiety turned to puzzlement. For my first so-called 'mistake' was not in the article. Nor was my second. Or my third. Or, for that matter, my fourth or fifth. I wrote to him, explaining my bafflement.

Then, suddenly, I worked it out. I had not sent Derek my article, but the document of my notes and jottings from our Tufnell Park discussion. As I wrote in The Times, nobody—nobody--but Derek Parfit `could have believed that this gobbledegook was intended for publication. If you told him that a set of rambling non sequiturs was to appear in a prestigious periodical, that was what he believed?'

The story has a happy ending. He was pleased with the article. The only substantial change he requested was that I include some of the lavish praise for Janet's latest book, The Ethics of Transplants: Why Careless Thought Costs Lives, such as '"This is applied ethics at its very best"—Peter Singer'.

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Notwithstanding Prospect's designation of him as among the world's most important thinkers, Parfit was a philosopher's philosopher, not a public philosopher or a people's philosopher. There are some not particularly profound philosophers who have developed a high profile by taking a stand on matters of wide interest. There are a few significant thinkers who have also become well known through their public engagement. In the not-too-distant past, Bertrand Russell was an example—though very few people read the highly technical philosophy on which he built his early reputation. Parfit was fascinated by real problems beyond the seminar room, but he did not contribute to the conversation by giving media interviews, writing mainstream articles or op-eds, or briefing politicians or policy wonks. He did not campaign. He had no social media presence. He never sought fame. He remains, therefore, virtually unknown beyond philosophy.

I hope this book goes some way towards remedying this injustice. I hope it also shows that his response to the New Jersey nurse was true. He did indeed work on what matters. <>

Culture and Cruelty in Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, and Artaud by Max Statkiewicz [Lexington Books, ISBN 9781793603920]

Questioning the Enlightenment in the **Culture and Cruelty in Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Artaud** challenges the cultural optimism of the Enlightenment through an examination of Nietzsche,

Dostoevsky, and Artaud. The Enlightenment was characterized, as Arnold put it, as "sweetness and light". Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, and Artaud each pushed back against the optimism of the enlightenment through their writing and advanced the idea of cruelty as lying at the root of all human nature and culture. In this study, Statkiewicz explores the seemingly opposing notions of culture and cruelty within the works of these authors to discuss their complex relationship with one another.

Review

In **CULTURE AND CRUELTY IN NIETZSCHE, DOSTOEVSKY, ARTAUD**, Max Stakiewicz deals, once again, with the "old quarrel" between poetry and philosophy. In his previous book – Rhapsody of Philosophy. Dialogues with Plato in Contemporary Thought (2009) – Stakiewicz had already called into question the very idea of such a "quarrel" by showing that the dialogue between "rigor" (akribeia) and "play" (paidia) can be read in Plato himself as a non-conflict. By rethinking the relationship between philosophy and poetry in contemporary thought, Rhapsody of Philosophy concludes that poetry and philosophy are not antagonists, but rather complicit knowledge processes.

In this new book, Stakiewicz goes back to the so-called "Ode to Man" in Sophocles' Antigone – human being is the most wonderful and the most terrible thing that there is – to argue that culture and cruelty are not binaries but rather different ways of understanding the complex world we live in. Against Matthew Arnold's culture as "sweetness and light," which tends to oversee cruelty, Stakiewicz stresses the disquieting power of art by analyzing the revelation of cruelty in his exemplary study of three poet-philosophers or philosopher-poets: Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, and Artaud. Difference in the culture, Stakiewicz shows us in the work of these three artists, is what resists the dreadful nihilism of indifference in a culture that goes on wrecking violence and destruction all over the world. -- Irene Ramalho Santos, University of Coimbra

Through an original and profound reading of the works of Nietzsche, Dostoevsky and Artaud, this book traces the re-emergence in modern culture of a theme whose roots go back to classical antiquity: the regenerative and creative power of cruelty. The argument for the complementary relationship of culture and cruelty and for cruelty's ability to unsettle and to call into question received ideas makes this work not only a major scholarly study of modernist literature and philosophy, but also an important contribution to the current debate on the meaning, functions and boundaries of culture. -- Luca Somigli, University of Toronto

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The word "culture" has many meanings, but apparently one valuation. Culture is universally praised. Let us consider the possible models of culture by providing the most general "cultural" background.1 The vogue of the notion of culture or civilization, and the attempt to define more precisely these sometimes loosely used value words date since at least the end of the eighteenth century, since the age of the triumphant Enlightenment. Most European languages adopted by then the Latin word cultura through the French word culture. Paradoxically, the French themselves had eventually abandoned the word culture in favor of the word civilization by the end of nineteenth century. Antonin Artaud, in his preface to The Theater and its Double in 1936, noted the still existing confusion between the two terms: "the distinction between culture and civilization is an artificial one, providing two words to signify an identical function." The loose usage of the word culture might be one of the reasons behind Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer's questioning the term (and the phenomenon) of culture: "to speak of culture (Kultur) was always contrary to culture. Culture as a common denominator already contains in embryo that schematization and process of cataloguing and classification which bring culture within the sphere of administration." Others tried to rescue the term by circumscribing more rigorously its semantic field.

Two main clusters of meaning are usually distinguished in the term "culture." First, an anthropological notion with scientific claims, often associated with the name of E. B. Tylor, who defined culture, in his Primitive Culture from 1871, as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Clifford Geertz, more than a 100 years later notes the persistence of this general view of culture in anthropological studies, and then respectfully dismisses Taylor's definition: "its originative power not denied," it seems to him that it has "reached the point where it obscures a good deal more than it reveals." And what it should reveal most forcefully, according to Geertz, is the essential diversity of cultures as the presupposition of modern anthropology:

Whatever else modern anthropology asserts—and it seems to have asserted almost everything at one time or another—it is firm in the conviction that men unmodified by the customs of particular places do not in fact exist, have never existed, and most important, could not in the very nature of the case exist.

The respect for the diversity of cultures can thus only be assured in the "hermeneutic" examination of particular cultures. Geertz offers his own "semiotic" definition of culture, based on the tradition of Max Weber and Ernst Cassirer. Culture consists of the humanly produced "webs of significance," which are to be interpreted by an anthropologist.9 Even though not an experimental science, anthropology remains in Geertz's view attached to the scientific ideal of objectivity. The methodology of the "thick description," in particular, which is able to provide a meaning of the behavior, understandable to the persons outside the culture, in contrast with so-called "thin description," able only to describe the facts of a behavior. Thus thick description, at the same time general and specialized, is aimed at an adequate reflection of the complex cultural reality and at the preservation of the universal humanistic ideal:

> Anthropology has attempted to find its way to a more viable concept of man, one in which culture, and the variability of culture, would be taken into account rather than written off as

> caprice and prejudice, and yet, at the same time, one in which the governing principle of the field, "the basic unity of mankind," would not be turned into an empty phrase.

What is perhaps most remarkable in Geertz's view is this combination of cultural diversity with a rigorous interpretive methodology. The "basic unity of mankind" remains a postulate of scientific anthropology, and thus, re-inscribes it within the tradition of Enlightenment preserved in spite of any relativistic temptation.

The second cluster of meaning, developed most strikingly by Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy in 1869, and already anticipated by Henry Buckle's History of Civilization in England from 1857, might be considered, on the contrary, as a strong evaluative manifesto of the Enlightenment ideology of culture and progress. It is true that in his ambitious but unfinished work, Buckle professes to lay foundations for the rigorous science of history. But the writers such as Dostoevsky and Nietzsche will criticize and then respectfully dismisses Taylor's definition: "its originative power not denied," it seems to him that it has "reached the point where it obscures a good deal more than it reveals." And what it should reveal most forcefully, according to Geertz, is the essential diversity of cultures as the presupposition of modern anthropology:

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morality. Buckle maintains, for example, that the advance of modern culture in Europe has been marked by a reduction of the rule of physical laws and an ever-growing rule of rational laws. A study of European history shows clearly according to Buckle that war, "this barbarous pursuit is, in the progress of society, steadily declining." Dostoevsky's underground man will have no trouble to show the futility of this belief; this is what should happen "logically," but "look around you: blood is flowing in rivers, and in such a jolly way besides, like champagne. Take this whole nineteenth century of ours, in which Buckle also lived. Take Napoleon–both the great one and the present one. Take North America–that everlasting union." And Nietzsche clearly opposes to it the Heraclitean principle of war (polemos), war eternally reasserting itself: "You say it is the good cause that hallows even war? I tell you: it is the good war that hallows any cause."

Arnold, more candidly, takes culture to be an idea and an ideal rather than a collective descriptive concept of modern history: an idea of perfection and an ideal of development for the humanity. In the preface to his Culture and Anarchy, Arnold defines culture as "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world," and he determines the scope of his essay and its predominantly practical task as setting up the idea of culture that would provide a "great help out of our present difficulties." Arnold's eulogy of culture is actually an apology, a R&Ldefense against the political thinkers of his day, Mr. Bright and Mr. Frederic Harrison, distant heirs of the Greek Sophists of the fifth century BC Greece, who staunchly opposed political action (ergon) to (an empty) talk (logos),19 as well as ancestors of some of the twentieth-century critics of the word (and the phenomenon) of culture, famously caricatured in Hanns Johst's play in the nineteen thirties ("when I hear the word culture, I reach for my Browning (gun)"). Frederic Harrison, in particular, sounds like a modern Callicles opposing a modern Socrates in the person of Matthew Arnold:

> Perhaps the very silliest cant of the day . . . is the cant about culture. Culture is a desirable quality in a critic of new books, and sits well on a possessor of belles lettres; but as applied to politics, it means simply a turn for small fault-finding, love selfish ease, and indecision in action. The man of culture is in politics one of the poorest mortals alive.

Thus the main and immediate practical upshot of Harrison's critique is the exclusion of men of culture from politics: they should not be "entrusted with power." But Arnolds, just like Socrates in Plato's dialogues—in Gorgias, for example, or in Apology—doesn't wish to be "entrusted with power," and just like Socrates, he would like to enjoin the members of his community to "know themselves" (Socrates's: know thyself).

In fact, the notion of culture propounded by Arnold is not the same as the one his opponents, "the disparagers of culture," reject. Its motive and principle is not curiosity or vanity. It is not an elitist conception of "cultural Philistines":

> A smattering of Greek and Latin [. . .] valued either out of sheer vanity and ignorance or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holders, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it.

On the contrary, integration constitutes Arnold's principle of culture. It is the ideal of perfection of human beings living together. Culture "seeks to do away with classes; to make all live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light." Arnold does not accept the traditional opposition between logos and ergon, exacerbated in the nineteenth-century political writings, as for example in Marx's exaltation of praxis

(most famously in his Theses on Feuerbach), as well as among Russian nihilists (slovo versus dielo; as for example in Alexander Chernyshevsky's What Is to Be Done, or Sergey Niechaev's "Catechism of the Revolutionary," as well as in Dostoevsky's Demons. Far from being a purely "intellectual" curiosity, culture constitutes for Arnold an active force of integration and of improvement:

> There is a view in which all the love of our neighbor, the impulses toward action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it—motives eminently such as are called social—come in as part of the grounds of culture, and its main and pre-eminent part. Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection; it is a study of perfection.

This description is of course the description of Arnold's own view, the view of an infinite perfectibility of human nature, through "rendering an intelligent being yet more intelligent," as Montesquieu, whom Arnold likes to quote, formulated one of the ideals of Enlightenment.30 Marxist opposition between an interpretation of the world and a transforming action is hardly possible in the case of the good. In a truly Platonic fashion, Arnold seems to affirm an almost direct agency of the knowledge of the good. A true culture would imply a passion for doing good, and eventually, actual doing good.

Culture's true sense as expressed in the phrase "sweetness and light"— which appears at least 26 times in Culture and Anarchy, is taken from Jonathan Swift's (1704) "Battle of the Books," a preface added to A Tale of a Tub, where it represents the ideal of the Ancients. It is not certain on which side Jonathan Swift stood in the battle. In any case, Arnold—writing more than one and half century later—seems to be resolutely on the side of "sweetness and light" of the Platonic ideal of perfection and happiness achieved through the theoretical as well as practical knowledge of the good: "the moral and social passion for doing good." And the name of this ideal of infinite perfectibility of human community is no other word than "culture."

But "culture" has also another meaning, which is manifest in the word "acculturation," Foucault's assujettissment, ideology, or "political correctness." All these phenomena signal a deteriorating of culture, its waning. Nietzsche and Dostoevsky called it nihilism or indifference, when it focuses on daily advantage and excludes any serious interest in the world. In Nietzsche's words, it is a state of the "last men," the despicable figures which we see in Zarathustra's proem. They are also called ironically "good men" in the third part of Zarathustra. The last men or the passive nihilists, as Nietzsche also calls them are present in the contemporary world, so much so that we can talk of the nihilist society. We are not concerned with the moral ideals, but we let ourselves be directed by the lowest ideas of personal advantages. Everything accommodates these ideas: mass media, entertainment, and politics. It is this state of moral degradation that Baudrillard calls the "obscenity of obviousness." Everything is already pre-thought, pre-judged, and pre-scribed. As Jean-Paul Curnier writes:

> La tentative de conquête de la pensée et de l'action politiques par l'exigence poétique a rencontré depuis un adversaire encore bien plus redoutable sous la forme de la culture comme mode de pacification par la puissance publique des tensions que le système génère et dont il a besoin pour fonctionner.
> [The attempt to conquer political thought and action by poetic exigency has since encountered an even more formidable adversary in the form of culture as a mode of pacification by public power of the tensions that the system generates and of which it needs to function.]

Another word combines the many meanings and one, this time negative, valuation; it is the word "cruelty." Cruelty in ordinary sense of the term marks the outer limit of culture, the barbarism, violence toward the weak. There can be physical as well as psychical cruelty, cruelty of enjoying the suffering of others. And yet, in another sense, cruelty could also have a positive connotation, could mean a remedy against the indifference of passive or suicidal nihilism. The supreme form of nihilism is indifference, what Dostoevsky called "indifferentism," and the remedy is precisely the cruelty or difference. Difference is at the center of the thought of Gilles Deleuze. He calls it "difference in itself," it is constituted as this state in which determination takes the form of unilateral distinction. We must therefore say that difference is made, or makes itself, as in the expression "make the difference." This difference or determination as such is also cruelty. Culture, which ordinarily is opposed to cruelty in a binary way, is more subtly related to it; it marks its genealogy and might be used, as in the case of Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and Artaud, in its regeneration. It seems wrong to consider culture and cruelty as simple binaries; they are related to each other in a much more complicated way. The focus of this book is on the "positive value" of cruelty the "cruelty of talent," cruelty in art. The main culprit of the degeneration of our culture, which lasts already two centuries according to the dictum of Nietzsche, is not some mythic evil of cruelty, but indifference; cruelty toward animals is the result of that. Difference or cruelty is the only way toward culture's revival. Deleuze and Heidegger explicitly link these both terms. Cruelty marks its genealogy and might be used, as in the case of Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and Artaud, in its regeneration. In other words, it is not right to consider culture and cruelty as simple binaries, but rather as complementary. The focus of this book is on the "positive value" of cruelty, the "cruelty of talent," cruelty in art. The main culprit of the degeneration of our culture, which lasts already two centuries according to the dictum of Nietzsche, is not some mythic evil of cruelty, but the nihilism of indifference; cruelty toward animals is the result of that. Difference or cruelty is the only way toward regeneration. Deleuze and Heidegger explicitly link both these terms. Hence, the use of them as the most important thinkers of our time.

Deleuze calls the difference cruelty, because it disturbs the orderly view of the world with its classification of genres and kinds (species). Difference in itself is not Aristotle's differentia specifica as the principle of definition, which is of the general. It is rather the principle, if we can call it thus, of singularity, of diaphora of Nietzsche, or Austragung of Heidegger. This difference, first of all applies to art and poetry. Difference is a poetic cruelty in the sense of "making difference," in a poetic (poiein—to make, to create) sense.

An ancient text perfectly illustrates this double valuation of human culture and cruelty. It is the so-called Ode to Man, or rather to human being (anthropos), or, for the classicists, polla ta deina ode. The latter transliterate the first words of the ode, which are here all-important. They name the double condition of human being: the state of deinon (of which deina is the plural). "Human being is the most wonderful, but at the same time the most terrible and cruel of living beings." It is the cultural development that makes human being great as Claude Lévi-Stauss will later write. The development of agriculture, domestication of animals, rhetoric, medicine, administration of the cities, all this was the result of the cultural Enlightenment of the fifth-century BC Greece, anticipating the modern Enlightenment.

But Sophocles (the author of the tragedy, Antigone, in which this text appears) sees these two aspects of human being, culture and cruelty as inseparable. In fact, one of the translation of deinon might be "cruelty." In Antigone deinon (wonderful and terrible) points toward Antigone, who says earlier in the

play "let me alone and my folly with me, to endure this terror" The deinon is linked with ate—destiny, especially cruel destiny—which Lacan associates with atroce. Heidegger translates deinon as das Unheimliche (the uncanny), underlining the double relationship of human being toward home and culture, and the necessity to go through the foreign culture, in a sense of deinon, in order to return to one's own. Deinon marks the tragic nature of human being. It is elevated by its culture, which at the same time renders him/her dangerous to himself/herself and its environment.

The association of deinon with Antigone points toward affirmative character of this being.40 Cruelty is supposed to resist the cultural emprise of Kreon, the rule of ideological indoctrination of polis or community, or the "institutional reality," as John Searle calls it, over feelings and kinship.

The authors of the books on cruelty toward the animals, like Charles Patterson's, Eternal Treblinka, Babette Babich's Words in Blood's, Gail Eisnitz's, Slaughterhouse, point out the nihilistic, industrial treatment of animals, and the cowardice of those who take advantage of these industries, but refuse to directly participate in the slaughter. The call for open cruelty in this case amounts to call for recognizing the immoral aspect of the enterprise. Users of meat, clothing, shoes, upholstery, bags, and so forth should face the cruelty on which the whole industry is based. It is in art that this revelation of cruelty should begin. Three authors, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, and Artaud share an aesthetic point of view on cruelty. For three of them, cruelty is first of all an artistic principle: "the cruel hammer of creation," of Nietzsche, "the cruel talent" of Dostoevsky's demons, and "aesthetic of cruelty" of Artaud. Camille Dumoulié writes about Nietzsche and Artaud, but the same concerns Dostoevsky: "Jamais peut-etre avant Nietzsche et Artaud l'acte d'ecrire, de repandre son encre n'a été métaphoriquement rapproche de l'acte de cruaute, de repandre son sang (cruor), avec une telle insistance." It is the manifestation of cruelty that undermines the Enlightenment's conception of human nature and of culture. The culture of "sweetness and light" may be able to overcome the threat of anarchy within the space of Enlightenment, but only by overseeing its cruel aspects. Cruelty, which lies at the roots of all culture and constantly threatens it with annihilation—when revealed, especially in art, literature, and philosophy—radically challenges this very project. Antonio Tabucchi emphasizes this challenge in case of literature: "La litterature, en substance, c'est cela: une vision du monde differente de celle qu'impose la pensee dominante, ou mieux la pensee qui est au pouvoir quelle qu'elle soit."

Three authors, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and Artaud, show the way from philosophical to artistic treatment of cruelty.

The first chapter is devoted to the work of Nietzsche and its formulation of the threat of nihilism. Nietzsche was also the first to establish the "new opposition," guilty of destroying the ancient tragic culture, namely that of the Dionysian and the Socratic or the Dionysian or the Alexandrian. Nietzsche displaces the opposition from the theoretical to artistic level. The chapter brings together the tragic and the cruel and ends somewhat unexpectedly with the desire of Nietzsche to save the humanity from the threat of cruelty.

The second chapter, in a way compares Dostoevsky to Nietzsche. Nietzsche was only thirty-seven years old when Dostoevsky died. It is nevertheless tempting to study Nietzsche before Dostoevsky. Indeed, Nietzsche's position in the history of nihilism places him, according to Marcel Camus, in the role of the theoretic predecessor of Dostoevsky. Nietzsche "humiliated» reason, that is, "nihilistic" reason, and thus freed it for the "cruel" world of Dostoevsky. The opposition between reason and feeling is at the

roots of nihilism. Rational and abstract categories (Kategorien der Vernunft) exhibit an excessive attitude toward the world. Nihilism and indifference are the result of this excess. Paradoxically, a violent, cruel challenge toward the categories of reason allows the possibilities of the experience of thought, the feeling of thought.

The third chapter, on the example of Artaud, concludes the way from philosophy to poetry, from nihilism to cruelty, which shows the endeavor of this book. Artaud straightforwardly presents cruelty as a countermovement to established culture. It is good to compare the traditional (Aristotelian) notion of catharsis, which aimed at protecting the limits of dominant culture, to Artaud's "purification," which on the contrary unsettles these limits. The Aristotelian catharsis defended our logocentric culture, whereas Artaudian cruelty shows the downfall of culture and its consequences.

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The phenomena and the concepts of culture and cruelty, but also those of nihilism and purification turned out to be ambiguous, and this is what makes their analysis difficult. But perhaps in this ambiguity lies also their force. They appear (phenomena and concepts) to explode the system of binary oppositions in which they are situated. The words culture and cruelty are ambiguous not only in themselves, but especially they are in ambiguous relation to each other. They are dependent on each other, they condition, and limit each other.

Cruelty is the ultimate opposition to culture. At the simple level, cruelty can function as a vaccination does, can prevent much cruelty by intensively representing its small part. Artaud perhaps best formulates this thought, but the same idea we find in Nietzsche and Dostoevsky:

> Whatever the conflicts that haunt the mind of a given period, I defy any spectator to whom such violent scenes will have transferred their blood, who will have felt in himself the transit of a superior action, who will have seen extraordinary and essential movements of his thought illuminated in extraordinary deeds— the violence and blood having been placed at the service of the violence of the thought—I defy that spectator to give himself up, once outside the theater, to ideas of war, riot, and blatant murder.

Cruelty thus can show that what is inacceptable in our otherwise accepted culture, in other words, that what would provoke our feeling of shame or, at least feeling of uneasiness, really exists and should be shown as such.

Culture can be protective of the boundaries of decency but can also oppress as ideology and propaganda, give rise to nihilism. Nihilism itself could be ambiguous, secure the cultural status quo, and also bring the fall of the corrupted culture. In this case, nihilism is the symptom of the degeneracy of "fighters" from the battlefield, and place them in secure conditions. There is no more physical contact with an adversary, whose bodies and those of their families are exposed to the actions of the cowardly agents/officials of death. The economic development and moral decadence forces us to use bodies of animals as well, to satisfy our culinary and vestmental "needs." Admittedly, it was always thus, but slaughter was never remote. Today, on the contrary, the culture of technoscience results in cultural development or rather moral recession and tries not to see blood, not be associated with killing.

Recent discussion around the clip of the band Rammstein for the song Deutschland has shown that the artistic principle of cruelty is not easily accepted in our culture. The song and the clip, in a Nietzschean

way, show the history of Germany from the wars of the Gotts to the Holocaust. The main point of the debate consisted in the question: could the cruelty of the Holocaust be represented? Could the cruel images be used as art? The answer should be yes. The function of art is precisely to question the nihilism of indifference. The opponents of this clip would rather not be disturbed by cruel images and live quietly, visiting the monuments, museums, and lamenting the number of victims. Art, on the contrary should disturb and question.

It is this indifference that cruelty tends to reveal and make people participate in the slaughter, or else refrain from it, not send rockets unless they are able to imagine their children under the ruins. <>

Bergsonism and the History of Analytic Philosophy by Andreas Vrahimis [History of Analytic Philosophy, Palgrave Macmillan, 9783030807542

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, the French philosopher Henri Bergson became an international celebrity, profoundly influencing contemporary intellectual and artistic currents. While Bergsonism was fashionable, L. Susan Stebbing, Bertrand Russell, Moritz Schlick, and Rudolf Carnap launched different critical attacks against some of Bergson's views. This book examines this series of critical responses to Bergsonism early in the history of analytic philosophy. Analytic criticisms of Bergsonism were influenced by William James, who saw Bergson as an 'anti-intellectualist' ally of American Pragmatism, and Max Scheler, who saw him as a prophet of *Lebensphilosophie*. Some of the main analytic objections to Bergson are answered in the work of Karin Costelloe-Stephen. Analytic anti-Bergsonism accompanied the earlier refutations of idealism by Russell and Moore, and later influenced the Vienna Circle's critique of metaphysics. It eventually contributed to the formation of the view that 'analytic' philosophy is divided from its 'continental' counterpart.

Contents

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, Henri-Louis Bergson was probably the most famous living philosopher in the world. His name was frequently discussed by the popular press, and his public appearances in France, Britain, and the United States attracted large crowds. His celebrity would influence diverse aspects of his contemporary culture, with a host of prominent artists, intellectuals, scientists, and even politicians embracing different versions of what they took to be Bergson's views. These remained fashionable for a period spanning roughly between the publication of Creative Evolution in 1907 and Bergson's controversy with Einstein in 1922.2 Bergson's work was largely forgotten already before his death in 1941, and would remain so for the rest of the twentieth century despite various later

attempts to revive it. It is only recently that a concerted effort to revisit his output has begun to take place, for example, with the recent publication of a multi-volume critical edition of his work edited by Frédéric Worms.

During Bergson's rise to fame, most of the widely read portrayals of his philosophical views were not produced by academic philosophers in dialogue with their peers, but by various non-experts communicating with a lay public. Such commentaries served to widely circulate misunderstandings of his writings. Milič Čapek describes this phenomenon as a

> pseudo-Bergsonism, which was nothing but a mere literary fashion, comparable to existentialism today. [...] the content of this pseudo-Bergsonism consisted in the enthusiastic response to the emotional color of certain words, like 'intuition', 'création', 'élan vital', without the slightest effort at critical analysis. In this sense what Julien Benda called 'le succes du bergsonisme' was in truth the greatest damage done to the authentic Bergson's thought; authentic Bergsonism was misunderstood because it was wrongly identified with its fashionable and literary counterfeit. (1971, ix–x)

In this book, I follow Čapek's terminological distinction between, on the one hand, what in the book's title I refer to as 'Bergsonism', which designates the oft-distorting popularisation of Bergson's views, and, on the other hand, more scholarly interpretations of Bergson's own work, to which I will apply the adjective 'Bergsonian'. I do not, however, straightforwardly adopt Čapek's disparaging attitude towards Bergsonism. As a cultural phenomenon and as an episode in the history of philosophy, the rise and fall of Bergsonism is an unprecedented and unique case of a philosopher attaining such widespread influence while still alive, without posthumously becoming a canonical figure. In different ways, Bergson's work would function as a Rorschach test both to those who enthusiastically championed some of its popular renditions and to those who opposed them. The former tended to see in Bergson what they sought, the latter what they feared or despised.

Bergson was clearly not a Bergsonist. He did little, however, to discourage the circulation of distortions of his views. He contributed to the Bergsonist current by responding to interviewers' requests for his opinions on diverse then-current affairs, ranging from cubism to feminism. Furthermore, by contrast to the abstruse technical vocabulary of his contemporary academic philosophers, Bergson's writing style seemed deceptively lucid, and thus accessible far beyond the confines of professional philosophical circles. This could easily mislead both Bergson's critics and defenders into misidentifying his views with their distorted popular over-simplifications. As this book progresses, it will become clear that this is a trap into which many of Bergson's analytic critics fell. In some respects, Bergsonism would become analytic philosophy's Rorschach test, onto which figures like Bertrand Russell, Moritz Schlick, and Rudolf Carnap would project deplorable philosophical errors. By contrast, this book will show how both Karin Costelloe-Stephen and L. Susan Stebbing endeavoured to avoid popular misunderstandings of Bergson's position. Costelloe-Stephen thus puts on a formidable defence of Bergsonian views, while Stebbing develops an insightful critique of Bergson which is all the more incisive because it avoids attacking strawmen.

I have so far discussed 'Bergsonism' in the singular. This may be partly misleading, since it was far from a unified movement, or even consistent tendency. Based on selective readings of Bergson's work, popular forms of Bergsonism invoked the authority of the Maitre in support of multifarious conflicting views and attitudes. It may thus be preferable, following Susan Guerlac (2006, 1–13), to talk in the plural of

multiple Bergsonisms. These would include, as Donna Jones has recently noted, cultural tendencies as disparate as 'anarchosyndicalism, mysticism and occultism, aesthetic modernism,9 fascism, pacifism, literary subjectivism, environmentalism, scientism and antiscientism' (2010, 78), as well as the Négritude movement (129–178). Some of these multiple manifestations of Bergsonism are diametrically opposed to others. As this book will show, analytic responses to Bergson developed in opposition to specific Bergsonist variants, particularly those associated with fascism, mysticism, and attitudes critical towards science.

Bergson not only failed to counter popular Bergsonisms as misinterpretations of his work, but was also unwilling to engage in debate with some of his academic critics who had inadvertently accepted such misinterpretations. He did not answer any of the analytic criticisms discussed in this book. It is thus difficult to determine which positions, if any, defended by Bergson can be salvaged from the barrage of analytic objections against them. Bergson would make matters even worse by explicitly endorsing a reply to Russell by Herbert Wildon Carr (1913) that, as Chap. 5 shows, not only failed to dispel popular misunderstandings of Bergson, but also was easily answerable by Russell. By contrast to Carr's flawed reply, neither Russell nor Bergson responded to Costelloe-Stephen's incisive answer to Russell. This book will not systematically attempt to imagine how Bergson should have responded to his critics. It will, however, look to the contemporary work of Costelloe-Stephen and Stebbing for some potential answers. This helps dispel the impression that there was nothing to say in reply to Bergson's analytic critics, which led some to conclude that they had 'vanquished' (Lakatos 1970a, 100) their foe.

Bergson's silence could be construed as confirming his critics' claim that his work did not rely on argument and remained indifferent to objections. This claim would pave the path for a series of subsequent polemics in which opponents of analytic philosophy are relegated to the domain of poetry. As this book will show, this early indictment of Bergsonism eventually found its way into Oxford philosophers' presentations, during the 1940s and 1950s, of 'continental philosophy' as under the dominion of Masters, 'Pontiffs' (Ayer 1949; cf. Russell 1992a, 292, 315), or 'Fuehrers' (Ryle [1962] 2009, 189).

Rather than developing an apologetics for Bergson, this book is primarily concerned with the role that responses to Bergsonism played in the history of analytic philosophy. It demonstrates that criticising Bergson was a formative exercise that shaped what, in the process, came to be called 'analytic philosophy'.

Perhaps due to the aforementioned decline in Bergson's philosophical influence, the role that criticisms of his position played for the development of analytic philosophy has hitherto largely been ignored by scholarship. By contrast, traditional accounts of the emergence of analytic philosophy have often assigned a central role to Russell's and Moore's attempts to refute idealism. The received view takes idealism to have been defeated in 1903—from then onwards analytic philosophers saw 'that grass is green, that the sun and stars would exist if no one was aware of them' (Russell 1946b, 12). Scholarship in the history of analytic philosophy has questioned and revised this simplistic account.

By Russell's (1928) own admission, he and Moore were not alone in challenging the Idealistic schools that had dominated fin-de-siècle academic philosophy across the world. Outside professional philosophical circles, it was Bergson that was seen as posing the chief challenge to the Idealist establishment. Shortly before his death in 1910, William James (1910) summarised the predicament

faced by his contemporary philosophy as a choice between F.H. Bradley and Bergson. Chapter 4 explains why James thought the obvious choice was Bergson, whom he portrayed as an ally to the Pragmatist critique of idealism. Russell (e.g. 1912a, 322, 1914c, 11) too upheld a version of James's depiction of Bergson and Pragmatism as allies opposed to idealism, only to add that their opposition was inadequate. Like Stebbing (1914, 2), Russell (1928, 57) thought that Bergson's popular appeal was to a large extent built upon the jargon- free imagistic language in which it was framed. Russell (1928, 68–69) distinguished such popular criticisms of idealism from a series of more effective academic criticisms that came from 'a severely technical standpoint' (69), and which included, among others, Russell and Moore's refutations. Seen from Russell's perspective, once idealism had been refuted, there remained a rivalry between the popularisers and the technicians. And so, as we shall see in Chap. 5, Russell would attempt to combine the two worlds: he set out on the first steps in his career as a public intellectual by relying on some of his more technical work in criticising Bergson in a public forum.

Not all the philosophers engaged with the analytic criticisms of Bergsonism saw their position in the same light as Russell. Chapters 6 and 7 show that both Costelloe-Stephen and Stebbing challenged the types of over-arching generalisations involved in Russell's claims about the battles between contenting 'isms'. Stebbing's (1914) work, which I explore in Chap. 7, paints a detailed picture of the differences between Pragmatism and the French Voluntarist tradition in which she shows Bergson to belong. She thus criticises the vagueness involved in all-encompassing pronouncements concerning the alliance between Bergson and the Pragmatists. While Stebbing, writing before Russell, looks to the history of philosophy to understand Bergson's thought, Costelloe-Stephen responds specifically to Russell's criticisms. She demonstrates how Russell's and Bergson's outlooks are in agreement concerning immediate acquaintance as the source of knowledge. She also sharpens their disagreement by diverting attention away from vague controversies about 'anti-intellectualism', focussing instead on a debate concerning the nature of sense-data.

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This book has examined an array of critical reactions directed against Bergsonism by central figures in the history of analytic philosophy. During the height of Bergsonism's international popularity, a progression of philosophers, beginning with Stebbing and Russell, and followed by Schlick and Carnap, raised their objections to certain views they attributed to Bergson. The book has endeavoured to reconstruct these philosophers' dialogues with interlocutors defending Bergson's outlook. Russell and Stebbing were largely responding to the enthusiastic reception of Bergson's work by William James, who saw it as part of American Pragmatism. Russell's criticisms were answered by Costelloe-Stephen, whose indirect dialogue with Stebbing this book has reconstructed. The Vienna Circle were partly reacting to Max Scheler's selective appropriation of Bergson into the current he called 'Lebensphilosophie'. Between 1913 and 1931, Schlick's early attack against Bergsonism, in the broader context of his critique of intuition, became transformed into the Vienna Circle's project of overcoming metaphysics. By 1931, Carnap's attack against metaphysics was redirected away from Bergsonism and against a new target: Martin Heidegger's pseudo-statements about 'the Nothing'. The Logical Empiricist project of 'overcoming' (translated by Ayer as 'eliminating') metaphysics set the agenda for subsequent debates within Anglophone analytic philosophy. In the mid-1940s, Ayer combined elements from Russell's reaction to Bergsonism with Carnap's attack on Heidegger's pseudo-statements in criticising the newly fashionable existentialism that had replaced the earlier Bergsonist fad. Some of Ayer's views would soon

be repeated by Ryle and Hare in their generalised proclamations concerning the division between 'analytic' and 'continental' philosophy.

The responses to Bergsonism examined by this book have played a significant, and hitherto neglected, role within the history of analytic philosophy. Traditional accounts of the emergence of Anglophone analytic philosophy have accorded pride of place to Moore's and Russell's early criticisms of the British idealist tradition. Without questioning the central significance of this episode for the development of analytic philosophy, this book has shown that it was coupled with a strategic move against the rival criticisms of idealism developed by Bergson and James. As Russell (1928) himself acknowledges, in the Anglophone world prior to the First World War, Bergson and the Pragmatists were widely perceived as leading the anti-idealist charge. As shown in Chap. 5, Russell accused Bergson of being inadequately critical of idealism in accounting for the role played by the subject-object distinction in perception. Russell thus implies that, by contrast to Bergson, the objections put forth by himself and Moore successfully and irrevocably refuted the basic tenets of idealism. A variety of reasons underlie the demise of British idealism, including, for example, the wartime controversy discussed in Chap. 8, which had been instigated by Bergson. By the time the war was over, Moore's and Russell's approaches were taking the leading reign in British academic philosophy. Chapter 8 shows things to have been quite different in the Germanophone context. There, Bergsonism was received as an ally of certain forms of idealism (such as Eucken's). In parallel, Bergson was interpreted, especially by Eucken's student Scheler, as reinstating intuition as a method for philosophy, and thereby opposing the NeoKantian schools that had dominated academic philosophy in Germany before the end of the war. Schlick's, and later Carnap's, attacks against Bergson took Scheler at his word: they saw Bergson as an ally of Lebensphilosophie who opposed the scientific world-conception by reinstating idealist tendencies.

Thus, for different reasons (some in tension with others), Bergson came to be in the cross-sight of representatives of very different philosophical tendencies that would eventually be bundled together under the banner of 'analytic philosophy'. There were substantial disagreements over a broad range of issues between Russell's 'logical atomism' (accompanied by a metaphysics of acquaintance), Stebbing's later development of 'Cambridge analysis', and the Vienna Circle's Logical Empiricism. Yet, despite the significant divergences between their position, Russell, Stebbing, and the Logical Empiricists all agreed in rejecting Bergsonism.

In each case, the divergence between their approaches is reflected in the details of their objections to Bergsonism. Russell, Stebbing, Schlick, and Carnap all disagree with Bergson's view that there is a special type of knowledge afforded by 'intuition'. Nevertheless, in each case, 'intuition' is understood somewhat differently. Russell and Stebbing have conflicting interpretations of the specific role played by 'intuition' in Bergson's epistemology. Due to James's influence, Russell assumes that Bergson is an 'anti-intellectualist' who appeals to intuitive knowledge in rejecting intellectual knowledge. Stebbing corrects Russell's Jamesian misinterpretation, dispelling the claim that Bergson is an 'anti-intellectualist', and showing instead that he sees the completion of knowledge as involving a combination of intuition with intellect. Russell's criticism of Bergson's 'intuition' focuses specifically on its misidentification with instinct. By contrast, Schlick's and Carnap's criticisms cover over any claim that acquaintance may result in knowledge, including eventually even Russell's sense-data theory. Schlick agrees with Stebbing in upholding the Lotzean thesis that knowledge necessarily involves two-term relations. Yet the conclusions reached from this commonly held thesis are modified by their divergent attitudes towards

metaphysics. Schlick and Carnap develop an overall criticism of metaphysical pseudo-statements, which they take to be nonsensical. Stebbing, who does not take all metaphysics to be nonsense, resists such conclusions, warning against prematurely rejecting what is valuable in metaphysical systems like Bergson's without the necessary detailed critical scrutiny of the entire system. Thus, in general, while Russell, Stebbing, Schlick, and Carnap agree that Bergson's positions are subject to serious objections, their criticisms involve substantial disagreements.

Despite these disagreements, in the course of the abovementioned critical reaction to Bergsonism, we find the earliest emergence of the view that there exists a movement or tradition that goes under the banner of 'analytic philosophy', and which is somehow distinct from other 'continental' philosophical traditions. As shown in Chap. 6, this view was first developed in the context of Russell's confrontation with Costelloe-Stephen and Bergson. In this context, Russell makes use of the term 'analytic philosophy' in a sense that is at least partly commensurable with how the term is used nowadays. Russell opposes 'analytic philosophy' to continental 'synthetic' philosophy. It would take some time for his pronouncements concerning 'analytic philosophy' and its opposition to 'continental' currents to become, as Glendinning puts it, 'the everyday currency of English-language metaphilosophy' (2006, 70). Though the term 'analytic philosophy' was sometimes used in the relevant sense within Anglophone (but not Germanophone) debates during the 1930s, its use became widespread after the Second World War.1 At around this time, Ayer's polemics against existentialism eventually led to his, Hare's, and Ryle's various proclamations concerning 'analytic philosophy's' division from some 'continental' counterpart.

One of the central themes that re-emerge throughout analytic criticisms of Bergsonism is the question of the relation between philosophy and poetry (or, more broadly, the arts). In 1912, Stebbing objects to Bergson's methodological appeal to intuition, arguing that its results are incommunicable. In the same year, Russell charges Bergson for charming his reader through his literary style, rather than attempting to convince them through argument. Russell famously concludes that Bergson is thus more akin to a poet (or an advertiser) than to a philosopher. Responding to Costelloe-Stephen, Russell further applies this line of thinking to his distinction between 'analytic' and continental 'synthetic' philosophers, when he claims that the latter care little for argumentation, relying instead on their literary powers of conviction. Neurath's 1921 polemic against Spengler redeploys Russell's strategy in accusing his opponent of 'pseudorationalism'. A similar strategy is soon used in Schlick's 1926 critique of metaphysical appeals to intuition (exemplified, among others, by Bergson's oeuvre), which he relegates to the domain of art and poetry, rather than philosophy. With some important modifications, Carnap's 1928 Aufbau repeats a variant of Schlick's 1926 claim against intuitive metaphysics, taking Bergson as his exemplary target. A year later, Heidegger's 1929 'Was ist Metaphysik?' gives the Vienna Circle a more apt target, with Carnap's and Neurath's responses to Heidegger's pseudostatements appearing in print in 1931. Carnap famously compares metaphysicians to bad poets or 'musicians without musical ability' ([1931] 1959, 80). Ayer later claims that 'irrationalist' (1948, 13) metaphysicians like Bergson, Heidegger, and the existentialists create 'imaginative literature' (1949, 56) posing as philosophy. Stereotypical depiction of 'continental' philosophy as a kind of literary exercise will persist in various ways of imagining the supposed analytic-continental divide.

In the historical trajectory this book examines, we find a tendency to convert an objection that was initially directed specifically against Bergson into a strategy deployed against an increasingly broadening range of targets. A significant exception is found in Stebbing's work, which explicitly resists this

tendency. Her 1912 objections specifically addressed a particular type of methodological appeal to intuition. Stebbing (1937) directly criticises the use of such arguments as excuses for not engaging with metaphysicians like Bergson. With the exception of Stebbing, the tendency towards generalisation is widespread throughout analytic responses to Bergsonism. Though Russell's (1912a) initial objections specifically targeted Bergson (albeit a strawman of his views), he already associated Bergson's position with a wide variety of cultural phenomena, from Pragmatism to imperialism. By 1922, his response to Costelloe-Stephen overgeneralises his 1912 strategy as applicable to the vaguely defined category of continental 'synthetic' philosophy as a whole. A similar tendency towards generalisation applies to Schlick's critique of intuition: while in 1913 Schlick specifically targeted Bergson, James, and Husserl (even if already overgeneralising by mistakenly equating their positions), in later work he would acquire a very wide range of targets, including eventually Russell himself. Carnap's qualified acceptance of Schlick's critique of 'intuitive metaphysics' in the Aufbau subsequently became transformed into a broader criticism of metaphysical nonsense. Ayer would eventually overgeneralise his polemic against Heidegger and Sartre into a dichotomy between 'journeymen' and 'pontiffs'. Some of Ayer's overgeneralisations were then applied by Ryle and Hare in criticising their 'continental' colleagues. (Indeed, this book can be read as tracing, through such overgeneralisations, a genealogy of such polemical proclamations by Oxford philosophers during the 1950s.)

As the early criticisms initially directed against Bergson became overgeneralised, it would become more and more difficult to find a way of dialogically resolving the resulting controversies. In large measure, the breakdown of dialogue was due to Bergson's unwillingness to respond to his critics. As we have seen throughout the book, Bergson did not reply to a single criticism by either Russell (who, like Bergson, failed to appreciate the significance of Costelloe-Stephen's answer to his criticisms), Stebbing, Schlick, or Carnap. (Neither did Sartre, while Heidegger's dismissive polemical mentions of the Vienna Circle fail to directly address any of their specific criticisms.)2 Bergson's unwillingness to respond does not entail that there was no possible dialogue to be had. This book has shown that early critical discussions of Bergson's views by analytic philosophers were directed towards specific philosophical questions. They involved taking a stance on, among other issues, the definition of number, the nature of sense-data, the use of 'analytic' and 'synthetic' methods in philosophy, the epistemic status of intuition, the epistemological role of memory and recognition, the relation between concepts and images, and even the significance of negation and the meaning of propositions about 'nothing'. This book has reconstructed a dialogue on these topics between a series of philosophers that are in many ways unlikely interlocutors, and tend to be studied independently from each other (if they are studied at all), namely Bergson, James, Russell, Costelloe-Stephen, Stebbing, Scheler, Neurath, Schlick, and Carnap. As this book has shown, despite some excessive polemics, communication, and even dialogue, among the figures in this list is not unattainable. An attempt to extend the conversation could include Heidegger, Sartre, Ayer, Hare, and Ryle. In Chap. 11, I looked back to Bergson's account of negation and nothingness in an attempt to push some of these philosophers into conversing with each other. Nevertheless, with these later developments from Heidegger onwards, communication became more rare and difficult, while polemics and overgeneralisations multiplied.

Unlike the exercises in polemical aggression and overgeneralisation of many of their colleagues, it was the work of both Costelloe-Stephen and Stebbing that guided this book's effort to reconstruct a dialogue between some of Bergsonism's analytic critics and their interlocutors. Costelloe-Stephen issued a challenging objection to Russell's thinking. It was clearly underestimated by Russell, who did not

publish a response. Costelloe-Stephen employed the terminology of her contemporary analytic philosophy (especially as found in Russell's work) in putting forth her original, and indeed compelling, arguments in defence of variants of Bergson's positions. While Bergson's stylistic and methodological preferences do often put him at odds with some analytic critics, there is little analogous justification for the fact that Costelloe-Stephen's voice remained unheeded. This book has shown that, apart from her direct response to Russell, Costelloe-Stephen's positions can be brought into dialogue with some of the criticisms directed against Bergson by Stebbing and Schlick. Stebbing's work is another viewpoint from which various analytic misunderstandings of Bergson can be corrected. Stebbing's lucid and erudite exposition of Bergson's positioning within the history of French philosophy, as well as her clarification of the differences between his views and those of the Pragmatists, can counterbalance Russell's misunderstandings of Bergson, as this book has shown. Yet, like Costelloe-Stephen's work, Stebbing's account of Bergson has been largely ignored until recently. Neither Costelloe-Stephen nor Stebbing were 'disciples' defending some orthodox Bergsonian viewpoint. Their defences and criticisms of Bergson's positions stand on their own as original contributions to philosophy. As this book has shown, they can be brought into fruitful dialogue with the positions developed by Russell, Schlick, and Carnap, often answering several of their polemical claims. As Chap. 7 has shown, Stebbing and Costelloe-Stephen are also engaged in an indirect dialogue with each other that remains unhindered by the usual misunderstandings involved in later controversies between 'analytic' and 'continental' philosophers. These two philosophers' significant contributions to the early twentieth-century debates surrounding Bergson's work can thus help us avoid the connected polemics and controversies, finding the way back to a circumspect philosophical conversation. <>

Vestiges of a Philosophy: Matter, the Meta-Spiritual, and the Forgotten Bergson by John Ó Maoilearca [Oxford Studies of Western Esotericism Series, Oxford University Press, 9780197613917]

Vestiges of a Philosophy: Matter, the Meta-Spiritual, and the Forgotten Bergson covers a fascinating yet little known moment in history. At the turn of the twentieth century, Henri Bergson and his sister, Mina Bergson (also known as Moina Mathers), were both living in Paris and working on seemingly very different but nonetheless complementary and even correlated approaches to questions about the nature of matter, spirit, and their interaction. He was a leading professor within the French academy, soon to become the most renowned philosopher in Europe. She was his estranged sister, already celebrated in her own right as a feminist and occultist performing on theatre stages around Paris while also leading one of the most important occult societies of that era, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. One was a respectable if controversial intellectual, the other was a notorious mystic-artist who, together with her husband and fellow-occultist Samuel MacGregor Mathers, have been
described as the "neo-pagan power couple" of the Belle Époque.

Neither Henri nor Mina left any record of their feelings and attitudes towards the work of the other,

but their views on time, mysticism, spirit, and art converge on many fronts, even as they emerged from very different forms of cultural practice. In **VESTIGES OF A PHILOSOPHY**, John Ó Maoilearca examines this convergence of ideas and uses the Bergsons' strange correlation to tackle contemporary themes in new materialist philosophy, as well as the relationship between mysticism and philosophy.

Review

"In this revelatory study of the intersecting interests of mystic Mina Bergson and her brother, philosopher Henri Bergson, Ó Maoilearca meticulously and cautiously tracks philosophical developments from nineteenth-century spiritualism to recent new materialism. In the process, he does no less than uncover occulture's and analytical philosophy's correlated investments in both spiritualism and materialism during the modernist period. This book will prove foundational to the study of modern mysticism as philosophical engagement and materialist analysis." -- Dennis Denisoff, author of *Decadent Ecology in British Literature and Art, 1860-1910: Decay, Desire, and the Pagan Revival*

"Henri and Mina Bergson form one of the most enigmatic sibling duos of the *fin-de-siècle*. The unfamiliar reader might assume little common ground between the two—the former a highly respected philosopher, the latter a feminist occult leader largely unknown outside of specialist circles today. Exploring both siblings' thought in relation to the other and demonstrating their converging areas of interest, Ó Maoilearca offers a sophisticated, provocative, and beautifully crafted reconsideration of the relationship between Western esotericism and philosophy. A must-read for anyone seeking to understand the ambiguous position of mysticism and magic in the Western intellectual tradition." -- Manon Hedenborg White, author of *The Eloquent Blood: The Goddess Babalon and the Construction of Femininities in Western Esotericism*

"**VESTIGES OF A PHILOSOPHY** performs its ideas with visionary urgency, as Ó Maoilearca sustains a diffractive reading of a vast array of sources—canonical works alongside obscure archival texts exhumed through meticulous archeology—that proposes conspicuous concordances between the thought of siblings Mina and Henri Bergson. The complex and exhilarating investigation significantly reconfigures the parallel Bergsonisms, contending with their strangeness and poetics, while aligning them with ideas of contemporary philosophy from Karen Barad and François Laruelle among others, in this volume's immaculate consideration of matter, memory, movement, and spirit." -- Matthew Goulish, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

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Prologue: A Reciprocity of Acceleration

Among the many challenging ideas found in the works of Henri Bergson, one of the strangest, and most difficult, concerns what he called "complete relativity." This concept appears in his penultimate monograph, Duration and

Simultaneity. This text gathered ideas concerning Bergson's infamous clash with Albert Einstein at the Société française de philosophie in 1922. At the center of their disagreement lies a difference in attitude toward "Langevin's paradox," or the "twin's paradox," first put forward in 1911 by the physicist Paul Langevin in his own exploration of Einstein's special theory of relativity (STR). This paradox concerns a thought experiment where one "voyager," Paul, sends his twin brother, Peter, off in a rocket at a speed just less than that of light. After a year, the rocket turns around and heads back to earth at the exact same velocity. Peter gets out after what has now been a two-year journey in the rocket only to discover that Paul has "aged" two hundred years "and has long been in his grave."

This is a predicted result from STR due to Peter traveling close to the speed of light, which retards the aging process (following Einstein's theory). Understood as two (biological) clocks, Peter's velocity relative to Paul allows him to age more slowly than Paul. Peter cannot reverse time, but he does retard it, at least relative to Paul. Yet it might still be asked: why is it Paul's aging alone that quickens relative to Peter? After all, in a consistent relativism of time, surely Paul could be seen as traveling at near to the speed of light relative to Peter— their speeds are reciprocal and covary— in which case, there would be no age difference between the two at all. So here is the paradox: the answer to whose aging slows down and whose speeds up all depends on which frame of reference you decide to treat as immobile (and take your measurements from), and which is taken as being in motion relative to this frame. And, as this decision is entirely contingent, it leaves STR looking somewhat perverse as a theory.

Moreover, for Bergson, separated twin siblings are more than interchangeable clocks; they are living beings that cannot be substituted for each other without losing something in the process. From this vantage point, a clock is an impersonal abstraction of our lived experience of time (durée). Indeed, it

is one that privileges only one frame of reference at a time in what Bergson dubs a "single" or "half-relativity" (la demi-relativité)— the frame of reference of the immobile measuring the mobile. In

contrast to this seemingly flawed approach, Bergson proposed a "double" or "complete relativity" (la relativité complete) where there are no privileged reference frames and where no perspective can be completely represented by another in an act of substitution.

Every frame or perspective is equalized as completely individual. It is impossible for Paul to represent the personal experience of Peter fully, because experience is more than the representation of experience. For one to represent fully another's lived time, one must experience it in every detail, in person.

But this is impossible without actually being that other person: "if I want to actually measure Peter's time, I must enter Peter's frame of reference; I must become Peter. If I want to actually measure Paul's time, I must take Paul's place." Otherwise, all I am left with is my virtual image of Paul, not his actuality. Ultimately, STR is predicated fallaciously on "a time or a space [that is] always virtual and merely imagined, never real and experienced." Its "essence" is to "rank the real vision with the virtual visions" or to hide "the difference between the real and the virtual."

Let's pause for a moment to think this through, because, in one way or another, it is crucial for everything that follows in this book. Fulfilling the counterfactual, "if I had been you . . ." entails me being all that you are, and hence not I- being- you (which would only bring along non- you baggage with it), but you- being- you (which even includes all of your kinds of self- alterity, auto- differentiation, etc.). We need a complete history (material, psychological, and social) to "transform" one person genuinely into a real other person (rather than merely an abstraction of that other): this would be an exhaustive factual analysis of that person- there- and- then that only that person-there-and- then can embody.

This emphasis on haecceity, on the thisness of this temporal perspective (a real time that is always lived by an actual someone, somewhere) is not to reinstate a totalizing logic of self- identity, hermetically sealed off from all alterity, however. Indeed, to circumvent the dichotomies associated with STR, it is precisely the logic of separation (Peter or Paul) that must be overcome.

The scene is thereby set for alternative logics, logics based on objects that are not only solid, hard bodies impervious to substitution with each other, but also fluid ones, watery and gaseous ones, or even sonic ones. This will involve performative, imagistic, and diagrammatic thinking, where some things can indeed be this and that, here and there, but not through a transcendent act of substitution (my representation of you standing in for you), so much as an immanent act of partial self- expansion, alteration, or bifurcation. To follow this work, we will need different logics that come from different kinds of things. Some of these logics will appear standardly "philosophical" or rigorous in a "hard" material sense; but some others will appear (or will be named) "mystical," "occult," or "spiritual." As if that's a bad thing.

Therefore, the stipulation that this is not that (that Peter is not Paul) need not be seen as an immovable obstacle but a creative constraint, because to voyage or travel— be it in time or space— is not a matter of mere representation between solid bodies. Transport involves a transfer of being, too— a qualitative change subtends (and "supertends") every quantitative one. If the voyaging siblings could be ontologically interchangeable, it would not be as wholes, but as moving, fluid, and luminous parts, within other "wholes" that are themselves mutating. They would be alter egos altering each other mutually within

"larger" processes. These "parts" are not separate, impenetrable things, but lines of moving continuity which flow heterogeneously.

And, finally, these "heterogeneous continuities" would embody the thisness or thatness of each partial perspective— nonsubstitutable from the outside precisely because they are mobile, moving inside duration (at various foliated levels). Following an alternative way of thinking, this logic might also be called a "Tattwa Vision," the hermetic practice of perceiving "thatness" in order to undertake another kind of cosmic voyage.

This book is dedicated to the strange voyages taken by two figures from history whose reciprocal accelerations took them far apart from each other on one level, and yet who also remained within an ongoing, "covarying" change, a continuous movement of alteration.

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Epilogue: The Whole of the Moon

According to Bergson (Henri), "the truth is that we shall never reach the past unless we frankly place ourselves within it." One aim of this work has been to ask how literally we should take this statement. A little over twenty years ago,

I published an introduction to Henri Bergson's philosophy that had, as one of its declared aims, to retrieve his ideas from what I described then as the "philosophical ghettos of 'vitalism,' 'spiritualism' and 'psychologism.' " Perhaps, in attempting to model a nonstandard philosophy using spiritualism as its source material, all I have achieved here is a certain gentrification of those ghettos, replacing their original residents with new, respectable types: Didn't you know that Plato was a mystic, too, as were these physicists? And what these modern materialists say over there is very similar to this nonsense over here (heck, even a Wykeham Professor of Logic at Oxford University, the late Michael Dummet, wrote about the Tarot).

Understandably, I hope that such interpretations of this experiment will be rare (though I do not delude myself into thinking that they will be nonexistent). The purpose of supernormalization is to show hetero- continuities between the ordinary and the extraordinary, to show that something supposedly unearthly is found in plain sight by looking at the earth (and even its most disreputable denizens) with far more attention than it is usually given. In the pairing of Henri and Mina, we see two allied attempts to naturalize spirit and spiritualize matter at work, two inverse, yet covarying ways of rethinking naturalism and spiritualism beyond deflation or inflation (they are, in their different ways, both supernormal). The work of one of them was well- acknowledged at the time and subsequently (Henri's); the other, Mina's, has been lost to contemporary view for a good while, even as its performative, mystical, and artistic approach to spirit and matter has become all the more timely.

Mina Bergson came from a respectable family and had a very famous, and very respectable, brother. She did not lead a respectable life, however. Yet her ideas and practices matched those of her closest relative both in breadth and depth. Possibly even more so— there is still so much more to research and for future scholars to unearth about both the Bergsons and their strange ideas about spirit, matter, and, of course, time— especially the past and memory.

One might even say that Henri gave us the "special theory of the past and memory" while Mina left us the "general theory." Perhaps Henri knew this, too. There is an odd passage near the middle of his 1911 essay on William James's pragmatism that, in retrospect, can be read in the light of much more than its ostensible subject:

> According to James, we bathe in an atmosphere traversed by great spiritual currents. If many of us resist, others allow themselves to be carried along.
> And there are certain souls which open wide to the beneficent breeze. Those are the mystical souls. [. . .] The truth is that James leaned out upon the mystic soul as, on a spring day, we lean out to feel the caress of the breeze on our cheek, or as, at the seaside, we watch the coming and going of sail- boats to know how the wind blows. Souls filled with religious enthusiasm are truly uplifted and carried away: why could they not enable us to experience directly, as in a scientific experiment, this uplifting and exalting force?

The vestiges of Mina's mystic philosophy comprise occult training techniques, Hermetic worldviews, and a spiritual performance art that, set side by side with the more usual tropes of her brother's philosophy (intuition, empirical evidence, deduction, argument), unveil nothing less in comparison. All the same, both the philosopher and the mystic only ever glimpsed something "wider" from each of their vantage points, hers incarnated through forms of dance and ritualized movements, his governed by philosophical codes and experiments. If she did see more than he, though, she undoubtedly suffered more as a result.

* * *

There is a song by The Waterboys that now seems appropriate to mention by way of a final remark. "The Whole of the Moon" may, or may not, have been playing at that house party in March 1990 when I tried to explain the

Bergsonian philosophy of time and memory— or at least Henri's version of it— to my interlocutor. Yet when Mike Scott sings "I was grounded / While you filled the skies / I was dumbfounded by truth / You cut through lies," it seems like he must have been in the room, too. The lyrics continue to resonatec with the story of Mina and Henri, especially when the protagonist describes how "I spoke about wings / You just flew / I wondered, I guessed, and I tried /

You just knew," before ending with the perfectly astral conceit: "I saw the crescent / You saw the whole of the moon." The philosopher- mystic and the mystic- philosopher, the part and the whole. <>

Sri Aurobindo at 150: An Integral Vision of Evolution, Human Unity, and Peace by Debidatta A. Mahapatra [Sophia Studies in Cross-cultural Philosophy of Traditions and Cultures, Springer, ISBN 9783031218071]

This book brings to focus one of the prominent 20th century Indian thinkers, Sri Aurobindo, by providing an overview of his philosophy on life and yoga, and by elucidating his thought in the context of contemporary society. This text is unique in approaching Sri Aurobindo as a problem solver and from a

conflict resolution perspective, the latter being the author's expertise. Sri Aurobindo's contributions such as Ideal of Human Unity, Integral Yoga, Life Divine and his poetic vision as embodied in his epic poem, Savitri, are explored in-depth. The book explores these ideas to seek possible solutions to the current predicaments of human life and society. This monograph attracts not only students and researchers in the fields of philosophy, religion, yoga, political science, international politics, Indian thought, and conflict resolution, but also general interest readers.

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My goal in this book is not to write another biography of the Yogi and philosopher Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950). While examining the ideas of this influential twentieth-century thinker, who turns 150 this year, my aim in this book is to examine how his ideas help us understand problems of our times and

explore pathways for their resolution. In this interdisciplinary study, I draw from the disciplines of politics, philosophy, history, and conflict resolution in the spirit of the integrality of knowledge. Sri Aurobindo's ideas appropriately fit into the category of integral knowledge, and his integral yoga presents a wider picture of life and society, various phases of their evolution towards unity and enduring peace.

Another task I undertake in this book is to contest the argument that Sri Aurobindo's ideas are too abstract, hence not worthy of gainful pursuit. I demonstrate that his ideas such as integral yoga, ideal of human unity, and life divine are not only academic subjects of study but also enabling codes that illuminate our understanding of complex problems of life and call for individual and collective praxis to address those problems in an integral, evolutionary, light. His words "All life is Yoga" present a holistic picture of life and encourage us to reconceptualize individual and collective activities as part of yoga, not as conventionally understood as physical fitness or mental calm, but as active and conscious, all-embracing, enduring praxis towards harmonious and peaceful organization of life and society. The charge of mysticism may make sense if we approach Sri Aurobindo from a pure materialist point of view. His ideas transcend materialism even while accepting it as a component of his integral vision in which "Spirit shall look out through Matter's gaze" and "Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face." I argue in this book that Sri Aurobindo is one of the most optimistic thinkers as, even while acknowledging the seemingly eternal persistence of challenges in individual and collective living, he presents before us a plan of action arising out of his integral vision for a harmonious and peaceful future.

As my goal in this book is to explore Sri Aurobindo's ideas in light of the developments of the twenty-first century, I find such an exercise difficult as there is scarce literature on this subject. There is abundant literature on his life, yoga, and philosophy, but literature focusing on contemporary relevance of his ideas is scarce.

Thinkers like Sri Aurobindo do not belong to the past, to be studied just as a matter of academic interest. There are elements in his ideas that transcend his times and are relevant to the contemporary world. I have, hence, undertaken in this project the task to look into his ideas as if he is one among us, examining the problems and offering solutions to those problems here and now. The questions that guide the main arguments of the book are – How is Sri Aurobindo relevant in the twenty-first century? How is he relevant to a discussion on issues including, but not limited to, political polarization, violence, and interstate conflicts?

My pedagogical location at the intersection of political philosophy, politics, and conflict resolution facilitated this project. As I worked on the intersectionality of these disciplines and drew from my expertise, I found the exercise quite rewarding. My study of Sri Aurobindo and his philosophy for the last two decades and my expertise in international politics and conflict resolution helped me adopt an interdisciplinary approach to bring Sri Aurobindo to reflect on the developments of our times. I conducted field studies in different parts of the world, and in the process learned immensely not only from a policy-making perspective but also from a philosophical perspective. I believe policy making must have a philosophical component and philosophy must have an application component. Philosophy, implying love for wisdom, must not be confined to ivory towers; it must play a role in igniting in individuals love for wisdom and praxis. I argue that this book is not just for coffee-table discussion or classroom assignments; it provides a framework for a reassessment of our thinking and action from an integral perspective. It will be beneficial not only for university professors or doctoral students in the

areas of philosophy, politics, history, and conflict resolution but also for policy makers to reexamine their frameworks and for general readers interested in life, yoga, and philosophy of this crucial thinker.

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Philosopher Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan wrote, Sri Aurobindo "was the greatest intellectual of our age and a major force for the life of the spirit. India will not forget his services to politics and philosophy and the world will remember with gratitude his invaluable work in the realm of philosophy and religion" (quoted in Brown 1968, p. 124). As the world is celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of this 'greatest intellectual of our age,' it would be a fruitful exercise to examine his ideas, how they shaped discourses on yoga and philosophy, and how they could be analyzed profitably for an understanding of the developments in the twenty-first century India and the world. Sri Aurobindo was not an ivory tower philosopher, speculating and theorizing developments in his time, though one could find a significant strain of theory builder in him. Practice and theory converged in his integral vision. The activist in him saw action in Baroda and Calcutta in the last years of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. His retirement from active politics to an almost secluded life in Pondicherry did not see a ceasing of activism, as his numerous correspondences and meetings demonstrated. While highlighting these aspects in the chapters of the book, I attempt to cast a larger canvas of Sri Aurobindo's life and respond to the question – what Sri Aurobindo offers us in this twenty-first century world? How are his ideas relevant to an understanding of the problems of the twenty-first century, and how do they help address those problems? I do not aim to present another biography of the yogi and philosopher or just reproduce the existing narratives about his yoga and philosophy. Though I examine his ideas and actions and reflect on his contributions to philosophy, yoga, politics, international relations, and conflict resolution, my goal is forward looking as I aim to bring to life Sri Aurobindo to address the problems of the contemporary world.

Sri Aurobindo beautifully weaved various perspectives on life and society, which perhaps a few of his contemporaries did. He was raised in England and trained in the Western ways of studying and analyzing phenomena. He used that training to delve deep into Indian spiritual traditions to emerge as a synthesizer of values that often transcended the binaries of the East and the West. French thinker, Romain Rolland, in his letter to Dilip Kumar Roy in 1924, wrote, "Here comes Aurobindo, the completest synthesis that has been realised to this day of the genius of Asia and that of Europe" (Roy 1969, page number not given). Sri Aurobindo quipped to one of his disciples that writing his biography would be superficial as biographies focus on surface events of human life and ignore or fail to grasp the profound significance of life and activities not visible to the naked eye. In a letter to a disciple, he wrote, "I see that you have persisted in giving a biography—is it really necessary or useful? The attempt is bound to be a failure, because neither you nor anyone else knows anything at all of my life; it has not been on the surface for man to see" (The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, hereafter CWSA, vol. 36, 2006, p. 11). While keeping in mind the subtleties of Sri Aurobindo's life and the complexities that a book project must confront while dealing with one of the important figures of the twentieth century, I attempt to revive interest in Sri Aurobindo's life and philosophy. In this direction, I have undertaken twofold goals in this book: analyze Sri Aurobindo's ideas; and explore the relevance of those ideas, mainly how they help us understand our current problems and how they can be studied profitably to address those problems.

The book comprises five chapters including the Introduction. I have outlined the book's main goals and provided an idea about other chapters in this introductory chapter. In the second chapter, I focus on Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution and integral yoga and their various facets while arguing that understanding them is key to understanding Sri Aurobindo's other ideas such as ideal of human unity. I elaborate on the theory of spiritual evolution and compare it with other theories of evolution including biological evolution and mental evolution. I also argue that his theory of evolution is linked with his yoga, and in that context, I elaborate on various elements of integral yoga. I also focus on concepts such as supramental consciousness, supermind, superman, Sachchidananda as an understanding of these concepts is helpful to understanding the whole spectrum of Sri Aurobindo's yoga and philosophy. In this chapter, I also demonstrate that Savitri, the epic poem of Sri Aurobindo, is his master creation, which emerged from his yogic experience. In the next two chapters, I apply the concepts elaborated in the second chapter to reflect on issues such as human unity and conflict resolution. In that sense, while the second chapter is more conceptual, the third and fourth chapters are more practical, as they explore the Aurobindonian perspective to better understand human issues in their multifaceted dimensions. In the third chapter, I explore his concept of 'ideal of human unity.' Besides elaborating on the concept, I examine its relevance in the contemporary world. For example, how national ego is detrimental to international peace, and how nation soul tends to foster international peace. In that context, I examine the developments such as the two World Wars, the League of Nations and its failure, and the establishment of the United Nations. I also attempt to examine the recent global developments by applying the ideas of Sri Aurobindo. In the fourth chapter, I elaborate on the practical aspects of integral yoga and combine them with the literature on conflict resolution. After briefly examining the conflict resolution discipline, I explore in Sri Aurobindo solutions to various problems afflicting human society and the world. I raise the question: if Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga is such an enabling concept with real potency, how does it help to resolve conflicts at the individual, community, state, and international levels? In the fifth chapter, I summarize the main arguments of the book and argue how Sri Aurobindo is relevant in the twenty-first century. Besides summarizing the main arguments made in the earlier chapters, I also examine three case studies – from a small scale to a large scale – in the light of Sri Aurobindo and attempt to offer solutions to those cases in his light. I make the case that we need to reexamine his ideas for the benefit of not only academic disciplines but also the larger human society. I argue that such an exercise is apt, theoretically and practically, on the occasion of Sri Aurobindo's 150th birth anniversary. <>

JUNG ON IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA'S SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

by C. G. Jung , translated by Caitlin Stephens, edited by Martin Liebscher [Lectures Delivered at ETH Zurich, Volume 7: 1939–1940, Philemon Foundation Series, Princeton University Press, 9780691244167]

Jung's lectures on the psychology of Jesuit spiritual practice—unabridged in English for the first time

Between 1933 and 1941, C. G. Jung delivered a series of public lectures at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich. Intended for a general audience, these lectures addressed a broad range of topics, from yoga and meditation to dream analysis and the psychology of alchemy. Here for the first time are Jung's complete lectures on Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, delivered in the winter of 1939–1940.

These illuminating lectures are the culmination of Jung's investigation into traditional forms of meditation and their parallels to his psychotherapeutic method of active imagination. Jung presents Loyola's exercises as the prime example of a Christian practice comparable to yoga and Eastern meditation, and gives a psychological interpretation of the visions depicted in the saint's autobiographical writings. Offering a unique opportunity to encounter the brilliant psychologist as he shares his ideas with the general public, the lectures reflect Jung's increasingly positive engagement with Roman Catholicism, a development that would lead to his fruitful collaborations after the war with eminent Catholic theologians such as Victor White, Bruno de Jésus-Marie, and Hugo Rahner.

Featuring an authoritative introduction by Martin Liebscher along with explanations of Jungian concepts and psychological terminology, this splendid book provides an invaluable window on the evolution of Jung's thought and a vital key to understanding his later work.

Review

"A uniquely original and bold commentary on a classic work of Catholic spirituality. It not only sheds light on C. G. Jung's interest in the foundations of Christianity, but allows one to understand, among other things, the importance of religious experience in his approach. A must-read for those interested in his work, especially the relationship between analytical psychology and religion."—Henryk Machoń, Opole University of Technology

This is not a new edition of the six unpublished volumes of notes in three books from the ETH lectures made in English by Barbara Hannah. The editors used an entirely new source the German shorthand notes of Eduard Sidler. They seem to be more comprehensive then Hannah's notes, and definitely add a lot to her summation. I would say however that Hannah's version seems to possess more of the anima, or the fire of Jung. But I am very glad they added this addition. It concerns firstly a list of important figures precursors to psychology in the world of philosophy. Then goes through the visions of the serous of the Seeress of Prevorst and Helene Smith's visions. The object in recounting these is to show there exists in our psyche a very rich world of introversion of which we are quite unaware. The seeress's visions are particularly extraordinary. They seem to be a real representation of an x-ray of the

inner world. The first volume ends in a very anti-climactic fashion and unexpectedly. Waiting for the next seven volumes is going to be quite an experience. — Craig M. Nelson

2 February 1940
Lecture 12
9 February 1940
Lecture 13
16 February 1940
Lecture 14
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1 March 1940
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Volume 7: Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola (Summer Semester 1939 and Winter Semester 1939/1940; in Addition: Lecture 3, Winter Semester 1940/1941)

The second half of the summer semester 1939 (16 June-7 July; four lectures) and the winter semester 1939/40 (3 November-8 March; sixteen lectures) were dedicated to the Exercitia spiritualia of Ignatius of Loyala, the founder and first general superior of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). As a knight and soldier, Ignatius was injured in the battle of Pamplona (1521), in the aftermath of which he experienced a spiritual conversion. Subsequently he renounced his worldly life and devoted himself to the service of God. In March 1522, the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus appeared to him at the shrine of Montserrat, which led him to search for solitude in a cave near Manresa. There he prayed for seven hours a day and wrote down his experiences for others to follow. This collection of prayers, meditations, and mental exercises built the foundation of the Exercitia spiritualia (1522-24). In this text, Jung saw the equivalent to the meditative practice of the Eastern spiritual tradition. He provides a psychological reading of it, comparing it to the modern Jesuit understanding of theologians such as Erich Przywara.

Jung's considerations on the Exercitia spiritualia follow the lectures on Eastern meditation of the previous year. Nowhere else in his writings is there to be found a similarly intense comparison between oriental and occidental spiritualism. Its approach corresponds to the aim of the annual Eranos conference: namely, to open up a dialogue between the East and the West. Jung's critical remarks about the embrace of Eastern mysticism by modern Europeans and his suggestion to the latter to come back to their own traditions are illuminated through these lectures.

In the winter semester 1940/41, Jung dedicated the third lecture to a summary of his lectures on the Exercitia spiritualia. This summary is included as an addendum to Volume 7.

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With the exception of a few preparatory notes, there is no written text by Jung. The present text has been reconstructed by the editors through several notes by participants of Jung's lectures. Through the use of shorthand, the notes taken by Eduard Sidler, a Swiss engineer, and Rivkah Scharf who later

became a well-known religious scholar, psychotherapist, and collaborator of Jung—provide a fairly accurate first basis for the compilation of the lectures. (The shorthand method used is outdated and had to be transcribed by experts in the field.)

Together with the recently discovered scripts by Otto Karthaus, who made a career as one of the first scientific vocational counselors in Switzerland, Bertha Bleuler, and Lucie Stutz-Meyer, the gymnastics teacher of the Jung family, these notes enable us not only to regain access to the contents of Jung's orally delivered lectures, but also to get a feeling for the fascination of the audience with Jung the orator.

There also exists a set of mimeographed notes in English that have been privately published and circulated in limited numbers. These were edited and translated by an English-speaking group in Zurich around Barbara Hannah and Elizabeth Welsh, and present more of a résumé than an attempt at a verbatim account of the content of the lectures. For the first years, Hannah's edition relied only on the notes by Marie-Jeanne Schmid, Jung's secretary at the time; for the later lectures the script of Rivkah Scharf provided the only source for most of the text. The edition was disseminated in private imprints from 1938 to 1968.

The Hannah edition does deviate from Jung's original spoken text as recorded in the other notes. Hannah and Welsh stated in their "Prefatory Note" that their compilation did "not claim to be a verbatim report or literal translation." Hannah was mainly interested in the creation of a readable and consistent text and did not shy away from adding or omitting passages for that purpose. As her edition was only based on one set of notes she could not correct passages where Schmid or Scharf rendered Jung's text wrongly. But as Hannah had the advantage of talking to Jung in person, when she was not sure about the content of a certain passage, her English compilation is sometimes useful to provide additional information to the readers of our edition.

In contrast to a critical edition, it is not intended to provide the differing variations in a separate critical apparatus. Had we faithfully listed all the minor or major variants in the scripts, the text would have become virtually unreadable and thus would have lost the accessibility that is the hallmark of Jung's presentation. For the most part, however, we can be reasonably certain that the compilation accurately reflects what Jung said, although he may have used different words or formulations. Moreover, in quite a number of key passages it was even possible to reconstruct the verbatim content: for example, when different note takers identified certain passages as direct quotes. Variations often do not add to the content and intelligibility, and often originated in errors or lack of understanding by the participant taking notes. In their compilation, the editors have worked according to the principle that as much information as possible should be extracted from the manuscripts. If there are obvious contradictions that cannot be decided by the editor, or, as might be the case, clear errors on behalf of Jung or the listener, this will be clarified by the editor's annotation.

Of the note takers, Eduard Sidler, whose background was in engineering, had the least understanding of Jungian psychology at the beginning, although naturally he became more familiar with it over time. In any case, he did try to protocol faithfully as much as he could, making his the most detailed notes. Sometimes he could no longer follow, however, or clearly misunderstood what was said. On the other hand, we have Welsh and Hannah's version, which in itself was already a collation and obviously heavily edited, but is (at least for the first semesters) the most consistent manuscript and also contains things that are missing in other notes. Moreover, Welsh and Hannah state that "Prof. Jung himself [. . .] has

been kind enough to help us with certain passages," although we do not know which these are. In addition, over the course of the years, and also for individual lectures, the quality, accuracy, and reliability of the scripts by the different note takers vary, as is only natural. In short, the best we can

do is try to find an approximation to what Jung actually said. In essence, it will always have to be a judgment call how to collate those notes.

It is thus impossible to establish exact editorial principles for each and every situation, such that different editors would inevitably arrive at exactly the same formulations. We have been able only to adhere to some general guidelines, such as "Interfere as little as possible, and as much as necessary," or "Try to establish what the most likely thing was for Jung to have said, on the basis of all the sources available" (including the Collected Works, autobiographical works or interviews, other seminars, interviews, etc.). If two transcripts concur, and the third is different, it is usually safe to go with the first two. In some cases, however, it is clear from the context that the two are wrong, and the third is correct; or if all three of them are unclear, it is sometimes possible to "clean up" the text by having recourse to the literature: for instance, when Jung summarizes Kerner's story of the Seeress of Prevorst. As with all scholarly works of this kind, there is no explicit recipe that can be fully spelled out: one has to rely on one's scholarly judgment.

These difficulties not only concern the establishment of the text of Jung's ETH lectures, but also pertain to notes of his seminars in general, many of which have already appeared in print without addressing this problem. For instance, the introduction to the Dream Analysis seminar mentions the number of people who were involved in preparing the notes, but there is no account of how they worked, or how they established the text (Jung, 1984, pp. x—xi). Some manuscript notes in the library of the Analytical Psychology Club in Los Angeles indicate that the compilation of the notes involved significant "processing by committee." It is interesting in this regard to compare the sentence structure of the Dream Analysis seminar with the 1925 seminar, which was checked by Jung. On 19 October 1925, Jung wrote to Cary Baynes, after checking her notes and acknowledging her literary input, "I faithfully worked through the notes as you will see. I think they are as a whole very accurate. Certain lectures are even fluent, namely those which you could not stop your libido from flowing in" (Cary Baynes papers, contemporary medical archives, Wellcome Library, London).

Our specific situation seems to be a "luxury" problem, as it were, because we have several transcripts, which was often not the case in other seminars. We also have the disadvantage, however, of no longer being able to ask Jung himself, as for instance Cary Baynes, Barbara Hannah, Marie-Jeanne Schmid, or Mary Foote could do. We can only work as best we can, and caution the reader that there is no guarantee that this is "verbatim Jung," although we have tried to come as close as possible to what he actually said. <>

Don't Forget to Live: Goethe and the Tradition of Spiritual Exercises by Pierre Hadot, Foreword by Arnold I. Davidson and Daniele Lorenzini Translated by Michael Chase [The France Chicago Collection, University of Chicago Press, 9780226497167]

The esteemed French philosopher Pierre Hadot's final work, now available in English.

In his final book, renowned philosopher Pierre Hadot explores Goethe's relationship with ancient spiritual exercises—transformative acts of intellect, imagination, or will. Goethe sought both an intense experience of the present moment as well as a kind of cosmic consciousness, both of which are rooted in ancient philosophical practices. These practices shaped Goethe's audacious contrast to the traditional maxim memento mori (Don't forget that you will die) with the aim of transforming our ordinary consciousness. Ultimately, Hadot reveals how Goethe cultivated a deep love for life that brings to the forefront a new maxim: Don't forget to live.

Review

"To read Pierre Hadot sparks enormous joy." — *Charlie Hebdo, on the French edition*

"No one is more qualified to describe this spiritual line of descent than Pierre Hadot" — *Le Figaro, on the French edition*

"A very beautiful book that celebrates action, the duty to serve, and joy." — *Valeurs Actuelles, on the French edition*

"This deeply personal work, by one of the greatest of French classical philosophers, featuring one of his major inspirations, the great German author and philosopher Goethe, excellently translated by Michael Chase, might just change your life. It is the culmination of Hadot's long-term concern with 'philosophy as a way of life,' and constitutes a significant expansion and deepening of this theme." -- John Dillon, Trinity College Dublin

"Renowned for reviving the classical idea of philosophy as an art of living, Pierre Hadot combines his expertise in Greco-Roman thought with an extensive study of Goethe to produce a fascinating book, rich in both erudition and relevance for the conduct of life—reinterpreting, with compelling nuance and philosophical sophistication, the deeper, more mindful meaning of the Horatian maxim *carpe diem*. What you learn from this book can change your life." -- Richard Shusterman, Florida Atlantic University

CONTENTS

The present work is a translation of N'oublie pas de vivre: Goethe et la tradition des exercices spirituels, the last published monograph by Pierre Hadot, who died two years after its publication in 2008.

In many ways, it is one of Hadot's most personal works. As he looks back after eighty years of life, well aware of his approaching death, he turns to one of the guiding spirits who had accompanied him throughout his life: Goethe. Although he had published occasional short pieces in which Goethe had played a key role, this is the first and only monograph he devoted to the great German polymath.

The reader quickly notes the extent to which a lifetime of reading Goethe had rendered Hadot intimately familiar with every aspect of his wide-ranging work. For although Hadot's main area of speciality was, of course, the history of Greek and Latin philosophy, he stood out from most of his French contemporaries by his thorough familiarity with German literature: thus, he published articles on Kant and Nietzsche and initially thought of writing a doctoral dissertation on Rilke and Heidegger. Throughout his life, however, Goethe, several editions of whose complete works lined the bookshelves of the home Hadot shared with his German-born wife, Ilsetraut, in Limours, France, held a special place

in his heart. This was especially true of the older Goethe, as he appears especially in the Conversations with Eckermann, that work, consisting of interviews with Goethe over the last nine years of his life, which Nietzsche famously called "the best German book there is." As he grew older and faced the prospect of death, Hadot increasingly found strength and hope in Goethe's calm acceptance of his own personal mortality and, above all, in his unabated love of life.

To a certain extent, Goethe's intellectual development shows some parallels to Hadot's own. After his youthful Sturm and Drang period, with its glorification of the tempestuous, individualistic, Romantic genius, and trying his hand at almost every literary genre and area of learning, Goethe gradually came to see the value and necessity of dedicating oneself to a life of service to others. In a similar way, Hadot, who had begun by working on the mystical philosophy of Plotinus and the abstruse theology and metaphysics of Marius Victorinus and Porphyry of Tyre, gradually turned toward the study of those Hellenistic philosophers, such as the later Stoics Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, who focused on more practical questions, such as how we should live our lives. Thanks in part to the influence of his beloved wife, Ilsetraut, Hadot came to see philosophy more and more as a way of life, the purpose and justification of which was to inspire as broad a circle of readers as possible to transform themselves, with a view to leading a flourishing life that was rich, full, and authentic. The means to this goal, Hadot believed, was the practice of what he famously called "spiritual exercises," techniques of self-transformation which, he believed, constituted the essence of philosophy and could still, when suitably modified, do so today. Thus, it seems perfectly appropriate that, near the end of his life, he should return to the study of the practice of spiritual exercises in one of his most beloved authors, Goethe. He no doubt believed that Goethe served as a perfect exemplar of the results to which the lifelong, assiduous practice of such exercises could lead: a rich, full, active, and productive life lived with full appreciation of the infinite value of every moment, combined with an unconditional acceptance of even the seemingly difficult and tragic aspects of human existence.

As compared with my previous translations of Hadot's books, the present work presented new challenges, especially when it came to translating Goethe. Following my previous practice, I first produced literal English translations of Hadot's French versions of Goethe's texts, and then compared them with the original German. The results were often quite different from the French translations used by Hadot, some of which were quite old and sometimes departed considerably from what I take to have been the meaning of Goethe's original texts. In the past, when such divergences occurred, I would get together with Pierre Hadot, and the two of us would reach compromise solutions. Sadly, this was no longer an option, but I have sought a middle ground between faithfulness to the original German and faithfulness to Hadot's interpretation of Goethe's words and thought. The result may not always be aesthetically pleasing—I am no poet and have made no attempt to reproduce the rhymes and rhythms of Goethe's incomparable verse. Yet I hope Pierre Hadot himself would not have considered the result a betrayal. <>

PLATONIC LOVE FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE RENAISSANCE edited by Carl Séan O'Brien and John Dillon [Cambridge University Press, 9781108423229]

Surveys this influential concept from antiquity through medieval theological debates to Renaissance Neoplatonism and etiquette guides.

Platonic love is a concept that has profoundly shaped Western literature, philosophy and intellectual history for centuries. First developed in the Symposium and the Phaedrus, it was taken up by subsequent thinkers in antiquity, entered the theological debates of the Middle Ages, and played a key role in the reception of Neoplatonism and the etiquette of romantic relationships during the Italian Renaissance. In this wide-ranging reference work, a leading team of international specialists examines the Platonic distinction between higher and lower forms of eros, the role of the higher form in the ascent of the soul and the concept of Beauty. They also treat the possibilities for friendship and interpersonal love in a Platonic framework, as well as the relationship between love, rhetoric and wisdom. Subsequent developments are explored in Plutarch, Plotinus, Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius, Eriugena, Aquinas, Ficino, della Mirandola, Castiglione and the contra amorem tradition.

Love in Plato and its Reception in Antiquity: The Transcendental Aspect of Love

The dominant theme of the collection, though, is the consideration of love from a metaphysical aspect; the extent to which love can enable us to encounter the transcendental and serves our aspirations to do so. While Anders Nygren in Agape and Eros tried to polarize both, unfavourably contrasting Platonic eras with the ultimate selflessness of Christian agape, the narrative of Platonic love's development, as illustrated by this collection, demonstrates the error of such a polarization and the extent to which Platonic love forms such a perennial undercurrent to Christian thought. This transcendental aspect forms a vital through-line from pagan antiquity to its Christianization in late antiquity by Augustine and via the Middle Ages to the Italian Renaissance. Several aspects of Platonic love are examined against the background of this transcendental aspect. In significant ways those contributions treating the etiquette of conducting a Platonic relationship in antiquity are echoed by the later chapters grappling with the manner of conducting similar relationships at the Renaissance princely courts.

Diotima's description in the Symposium of the process of ascent from the love of an individual to a series of higher objects, on the way to the Beautiful Itself, raises an important question about the nature of Platonic love and one that has bothered a number of readers down the ages: what is in it for the beloved, who seems to be exploited as merely a means to this ascent? Plato thematizes this issue in the Lysis in his examination of whether Lysis' parents actually love him or only appreciate him in so far as he is useful and two contributions grapple with this problem. Carl O'Brien (`The Selfishness of Platonic Love?') discusses the issue of whether the ascent inherent in Platonic love, involving seeing the beauty of the beloved as the same as the beauty of all beautiful bodies, would seem to run counter to our fundamental understanding of love which is for a specific individual. Plato had surely no intention of downgrading the status of the love of individuals, but rather assumed that this would be enhanced by the addition of 'higher', or more abstract, objects of love. The extent to which the Platonic lover can orient the beloved towards these 'higher' objects is treated by Marina McCoy (love and Rhetoric as Types of Psychagogia'), who gives us a detailed analysis of Socratic eros in the Phaedrus, in the process linking the earlier and later parts of the dialogue together, in a badly needed way, by showing how Socrates' teaching on rhetoric in the second half is also motivated by eros.

Towards the end of her essay, she makes the following important point:

> Both philosophy and rhetoric are at work in Socratic psychagogia. Indeed, it would be a mistake to identify the philosophical as rhetoric-free or only concerned with logical or dialectical divisions. Socrates treats the pursuit of truth itself as erotic, that is, as a longing for truth and not only an intellectual capacity to know. Because philosophy concerns a desire for the forms, we cannot separate philosophy as instructive while rhetoric attends to persuasion by means of desire. Instead, Socrates' philosophical soul-leading is integrative, seeking to order and harmonize the whole of Phaedrus' soul.'

This essay, like O'Brien's contribution which precedes it, treats the etiquette of Platonic relationships, which forms a particularly significant line running through the volume, focusing as it does on the pedagogical aspect and drawing a distinction between rhetoric, which leads the soul where it wishes to go, and eros, which leads the soul towards truth.

Just as McCoy examines the parallels (and differences) between eros and rhetoric, so too Elizabeth S. Belfiore (Plato on the Love of Wisdom') focuses on the significance of the actual term philosophia, meaning as it does 'love of wisdom' and its erotic dimension. She examines the nature of Platonic love

across a broader canvas by tracing Socrates' own linking of eros with philosophical enquiry in a number of key dialogues (Apology, Republic, Alcibiades I, alongside the Symposium itself), culminating in his assertion, just before drinking the hemlock in the Phaedo, that, despite what this lifelong practice of his has led to, he would not have it any other way. Despite the transcendental aspect of love, which comes across very clearly in McCoy's and Belfiore's treatments, Plato was not unaware of the attractions of interpersonal love and presents philosophy as an enterprise shared by both lover and beloved; this Platonic structuring of relationships would later be translated to a Christian heteroerotic context during the Renaissance.

Moving on from Plato himself, we turn first to the most interesting and prolific figure from among the Platonists of the so-called 'Middle-Platonic' period, Plutarch of Chaeronea. Frederick E. Brenk surveys Plutarch's three principal treatments of the theme of love (both eros and philia), Advice to a Bride and Groom, On Isis and Osiris and the Dialogue on Love, the last of which is much the most extensive. Brenk emphasizes Plutarch's comprehensive treatment of heterosexual, married love, as well as homosexual or pederastic love, which makes him of special interest to Renaissance theorists. In re-examining the manner in which the homoerotic aspect is reconceived in heterosexual terms, Brenk's treatment marks the beginning of another significant strand which regularly resurfaces in the development of Platonic love (particularly during the Renaissance), even if it always remains significantly overshadowed by the transcendent dimension.

This transcendent dimension is once again addressed by Dominic J. O'Meara's treatment of the greatest Platonist philosopher of later antiquity, Plotinus, in 'Love in Plotinus' Thought', in which he surveys different aspects of eros in Plotinus' philosophy, starting from his view of the human experience of love, but rising then to a consideration also of the cosmic dimensions of eros, and especially the love of the soul for both the realm of Intellect and even that of the One/Good, while the remarkable concept of the 'love' of the One/Good for itself is also explored. Like Belfiore's contribution, O'Meara's also highlights the centrality of the human experience of love to the life of philosophy, outlining the echoes of Plato's Symposium and Phaedrus in Plotinus' oeuvre.

Next, by way of rounding off the antique (and late antique) interpretation of Platonic Love, we return to the strand, first picked up by Brenk, of presenting the originally homoerotic Platonic relationship in heterosexual terms. John Dillon devotes an essay to enquiring whether we can recover at least the outlines of a Platonist ars amatoria, or set of prescriptions for successful loving, in a high-minded, Platonic mode, to be derived from such dialogues as Lysis, Symposium, Phaedrus, and, not least, Alcibiades I, based on Socrates' claim, at the end of the Phaedrus, that he possessed an erotike tekhnë. Such a tekhnë would have theorëmata, and these were listed as (I) selecting a suitable love-object, or axierastos; (2) commending oneself to him and (3) guiding him to moral and intellectual self-improvement. Dillon focuses on the exposition of this in the Didaskalikos of the second-century CE Platonist Alcinous, but speculates that theorizing on this topic may go back as far as Polemon, in the Old Academy.

Moving on to the interface between antiquity and the Middle Ages, Jan-Ivar Linden addresses the topic of love and desire in the works of St Augustine, through whom much of Platonist philosophy was incorporated into a Christian religious context. The emphasis in Augustine is very much on the love of God, rather than on varieties of human love, but here too he is able to draw fruitfully on the Platonic tradition (mediated via Plotinus and Porphyry). Linden demonstrates that the Platonic understanding of

philosophy as love of wisdom, as we find it outlined by Belfiore, becomes Christianized by Augustine, and that the true sense of love of wisdom is understood by Augustine as love of God.

Love and Metaphysics during the Middle Ages

For all its significance throughout antiquity and despite the extent to which the concept of Platonic love can be regarded as programmatic for the theological debates of the Middle Ages, it played only a relatively limited role in the medieval period after Aquinas. That the Symposium and Phaedrus were unknown in the Latin West is largely responsible for this, just as their significance in Italian (and French) Renaissance thought is closely tied to Marsilio Ficino's Latin translation, which rendered them accessible once again. During the medieval period, Platonic love becomes particularly significant to the Greek Christian tradition in the person of the remarkable figure of (pseudo-)Dionysius the Areopagite, who has creatively appropriated the Platonist tradition of the fifth-century CE Athenian School, and specifically Proclus, to expound the doctrines of Christianity. Andrew Louth focuses on Dionysius' adoption of the Platonist position that love is a human response to beauty, beauty being understood less in terms of symmetry and more in terms of transparency to higher realities. There is much of Plotinus here, of course, as well as Plato himself, but that is what one would expect. Dionysius also, however, places much emphasis on God's love for his creation, as one would expect from a thinker in the Christian tradition.

John Scotus Eriugena's concept of love, as outlined in his Periphyseon, rests upon a Christian and Neoplatonic admixture, heavily influenced by (pseudo-)Dionysius, and forms the bedrock of his metaphysics. Max Rohstock examines two interpretations of love in Eriugena: as a genitivus subiectivus (i.e. the love that belongs to God) and as a genitivus obiectivus (i.e. the Platonic understanding of love as a striving to God). Eriugena's concept of love is intrinsically bound to his views on the (in)comprehensibility of God, which for Eriugena is only possible by means of negation. Rohstock demonstrates that God's negative self-referentiality is divine love. For Eriugena, love is not only a means of ascent, but divine immanent love in us allows us to turn inwards and therefore makes our thinking possible.

Several disparate strands combine with the Bible to influence Thomas Aquinas' concept of love: Aristotle, Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, and through these, Plato, Plotinus and Proclus. Thomas perceives a separation between two types of love he posits — natural love and intellectual love — in a manner reminiscent of Plato's higher and lower forms of love. Thomas' doctrine of charity exhibits another Platonic aspect: the love of higher entities for lower ones (providential love). Kevin J. Flannery S.J. also examines the Christian aspect of Thomist providential love, along with Thomas' understanding of delectatio (pleasure/delight) and its relationship to the Good, although Thomas reacts to Plato via the prism of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics. Thomas' understanding of Plato is also motivated by his understanding of the concept of charity. Just as Thomas distinguishes human delight and goodness from the essence of delight and the essence of goodness, he also distinguishes human charity from divine charity (i.e. the Holy Spirit) in contrast to contrary formulations in Augustine and Dionysius.

Platonic Love in the Renaissance

The work of Georgios Gemistos Plethon and Cardinal Basil Bessarion brought Platonism, and its concept of love, back to the forefront in the Latin West. Yet Platonic love during the Renaissance is inextricably linked with the name of Ficino. The Renaissance section commences with three contributions which examine the transcendental aspect of Platonic love, illustrated both by Ficino's own

writings and the response to them, and by three further contributions which focus on the more practical aspects of conducting a Platonic relationship (again revealing the influence of Ficino), thereby picking up this strand already identified in antiquity by the contributions of O'Brien, Brenk and Dillon (although here too the transcendental or aspirational aspect is also at play). Paul Richard Blum examines Ficino's significance as a commentator of the Symposium and Phaedrus and on Plotinus and Dionysius the Areopagite. It is Ficino who most characterizes our understanding of Platonic and Socratic love (amor platonicus et socraticus).

[Quite possibly the earliest mention of 'Platonic love' is in fact Ficino's reference to the 'purity (or chastity) of Platonic and Socratic love' (amoris platonici et socratici castigarem; Ficino, In Phaedrum 2. I.2). Ficino's next reference a couple of sentences later (amorais socratica pudicitiam; In Phaedrum 2. 1.3) mentions the 'virtue of Socratic love' only. These references in the Phaedrus commentary probably predate the references to Platonic love in Ficino's De amore: although Ficino mentions both the Platonic Theology (completed 1474) and De amore (completed 1469, published 1484) in his Phaedrus commentary, Allen 2008, xxv makes a convincing argument for regarding these (three) mentions of later works to be subsequent insertions (probably in the 148os) and for dating Ficino's Phaedrus commentary to the period from April 1466 to November 1468, when Ficino produced his Latin translation of the Phaedrus dialogue.]

Although the Renaissance transformation of the Lysis informed the notion of 'Platonic friendship', as outlined by Schachter, Ficino himself was opposed to a separation between love and friendship. The Symposium's Aristophanic myth is reinterpreted by Ficino in terms of a struggle to regain the divine light; a reinterpretation that would itself stimulate a further reaction in the French Renaissance as subsequently illustrated by Schachter. Ficino justifies love for earthly things, provided that it is exercised with moderation, although love for the divine should be infinite. Blum demonstrates the manner in which Ficino transforms the process of living (Platonically) into an act of Christian worship, which is simultaneously compatible with his understanding of Plotinian metaphysics.

The relationship between love and beauty was significant for Plato's Renaissance disciples, just as it has been for the Master himself. Maryanne Cline Horowitz compares Ficino's speculations on beauty in De amore with those of Leone Ebreo (Judah Abravenel), as outlined in his Dialoghi d'amore. In contrast to the homoerotic nature of love in Ficino, Leone's dialogue is conducted between a male teacher (Philo) and a female student (Sophia). As is typical of the Renaissance thinkers, Leone reinterprets the Symposium's Aristophanic myth, and also quite typically focuses only on the androgyne, rather than the other Kugelmenschen. In his case, this may be an allusion to the Talmudic tradition of Adam as a hermaphrodite (before Eve's separation); Horowitz demonstrates here the malleability of the Symposium, which Leone brings into dialogue with the Hebraic tradition, just as Ficino Christianizes it. Horowitz examines the various influences upon Ficino's doctrine of beauty: Plotinus, Proclus and Alberti. Both Ficino and Leone present beauty as spiritual and ultimately incorporeal. The connection we repeatedly find in Platonic sources between the Beautiful and the Good is found in the Renaissance thinkers in terms of a connection between external female beauty and internal virtue.

The response to Ficino's commentary within Florentine circles is treated in Dillon's analysis of Pico della Mirandola's commentary on a poem by Girolamo Benivieni. Pico's commentary demonstrates the importance of the Neoplatonic tradition for the Florentines, drawing both on Plotinus' treatment of eros (Enn. III 5) and on Hermeias' Commentary on Plato's Phaedrus.4 The cosmic dimension is clearly at

play here, since Pico allocates the first book to outlining Platonic cosmology to the degree necessary for understanding the theory of love reflected by Benivieni's poem. Ficino comes under fire from Pico for an interpretation that does well enough in traditional Christian terms, but which is not Neoplatonic enough for his tastes. Since love, for a Platonist, implies deficiency, God does not love his creatures according to our understanding of the term. (That the first principle has no need of the things which come after it, but that they strive towards it, is a characteristic of Neoplatonism.) Pico is not in dispute with Ficino as regards the different levels of love; both postulate three forms (heavenly, human and bestial), instead of the higher and lower form which we find in Pausanias` speech. In the light of the subsequent contributions on the relationship between Platonic theorizing and Renaissance praxis, one might note that Pico does not seem to have been influenced by his own attack on bestial love, given his amorous adventures with the wife of Lorenzo de' Medici's cousin six months before. This incident almost cost him his life, but as Dillon sagely reminds us, he was only twenty-three at the time.

The final three chapters in the volume leave the realm of philosophy, narrowly understood, and by examining the influence of Platonic love on Renaissance Italian and French discussions of etiquette, illustrate the significance of this concept upon both literature and social history. W. R Albury's contribution focuses on the contra amorem tradition — a corpus of writings in a range of genres which present love as a disease, concentrating on the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Albury considers the transformation of Platonic love within the framework of heteroerotic relationships (rather than in Athenian homoerotic terms) against the background of the higher social status of elite women in Renaissance Italy compared to classical Athens. Albury compares Bartolomeo Sacci's De Amore and Giovanni Battista Fregosa's Anteros to illustrate the interplay between the contra amorem tradition and Ficino's treatment of Platonic love. Platina's distinction between honourable and dishonourable loveclearly demonstrates a typical characteristic of Platonic love. The Platonic connection between rhetoric and love is also apparent in Platina's diatribe against women, intended as an efficacious means of treating the lovesickness of his interlocutor, Lodovico. By contrast, the goal of Platonic love as an ascent to the divine is missing in Fregosa's Anteros. Although the suffering lover can devote himself to prayer, a further recommendation is that he devote himself to as many women as possible, which undermines the importance of the transcendent dimension. Instead, the image of the beloved becomes ingrained in the lover's imagination as a phantasm. Fregosa's Anteros criticizes typical aspects of the Ficinian presentation of Platonic love (such as the role of beauty), yet even the positive reception of Platonic love to be found in Castiglione's Courtier can be directly traced to Anteros, as Albury demonstrates.

Reinier Leushuis connects the aspects of philosophy and amorous praxis in his examination of Pietro Bembo's speech on Platonic love in Castiglione's Courtier. The classic Platonic element of an ascent to the divine is present, alongside a more practical attempt at amorous permissiveness more suited to the reality of courtly life, demonstrated by the elevation of the act of kissing to the status of a spiritual act. (The motivation here recalls perhaps the self-serving speech of Pausanias in the Symposium, but Bembo presents the kiss as pivotal in the ascent to the divine.) The old would seem to have a greater capacity to love Platonically since their enjoyment of beauty can be more thoroughly regulated by reason than that of the young. The interlocutor Gasparo's comments on the fury of sensual love are invoked by Leushuis to demonstrate Castiglione's awareness of that great countercurrent to Platonic love, the contra amorem tradition.

We end with Marc D. Schachter's treatment of the influence of both Ficino's Lysis commentary and his De amore on Renaissance discussions of friendship. Both the Platonic distinction between higher and lower love are found in Ficino' s claim that friends should not be selected due to their bodily appearance, but rather due to the beauty of their souls. A pedagogical orientation is found in Ficino's understanding that friendship is born from the desire to teach and to learn. Schachter moves beyond the Italian Renaissance to consider Héroët's adaptation of the Aristophanic myth in the Symposium, The Androgyne of Plato, which both responds to the Ficinian view of Platonic love, as outlined in De amore, as well as his presentation of this type of love/friendship within a heteroerotic context. Schachter turns to Des Périers' French translation of the Lysis (Le Discours de la queste d'amytie), pointing to the transformation of Platonic love in theintellectual circle surrounding Marguerite de Navarre. These texts all contain the core Platonic elements of a spiritual ascent and therefore contrast sharply with Montaigne's 'Of Friendship' (in the Essays), which Views the transcendent dimension in its understanding of friendship as an earthly attachment.

Platonic love has never lost its fascination as a subject of study for classicists and ancient philosophers, for those concerned with the theological and metaphysical speculations of the Middle Ages and for scholars of the Renaissance. The essays in this volume also demonstrate the vast thematic richness of the Platonic concept of love: from an important framework underpinning theory regarding love of God and the possibility of ascent to the divine to an overarching current informing more dogmatic texts about appropriate sexual and social relations. Platonic love is of relevance for the disciplines of classics, philosophy, literature, theology, History of ideas and gender studies. It is to be regretted that these various periods, disciplines and multifaceted themes are not brought into dialogue with each other to a greater extent. It is our hope that this volume may illustrate how fruitful such a dialogue can be. <>

The Closed Book: How the Rabbis Taught the Jews (Not) to Read the Bible by Rebecca Scharbach Wollenberg [Princeton University Press, 9780691243290]

A groundbreaking reinterpretation of early Judaism, during the millennium before the study of the Bible took center stage

Early Judaism is often described as the religion of the book par excellence—a movement built around the study of the Bible and steeped in a culture of sacred bookishness that evolved from an unrelenting focus on a canonical text. But in The Closed Book, Rebecca Scharbach Wollenberg argues that Jews didn't truly embrace the biblical text until nearly a thousand years after the Bible was first canonized. She tells the story of the intervening centuries during which even rabbis seldom opened a Bible and many rabbinic authorities remained deeply ambivalent about the biblical text as a source of sacred knowledge.

Wollenberg shows that, in place of the biblical text, early Jewish thinkers embraced a form of biblical revelation that has now largely disappeared from practice. Somewhere between the fixed transcripts of the biblical Written Torah and the fluid traditions of the rabbinic Oral Torah, a third category of revelation was imagined by these rabbinic thinkers. In this "third Torah," memorized spoken formulas of the biblical tradition came to be envisioned as a distinct version of the biblical revelation. And it was

believed that this living tradition of recitation passed down by human mouths, unbound by the limitations of written text, provided a fuller and more authentic witness to the scriptural revelation at Sinai. In this way, early rabbinic authorities were able to leverage the idea of biblical revelation while quarantining the biblical text itself from communal life.

The result is a revealing reinterpretation of "the people of the book" before they became people of the book.

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A Brief Outline of the Project

This book is divided into two parts. The chapters that make up part I argue that, rather than valorizing the Pentateuch and its prophetic echoes as perfect transcripts of the divine will, many early rabbinic practitioners experienced the Bible as a problem. In the first chapter, "A Makeshift Scripture," the reader

is asked to reconsider the tenor of early rabbinic comments about the writtenness of scripture. The traditions analyzed in chapter 1 represent a stream of rabbinic thought in which the biblical text is theorized not as a perfect record of divine knowledge but as a treacherously limited and changeable vessel for preserving the divine will. The chapter begins by analyzing early rabbinic traditions about Ezra the Scribe and other scribal heroes who narrowly saved the biblical text from oblivion at repeated junctures in the history of Israel—even, at times, reconstructing the lost text from memory. In these narratives, the vulnerable material nature of each instantiation of the Bible text has rendered the biblical tradition susceptible to repeated erosion, loss, and change. The chapter continues by investigating early rabbinic traditions that contrast the first tablets of the law destroyed by Moses with the second tablets of the law ultimately bequeathed to the people of Israel. These two tablet traditions are treated as a form of narrative theorizing about the nature of written text and its limits as a vehicle for divine revelation. In such stories, the first (lost) tablets of the law come to represent the impossibility of authentically capturing the divine will in a material written text. While the second (received) tablets of the law become a locus for reflection on the inherently brittle and imperfect nature of the written revelation that was bequeathed to history.

In the second chapter, "A Book That Kills," the reader is asked to question the widespread presupposition that rabbinic practitioners embraced the biblical text as "a tree of life to all who grasp it" (Prow 3:18). In the early rabbinic traditions collected in chapter 2, the biblical text is imagined as a mortally dangerous artifact that can leave death and destruction in its wake. Unlike the first chapter, chapter 2 is not organized thematically but is instead divided into a rough chronology to highlight distinct developmental stages in rabbinic thinking about the perils of biblical texts and its affordances. The chapter opens by analyzing tannaitic traditions in which the mortal dangers of the biblical text emerge when it is read by minim (sectarians, heretics, or early Jesus followers). These traditions often use images of an adulterous wife to capture a notion that the biblical text was hazardous because the lures of its lyrical beauty and spiritual pleasures remained intact even as the text was corrupted and put into the service of the enemies of Israel—transforming the biblical text into a Trojan horse for heresy and spiritual poison. Later Palestinian sources transfigure the motif of textual promiscuity so that the danger posed by the biblical text lies not in its potential to be shared between communities but instead in the way the written text makes its unbounded spiritual forces available to anyone who approaches it. In these early amoraic sources, the tannaitic triangulation between biblical textuality, heresy, and physical death was now applied to actors within Israel. As a hypostasized font of divine power, the biblical text portrayed in these narratives produces a proliferation of uncontrollable spiritual modes, many of them deadly. In later Babylonian traditions, the imagery that emerged in previous traditions is further concretized and expanded until simple proximity with the biblical text can wipe out both individuals and populations without any transparent spiritual mechanism at work. In such traditions, the very existence of a material written revelation had become a source of a multiform and inchoate terror.'

Chapter 3, "Neglect of Text," argues that the dangers attributed to the biblical text in these mythologizing narratives were also reflected in more quotidian practical measures that restricted use of the biblical text as a source of religious information in many late antique rabbinic circles. Adopting a more expansive and nuanced definition of restriction and censorship, chapter 3 explores different modes through which late antique rabbinic authorities sidelined and restricted the written text of the Hebrew Bible as a source of communal information. The chapter opens by analyzing how practices of inaccurate citation both reflected and cultivated neglect of the written text of the Hebrew Bible by trivializing textual engagement as a potential source of knowledge. The chapter then looks at how diverse rabbinic injunctions deterred practitioners from deriving information directly from the written text of the Bible by discouraging informational reading in general, by placing restrictions on reading the Bible at certain times and on certain days, and by proscribing the circulation of vernacular copies of biblical texts. The third chapter thus completes part I of the book, which explores different ways in which early rabbinic thinkers approached the biblical text as a problem.

Part 2 asks how a community so deeply ambivalent about the biblical text nevertheless elevated the Hebrew Bible as a central pillar of communal thought. The chapters in the second half of the book argue that this apparent paradox was possible because early rabbinic practitioners approached the practices of reading and engaging with written text very differently from modem informational readers. It argues that the memorization-heavy reading practices described in early rabbinic literature had already rendered the written text of the Hebrew Bible a secondary, even superfluous, witness to the biblical tradition in daily practice. So much so, in fact, that early rabbinic thinkers came to think of these recited oral formulas of the biblical traditions as a distinct revelation in their own right. Until Spoken Scripture came to be theorized as a third type of Torah that flourished in the liminal space between the consonantal

transcripts of the Written Torah and the emerging rabbinic traditions of the Oral Torah—a more authentic echo of the scriptural revelation at Sinai than could be contained in a scroll's limited parchment.

Chapter 4, "Rabbinic Practices of (Bible) Reading," demonstrates that common early rabbinic modes of Bible reading bypassed the written text as a source of information—treating written words as nothing more than a ritual corollary to spoken language, in whose spoken formulas true meaning and communication were thought to reside. The chapter opens by exploring a widespread early rabbinic commitment to memorized ritual recitation as the primary mode of engaging with biblical text and argues that these practices of ritual reading served to marginalize written texts of the Hebrew Bible as a source of cultural transmission and knowledge. Since this mode of early rabbinic liturgical reading was rooted in recitation formulas passed directly from teacher to student and did not derive meaning directly from written words, both transmission and meaning in this reading practice were thought to reside primarily in the spoken words. The rest of the chapter seeks to illuminate this conceptual inversion of text and meaning by looking at early rabbinic literacy pedagogies as both representative and formative of a reading practice that treated written texts as secondary—and often temporary—props in the transmission of recited formulas from teacher to student.

Chapter 5, "The Third Torah," argues that this bifurcation of the biblical tradition into oral and written iterations was not merely an incidental development in rabbinic practice but was theorized by many early rabbinic thinkers as reflecting a more fundamental bifurcation of the scriptural revelation at Sinai into two distinct historical echoes: a limited consonantal transcript preserved in the biblical text that was bequeathed to history and a more authentic spoken iteration of the biblical revelation transmitted through the living recitation of the tradition by human mouths. These traditions characterized the memorized spoken formulas of the biblical tradition as a discrete, qualitatively different, and ultimately superior witness to the biblical revelation—a distinct third form of Torah preserved at the interstices between the Oral and Written Torah. Chapter 5 opens by exploring how early rabbinic thinkers could conceive of two largely parallel formulas of the biblical tradition as distinct forms of revelation. This section first explores early rabbinic traditions in which the small divergences that foreshadowed the Masoretic qere and ketiv ("read thus, though it is written thus" traditions) were taken as signs of deeper metaphysical divergences between the spoken formulas of the biblical tradition and the consonantal transcript. The discussion then moves on to consider Babylonian rabbinic traditions in which mikra (the spoken formulas of the biblical tradition) and masoret (the written transcript of the biblical tradition) were imagined as distinct revelatory works, configured in a hierarchy of authenticity in which the spoken version of the biblical tradition was embraced as the primary witnesses to the biblical revelation. The chapter then examines in more detail the ways in which these memorized oral formulas of the biblical tradition were envisioned as a qualitatively superior echo of the biblical revelation that passed down almost material traces of a living revelatory divine speech through the corporeal mechanisms of breath, scent, and taste. The chapter closes by tracing traditions in which this third Torah of Spoken Scripture was imagined as the survival of its own distinct moment of biblical revelation: the first, more authentic, biblical revelation that was temporarily inscribed on the first tablets of the law and then released into its natural form as speech and sound with the smashing of the tablets.

Chapter 6, "The Closed Book," asks how practitioners imagined the status and character of the written consonantal transcript passed down on parchment scrolls once they no longer functioned as

communicative witnesses to the biblical revelation. While many researchers have suggested that Torah scrolls functioned primarily as ritual objects, this chapter argues that we should go further and take seriously the many early rabbinic traditions in which the Torah scroll was envisioned as a form of corporeal avatar—an almost-living biological body that could act as an intermediary between the divine and the human. The chapter opens by analyzing the ways early rabbinic traditions treat the Torah scroll like the human body, as an entity that manifests sacred powers most strongly when it is closed, covered, and whole—so that the scroll's all-too-material textual facets are exposed to view only during the carefully regulated moments of intimacy allowed for liturgical recitation-reading. The chapter then explores the very biological bodily imagery utilized in traditions that imagine the Torah scroll being touched, moved, or physically manipulated in liturgical contexts—particularly in rituals in which the Torah scroll is treated as a member of the human community. The chapter closes by considering how the Torah scroll came to be imagined as a personified avatar of sacrality—a conduit between heaven and earth—in the absence of a sacrificial priesthood acting within the Temple cult. The chapters that make up the second part of the book thus argue that early rabbinic authorities were able to maintain the Pentateuch's central status in rabbinic thought and practice while retreating from the biblical text as a communicative document because the biblical text had come to be treated not as a written communication so much as a personification of revelation that housed a living recited soul within a powerful (if dangerous) parchment body.

The concluding chapter of the monograph asks how this portrait of the early rabbinic relationship with biblical text changes our perception of subsequent developments in the Jewish relationship with Bible. Contemporary Jewish approaches to the Bible are deeply rooted in the medieval tradition of systematic biblical commentary. Yet it has proven challenging to explain the sudden global rise of these new forms of commentary in the Middle Ages so long as medieval Jewish approaches to biblical textuality were projected back into the classical rabbinic period. With this new portrait of classical rabbinic approaches to the biblical text, stark contrasts begin to emerge between medieval Jewish conceptions of biblical textuality and those of the early rabbinic period. The conclusion thus suggests that the far-reaching transformations in Jewish modes of engaging with the biblical text that arose with the Middle Ages were not spurred by particular cultural or technological developments so as much as a sea change in Jewish conceptions of what kind of book the Bible was. That is, the conclusion theorizes that the all-important medieval shift in Jewish modes of engaging with the biblical text derived from a global transformation in the Jewish vision of the Bible's genre and affordances. <>

Exploring Sexuality and Spirituality: An Introduction to an Interdisciplinary Field edited by Phil Shining and Nicol Michelle Epple [Series: At the Interface / Probing the Boundaries, Brill | Rodopi, 9789004430792]

The wide spectrum of links and interrelations found amongst the diversity of human sexual expressions and spiritual practices around the world constitutes one of the most fruitful grounds of scholarly research today. Exploring Sexuality and Spirituality introduces an emerging academic field of studies focused on the multiplicity of problematizations intersecting spirituality and sexuality, from eroticism and ecstasy embodiments to inner spiritual cultivation, intimate relationships, sex education, and gender

empowerment. This collection of essays addresses subjects such as prehistoric art, Queer Theology, BDSM, Tantra, the Song of Songs, 'la petite mort', asceticism, feminist performative protests, and sexually charged landscapes, among others. Through varied methodologies and state-of-the-art interdisciplinary approaches, this volume becomes highly useful for readers engaged in the integration of scholarly and practical knowledge.

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From the raw sexual images of Upper Palaeolithic rock shelter engravings and rock paintings at La Ferrassie, Serra da Capivara or the Altamira Cave, to the high-tech, cutting-edge 21st century neuroscientific research on orgasm and sexual ecstasy, the exploration of the intrinsic relations between sexuality and spirituality can be traced and detected as a recurrent event among human societies. Sexuality and spirituality interrelations had been problematized since prehistoric times by remarkably diverse cultures from all around the planet; its related inquiries were not extinguished, not even in the most severe historical periods of repression exerted by political and religious authorities.

In contemporary societies the exploration of sexuality through spiritual exercises and the exploration of spirituality through sexual practices increases and expands its reach, supported in social media, globalized networks, and the interaction generated between exponents of a vast multiplicity of approaches and heterogeneous sources of historical knowledge. Today, the diversified sexuality and spirituality interconnections are established by all kinds of agents, from celibates to sex industry professionals, from mainstream therapists to underground artists, from religious believers to bondage practitioners, from New Age communities to politically aware NGO's, from queer activists to sex education teachers, from personal trainers to alternative movements, just to name a few. There was a time when sexuality and spirituality knowledge was esoteric, but now, progressively, it becomes part of globalized popular culture.

Sexuality and spirituality research is usually produced by scholars, like religious studies and theology historians, commonly specialized in the study and interpretation of sacred texts; but also by sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, and gender studies communities, focused on the ethnographic investigation of the social and cultural implications of sexuality and spirituality phenomena; or by psychology and sexology scholars, interested in the inquiry of human psychology and basic physiology, as well as neuroscientists centred on the analysis of the states of consciousness and the neural processes associated to sexual embodiments and spiritual experiences. Nevertheless, another kind of rigorous sexuality and spirituality exploration simultaneously takes place outside the academic circles, persevered by authentic everyday practitioners of millenary eastern traditions like Tantra, Taoism, Yoga, and Buddhism, or committed practitioners of the western systematization of many ancient arts of ecstasy labelled, in modern times, as BDSM. Additionally, the real-life sexuality and spirituality exploration of, not only New Age 'sacred sexuality' communities, but also alternative sexualities organizations, and even art world performers, designers, and film-makers, contribute to present a much more complex panorama of the state of-the-art of sexuality and spirituality research.

This book, **Exploring Sexuality and Spirituality: An Introduction to an Interdisciplinary Field**, is a brief overview of the diverse types of sexuality and spirituality scholarly research developing in the first decades of the 21st century, and its

varied interconnections with the more popular, empirical, and pragmatic forms of non-academic expertise shared around the globe today. Through these pages, the central problematizations, themes, authors, and books founding the emerging sexuality and spirituality field of studies and research are referenced and debated, while singular and relevant objects of research are presented, revealing a vast multiplicity of methodologies coming from multi, inter, and transdisciplinary approaches, mixing both traditional and innovative knowledge perspectives, useful for individuals and collectives, and for both scholars and practitioners in our times.

Historical Overview of Sexuality and Spirituality Interrelations

The wide spectrum of resonances, intersections, interconnections, overlappings, and commonalities—as well as incompatibilities, exclusions, conflicts, oppositions, and even prohibitions—established between the vast multiplicity of spiritual practices around the globe and the limitless diversity of human sexual expressions, constitutes in the 21st century one of the most fruitful but also singular grounds of exploration and research. Nevertheless, what is normally recognized now as two independent and autonomous 'spheres' or 'dimensions' of human life, was a single and integrated experience during thousands of years, accessible to any human being, relevant for societies since the beginning of the species. The differentiation between 'sexual' and 'spiritual' domains is, in some way, a recent historical process moulding human cultures, whereas its complete separation has been refused and resisted for centuries, up until today.

There is not such a thing as a universal history of sexuality, nor either a universal history of spirituality, because sexuality and spirituality are not universal conditions; the history of sexuality and spirituality interrelations can be traced in every culture, bringing to light its own particularities and singularities. Notwithstanding, there is evidence of historical processes shared between cultures and civilizations during hundreds or thousands of years, and in this way, different historical formations or 'ages' can be mapped. Sexuality and spirituality constitute human potencies—more accurately, biological potentials. The big picture of the history of human sexuality and spirituality interrelations reveals how fundamental this interaction has been in the evolution of human societies. Three major historical divisions along two significant

historical sexuality and spirituality re-integrations can be clearly identified. These periods are not exactly sequential or successive—as human history is not linear; the regimes corresponding to the periods overlap between each other, and in the same age diverse regimes can be traced, even in the same geographical region. Yet despite all the discontinuities, a historical overview of sexuality and spirituality interrelations reveals how these two different but at the same time intrinsically related biological potentials had always been at the centre of power relationships' social diagrams throughout the entire history of humankind.

The Prehistoric Sex, Life, and Death Continuum

Archaeological registers support the hypothesis which postulates the experiences of sex, life, and death as the concrete foundations of human spirituality. This thesis has been presented since the very beginning of the formation of Religious Studies as an academic discipline, in the first decades of the 20th century, and was synthetized by one of its pioneers, Mircea Eliade, as a 'pattern' of prehistoric societies associated with the narrative of 'the mystery of creation': a problematization on the unexplained 'mystery' which 'governs the origin of life, the food supply, and death'. Sex is the only other problematization as ancient as death; between sex and death the mysteries of life became a human inquiry. The exploration of sex-related issues was not only relevant, but actually a vital matter within prehistoric cultures all around the globe, at least from the Upper Palaeolithic (50,000–10,000 BCE), as testimonies indicate. Sex was depicted through oral, visual, and tactile forms of expressions by the first developed communities of anatomically modern humans during thousands of years before the formation of the first civilizations, making part of their everyday life and their rituals, constituting one of the earliest matters of human knowledge.

Prehistoric cultures, Rosemary Radford Ruether explains, 'experienced energies that circulated in themselves, male and female, and in the animals, plants, and earth around them'. 'Animism' is the earliest spiritual approach, enabling humans to live in contact with forces and spirits. From this immanent ground emerges the primeval experience of the 'divine' in human history and the early notions of spirituality. 'The divine', says Ruether, is seen as 'the matrix of life-giving energy that is in, through, and under all things, sustaining and renewing life'. Sexual forces are perceived as a primordial part of

the universe's matrix of life-forces and spirits, while sex is already recognized by early hunter-gatherers as nature's primary source of life. Perhaps there were not yet fully formed experiences of 'sexuality' or 'spirituality' at this point of human history; maybe there were just instinctive notions of *sex* and *spirit*, integrated in the non-dual experience of everyday reality.

The Archaic Sexuality and Spirituality Division: Separating the Divine and Nature

The regular surpluses of agrarian societies, very soon, enabled a much greater degree of role differentiation, but also, of inequality; the greater the surpluses a society produced, the greater the levels of inequality generated. Wealth got increasingly concentrated in small numbers of families, leading to the formation of kingdoms and governments, while populations grew and societies got stratified. These tendencies spread over the globe, mainly from Eurasia and Africa to South and North America, just at different eras. The first chiefdoms, governments, and stratified societies were established in Mesopotamia and Egypt between 4,000 BCE and 3,000 BCE, laying the foundations of the first complex civilizations. Furthermore, correlatively to the first kingdoms and governments, the concept and experience of religion comes forth. Religion is as a form of administration of the spiritual experiences of a population, emerging in times of the formation of the early city-states as the correlate to kingship in archaic societies. From this era onwards, myths about kings and gods become the centre of human cultures. As Robert Bellah says, 'king and god emerged together in archaic society and continued their close association throughout its history'.

The transition from Palaeolithic and early Neolithic animistic communities to the Bronze Age theistic societies is characterized by an integral reconfiguration of the global spectrum of human politics, ethics, and worldviews. Ruether points out how, during this transition, nature's 'divine' forces and energies of the universe become visualized 'as gods and goddesses, personified as ruling-class humans', yet separated by something very particular: their 'immortality'. Religion is deity-centred, based in transcendent and immortal *gods* governing people's fate: 'Gods and goddesses were presumed to exist in the heavens, separated from humans', as Ruether explains; 'kingly and queenly gods and goddesses were inventions reflecting the same process by which urban society, social hierarchy, and literacy were developing'. This is the same

historical process in which the *divine* shifts into the *sacred*, now regarded with reverence, as inaccessible to the large populations. Everyday rituals get transformed into solemn ceremonies, ritual houses give way to temples, shamans are replaced by priests. Through religious institutions spirituality becomes governmentalized.

Archaic governmentality propitiates the first transcultural separation in human history between everyday life and spirituality with the introduction of the division between *immanent* nature and *transcendent* realms where only deities or gods exist. From now on, the access to the divine becomes imperatively mediated by authority figures—the gatekeepers of the sacred. Consequently, the sexual/spiritual continuum gets interrupted for the first time in history. In prehistoric cultures sex and sexuality issues are direct mediums to keep communities in contact with the divine, and in this way, transact their vital concerns with nature: cycling seasons, fertility, fecundity, longevity, ecstasy, knowledge about death, trance states, etc.—all the basic sexuality and spirituality problematizations. In archaic cultures, in contrast, communal vital concerns start to depend on their worship to gods and transcending realms outside everyday life. In these societies sex is still considered a powerful medium to get in contact with the divine, but now with a substantial difference: sexual relationships are now regulated by political and religious authorities, the gatekeepers of the sacred, self-appointed as divine figures themselves.

Cults get disseminated, like the cult to Innana-Ishtar, the goddess of love, beauty, sex, desire, and fertility in ancient Mesopotamia, in a new era, when the intercession of transcendent gods seems to be necessary to achieve contact with those forces. Sex was intrinsically related to power in prehistoric cultures, in terms of renewal of life in the universe, but also of human vigour. This perception didn't change in archaic regimes. Is well documented how Innana 'promoted vigour, fertility, production, and reproduction, increasing population and success in ancient civilization'. Innana was worshipped in Uruk, the major city of the time, the birthplace of the first writing system, the earliest great work of literature, the oldest recording king lists, and the prototypes of monumental architecture. 'Most people are (…) unaware', as Anne O Nomis points out, 'that these "hallmarks of civilization" developed from a Goddess-held area—a Goddesss whose power is sexual'; in fact, 'Innana made civilization possible', as

Nomis asserts; 'civilization was nurtured with erotic vigour'. Sex was a driving force of cultural development, both in prehistoric and archaic societies. But a new dimension of the interrelation between sex and power emerged during ancient times: the use of sex and sexuality as political instruments; it is not just a coincidence that, eventually, Innana also became the goddess of war and political power.

There is a 'close relationship between stratification, despotism, and polygyny in early agrarian states', as Laura Betzig's research has shown. Betzig demonstrates this governmental process is a constant of all ancient civilizations and empires, from Mesopotamia and Egypt to China and India, as also to Mexico and Perú, traceable from 3,000 BCE to the first centuries of our era. Patriarchs were in competition for the biggest harems, as a sign of power and prestige. But the use of sex as a strategy for sustaining power relationships was not only exerted at an inter-state level. The determination of the internal diagrams of power relationships of the communities is also driven by sex and sexuality. The most valued treasure for kings and emperors is the power of their descendants, because that is the only way to guarantee their own 'transcendence'. Driven by that egotistical quest, blood-based patriarchal structures got inserted in all civilizations, systematically empowering men over women. 'The sexual regulation of women', Gerda Lerner says, 'underlies the formation of classes and is one of the foundations upon which the state rests'. Correlatively, regulating sexual conducts is one of the distinguishing characteristics of religion. In governed societies, from the archaic age to present day, human's life cycle problematizations are a matter of state politics managed as sexual health public issues. The biological stages of female's life cycle—menstruation, virginity, pregnancy, etc.—have been the centre of sexuality regulations until modern times.

Patriarchies establish monogamy as the only accepted couple relationship model for the general populace, and marriage as an institution. Marriage's primary function is to bind women to men, ensuring the continuation of the family line and providing social stability; literally, through marriage, a woman becomes a man's property: the only respectable woman is the married woman, the one controlled by her husband; any other woman is now designated as a 'public woman', that is, 'unveiled' for men. Sexual conducts become restricted and regulated by laws and moral codes, although Betzig

illustrates how 'in the six large, highly stratified early states, commoners were generally monogamous' while 'elites practiced de facto polygyny'. The wealthiest men had the chance of being polygamous, or being promiscuous having relations with prostitutes. 'By the middle of the second millennium BCE prostitution was well established as a likely occupation for the daughter of the poor', conditioned by 'the pauperization of farmers and their increasing dependence on loans in order to survive periods of famine'. Commercial prostitution derived directly from the enslavement of women and the consolidation and formation of classes, as a simultaneous process to the development of what Lerner denominates 'cultic sexual services', offered by 'priestesses and temple sexual servants' as part of prosperity rituals. Sacral sexual services are mentioned in the Epic of Gilgamesh, confirming how in archaic cultures, although already governmentalized through religion, sex and sexuality issues are still considered civilizing.

The Axial Sexuality and Spirituality Reintegration: Re-Joining the Human Body and the Divine

The widespread despotism of early kingdoms, exerted through the concentration of political power and the monopoly of the relations with the divine, provoked severe consequences for archaic human societies, as 'class stratification, the magnification of military power, the economic exploitation of the weak, the universal introduction of some form of forced labour', including slavery, among others. These processes continued and expanded—at different times and degrees—all over the planet in the respective transitions of human societies from Bronze to Iron Ages that characterizes ancient cultures. But, across all Eurasia, something completely new was introduced between the 8th and the 3rd century BCE, in the period denominated by Karl Jaspers as the Axial Age. Throughout multiple ancient cultures 'new models of reality' and 'critical thinking' emerge in the Axial Age. 'This cultural dynamic does not entail that Iron Age societies became predominantly axial', as Nicolas Baumard pertinently clarifies. 'On the contrary, most people in Iron Age societies still lived only a little way above bare subsistence level, and consequently saw only minor modifications to their preferences'. It is a fact that the revolutionary innovations of the Axial Age only where experienced by elites and minorities without being diffused among large populations.

Yet its concepts, practices, and perspectives had become significantly relevant in later human cultures, as it can be proved today.

The religious expansion in this historical era has been exhaustively documented, focusing research on 'the observation that most of the current world religions—from Hinduism to Buddhism and Chinese folk religion, from Judaism and Christianity to Islam—can trace their origins back to' the Axial Age. But the authentic revolution of the Axial Age consists in the introduction of alternative ways of life—alternative, in fact, to the religious mainstream and social massification of ancient civilizations. Concretely, what the Axial Age introduces are the first wave of counterhegemonic cultures during the last millennium BCE in different regions of Eurasia, particularly in Greece, India, and China. Dissimilar social movements and schools of thought as Greek Cynicism, Indian Cārvāka, or Chinese Confucianism can be considered axial, in the sense all of them contribute in their respective territories 'to raise the critical question of the relation between god and king'. For the first time, the divine nature of kings and royal lineages are contested and challenged, through diverse intents of reconnecting the human and the divine. Bellah identifies the Axial Age breakthrough as a 'cognitive change', while Baumard as a 'behavioral' reconfiguration. From an integral perspective, the new axial knowledge experiences and the new embodied practices are interrelated elements of the first alternative lifestyles in human history.

Taking for granted the *saṃsāra* narrative, markedly different spiritual, religious, and philosophical approaches emerge between 600 and 500 BCE as a reaction to the 'problem of suffering existence and the allied doctrine of cyclic rebirth'. All these approaches are '*gnoseologies*', as David Gordon White denominates the 'theories of salvation through knowledge', oriented to 'know the truth', which would be, 'that in spite of appearances, one is, in fact, not trapped in suffering existence'. The archaic division between the divine and nature and the separation from sex from spirituality are prolonged and widened in Axial Age India with the popularization of many of the gnoseologies, because 'in all of these systems, the necessary condition for gnosis is the disengagement of one's cognitive apparatus from sense impressions' and from 'the matter of the body'. Renunciation practices, which had emerged parallel to the imposition of the caste system—at least since 1,500 BCE —get perfectioned in Post-

Vedic India, opening the way for the *śramaṇa* movements promoting the figure of the 'holy man', the *sadhu*, like Jains, determined to cease all action to avoid *karma*; or the monks, like Buddhists, for whom 'the path of asceticism and the practice of meditation' are necessary to 'purge cognition of its inborn defilements'. From now on religious spirituality becomes a problem of liberation (*mokṣa*). So, even when the renunciation practitioners were effectively counterhegemonic, the macro-historical process of sexuality and spirituality separation was accelerated by the axial ascetic movements.

Nevertheless, some of the Axial Age cultures contribute to the sexuality and spirituality reintegration. Human physiology is explored by all axial alternative social movements, even by ascetics, by researching empirically on the functions of the 'consciousness-body' complex. Moreover, a few of axial counterhegemonic cultures developed the pioneer models of what Michel Foucault denominates as 'arts of existence': bodies of values and practices 'by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an oeuvre that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria'. In this sense, the *corpus* of knowledge—always empirical and practical—of axial cultures as Stoicism or Epicureanism in Greece, the Fangshi and Xian proto-Taoist traditions in China, or the Siddha tradition in India, are examples of axial arts of existence. Instead of determining their behaviours by following 'codifications of conducts and the strict definition of what is permitted and what is forbidden', as is the case of religious believers following the moral code of its respective religion, the practitioners of the arts of existence adapt 'recommendations about the regimen one should follow' concerning diets, physical training, and sexual activity, among other vital components. In this way, Stoics, Epicureans, Fangshis, Xians, and Siddhas are very different from religious devotees, because they shape their conducts stylizing advices and prescriptions, but never following prohibitions or obligations, enabling 'individuals to question their own conduct, to watch over and give shape to it, and to shape themselves as ethical subjects'.

The arts of existence can be distinguished by the type of exercises cultivated by their practitioners, what ancient Greeks named as *askēsis* ('training', 'exercise'), and what Pierre Hadot denominates as 'spiritual exercises'. In fact, the term 'asceticism' comes

from the concept of *askēsis*, but they are not equivalent; from all the types of spiritual exercises, only the renouncing exercises can be considered as *ascetic*; thus, asceticism is only one model of *askēsis* among others. As Hadot explains, there is a cosmic dimension intrinsically related with the ethical dimension of ancient Greek philosophies, which more than 'a theoretical construct', were methods 'for training people to live and to look at the world in a new way'; this is why, according to Hadot, 'the word "spiritual" is quite apt to make us understand that these exercises are the result not merely of thought, but of the individual's entire psychism'. This is the beginning of a fully formed experience of spirituality distinguished to religion, precisely in the sense in which Foucault defines spirituality, as the experience of 'a subject acceding to a certain mode of being and to the transformations which the subject must make of himself in order to accede to this mode of being'. Indeed, all the Stoics, Epicureans, Fangshis, Xians, and Siddhas incorporated spiritual exercises into their everyday life routines as a method for transforming normal existence.

The stylization of sexual conduct is a pivotal component of the arts of existence. Sex becomes a matter of refinement and cultivation during the Axial Age, when the early developments of medicine open an inquiry about the physical consequences of sexual activity. Between the 6th and 5th centuries bce a new sexual problematization emerges, this time focused on the correlation between sexual activity and health. The center of this new human inquiry—as it would be expected in patriarchal societies like those of the time—is male's power; for that reason, the central problematization is no other than the emission of sperm. The Greeks created the pioneer prescriptive regimes of sexual pleasures, a prime concern for spiritual exercises practitioners, as Foucault shows, 'not simply because excess might lead to an illness; it was because in sexual activity in general man's mastery, strength, and life were at stake'. At the same time, macrobiotic hygiene develops in China, incorporating the inquiry about sex, health, and expenditure. Meanwhile, in India, the ascetic movements' narratives 'were combined with more or less magical notions concerning the loss of physical strength through sexual activity'; as Madeleine Biardeau describes it, 'it is the sexual act itself which provokes a weakening of the body and therefore a weakening of the mind which can no longer concentrate on the pursuit of the Absolute'.

This simultaneous problematization of ejaculation by Greek, Indian, and Chinese axial cultures is explained by Thomas McEvilley as a 'diffusion situation' presented in Eurasia, when the Persian Empire extended its limits from the Balkans to the Indus Valley. As McEvilley points out, 'there would seem to be some connection between the Indian and the Greek doctrines' of sperm production and the sperm function in male's bodies. Outstandingly, these ancient cultures share the same physiological model of sperm functioning, based in the hypothesis that semen is produced in the brain and rises or descends through the spinal column. This antique 'notion of the spinal column as a channel for semen and seminal thoughts', as White also annotates, 'that was both a medical and mystical notion dear to the Stoics', can be founded in medieval India; actually, White considers it 'the prototype' of all posterior Hindu models. While ancient medical tradition in India, Āyurveda, validates to this day the fundamental teaching concerning the loss of vitality intrinsic to ejaculation, only the alchemical traditions developed the antique notion of 'the spinal channel connecting the brain and the penis', in both India and China. Nonetheless, as McEvilley says, there is a shared narrative about the 'upwardization' of semen that can be traced from Plato's *Timaeus* to middle ages *haṭha yoga* doctrine of the rising of the *kuṇḍalinī*;[39] and as White confirms, 'Greek "pneumatic" physiology appears to anticipate Indian *kuṇḍalinī* practices', Chinese inner cultivation exercises, and the narrative of the 'transmutation' of sexual fluids.

The axial stylizations of sexual conducts were 'a health precaution' but also, as Foucault clarifies, they were 'an *askēsis* of existence'. In China, 'all of the material on macrobiotic hygiene belongs to a medical tradition of *yangsheng* (nurturing life)', including the *fangzhong* (intra-chamber), the arts of sexual cultivation, because most of 'macrobiotic hygiene is identified with the immortality beliefs of the Xian'. Sex was used as a medium for cultivating vitality by the Asian shamanic cults that shaped both the Xian and Siddha traditions constituting the roots of Taoism and Hatha Yoga; this is why a common structure shared between the proto-Taoist inward trainings of the last millennium bce and the Hatha Yoga rising of the *kuṇḍalinī* practices of the first millennium can be clearly traced. 'Sexual relations', Donald Harper asserts, were used by Xian traditions as vital components of the 'therapeutic arts of physical

cultivation'; actually, the axial *fangzhong* can be considered as the first *ars erotica* in humankind history. But this *ars erotica* is inseparable from the art of existence in which was shaped; as Harper corroborates, in ancient Chinese axial cultures, 'sexual intercourse was one of the methods for "nurturing life"'.

The immanent cultivation of vitality through sex introduced by both the Xian and Siddha arts of existence was also related with a transcendent quest for immortality, conforming together the roots of the Indian tradition identified after the 7th century as Tantra, the epitome of all the sexuality and spirituality spiritual traditions in the sense that, as Biardeau and White define it, Tantra is a form of spirituality centered on desire (*kāma*). If Buddhism can be considered the art of losing desire, Tantra can be understood as the art of using desire as the way to embody spiritual experiences. Buddhism and Tantra are two opposite but complementary arts of existence—in fact, Tantric Buddhism was also developed in South Asia during the second part of the first millennium CE, introducing the values of 'bliss' and 'ecstasy' into the arts of existence. As only in prehistoric times happened before, the human body becomes the physical ground for the exploration of the divine during the Axial Age, perhaps not for the social masses, but certainly for minorities making an impact for the future. The arts of existence are the ultimate form of embodiment of the 'real change' propitiated by the Axial Age, as proposed by Baumard: 'the emergence of self-discipline and selflessness'. One of the defining characteristics of the ancient East arts of living—Taoism, Buddhism, Yoga, and Tantra—is their focus on the development of *technologies for dissolving the self*—what Hadot refers to as 'the dilation of the self'; and for that purpose, the 'erotico-mystical practice' was a privileged medium. Besides constituting models of what Robert Ford Campany denominates as 'biospiritual self-cultivation', axial *ars erotica* and its sex life stylizations were designed for embodying the divine.

The Medieval Sexuality and Spirituality Division: Separating the Divine and Pleasure

At the dawn of the common era all the major world religions—Hinduism, Jainism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, the Chinese folk traditions, and the institutionalized forms of Buddhism—were taking shape, expanding similar values around the globe,

establishing moral codes, sets of laws, rules and norms 'in order to define what was permitted and what was forbidden', particularly, about issues concerning sex and sexuality. Moralities were established through laws; intimate relationships between social classes became strictly regulated, as also marital relationships and key issues like householding, reproductive behaviour, inheritance, divorce, and paternity. The first sexuality and spirituality regulations can be traced back to archaic governmentality, regarding new social dynamics like marriage and prostitution, when intimate relationships became subject of consideration for human cultures for the first time. But the processes of codification of sexual conducts never stopped during the ancient era. The focal point of the archaic and ancient problematizations on intimate relationships is the sexual conduct of the woman in its multiple roles, modelled at the service of men. It is a concern manifested in the earliest law codes in human history, from The Sumerian Code of Ur-Nammu (c. 2100 BCE), and the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi (c. 1760 BCE), to the Laws of Manu (300–200 BCE), at the end of the Vedic Age in India, when the caste system was consolidated.

The transition from ancient to medieval societies is related with the emergence of new problematizations and new focal points of religious sexuality and spirituality regulations. Even when Eurasian cultures reached its middle ages at different times in history, there are common patterns between all of them. Middle ages are characterized by a new form of governmentality, where kings and dynasties still rule, but now following the moral codes of religion. In the Hindu social system, for example, priests 'are at the top of social hierarchy'; 'only a Brahman is competent to know', Biardeau explains, 'the norms of men's conduct, not least those of the prince'. Brahmanical circles in India, deeply influenced by axial social movements, incorporate renunciation vows into their lifestyles; the figure of the *sannyasa* embraces practices like celibacy—sexual abstention—and adjust them into the orthodox Hindu doctrine. The Brahmans reform their principles in order to adapt their archaic belief system to the new cultural demands of the *saṃsāra* narrative—the endless cycle of rebirths—, reworking many Vedic mythologies to become themselves 'the best placed both to obtain liberation and to secure the best rebirths'. However, the sustainment of the patriarchal caste system

would require a far more encompassing strategy by Brahmanical authorities in their intent of reforming Vedic institutions.

The Hindu synthesis started to develop between 500 BCE and 300 CE, but it was only until the middle kingdoms and the medieval period in India that Hinduism gets completely formed. In this new process, as Biardeau explains, Brahmanism was able to 'integrate almost anything without a change of structure' within their patriarchal caste system, including not only the ascetic values of the *śramaṇa* movements, but also the emotional forces driving the *bhakti* movement in Post-Vedic India. *Bhakti*, or 'devotional attachment to God', becomes the central component of the synthesis that gives shape to Hinduism; through the *bhakti* model of spirituality old forms of selflessness become assimilated by the masses, like *ahiṃsā* and self-surrender. The phenomenon of the Love for God, though, was not exclusive of ancient India. The formation of Judaism is driven by 'the love of God' expressed by the people of ancient Israel, in the same era the first *bhakti* manifestations appear in India, during the Axial Age. The people of Israel lived 'in covenant' with God, 'whom they serve in wholehearted devotion'; the love of God is identified 'with the performance of his commandments'—paralleling the relation of loyalty and servitude to the kings. Yet this love of God developed in very erotic ways, like the Song of Songs, a love poem composing the Tanakh and the Old Testament, describing 'the romance of God and Israel' as a celebration of sexual love. The Judaist prophets, as Jon D. Levenson explicates, soon will interpret that, 'Israel played the prostitute or the adulteress' and only believer's faith 'will redeem her and renew the broken marriage'.

Devotional attachment to God produces a new mainstream throughout all over Eurasia during the transition from ancient to middle ages societies. The expansion of Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam generates a new type of worship and belief: the faith of the devotional believer. This ancient transcontinental tendency to praise unconditional love and self-sacrificing devotion becomes determinant in the way religion problematizes intimate relationships in middle ages societies. Only in devotional societies 'love' becomes problematized, and soon starts to be associated with conjugal household. Love is habitually identified with the 'love of the couple' in religious societies, where marriage functions as an institution. The woman must be, not

only faithful, but loving, amorous to her husband. 'Her duty is summed up in a formula', Biardeau explicates: 'to serve her husband as her God'. The awareness about the magnitude of love within human relationships is a collateral effect of the rising of devotion and the expansion of organized religion. Not only compassionate gods emerged in the first millennium ce, but also forms of love separated from sex. *Bhakti*, devotional love, is distinguished from *kāma*, desire and sensual pleasure. The middle ages axiological atmosphere helps to reinforce the institution of marriage, but also puts a new pressure on men: to remain sexually faithful to his wife, in the same way he must keep faithful to God.

After the fall of the Roman Empire the social diagram of power relationships in Europe gets reconfigured. Christian authorities progressively accumulate political power, and in order to achieve supremacy over the kings, they use the same strategy of the Brahmans in South Asia: they declare celibacy as a requirement for ordination to the priesthood, mainly to distinguish the clergy as an exceptional group identified with the highest goals. Clericals in the Catholic Church advocated for a mandatory form of celibacy to the priesthood since the 4th century, but they only took a stand in favour of its definitive implantation in the 12th century. During the first millennium religion expanded all over Eurasia, implanting codifications of the sexual conducts, and in this way, ensuring social control over the population—primarily, domination of men over women, and domination of social groups over others, separating social classes while prohibiting sexual contact between them; this early medieval ages diagram, therefore, does not facilitate a plenty sexuality and spirituality reintegration, except for the emergence of minorities and elites practicing sexual cultivation techniques and the arts of existence. Yet the biggest sexuality and spirituality division was still to come, during the second millennium of the common era, in the late medieval periods of each continent. After the 13th century, when the celibate clergy becomes the paradigm of separation from the sinful world, the codifications of the sexual conducts get stricter and more severe than ever before. 'The marriage relation was the most intense focus of constraints', Foucault explains; it remained under confession and 'constant surveillance'. As he says, 'breaking the rules of marriage or seeking strange pleasures brought an equal measure of condemnation'. Now the prohibition is not only adultery,

like in archaic and ancient societies. Late medieval regimes judge orientations like homosexuality and infidelity between couples, while punish practices like sodomy or masturbation.

Middle ages governmentality is the main cause for inhibiting desire and sexual experimentation, both in eastern and western regimes, because marriage is converted into a conservative social institution and devotion becomes a mainstream value in this era, displacing the ancestral social demand of ecstasy. But in addition to this transcontinental expansion of monogamy as an intimate relationship model, another historical process contributed massively to propitiate a new sexuality and spirituality separation. It is the moment when one of the most significant cultural differences between western and eastern societies emerge. Christianity introduces the notion of sex as a *sin*—as an obstacle to *salvation*—and, in this way, contributes to differentiate western cultures from eastern cultures, where sex has never been considered something equivalent to a sin—on the contrary, in the East 'sex is an expression of mystic union in terms of human love'. The Christian doctrine of original sin is associated with sex since the 3rd century, when Augustine of Hippo develops the notion of *concupiscence*. Sinful lust becomes subject of punishment in the late medieval period in Europe, after the Catholic Church starts to combat heresy through the Inquisition. The severe codes of regulation of sexual acts—conceived now as the *flesh*—implanted in Christian societies during the European middle ages would be inherited by colonial American cultures after the conquest of the new continent, enculturing the three Americas into the West. The influence of Christianity's' strict sexual conducts regulation will have a later repercussion in the 18th and 19th centuries, in middle and far eastern cultures going under processes of 'westernization'.

In India sex continues to be used as a medium to engage in spiritual experiences during the early medieval period, with Tantric Kaula cults all over the subcontinent practicing rites centred in the consumption of sexual fluids, and the appropriation of these rituals by Brahmans and kings between the 9th and 12th century, developing into the Trika tradition within Kashmirian Hindu circles. At this point the practical dimension intrinsic to the original knowledge of the ancient Siddha tradition from where Tantra emerges has dissolved into the religious mythology of Hinduism. This is why in this age

Tantra functions as a soteriology, a doctrine to attain salvation. However, in resonance with the western world, the moral regimes become strict and more severe after the 13th century in the Indian subcontinent, when Islam establishes itself during the course of a long gradual Muslim conquest extended from Africa to Asia. Medieval governmentality propitiates the second historical separation between sex and spirituality when sex becomes 'profane' and, when later on, many sexuality issues and practices become forbidden, prohibited, and persecuted, often making sex incompatible with mainstream spiritual paths. For religious communities, as James A. Brundage admits, 'sex represents a rich source of conflicts that can disrupt orderly social processes'; and he adds: 'throughout the ages communities have used various combinations of law, religion, and morality to achieve control. Not surprisingly, the regulation of sexuality has been a central feature of every legal system'. Desire was considered by the ancient ascetics the direct cause of suffering and attachment to the cycle of rebirths; this is when sexual desire becomes a hindrance for ascetic spiritual paths. But the gap between sexual desire and spiritual realization becomes an abyss in medieval cultures, when religious moral codes produce a division between sexual pleasure and the divine. After the 13th century, all the *ars erotica* and the sexual arts become *esoteric*: reserved for secret confidential circles and hidden initiates.

The Modern Sexuality and Spirituality Division: Separating the Divine and the Truth

The repercussions of the impact generated by the restrictive moral codes established in the medieval regimes lasts until the first centuries of the modern age. In fact, the moralities of the 18th and 19th centuries seem particularly conservative in almost all continents, from South and North America to Europe, the Middle and the Far East. Nevertheless, as Foucault has demonstrated, a parallel historical process develops at the same time that the repressive regimes are sustained. 'Sex' is systematically 'put into discourse' by modern institutions—the government, the clinic, the police, the fabric, the church, the school, the family, among others—as part of a macro-process that had not stopped to this day, 'a veritable discursive explosion' about sex in all its forms: statistical registers of population, sexual health politics, psychopathy of sexual behaviours, guidance on sexual relationships, etc. The discourses about sex increase

and propagate everywhere since Modernity starts, even when moral codes are still repressive, at least until the first part of the 20th century. This paradox can be consistently explained, as Foucault has documented copiously, as an overlapping between Christianity and Modernity; there is a continuation of the individualization processes first started in the West by early Christianity, and more specifically, the practices of inducing the population to talk about sex—like the medieval technique of confession—not because of religious social control anymore, but caused by other type of power and other form of governmentality.

The formation of urban capitalist societies and the decline of kingdoms related to modern cultures propitiates a new form of exercising power and domination over populations, very different than the archaic and medieval forms of governmentality. Between the 16th and 17th century emerges what Foucault calls '*biopower*', a relation of forces focused on the administration of life. *Biopolitics* is the correlative political process of capitalism; it can be distinguished because all its 'mechanisms of power are addressed to the body, to life, to what causes it to proliferate'. Only through the social control exerted through biopolitics the capitalist mode of production becomes a life system and an specific ethics centered on individual benefit. Within a capitalist system the concentration of power, as formulated by Marx, depends on the control of the means of production. But as Foucault complements it, the modern domination of large populations is only possible thanks to this new type of power, in which life is preserved and sustained, precisely, as a capital: human life is now a capital which must be conserved and protected. The modern political regime is the one in which 'political power had assigned itself the task of administering life'. In the middle of this new axiological atmosphere the discourses about sex multiply, as a strategy to guarantee a permanent access to the fundamental basis of human life. This modern transcontinental event propitiates the emergence of some unprecedented historical experiences, including the one that what we identify today as 'sexuality'.

Although what it is recognized with the term 'sexuality' describes a complex of biological potentials intrinsic to human beings—mixed with the particularities of the cultural environments—, only modern societies use the concept being conscious of its own problematizations. The formation of the conceptualization of sexuality starts in

the 19th century, when modern 'western societies created and deployed a new apparatus' designed for the assemblage of discourses, practices, and subjectivity-production habits, helping to maintain certain power relations diagram in capitalist societies. This *dispositif* of 'sexuality' quickly became one of the basic components of modern life, determining the construction of individual identities. The discourses about sexuality emerged in order to gain control over the lives of a population, taking care and preserving their value, promoted directly by 'a power organized around the management of life'. As Foucault states, 'during the 19th century you begin to see that sexual behaviour was important for the definition of the individual self. And that is something new'. Yet he adds: 'now sexuality seems to be a question without direct relation with reproduction. It is your sexuality as your personal behaviour what is the problem'. Globalized institutions like the World Health Organization and the World Association for Sexual Health define sexuality as 'a core dimension of being human which includes sex, gender, sexual and gender identity, sexual orientation, eroticism, emotional attachment/love, reproduction', which becomes the 'result of the interplay of biological, psychological, socio-economic, cultural, ethical and religious/spiritual factors'. The spectrum of sexuality is wide and loose, and its interrelations with spirituality compose an spectrum even wider and complex. So, as contemporary institutions reveal, even sexuality and spirituality issues are biopolitical interests, because any kind of sexuality process is used as a mechanism for individualization.

As Foucault points out, 'sex is the most speculative, most ideal, and most internal element in a deployment of sexuality organized by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures'; correlatively, 'is sex itself which hides the most secret parts of the individual: the structure of his fantasies, the roots of his ego, the forms of his relationships to reality', he says; and adds: 'at the bottom of sex, there is truth'. However, western societies adopt a new 'procedure' to generate knowledge experiences about sex different than the axial *ars erotica*, the opposite procedure already present in ancient civilizations—including 'China, Japan, India, Rome, the Arabo-Moslem societies', among others. Notably, the humanist will of truth established by Christianity in the West is continued by modern science. The West has 'equipped itself with a "*scientia sexualis*"', a modern procedure that permits to

rationalize sex and sexuality, in which sex is 'not only a matter of sensation and pleasure, of law and taboo, but also of truth and falsehood'. 'In the erotic art, truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience', as Foucault clarifies; 'it is experienced as pleasure, evaluated in terms of its intensity, its specific quality, its duration, its reverberations in the body and the soul'. And he adds, 'this knowledge must be deflected back into the sexual practice itself, in order to shape it as though from within and amplify its effects'. On the contrary, the *scientia sexualis* 'connects the ancient injunction of confession to clinical listening methods'; confession 'gradually detached itself from the sacrament of penance' and 'migrated toward pedagogy, relationships between adults and children, family relations, medicine, and psychiatry'. This is how 'sex was constituted as a problem of truth': sexuality is 'the correlative of that slowly developed discursive practice which constitutes the *scientia sexualis*'.

Modernity spreads individualism, capitalism, and industrialization all over the globe—through colonialism—and accelerates the processes of urbanization at the same that intensifies the processes of stratification and social differentiation. When the centre of life is no longer a god, but the human being—and more precisely, the individual—, the processes of subjectification multiply and the problematization of personal identity is introduced to the masses. This is why sexuality is one of the most important *dispositifs* of capitalism: because the fundaments of all personal identity rely on sexuality issues—sexual identity, sexual orientation, sexual preferences, etc. Moreover, Modernity expands its values through science and its correlate processes of secularization; political and educational institutions conform their autonomous spaces, independent from religious institutions. This macroprocess induces human societies to rationalize their sexual experiences like never before. The rationalization of the sexual experience characteristic of modern life produces a new historical sexuality and spirituality division that only contributes to expand the already existing sexuality and spirituality everyday life gap.

Modern governmentality propitiates a new rational separation between sex and spirituality, disassociating the divine from the truth. In all archaic and medieval sexuality and spirituality divisions the divine—under the form of the sacred—was still

considered the truth. In all modern societies, the divine—and consequently, spirituality and religion—is radically separated from the truth—or more precisely, the 'games of truth' present in every culture. The verificationist approach of science eclipses traditional sources of knowledge, delegitimizing the discourses and the practices related to spirituality, associating mysticism with superstition, while reducing sex to a set of physiological functions, and conforming sexuality to a rational auto-operation. The dependence of religion on transcendent explanations make incompatible and unlikely the dialogue between religious traditions and modern science, and the lack of distinction between spirituality and religion closes all dialogue with immanent-oriented arts of existence. The archaic binary oppositions sacred/profane and transcendence/immanence, plus the ancient and medieval opposition matter/spirit, are joined by a new set of binary oppositions introduced by modern governmentality: anthropocentric/theocentric, subject/object, and secular/religious. All these binary oppositions contribute to the cultural sexuality and spirituality separation, and the modern division between the truth and the divine.

Within the new axiological atmosphere of secularization art separates itself from everyday life, constituting an autonomous sphere independent from religion. This is how the avant-garde wings of the modern art movements liberate desire against the strict moral codes of its time, and embrace sex and sexuality in their works like never before—as an expression of the individual freedom fuelling all Modernity processes. From Sade and the *poète maudit* poetic tradition to Georges Bataille and the novels of Henry Miller, from Picasso to Max Ernst and Francis Bacon, modern art captures the sublime of the sexuality and spirituality experience through different formal disciplines. Meanwhile, underground cultures develop in urban societies, and some of them look form some type of sexuality and spirituality reintegration to deal with the emptiness that modern life brings to the masses. Like Foucault envisions it, 'the death of God leaves an empty space: it has not been filled—the theological space remains open'; the death of God is tied 'to the ontological void which his death fixed at the limit of our thought'; that is why in modern cultures 'the body and sexuality assume a greater importance in the finitude of existence', and the erotic expressions erupt unprecedently: because 'eroticism can say what mysticism never could'. The autonomy

of art in Modernity contributes to the problem of developing a classic type of *ars erotica*, when in pre-modern societies the separation between art and everyday life is unconceivable. Nonetheless, some of the underground movements and the western countercultures invent a modern type of *ars erotica*: stylizations of sex unlinked to arts of existence. The bdsm cultures are a source of modernized *ars erotica*, which reaches the experience of selflessness within individualistic environments. Non-normative sex practices develop since the 19th century, and keep growing to this day. When mainstream societies are induced to break apart from the divine in their everyday life, sex helps to resist the separation.

The Global Sexuality and Spirituality Reintegration: Re-Connecting Human Life and the Divine

The expansion of modernization processes and modernist values from Europe to all the other continents through colonialism transforms the political administrations, spreading the republican models built upon secular values. In the 19th century, the rationalist secularization processes and the restrictive moral codes of the Victorian era marginalize the sexuality and spirituality knowledge and repress the sexuality and spirituality practices in the West, but also in eastern countries, with the rise of new religious fundamentalisms. So, it is not a surprise that in this century new alternative social movements emerge, looking for an effective sexuality and spirituality reintegration and new spiritual lifestyles. This is the moment when the first New Age social movements take form in Europe and, particularly, America, presenting sets of values 'which apparently rupture or transcend what modernity has to offer', providing 'solutions to the loss of certainty' in modern life. Some of these movements develop systems of thought, like Theosophy, incorporating concepts and values borrowed from eastern alchemical traditions, and actually, introducing the first vague notions of Tantra to western audiences. Moreover, new practices emerge looking to recover 'perennial' problematizations, like the practice of sexual magic, a western assemblage of ancient sexual inner cultivation techniques, paganism, and religious myths designed for the achievement of modern experiences of 'liberation'. The work of Madame Blavatsky, Pascal Beverly Randolph, and Aleister Crowley inspire a new sexuality and spirituality reintegration in which empirical experience and the embodiment is a

priority, but always supported on an excessive amount of theoretical speculation, inherited not only from the ancient speculation of eastern alchemical traditions, but also from religious perspectives on transcendence. In any case, these communities and their systems of thought and practice were always presented as an alternative to religion by their own founders, looking for a 'sacralization' of Modernity, and above all, a reintegration of the divine and the truth.

The economic interdependence of modern nations accelerates at the end of World War ii, when the brand-new democratic regimes expand capitalist markets all over the planet, producing the integration of nation-states and cultures into a single system of life, the system of globalized capitalism. At the end of the 20th century the entire humankind becomes integrated into Globalization, when supranational institutions get established; in the 21st century the global system consolidates itself supported in new technologies of communication and social media. Capitalist governmentality modulates its biopolitical exercise, evolving from a disciplinary biopower to a direct control biopower, in what Foucault and Gilles Deleuze had described as 'societies of control'. In these new globalized social diagrams individual freedom is regarded as the central value above all, and the self becomes the center of contemporary life. This explains why even the potential alternatives to mainstream lifestyles become captured in late capitalist societies. The New Age movements neutralize a significant part of their counterhegemonic potential when they become platforms of what Paul Heelas has accurately described as 'self-spirituality'. The New Age is reconfigured as a self-help market offering solutions to self-esteem problems, and although is full of religious and arts of existence references, it fails at proportionating real methods of losing or dissolving the ego—the selflessness virtue that characterizes religions and the arts of existence.

Nevertheless, the resurgence of spirituality in the 20th and 21st centuries' modern societies is not reduced to the New Age social movements. Globalization implies a new generalized 'post-secular' situation, in which governmental secular institutions integrate into post-modern cultures, were religion and spirituality are fundamental dimensions of life. This is how religious devotees keep growing in certain regions of the planet, and new alternative spiritual movements emerge everywhere. Some of these

movements or cultures 'now prefer to call themselves "spiritual" rather than religious', as Heelas points out: those people who cultivate some form of spirituality without following the moral codes, nor either the doctrines of an organized religion, and instead, concentrate their exploration on 'subjective life'. And breaking apart with the binary opposition between religious spirituality and New age spirituality, the global age post-secular panorama presents at least another model of spirituality, the model created by the axial arts of existence, a practice-oriented spirituality that does not depend on religious institutions, but at the same time is not centred on the self, only in the practice, as a mode of achieving selflessness experiences. The arts of existence re-emerge in the 21st century, when Internet and the new technologies of communication diffuse their practices like never before. The arts of existence and the *ars erotica* are no longer esoteric in times of social media, they are now open to new populations. The ancient legacies of sexuality and spirituality knowledge are recovered in the global age, and not only by New Age movements, but also by practice-oriented collectives and communities; the hype of New Age fusions like Osho's Neo Tantra sometimes eclipses the work of rigorous Yoga and Tantra practitioners around the globe, which explore today consistent modes of actualizing ancient knowledges, while focusing on the human body's potential as a ground for spiritual experimentation.

Both New Age seekers and contemporary arts of existence practitioners explore new forms of sexuality and spirituality reintegration, trying to keep sex and sexuality in contact with the divine: pleasure as a natural form of experiencing the divine and accessing ultimate reality. The global sexuality and spirituality reintegration, like the axial sexuality and spirituality reintegration, is not spread through the majority of the population, but this time the number of people composing the minorities involved with sexuality and spirituality explorations is enormous, and is no longer reduced to the elites, but to all kinds of social groups, lifestyles, and cultures in the planet. In the globalized societies of control the moral codes become very flexible, including those regarding sexuality. After the modern sexual revolution of the 1960's and the popularization of contraception methods, the globalized urban centres become more hedonist; and even with the aids counterrevolution of the 1980's, sexual conducts are less restrictive in the 21st century. The *dispositif* of sexuality keeps expanding its reach,

but the processes of aestheticization of everyday life in globalized cultures are not always in function of capitalism and biopolitics. Some of the contemporary sex life therapy and sex life cultivation communities are looking for alternative ways of empowering feminine, masculine, and sexually indeterminate minorities, plus non-hegemonic life styles. The 'immanence of life' is the center of all new spiritualities conjuring self-centered ethics, what Heelas has named as 'spiritualities of life'.

Sexuality and Spirituality Key Issues and Problematizations

There are, at least, eight sexuality and spirituality problematizations defining the reach of the sexuality and spirituality field of research: life renewal, life cycle, feminine/masculine polarity, ecstasy, eroticism, inner cultivation, intimate relationships, and gender empowerment. The first five of these problematizations can be traced back to early modern humans and prehistoric social formations. The next two emerged in ancient times, and only the last appeared in modern ages. The sexuality and spirituality exploration is already present at the dawn of mankind, and constitute an integral part of the formation of the first civilizations and the emergence of counterhegemonic cultures, revealing in its deep historical roots the relevance and the social pertinence of this field of research in globalized societies today.

Life Renewal

For early hunter-gatherers is vital and crucial to explore the mysteries of nature's cycling seasons and to understand how life generates and regenerates itself through the cosmos. Inquiring on the continuities between nature and the body they develop practices associated with what Eliade describes as 'the renewal of the original state of potency'. Earliest dancing in Africa is linked to a necessity of getting access to some of life and death mysteries, invoking what Ruether describes as the 'divine energy for life and the renewal of life' which 'sustains the cycling seasons'. Along with dances, collective sexual practices where at the centre of the earliest life renewal rituals, used as mediums for the instinctive exploration of 'the mystery of generation and fecundity'. This association between sex, fertility, prosperity, and fecundity is openly exposed in all early human cultures, from the Upper Palaeolithic until late archaic societies. Prehistoric sex rituals evolved into the ancient 'seasonal festivals' which included 'orgies' legitimated by the entire community, as a tradition part of popular

folklore. Religious societies reconfigure the sexuality and spirituality problematizations and the way they were approached; celebration of life is not so relevant anymore, and the immanent relations get buried by complex theological myths about the origins of the world. However, some New Age groups recover today these perennial traditions.

Life Cycle

The transitions and changes experienced at every stage of the life cycle was another vital issue for Upper Palaeolithic societies, as archaeological registers indicate. The statuettes—carved or sculpted—known as the 'Venus figurines' are a clear example of the tools used by prehistoric cultures to produce knowledge experiences about the human life cycle. Patricia C. Rice suggests that female figurines represent women throughout their entire adult life, not just when they are pregnant, but through all female aging process, meanwhile Le Roy's McDermott's proposes a 'materialist hypothesis' for the figures to interpret them as 'accurate representational images of the female body at different stages of development' of the life cycle. These stages include, 'puberty, menses, coitus, conception, pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation', the 'regular events in the female cycle', or what Alexander Marshack describes as 'perceptible "time-factored" alterations in bodily function'. The social uses of the figurines, it seems, were related with 'needs of health and hygiene', the mysteries of sexual reproduction, the relation with nature's cycles as an 'attempt at influencing and participating in the periodicities, equations, and difficulties of the processes involved', and 'the recognition of, and ritual, mythologized participation in the uncertainties and dangers that surrounded the processes of life, birth and death'. The early human sexuality and spirituality life cycle problematizations, revealed in archaeological cases like Çatalhöyük, constitute the foundations of the first sexual health programs, from ancient Chinese macrobiotic hygiene and Indian Ayurveda, to pre-modern American indigenous societies' regimes. Sex education programs reclaim these topics today.

Feminine/Masculine Polarity

The repeated vulvar and phallic motifs in prehistoric paintings and sculptures are the best evidence and testimony of the early human inquiry on sexual differentiation and biological complementarity. From the accuracy of the Aurignacian vulvar tradition in the Vézère Valley (c. 34,000 BCE–28,000 BCE), or the wide-open oval vulva engraved

on the Monpazier statuette (c.25,000 BCE), to the ithyphallic figures at Lascaux (c.17,000 BCE), and the male genitalia depicted at Trois-Frères (c.13,000 BCE), the mystery of sexual differentiation was ordinarily explored by prehistoric communities. The problematization of feminine/masculine polarity is a key issue in early human societies, as André Leroi Gourhan points out; it is described by Eliade as the 'principle of complementarity of the two sexual and cosmological principles'. As he proposes, 'it is probable that this principle of complementarity was called upon both to organize the world and to explain the mystery of its periodical creation and regeneration'. This problematization continued in the archaic and ancient regimes in the form of the *hieros gamos* tradition, the ritual of the marriage between deities, or kings, and nature. The exploration of the possibilities of life renewal evolved into a new problematization focused on the distinction of female and male bodies, as well of feminine and masculine energies. The yin/yang complementarity of Taoism, plus its parallel fundamental opposition of *śiva/sakti* in *haṭha yoga* and Tantra, are the axial developments of this problematization. In modern days, criticism is exerted by gender theorists against the binary systems developed from ancient assumptions, but also speculative reinterpretations of its principles come from New Age communities. Religion also continued with this problematization to describe their divine order, like the Qur'an interpretations by Islam scholar Ibn Arabi—describing devotion to God as both active and receptive—, and the Kabbalah's exegesis of Jewish scriptures in female and male complementarity terms.

Ecstasy

Prehistoric and tribal cultures, as Eliade explains, engage in 'ecstatic experiences' as their natural form of spiritual experience. Ecstasy was lived collectively, as a community, through chanting and dancing, and particularly through drumming, with the shaman leading the gathering as the 'master of ecstasy', at the very roots of the creation of music. Besides music and entheogens, sex was the other privileged medium used for the attainment of bliss, states of trance, mystical experiences, and embodied altered states of consciousness. Sexual intercourse was used and recreated in varied types of rituals and celebrations 'to increase the sexual vigour of the community'. In this way, ecstasy was explored as a way to enhance vitality and as a strategy to

empower people, while at the same time the embodied trance states were the gates to access to non-ordinary realities and keep the community in contact with the 'divine' and the spirits of the universe. The Dionysian Cults are an example of the way in which this prehistorical tradition was incorporated into the first proto-religious cultures, with the ancient Greek's creation of Dionysus, god of ecstasy. In medieval Christian cultures ecstasy is problematized as *rapture*, a sacred experience linking religious mystical experiences and sexual bliss, like the type of ecstatic rapture embodied by Saint Catherine of Alexandria or by Saint Teresa of Ávila, where mysticism is understood as a matter of *union* with a transcendent Divinity. Meanwhile, in India, the Brahmanical elites of Kashmirian Hindu circles—notably, the theologian Abhinavagupta—reinterpret the Kaula Tantra tradition and invent a life origins myth centred on ecstasy, 'in which the entire universe' creation functions as the divine 'orgasm' of God, and the Trika art of existence in which the practitioner cultivates a 'divine state of consciousness homologous to the bliss experienced in sexual orgasm'. This version of Tantra constitutes the foundation of most of New Age Tantra reinterpretations, becoming popular in globalized hedonist societies. On the other hand, science explores today the neurophysiology of the orgasm or sexual trance, and its neural correlations with altered states of consciousness.

Eroticism

As George Bataille suggests, eroticism is one of the ways in which humans start to distinguish themselves from animals. Indeed, from within the simpler and rougher sexual depictions at Serra da Capivara (c. 36,000 BCE–25,000 BCE), or Magura Caves (c. 8,000–6,000 BCE), another type of art emerges: the art of eroticism, which generates pleasure through sensuality. Although, as Bataille explains, is not enough to perform or to depict sexual acts to be considered erotic. 'The simple sexual act is different from eroticism', he explains; 'unlike simple sexual activity, it is a psychological quest'. Eroticism is a very specific kind of sexual stimulation, in which consciousness becomes decentered from the self. 'The whole business of eroticism is to strike to the inmost core of the living being, so that the heart stands still. The transition from the normal state to that of erotic desire presupposes a partial dissolution of the person'. In this sense, the Upper Palaeolithic pioneer forms of expression—dancing, chanting,

painting, carving, sculpting, etc.—constitute the grounds in which the seeds of eroticism were planted in human evolution, like the images founded at Lascaux (c. 17.000 BCE–13,500 BCE) and the 'awareness of death' manifested in the pictures. As ecstasy and mysticism, eroticism is linked with higher and expanded states of consciousness, because of its exploration of the experience of the *sublime*; that is the substantial difference between eroticism and pornography, a practice which produces images to generate sexual excitation—like eroticism—but without embodying the sublime. Pornography starts to take form in patriarchal archaic societies like Mesopotamia, and developed with the drawings of ancient China, Greece, Pompeii, the Tlatilco figurines of Mexico, or the later Moche pottery in Peru. But eroticism also flourished in patriarchal regimes, like the Indian middle kingdoms' Tantric temples in Khajuraho—were majestic architecture is in function of absolute sexuality and spirituality integration—, or the ecstatic verses written by Sufi poet Rumi in medieval Persia. Eroticism exploration even continued in religious regimes, with the chiaroscuro paintings of Italian Renaissance master Antonio da Correggio, the classical Hinduism poem of *Gita Govinda*, or the Baroque sculpture of Saint Teresa created by Bernini. And it keeps developing in Modernity and Globalization regimes, from the formation of tango music in the brothels of Buenos Aires at the beginning of the 20th century, to the sensuality of samba in Brazil, and so on. bdsm practices, in the other hand, from bondage to sadomasochism, Shirabi, and Obi erotic asphyxiation, are examples of modern *ars erotica* without inner or self-cultivation.

Inner Cultivation

The axial counterhegemonic cultures embracing non-celibate arts of existence, like some schools of Stoicism an Epicureanism, but particularly Taoism, Tantra, and Yoga—the *haṭha yoga* tradition—, introduce the problematization and the practices of inner cultivation through sexual exercises. Like Harper explains, the eastern arts of existence that developed *ars erotica* explore 'intercourse for the sake of physical cultivation rather than as a consequence of passion'. This is why the Chinese and the Indian *ars erotica*, since ancient times, generates knowledge experiences about 'postures, sexual positions, counting number of penetration movements, techniques, actions for the man to perform, movements for the body', and many other physical aspects of the

sexual act. Yet the eastern sexual experimentation and its emphasis on the technique always has been in function of its spiritual purposes; that is why, since the pioneer shamanic, Xian, and Siddha traditions, the exercises of inner cultivation had been used as vehicles for uniting or *melting* with the 'absolute'—nature's field were the divine engenders itself. At least since ancient times, through medieval, and modern societies, the notion of *ars erotica* and the legacy of the arts of existence had been preserved by traditions like Vajrayāna Buddhism in the East, or Gnosticism in the West. Techniques like the *coitus reservatus*, praised by both ancient Chinese and Greek medicine traditions, has been explored by spiritual communities for more than two millenniums. Even ancient celibate traditions learned from the arts of existence problematization of semen expenditure, like the Hindu *brahmacarya* tradition, or the Buddhist art of *bodhicitta* cultivation. The sexual arts and inner cultivation exercises had been used for improving health, wellness, rejuvenation, and prolonging life. The myth of immortality achieved through sexual arts and inner cultivation not only was fascinating for ancient and medieval kings, but also for esotericism practitioners in the modern age, particularly in Europe and America, influenced by eastern traditions in their explorations. The arts of inner cultivation continue in the global age, with new developments; for example, Mantak Chia has modelled a metaphysics-free art of existence for the globalized generations, through a Sexual Kung-Fu system based in ancient Taoist traditions, in which sexual cultivation is a fundamental feature. Moreover, the resurgence of sexual cultivation practices takes distance from most of the patriarchal structures linked to the original *ars erotica* and arts of existence, and now women can actively engage in their own practices following female's priorities.

Intimate Relationships

The emergence of *bhakti* and the devotional movements, from Israel to India, is the reason why intimate relationships became a transcultural human problematization. Only after the expansion of the institution of marriage and the practice of monogamy within religious cultures the problem of intimate relationships and married couples becomes a central issue in societies all around the planet, with the focus on conjugal household and the right ways to conduce couple's life. The definitive example of the

ancient problematization on intimate relationships is the Kāmasūtra, an integral part of the Kāmaśāstra Hindu tradition. At the same time a love manual and a sex manual, the Kāmasūtra is also an an *ars erotica* and an arts of living handbook, prescribing without imposition 'the rules to be followed in order for a marriage to be dharmic', the advices for preserving 'fidelity' between the couple, particularly for the woman, 'and for maintaining their husbands love for them'. Nonetheless, the ancient sex manuals can't be reduced to mere *dispositifs* of domination from men over women. As Biardeau points out, there is a Hinduist initiative of 'seeking *mokṣa* in *kāma*' (liberation through desire) within their Tantric cultures, which can be detected in works like the Kāmasūtra, when it portrays how 'the couple reproduces the union of God and nature' and 'the experience of love is analysed as a self-dispossession'. This selflessness potential of the love and sex associated with intimate relationships has been problematized from ancient to medieval periods, from the *Ars Amatoria* written by Ovidio to the Islamic sex manual The Perfumed Garden, among many others. The tradition of the love and the sex manual has been prolonged in the global age by the New Age cultures, and the problematization of the intimate relationships has been recovered by contemporary psychology in their experimentation of sex life therapies, like Gina Ogden's pioneer large-scale survey designed to investigate the connections between sexuality and spirituality at the end of the 20th century, and her 'integrative model' of sex therapy, interconnecting physical, emotional, mental and spiritual elements into self-transformative processes. Sex therapy and couple therapy are common practices in globalized societies.

Gender Empowerment

Although gender-related issues had always been an integral part of social formation processes, gender only became a problematization in the 20th century, when identity construction and subjectivity production emerged as central components of modern culture. Feminist Theory was at the forefront of gender problematization, bringing light to more than five thousand years of oppression and domination by men over women. 'The power of women is strongly linked to sexuality', as Priyanka Thukral Mahajan affirms. 'Women, as objects of sexual attraction (...) have the power to influence and dissuade men from a higher purpose'. Therefore, 'to perpetuate order', it is 'necessary to

reign and control the power of women through restrictions on her sexuality'. Since ancient cultures, as Lerner demonstrates, 'the state has assumed the control of female sexuality', while social domination has been legitimated in the name of the sacred. Additionally, Queer Theory has contributed significantly to the gender problematization, after several centuries of hetero-normative intolerance. From ancient civilizations to early medieval cultures, homosexuality was never a problem, even when patriarchalism was deeply established; actually, there were not terms or concepts of heterosexuality and homosexuality in pre-modern cultures. But the moral codes of Christianity propitiated a change of perception, and its influence has remained until the present era. Parallelly, the other world religions had become conservative with non-heterosexual communities, and in this way, gender inquiries constitute political battles at the same time. Modernity debilitates classic kingdoms, but patriarchy continues through capitalism. Both Gender and Queer Theory analyse the modes in which female and male differences are socially constructed, including religious environments. Feminists and LGBTQI activists explore the challenges that non-heterocentric sexualities live in the interior of religious communities, with the support of the academia. Empowerment through spirituality is a central feature of all gender problematizations, although more identity-driven than selflessness-oriented. Queer Theology has developed since the 1990's, exploring problems as race, sexual orientation, and politics through the Holy Scriptures, like the book of Patrick Cheng, *Rainbow Theology: Bridging Race, Sexuality, and Spirit*, or the legacy of Marcella Althaus-Reid, mixing queer and feminist theory with Theology; Thealogy and Feminist Theology constitute other forefronts of religious sexuality and spirituality inquiry, at least, from 1978 with Phyllis Trible's book *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*. Yet gender empowerment has also been approached by communities living outside the moral codes of organized religion, like for example the cults of the 'goddess' popularized by Neo-Tantra female practitioners in the 21st century, reconnecting women with the divine.

Distinguishing the Sexuality and Spirituality Field and the Religion, Gender, and Sexuality Field of Studies and Research

The entire catalogue of the problematizations composing the full spectrum of sexuality and spirituality -related explorations is complex enough to distinguish more than one field of studies and research, even when all the areas of exploration keep their interconnections in everyday life. The heterosexist and heteropatriarchal background of the millenary sexuality and spirituality explorations was confronted in the middle of the 20th century with a particular type of academic research exploring experiences also linked to sexuality and spirituality, but focusing in gender problematizations within religious adscriptions—not accidentally: organized religion has been the model of spirituality more deeply engaged with the instauration of heteropatriarchal structures and heterosexist views within societies during three thousand years. This specific scholarly inquiry is distinguished today as the Religion, Sexuality and Gender (RS&G) field of studies. Feminist studies and Queer studies became the pioneer areas of scholarly research. While the research matrix and axis of the sexuality and spirituality field of studies is *ecstasy*—the spiritual dimension of sexual ecstasy—, the research matrix and axis of the RS&G field of studies is *gender*—and in general, the processes of subjectivity construction. While sexuality and spirituality inquiry approaches embodied experiences of sex life cultivation and non-ordinary states of consciousness derived from the traditions of arts of existence experimentation, RS&G inquiry embraces all kind of processes of subjectivity construction as central problematizations, like genre construction, identity, and sexuality formation. While sexuality and spirituality research brings to light the health and wellness potential of sex and eroticism in its divine dimension—and the social pertinence of that quest—, RS&G research reveals the social construction dimension of sexuality and spirituality experiences, because even embodiments are affected by different kind of power relationships conditionings, helping to make visible the vast, complex, and heterogeneous multiplicity of real lived processes related to sexuality and spirituality, surpassing the natural oppositions and the cultural binary systems. Therefore, the problematizations exposed by LGBTQI communities, studied through RS&G investigation, result very pertinent to all types of sexuality and spirituality explorations, including the research on the ungraspable and ineffable *selflessness* embodiment, yet

embracing power relationships analysis, socially-grounded perspectives, and real-life-supported diagnostics.

The picture of the full spectrum of sexuality and spirituality explorations only gets completed when the RS&G research is incorporated into the debate. That is why EXPLORING SEXUALITY AND SPIRITUALITY includes three chapters located within the interstices of the sexuality and spirituality and the RS&G fields of studies and research, in the hands of Rita Dirks, Huai Bao, Assumpta Sabuco Cantó, and Ana Álvarez Borrero. Dirks reflects on 'divine love' and 'the experience with the divine', as all sexuality and spirituality authors; 'We experience love, God, through our erotic relationships', she says. But in this volume Dirks focuses on the exploration on 'homosexual experience as mediating the experience with the divine', and 'the sacredness of homosexuality', as any other RS&G researcher. Bao examines the everyday life experience of celibacy, one of the classical debates of sexuality and spirituality studies, but also takes time to analyse the particularities of homosexual celibates and spiritual seekers. 'Why in some, if not all, Buddhist discourses' (…) he asks, are 'homosexual desires and acts 'often regarded as a form of sexual misconduct?', embracing RS&G problematizations into his work. Finally, Sabuco Cantó and Álvarez Borrero inquire about 'new alternative forms of sacredness', but focusing on feminist demands and feminist perspectives. 'While feminist women think their own genitals are sacred', Sabuco and Álvarez say, 'some Christian sectors assume this conception as harmful against the respect for the traditions and popular beliefs'. In this mode, these chapters approach sexuality and spirituality explorations, but assembled with RS&G problematizations related to subjectivity and gender construction, making use of queer and feminist critic theory to trace and detect what Bao refers to as 'the power structures' inserted in the codes followed by religious believers constructing their subjectivity and gender identities, functioning as determinant influences in their lives and their life possibilities.

The complementarity of the sexuality and spirituality and the RS&G fields of research, even in this book, resides in the balance acquired after paralleling their opposite contributions. The RS&G research traces the social construction of subjectivity by individuals and communities who prioritize spiritual activities in their lives,

particularly the people engaged in religious forms of spirituality; in this case, the analysis of the moral codes and the power relationships exerted by religious authorities results indispensable. As Bao explains, 'the regulation of sexuality by these religious institutions is largely impacting the subjects' perception of spiritual requirements and accomplishments'. And, when they don't follow heteronormativity, as he adds, 'members of gender and sexual minorities face even more sex-negative opinions and impressions'. Gender and subjectivity problematizations are always relevant in sexuality and spirituality explorations, because even if the mystical embodiment—conceived as Divinity or emptiness—is free from all cultural predeterminations, the complete lived experience includes more than the sublime, ecstatic, expansive state of consciousness; the experience includes also all the everyday processes allowing the embodiment to take place, and all the processes opened and continued after the non-ordinary embodied state ends. The selflessness experience research includes all what happens before and after the embodiment; 'an individual seeking self-determination and independence from imposed heterosexual practices'—as Oscar Wilde, a case explored by Dirks in this volume—, for example, lives singular processes which delineate particular spiritual paths, which deserve to be differentiated from the mainstream. And, in a complementary, opposite direction, sexuality and spirituality research focuses on how subjectivity and any other self-construction becomes dissolved in the selflessness embodiment, in the physical core of the experience in which all cultural conceptual formation and all self-referentiality melts away, the embodiment of ecstasy in which self-consciousness, identity, individuality—and all its singularities—get momentarily vanished within embodied 'absorptive states of consciousness', as Shining explicates. If subjectivity is central for RS&G scholars, selflessness is the priority for, not only sexuality and spirituality practitioners, but also sexuality and spirituality researchers. 'Pleasure is impersonal', says Papadopoullos; 'it shatters identity and subjectivity'. This unique type of embodiment and the unique type of experiences that enables and allows to live, opens possibilities much more enriching that simple individualistic hedonism. Experiencing ecstatic embodiments opens non-conventional perspectives in spirituality, but above all, opens the possibilities for heterogeneous modes of life and alternative ethical models.

Sexuality and spirituality explorations are now recovering its relevance in the contemporary ways of life, within the communities and societies of present-day globalized urban centres, after centuries of repression in both eastern and western cultures—indeed, where the reactionary heritage continues to be contested to this day. Therefore, even when sexuality and spirituality explorations constitute one of the foundational grounds of human knowledge—and, perhaps, one of the defining characteristics of the human species—, is clear that an sexuality and spirituality academic field of studies and research only takes form in the 21st century, when the new millennium opens up. It was impossible to develop a proper 'area' of sexuality and spirituality scholarly research before, because the full spectrum of sexuality and spirituality issues can't be reduced to the academic domain of a modern discipline. The embracement of sexuality and spirituality inquiries was impossible, of course, in the Age of Enlightenment, because the secularization processes had not become effective yet. But it was also impossible in the 19th and the 20th century, in the age of specialization of knowledge through compartmented disciplines. Sexuality and spirituality research is interdisciplinary by nature: sexuality and spirituality academic investigation is created between the intersections of the epistemological and practical boundaries of diverse modern disciplines, generating multi, inter, and transdisciplinary forms of research, as well as transversal academic communities and networks. This happens, simultaneously, to the increasing popular demand of everyday life sexuality and spirituality -related knowledge, the expansion of sexuality and spirituality practices, the multiplication of the self-managed networks, and the transcultural interaction of empirically cultivated practitioners making part of growing globalized communities.

Moreover, the sexuality and spirituality field of studies and research distinguishes itself from other sexuality and spirituality -related social spheres, like the New Age market of spirituality. Since the last decades of the 20th century, a New Age market has taken form within contemporary societies, nourishing an unprecedented demand for pragmatic and handy, everyday life sexuality and spirituality exploration. This is how a notion of 'sacred sexuality' finds its place in the public agenda, via the New Age market labels, using a religious word—'sacred'—connected with a secular construction—

'sexuality'—as an umbrella term to include commercial alternatives responding to a vast multiplicity of social lacks and desires. Authors like Nik Douglas or Margo Anand helped to carved the niche of 'sacred sexuality' inside the New Age market, and inheritors as Michael Mirdad continue to exploit successfully the segment of the market, through 'bliss manuals', handbooks concerning the 'alchemy of ecstasy', and step-by-step guides to embody 'sexual ecstasy'. While the RS&G field, and in general all the traditional academic sexuality and spirituality research has dismissed nature—the absolute, the ecstatic, and the embodied spiritual experience—extra-academic fields of exploration keep embracing these millenary inquiries in the 21st century. Since its origins, in the 1960's, the New Age market became the territory for exploring 'metaphysical' sexuality and spirituality questions. The friendly-for-the-masses and corporative-indulgent perspective of Osho's trademark, for example, represents the mainstream sexuality and spirituality model of 'sacred sexuality', 'sexual magic', 'sexual alchemy', 'Neotantra', or any given name of the market segment, which successfully attends today a growing demand of emotional health. Habitually, this market spaces are focused on the improvement of s*elf-esteem* as the 'spiritual' priority of the work offered by self-appointed 'gurus', 'experts', or community-recognized 'masters'. In spite of this, globalization opens the possibilities of reintegration of sexuality and spirituality practices in other forms beyond the services offered by self-centred capitalist markets. In the contrary, the priority of sexuality and spirituality scholarly and not scholarly research is knowledge, and the social pertinence of sexuality and spirituality -related knowledge experiences.

The production of subjectivity becomes richer and more complex as a result of the individualization processes globally forged by neoliberal capitalism since the end of the second millennium; this global contemporary condition produces an unlimited demand of individual and collective exploration of both sexuality and spirituality, expanding the limits of each autonomous sphere. In the 21st century the knowledge concerning sexuality and spirituality is disseminated through an overwhelming archipelago of scholar disciplines, ancient teachings and popular wisdom, divided and separated, but in increasing interaction, generating initiatives of integrative knowledge production. In the intent of bridging traditional—sometimes millenary—bodies of

non-academic teachings with cutting-edge research, the S sexuality and spirituality field of studies and research starts to take form while the new millennium opens up, generating knowledge experiences in the age of ephemeral information. Some of the interdisciplinary areas of studies and research related to the sexuality and spirituality traditions currently being developed in globalized urban centres are *sex life* and *couple therapy*, *sex education*, and *sex life cultivation*, facing the challenge of bridging ancient teachings with modern methods, particularly with health sciences in the case of biospiritual and sexual cultivation practices.

Contents, Approaches, and Methodologies Presented in this Book

Evidently, is impossible to be 'representative' of the unlimited multiplicity of views and approaches, many of them in contradiction within each other. But this collection offers a very illustrative picture of the actual state of sexuality and spirituality exploration and research, registering the broad panorama of its transcultural situation, exposing the immense variety of the perspectives of understanding, problematizations, methodologies, and ethics involved, as also, the commonalities founded in their heterogeneous models of explanation, their own valuation of the experience, and their descriptions of lived embodiments. Indeed, EXPLORING SEXUALITY AND SPIRITUALITY covers many approaches situated on opposite poles of the wide spectrum, from sacred scriptures interpretation to direct empirical experimentation; from revision of literature to fieldwork research; from in-depth interviews to news reports analysis; from personal view recountings to collective educational proposals, among some others. This book encompasses the discourses of disparate types of practitioners, from lecturers to social activists, from worshippers to psychonauts, from celibates to sex masters, from analysts or coaches to subversive poets. It comprises the values, habits, and affections of dissimilar styles of living, from the ascetic to the sexually-centred, from the brighter and ecological to the more obscure and experimental, from the neutrally agnostic to the religiously devotional, from organized religious parishioners to individuals 'who claim that they would label themselves as "spiritual" rather than "religious"'. And moves from the strictly sacred to the openly profane, from the spiritual bliss of Saint Teresa of Ávila to the nocturnal ecstasy lived

by the prostitutes of Georges Bataille's short stories, from consecrated celibates to present-day consensual sadomasochists, and so on.

The common interdisciplinary ground exposed in all the articles of the collection is not just a coincidence. Only through an interdisciplinary stance results possible to embrace many of the central problematizations of this book, located at the fringes of the specialized areas of knowledge, or within the interstices of the disciplines, if not completely out of academic programs, to this day. Some of the subjects of this book constitute crucial events in the history of the sexuality and spirituality explorations, like the relevance of the sex organs and sexual scenes depictions of prehistoric rock art—at least, since 40,000 years BCE—, the purpose of composing a sacred text devoted to sexual union like the Song of Songs—more than a thousand years before bce—, the epitome of a spiritual tradition centred on desire becoming a hegemonic religion, as is the case of the Trika Tantra of Kashmir Shaivism—between the 9th and 12th century—, the systematization of perennial sources of extreme, radical pleasure in modern times, like the BDSM scenes and communities—between the 19th and the 20th century—, and the globalized popularization of a very old expression that captures the spiritual potential of orgasm, the term *la petite mort*—in the 21st century. This ride takes us from Africa to Western Asia, and then from East Asia to Europe and America, to the globalized condition of present-day nations and societies in all continents, revealing some of the central problematizations repeated through the complete history of sexuality and spirituality exploration, even until today. Presenting this network of basic problematizations is a good introduction for anyone desiring to understand—or experience—the intrinsic relationships between sexuality and spirituality; is the rich and vast multiplicity of the full spectrum of sexuality and spirituality explorations—generated all across the opposite poles and the binary systems—from where the academic field of studies and research supplies itself, and is within a complex web of transversal relations, intersections, and overlappings between the disciplines that the central problematizations can get traced, and therefore, the field of research can be mapped.

Nevertheless, this book is more than a simple compendium of eclectic material, politically correct multicultural inclusivity, or dialectics between opposite

relations. EXPLORING SEXUALITY AND SPIRITUALITY functions as a map to detect, differentiate, and locate some of the central problematizations that compose the full spectrum of sexuality and spirituality contemporary explorations. Furthermore, this collection of essays and articles is an introduction to the emerging sexuality and spirituality interdisciplinary academic field of study and research. Sexuality and spirituality explorations are naturally and intrinsically interdisciplinary, and this volume proves it. Through its ten chapters the book provides concrete examples of integrative knowledge explorations and a space for experimentation for new models of inquiry, assembling multi, inter, or transdisciplinary projects of research and very different styles of writing. The authors are specialized in disciplines like religious studies, theology, anthropology, sociology, queer studies, literature, psychology, philosophy, and architecture. And from there, they compare, contrast, juxtapose, combine, blend, or synthetize their ideas, concepts, analysis, studies, and diagnostics with knowledge coming from other disciplines, like geomorphology, archaeology, neuroscience, ethnography, psychoanalysis, hermeneutics, musicology, education studies, feminist studies, poetry, performance arts, and ancient arts of existence, like Buddhism, Taoism, Tantra, and Yoga. Some of the most cited works in this book are the Old Testament's Song of Songs, *Madame Edwarda* by Georges Bataille, the three volumes of *The History of Sexuality* by Michel Foucault, and *Kiss of the Yoginī. "Tantric Sex" in its South Asian Contexts*, by David Gordon White. A sacred Judeo-Christian ancient scripture; a clandestine erotic short story; a critical genealogy of desiring man; and a religious studies history of Tantric Sex: this might give an idea of the unlimited horizon of the sexuality and spirituality interdisciplinary field of studies and research, and the complexity of the relations between its communicating vessels.

The book's ten chapters are distributed throughout five parts, each part linked to a specific research matrix, preceded by this introduction to the field of studies and research. The selected authors embrace interdisciplinarity, each one from its own singular perspective, from experienced scholars to young explorers, from academic associates to independent researchers, from religious believers to spiritual practitioners. What follows is a brief presentation of the sexuality and spirituality research matrixes used in EXPLORING SEXUALITY AND SPIRITUALITY, and a basic map

of the transversal relations, common problematizations, interconnected practices, resonant concepts, and shared affections founded between different chapters, but also of its opposed perspectives, multiple methodologies, unlike practices, dissimilar values, and contrary intents.

Natural Instincts: Exploring the Natural Conditioning of Sexual Expressions

Part 1, 'Natural Instincts', introduces the readers to sexuality and spirituality research presenting distinct essays inquiring the immanent, natural conditions intrinsic to sexual experience and the inherent connection between spirituality and nature, like sexual differentiation or sexual impulses, and its modes of being manifested. The first chapter of this book, perhaps the more poetic and intuitive, illustrates the possibilities opened for thinking what has not been thought yet, by non-disciplinary or non-academic projects of sexuality and spirituality exploration. 'Spirituality of the Sexually Charged Landscape', presented by Dennis Alan Winters, embraces the research on 'sex as a driving force of life and instinct', not only of animal or human species, but also of non-animated forms of life, like *land* itself. Winters focuses on 'the erotic play of male and female forces expressed through visually distinct and expressive patterns of topographic and morphologic relationships', taking the ancient Eastern model of cosmological conceptualization based in the opposition and intrinsic relation between female and male forces—like the *yin-yang* Taoist model, or the *śiva-śakti* Tantric/Yogic model—to the exploration of the immanent sexual forces embedded in earth's landscapes. Linking psychology, geomorphology, and Buddhist teachings, Winters traces both the 'beautiful' and the 'sublime' experiences generated by landscapes, caused by the intrinsic sexual forces molecularly present in their landforms. Winters' work questions anthropocentrism, and the assumption that eroticism is exclusive human property through a provoking reflection: 'Revealing her most private parts, nature's divine intention all along has been to illuminate our providence as sexual beings', he says. 'Rather than appearing to succumb to our allegorical anthropomorphizing of hills and valleys as sexual body parts, perhaps it has been the Earth Divine that has geopomorphized human beings'.

In the second chapter of this book, 'Spirituality and Sexuality in Prehistoric Art', Richard Alan Northover employs case studies of Palaeolithic and Neolithic rock art

from Europe, North America, and Southern Africa, to explore prehistoric sexuality. Northover argues why and how 'prehistoric sexuality can only be understood within the broader spectrum of prehistoric spirituality', presenting a multidisciplinary study examining and comparing two dissimilar methodologies: David Lewis-Williams's ethnographical and empirical research, and Bataille's flexible poetic-philosophical inquiries. The parallel between the two theories 'reveals striking similarities among prehistoric societies since the Upper Palaeolithic and across continents', he asserts; from Lascaux and Çatalhöyük to Newgrange and the Game Pass of the Drakensberg, a pattern seems to be repeated: 'spiritual potency' is constantly related with 'sexual potency'. Northover emphasizes the links between animality, sexuality, spirituality, and death, exposing how 'prehistoric spirituality consists within an animistic and shamanistic approaches to spirituality which concerns immanence and embodiment rather than transcendence'. Both Winters' and Northover's articles demonstrate that sexual/spiritual experiences are not only the product of cultivated civilizations, but more a natural display of forces that exists independently of the historical formations of human societies. Before the emergence of religious spirituality—which is always supported on transcendental cosmologies—the 'adored' forces to get in contact with seem to be purely immanent. No sign of gods, no theistic patterns can be traced. 'In prehistoric people: in myth narration; the art that they carved and painted; the rituals they performed and the structures they erected. All involve the common themes of death and desire', as Northover points out.

Religious Rapture: Exploring Sacred Scriptures' Views on Sexual Mysticism

Part 2, 'Religious Rapture', comprises two examples of religious sexuality and spirituality exploration, embracing the experience of eroticism and mysticism in religious-oriented modes of life. As any other research on religious spirituality, the methodological procedures are supported in the study of the corresponding sacred scriptures of each particular religious tradition researched. The third chapter in this collection, 'A Spirituality of Pleasure: The "Thousand-Year" Intercourse of Śiva and Śakti', by John R. Dupuche, studies and interpret the work of medieval theologian Abhinavagupta to explore the 'spirituality of pleasure' intrinsic to Kashmir Shaivism and the Tantric Kula ritual. Dupuche explains the meaning of the 'freedom' arising

'from the union of opposites' that characterizes Tantra, and how Shaivism's sacred scriptures depict the ultimate state of ecstatic pleasure within a sexual-spiritual experience as 'the "thousand-year" intercourse' of Śiva and Śakti, 'united in an eternal embrace from whose vibration the whole world emanates'. In all forms of Tantra, an integration of opposite sexual forces—female and male—constitutes not only the macrocosmic source of creation of the universe, but also the microcosmic fount of life for its human practitioners. In Trika Tantra, particularly, there is a conscious intent of trying 'to reach this Divine blissful consciousness', as Dupuche says, a state 'of unification of the Goddess with the God Śiva, at the crown of the head where they enjoy unbounded erotic bliss'. An important contribution by Dupuche in this debate is the way he includes the potential use of this form of spirituality of pleasure by committed celibates, pointing out how even the non-celibate practice of sexual *mudra* and *maithuna* in Tantra also makes use of ascetic components. Dupuche mentions *coitus reservatus*, a set of techniques incorporated by advanced practitioners—not in traditional Tantric popular rituals—which allows to embody 'the union of *eros* and *thanatos*, for he is sacrificing himself out of his desire for her. It is the ultimate ascesis, and at the same time the ultimate *eros*. The fullest *eros* is in fact achieved by the complete ascesis of self-emptying'. In this way, from a religious perspective, Dupuche identifies sexual practices where the erotic and the ascetic imply each other, and recovers the use of Tantra exerted by classic celibate practitioners—focused on visualization and meditation techniques—for 21st century new ascetic practitioners.

In the fourth chapter in this collection, 'Experiencing yada': Holistic Encounters of Spiritual Bliss between Christian Believer and God', Nicol Michelle Epple assembles phenomenological analysis with scriptural-based studies to meditate on the spiritual potential of intimate sexuality. According to Epple, 'Christians can *come* to "know" God more deeply and intimately by embracing the connection between spirituality and sexuality'. After her textual-study of certain passages of Song of Songs, Epple concludes that 'sex is used—and was created by God—as a metaphor for His desired intimacy with His believers'. Additionally, she exposes 'how music used for worship can facilitate these intimate experiences' and sketches 'the structure of contemporary Christian

worship music and describe the sensual auditory affectation derived from such worship experience'. Epple explains how 'the Western Church has divorced itself from sensual experience, often asking people to ignore their own bodies and desires. Underlying all desire, though, is the ultimate desire to know God. That desire is what drives believers'. In this way, Epple emphasizes the relevance of the body in 21st century Christian interpretations: not denying it, but embracing its capacity of generating pleasure, for spiritual purposes. Dupuche's and Epple's articles not only share the scriptural-interpretation methodology, but also an intent of, in Dupuche's own words, 'integrating eros into Christian mysticism. This paper wishes to make a contribution to this work'. Following Epple and Dupuche, it can be traced a Christian interpretation that 'does not oppose eros and spirituality'. Dupuche's theological inquiries stand at the 'forefront of interreligious dialogue' today, detecting 'striking correspondences' between Christianity and Tantra. 'The Tantric teaching, as this article suggests, opens up the possibilities latent in Christianity', asserts Dupuche. While Epple states that sex is used as a 'metaphor' in Christianity, Dupuche reveals how intercourse is expressed in 'symbolic' terms in Shaivism Tantra. Yet both of them help to clarify the 'spiritual dimension of the sexual relationship', as Epple says, and the fact that in eastern and western religions 'the relationship between the Word and the Spirit is also erotic, not in a limited way, but eminently', as their scriptural foundations and mystical embodiments can prove it.

Alternative Ecstasy: Exploring the Spirituality of Non-Hegemonic Sexuality

Part 3, 'Alternative Ecstasy', embraces research focused on the complex relations with spirituality and religion established by people and communities associated with non-hegemonic forms of sexuality, like non-heterocentric and non-patriarchal ways of expressing their sexual orientation or their gender identities. Queer and feminist perspectives are included in this book, tracing subjectivity construction processes in particular cases, individual or collective, related to spiritual or religious life events. In the fifth chapter in this collection, 'Oscar Wilde's Spirituality: The Erotics of Queer Theology', Rita Dirks immerses herself into the work of Oscar Wilde to explore the roots of modern queer theory. Wilde's writings, analyzed in relation to his 'plurality, or queerness', constitute a fertile ground for Dirks' interdisciplinary inquiry on the

'sacredness of homosexuality', assembling Literature Studies and Queer Theology into a text-based study. As she explains, 'Queer Theology, in part, desires to unite the spiritual and the erotic in order to encounter and express the sacred', and in this way, Wilde was a brave pioneer. Showing how Wilde 'almost identified himself with Christ', Dirks suggests that 'perhaps Wilde points the way, as a precursor or martyr for queer theology', as at least from 1895, 'he has become the martyr for gay rights'. As she states, 'the churches are moving from oppressing practicing homosexuals in Christ's name to believers in Christ's identification with Christ as one who suffered because he was queer'. This critical RS&G approach resonates with 21st century's new ways of interpreting sacred scriptures, 'conceiving the Judeo-Christian tradition within an essentially egalitarian continuum'. Some others go further, and reclaim the 'Christian tradition as itself queer'.

In the sixth chapter in this collection, 'The Holy Rebellious Pussy: New Feminist Demands and Religious Confrontations', Assumpta Sabuco Cantó and Ana Álvarez Borrero focus on a study case of transgressive performative protests in several cities of Spain to analyse critically how sexuality and diverse conceptions of what is sacred are expressed. Through this research Sabuco and Álvarez offer new insights about the hegemonic conceptions of sexuality maintained by religious institutions to this day. Feminist protesters, 'united against the sacredness of motherhood proposed by the government's reform', proclaimed an alternative sacralization: the sacralization of women's genitals. They took the streets of Málaga and Sevilla carrying 'a plastic vagina a couple meters high' on their shoulders, accompanied by songs rewritten in feminist style, in the 'same fashion as people carry the Christ or Virgin images in processions during Catholic holidays'. As Sabuco and Álvarez argue, 'Virgin Mary is one of the most important archetypes in Christianity: she tells what it is to be a good woman, so the resignification and renewed appropriation of this figure is to transgress what being a good woman means'. In this sense, 'the more or less artistic reinvention of the meaning of the Holy Virgin is a common strategy of many feminisms which want to break with the models imposed by a religious or moralist vision'. Placing the vulva at the centre of the performances and protest acts directly broke the hegemonic religious imagery, but not just for gratuitous transgression: is the life of women around the globe what is at

stake. Sabuco and Álvarez, through a critical approach, make visible the demand of women in the 21st century for a 'model of relations between sexes based on self-determination and no longer on inferiority'. The Holy Rebellious Pussy is a strategy of counter-conduct, a sexual response to the use of sacredness as a value for perpetuating domination relationships of men over women. The fact that the Holy Rebellious Pussy Procession was replicated in several cities across South America—actually, several years before the successful Chilean participative performance 'Un Violador en tu Camino' ('A Rapist in Your Path')—shows how the globalized demand for women's sexual empowerment keeps growing when repressive habits and millenary patriarchal-religious sexual constraints are still systematically maintained.

Taboo Challenges: Obstacles and Strategies for New Sexuality and Spirituality Re-Integrations

Part 4 'Taboo Challenges' is focused on the tensions that still permeate the intents of integrating sexuality and spirituality in everyday life, mainly in cases of religious spiritualities. The works here included are not only centered on individual processes of subjectivity, but also in collective and sociopolitical processes; one brings light into the existing gap between religious spirituality values and the freedom of people to actually engage in sexual practices, while the other one is centered on education as the strategy to overcome the obstacles that impede the development of consistent forms of integrating sexuality and spirituality. In the seventh chapter of this collection, 'The (In)compatibility between Spirituality and Sexuality: Contemporary Chinese Case Studies', Huai Bao uses in-depth interviews to investigate 'the interrelatedness between spirituality and sexuality in the lived experiences of contemporary China', where 'modern spirituality is informed by a blend of Buddhism and other religions', and confirms how 'regulation of sexuality by religious institutions and dogma is largely impacting the subjects' perception of spiritual purity and accomplishments'. As Bao finds out, 'all the interviewees have expressed a common concern about the contradiction between spiritual empowerment and sexual urges and attractions', with direct consequences on their 'emotional stability and peace of mind', generating 'a lasting sense of guilt about their sexuality'. Bao also observes how 'the discourses over (in)compatibility between sexuality and spirituality appear to be informed more by

stereotypes instilled by media and beliefs reinforced by those who hold more discursive power, rather than by first-hand data and real-life interactions'. And the situation is even more complex when LGBTQI communities' demands enter into the debate. As Bao confirms, 'of course, members of gender and sexual minorities face even more sex-negative opinions and impressions', when their decisions and choices are interpreted as threats to the power structures of the religious institutions. In this way, Bao's article helps to trace the power relationships diagrams embedded in the circumstances lived by Chinese people up to this day, and makes visible the gigantic gap between traditional religion's moral and current, globalized emotional demands.

In the eighth chapter in this collection, 'Sex Education and Tantra', Pavel Hlavinka analyses how the contemporary reconfiguration of ancient spiritual traditions can be used as a direct source of empowerment for people today. His work is an exploration of the possibilities of Trika Tantra and Kashmir Shaivism's spirituality of pleasure as a source of inspiration for innovative adult sex education programs. As Hlavinka reveals, 'institutions at present merely cover sex education in terms of the physiology of conception and the health risks involved'; Hlavinka adds that 'precious few young people receive guidance on having a satisfactory relationship at an erotic level or on the perception of sexuality from a spiritual perspective'. Hlavinka points out the two main factors that make of Tantra an authentic alternative to the western educational system: its '*ars erotica*' and 'self-knowledge'. 'The reduction of human sexual and emotional complexity to the instrumental, rational domain of a *scientia sexualis*', as Hlavinka states, 'differs substantially from Tantra, which is not about determining or studying behaviours, it is about developing abilities and skills, and about learning how to manage situations'. An *ars erotica* is based on the continuous practice, and the Tantic *ars erotica* consists in 'perfecting the skills of achieving union with the Divine through the sexual union' with a couple. This fundamental spiritual goal, an ultimate purpose traced in all sexuality and spirituality research, is mixed by Hlavinka in his program with the classic value of 'self-knowledge', helping to maintain a connection with the self-oriented demands of global capitalism, which constitute the mainstream concern of today's cultures, as Bao's research also can proves. The contemporary perspective of spirituality as a 'vehicle' for individual development is, in Dirks words,

about 'the connection between spirituality and sexuality, the interconnection of both in one healthy identity, being authentic, honest with who we are for our ultimate individual development'. Indeed, individual development constitutes the driving force of most types of globalized spiritualities, as Heelas has demonstrated before, from the 'self-religion' of spiritual seekers to the selflessness in the 'spiritualities of life' of many communities all around the globe. In this sense, Hlavinka decides to play—as his pedagogic strategy—with the popular demand for 'personal growing' of New Age re-adaptations of Tantra. 'The tradition and the training of the arts of love are one of the most practical ways of gaining self-knowledge, while exploring our own sexuality', he says. And makes emphasis, as all other sexuality and spirituality authors, in the fact that 'everything starts with the body', proposing educating 'inputs and orientation for our body, since the very start, before anyone can be start thinking in spiritual efforts, specially our younger people'. Its adaptability is more flexible than any other source of sex cultivation. Hlavinka argues that 'Tantric views regarding sexual and love relationships can be useful to persons and communities all over the world, even remaining faithful to other religions'. From his view, Tantric sex education becomes 'an alternative to the values of competitive struggle intrinsic to the marketplaces of the contemporary world, enhancing love, union and solidarity instead of greed and competition', but also, a real alternative to 'pharmacological manipulation of human sexual behaviour'.

Limit-Experience Embodiments: Erotico-Mystical Arts and Non-Normative Sexual Practices

Part 5, 'Limit-Experience Embodiments', joins interdisciplinary research on sexual practices that potentially generate spirituality experiences, and research on mystical embodiments generated through sexual practices. The ninth chapter in this collection, 'The Abandoned Self: Excess and Inner Experience in Sadomasochism', written by Catherine Papadopoullos, focuses on the limit-experience of sadomasochism (SM), approaching sm as an *ars erotica*, to explore the self-transformative 'possibilities of pleasure' and the spirituality of 'transgressive sex'. Assembling philosophy, avant-garde literature, and psychoanalysis within a phenomenological model and a critical-analytical approach, Papadopoullos researches on the mystical experience generated

through consensual SM, exposing how its practice allows the individual to enter into 'an entirely different order of experience'. SM is the perfect example to appreciate the complex interaction between the opposite processes located at the extreme poles of the sexuality and spirituality spectrum: self-construction and selflessness. While Papadopoullos points out how SM is used by practitioners 'to make themselves into the persons they want to be', and subsequently 'establish the condition of a culture self-construction, where agents become the artisans of their own destiny'—exposing the problematizations of RS&G explorations—, she also illustrates how SM is part of the 'methods for provoking the loss of self' and 'annihilation of one's consciousness': 'the boundaries of the subject become challenged and subverted. Deconstruction of self-making and de-subjugation happen simultaneously through the embodiment of a radical limit-experience'. The sexuality and spirituality ultimate goal can be effectively embodied practicing SM, the embodiment of selflessness, the opposite goal to subjectivity realization. Pleasure is 'a place where identity can be temporarily displaced', Papadopoullos says; 'identity becomes "other" than itself', and in this way, life becomes more fulfilling, because 'intense pleasure is de-subjectifying, is impersonal. It can disassociate and tear the individual from identity in such a way that they are no longer a subject as they were before'. If sexuality functions as 'the *dispositif* that binds pleasure to identity', she says, 'turning humans into subjects' in capitalist societies, SM is used as a gate for selflessness. This 'will to depersonalise oneself' executed through sadomasochism, like Papadopoullos asserts, makes possible to embody the instant 'at which eroticism passes without hindrance into the sacred', and implies 'the necessary separation or detachment of the person' to function as a spiritual experience by itself. Therefore, the sexuality and spirituality research on selflessness embodiments helps to uncover 'the revolutionary implications of sexuality and human desire'.

In the tenth—and final—chapter in this collection, 'Embodying "The Little Death" of Orgasm: An Interdisciplinary Research on Sexual Trance', Phil Shining embraces the academic exploration of the sexual trance experience and the erotico-mystical embodiment. Assembling 'heterogeneous forms of knowledge', like avant-garde poetry, post-structuralist philosophy, techniques of the four ancient eastern arts of existence—

Tantra, Taoism, Yoga, Buddhism—, and neurophysiological models of scientific explanation, Shining presents an interdisciplinary research on orgasm and sexual bliss, looking forward transdisciplinary contents intended to be used directly in sexual practice. Shining focuses his research on the physical and biological ground supporting the expression *la petite mort*, a millenary French language game that had become popular today, because of the way it characterizes 'some unusual effects of sexual climax'. He traces the commonalities between all the heterogeneous forms of knowledge related to orgasm and sexual trance, finding that all sources problematize 'the interrelations between sexual ecstasy and the experience of dissolution, or death of the self'. In all cases, orgasm is regarded as an experience which 'enables a loose of the sense of the self through the embodiment of a—more or less—intense state of trance', and an 'absorptive state of consciousness': an active and perceptive state of consciousness without any type of mind production. In this way, Shining concludes that 'the expression *la petite mort* functions as a highly accurate description of the embodiment determining the neurophysiological core of sexual trance', but also, of 'trance experiences in general, and mystical experiences in general'. He proposes making emphasis on sexuality and spirituality empirical research, pointing out the urgency of bridging science and practical arts of living, to generate sexual and spiritual knowledge. And also opens new debates on the spiritual potential of ancient arts of love techniques, like the *coitus reservatus*, which Dupuche and Hlavinka also highlight. Orgasm is a little death when man ejaculates, losing his vitality and vigor, but orgasm can be the direct experience of emptiness and ultimate reality without the loss of life, without the 'expenditure' that Bataille describes, *if coitus reservatus* is practiced.

The chapters of Papadopoullos and Shining share crucial sexuality and spirituality problematizations, especially those related with Bataille's and Foucault's avant-garde conceptualization on mystical experiences attained through challenging physical practices, recognized by them as 'limit-experiences', and characterized as the dissolution of the frontiers between subject and object. Through the work of Bataille and Foucault the articles of Papadopoullos and Shining offer tools for exploring profane forms of mysticism and secular selflessness, outside the reach of religious perspectives—*divine*, indeed, but not exactly *sacred*, as comprehended by religious

morality. In secularized urban societies, the 'death of God'—in Nietzsche's tradition—has created an absence that, eventually, gets fulfilled through other type of sublime experiences, and eroticism is one of them. Eroticism is sexual and spiritual at the same time, that is what defines it. The ecstatic sexual experience can be used as an opportunity to live the 'death of the self', and experience the plenitude of life without an ego, when all self-narratives dissolves and auto-referentiality ceases in remaining brain activity—producing an altered state of consciousness in resonance with 'absolute emptiness'. For Foucault, the spiritual efforts consist in 'to render oneself permanently capable of getting free of oneself'. In this direction, Papadopoullos and Shining explore spirituality as 'self-transformation', in the way Foucault understands it, not only as an affective but also as an ethical life-reconfiguration, where spirituality is conceived and lived, in Papadopoullos' words, as 'a matter of doing, of praxis'.

Moreover, the interrelations and commonalities detected between the chapters focusing on sacred, religious rapture, and the chapters dealing with profane, spiritual ecstasy, are solid enough to delineate the basis of the sexuality and spirituality field of research—while demonstrating also how socially constructed is the binary system differentiating the 'sacred' and the 'profane', although not because of being constructed the differences are less real. Epple's chapter interconnects with Shining's research on orgasm as the immanent embodiment of a mystical experience, describing how in 'orgasm there is a physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual transposition of oneself into a place of oneness with the partner'. Epple's, Dupuche's, Papadopoullos', and Shining's works coincide in bringing light on the experience of 'orgasm as a glimpse of divinity', and embracing scholarly investigation focused on 'the mysticism intrinsic to ecstasy—even maintaining their differences, the formers conceiving ecstatic bliss as the union with a transcendent Divinity, and the latter as melting within an immanent absolute reality. Although the ecstatic mystical experience is habitually understood in terms of 'self-transcendence' in times of New Age spiritualities, Winters, Papadopoullos, Northover, and Shining demonstrate that an immanent sense of the divine is always possible. While religious Buddhist teachers give him theistic interpretations about what he sees, Winters presents divinity directly, on Earth's landforms, without needs of any additional transcendental explanation. Papadopoullos

and Shining exhibit the inherent divinity to sexual ecstasy without recurring to religious explanations, only to the biological and cosmological physicality of human bodies and its surrounding environments, and in this way, interconnect with Northover and his reconstruction of prehistoric, pre-religious spirituality, with shamans' and trance dancers' 'forays into the spirit world, during altered states of consciousness'. 'Perhaps the potency of the spirit world can be seen as a more general animating—or animal, or animistic—force', hypothesizes Northover, an immanent network of 'forces suffusing the entire universe, involving everything in an endless cycle of life and death'. And that is why Northover also sees, as Bataille saw first, 'the idea of sexual climax as "the little death"—*la petite mort*—' being a central component of prehistoric art expressions. The limit-experience and its intrinsic relation to ecstasy has always been at the center of sexuality and spirituality problematizations; as Northover says, 'Transgression, eroticism, excess and art involve the attempt to bridge this divide between continuous and discontinuous being, between life and death'.

However, as Hlavinka points out, 'sexual pleasure is now seen by many as a path of spirituality', perhaps too easily. It has been mainstreamed in the New Age market, incentivizing speculation regarding knowledge on sexuality for the sake of business, as promoting self-proclaimed forms of spirituality reduced to simple well-being, and self-indulgency. The intent of the authors of this volume, EXPLORING SEXUALITY AND SPIRITUALITY, is to contribute with their research to the development of the sexuality and spirituality and RS&G fields of studies, and support its embracement in academic spaces, in contact with everyday people's necessities. In times when spirituality becomes everything and nothing, the sexuality and spirituality field of studies and research enhances the debate on the ethical dimension of spirituality, bringing back the attention to the ecstasy embodiment and the experience of bliss, not only as a 'natural high', but also as a self-transforming event, potentially reaching a non-individualistic ethical core, privileging the mother of all self-transformations: what Papadopoullos refers to as 'loss of self', and Shining as 'losing the ego' or 'ego-dissolution' experiences, what Northover mentions as the 'physical and spiritual rebirth' of communities even before the first civilizations. As Epple reminds, the etymological roots of 'the word *ékstasis* in ancient Greek means "to stand outside

oneself", feeling outside, elsewhere': ecstasy as an opportunity to dive into the 'satisfying yet longing-producing desire reached through a giving up of oneself'. That is selflessness. It is 'bliss without distinction between the experience and the experiencer', as Dupuche affirms. 'The sense of ego disappears … It is an emptying of oneself, a forgetfulness of oneself. It is a losing of oneself in the other'. Is the moment when pure, absolute sensation takes over the body and incarnates the sublime, as Winters beautifully pictures it, 'in one's skin as the border between self and landscape': right here, right now, in the frontier between inner experience and the infinite. <>

Subatomic Writing: Six Fundamental Lessons to Make Language Matter by Jamie Zvirzdin [Johns Hopkins University Press, 9781421446127]

See science writing fundamentals afresh through a subatomic lens!
In *Subatomic Writing*, Johns Hopkins University instructor Jamie Zvirzdin goes bravely into uncharted territory by offering a totally new kind of guide for writing about science—from the subatomic level up! *Subatomic Writing* teaches readers that the building blocks of language are like particles in physics. These particles, combined and arranged, form something greater than their parts: all matter in the literary universe. The six levels of language covered in this guide create writing that illuminates and energizes the reader to feel, learn, change, and act. This interdisciplinary approach helps scientists, science writers, and editors improve their writing in fundamental areas as they build from the sounds in a word to the pacing of a paragraph. These areas include

- Sound and sense
- Word classes
- Grammar and syntax
- Punctuation
- Rhythm and emphasis
- Pacing and coherence

Equally helpful for students who need to learn how to write clearly about science and scientists who need to hone their writing skills to create more effective course material, papers, and grant applications, this guide builds confidence in writing abilities as old skills are taught in new, exciting ways. Each lesson provides exercises that build on each other, strengthening readers' capacity to communicate ideas and data, all while learning basic particle physics along the way.

Review

Jamie Zvirzdin has written a quirky, quarky, marvelously helpful, relentlessly readable guide to effective science communication. Like particle physics, grammar and good writing are, at their core, a system of rules and relationships. Master these and the universe is yours!
—Mary Roach, author of *Fuzz* and *Stiff*

Metaphor is both the food of science and the spice of language. Jamie Zvirzdin links principles of physics

with those of grammar and linguistics, adds a pinch of poetics, and serves up a tasty guide to scientific thinking and writing.
—Christopher Joyce, Correspondent, Science Desk, NPR

By equating the fundamental particles of the Standard Model to elements of writing, Zvirzdin has created an engaging book that teaches the mechanics of science writing. Her novel approach, interspersed with fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, is both valuable and refreshing. It is a book all scientists should have on hand.
—Steven C. Martin, senior programmer at NASA / Goddard Space Flight Center

Subatomic Writing—Jamie Zvirzdin's innovative guide to telling stories of science—uses particle physics, demons, science history, family life, and a terrific sense of humor to make its points. The result is smart, effective, and a whole lot of fun.
—Deborah Blum, Pulitzer Prize–winning science writer, director of the Knight Science Journalism Program at MIT, and founder of *Undark Magazine*

Inspired! *Subatomic Writing* provides an insightful and helpful new doorway into the foundations of language and writing, all wrapped up in some imaginative fun.
—Mignon Fogarty, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing*

This is a fantastic writing resource for people like me, people whose first language isn't English. As a guide, the book develops your writing skills, but it also tells a story, which helps you walk through the harder parts of English step by step. Easy to read, informative, and entertaining!
—Jihee Kim, Argonne National Laboratory

Jamie Zvirzdin's brilliant, engaging writing guide, *Subatomic Writing,* is ostensibly here to help those who write about science, but her clear explanations, practical lessons, and gift for metaphor will help anyone struggling to assemble words into coherent strands. Who knew that the building blocks of language shared so much with particle physics? A wonderfully unique guide to vibrant writing.
—Dinty W. Moore, author of *The Mindful Writer* and founder of *Brevity Magazine*

Forget your preconceptions of what a book about grammar and writing is like. This is a wild ride, entertaining, enlightening, practical, and hands-on. Plus you'll learn some particle physics to boot! Zvirzdin's enthusiasm for clarity, conciseness, and vibrancy in science writing is contagious.
—Pierre Sokolsky, Dean Emeritus of the University of Utah College of Science, Distinguished Professor of Physics and Astronomy, and author of *Introduction to Ultrahigh Energy Cosmic Ray Physics*

Writing, as you may have heard, is not rocket science. In fact, it's particle physics, as Jamie Zvirzdin demonstrates in *Subatomic Writing*, her insightful new guide for the nerdy-minded scribe.
—Dava Sobel, author of *Longitude*, *Galileo's Daughter,* and, most recently, *The Glass Universe*

The type of book you can read from cover-to-cover to get an idea of everything you need to know

about writing without being bored...I found new nuggets of insight that could help me write better.
—*Fancy Comma*

UNHALLOWED ORIGINS

> Play is a strategy for learning at any age. — Mara Krechevsky, Harvard University, Project Zero

THE NIGHT THE dEMON came to me, it was my turn to put my eleven year old, Maxwell, to bed. Like his nineteenth century namesake, the physicist James Clerk Maxwell, Max is passionate about science, works extra hard in social circles, and loves playing with language. Where science and language arts overlap is a comfortable place for us, and it's roomier than people think.

Max and I were sitting on his bed that chill October night, reading Gary Larson's The Complete Far Side, Volume 3—yes, Volume 3—when Max turned to me.

"Why do scientists in cartoons always act like morons?" he asked.

I closed the book, stood, and pulled his Star Wars blanket over him. Our black brown tabby cat, Tom, jumped onto the bed and curled up on Luke Skywalker's face.

"To be fair," I said, petting the cat, "every one in cartoons, including cows and chickens, does dumb stuff. It's easy to poke fun at scientists because they're brilliant and busy, but I think people are genuinely frustrated when scientists can't—or won't— communicate information so people understand the science. Some scientists never learned how— in fact, many of my friends say they never realized they'd be writing so much in their science careers. They often say they wish they'd taken the time to learn how to write better." I scratched Tom under his chin, and the purring grew louder. "James Clerk Maxwell was brilliant in physics, but he was even more brilliant because he knew how to write about physics in a way that was accessible to others. He wasn't afraid to use analogies and play around with a little fiction to explore ideas . . . like his thought experiment with a little demon, for example."

"Maxwell's demon."

"Yes. A demon that could reverse chaos. In a letter to his friend Peter Tait, Maxwell imagined that this 'finite being' could separate hot from cold particles inside a divided box. Sorting the particles lessened the chaos in the system, but it also seemed to undermine some universal laws. Then another scientist, William Thomson— Lord Kelvin— loved the idea and called it Maxwell's 'sorting demon.' The name stuck, spread, and helped people visualize and mentally sort all those invisible particles." I bent down and kissed Max on the forehead. "You know, Gary Larson actually loves science. He wanted to study bugs as an entomologist. But his cartoons show that the curse of knowledge is a prob lem for both scientists and society because we don't talk to each other in a way the other can understand. If we did, I suspect we'd have fewer pseudoscience scams, more brilliant breakthroughs— and more public support for science."

Max wriggled deeper under the blanket and pulled Tom close to his chest. "You should write a book for your students," he said. He brightened. "It could be a thought experiment— how we can reverse chaos in the world through better science writing."

"Hmm, maybe." I hedged, thinking of my epic todo list. "Anyway, g'night. Love you."

"Love you too."

I walked into the next room and turned on my computer to work on some programs for the Telescope Array Proj ect, an international physics collaboration in Utah. Even though I earned a master's degree in writing and lit er a ture, my first love is physics, so by day, I teach science writing to gradu ate students at Johns Hopkins University; by night, I work on analy sis programs or remotely run cosmic ray tele scopes. We use these sensitive detectors in the Utah desert to track ultrahigh energy cosmic rays, understand them, and figure out where they come from.

While Earth's atmosphere and magnetic field shield our planet from the worst of cosmic bombardment, these "rays" are actually highspeed subatomic particles, often protons, that zip through the universe and collide with our atmosphere, our Earth, and our DNA, causing small mutations within us. Outside Earth's protective magnetic field, cosmic rays can cause radiation prob lems for astronauts. We can't boldly go where no Shatner has gone until we figure out how to handle cosmic ray shrapnel.

While some physicists detect cosmic rays on satellites and other spacecraft, the Telescope Array Proj ect—and its Southern Hemi sphere sibling, the Pierre Auger Observatory— tracks cosmic rays from the ground. When a cosmic ray hits our atmosphere, the tiny blast creates a shower of other subatomic particles, including particles of light. The light—called photons, packets of energy— scatters out and hits our detectors, which we run on clear, moonless nights. With geometry and some data crunching, we see how those photons point back to where the cosmic ray entered and how much energy the original cosmic ray particle had. Where in the sky ultrahigh energy cosmic rays come from, how massive they are, and what causes them still needs to be proven with statistical accuracy. I am fortunate to work with marvelously talented people at the University of Utah, colleagues who not only take time to answer my questions but also make the learning pro cess enjoyable.

Although tracking subatomic particles is one of the greatest pursuits and pleasures of my life, sharing what I know through writing is another. Human communication, like particle physics, is complex, chaotic, confusing. I'm grateful my parents and En glish teachers read to me, listened to me read out loud, and helped me make sense of the hot mess that is the En glish language. Individual words shift

sound, form, and meaning almost at random, jostle against other words, and combine or break down into new entities. Either by themselves or together in phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs, words can be slowed or accelerated, losing or gaining momentum rhythmically or erratically.

Other words zip past our comprehension entirely, or at low energies, they rain down on our heads, impacting the surface only and never reaching our brains. A few words, however, burrow deep into us, causing critical changes to our way of thinking, our way of being. If too many words smash into us at energies too high for us to handle, we simply shut down, as some of our Telescope Array detectors do when a plane flies by on a dusty, smoky night. The words are overbright: too much information, too much noise, not enough substance. Frustrated by unexplained jargon flung at them from atop university towers, many people have likewise shut down, turning to less reliable— and more soundbitable— sources for information.

That cold October night, while I stared at the twisted syntax of my Python program, it hit me: particles of language are like particles of matter. Maybe if we visualized language, especially writing, as specific sets of particles colliding and interacting with each other, we could be better science communicators and break the curse of knowledge— reverse communication chaos in a world prone to pseudoscience and error. At the very least, we could or ga nize the chaos so readers are better able to detect and reconstruct our words with more accuracy, ease, and interest.

My mind drifted further from my program to Ada Lovelace, mathematician and daughter of the poet Lord Byron. While Charles Babbage first worked on the Analytical Engine— the humble beginnings of the mighty computer—it was Lovelace who recognized its potential. And, more importantly, she wrote about the Engine's abstract algorithm clearly and accessibly in her 1843 work, Sketch of the Analytical Engine, which Babbage never did. Similarly, James Clerk Maxwell pored over Henry Cavendish's chemical, electrical, and geological research and then wrote about it, distilling the brilliance of shy Cavendish and adding his own original notes. Taking time to repack age information from others in writing has itself led to innovation and insight.

My science writing students at Johns Hopkins are marvelously diverse. Some are En glish majors fresh out of undergrad who love science and want to include it in their fiction, nonfiction, or poetry. Some are science journalists and write articles for news outlets, magazines, or educational companies. Still others work as medical professionals and scientists— across all disciplines— and want to write grants, lab reports, white papers, articles for research journals, and nonfiction books, including memoirs. The desire to communicate is there, as is the desire to understand the universe we inhabit.

My students' knowledge of English grammar and usage is as diverse as their science backgrounds, anywhere from "I never learned this" to "I forgot everything" to "I'm already an editor." Since no writing instructor can share all they know in one semester or one book, I encourage my students to proactively fill in bits of missing knowledge by using Google, Wikipedia, Merriam-Webster Online, Khan Academy's free grammar course, or if they're really serious about improving their publication odds, by reading The Chicago Manual of Style directly, as I did in college and as my students often choose to do during the semester. There will always be some tiny issue to double check in the style guide of your choice (or your editor's choice), but most problems I've seen over the years as a science editor point back to a few missing fundamental lessons regarding the nature of language.

Particles of language are like particles of matter. Such a fragmentary approach to writing, using a meta phor from subatomic physics, would be a risky, interdisciplinary thought experiment, like Maxwell's sorting demon: speculative rather than definitive. I thought of Michael Faraday's fear, in 1852, as he wrote about a new metaphor for magnetism— "lines of force"—in Experimental Researches in Electricity:

> I am now about to leave the strict line of reasoning for a time, and enter upon a few speculations respecting the physical character of the lines of force. . . . It is not to be supposed for a moment that speculations of this kind are useless, or necessarily hurtful, in natural philosophy. They should ever be held as doubtful, and liable to error and to change; but they are wonderful aids in the hands of the experimentalist and mathematician. For not only are they useful in rending the vague idea more clear for the time, giving it something like a definite shape, that it may be submitted to experiment and calculation; but they lead on, by deduction and correction, to the discovery of new phenomena, and so cause an increase and advance of real physical truth, which, unlike the hypothesis that led to it, becomes fundamental knowledge not subject to change.

Maybe physics itself could give abstract writing principles a more concrete shape. As I stared out the dark win dow and listened to the wind howl in the nearby woods, I thought, We need to play with language again, bring back the spirit of speculation. Maybe I could write a book after all. I saved the program, shut down the computer, and went to bed.

As my husband slept like the loggiest of logs on the other side of the bed— both Andrew and Max are sound sleepers, a trait I envy— I had fi nally drifted into dreams when something heavy sat on my chest. I couldn't move, couldn't breathe. I struggled to open my eyes. A shadow loomed over me, and the blue light from the bedside phone charger dimly illuminated the shadow's wicked features. An electric shock of terror charged through me, and then I remembered: Sleep paralysis! Night hag! Not again. Schedule another sleep test tomorrow. Night hags are the worst!

"Who you callin' hag, b——?" the shadow hissed.

I jerked in surprise and found I could move again. My fight response kicked in, and I kicked that hag right off the bed. What ever it was fell with a satisfying thud onto the carpet. I heard an "oof," then a groan. The shadow picked itself up. "I'm

not a f——ing succubus, woman. I'm a demon. Your demon, in fact,

and you just summoned me."

"What?" I whispered. "I did not."

"C'mon, 'Bring back the spirit of speculation'? Methinks thou didst,

dumbass. Shall we go downstairs to talk?"

Great, I thought. Maxwell's mother's demon.

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As odd as the encounter had been, I slept remarkably well the rest of the night, the best sleep I'd had in years. I opened my eyes Monday morning more cheerful than Winnie the Pooh in an ocean of honey. I shook off lingering whisps of the previous night with ease: the human brain is so easily duped by our own faulty senses. They say seeing is believing— maybe hearing, too, in the case of Socrates— but it shouldn't be. All the same, the dream had been refreshing, demon notwithstanding. In fact, it had almost convinced me to write a book.

"Have you seen Tom?" Max asked at the breakfast table. Andrew had already left for work. "Also, did you do a chemistry experiment last night?"

My honey bright smile slid off my face and dripped onto the linoleum. I ran into the library. Glass shards and cat brush on the floor. Starburst burn on chair and rug. I spotted my pencil and notebook on the coffee table. Among the graphite scribbles were three tables and a doodle of a three eyed demon.

I knew then I was destined to spend the next seven days crafting the strangest writing guide ever. I stomped back to the kitchen for a broom.

THE PARTICLE CHALLENGE

So here it goes, for poor Tom's sake, a fragmentary adventure with the particle nature of language. Since we might as well make the best of this nonsense, I invite readers to experiment with Subatomic Writing using the exercises at the end of each lesson. After you've finished the book, challenge yourself to use all six lessons to write one short, vibrant 700 word article, essay, or story teaching something about science (something accurate, please, based on reliable sources). I ask my students to use exactly 700 words, to practice concision and syntax flexibility. Then publish your writing or perform it somewhere! Feel free to join the conversation on Twitter with the tags #SubatomicWriting and @jamiezvirzdin. If, under demonic duress, you had to match up the particles of the physical and literary universes, how would you do it? <>

THE EXISTENTIAL HUSSERL: A COLLECTION OF CRITICAL ESSAYS edited by Marco Cavallaro & George Heffernan [Contributions to Phenomenology, Springer, ISBN 9783031050947]

- This is the first book to cover Husserl's phenomenology of existence
- Collects the contributions of a team of internationally recognized scholars collaborating on a neglected but essential aspect of Husserl's phenomenology
- Remedies the widespread but misleading impression that transcendental phenomenology does not and cannot deal with existential questions

This book examines Husserl's approach to the question concerning meaning in life and demonstrates that his philosophy includes a phenomenology of existence. Given his critique of the fashionable "philosophy of existence" of the late 1920s and early 1930s, one might think that Husserl posited an opposition between transcendental phenomenology and existential philosophy, as well as that in this respect he differed from existential phenomenologists after him. But texts composed between 1908 and

1937 and recently published in Husserliana XLII, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie* (2014), show that *the existential Husserl* was not opposed but open to the phenomenological investigation of several basic topics of a philosophy of existence. A collection of contributions from a team of internationally recognized scholars drawing on these and other sources, the present volume offers insights into the relationship between phenomenology and philosophy of existence. It does so by (1) delineating the basic outlines of Husserl's phenomenology of existence, (2) reinterpreting the tension between Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and Jaspers's and Heidegger's philosophy of existence as well as Kierkegaard's and Sartre's existentialism, and (3) investigating the existential aspects of Husserl's phenomenological ethics. Thus focusing on neglected aspects of Husserl's thought, the volume shows that there is a consensus between classical phenomenology and existential phenomenology on the urgency of addressing the existential questions that in *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936) Husserl calls "the questions concerning the meaning or meaninglessness of this entire human existence". *The Existential Husserl* represents a major contribution to the clarification of the historical and philosophical developments from transcendental phenomenology to existential phenomenology. The book should appeal to a wide audience of many readers at all levels looking for phenomenological answers to existential questions.

Contents

This volume is the direct result of a contingent encounter with existential consequences. In July 2017, we, the editors, met at the 48th Annual Meeting of the Husserl Circle in Rethymno, Crete. Heatedly debating the complex thought of a leading German philosopher in the midst of a hot Greek summer can have not only unhealthy but also salutary after-effects. Until now the association of Husserl's name with existential or existentialist philosophy has been unconventional, to say the least. Indeed, how is "der Meister der Wesensschau," as Dietrich Mahnke once dubbed him,1 to be thought of in connection with a philosophy that claims, famously or infamously, that "existence precedes essence"?

If, however, one refrains from making precipitous inferences regarding the rather palpable differences between the connotations of the words Wesen in Husserlian phenomenology and essence in French existentialism, and takes care to interpret Sartre's programmatic pronouncement only upon careful reflection, unanticipated associations may gradually emerge. Sartre namely says: "What they [les existentialistes] have in common is simply the fact that they think that existence precedes essence [l'existence précède l'essence], or, if you will, that subjectivity must be our point of departure."2 As is well known, subjectivity figures as an equally central theme in Husserl's philosophy, and is, though not exactly the point of departure, surely the pivotal point of its chief methodological device, the transcendentalphenomenological epoché and reduction.

Despite this prima facie deep connection between Husserlian phenomenology and existentialist thinking, the current body of literature on this topic is not very extensive. It may have been for this reason as well that, inebriated by the Greek sun (not to mention the Cretan raki) and enthused by the lively discussions with the other participants at the Husserl Circle meeting, we came up with the idea of a collection of essays that would shed some light on this hitherto relatively neglected dimension of Husserlian scholarship. Thus was born The Existential Husserl: A Collection of Critical Essays.

This volume aims to initiate, or, more accurately, to revitalize, a long-delayed and long-dormant exploration of the existential and even existentialist aspects of Husserl's thought. At the latest since the publication of his research manuscripts collected in Die Lebenswelt,3 and especially of those gathered in Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie,4 an inchoate awareness of Husserl's existential philosophy and of what may perhaps even be called his "existentialism" (sit venia verbo!) has been growing in the community of Husserlian scholars. The contributions of this collection not only substantiate this fact, but also deepen the discussion and highlight important critical aspects of this promising direction in Husserlian scholarship.

In "Husserl's Phenomenology of Existence: A Very Brief Introduction," George Heffernan provides a preliminary justification for the collection by establishing beyond any reasonable doubt that there is such a philosopher as "the existential Husserl"—while bracketing, but also inviting, and even provoking, the accompanying question whether there is such a philosopher as "the existentialist Husserl."

In "Transcendental Anthropology and Existential Phenomenology of Happiness," Jagna Brudzińska proposes to overcome purely cognitive accounts of the phenomenon that do not do justice to phenomenal polarities and subjective ambiguities. She seeks to accomplish this by providing a phenomenological-anthropological description of happiness that focuses on both the intentional subject striving toward happiness and the lived experience of happiness by the subject itself. Thus she highlights the genetic-temporal, ethical-social, and existential-teleological aspects of happiness (Glückseligkeit) in Husserl's sense of bliss (Seligkeit).

In "'I Want, Therefore I Can': Husserl's Phenomenology of Heroic Willing," Marco Cavallaro investigates the concept of heroic willing in Husserl's late ethical thought and lays out the transcendental-phenomenological conditions of heroism. First he provides the basic outlines of the phenomenology of willing that Husserl works out in the lectures and research manuscripts of his years in Göttingen (1901–1916). Then he considers the problem of the irrationality of life and world, which becomes a central issue in Husserl's reflections on ethics during his Freiburg period (1916–1938). Finally he sketches how Husserl responds to this problem by developing the concept of heroic willing. In short,

Cavallaro argues that heroic willing is Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological solution to the existential problem of practical irrationality.

In "'Mag die Welt eine Hölle sein': Husserl's Existential Ethics," Nicolas de Warren explores the indigenous existential concerns of Husserl's ethical thinking after the First World War by focusing on his "Freiburg Manuscripts." These posthumously published research manuscripts contain reflections in which Husserl reframes the "imaginative destruction of the world," a centerpiece of the phenomenological method of suspension and reduction, in ethical terms. This move leads Husserl to confront existential questions: Is it possible to strive to become an ethical person if one cannot assure oneself of the ethical meaningfulness of the world? Would I still want to be an ethical person in a world that is hell? Can I even live in a meaningless world? In response to this haunting of ethical life by the scepter of its own impossibility, Husserl develops his original doctrine of absolute values, the affective basis of ethical imperatives, the significance of what we care about, and the idea of the autonomy of freedom as grounded in the self- responsibility of ethical persons and their responsiveness to their chosen values.

In "The Development of Husserl's Categorical Imperative: From Universal Ethical Legislation to Individual Existential Exhortation," George Heffernan argues that it is useful and fruitful to understand the development of Husserl's categorical imperative as a Leitfaden to the evolution of his moral philosophy, shows that his ethics presents at its different stages not one categorical imperative but several categorical imperatives, and explores the philosophical significance of his mature categorical imperative, which is distinguished not by its abstract, formal aspects, but rather by its concrete, material—and individual, existential—dimensions.

In "A Phenomenological and Logical Clarification of Individual Existence," Carlos Lobo attempts to explain how, in the context of the old conflict between abstract logical thought and existential subjective thinking, the problem of individuation emerges as a touchstone for deciding whether there is an existential turning point in Husserl's phenomenology. He does this by posing the question of how Husserl tries to surmount the classical metaphysical and logical opposition between existence and essence, as well as that between an extrinsic individuation (through space and time) and an intrinsic individuation (through complete logical determination of an individual essence), and by attempting to reformulate the old opposition between necessity and contingency in radically new terms, so that it can become possible to conceive, in a formally coherent way, of a free individual without reverting to the intractable dilemma of freedom versus necessity.

In "Is Husserl's Later Ethics Existentialist? On the Primal Facticity of the Person and Husserl's 'Existentialist Rationalism'," Sophie Loidolt argues that Husserl's later reflections on ethics exhibit existentialist elements insofar as they acknowledge the unique existence of the concrete individual, not only as a theoretical topic, but also as "an issue" for this very individual; address the questions concerning existence and duty, for a whole life and for one in constant renewal; and recognize the individuation of the authentic person by a "call," that is, the moment of decision in a specific situation involving a choice of who one is, the impossibility of justifying oneself according to universalist standards, and the necessity of taking absolute responsibility for one's decisions. All these reflections lead Loidolt to speak of Husserl's "existentialist rationalism," which, in articulating the tensions between the rational and the irrational in the primal facticity of the person, remains obliged to the ideals of the Enlightenment.

In "Birth, Death, and Sleep: Limit Problems and the Paradox of Phenomenology," James Mensch analyzes what Husserl in The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology describes as "the paradox of human subjectivity," which involves our "being a [transcendental] subject for the world and at the same time [as human] an object in the world"; formulates the limit paradox that, as humans, we are mortal, but as transcendental subjects, we cannot assert that we are; and poses the question whether the phenomenological method, as applied to limit problems of life and death, can render intelligible the relation between a deathless transcendental subjectivity and its mortal human counterpart.

In "Husserl, Jaspers, and Heidegger on Life and Existence," Dermot Moran provides historical and philosophical insights helpful for understanding the decisive debates about the salient differences between the approaches of phenomenology, philosophy of existence, philosophy of life, and existentialism to various pivotal issues, including Husserl's universal rationalism, his late attention to the problems of existence, the primacy of subjectivity, the meaning of life and the life of consciousness, the freedom of the will and of the conscious agent, the life-world and the idea of a science of it, and intersubjectivity and the life of spirit.

In "Authentic Existence in Husserl and Heidegger," Thomas Nenon examines Heidegger's analysis of authentic existence in Being and Time (1927) and Husserl's development of the idea of genuine existence in the time leading up to Heidegger's magnum opus. He argues that, contrary to the common supposition that Heidegger has a great deal to say about the idea of authentic existence whereas Husserl does not, in his middle and later periods Husserl's work actually went in a direction that paralleled Heidegger's in certain significant respects. He cautions, however, that there remained an important difference between these thinkers that came to separate them during the 1920s.

In "Kierkegaard and Husserl," Bernhard Obsieger presents a systematic exposition of Kierkegaard's view of the three different normative approaches to life, namely, the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious; compares and contrasts this view with Husserl's apprehension of the meaning of human life; and attempts to show that Kierkegaard's account of the three fundamentally different approaches to life both poses a challenge to and offers an important alternative to Husserl's position that ethical life must be regarded as the only coherent life and as the only ultimately satisfactory life.

In "Husserl's Concept of the Absolute Ought: Implications for Ethics and Value Theory," Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl challenges the supposedly clear picture of two completely distinct theoretical approaches to a phenomenological ethics and value theory in Husserl's work, the one rationalistic and the other personalistic; clarifies the notion of an absolute ought by means of a three-level model that explains the transition from Husserl's earlier to his later views in terms of the difference between a purely object-oriented and a reflectively subject-related usage of "absolute ought"; and argues that, notwithstanding considerable reorientations between the earlier and the later elaborations, a strong continuity prevails in terms of an overarching theory of reason.

In "Revisiting Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology of the Ego: Existence and Praxis," Rosemary Rizo-Patrón de Lerner seeks to overcome the notion that Husserl's phenomenology, which is often misguidedly supposed to be primarily theoretical or monolithically eidetic, is unable to address questions concerning concrete existence, historical facticity, ethical life, and metaphysical problems, and aims to provide a novel, unitary interpretation of Husserl's philosophy by uncovering the eminently practical

nature of transcendental subjectivity, which ultimately exists as an intersubjective community of active egos with essentially existential roots.

In "The Existential Situatedness of the Transcendental Subject," Rochus Sowa contrasts the human person, thematizable in the natural attitude with the general structures specific to persons, and the transcendental subject, thematizable in the phenomenological attitude as the subject that constitutes the world and itself as a human person in the world. Applying this distinction, he clarifies the concepts of world-constitution and self-constitution as a "letting-appear" of world and human subject to demonstrate the identity of the transcendental subject as transcendental person and human person and thus the situatedness of the transcendental subject in the world as well as in innumerable situations of human life. He concludes by showing that even in "deworlding" transcendental-phenomenological reflection, the transcendental subject situates itself worldly.

In "Existential Choice: Husserl Meets Heller," Andrea Staiti develops a vindication of Agnes Heller's conception of existential choice by drawing on Husserl's manuscripts and lectures on ethics. After reconstructing Heller's view and the criticism that has been leveled against it, he turns to Husserl and argues that existential choice is necessary in order to shift from a naïve to a self-reflective stage of the good life; that there is a tight link between existential choice under the category of difference and existential choice under the category of universality; and that the revocation of existential choices does not annul their impact on life. He suggests, as a result, that there is a certain irrevocability of existential choices even when life forces us to give up on them.

Taken collectively, the contributions of this volume demonstrate that Husserl's phenomenology provides rich resources not only for conducting investigations involving theoretical inquiries concerning logic, epistemology, and theory of science, but also for engaging in practical sense-reflections (Besinnungen) on existential—and perhaps even "existentialist"—questions concerning the meaning of life or a life of meaning.

At this point, we co-editors have the distinct pleasure of expressing our immense gratitude not only to our contributors but also to Panos Theodorou and Fotini Vassiliou, who graciously and generously hosted the 2017 Husserl Circle meeting at which the idea for this volume was conceived; to Burt Hopkins, the Permanent Secretary of the Husserl Circle, who also co-organized that event; to Dieter Lohmar and Jagna Brudziñska, who co-organized what amounted to a direct continuation of that meeting, namely, the conference titled "Husserl und das Denken der Existenz" at the Husserl Archives of the University of Cologne in 2018; and, last but not least, to Nicolas de Warren and Ted Toadvine, the Series Editors of Contributions to Phenomenology, for their patience and understanding in seeing this project through to its conclusion. <>

MIDDOT: ON THE EMERGENCE OF KABBALISTIC THEOSOPHIES by Moshe Idel [Ktav Publishing House ISBN: 9781602804401]

This study examines the theories about divine attributes in Philo of Alexandria, and the different models in Rabbinic literature, as the background of the emergence of the variety of theories about ten sefirot as

divine attributes in medieval Kabbalah. The existence of some statements about ten divine attributes (middot) unrelated to early Kabbalah, served as a structure that was combined with the ten sefirotic discussions in Sefer Yetzirah. Moreover, the interiorization of the divine attributes in ecstatic Kabbalah, as referring to psychological processes, serves as a dissenting development in the Kabbalistic literature, is analyzed, a development that preceded and influenced Hasidism.

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Conceived in the popular imagination as the innovator and bearer of an exclusive monotheism, the most widespread theologies in Judaism are, nevertheless, very complex and inclusive ones. The emergence and the fast floruit of a luxuriant theosophy in medieval Judaism in Kabbalah was regarded as an enigma, and sometimes even sharply criticized by more "rationally" — oriented thinkers. Adhering as these thinkers were to a stark exclusive type of monotheism, the inclusive nature of most of the Kabbalistic discussions were even regarded by the opponent to Kabbalah as idolatry, though this lore, in its various forms, has been gradually accepted by the greatest parts of the Halakhic elites since the 13th century.

The present study deals with processes of building growingly more complex and relatively systematic theologies conspicuous in Kabbalistic literature Those complex theologies, different as they are from each other, will be designated as theosophies. They emerged within the framework of Jewish canonical religious writings that were relatively indifferent toward systematic theology. This relative indifference is evident already in the Hebrew Bible, in the pseudepigraphic literature in antiquity and late antiquity, and in the vast Rabbinic literatures, all of them literary corpora that were more inclined to legalistic and mythical forms of thought. The transition from a non-theological religious modality in those earlier corpora to very complex theologies in the Middle Ages, was triggered by a variety of factors within Judaism and outside it. In the cases discussed here, the process of harmonization between different and sometimes diverging approaches in the Scriptures and in Rabbinic literature was certainly an important factor, though not just a continuation or an elaboration. This is, to be sure, not an apology for Kabbalistic theosophies, neither a critique, since I do not adopt an essentialist vision of Judaism.

The following discussions are part of an historical and phenomenological analysis of some aspects of concatenations between theosophy and theurgy, which passed, for the time being, not sufficiently

explored in the field, and sometimes even ignored. This concatenation affected not just the nature of those two topics but also other, more eminently, the nature of what scholars calls Kabbalistic symbolism, and the attention to the belief in efficacy of the rituals. This constitutes one of the main reasons for the reception of this type of Kabbalah in Rabbinic elites since the 13th century. The importance of theurgy and symbolic interpretation — issues that will be dealt with in more details in this study — lays in the pursuit of offering meaning to a certain way of life, namely Rabbinic Judaism, as mainly a ritualist type of religiosity.

The approach adopted here, as in many of my other studies, is a non-Romantic one; namely, an attempt to avoid the glorification of innovations, ruptures, Gnosticism, crises, antinomianism, paradoxes or historical teleologies, that inform much of the scholarship in the field. Instead, I prefer to pay attention to shifts and changes taking place in basic traditional notions, their new or different concatenations, and eventually their reception in Jewish society, in addition to highlighting external influences, and the conceptual tensions the latter triggered.

This does not mean that the categories mentioned as part of the Romantic approach are not pertinent at all. Instead they play, in my interpretation, a much more modest role in a proper understanding of the evolutions of Kabbalistic systems. If the various forms of Kabbalah emerged in conspicuously Rabbinic environments, and many of their exponents were figures that invested time in the study of traditional Jewish texts, the major effort I propose to invest is in understanding the dynamic or evolution within this type of literature, and afterwards in various intellectual contexts, important as they are. A balanced view should take in consideration both continuities and ruptures, without overemphasizing any of them on the expense of the other. This is the reason why a proper understanding of the emergence of Kabbalah in the Middle Ages should start first with an inspection of those elements inherited from earlier sources that were known, quoted and interpreted by Kabbalists.

This does not mean that in this study I shall try to explain all the complex processes that produced the various forms of theology in Kabbalah. However, I shall try to suggest affinities between different Rabinic models and some Kabbalistic theosophies. In other words, the present study does not attempt to explain the emergence of Kabbalah, since Kabbalah is an umbrella term for various schools and systems, each one having a different history and in some cases different sources. The variety of theories about divine attributes, found in Rabbinic sources, inspired different views in medieval Jewish thought and especially in the various schools of Kabbalah.

The occurrence of several divine names in the various parts of the Hebrew Bible is a fact that triggered a variety of intellectual developments in understanding the Bible. The best known of them is the so-called theory of documents found in the Bible, a theory that opened, dramatically, a new page in the critical study of the Hebrew Bible. Though it takes in consideration a variety of factors that distinguish between the various parts of the Hebrew Bible, either conceptually or terminologically, the occurrence of different divine names constitutes nevertheless a major criterion.' In some biblical documents, some of the divine names are used together, as part of an effort to harmonize the discourse about the divinity. The gist of this scholarly approach is to identify various documents that resort to specific divine names that are less evident in other documents and thus to distinguish between them, and analyze each of them in itself.

Basically, those documents stem from different historical periods and what is even more important, from different religious groups that constituted the ancient Israelite societies.' Thus, the main vector of modern scholarship insofar as this topic is concerned, is to find out the stylistic differences, the specific conceptual views, which means that this is a theory grounded in a proclivity of separating between the authorship of some documents and that of others. This theory is gravitating around the occurrence of different divine names as one of the blueprints of different ancient authors or groups, as part of the approach of historical criticism.

However, when seen from a traditional point of view, which surmises that the Bible is a document authored ultimately by a divine power and consisting in an overarching conceptual homogeneity, the diversity of divine names reflects not different styles and some human authors, but various divine aspects and their activities. Sometime in late antiquity, most probably before the turn of the millennium, correlations between divine names and some modes of divinity activity can be discerned in some Jewish texts. Those are rather stable correlations and they convey the assumption of the existence of a more complex metaphysical structure than a simplistic exclusive monotheism, assuming a diversity of divine powers that is conveying God's diverse actions and thus the resort to those divine names. Those powers are called in Rabbinic literature by the Hebrew term middah, [in plural middot, literally measures, while in Philo of Alexandria they are described as dynameis, powers.

The earliest dated evidence is found in several of Philo's writings and despite the difference between the specific correlations of divine names and modes of actions in his books, and what is found in Rabbinic literature, the existence of such schemes testify to a prior existence of such a way of thought before the beginning of the first millennium CE. Also the obvious variety of understandings of the nature of the two powers in both Philo, in early Christianity, and in Rabbinic literatures, that will preoccupy us in the first two chapters, militates in favor of an earlier date for the emergence of this theory of two divine powers, sometimes early in the intertestamental period. This variety precludes an essentialistic approach to this topic, in its Rabbinic sources or in their later Kabbalistic avatars.

To be sure: the Hebrew texts resort to the term middah, that relates to some form of divine reaction to the human behavior, as the Rabbinic dicta middah ke-neged middah, namely one measure against a measure,' or "in accordance to the measure you measure, you are measured." These principles became clues for understanding the relationship between different acts and their results in a long variety of authoritative commentaries of the Hebrew Bible, especially Rashi, Nahmanides and R. Bahya ben Asher. Measuring is also the case even when the topic of creation is engaged, where some form of measure involved in these acts is mentioned.' What seems to be missing in the earlier forms of Rabbinic discussions of the middot are more general questions, like the immutability of God or the transition from the one to the many. Philo, however, is concerned much more with the issue of hypostatic powers, influenced as he was by Greek philosophers, and much less with an interactive or correlative theology, as it is the case in many instances in Rabbinic thought, as we shall see in detail in chapter 2.

Provided the pair of divine powers includes a benificient and a punitive power, we may ask whether this theory is related in a way or another to the Qumranic dualistic theory of two camps, but at this stage of research it is hard to answer this question in a conclusive manner. In any case, the Rabbinic theory of two — and more rarely three or more — measures had a prominent place both in Rabbinic thought since its inception, and also in those speculative trends that emerged in the Middle Ages under the aegis of Rabbinic authority.

Nevertheless, so far only a little has been done in order to examine the richness of the Rabbinic discussions of those divine measures or attributes, and even less the nature of the complex affinities between them and the early Kabbalistic writings, emerging as they were in their vast majority in circles where Rabbinism was a decisive term of reference.

While no scholar would deny the plausible relations between early Kabbalists in late 12th century, and Rabbinism, as some of them were accomplished legalistic figures, an examination of the details of such linkages still wait for a much more detailed scrutiny. I hope that the following chapters will open the door for further and more detailed analyses in this direction. In any case, the discussions of the attributes are an evident case of terminological, and to a great extent also of conceptual continuity, between two types of Jewish literatures that are written mainly in Hebrew that constitutes a fascinating challenge for understanding the precise relationship between those distinct literatures.

This issue is especially relevant for the question of the sources and the beginnings of Kabbalah. What I would like to show is that a type of inclusive theology, found in a more modest manner in the Rabbinic and other Jewish corpora in the first millennium CE, was highly influential in shaping another sort of inclusive theology, namely, several different Kabbalistic theosophies, at the very moment when exclusive theologies of philosophical extraction made the most significant inroads in Judaism in the form of Maimonides' philosophical version of exclusive monotheism.

The existence of many Rabbinic statements about divine attributes, conceived as independent entities, which constitute an inclusive theology, should have, in my opinion, an important role in the emergence of the Kabbalistic theosophical inclusive theology, that deals with many more divine powers, resorting in many cases to the Rabbinic term middah/middot. Here we have terms rich in meanings and canonized in authoritative sources that are often quoted by Kabbalists, which can allow a much more secure insight in the processes related to the emergence of Kabbalah in the Middle Ages.

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In other words the initial diversity of the biblical narratives, especially the recurrence of many divine names, generated attempts to "rationalize" — basically to reorganize the occurences of these names, by means of a theory of attributes — but these rationalizations elicited further distinctions, as we shall see in chapter 2, and those distinctions or models dealing basically with two attributes interacted with a system of tens — the sefirot — and impacted the various perceptions of those sefirot, contributing thereby to Kabbalistic theosophy in the earlier phases of this lore. In some cases, the existence of various views of sefirot required some forms of harmonization, which triggered more sophisticated theosophical theories, as we can see in Safedian Kabbalah. In other words, in a traditional religious world, which strives toward amalgamation of canonized values and harmonization that attenuates differences, the emergence of distinctions triggers later syntheses, which turn to be more and more complex, multiplying the numbers of the divine powers much more beyond the ten divine powers. This is a spiralic move. Here we shall be dealing with the earlier phases of this comprehensive process of distinctions, that produced smaller and smaller divine units, designated as aspects of the sefirotic worlds, later on called behinot, and they culminated in a theory of atomization of the divine into many sparks that are found, or fell, in the lower world, according to the views of R. Moshe Cordovero and R. Isaac Luria.

To a certain extent, the present study addresses some few topics of a broader field that still requires a much more detailed attention in scholarship: the emergences and development of the Kabbalistic theories of ten divine powers better known in scholarship as sefirot, but addressed here from the perspective of the term middot. This is a vast area of investigation, which is addressed here only in part, namely insofar as the connections between those divine powers and the theories of middot are concerned. Interestingly enough, long after the canonization of the theosophical forms of Kabbalah, with their emphasies on sefirot, especially since 16th century forms of Kabbalah, in 18th century Hasidism we witness a reversal of the meaning of the term middot; it now plays a much more important role than sefirot, at least as we can see especially in the traditions related to the Great Maggid of Mezeritch and his school. This oscilation between the alternating roles of the two terms, which were so important for Jewish forms of theologies, is a phenomenon that requires a more detailed analysis.

Another issue that deserves special attention, but will remain beyond the present study, is the parallelism between this atomization of the divinity and that of the soul, especially evident in the Kabbalah in the second part of the 16th century. Neither are the following pages a summary of my previous studies on topics related to early Kabbalah, like the topic of prayer and theurgy, of the ten sefirot above ten sefirot, for example. Nor do I see the topic of this book as a purely historical discussion of the emergence of Kabbalah in the Middle Ages or its antiquity. Since my view as to the existence of different schools that together resorted to the umbrella term Kabbalah, each of them should be understood as having its own distinct history, though later on in their development they intersected.

My topic here is a picture of certain specific topics, theosophy and theurgy, their sources and their concatenations. However, in order to highlight this concatenation, I shall deal also with Kabbalistic schools that did not adopt it, like the writings from circle of the Book of 'Iyyun — chapter 8 — or the ecstatic Kabbalah of Abraham Abulafia, in chapter 9. Likewise, the first chapter deals with Philo of Alexandria's theory of divine attributes, divorced as it is from theurgical overtones, because of the profound philosophical impact of Greek thought. The different treatments of the two attributes will serve also as a prism for emphasizing the often deep differences between those Kabbalistic schools, a fact not sufficiently put in relief in modern scholarship of Kabbalah, which is still containing some significant impulses toward harmonization and what I call theologization.

In my opinion, fusing discussions from different schools, because of a deep belief held by a scholar that they must coinncide, or at least correspond, brings about much confusion, even more so because of the conceptual fluidity of Kabbalistic thought, which means that even the same Kabbalist may embrace more than one theology in his books or even in one of them, a phenomenon that can be designated as chronical theological instability. <>

Primeval Evil in Kabbalah: Totality, Perfection, Perfectibility by Moshe Idel [Ktav Publishing House, ISBN: 9781602804036]

Primeval Evil analyzes the various versions of a theory maintaining the Kabbalistic visions as to the precedence of evil before good, within the divine realm and in the lower dimensions of reality. It

proposes a source for some of the theories of evil in medieval Kabbalah, in the Zurvanic version of Zoroastrism and their reverberations, which is different from the scholarly assumptions as to the influence of Gnosticism on Kabbalah. A series of pre-Kabbalistic, Kabbalistic and Hasidic texts have been addressed, in print and in manuscripts, in order to substantiate the understanding of these theories are related to visions of the divine as all-encompassing, and perfect or perfectible.

»Faith in the World«: Post-Secular Readings of Hannah Arendt edited by Rafael Zawisza, Ludger Hagedorn [Institut fur die Wissenschaften vom Menschen, Institute for Human Sciences, Campus Verlag, 9783593514888]

This volume offers a manifold approach to a less evident and until now much neglected undercurrent in the work of Hannah Arendt, namely her ambiguous relation to the Judeo-Christian religious heritage. Arendt's dissertation was dedicated to the concept of love in the work of Augustine, where she set her tone and developed her frame for approaching theological matters. Her understanding of secularity might provide a model for the reconciliation of secularization and the persistence of religious belief in the contemporary world. Though Hannah Arendt was certainly and outspokenly a secular thinker, her work also harbors ways of understanding secularization as the possibility of a new, maybe even messianic, attitude towards finite life and earthly reality. She famously depicts this attitude as »faith in and hope for the world«.

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Faith in the World or: The Philosophical Contraband of a Hidden Spiritual Tradition: An Introduction by Rafael Zawisza and Ludger Hagedorn

On the 7th day of Tevet, 5687, Gershom Scholem wrote, from Jerusalem, a letter addressed to Franz Rosenzweig, who at that time was already unable to speak. It was at the invitation of Martin Buber and Ernst Simon that Scholem composed this text, one among forty prepared by Rosenzweig's friends. In Germany, it was the 26^h of December, 1926, just one day after Christmas. Characteristically, Scholem wrote this letter about the »renaissance« of the Hebrew language... in German. It is a unique document that captures an extraordinary moment, when new inhabitants of Palestine—themselves speaking all the languages of the world, including Yiddish, Polish, Russian and German—prepared the first generation of young people who, not having any other common tongue, would speak only Hebrew, this reborn language in which they would have to live and love, laugh and swear. Scholem is aware of the cruelty inscribed in the fate of those newcomers: »a generation of transition,« doomed to »live within that language above an abyss.« He repeatedly writes to Rosenzweig about »our children,« although he never had any of his own—it is clearly the kind of voice that comes from a father of a nation, a patriarch who awaits his progeny with a gaze full of passion, hope and, above all, fear. Scholem noticed that the Hebrew spoken in the streets was often a »ghostly language« (gespenstische Sprache) that created an »expressionless linguistic space« (ausdruchslose Sprachwelt), a space he saw as arising from a secularization that he fiercely rejected: »the secularization of the language is no more than a manner of speaking, a ready-made expression. It is impossible to empty the words so bursting with meaning, unless one sacrifices the language itself.«

It was due to a justified fear for that crucial generation—who would have to live without tradition in an »abyss« (Abgrund) and »emptiness« (Leere)—that Scholem, in his letter, made such a powerful proclamation of faith in the autonomous life of names, stored in the holy language, always ready to erupt with revolutionary force. Scholem wanted to believe that when this hidden »force« of sacred language is evoked daily, even if unconsciously, that it does have unforeseeable consequences »[b]ecause at the heart of such a language, in which we ceaselessly evoke God in a thousand ways, thus calling Him back into the reality of our life, He cannot keep silent.«

Just four years later, in 1930, Hannah Arendt co-authored with her then husband, Gunther Stern, an essay dedicated to Rilke's Duino Elegies, which also touched upon the topic of secularization. The authors observed that since Jewish and Christian religions were of an acoustic character—one has to listen to God—modernity brings a specific crisis whose final result is not a logical passage to atheism but rather a »religious ambiguity« (Arendt and Stern 2007, 3). The fact that God is no longer audible can be interpreted as God's hiddenness or God's non-existence. Our time is characterized by »the absence of an echo« (ibid., 1). In stark contrast to Scholem, who expected God to speak again through Hebrew, the twenty-four-year-old Arendt dismissed the idea that God could ever speak again. Secularization doesn't lead to one particular destination that can be known in advance but, at the same time, it is a process

that cannot be undone once it has happened. »The absence of an echo,« with its double negation, is the most salient metaphor for a God who has evaporated, or better yet, a God whom the various sonars of the Enlightenment revealed as »residing« beyond the boundaries of Creation. It is as if there was a very thick wall, impenetrable to any sound coming from outside the world.

Although she rarely recorded strictly personal views in her Denhtagebuch (>thought journal<), Arendt made the following entry in May of 1965:

Since I was seven years old, I have always thought of God [an Gott gedacht], but I have never really thought about God [fiber Gott]. I have often wished that I no longer had to go on living, but I have never posed the question of the meaning of life (Arendt 2016, II, 641).

The enigmatic nature of these words notwithstanding, Arendt expresses here a characteristically Jewish response to a post-Christian modern nihilism, one which culminates in the thought that without God life has no meaning and that everything is permissible. From this point of view, nihilism and traditionalism are nothing but two sides of the same coin. Arendt's question is not how to rebuild a religious worldview or how to restore the vision of nature (physis) as sacred—something which was exactly the goal of Leo Strauss' philosophy. Instead, Arendt poses the question in this way: After the demise of metaphysics (closely connected to the Western concept of religious transcendence), must humanity necessarily conform to an absolutely secularized immanence? Hence, the central difficulty lies not in the disappearance of God hut in a human nostalgia for the absolute. Hannah Arendt's response to that was to rescue the world even while God seemed completely irretrievable.

The current collection of essays begins with two on the topic of love. Sigrid Weigel, through a detailed reading of Arendt's Denhtagebuch, discovers a completely unknown project, one never realized by Arendt. This is the project that could elucidate her tripartite description of the human condition as well as her often criticized division between private and public spheres of life. The Arendtian loving subject can be read as endowed with an existential dimension that resists any subsumption by metaphysics, and which remains in accord with Arendt's critique of »ordered love« in Der Liebesbegrif f bei Augustin.

Agata Bielik-Robson elucidates the substitution of amor Dei by amor mundi in Arendt as the proper expression of her Marranic cryptotheology. In order to do so, Bielik-Robson explores less known interconnections, like the influence of Franz Rosenzweig and Gershom Scholem on Arendt. The originality of Arendtian cryptotheology cannot be reduced, however, to external inspirations: it consists in the way Arendt revised certain ideas of Christian thinkers (especially Augustine and Duns Scotus) and created her own idiosyncratic discourse in which the worldly and the messianic cannot be distinguished.

The essay of Rafael Zawisza sheds light on the moment when this procosmic shift took place, namely, in Arendt's doctoral dissertation. Zawiszás analysis of the third part of Der Liebesbegriff demonstrates that Arendt's secularism was preceded by her deconstruction of theology, which was specifically directed against the doctrine of original sin. This seemingly apolitical deconstruction possessed a strong critical capacity in the context of Weimar era politics.

Another early encounter with theology is presented by Jim Josefson, who reflects upon the impact of German Lutheran and dialectical theologian Rudolf Bultmann. Although Arendt wrote to Karl Jaspers that she was indebted to Bultmann, that debt is far from obvious when one looks at her writings where there appears almost no reference to his works. Hence, Josefson attempts to reconstruct Bultmann's

influence by connecting hints ii the Jaspers letter and Arendt's scattered theological reflections with Bultmann's writings from around 1925, when Arendt attended Bultmann's seminar on the anthropology of St. Paul. By unpacking Arendt's conclusion that »faith communicates itself, wants to be understood and so understands itself,« Josefson claims that the basics of her cryptotheology can be traced to Christian sources, making her an exemplary philosophical Marrano.

The next two essays focus on Hannah Arendt's secularity. The underlying thesis of both authors is that even in her closest proximity to religious or biblical subject matter, Arendt remained a secular thinker, who interpreted the Judeo-Christian heritage liberally, that is, in the interest of culture and poitics. Martine Leibovici brings together Hannah Arendt's and Michael Walzer's reflections on revolution, the Biblical Exodus, and the question of liberation. Both authors engage with those topics differently, although they share a mistrust of political messianism. Yet, Leibovici demonstrates that it is not just a negation of Biblical tradition that guides Arendt and Walzer; it is rather a deep conviction that although certain religious motives can remain an inspiration for secular culture, the secularization of those motives or figures is not a direct transposition. This careful examination of the distance between religious and secular perspectives results in a rich reflection on the various modes of »living-in-time« and the basis of law.

Christina Schues undertakes a question that is very crucial to a post-secullar reading of Arendt, namely, to what extent the concept of natality can br regarded as a remnant of religion, as its afterlife. Schues resolves this dilernma by showing how Arendt extracts from religion only that which remains »within the reach of man« (Arendt 1958, 247). It is not justified to say

that Arendt simply appropriates what was invented or stored in religious literature because, in metaphysics, the trust in the world and the promise inherent in birth—two main phenomena analyzed by Schues—are tethered to the afterlife, which changes their significance. Hence, Arendt's post-metaphysical thought is not a secularization but rather a reconfiguration of the meaning given to human finitude.

The last, political part of the collection is dedicated to the consequences of secularization for politics. Roger Berkowitz reconstructs Arendt's discussion of immortality as the basis for a meaningful life. In contrast to Christianity which linked immortality with salvation in the extraterrestrial domain, Arendt invokes earthly immortality which in antiquity was given to great, memorable deeds. Berkowitz claims that the concept of »immanent transcendence« is necessary for the prospect of regaining this neglected dimension of public life, because politics must transcend actuality in order to reinforce the durability of the world.

Milan Hanys's essay deals with the problem of evil in Arendt, who overcomes the traditional theological dualism of good and evil by reflecting on absolute goodness and radical evil; in fact, both extremes turn out to be equally destructive for the world. Here a religious point of view is not disqualified but rather bypassed through her secular concerns. Arendt's hesitation about whether to name the evil of totalitarian regimes »radical« or »banal« reflects her attempt to confront the Western theological legacy.

Aishwary Kumar offers an archaeology of political cruelty in India, the world's most populous democracy, and the consequences of its specifically subcontinental character for the place of public

religion in global democratic life at large. Kumar analyzes in parallel the writings of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar and Hannah Arendt and expands the scope of Arendt's theories by elaborating a new category: »a jurisprudence of neglect« which is a systemic organization of a political structure that prepares people to accept and enable the complete abandonment of the minorities, among them Muslims and outcastes. Kumar's reflection on politics is accompanied by the question of whether this cruel logic has a theological bedrock; it therefore could be characterized as a psycho-theological analysis of politics.

Vivian Liskas epilogue to the book constitutes both a summary and an opening. On the one hand, Liska reads the figure of Abraham in Kafka and Arendt to demonstrate that a transition from religious to secular language is possible and accomplished (yet not politically valid) in the doctrine of human rights. On the other hand, Liska's reading of the Biblical scriptures as an example of »great literature« is a gesture of validation, that is, it suggests that literary works, whether theopoetic or not, can invent, test, and codify new ways of living together. <>

HANDBOOK OF THE AMERICAN SHORT STORY edited by Erik Redling, Oliver Scheiding [Handbooks of English and American Studies, De Gruyter, 9783110585230]

The American short story has always been characterized by exciting aesthetic innovations and an immense range of topics. This handbook offers students and researchers a comprehensive introduction to the multifaceted genre with a special focus on recent developments due to the rise of new media. Part I provides systematic overviews of significant contexts ranging from historical-political backgrounds, short story theories developed by writers, print and digital culture, to current theoretical approaches and canon formation. Part II consists of 35 paired readings of representative short stories by eminent authors, charting major steps in the evolution of the American short story from its beginnings as an art form in the early nineteenth century up to the digital age. The handbook examines historically, methodologically, and theoretically the coming together of the enduring narrative practice of compression and concision in American literature. It offers fresh and original readings relevant to studying the American short story and shows how the genre performs American culture.

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The American Short Story Past and Present

Short Story Studies: The Current State of the Field

Since the onset of the new millennium, the American short story has been praised as the perfect literary form for the twenty-first century. In an age in which brevity rules, the short story appears to meet the demands of mobile devices and limited attention spans. According to some critics, the short story is "the genre of today" (Botha 2016, 201). In its long history, however, the American short story has shown itself to be a highly dynamic and productive narrative form. From early on it embodied the technological and cultural changes that advanced American society from the colonial period to the present. Be it the nineteenth-century expansion of the mass-market newspaper and magazine industry or the late twentieth-century boom of electronic publication outlets, the short story is the art of brevity that makes it an attractive catalyst not only for narrative experimentations, but also for building communities of readers who want to hear and tell stories about themselves and others (Sketches, Tales, and Stories). While scholars noted that America is certainly not "the land of the short story, but 'the land of the

definition of the short story'" (Levy 1993, 1), the current Handbook of the American Short Story does not intend to develop a new taxonomy or a typological description of the American short story, but rather reassesses the genre in terms of what has been called "bibliomigrancy" (Venkat Mani 2016, 60). As such, the chapters in this handbook illustrate the emergence, circulation, and distribution of the short story beyond national paradigms or a binary that repeatedly reads it in terms of an apprenticeship for the novel (Canon Formation). The chapters dedicated to individual authors also document each author's creative contribution to the genre and, by pairing two short prose texts from one author, provide a better understanding of the spectrum of creative experiments performed by each author. Additionally, the volume's paired readings offer both practical and critical analysis of the short form's iteration, its narrative identity in terms of ambiguity, implication, and suggestiveness, as well as the genre's portability in different publishing contexts. Focusing on American short stories from the past to the present and relating them to the changing field of literary production and authorship, the Handbook of the American Short Story adopts an approach that "allows the co-ordination of immanent formal analysis of the individual text with the twin diachronic perspective of the history of forms and the evolution of social life" (Jameson 1981, 105). What sets this handbook apart from other accounts is its focus on genre, period traits, and material arrangements exposing the American short story as a cultural text that offers specific social and historical meanings distilled in the short story's aesthetic form and brought to light by a practice of close reading. Thus, this volume highlights the socio-poetic dimensions in the writing, publishing, and reception of the American short story.

Given the genre's communicative power and productivity, why is it that both authors and critics repeatedly feel urged to talk about the future of the short story? Are we dealing with an "endangered species" — as Joyce Carol Oates puts it (Oates 2000, 38-41) — that needs our constant reflections to reassure us that it has a future — or, is it already a "dead form," as the literary magazine n+1 proposes, "unnaturally perpetuated" by America's "fiction factory"? (Batuman 2006, 63-4). In a recent piece on the American short story in the twentieth century, Charles May speculates that "because American readers are more interested in nonfiction and the occasional novel than the short story, the form is currently in the literary doldrums in the United States" (May 2012, 324). Throughout its history, as Kasia Boddy aptly puts it, the American short story has been praised either as "a highly polished gem" or condemned as "literary fast food" (Boddy 2010, 15). In his astute evaluation of the anglophone short story in the context of today's writing and publishing, Paul March-Russell discusses the genre's major transformations from the pre-web era into the digital age. Given the many online self-publication options and new types of media authorship, he acknowledges the "split identity of the short story," referring to "the ambiguous identification of the short story as both rarefied object and commodified artefact," only to conclude: "the short story remains an indistinct process" (March-Russell 2016, 25). Although this is how the rise-and-fall narrative of the genre often goes, it is remarkable that it is mostly expressed by the lovers of stories highlighting the short story's transience rather than its enduring strength. Others, such as the French critic Claire Larriere, keenly concluded: "if anything, the short story is shorter today than it has been in the past. There are now collections of 'short shorts' and 'sudden fiction' which scarcely existed fifty years ago. The game of hide-and-seek is bound to be more exciting" (Larriere 1998, 198). Larriere's remarks point to the innovative potential of the short form and the resonance it has for readers. A good case in point for the short story's sociability, and its function as a transforming and transfixing encounter between a world in miniature and the reader, is the rediscovery of Lucia Berlin's vividly conversational stories about human environments (see A Manual for Cleaning Women, 2015). Public short story

reading events, sharing stories both in print and online, and short fiction contests show that the genre is in sync with a new wave of slow and mindful media and its focus "on the fertility of individual and collective imaginations" (Rauch 2018, 10). Given the mobility of the genre as a relational concept that is conditioned by numerous codes (compositional, social, economic, material, temporal) allows us to both consider the short story as a socially symbolic act and discuss the genre's "mediatory function" (Jameson 1981, 105). A genre like the short story not only contains conventions, but also deviates from them. In his incisive study on genre, John Frow argues that genre has no "essence." It is not a container. Genre functions productively and possesses a "historically changing use value" (Frow 2006, 125, 134). Likewise, in a most recent study on genres and functions of the short story in North America, Michael Basseler shows that the short form serves as "an organon of life knowledge" (Basseler 2019, 17; 713 Current Approaches). In doing so, he explores how the genre's "complexity of thematic, formal, stylistic, and generic choices" shapes "the reader's 'sense of life' . . . and how it can or cannot be understood" (16). Moreover, this volume's genre approach helps us compare, contrast, and untangle the family resemblances that constitute the American short story. Extending our knowledge of short prose works and their dynamic socio-poetic functions, The Handbook of the American Short Story exemplifies the genre's pragmatic and active sense to give us the world via a selection of individual responses highlighting the short story's past, present, and future.

The paired readings and model interpretations in The Handbook of the American Short Story illustrate that the short story has always been a demanding form. George Saunders, for instance, admits that it is more challenging to write a good short story than to write a novel, defining the latter as a "a story that hasn't yet discovered a way to be brief' (Saunders 2013a, n. pag.). Robert Stone praises the short story as an art form that explores realities "subjectively experienced from the inside" (Stone 1991, 102). Distinguishing the short story from other short forms like the anecdote or news account, Joyce Carol Oates asserts that "the short story is a prose piece that it is not a mere concentration of events . . . but an intensification of events by the way of events" (Oates 1998, 47-48). Despite the numerous approaches — by both critics and writers — toward explaining the essence of brevity in literature, the short story remains, as Martin Scofield aptly puts it, "the exemplary form for the perception of crisis, crux, turning point" (Scofield 2006, 238). Its narrative economy in terms of time and space records decisive, intimate moments of life that give them a broad social resonance. As such, the short story offers a vibrant field of research (see the new journal Studies in the American Short Story 2020).

In this sense, Charles May's prediction (May 2012, 324) is of interest here because he raises an important question: how to write about the American short story in the twenty-first century, especially after the minimalist boom of the 1980s? The most recent surveys and companions tell a progressive history of the American short story which roots in a long-lasting legacy of sketches and tales as it first appears in Washington Irving's influential The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent. (1819-1820; 715 Irving). In her study on the "Beginnings of American Literature," Lydia Fash claims that Irving "established the utility of short fiction for conjuring an American people and supporting American literary professionalism" (Fash 2020, 55; see Scheiding and Seidl 2011, 67-80). Scholars deal with the evolution of the form in the nineteenth century and explain how short prose works became an art form in the opening decades of the twentieth century culminating in a neo-realist renaissance of the Eighties and Nighties (Nagel 2015). Departures from this master narrative of the American short story can be found in a number of studies written in the wake of Mark McGurl's The Program Era (2009) that saw a sea change in the study of postwar literature. A good case in point is Kasia Boddy's survey of the American

Short Story after 1950 in which she focuses on institutional aspects of the form in the context of big magazines, the creative-writing industry in the U.S., and the production of the short story in a literary market depending on specific forms of recognition like literary awards and prizes (2010; see also Delaney and Hunter 2019). By contrast, Paul March-Russell's introduction to the short story (2009) reassesses the genre's stadial history. In doing so, he takes the reader on a transnational journey from the short story's beginnings in Western folk traditions to what he calls in the final chapter "Voyages Out," focusing on the "postcolonial short story." In her 2018 study on the American short story cycle, Jennifer Smith analyzes the expansion of short prose within a specific form of narrative composition. She claims that the "short story cycle has become the primary and best descriptor for the genre, because it most accurately captures the recursiveness central to the genre and privileges the short story as its formative element" (Smith 2018, 4). Along the line of earlier studies, such as James Nagel's study on the contemporary American short story cycle (2001), Smith reads the cycle as a productive format for "identity formations" (7). Since the multiethnic literature of the 1980s and 1990s turned toward multiplicity, polyphony, plurality, and fragmentation, the cycle's composite nature allowed ethnic writers to integrate new elements into the short story and expand it. Recent examples of the cycle's "ethnic resonance" (Nagel 2001) can be found in Junot Diaz's Drown (733 Diaz) in which he chronicles the world of the Dominican American diaspora unfolding the archipelagic histories of his characters. Diaz and African American writers like Bryan Washington spell out versions of the cycle that become manifest in geography. Lot, Washington's 2019 debut collection of stories about Houston, Texas, presents on the first page of the text a stark black-and-white illustration of an urban grid, a drone's-eye view of the "hood" and the arteries of freeways around it. It looks almost like an X-ray, signaling that the ensuing stories have an almost supernatural power to see and know what others cannot know. Washington's stories spell out a regional understanding of the world that challenges major western epistemologies. By 2010, as Smith shows, the trend towards microfiction had changed the narrative outlook of the cycle. She claims that a new genre emerged under the term "novellas-in-flash" or "flash cycles" (Smith 2018, 169-177). These are novellas composed entirely of standalone flash fiction pieces organized into full narrative arcs. Smith not only highlights the cycle's duration as an art form, but also the ways in which the short story form resurges in the digital age. In light of new publishing trends like the flash fiction novel or the novella-in-shorts, her book also raises important questions about the commodification of shortness. If brevity becomes a commercially viable brand (see Amazon's short reads section), the novel becomes a label with weight and significance. By borrowing the label, the short story can share the novel's prestige and convince readers to buy it. Perhaps this is another reason for the booming of the short story cycle as a composite novel over the last decade. The traditional New York publisher Henry Holt and Company released Philip Caputo's collection Hunter's Moon (2019) under the label "A Novel in Stories."

Another notable approach to explain the genre's productivity is the 2019 collection of essays published as The Edinburgh Companion to The Short Story in English, edited by Paul Delaney and Adrian Hunter. The collection offers an analytical framework built upon five major themes: history, publication, form, place, and identity. In terms of future issues for the study of the short story, the most promising piece is Laura Dietz's essay on "The Short Story and Digital Media" (Dietz 2019, 125-139). Dietz discusses what Ellen McCracken calls "transitional literature" (McCracken 2013, 105). According to McCracken, multiform digital tools produce "electronic texts that mimic the format and appearance of print" and mark "a key stage in the shift between print and digital books underway in the 21st century" (105). Dietz

writes that transitional literature adds "few or no features that take advantage of the affordances of screen reading . . . keeping open the possibility of moving, returning, to print without significant alterations" (Dietz 2019, 125). In his story collection Texts from Jane Eyre (2015), Daniel Mallory Ortberg condenses famous short stories like Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" into serialized smartphone chats. On its website, The New Yorker published Jennifer Egan's short story "Black Box" (2012) in the twitter format over a period of ten days. Egan tells her spy thriller in tweets that play with today's phenomenon of serialization, temporality, and interaction. The story is also a striking example for transmedia storytelling that mediates between scribal practices, online technologies, and print publication. In this sense, Dietz's essay raises important questions about the future of the story's form in the overlapping contexts of print, electronic (self-)publications, and digital fiction networks. In doing so, her analysis draws our attention not only to what the label "short story" means in today's e-age, but also how stories or single-author short story collections climb out on new artistic and commercial limbs like digital-only formats, intersecting legacy publishing with short fiction distributed via digital social media. Recent print market evaluations show, for instance, that digital short-story collections provide an outlet for collections that have no print prospect at all. On the one hand, what becomes necessary are further investigations about new publication strategies and how writing emerges and find its readers today; on the other hand, the "ambitious leaps of genre and world-building" (Machado 2019, xviii), especially in the field of science fiction and fantasy, also concern the very form and consumption of the short story. Given these trends in writing and publishing the short story, we need to consider both the short story's economy and texture to better understand the complex weaving of material and aesthetic "forms that organize texts, bodies and institutions" (Levine 2015, 23; see also Hungerford 2016, 19-39;Textual Materiality).

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As this overview shows, the American short story has always been characterized by exciting aesthetic innovations and an immense range of topics. This handbook offers students and researchers a compact introduction to the multifaceted genre with a special focus on recent developments due to the rise of new media. Part I provides systematic overviews of relevant contexts ranging from historical-political backgrounds, short story theories developed by writers, print and digital culture, to current theoretical approaches and canon formation. Part II consists of paired readings of representative short stories by eminent authors, charting major steps in the evolution of the American short story from its beginnings as an art form in the early nineteenth century up to the very present and such innovative voices like Lydia Davis, Yiyun Li, and George Saunders (7131 Davis, 34 Li, 32 Saunders). The handbook examines historically, methodologically, and theoretically the coming together of the enduring narrative practice of compression and concision in American literature. It offers not only original readings relevant to studying the American short story, but also provides ideas for fresh interpretations of and further reflection on this fascinating genre that has profoundly shaped the reception of American culture.

Even though several outstanding handbooks dedicated to the American short story have been published in recent years, a handbook that combines theory with paired readings of short stories and a focus on the rise of new media and new narrative trends is not available at the moment. Edited by Alfred Bendixen and James Nagel, A Companion to the American Short Story (2010) provides detailed readings, but does not discuss aspects such as print culture or topics related to current directions in literary criticism. A Companion to the Amercican Short Story ends in the 1990s; A History of the

American Short Story: Genres - Developments - Model Interpretations (2011) edited by Michael Basseler and Ansgar Nunning and James Nagel's The American Short Story Handbook (2015) contain original discussions, but do not include chapters on the short story development in the digital age or short fiction published since 2000. Our handbook seeks to fill this gap, offering students and researchers alike a compact introduction to the multifaceted genre with a special emphasis on current developments due to the rise of new media. <>

Essay: Lydia Davis (1947—) by Lynn Min

Abstract: This chapter is a paired reading of Lydia Davis's "Negative Emotions" and "A Story of Stolen Salamis" from her collection Can't and Won't. The stories have been chosen because they amply illustrate how Davis's pieces are reading lessons in themselves. By their very brevity, they invite us to pay attention to language in a very privileged way. They enable us, in the words of Roland Barthes to "see language" (Barthes 2002, 735). The chapter will seek to explain how these short-short pieces invite us to pay attention to details down to the very comma. My analysis will try and show how this invitation to pay attention to the minutest details of language gives readers indications on how it can be a useful tool for efficient close reading. We examine Davis the translator, Davis the adaptor, and Davis the short story *titer, we will discover how her very dexterous use of language conveys poignancy, humor, violence, and ultimately life.

Context

When Lydia Davis was seven years old, her father brought the family to Vienna, where he was invited to teach for a year and she was enrolled in an Ursuline convent school. In an interview with Eleanor Wachtel, Davis tells of finding herself in a Vienna still reeling from the war, surrounded by a language she did not understand. She speaks of how difficult that year was for her emotionally, because her mother was hospitalized shortly after their arrival. Though she managed to learn German in a month, the fact that she went from not understanding anything to things becoming 'transparent,' acquainted her with the notion of 'not feeling at home in a language.' She concedes that this experience was probably an important influence on her decision to become a translator. Later, when the family moved to New York City, she once again found herself in a strange environment in a new school much larger than the small-town school she had known in her hometown of North Hampton in Massachusetts. She had to have private tutoring in French to catch up with her classmates who had been learning it since kindergarten. These French lessons, she confides, with a teacher whom she liked very much, and a French grammar book which she refers to as her "Rosebud," enabled her to "come to a comfortable place" in a strange city (Wachtel 2008).

These notions of "not feeling at home in a language" and finding "a comfortable place" are primordial to us as Lydia Davis readers. This chapter shows that for us to feel at home in her art we too have to develop at least some of the reflexes of a translator, and an eye and an ear for grammatical details with a regularity that is perhaps not habitually part of our reading practice.

Today, Davis is considered one of the most important voices in American fiction, but it was as a translator, notably of Maurice Blanchot and Michel Leiris that she first gained renown. Virtually ignored at the beginning of her career as a writer, it was only in 2001, when Dave Eggers published her collection, Samuel Johnson is Indignant, that she started to gain attention - attention that grew to acclaim when in 2013 she was awarded the Man Booker International prize for the ensemble of her works. To date she is the author of one novel, The End of the Story (2004 [1995]) and seven short

story collections, including Break it Down (1986), Almost No Memory (1997), Samuel Johnson is Indignant (2001), Varieties of Disturbance (2007), all to be found in her Collected Stories (2013 [2009]), and Can't and Won't (2015 [2014]). Her translation of Marcel Proust's Swann's Way won the 2003 French-American Foundation Translation Prize - an honor that was repeated in 2011 for her translation of Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary. In 2019, she published the first volume of a collection of her essays, Essays One - a compilation of pieces from the 1970s to the present day - on writing about literature and on writing itself, but also covering other topics such as the visual arts, history, and religion. The second volume, due in 2021, is to be devoted to her writings on and about translation.

Her short-short prose pieces, for which she is the most known, "miniatures" as they are sometimes called, take the reader by surprise. It is perfectly understandable that a reader will be taken aback by a piece such as "Collaboration with Fly," which reads:

> "Collaboration with Fly"
> I put that word on the page, but he added the apostrophe. (Davis 2013, 508)

> Can't and Won't
> I was recently denied a writing prize, because, they said, I was too lazy. What they meant by lazy was that I used too many contractions: for instance, I would not write out in full the words cannot and will not, but contracted them to can't and won't. (2015, 46)

> "Circular Story"
> On Wednesday mornings early there is always a racket out there on the road. It wakes me up and I always wonder what it is. It is always the trash collection truck picking up the trash. The truck comes every Wednesday morning early. It always wakes me up. I always wonder what it is. (2015, 3)

We might simply think of "Collaboration with Fly" as an intertextual reference to Emily Dickinson's "I Heard A Fly Buzz When I Died," as does Shelley Jackson writing in the Los Angeles Times (2007); "Can't and Won't" a tongue-in-cheek comment on the arbitrary choice of literary awards; and "Circular Story," as John Winters writes, "typical of the dead ends that occupy most of [Can't and Won't's] pages' (Winters 2014, n.p.).

Davis leaves so much space for the reader, there can be as many interpretations as there are readers. However, if we consider them as an invitation to see language, we discover aspects that help explain these explanations. Conjuring up the fly on the page, we might consider what type of words need apostrophes — possessives like John's or contracted forms like can't and won't. Substitutes for cannot and will not, as the story recounts. But then we perhaps wonder why cannot is written as one word and will not as two. And this takes us to our grammar books, and we see that according to Huddleston and Pullum these forms are not completely interchangeable with the short forms. Not only are they considered more formal, they do not express negation in the same way. And if "will not" is written in two words and not one, it is because negation does not work the same way with each. When "not" follows "will," it negates the clause that follows. When "not" follows "can," it negates one auxiliary. Thus "She cannot write well" means "It is not possible for her to write well". Whereas, "She can not write well" means "On occasion it is possible for her to not write well" (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 799-803). Since the theme of negation is a recurring one in Davis's works, we might want to look at what it

entails —literally entails, as we will see below. We also notice that these words are all in italics, as is the title. And words in italics, the equivalent of emphasis in speech, are used to draw attention of the reader. And if they are emphasized, we are meant to pay attention. This piece might further be a reflection on fiction. Is the narrator speaking of Lydia Davis herself? Surely not. Lydia Davis readers know that she rarely uses short forms. It is one of the reasons her stories read so much as though they are 'over-translated' in English. A closer reading of "Circular Story" reveals itself to be about the pronoun "it" and the slipperiness of language. I will return to this at the end of the chapter.

We might also think that in leaving us so much space for interpretation, she is putting her readers through the same experience she had as a child, making us not feel perfectly at home in language, albeit our mother tongue. We understand the words, but 'we don't get it.' Her careful attention to syntax, to grammar, to form, to rhythm may give the impression of an 'over-correct' text.

Davis dates her earliest inspiration to becoming a writer to her discovery of Kafka and Beckett — Kafka for "the sparseness, the humility (whether assumed or real) or a combination, the imagination" (qtd. in Gunn 2014, n.p.) and Beckett for teaching her that "you could write about the self-watching the self-write, and also that you could write about anything" (Wachtel 2008, n.p.). She tells of her excitement upon discovering Malone Dies: "There was so little material, such plain language, no attempt at literalism whatsoever, or flowery language, that he would spend a page or two about how he dropped his pencil was so utterly strange and wonderful" (Wachtel 2008, n.p.). Our impression as Davis readers of "seeing language" as Barthes once expressed it (Barthes 2002, 735) may come partly from her teenage pastime of cutting out her favorite Beckett sentences to study the sheer beauty of them (Manguso 2008, n.p.). This invitation to "see language" is a solicitation that is constantly renewed in our reading of Davis. For indeed, if, in her stories, there is a dearth of character, of place, of plot, it is amply made up for in the profusion of ways Davis summons us to examine language. The following close readings will show that Davis is first and foremost a reader's reader.

Close Readings

In Davis's preoccupation with the poetics of the normal, there is, as Eliza Haughton-Shaw points out, "an invitation and the permission to become unfamiliar to ourselves in our most ordinary moments" (Haughton-Shaw 2020, n.p.). The two stories "Negative Emotions" and "A Story of Stolen Salamis" are from her last collection Can't and Won't. The two ordinary moments rendered unfamiliar are an email, and a news brief. It is in this collection that the trademark characteristics of her writing are the most salient: (1) the short-short pieces — out of the 122 stories 97 fall into this category, 70 are less than a page long — the other 7, a page and a bit. (2) Found material: extracts from Flaubert's letters to his mistress Louise Colet, translated and turned into stories; dreams — her own and those of her friends turned into stories; complaint letters she wrote herself and sent — one to a frozen peas manufacturer complaining that the color of the peas in the can does not correspond to the color on the label.

Lydia Davis comments on "Negative Emotions" in Essays One. She speaks of the influence and her great admiration for the stories of Thomas Bernhard, notably "their tight structure, their completeness, and negativity of attitude. But also the hypercomplex syntax of some of the sentences" (Davis 2020, n.p.). More specifically in regard "Negative Emotions" she specifies the direct influence Bernhard's story "Near Sulden" exerted on her:

> (1) [. . .] my analytical readings of Bernhard's short pieces, all the closer since I was working on them in class; and more immediately, (2) the raw material - the email I encountered. The emotional impetus for the piece - since there is always, for me, strong feeling behind a piece of writing - was at least twofold: (1) amusement at what Bernhard does in his brief stories, and at the content of the email; and (2) admiration for Bernhard's writing and a desire to do something similar, although I did not see the influence of Bernhard (obvious to me now) until after I had written it. (n.p.)

The following close reading is an attempt to explain how "emotion," "amusement," and "negativity of attitude" — all characteristics of Davis's works — are carried out grammatically and thus stylistically. We will notably be looking at the grammatical notions of direct and indirect reported speech, free indirect speech, pronouns, and negation. These notions are admirably woven into the story and explain how politeness theory and the notion of face intertwine in how we interpret what we hear or read. We will discover how these notions enable us to discover unsuspected clues concerning narrative voice.

"Negative Emotions" (282 words) tells the story of a well-meaning teacher who sends an article that he found in a book written by a Vietnamese Buddhist monk giving advice on what to do about emotions to all the teachers in his school. The message is badly received by the colleagues resulting in an angry backlash with them writing back an irate message with an ironic twist: "They said, they in fact liked having negative emotions, particularly about him and his message" (Davis 2015, 103). It is a story that could be included in a textbook on professional writing entitled, "How Not to Write an Email." Though this will be part of my analysis, the essential of my task will be devoted to how we as readers interpret what is not said - a task required by every reader of great literature, but even more so with a Lydia Davis story, where the reader might conclude to there being a little too much silence.

My resume above of "Negative Emotions" is a combination of indirect reported speech, and a direct quotation from the story. The direct quotation is in inverted commas and is a faithful rendering of how the story ends. The reported speech, on the other hand, in being a resume is much less faithful. Not only have I left out details, I have also added my own interpretation - there is no mention of an email in the story, only a message.

Communicatively speaking, a message conveyed via indirect reported speech can be considered a regular culprit in failed communication. This is because it is, like the above, often a summing up of what the other person said - words are exchanged for others, things are left out, and a certain amount of subjectivity can enter into the transformed message. Here is the actual opening paragraph:

> A well-meaning teacher, inspired by a text he had been reading, once sent all the other teachers in his school a message about negative emotions. The message consisted entirely of advice quoted from a Vietnamese Buddhist monk. (103)

Though the message is not explicitly referred to as being an email, we infer that this is how he sent the message to "all the other teachers." And we imagine the email sent via the professional mailing "reply-all" list to all his colleagues in the "to" section, with his name in the "from" section will be primarily received as a communication of professional tenor. However, there is no direct message from the colleague himself, just "advice quoted from a Vietnamese Buddhist monk about negative emotions." Though the narrator uses the term "quoted," we notice in the paragraph that follows that there are no quotation marks, and though there is the reporting frame "said the monk," and the absence of the inverted commas in direct reported speech is grammatically accepted (Huddleston & Pullum 2002, 1023), the

effect of direct speech and the constraint upon this structure "to use the actual wording" of the speaker (1023) can be held in doubt. We might question the reliability of the term "quoted," because, if taken literally this could also infer that the message would be in Vietnamese. Since the quote is in English, we must further infer that the monk in question was either fluent enough to write in English or, if not, that the text was translated. The formal, rather restrained tone of the message (for instance, the use of the formal "one") can be interpreted by the fact that English is not his mother tongue. But this can also be interpreted by a perception of Buddhist spirituality as being itself formal; or it can be interpreted as a general cultural abeyance to the oriental code of politeness. We might further ponder the idea of "negative" emotion, because the monk only speaks of "emotion":

> Emotion, said the monk, is like a storm: it stays for a while and then it goes. Upon perceiving the emotion (like a coming storm), one should put oneself in a stable position. One should sit or lie down. One should focus on one's abdomen. One should focus, specifically on the area just below one's navel and practice mindful breathing. If one can identify the emotion as an emotion. It may then be easier to handle. (103)

Emailing, Business Letters, Context, and Politeness Theory

There is nothing immediately offensive about this email. "Emotion" is in itself not necessarily negative, but as the simile "emotion is like a storm" infers, it can be strong, powerful, and destructive. And, since, as the definition of the word "emotion" specifies, it is: (1) a "strong feeling deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationship with others; (2) an instinctive or intuitive feeling as distinguished from reasoning of knowledge," the introduction of such notions in a professional milieu can be understood as being inappropriate. If it had been sent to a few close friends, close enough for them to interpret it as a catechism for fellow Buddhists, for example, or as something to laugh about, either because they were all sharing negative emotions about a shared experience, or because they would all have in mind a friend or colleague Buddhist whose image of him/herself as the epitome Buddhist detachment and serenity is so far off the mark that it is laughable, the outcome would probably have been different. But assuming "all the teachers in his school" were not personal close friends, which is probable because being "close friends" with the entire staff is not possible ("can't" be friends with everyone and "won't" even try), the vicious harangue that followed is natural.

To better grasp what is at stake here, we are going to use the linguistics field of pragmatics or, as George Yule has put it, "the study of 'invisible' meaning" (Yule 2014, 126) as our guide. Invisible meaning often means the gap between the intended message and what is understood and what is meant (129). Inference in pragmatics is additional information used by the listener to logically create a connection between what is said and what is meant. Gaps between what is said and what is meant are not always a source of polemic. If someone says, "Could you please pass the salt?," even though it is in interrogative form, we know that it is a polite way of asking for the salt, and not a question about our physical capacity to pass the salt, in which case we would answer, "yes" or "no." This is called an indirect speech act. And we use indirect speech acts to make requests because it is more polite than an imperative "Pass the salt" and "removes the assumption of social power" (132). Our adeptness in using indirect speech acts is tied to our sensitivity to the other person's face,' and in politeness theory is called a "face-saving act." We all have a 'negative face' and a 'positive face.' Negative face is the need to be independent and free from position; positive face the need to feel connected, to have a sense of belonging, be part of a group. As the colleagues understood this message not only as an imition, but as an accusation, the well-meaning teacher has managed not only to disregard their negative face, in threatening their negative face,

he has unintentionally managed to address their positive face — creating a group of colleagues whose sense of belonging to a group has taken on a whole new dimension. And has excluded the sender.

Different cultures respond to these notions of face in various ways. Oriental cultures being more deferential than Western cultures is one possible explanation for the choice of the pronoun "one" instead of the more direct "you" in the monk's advice on emotion. But more specific to the story in regards to face and culture are those required of the professional world in regards to politeness. The inference of the remark made by a friend at a party will not be the same as the same comment made by a colleague or a superior in a professional context. Thus, simply the name of the sender would immediately condition the reaction of his colleagues. Factors such as their relationship to him and his and their place in the hierarchy of the school would all be determinant in their reception of his advice:

> The other teachers were puzzled. They did not understand why their colleague had sent them a message about negative emotions. They resented the message, and they resented their colleague. They thought he was accusing them of having negative emotions and needing advice in how to handle them. Some of them were, in fact, angry. (103)

Face and Culture; Context and Relationships; Negative Inference and Added Meaning

We have already noted that the term "negative" appears in the title of the story as well as in the summing up by the narrator, "sent them a text about negative emotions." I have suggested that it is this interpretation by the sender that led the colleagues to interpret it this way. But what if the title of his email were not "negative emotions" but "advice from a Vietnamese Buddhist monk"? Would the negative inference still be present? It would for the reader because of the title of the story, "Negative Emotions." But even without this title the adjective "well-meaning" in the opening noun phrase is also a clue. "Well-meaning" only means "to have good intentions." But there is an added meaning that is "implicated" — the added meaning being something like "gone about in the wrong way thus doomed for failure." Note the term inference refers to the act or process of inferring by deduction, while implicature is an implied meaning. In the term "well-meaning" there is the additional conveyed negative meaning. We detect further implicature in the modal auxiliary "should" as advice is going to be understood by the listener as a suggestion to correct a behavior. Even though the pronoun "one" could be paraphrased by the general "everyone," thus less threatening than "you," colleagues might not appreciate being lumped into this "everyone" and being given the unsolicited advice to regard the area below their navel. They do not wish their positive face to be addressed in such a way.

Vocabulary

A term in this email that might take on additional meaning and could be considered as offensive is "Buddhist monk." Though Buddhism, in being nontheistic, is not strictly speaking a religion but a philosophy, the interpretation of the message as an inflicting of spiritual views upon others through the bias of a professional mailing list is a possible construal. And that the term 'emotion,' let alone those of 'abdomen' and 'navel' might cause offense, is linked to the fact that these terms belong not only to the personal domain, but to the intimate. We are beginning to have a clearer picture of a very authoritative narrative voice deftly guiding our way to the dramatic, albeit ironically funny denouement.

Narrative Voice

We note so far that there have been no outright negative sentences - only negative inference and implicature. This negative implicature continues with the adjective "puzzled," which implies "did not understand." However, it is not until "They did not understand why their colleague had sent them a message about negative emotions," that we encounter a negative sentence constructed via "analytic primary negation." That is, a sentence formed by a "primary clause containing a primary form of an auxiliary verb" negated by adding "not" after the verb (for instance, "did not"). It is opposed to secondary synthetic negation where the verb is inflected (for instance, "didn't") (Huddleston & Pullum 2002, 799). We further note that throughout the rest of the story, each time there is an outright negative sentence, it is systematically an analytic negative. We thus encounter a narrative voice that is omnipresent in Lydia Davis's stories. The somewhat stiff, overly pedantic, working a topic to the bone, non-conversational voice that is rather distant. The use of the full forms in the negative construction is partially responsible for this. Huddleston and Pullum explain that analytic and synthetic negation are not fully interchangeable, the main difference being one of style level, the synthetic forms, being more informal, are considered the default form. Analytic negation is preferred in formal writing and solemn contexts. Synthetic negation is preferred in ordinary conversation and is considered to increase the sense of familiarity, intimacy, and accessibility (800). Huddleston and Pullum go on to specify that analytic forms sound unnatural in many conversational contexts unless there is some clear reason for their use, such as emphasis on the word "Not." This is because emphasis, which is not possible on the contracted form N'T, is possible on the full form NOT. This use is thus understandable in the contrastive sentences:

> The teachers did not choose to regard *their* anger as a coming storm. They did not focus on their abdomens. They did not focus on the area just below their navels. (Davis 2015, 103; emphasis added)

But it is not necessary in the explanatory, "They did not understand why their colleague had sent them a message [. . .]," as there is no contrast to the preceding sentence expressing the idea that the teachers were "puzzled." This sentence simply explains why they were puzzled.

We further notice that the narrative voice does not make use of grammatical ellipsis. For example, the above sentence could have been more concise. In coordinate sentences with "and" the repetition of the noun and verb in the compound clause is not compulsory. Thus, in preferring the more formal: "They resented the message, and they resented their colleague" (emphasis added) to the more concise and spontaneous "They resented the message and their colleague" (emphasis added), the narrator can thus literally pound home the point.

The verb phrases "resent," "accusing," "needing advice," "handle," "get over," "caused," along with the adjective "other" in "The other teachers were puzzled" (emphasis added) all combine in the mounting crescendo of negation, building up to the exclusion of the well-meaning colleague. The adjective "other," excludes the sender of the email. Idem for "Some of them were, in fact, angry" (emphasis added). "Some" implies "not all of the teachers were angry" and excludes the teachers who wrote back:

> Instead, they wrote back immediately, declaring that because they did not understand why he had sent it, his message had filled them with negative emotions. They told him that it would take a lot of practice for them to get over the negative emotions caused by his message. But, they went on, they did not intend to do this practice. Far from being troubled by their negative

> emotions, they said, they in fact liked having negative emotions, particularly about him and his message. (103; emphasis added)

The coordinating conjunction "but" sets up an opposition to something expressed or inferred in the previous clause, "it would take a lot of practice for them to get over the negative emotions caused by his message." This opposition can be argumentative or explanatory. Argumentative "but" does not oppose the preceding clause, but something inferred. "He is rich but happy," infers the rich are not happy. Explanatory "but," which we have here, introduces a clause that develops or explains the preceding clause. The negative inferring verbs, "get over" meaning to recover or survive a difficulty, and the verb "cause" implying to make something (usually bad) happen, clearly enable the sentence introduced by "but" to be an explanatory refutation of even attempting the practice. But who in fact is explaining?

Reported Speech, Parentheticals, Supplements, and a Duo of Narrative Voices

On a first reading, the story seems to be a stable third person narration, as all pronouns in the text are all third person pronouns: "he," "they," "them," and "their." It is in the narrative past tense, and when there is reported speech, the necessary grammatical adjustments are in place. In direct speech the angry message of the angry teachers would read: "Because we do not understand why you have sent it, your message has filled us with negative emotions [. . .]" (emphasis added).

Did each angry teacher individually send this message — this exact message? In which case were they authorized by the others to use the collective "we," or did they use the first person singular "I"? Or was one teacher chosen to send it with all the angry teachers in copy? And what about the adverb "immediately." If taken literally this paragraph would lead us to believe that all the angry teachers were at the same place at the same time and speaking in one harmonious voice dashed off the angry email. Of course, this is not how we interpret the story, because we know that indirect reported speech is a retelling of what was actually said. The reporter in the story is the narrator and as narrator she has direct access to the content because the author has made her the spokesperson. The original speakers are the monk, the other teachers, and then some of the other teachers — the angry ones. The only information the story gives us about the original sender is that there was no message from him, just the quote.

The major difference between reported speech and direct speech is the question of deixis, that is the personal pronouns, time and place adverbs, the demonstratives, and tense. Reported direct speech, with quotation marks reports the words of an "I" talking to a "you," about some topic. In a normal conversation there is turn taking, where the "I" becomes the "you," when it is the other's turn to speak. In indirect reported speech, "I" usually becomes a third person — in our story "they" —and the present tense of the moment of utterance becomes the past tense, "here" becomes "there." In speech utterance linguistics, the third person pronouns are considered non-persons:

> The third person pronoun does not refer to a person because it refers to an object located outside direct address. But it exists and is characterized only by its opposition to the person "I" of the speaker who is uttering it, situates it as a non-person. Here is its status. The form "he' takes its value from the fact that is necessarily part of a discourse uttered by "I." (Benveniste 1971, 229)

Since the pronouns "they," "their," and "them" appear 21 times and "he," "his," and "him" 9 times, this repetition (nearly 12% of the text) merits a closer look into how they participate in the orchestration of narrative voice.

Framing Structures

The framing structures, in bold print in my examples below are the words of the narrator.

1. Emotion, said the monk, is like a storm;
2. Instead they wrote back immediately declaring that;
3. They told him that
4. But, they went on, they did not intend;
5. Far from being troubled by their negative emotions, they said, they in fact liked (. . .1.

In indirect reported speech, there is a choice between an "embedded subordinate framing structure," found in 2 and 3 above, which are grammatically like any subordinate content clause introduced by "that," or a "non-embedded framing structure" which either follows the content clause, or like in our story, is in median position as in 1, 4, and 5. These non-embedded framing structures are considered less common than their embedded alternatives (Huddleston & Pullum 2002, 1025). We notice that, once again, as for the case of the analytic negation and coordinate sentences, Davis has chosen the less common of two possible grammatical structures.

Third Person Personal Pronoun and Content Clause

When the third person pronoun used in indirect reported speech is singular, it is easier to accept that the content corresponds to what the person said. However, when it is the plural "they," corresponding to a group, it is a little more complicated, as seen above. What is of interest in these non-embedded framing structures in the indirect reported speech without the inverted commas, is that in splitting the reported speech in two, we cannot entirely ascertain whether the beginning belongs to the original speakers or to the narrator. In 4 is "But, they went on," and in 5 "Far from being troubled by their negative emotions, they said" the words of the angry teachers, or the comment of the narrator?

There are several types of blurring going on in this story. In choosing not to use the inverted commas to introduce the reported speech, there is a constant blurring between the direct speech of the narrator and the indirect speech of the teachers. The non-embedded framing structures are termed parentheticals and act as supplements (952-953, 1024). Thus, like a passage between parentheses in a text, that is, a word or phrase inserted as an explanation or afterthought into a passage which is grammatically complete without it, in writing usually marked off by brackets, dashes, or commas (1748), we are invited to pay attention to why Davis chose this structure and not the more common one.

Free Indirect Speech

Free indirect speech is a grammatical and stylistic means of allowing an author to express the thoughts of a character. There are no inverted commas, and the third person pronoun of the narrative voice remains. Free indirect speech seamlessly allows the author to surreptitiously slide from the third person narrative voice into the minds of the characters. The reader can sometimes detect free indirect speech through the use of deixis — the passage remains in the past tense, but 'now' is used instead of `tchen,' here' instead of 'there'. The reader understands a "s/he thought/ felt" etc. that is not present in the text. Our story, on the surface at least, seems to be entirely about the thoughts of the characters so free

indirect speech may not seem to be immediately pertinent. However, upon examining these parentheticals as well as the other grammatical choices involving negation and coordination, the choice not to use inverted commas to introduce the monk's text, and the insistent use of third person pronouns we detect another very subtle narrative voice that stealthily makes its way into the story. Rather than the detached narrative voice of the third person narration, this voice becomes a double voice and takes on the voice of the community, one of the voices Rimmon-Kenan identifies as the unreliable narrator (Rimmon-Kenan 1989,100-103), here ironically recounting the hilarious but violent reaction of the teachers. We hear not only an echo of their anger, but also gain understanding of the first rule of professional writing: "Never write an email when you are angry."

We also better understand how this story echoes the three dimensions Davis admired in Bernhard's story: (1) Davis's particular use of negative structures has captured the negative attitude admired in Bernhard's story; (2) her ironic twist on positive face, where sense of belonging to a group concludes in the hilarious ending of the sheer jubilation ignited by the sharing of negative emotion, captures the amusement Bernhard's story procures for her; (3) in the response to a colleague, who has in fact said nothing, we detect an interesting twist on a theme that is very dear to another inspiration to Davis — Maurice Blanchot who wrote about how "the need to write is linked to the approach toward this point at which nothing can be done with words" (Blanchot [1955] 1992, 52). The "well-meaning" colleague, in not including a personal message has literally "done nothing with words," and thus captures the emotional impetus that makes this more than a humorous anecdote. In inviting us to examine reported speech, it is in fact a story about how we interpret text — the added meaning. Email is like conversation without the intonation, and without the immediate turn taking possible when we speak. The unsuspected violence of the colleague's message, and the violence of the reaction is language at work. Davis's over-careful narrator joining her voice with that of the community reminds us that it is only in taking great care with language that we can begin to feel at home with it and in it.

Reported speech and the undetected violence of language is present also in our second story, which is the opening story in the collection Can't and Won't. Davis's stories are better understood when perceived in their cohesive whole. The second close reading will demonstrate how it prepares us for the reading of much that goes on in her very short prose pieces, as she herself prefers to call them.

> "A Story of Stolen Salamis"
>
> My son's Italian landlord in Brooklyn kept a shed out back in which he cured and smoked salamis. One night, in the midst of a wave of petty vandalism and theft, the shed was broken into and the salamis were taken. My son talked to his landlord about it the next day, commiserating over the vanished sausages. The landlord was resigned and philosophical, but corrected him. "They were not sausages. They were salamis". Then the incident was written up in one of the city's more prominent magazines as an amusing and colorful urban incident. In the article, the reporter called the stolen goods "sausages". My son showed the article to his landlord, who hadn't known about it. The landlord was interested and pleased that the magazine had seen fit to report the incident, but he added: They weren't sausages. They were salamis. (Davis 2015, 3)

To analyze this story, I will be using the theoretical tools which are those of M.A.K. Halliday and Ruquia Hasan in their work Cohesion in English. Their work explains how a text functions as a semantic edifice, how one element connects to another via the following 4 tools: (1) Reference: that is, Pronouns: A noun is replaced by a pronoun; (2) Substitution: one word is replaced by another, that is, A dish on the table was cracked. The plate had been in the family for centuries; (3) Conjunction: A term is not only

substituted, it is redefined; for instance: The plant her mother gave her before she died was losing its flowers. That blooming symbol of her love was disappearing also. (4) Ellipsis, which is substitution by zero. The easiest example is coordination ellipsis, which was explained in the previous close reading. These four tools will be applied to two ideas: One, by the linguist Andre Joly who has demonstrated how the title and first sentence of a literary text is the conditioning framework for the whole novel. I am extending this to apply to the first story in the collection. The first sentence is a suggestion of the text that is to follow — and what is to follow is a transformed version of this initial suggestion (Joly 2001, 151). The second idea is Lydia Davis's. In her chapter on writing in Essays One she writes of the importance of ending: "Do work hard on the very last words — they can sometimes make all the difference as to whether or not a story seems finished" (Davis 2020, n.p.).

Reference: There are several incidences of reference: "My son's Italian landlord" referred to as "he" twice; "my son" becomes "him"; "shed was broken into and the salamis were taken" beomes "it"; "sausages" become "they" four times; "the article" becomes "it." "The landlord" is also replaced by "who" in a relative clause, and the "shed" by "which" in an adverbial clause introduced by the preposition "in."

Substitution: The term "stolen," as specified in the title, is replaced by "taken" and "vanished." "Salamis" is substituted by "goods" and "sausages" twice, once by the boy, the second time in article.

Conjunction: Conjunction is used in the most interesting manner here by Davis and in so doing she calls to mind what we have just discovered about indirect reported content. For when salamis is substituted by the word "sausages," it is not only substituted it is redefined. And this redefinition is at the heart of two challenges of translation. The first concerns what Walter Benjamin termed "the manner of meaning" (qtd. in Jacobs 1975, 761). Benjamin remarks that though the English word "bread" and the German word "Brot" refer to the same foodstuff made with water and flour and yeast - the manner of meaning is not the same. If a salami connotes a sausage, a sausage does not connote a salami. A sausage is what we in the English-speaking world eat with mashed potatoes, or for breakfast with eggs. A salami is an antipasto eaten perhaps with a glass of wine. The journalist who wrote the article has translated the term, and, in so doing, has ignored the landlord's cultural heritage.

Reported speech: The title "A Story of Stolen Salamis" is not exact. It is a story of a story of stolen salamis. Written up, not as "an incident in a wave of petty vandalism and theft," but as "an amusing and colorful incident." There is indeed here what Lecercle has termed a "violence of language" (Lecercle 1990, 141) - perhaps even an ever-so-slight mocking of the expected appreciation of the "woke" readers of "one of the city's more prominent magazines." We begin to touch here on a poignancy that can go undetected in Davis's fiction, if we are not conscious of how language can trip us up - a theme that is central to all of Davis's writing.

Ellipses: The direct speech of the landlord at the end of the story, "They weren't sausages. They were salamis," which at first seems to be a repetition of "They were not sausages. They were salamis" is not a repetition. The long form analytic negation has been replaced by the default, more spontaneous, more conversational synthetic negation. The landlord in his repeated complaint uses the contracted form of "were not". This, of course, is not an ellipsis of a word but a simple grapheme. But we can take this one step further and interpret it metaphorically. The substitution of NOT by a zero and an apostrophe could be metaphorically interpreted as a restitution of the landlord's identity. Davis, in substituting one form of negation for another uses this zero to indicate the integration of the immigrant landlord - and this

through his use of a contracted form of negation. When looking through Lydia Davis's translations and adaptations of Flaubert's letters, we notice that contrary to most of her fiction, she does in fact use the contracted forms. She has explained that when she was translating Madame Bovary she went to Flaubert's letters to find a more spontaneous Flaubert (Davis 2020, n.p.). The narrative tells both the story of an unrecognized other but ends with a transformation. A more spontaneous landlord expressing himself via synthetic negation has reminded us of his desire to be an integrated American.

Theoretical Perspectives

Any theoretical approach to Lydia Davis's work will bloom and flourish by an examination of what she herself has written, not only about translation and writing, but about the visual arts as well. Because of the very tight control she wields over the English language and her own particular manner of deploying it in the disarming brevity of most of her pieces, the ideal place to begin is a study of her Essays One (2020). Davis's concern for form reveals itself to be a necessary prerequisite to emotion. It is in her essay on artist Joan Mitchell that we find one of the best ways of apprehending her fiction. She speaks of a visit she made to Mitchell in the French village of Vétheuil and wandering out to her studio to look at the painting, "Les Bluets," which she liked very much. And yet, she admits to naively seeing it only as "shapes and colors, white and blue." It was only when someone told her that it was in fact a painting of the Vétheuil landscape, more precisely the cornflowers, and this came as a shock to her:

> Apparently I had not known before that an abstract painting could contain references to concrete objective, identifiable subject matter. Two things happened at once: the painting went beyond itself, lost its isolation, acquired a relationship to fields, to flowers; and it changed from something I understood, into something I did not understand, a mystery, a problem. (n. p.)

Even though Davis's stories in their seemingly obsessive manner of presenting us with the ordinary, the quotidian, appear to be about things we know, she, like Mitchell, throws new light on the concrete, the objective, the identifiable matter. "She is our Vermeer, patiently observing and chronicling daily life, but from angles odd and askew," writes Parul Seghal (2019, n.p.). And it is first and foremost through her use of the English language that she takes us unawares. This is because, as Paul De Man points out in his Introduction to Walter Benjamin's The Task of the Translator:

> We think we are at ease in our language, we feel a coziness, a familiarity, a shelter in the language we call our own in which we think we are not alienated. What the translation reveals is that this alienation is at its strongest in our own original language, that the original language within which we are engaged is disarticulated in a way which imposes upon us a particular alienation — a particular suffering. (De Man 1986, 84)

Davis exposes the capacity of language to go wrong, but she does not write against language. On the contrary, in making language her leading character, the main action, and the principal setting, she gives its study a whole new role in the understanding of a literary text. Since Davis's stories are sometimes seen as a defamiliarization of English, or even, as someone once remarked, a translation of English into English, looking to the works on translation helps to better grasp this dimension of her work. It is via the concept of the defamiliarization of language brought to light by Walter Benjamin in The Task the Translator that we can better apprehend Davis. This is because, like for Benjamin, Davis firmly believes, what we take for granted in our language is up for questioning, that is the question of the compatibility between grammar and meaning (87).

It is Jonathan Evans's The Many Voices of Lydia Davis (2016) that gives us the most in-depth insight on how her literary works can be regarded as being in dialogue with the works she has translated. From Blanchot, whom Evans cites as being Davis's most enduring influence as a translator, she has learned and continualy sought to remain as faithful as possible in regards to syntax, word order and style of the source author's text (Evans 2016, 26. In his detailed analysis of her translation of Madame Bovary as well as in her reworking into short stories of various short extracts of Flaubert's letters to Louise Colet, we better discover not only Davis the translator, but also Davis the adaptor and Davis the appropriator. Moreover, Evans further contends that not only is Davis's novel The End of the Story a rewriting of Proust's Swann's Way, but in her extending of the practices employed in her translations of Leiris, he also contends that her translation of Swann's Way is a veritable rewriting of the canonical translation by Scott Moncrieff and the lesser known translation by James Grieve (71-88).

Our analysis in both the stories studied above exposed how a harmless email and an amusing news brief dissimulated a violence of language linked to the characters' disregard for how language means and does not mean. For insight into the defamiliarization and the violence of language, we can profitably look to Lecercle's The Violence of Language (1990) where he introduces the notion of the "remainder" - "that dimension of language that is there beneath the surface and resists the prescriptive rules of grammar" (141). The "remainder" is also studied in Venuti's The Translator's Invisibility ([1985] 2008) where the Davis reader can gain more insight into the concept of the foreignization of language with the "remainder" allowing for the cultural "other" to emerge from the text. As Davis's fiction often reveals ourselves as 'other,' these works in their delving beyond the surface are useful guides. Moreover, a look at how nonsense texts work is yet another theoretical context that is of help. In their study The Force of Language, Lecercle and Riley (2005) investigate how in refusing meaning, nonsense texts provoke interpretation. They are "forceful attempts to force meaning out of them or into them. Such forceful attempts develop intuitions about the workings of language, even as nonsense itself does" (81).

Davis does not like the term flash fiction, nor does she like her work to be considered experimental:

> To me, experimental implies that the writer had a plan to test some preconceived writing strategy and see if it would work, that what resulted might or might not prove anything, and might or might not be successful. It seems to me both preplanned, deliberate, conceptual, and at the same time rather tentative. Since I generally prefer to start a piece of writing without much of a plan, and not to be sure exactly what I'm doing, I do not consider the stories that result, in any way experimental. (Davis 2020, n.p.; original emphasis)

However, to get a view of how her fiction fits into the general picture of the short story, and more precisely short-short fiction, Kasia Boddy on Davis in her textbook The American Short Story from 1950 (2010) and Julie Tanner's chapter in Cocchiarale and Emmert's Flash Fiction (2017) each in their own way demonstrate how, if Davis is to be classified in the above genres, she takes them to a new level.

To conclude, as this chapter's close readings have striven to show, the very best place to start analyzing Davis's work is with a grammar textbook in hand — my favorite being the The Cambridge Companion to the English Language. In saying this, I am simply repeating the advice Davis herself gives to young writers. The book she advises is Virginia Tufte's Artful Sentences: Syntax and Style (2006). It is because the short story cannot afford the luxury of the novel to include passages that are present simply for the sheer pleasure of the skillful writing, we are called upon to take into account every word. In Lydia

Davis's work, not only is it every word, it is every sign down to the tiniest phoneme or unobtrusive lexeme. The reader who, at first might believe that there is little to work on can discover, such as we did rapidly above, what the modest apostrophe can bring to the work; what a little verb phrase, like, "said the monk," can tell us about narrative voice, and how, when the grammar of a language gives us a choice between two seemingly synonymous structures, or words that may mean the same, we discover that what is expressed is different. But this difference often reveals itself to ring a bell with a theme, or an idea expressed further back in the text, or announces something we will discover further down.

Repetition in the short-short story is another source of investigation. Let us return briefly to "Circular Story," cited at the beginning of this chapter and examine the repetition. The pronoun "it" is used four times. Three of those times, the referent for "it" is clearly the noun anaphorically referred to in the preceding sentence; but in the last sentence we cannot replace "it" by the "the truck." The referent can only be "the racket out there on the road" located at the beginning of the text. And that is why it is a "circular" story. It brings us back to the beginning. And in bringing us back to the beginning it becomes what Roland Barthes considers to be the ideal text — the reversible text open to the greatest variety of independent interpretations and not restrictive in meaning (Barthes 1970, 11). Just like the pronoun "it."

While the study of grammar is an entry point to all her stories, grammar itself as title and/or theme predominates some of her most intriguing stories. The haunting "Grammar Questions" (Davis 2013, 527), the story of the narrator's dying father recounted through grammatical questionings: "In the phrase 'he is dying,' the words `he is' with the present participle suggest that he is actively doing something. But he is not actively dying. j. . .] 'He is not eating' sounds active, too. But it is not his choice. He is not conscious that he is not eating. He is not conscious at all" (528; original emphasis). Or "Example of the Continuing Past Tense in a Hotel Room" which reads, "Your housekeeper has been Shelley" (715). Or again, the use of the subjunctive in her story "Honoring the Subjunctive": "It invariably precedes, even if it do not altogether supersede, the determination of what is absolutely desirable and just" (377; emphasis added). The choice between the five aspects of the present indicative tense in English (compared to only one in French) cannot be carried out adequately if the translator is only applying the grammar rules. The subjunctive mode has disappeared in British English but is still used in formal writing in American English, but as Davis said herself in her interview with Wachtel, "It's so wrong to the ear" (Wachtel 2008, n.p.). The study of grammar is at the heart of the very long story "We Miss You: A Study of Get Well Letters from a Class of Fourth-Graders" (534-560), which is a socio-anthropological study of 27 children via the letters they sent to her brother who was hospitalized after being hit by a car. Their use of verb phrases, their command of complex sentences, their choice of coordinate conjunctions and formulaic expressions are described in the minutest detail in the dry, analytic voice of a sociologist, which leaves the reader not only with a sentiment of deep poignancy at these letters, but also a fine lesson on how language means and does not mean.

Like Lydia Davis looking at Mitchell's "Cornflowers," we might naively think, "Oh, it's only an apostrophe, only a contracted negation. We understand that." But then we realize, we do not. Davis concludes: "I became willing to allow aspects of the painting to remain mysterious, and I became willing to allow aspects of other problems to remain unsolved as well" (Davis 2020, n.p.). And so it is with her stories — these ever-yielding miniatures. Lydia Davis has been said to be a writer's writer. But she is first and foremost, a reader's reader. And each of her stories contain a lesson in close reading.

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Becoming the Ex-Wife: The Unconventional Life and Forgotten Writings of Ursula Parrott by Marsha Gordon [University of California Press, ISBN: 9780520391543]

"Makes an excellent case for Parrott as an unjustly forgotten historical figure."—The New Yorker

"Remind[s] us of the brazenly talented women sidelined by convention."—New York Times

The riveting biography of Ursula Parrott—best-selling author, Hollywood screenwriter, and voice for the modern woman.

Credited with popularizing the label "ex-wife" in 1929, Ursula Parrott wrote provocatively about divorcées, career women, single mothers, work-life balance, and a host of new challenges facing modern women. Her best sellers, Hollywood film deals, marriages and divorces, and run-ins with the law made her a household name. Part biography, part cultural history, Becoming the Ex-Wife establishes Parrott's rightful place in twentieth-century American culture, uncovering her neglected work and keen insights into American women's lives during a period of immense social change.

Although she was frequently dismissed as a "woman's writer," reading Parrott's writing today makes it clear that she was a trenchant philosopher of modernity—her work was prescient, anticipating issues not widely raised until decades after her decline into obscurity. With elegant wit and a deft command of the archive, Marsha Gordon tells a timely story about the life of a woman on the front lines of a culture war that is still raging today.

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Marsha Gordon is Professor of Film Studies at North Carolina State University, a former Fellow at the National Humanities Center, and the recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities Public Scholar award. She is the author of numerous books and articles and codirector of several short documentaries.

What inspired you to write a biography about Ursula Parrott and what drew you to her work as a Hollywood screenwriter and author?

In 2015, I was tipped off to a collection of F. Scott Fitzgerald screenplays in the special collections archives at the University of South Carolina. When I made an appointment to look at the materials, I had a limited amount of time, so I picked the screenplay that had the best title— *Infidelity*! Fitzgerald had been hired by MGM to write this screenplay in 1938, and I will never forget what I wrote in my notes

about the author of the story Fitzgerald was adapting: "Who is Ursula Parrott?" I had never heard of her!

The more I learned about her—from her 1929 best-selling book *Ex-Wife*, to her prolific publishing career and her movie work—the more interesting I found her and the more shocked I was that none of her books were in print. In fact, she had been totally erased from the story of 20th century American literature, film, and culture. I hope my book begins the work of telling her story and bringing renewed attention to her fascinating and immensely readable writings.

In what ways do you believe Parrott's writing was prescient, anticipating issues that were not widely raised until decades after her decline into obscurity?

Parrott saw a lot of the impossible contradictions of modern life for women, especially involving relationships, sex, marriage, child rearing, and work. If you read her writing and ignore the period-specific elements—speakeasies, slang, fashion, and the like—it's shocking how much of what she says would not be out of place in a modern novel or conversation. She called out a lot of male behavior that we are still reckoning with in the #MeToo era, even though she was engaging with these things in the 1920s and 1930s.

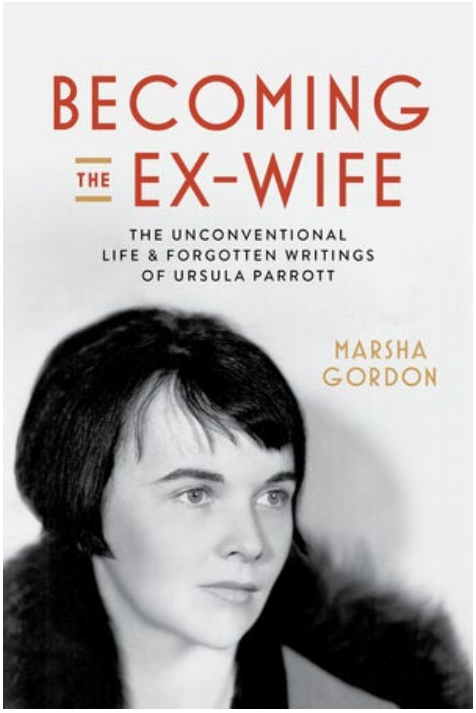
How did you go about researching Parrott's life and work, and what were some of the challenges you faced during the process?

Writing a biography is a bit like being a detective. You follow trails and clues, hit a lot of dead ends, pick up threads, make inquiries, and just keep on digging as you pull together the best paper trail you can to tell a version of a person's life. It's a heavy responsibility, especially when you admire and are sympathetic to the person you are writing about. This gets especially challenging when it comes to someone who has left behind no archive. When Parrott died in the 1950s, she was down on her luck and there was not a single obituary published to commemorate her passing. Nobody tended to her legacy.

When I was a fellow at the National Humanities Center (2019-2020), I set about reading every novel, story, serial, and article Parrott ever published—which took me about a year. That gave me a fantastic sense of her interests and writing style. As I learned more about her personal life through her surviving correspondence with her literary agent and with one of her great loves— both of whom deposited their personal papers with archives — I also realized how much her fiction was about her own life experiences. I pieced together the puzzle of her life through her letters, the vast number of newspaper and magazine stories about her, and her body of published writings.

What do you think Parrott's legacy is in American culture, particularly in terms of her contributions to women's literature and feminist thought?

I think this remains to be seen, since influence can only be gauged by what people read, talk, and publish about in the present day. For so long Parrott has been sidelined, relegated beyond the margins of twentieth century literary and intellectual life. And she's a complicated figure, too—she claimed to have disdain for feminism, but she usually behaved and wrote like an ardent feminist! If people—especially teachers and professors, book reviewers and journalists—discuss and share her work with a new generation, I'm confident that she will have a well-deserved place at the table.



Can you talk about Parrott's writing style and how it evolved over the course of her career?

She had tremendous wit. Even in her darkest hours, she cracked jokes that would make me laugh out loud when I read them in her letters and stories. She had the capacity for the kind of zinger line that we associate with Dorothy Parker, whom I'm sure she associated with when she was hanging out at the Algonquin and the other smart New York places. I also believe that she's one of the great forgotten writers of life in New York City, describing life there in prose perfectly suited to its rhythms, with details—musical notes, cocktail recipes, wisecracks, speakeasy descriptions—that masterfully evoke a time, place, and feeling.

How did Parrott navigate the challenges of being a female writer and Hollywood screenwriter during a time when women's voices were often marginalized?

Despite her alleged distaste for feminism, Parrott did what she could to represent the unvarnished truth about many pressing issues confronting women. When she went to Hollywood, she did her best to make the female characters she wrote scenes and dialogue for both worldly and smart. These were women who could hold their own in any conversation or setting, from the barroom to the bedroom. She spoke openly with the press and in her stories about raising her son without his father's help. In stories, interviews, and letters, she discussed how women had to learn to deflect men's advances—in cab rides home, at parties, while conducting business. When a banker once suggested to her that she could pay interest on a loan with sexual favors, she deflected his suggestions and proudly announced that "I pay 'em six percent interest, like all the men who borrow from them." Parrott knew, in other words, that all women had to fight different battles than their male counterparts. It's one of the things that made their lives so much more difficult, and their victories so much harder won.

What do you hope readers take away from your book, and what impact do you think Parrott's story and writing can have on contemporary debates about gender and feminism?

First and foremost, I hope that reading my book makes people want to read Parrott's books! Fortunately, McNally Editions is republishing **Ex-Wife**, Parrott's 1929 debut bestseller, in May, so that's the easiest way to get started with a really wonderful and interesting read. I hope that people will discuss what *Ex-Wife* had to say about women's lives in the 1920s, and also what it might reveal about the present state of debates over gender roles and feminism.

Finally, can you tell us a bit about any upcoming projects or research that you're currently working on?

I have a lot of different projects at their beginning phases, but there are two that directly grew out of writing this book. First, I'm trying to get a press interested in republishing *Breadwinner*, Parrott's

phenomenally interesting 1933 novella, serialized in *Redbook*. It's about an ambitious and successful woman screenwriter who is also a single mother whose beau cannot accept how greatly her success outpaces his. I think that it might be the first women-centric work-life balance novel, as well, written at a time when the pull of career, family, and home were just emerging for women, who had never had so many opportunities and pressures before. I'd also love to edit a collection of Parrott's short stories, selected letters, and articles—including her amazing 1929 manifesto, "Leftover Ladies." I am really hoping that a press realizes how relevant her writing is, both for a general readership and for classes in American literature and women's studies. Ursula Parrott richly deserves the attention!

Review

"As Marsha Gordon argues in her engaging new biography, **BECOMING THE EX-WIFE**, the novel 'offers a strong case for the protections of marriage and the dangers of being an unattached woman.' . . . In her biography, Gordon makes an excellent case for Parrott as an unjustly forgotten historical figure: a sociological flash point, a beneficiary of feminism and victim of patriarchy who got her enemies mixed up." — *The New Yorker*

"Why did a once-transfixed reading public turn away, and why is Parrott so often now eliminated from a pantheon of popular urban "working girl" writers that includes Helen Gurley Brown, Candace Bushnell, Nora Ephron, Dorothy Parker and, perhaps most comparably, Jacqueline Susann? . . . A reissue of Ursula Parrott's racy novel "Ex-Wife," and a new biography of its author, remind us of the brazenly talented women sidelined by convention. . . . [Gordon] surfaces plenty of colorful period detail: passport photos of everyone looking mussed and truculent in that Jazz Age way; correspondence from exasperated agents, editors and lovers; even an adorable 'mapback' version marked with key locations in 'Ex-Wife.'" — *The New York Times*

"Parrott led a scandalous, glamorous, sometimes lonely life in the public eye, and Gordon, professor and director of the film studies program at North Carolina State University, has done the world a great service by bringing her back into the spotlight." — *Washington City Paper*

"In **BECOMING THE EX-WIFE**, Marsha Gordon sheds welcome light on this remarkable and troubled writer, who knew too well how hard it was to be a modern woman who wanted sexual freedom and a career of her own choosing. In this well-researched and fascinating biography, Parrott emerges as a star who should be remembered alongside Jazz Age icons like Dorothy Parker and the Fitzgeralds." — *Newcity Lit*

"[O]ffers an in-depth look at Parrott's complicated and sometimes scandalous life." — *Walter Magazine*

"Ursula Parrott longed to be a hard-boiled city reporter, but when the sexism of the newspaper industry thwarted her ambitions, she found her voice—and made her fortune—by turning to fiction. She scandalized readers with her nuanced, world-weary stories of women who discovered that the sexual revolution of the Jazz Age wasn't always the great gift to women that it was cracked up to be. With her sharp wit, rebellious ambition, and tragic love life, Ursula Parrott deserves to be celebrated alongside greats like Dawn Powell and Dorothy Parker. A pleasure to read."—Debby Applegate, Pulitzer Prize–winning author of *Madam: The Biography of Polly Adler, Icon of the Jazz Age*

"An incisive portrait of a thoroughly modern woman careening through a meteoric literary career and a reckless personal life, from the Jazz Age to the postwar era. Ursula Parrott's massive output of popular fiction, says Marsha Gordon, 'pulled back the curtain on women's debased circumstances in a permissive age'—which is precisely what Gordon does here, to devastating effect, with Parrott herself."—Thomas Schatz, author of *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era*

"Ursula Parrott finally gets her due in Gordon's revelatory book. Drawing upon exhaustive archival research, Gordon tells the fascinating story of the best-selling novelist whose tumultuous personal life eventually eclipsed her literary career. But Gordon does more than shine a light on an unjustly forgotten writer—she asks us to consider *why* she was forgotten. In her work and her life, Parrott explored the paradoxes of modernity for American women—what she saw as the illusory nature of equality for 'leftover ladies,' divorcees or unmarried career women whose lives did not unfold according to the conventional marriage plot. Parrott's trenchant observations arose from her own life but were ahead of her time. Thanks to Gordon's masterful biography, her moment has finally arrived."—Cara Robertson, author of *The Trial of Lizzie Borden*

"**BECOMING THE EX-WIFE** is just the kind of book I love to read—remarkably well researched and entertaining. Gordon deftly shows why Ursula Parrott more than deserves a place on the shelf."—Cari Beauchamp, author of *Without Lying Down: Frances Marion and the Powerful Women of Early Hollywood*

"In her sparklingly clear and vital new biography, Gordon recovers the story of a singular writer and unhappy woman, who shot to fame with a novel called *Ex-Wife* and carried that tag around with her for the rest of her life. Although she warns that it is not 'an inspirational feminist story,' Gordon's colorful account is salutary all the same, exposing the ways in which even the most successful women's writing can be dismissed and forgotten, and restoring Ursula Parrott to our attention with sympathy and warmth."—Joanna Scutts, author of *Hotbed: Bohemian Greenwich Village and the Secret Club That Sparked Modern Feminism*

"What a fascinating history Gordon charts! Long before Betty Friedan and Helen Gurley Brown, Ursula Parrott voiced the entanglements of modern femininity for educated white women of her generation. Gordon's account of Parrott's life and work—at once typical and utterly astonishing—is smart, witty, and engaging."—Shelley Stamp, author of *Lois Weber in Early Hollywood*

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Remembering a 'Leftover Lady"

If you were to sit down and read reviews of Parrott's novels and stories by many critics of her day or casual characterizations of her by commentators and columnists, you would expect her writing to be maudlin and romantic, her plots filled with champagne and late nights dancing at the smartest nightclubs, flowers and weddings, babies and country homes. But her plots are possessed of these elements only to prime her characters—and her readers—for disappointment. The often trivializing evaluations of her work by critics of her time indicate how much she was misunderstood, making it less surprising that she is all but forgotten today.

Parrott published around 130 novels, stories, novelettes, articles, and serials—none of which are currently in print. At the peak of her career, she made $100,000 a year—the equivalent of roughly two million dollars today.' Although most of her stories depicted romance of some sort, usually of the failed variety, she also wrote about people (indeed, a man and a woman) stranded following a small plane crash in the Canadian wilds during winter, escape plots about people (indeed, a man and a woman) captured by Nazis and held prisoner on a West Indies island during World War II, and stories of young men leaving comfortable lives to fight a war they believed in (indeed, men leaving women behind). Coupling and decoupling play out in most of her stories, but this was just the tip of Parrott's literary iceberg.

Like many of her female contemporaries, she was categorized as a woman who wrote trivial and sentimental romances, although her tales were about much more: difficult divorces, phenomenally successful women's careers, and single parenting; female piloting, adventuring, and traveling; risk-taking on the Underground Railroad, combat, and labor organizing; World War II veterans returning to civilian life and nefarious Nazi plots. Romance writing is a dubious corral in which to contain someone who used the genre to think about women's place in the modern world, and much more.

Of course, she wrote her fair share of tales for the marketplace and made concessions in the process, and she was never able to dedicate herself to the craft of writing in the fashion she had dreamed of. It is certain that Parrott could not have sold stories for such high sums to the mass market magazines that kept her afloat during the 1930s and the 1940s without nesting them inside of a familiar guise and adhering to certain editorial expectations. But most critics never bothered to get past the surface, not noticing, for example, that it was almost always the men in Parrott's stories who experienced unrequited love, wringing their hands over how to convince women to accept their proposals. When the United States rolled out its first World War II—era Victory Book Campaign in the fall of 1942, it warned potential donors to desist from donating any "women's love stories," listing Ursula Parrott—along with Kathleen Norris, Faith Baldwin, and Elinor Glyn—as authors to be avoided. The limiting lasso of the woman writer had already been firmly drawn around Parrott while she was alive; without anyone tending to her legacy, there was no escaping it.

There is much to admire about Parrott's writing, including many of her stories and novels that receive woefully inadequate attention in these pages, like her 1933-34 "Breadwinner," a serialized novel that is a profound snapshot of a time, place, and worldview centered around a successful writer and single mother who cannot convince the unsuccessful man she adores to get over his preposterous inferiority syndrome. In it, Parrott enacts a stunning takedown of male privilege in the workplace when Mark learns that his office will be laying off workers and tells Linda about his likely disposability: "Most of the smaller agencies, like mine, have been too well filled for years, with a good many allegedly bright young men like me, who did a half-days' work for a good day's wage, because we wore our clothes well, or because the daughter of the senior partner liked the way we danced. We didn't need particularly marked abilities." In a mere two sentences, Parrott eviscerated an entire generation of entitled white-collar workers by cutting them down to size in the voice of one of their own. No wonder Mark was so insecure—he had no legs to stand on, except for those granted by virtue of his maleness.

Her second novel, Strangers May Kiss, contains some exceptionally inter esting and adventurous writing, as when the novel's long-suffering female protagonist imagines New York City itself delivering her a pep talk:

> March on. It don't matter where or why—you had your fun, didn't you? It's finished? What of it and who cares? March on. Don't block traffic. You have a broken heart? Forget it. Applesauce. Bologna. March on. You're tired? Who isn't, sometimes? March on. You didn't get what you want? Nobody does in the end. All things pass, some slowly, some fast. It don't matter. The parade's the thing. Watch the parade. The band keeps playing. Keep step. March on, baby, somewhere or nowhere, in the end you won't know the difference. If you don't want to look at tomorrow, and you don't like today—hell, you had yesterday. And you can always watch the parade.

Written in a stylish staccato beat, this rallying cry brims with the forward-thinking ethos that carried its author through so many years of her life. It is sophisticated, witty, playful, and insightful. I wish I could go back in time to 1949 and scoop up the stack of Parrott's manuscript pages, which were so important to her that she dragged them around even as her life was falling apart, before they hit the dumpster at the Henry Hudson Hotel. Was a draft of her important novel among those pages? We will never know.

Parrott's life cannot be told as an inspirational feminist story. She was complicated, embodying and espousing many contradictions. A wildly successful woman who saw careers as impediments to women's happiness, especially of the marital variety. A romantic who pursued love and marriage in a serial fashion because she believed that a long-lasting relationship was the ideal path and the next walk down the aisle might lead her to it. A woman who craved stability but who could not resist making decisions that resulted in chaos. A radical who sometimes advocated for conservative values. Parrott did not always make sense, including to herself—but she tried her best to reckon with and explain her bewilderment. She was a skilled dismantler of dreams, her own included.

Parrott once predicted, "Women like me will be better off in a hundred years": "We hunt about among the wreckage of old codes for pieces to build an adequate shelter to last our lifetime ... and the building material's just not there." "I do believe," she continued with equal parts hope and resignation, "that out of all this will come a comradeship between men and women ... fairer to men ... fairer to women. But not in time for us." She acknowledged, with a sense of defeat, "Women like me, here and now, feel one way, believe another ... and on neither side is happiness to be reckoned among the spoils."'

I am convinced that Ursula Parrott was right, that it would have been significantly easier to be her now than it was a hundred years ago when many of her ideas and actions seemed untenable, off-putting, even outlandish. But as she struggled to make sense of the messy modern world and her place within it, she helped shape a conversation about women's lives during turbulent years of consequential change. If her inconclusiveness on these matters was as unsatisfying on the page as it was in her life, perhaps we should recall how she accepted this uncertainty but marched on nonetheless. "I'm sure I cannot tell whether the professional woman is happier than the wife or less so," she admitted. "But of one thing I'm sure—if we are able to make anything out of our mad era we must face the facts as we see them and piece out the salvation of our individual existence." <>

Recovering Women's Past: New Epistemologies, New Ventures edited by Séverine Genieys-Kirk [Women and Gender in the Early Modern World, University of Nebraska Press, 9781496231796]

Feminist rewriting of history is designed not merely to reshape our collective memory and collective imaginary but also to challenge deeply ingrained paradigms about knowledge production. This feminist rewriting raises important questions for early modern scholars, especially in bringing to life the works of our foremothers and in reconsidering women's agency.

Recovering Women's Past, edited by Séverine Genieys-Kirk, is a collection of essays that focus on how women born before the nineteenth century have claimed a place in history and how they have been represented in the collective memory from the Renaissance to the twenty-first century. Scrutinizing the legacies of such politically minded women as Catherine de' Medici, Queen Isabella of Castile, Emilie du Châtelet, and Olympe de Gouges, the volume's contributors reflect on how our histories of women (in philosophy, literature, history, and the visual and performative arts) have been shaped by the discourses of their representation, how these discourses have been challenged, and how they can be reassessed

both within and beyond the confines of academia. **RECOVERING WOMEN'S PAST** disseminates a more accurate, vital history of women's past to engage in more creative and artistic encounters with our intellectual foremothers by creating imaginative modes of representing new knowledge. Only in these interactions will we be able to break away from the prevailing stereotypes about women's roles and potential and advance the future of feminism.

Review

"Extremely important. In many academic departments, schools, and even in the public forum, we are having to fight for women authors, artists, or politicians to be added to historical records, monuments, libraries, and curricula. This is in great part, as this volume shows very well, because they are not treated by historians or researchers with the respect due to their achievements but always as women first, whether virtuous and pious mother types or courtesans and 'lunatics.' This book highlights the ways in which women of the past were and still are excluded from the history of their disciplines and contributes to their recovery."—Sandrine Bergès, author of *A Feminist Perspective on Virtue Ethics*

"This book refocuses and revivifies the field of early modern feminist studies at a moment when the humanities are rightfully reevaluating how knowledge is created and how this epistemic process has marginalized, abstracted, obfuscated, and repressed the lives and voices of entire cultural, ethnic, and gender groups. . . . Having all these essays and reflections on approaches to studying the field together in one volume is invaluable to both scholars and students of all these fields and this topic."—Abby E. Zanger, author of *Scenes from the Marriage of Louis XIV: Nuptial Fictions and the Making of Absolutist Power*

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In our endeavor to rescue early modern women from the cultural darkness in which their intellectual lives have been enshrouded, the field of feminist historiography keeps renewing itself, pushing off the boundaries of the normative, phallocentric unconscious that has hitherto shaped not only the academic community's but also society's symbolic encounters with our matrilineal cultural heritage. Certainly, one case in point is how women's works and lives have been presented in mainstream discourses, whether these form part of canon extension or are oriented toward the broader public (museum and art gallery visitors, film viewers, or general readerships). As philosopher Sarah Hutton warns us, it is not enough to "overcome amnesia"; we need to avoid a "new amnesia."' In other words, "slotting in" women's achievements "within a pre-existing discourse, into a narrative originally constructed without them" can only result in a dysmorphic understanding of their actual contributions to the advancement of knowledge.'

Thanks to the colossal Female Biography Project (2005-14) under the lead of Gina Luria Walker,' a new field of collective feminist enquiry, at once transnational and transdisciplinary, is emerging—driven by the realization that "if women remain studied through the prisms of male-knowledge-ordering systems, old inaccuracies will remain perpetuated."'

Karl C. Alvestad, Janice North, and Ellie Woodacre's collection of essays, Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers, gives insight into the history of these representations through the medium of pop culture, where natural impulses feed on sensationalism and presentism. Despite the milestone advances in women's studies in the fields of literature, philosophy, history, and history of art, "presentist views" and "emotional historiographies" of women's lives, to borrow from the title of Susan Broomhall's chapter in this volume, perpetuate the enduring misrepresentations and mythification of women, and account for the near-absence of tangible narratives about women's roles as political, cultural, artistic, and literary agents and, more broadly, as producers of knowledge. However, such reflections, often carried out within the enclaves of our distinct disciplines, call for a broader transdisciplinary and transcultural reassessment of how we shape foundational knowledge and of how new research in the humanities and artistic practices can dialogue to add important correctives to "official" histories and standard feminist narratives.

This is the aim of the present volume, whose initial shape was conceived as part of the conference Recovering Women's Past: New Epistemologies, New Ventures, held at the University of Edinburgh, September 8—10, 2016. The title presented itself to me in an exquisite three-day gathering of minds and souls, a year earlier, in April 2015, at the University of Coruna's Seminario Internacional Mary Hays and Women's Biographies, where I was invited to give a guest lecture. To me, it became clear that in order to deliberately facilitate the project of a feminist historical recovery of women's past, if we were to continue Mary Hays's groundbreaking "invention of female biography," we needed to create a space for a

fruitful conversation within and beyond the broader community of academics in the humanities, and to find points of convergence between past and present. Her work, as the modern editorial annotations of her Female Biography demonstrate, lends itself to the scrutinizing eyes of specialists from across the humanities. Hays has made us think critically not only about the processes of historical and academic practice but also about both "feminist history traditions" and "contemporary uses of female biography" beyond the conventional parameters of literary studies. The shape of this volume is thus the result of the lively discussions that arose from the 2016 conference in Edinburgh and have continued since in the inspiring context of the New Historia, founded in 2017 by Gina Luria Walker at the New School in New York City."

With a focus on how women born before the nineteenth century acted out a role in history and have been represented in the collective memory, the chosen timeline of this volume's journey between past and present spans the Renaissance to the twenty-first century. This allows for a better understanding of the history of feminism from earlier manifestations within the centuries-long debates on women known as the querelle des femmes and of the impact of new feminist research, be it on school or university curricula or on curated exhibitions and artistic creations!' The chosen timescale, however, is not intended to replicate the conventional framework of periodization, which comes with inherently flawed categories of imposed knowledge. The notion of the "early modern" is here considered in its broadest sense with the aim to accommodate its conceptual and temporal fluidity in the transnational and transatlantic context of women's history from the Renaissance to Napoleon's memorable defeat in 1815. Although some of the women included here (Helen Maria Williams and the Purbeck sisters) were born in the middle of the eighteenth century and some of their most important works were published at the beginning of the nineteenth century, they were immersed in Georgian and ancien regime cultures while being, like Olympe de Gouges, key observers and participants in the formation of the political woman, albeit undermined by traditional historiography.

Scrutinizing the reception of the works of these politically minded women, a trained eye soon comes to realize that they were first romanticized, then lost in "translation" as these figures began to be excavated from the dusty bookshelves of national libraries and private collections. But why is that? In the absence of women in the official history of Western society, feminist scholars have admitted to being guilty of replicating andro centric readings of their foremothers' works.' As this volume proposes, the time has come to rebuild "the practice of history" and thus destabilize the foundations of prevailing "knowledge-ordering systems," not solely within the precincts of perfectly delimited time periods and subject areas, but from within a broader perspective aspiring to unlock disciplinary differences and open a new field of cross-cultural and transdisciplinary investigation that brings together academic experts and practitioners from philosophy, literary history, literature, theater, arts studies, and beyond.

The objectives of this collection of essays are therefore to reflect on how recovering women's past informs our own understanding of and raises questions about received methodologies across the humanities, that is, about epistemic responsibility. For example, how are the questions posed by philosophers different from questions posed by other disciplines in the humanities? What is the relation between biography and philosophy, biography and history of art, biography and the performative arts, biography and the collective memory? By answering these questions, the volume's contributors reflect on how our "histories" of women (in philosophy, literature, history, and visual and performative arts) have been shaped by the discourses of their representation, how these discourses are challenged, and

why those need challenging both within and beyond the confines of academia. Taking issue with the notion of canonicity in the twinned contexts of reception and gender studies, the volume opens with a section on "new epistemologies," a theoretical framework that gives insight into the methodologies employed by feminist philosophers and historians to challenge the status quo.

In their respective contributions, Gina Luria Walker, Nancy Kendrick and Jessica Gordon-Roth, Lara Perry, and Susan Broomhall interrogate a range of approaches and assumptions that, despite their disciplinary specificities, reveal and stress the importance of making these practices dialogue with each other across the disciplines. Advancing knowledge-seeking and knowledge itself by exploring various fields of academic enquiry, and not just correcting or filling the gaps, forms the raison d'être of this volume.

By asking whether Virginia Woolf was wrong, and what else might have happened to Judith Shakespeare, Gina Luria Walker revolutionizes the way we envision the project of feminist historical recovery and urges us to challenge the assumptions that structure our deepest beliefs about culture. Rather than dismissing controversial monographs such as Shakespeare's Dark Lady: Amelia Bassano Lanier, the Lady behind Shakespeare's Plays (2016) by John Hudson or Sweet Swan of Avon: Did a Woman Write Shakespeare (2006) by Robin P. Williams, Walker takes these works and other similar ventures as thresholds into the uncharted waters of taxonomies, if not in the making yet, still unimagined.' In other words, these should inspire us to think outside the box, to question the validity of the canon as we know it, which has shaped our world vision from school textbooks to high and popular culture. As Walker argues, traditional academic models of periodization, genre, and intellectual schools are increasingly awkward and inherently biased and encourage repeating patterns of interpretation and representations that undermine women's cultural heritage.

Far from being all-inclusive, the phrase "cultural heritage" teems with potential for the recognition of women's contributions: gender neutral in appearance, unlike the French term patrimoine, it disguises centuries of ideological manipulation and indoctrination meant to condition how we read, interpret, tell, and retell women's stories and lives. The official reintroduction of the potent phrase journées du matrimoine in France, in addition to the conventional annual Heritage Day, thanks to academic and practitioner Aurore Evain, signals an important shift in the move toward sexual parity.' Across the globe, the heritage sector has been working harder at making women more visible in museum and library exhibitions, even in fashion magazines, such as Bazaar, which regularly features a section on a historical woman. Yet, even then, as the contributors remind us in this volume, we must be wary of how we present this matrimoine so as to avoid the traps of orthodox ideologies and enduring myths that encourage dualistic interpretations opposing male and female, reason and intuition, logic and emotion.

In their chapter "The Visible and the Invisible: Feminist Recovery in the History of Philosophy," Nancy Kendrick and Jessica Gordon-Roth put forward a useful framework for reevaluating how the epistemic space early modern women carved for themselves has been reduced to a subjective set of paradigms, the private and the personal, which is in complete contradiction with the very practice of analytical philosophers. In a discipline where it is claimed arguments and their authors are distinct, it emerges that men's and women's texts are treated differently. Women philosophers' texts, such as Mary Astell's and Margaret Cavendish's works, are de-intellectualized, decoded through the lens of (auto)biographical records, such as labor and birth or intimate relationships, denying those women a philosophical standpoint on a par with their male counterparts. It may be argued that early modern women have had a

better fate in literature and history departments; however, Kendrick and Gordon-Roth's argument resonates with the experiences of academics intent on disseminating knowledge about women's contribution to our cultural heritage but often working in isolation."

Lara Perry's perspective as a feminist art historian further testifies to the normative trends that have characterized the recovery of the history of women artists, despite Linda Nochlin's important 1976 essay reflecting on the apparent inaccessibility of women artists. Perry focuses here on female artists Mary Beale (1633-39), Sarah Hoadly (1676-1743), and Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), whose lives and works were discussed in biographical collections such as Ellen Clayton's 1867 English Female Artists. However, what have the parameters been for the inclusion of their works in (and their absence from) the collections of national museums such as the National Portrait Gallery (founded in 1856) or the National Gallery (founded in 1838) ? How does one account for the (in)visibility of women artists, and when they are made visible, how is the general public's knowledge of these women's works channeled? With the Prado Museum's 2019 bicentenary exhibition of Lavinia Fontana and Sofinisba Anguissola in mind, Perry gives firsthand insight into how the journey for the recognition of two major Renaissance female artists on a grand scale has much to reveal about the complex mechanics and gender politics of curatorial methods and about historians' epistemological practice." Perry's analysis conjures up striking parallels with Susan Broomhall's groundbreaking research on the conceptualization of "emotional historiography.'" By investigating the historiographical practices that have characterized the formidably colorful afterlife of Catherine de' Medici, Broomhall proposes a novel way of reflecting on how our encounters with other historical women of power have been shaped (whether these women are queens, intellectuals, or artists). She draws our attention to the importance of reflecting on our own reading habits as more than just "interpretive acts" but as informed by affect, tinged with the ideological residues of conditioned, if not fabricated, knowledge about the historical women that made it into the gallery of the female greats.

In presenting these four chapters together, this section aims to show how new knowledge-ordering systems can provide innovative modes of thinking in both academic and artistic practice. In particular, how does the unearthing, (re)reading, reinterpretation, and even adaptations of "female genealogies" inform new and modern narratives (whether academic, artistic, or fictional)? Who and how are the women remembered and represented? How have their lives been rescued, told, and retold? Do gender politics inflect the choices of philosophers, historians, biographers, or artists when they set out to make these women's voices heard? If so, how?

The second part of the book, "New Ventures," is an attempt at illustrating precisely this. Presented in a chronological and thematic order, the contributions in this section all are new case studies ranging from the seventeenth to the twenty-first centuries. Highlighting the vibrancy of feminist historiography across the disciplines and also across time, the opening chapters point to the necessity of further investigation into the quenelle des femmes and its effects on the philosophical and theological discourses in the mapping of womanhood. These are crucial both to our understanding of how the history of women came to be written and unwritten and, as recently posited by Derval Conroy in Towards an Equality of the Sexes (2021), for a rewriting of mainstream political thought that considers "the history of equality, and hence of gender equality" as an important analytical category of investigation that turns into "a dynamic construction which needs to be historicised."

Carme Font Paz's analysis of Samuel Torshell's early feminist work The Woman Glorie (1650) corroborates Conroy's assertion that "modern binary conceptions must be set aside" to achieve a more accurate and inclusive history of political philosophy.' Font Paz demonstrates how modern and subversive Torshell's views were, which she argues might explain why it fell into complete oblivion. Torshell's text is an important addition to the complex picture of the phallocentric regulation of woman's conduct in the early modern period. Erecting Anna Maria van Schurman and Queen Christina of Sweden as exemplars of intellectual achievement, he poses a whole epistemology of female learning that stems from early feminists' well-cherished motto that "the mind has no sex."' By presenting Torshell as ahead of his time in his promotion of "a sexual revolution based on a spiritual discipline for men and women," Font Paz's close reading of Torshell's little-known counterdiscourse provides interesting parallels with Sarah Hutton's chapter on eighteenth-century French philosopher and mathematician Emilie du Chatelet. In her essay Hutton identifies two types of dangers faced by women intellectuals asserting themselves as legitimate authorities in the male-dominated domain of sciences. Hutton's case study of one of the most famous women scientists further illustrates Nancy Kendrick and Jessica Gordon-Roth's portrayal of women intellectuals as key system-builders in philosophical discourse; in particular Hutton highlights the subtleties and incongruities of what Font Paz has identified as the complex game of "genderfluid textualities" in the quenelle des femmes. In so doing, Hutton offers a way of contextualizing how other women engaged in intellectual discourse that infringed upon men's dominion of knowledge—including Helen Maria Williams, the Purbeck sisters, and Olympe de Gouges, who are included in this volume.

Although Helen Maria Williams features more often in university curricula and although her profile as a maestra of poetical and political discourses has been well established, Paula Yurss Lasanta's case study provides another telling example of how women as authorities in late eighteenth-century political discourse can be partially distorted through lack of engagement with the full body of their writings. Here Yurss Lasanta brings to our attention two significant texts, Letters on the Events (180 and Narrative of the Events (1819), which were published more than twenty years after her much-better-known Letters Written in France (179o) and are yet to be fully analyzed.' Bringing to the fore spectatorship as a key paradigm in eighteenth-century historical and journalistic discourse, Yurss Lasanta offers a fresh assessment of Williams's work as a rational and objective account of the French Revolution by deconstructing normative analyses of her revolutionary narratives as "emotional?' She discusses how Williams's unconventional status as both a thinker and a commentator living abroad influenced the way her discourse, directed at an English audience, evolved between 1790 and 1815. By showing how Williams's commentary of the 1815 events is informed by both her personal engagement with Enlightenment philosophers (such as Voltaire) and her direct experience of the Reign of Terror, Yurss Lasanta portrays Williams anew as a political historian rather than as a political woman writer. Relegated to the fringe of politico-historical discourse, Williams is thus another example of how canonicity has affected the recognition of women's important contributions to history, which have been underrated, misrecorded, or simply have been read through the narrow lens of their gender.

New names continue to emerge and similar patterns of elision and obliteration recur as feminist scholars untiringly stitch newly excavated finds to the genealogy of women's feats in the production of knowledge. Maria Jesus Lorenzo-Modia's chapter on the Purbeck sisters further exemplifies the previous contributions' call for the need to persevere in destabilizing inherently misogynist paradigms and rethinking how women writers interacted with their male peers, whether as scientists, historians, or

readers and interpreters of literature or as sociocultural agents and observers of political events. Like Williams and de Gouges, the Purbeck sisters engaged, under the guise of fiction, with "serious" topics such as Jacobinism and anti-Jacobinism, and the ideology of the Reign of Terror. The obscured) Purbeck sisters are yet another example of how early modern women of letters cultivated virtue in the Aristotelian epistemic sense: through their intellectual interactions with political and scientific discourses, they positioned themselves as knowers, if not publicly, at least within the confines of their private rooms. Font Paz's, Hutton's, Yurss Lasanta's, and LorenzoModia's case studies contend with how mainstream historiography, with its androcentric if not misogynistic overtones, has tended to represent, narrate, and shape early modern women's intellectual lives, often reducing them to the biographical, to the personal, and to the sensational. By and large, as many studies have shown in recent decades of feminist academic investigation, reading and interpreting their works have been informed by traditional modes of thinking. These case studies resonate with Mary Spongberg's 2019 book Women Writers and the Nation's Past, 1790-1860: Empathetic Histories, which she had previewed at our 2016 conference. With "emotion" playing a crucial role in the reconstruction of how women's histories came to be written, ideologically driven patterns of phallocentric fallacies have led to a subjective and flawed assessment of these women's works and contributions to the arts and humanities across time.

The reliability of biographies of these women has therefore become objectionable. While the increase in studies on near-forgotten works has become more and more valuable in the recovery of women's voices, biographies of women (whether by men or women) as a genre have only begun to resurface as important documents for fully comprehending the narratives and counternarratives that have influenced the representation of women across the disciplines represented in this volume. The contributions by Begona Lasa-Alvarez, Anne Marie Hagen, and Armel Dubois-Nayt explore the importance of biographical sources as educational testimonies that are revisited and tailored for targeted audiences, especially women, and children or teenagers. In the wake of Spongberg's milestone work on women-authored courtly memoirs, Lasa-Alvarez examines women writers' contribution to the feminization of queenship studies in the nineteenth century: her focus on textual and iconographical representations of Queen Isabella of Castile in Victorian biographies of royal women serves to highlight the extent to which women biographers such as Anna Jameson, Mary Clarke, or Ann Hasseltine Judson engage with the domesticating and nationalist mainstream narratives created by their male peers and produce in the process alternative life stories intended for women readerships.

The popularity of biographies of royal and political women can be seen in the increasing number of novels and plays dedicated to the representation of queens and historical heroines especially throughout the Romantic period and beyond.' Particularly striking is their presence in children's fiction, which was on the rise from the nineteenth century onward. Hagen's chapter on the portrayal of Flora MacDonald, the famous eighteenth-century Scottish Jacobite heroine, deploys iconographic and paratextual material to discuss how the Victorian and Edwardian stories that feature MacDonald as a heroine guide their young audience's interpretation of female heroism and thus imprint on them codified modes of thinking about women of the past.

The repercussions of such representations solidified by mainstream nineteenth- and early twentieth-century biographical and fictional works about "illustrious" women are further illustrated by Dubois-Nayt's study on Mary, Queen of Scots, in juvenile fiction written between the 1980s and 2010s. Crucially, this chapter analyzes how novels by Moira Miller (1987), Terry Deary (1998), Valerie Wilding

(zoos), and Kathryn Lasky (2010) shape young people's perception of the past and understanding of historically authoritative women. In the process, Dubois-Nayt discusses the extent to which gender politics and current feminist discourse in media and society have influenced the authors' choices in their portrayals of the queen.

Capturing the inner lives of historically famous women is, however, no easy task; too subjective a mission for the scholar, it has creative potential for novelists, poets, and artists, but what of the women's own voices? Making these women's voices heard not just on the page but also on stage is another venture that has yielded passionate, colorful, sensational portrayals of historical women, which still remain to be fully investigated. Theater and performance studies have become essential to feminist historiographical work: interestingly, just as early modern women's lives have drawn the attention of historians, so have they caught the imagination of playwrights and filmmakers.

The "emotional history" of Ninon de Lenclos and Queen Christina of Sweden provides one such example, as it reveals a fascinating crossover between periods and genres (biographies, novels, portraiture, biopics, and theater). In my own chapter, "Theater and Women in Power: The Ninon de Lenclos Phenomenon from Olympe de Gouges to Hippolyte Wouters," drawing upon Broomhall's revisionist study of the Catherine de' Medici story, I have chosen to focus "on theater as a powerful art form in the creation of emotional historiographies." Voltaire appears to have created the first play dedicated to the famous seventeenth-century salonnière and courtisane. However, Olympe de Gouges's play Moliere chez Ninon ou les Brands hommes seems, despite the inimical criticism it received from the Comédie-Française, to have launched a trend in the dramatization of Ninon de Lenclos's eventful encounters with other seventeenth-century women, such as Queen Christina of Sweden, Madame de Maintenon, and Madame de Sévigné. Retracing these inventive recreations of Lenclos's encounters with other major historical women across time sheds light on the ways gender politics has affected the multifaceted portrayal of women as "female greats." Above all, the survey of the Ninon plays allows us to fully capture the originality and visionary quality of de Gouges's work as a blueprint for feminist historiography. When in her ivory boudoir de Gouges penned her "imaginary" dialogues between Ninon de Lenclos and Queen Christina, she created a utopic vision of cultural sisterhood—a powerful counternarrative for those who knowingly or not would follow in her footsteps. In Aurore Evain's words, "to make women's legacies visible is to reinvent our relationship to History and to reinvigorate our cultural memory. Women are not limited to the status of biological mother, but they are also cultural and artistic mothers.." This is what de Gouges did when she wrote her play on Ninon de Lenclos. She had sensed the importance of creating an alternative story that defied mainstream ideology.

Without any doubt, de Gouges's original play offers a unique female standpoint on the stories of Queen Christina and Ninon Lenclos on the eve of the French Revolution, which can be compared and contrasted with how the playwright herself is portrayed as an eighteenth-century feminist activist and revolutionary in Clarissa Palmer's play-text Olympe de Gouges porteuse d'espoir (Olympe de Gouges a beacon of hope), first performed in Paris in 2012 at the Guichet Montparnasse and featuring since on its winter and spring program.' How Palmer and her cowriter Annie Vergne envisaged their creation of the historical Olympe de Gouges, with a modern audience in mind, is the subject of the concluding chapter, "Citoyenne Center Stage: The Creation of the Play Olympe de Gouges porteuse d'espoir." Palmer explains how "the presentation of this eighteenth-century woman alongside a timeless alter ego creates a link between the present and the past that encourages a reevaluation of women's roles then and now."

In so doing, Palmer highlights the crucial role which the arts are to play in the revival and promotion of historical women's voices beyond the confines of academia, in a way that resonates with other similarly riveting productions: Aphra (2o15) by Alexandria Patience, Nancy Jo Cullen, and Rose Collard; Aphra Behn, Punk and Poetess (2017) by Aline César; Anna Birch's ongoing work on Mary Wollstonecraft since 2005 and her creative revival of Cicely Hamilton's A Pageant of Great Women (2011 and 2015): and productions by Aurore Evain's thriving theater company, La Subversive, from its debut with Madame de Villedieu's Le favori in 2015 to A la recherche de la princesse de Montpensier (2018-19) after Madame de La Fayette's eponymous novel, and more recently Mary Sidney, Alias Shakespeare (2021-22), based on Robin Williams's Sweet Swan of Avon. In the same spirit, the New York—based theater company On Her Shoulders has made it its call "to make it impossible to deny or ignore the great tradition or value of women's contribution to the theatrical canon." These recent endeavors coincide too with a revival of "the field of Women and Music" as works of early women composers such as Barbara Strozzi (1619-77) and Clara Schumann (1819-96) are brought to light.'

Thus a new dawn is emerging, and now is the time to further the dialogue between academics, practitioners, curators, and educators. If we want to disseminate a more vibrant and inclusive history of women's past, we must engage in more creative and artistic encounters with our intellectual foremothers by seeking imaginative modes of representing new knowledge in the visual and performative arts, in museum collections, and even further, in design and technologies as initiated by the New Historia project.' Only in these interactions will we be able to break away from the prevailing stereotypes about women's roles and potential; only then will the future of feminist ventures move forward. <>

Empathy: Emotional, Ethical and Epistemological Narratives by Ricardo Gutiérrez Aguilar [At the Interface / Probing the Boundaries, Brill | Rodopi, 9789004376762]

Empathy is sometimes a surprisingly evasive emotion. It is in appearance the emotion responsible for stitching together a shared experience with our common fellow. This volume looks for the common ground between the results of Digital Media ideas on the subject, fields like Nursing or Health and Social Care, Psychiatry, Psychology, and Philosophy, and finally even in Education, Literature and Dramatic Performance.

The Joyful Páthos from Oxford by Ricardo Gutiérrez Aguilar

> There is a problem here. But it is not so much a problem for my account of the appreciation of works of fiction as one for theories of emotion. What are admiration and pity? Believing that someone is admirable or that she suffers misfortune is not sufficient for admiring or pitying her (whether or not it is necessary); one can hold such beliefs without experiencing the emotion. Perhaps the emotions involve mere dispositions to feel in certain ways, or dispositions to react in certain ways to certain stimuli, dispositions of which one may or may not be aware [...] Whatever it is that combines with the appropriate belief to constitute the emotion (in those instances in which such a belief is involved), I suggest that some such state or condition, or one that is naturally taken [...] keep[s] our conception of quasi emotion flexible enough to accommodate any reasonable theory of emotion.– WALTON, KENDALL L., Mimesis as Make-Believe

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Looking back, it could be said that we've come a long way since July 2016. On a hazy, English summer afternoon, this present editorial project came about under such special circumstances to attend to that emotion we usually call 'empathy' – a theme apparently not fit for table talk. Moreover, empathy is sometimes – for unfathomable reasons – a surprisingly evasive emotion. It is indeed a problem open to discussion. It can be particularly problematic since, for one thing, it is in appearance the emotion responsible for stitching together a shared experience with our common fellow. It is the emotion essential to bridging the gap between subjects – to making a community. We do not naturally live (nor want to live) alone: we do not want to take that state or condition as natural; not in the flesh; not even lost in our thoughts. This familiar and demanding condition is so fundamental that it poses a threat to perspective – perhaps even more so than when the haze in Oxford is so thick. But we do not want to take it for granted – that natural state which is already trivialised – and we do not want to think alone.

Thus, when this collective work was initially conceived in that faraway conference room, its future could not fully be projected. It has since evolved into the challenge to compile some of the proposed answers that had their origins there in 2016, but that are today in 2019 by all means actualised to the utmost

extent – so much so that we dare to commit them to writing. They remain, though, answers that have their place of reference in the welcoming chambers of Mansfield College, at the University of Oxford (UK). The Empathy Project (an interdisciplinary academic initiative promoted by Dr Robert Fisher, founder of its network) held its third Global Meeting within the premises of ye olde constituent college at Mansfield Road from Thursday 14th to Saturday 16th of July 2016. Hosted by Susan Fairbarn in the role of the Conference Leader, around 40 scholars hailing from the most distant corners of the world shared on those days their good measure of the very condition being studied. We spoke about, on, and with emotion – and we did it with joy. Whether having landed from Australia, India, Turkey, the U.S.A., or from so many of the places interconnected by the familiar paths that intimately unite our Europe (from Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain, etc.), the attendees proffered both facts and intuitions, dedicating those three days to thoroughly rounding out the so- called 'problem' of the elusive emotion of empathy. Each of us gave her/ his 'pound of insights'. Whether scattered and drinking coffee under the shelter of the hall in The Tower, or gathered dining and chatting in The Chapel, we strove to highlight what is otherwise clearly evident. While we of course sought each to advance our best hypotheses on the subject as well, we also looked for the common ground between both the results of our conducted research and our experiences: Digital Media ideas on the subject worked just fine elbow to elbow with those proposed by fields like Nursing or Health and Social Care; and Psychiatry, Psychology and Philosophy got along quite well with the lines of inquiry of Education, Literature and Dramatic Performance, for example. As if collectively taking on the shape of a prism, all contributions officiated like facets of the same body – a delineated space not void, but rather full – and encompassed ever more suitable signs, symbols and expressions to incarnate the concept being pursued. Lastly, we intended to come back home if not having found the intellectual consensus on our 'empathetic' concerns, then at least having been found – having coincided at the crossroads of páthos, of affect and being affected – by others' speeches and personalities.

This book is in some way none other than the written emblem – perhaps a true milestone, or at the very least a meaningful souvenir – commemorating that at once now- distant and still- near success.

Sympathy, Empathy and Their Ilk

'Empathy' threatened (and whenever it reaches out to connect with someone, still threatens) to be a term too close to the chest to be properly grasped by plain, cold- blooded, intellectual articulations, but which is nevertheless too fundamental to dismiss as a mere functional tool that can be substituted by others of equal value. For example, consider the case made by our moral judgments. They count on empathy in order to praise or blame, to call out liars and hypocrites – and we certainly do judge morally on a daily basis.

Empathy is thus central, ultimately, to our judgments of others. But as Walton says, believing that someone is admirable (praiseworthy) or that he/ she is suffering misfortune (pitiable) is not sufficient for admiring or pitying him/ her; whether or not it is necessary to in fact have that belief, that certitude – to have that feeling. This latter can be a 'necessary condition' to a praxis, but it is not the only one. To praise or to pity are actions undoubtedly in need of the subjective certitude of the feeling – the alleged motivational drive. You cannot use the term and refer to the practice without incorporating the subjective state of 'feeling pity', nor 'praise someone' without admiring him/ her – otherwise what you really practice is 'being an hypocrite', i.e. you are a user of the practice of 'hypocrisy'. They are complex devices (if we are allowed to call a concept a device), however – we have them in layers. The feeling

accompanying the judgment, constituting it, is just one of those layers. They are complex states and conditions in which whatever it is that combines with the feeling to constitute the emotion has to accommodate a reasonable theory for its applicability. 'Reasonability' is the key here. It is a term usually attached to judicial vocabulary, close to 'warrant'. Here, closer to 'theory', the term presents discursive reasons as a type of justification. It is not sufficient on its own – but it does work as a criterion. In fact, such a component is central to empathy to so deep an extent as to demand the kind of public justification we have strived to achieve in each navigation around the concept. For it is here that 'sympathy' and 'empathy' part ways. Their proximity has always been a matter of theoretical concern. Here we should blatantly differentiate the foundations of an idea of empathy that severs it from its closest acquaintance, sympathy – and a good part of current discussions on the topic is intended to clarify once and for all both terms on the basis of that categorical difference. Professor Linda Zagzebski can help us at this point to better articulate it:

> The class of moral judgments I want to focus on are what I call ground level moral judgments. These judgments can be identified by two important features. First, they are "here and now" judgments. That is, they are made in a context in which the person making the judgment is confronted with the object [another person] of the judgment. Second, they utilize what I call "thick affective concepts." These concepts mostly coincide with what Bernard Williams calls "thick evaluative concepts." Examples of ground level judgments include, "She is pitiful," "He is contemptible," "That remark is rude," [...][They] combine descriptive and evaluative aspects in a way that cannot be pulled apart [...][They] have both cognitive and affective aspects that cannot be pulled apart.

Investigating these judgments is the domain of praxis. Appreciating emotion has to do with the ability and practice of being sensitive to the vicarious experience of personal states that are capable of founding and making possible the recognition of another human being as a subject of special rights: the right to be appraised, the right to be defended from contempt or harm or humiliation – but all of this goes beyond the mere concept of a subjective state. The justification needs to be public in the sense a dialogue would entail. Furthermore, these cognitive judgment criteria are independent of time and space. We can be empathetic with fictions and protagonists of the past, 'here and now'. We can recognize them. Public justification is meant to work like a two-way warrant. It is a sort of credential, a safeguard. The justification – the reason(s) – is a word shared communally. The Greek word dialogue [^^^^^^^^] exposes its inner meaning quite well: symmetrically, the word that parts the speakers is the same that connects them. It is like a rope that links the parties holding it, even as they perhaps pull in different directions. At its ends, two or more speakers tread on common ground and pledge to respect each other. They are separated and united by reasons, by words shared. But reasons must be transparent to this end; they must go public to work in this manner. It is an openness of the criteria to judge others worthy of the empathic motions of feelings. Emotions are nothing but articulated systems. They substantiate a 'reasonable theory' by virtue of which the appellative function of language motions, by means of which an imaginative projection leading to objectivity is made:

> In the fields of developmental psychology and socialization research, it has long been agreed that the emergence of children's abilities to think and interact must be conceived as a process that occurs in the act of taking over another person's perspective [...] [T] aking up this person's view and steering it toward certain significant objects, is interpreted by these theories to be an indication of a phase of experimentation in which a child tests out the independence of another perspective on the surrounding world.

'To think' has to do with 'to interact'. The child tests out his/ her own judgments in the confrontation with the 'possible Other'. Empathy, as we shall see in the forthcoming pages, assumes then a theory of reference in which that very reference as an individual is bestowed with personality by means of a 'charitable act' (as Donald Davidson would say), but an act to which (in reverse) the charitable person is afterwards committed. An act based on the concept of a 'duty-right'.

In Search of Empathy in Prehistoric Times: Evolution and Revolution by Josefa Ros Velasco

Empathy is normally defined as the psychological identification with the feelings, thoughts or attitudes of another. Stated differently, empathy is the ability to understand what another person is experiencing and put oneself in someone else's position. This contribution attempts to be a reflection on the evolutionary and 'revolutionary' role of empathy in human evolution by paying attention to the conditions of possibility and the presence of empathic behaviours in pre- sapiens' prehistory. On the basis of the knowledge provided by specialists in multiple disciplines such as neuropaleontology, prehistoric ethnology, psychology and philosophical anthropology, we will first establish how different levels of empathy were possible in our ancestors as cognitive and social complexity was gradually developed over time and which factors were responsible for and made possible our current ability to empathise. Following from the above, we will address the understanding of the biological and sociological evolutionary function of empathy, that is to say, what was – or/ and is – the role of empathy in the evolution towards the species Homo sapiens. The aim of this exercise is not only to get to know more about the nature of empathy and its anthropogenesis but to show that the role of empathy in our global time remains the same in evolutionary terms, i.e., to promote both the mutual understanding and cooperation necessary for the prosperity of peoples and the realisation of private interests.

Empathy or Compassion? On Rational Understanding of Emotional Suffering by Victoria Aizkalna

Abstract

The subject of empathy and the role it has in forming a well- functioning society has become widely discussed since the advances of modern technology of functional magnetic resonance imagery (fMRI) give us the possibility to read human brain and track what parts of brain respond to certain stimuli. High, therefore, is the temptation of falling into a rabbit hole of labeling certain parts of physical human brain to be the key to understanding of a complex world of human mind and consciousness, of feelings and emotions. In the present article the focus is on understanding phenomenon of empathy, and also to the downsides of the cult of empathy. Saying this, by no means I want to diminish the value of findings and discoveries of neurosciences, however I am going to argue that mapping the brain is not the key to understanding mind, and that empathy is not the key to the solution of conflicts, nor it leads to stronger societal bonds. What does, then? There is no one, nor two or three good answers. There are plenty of ways to approach the subject, and any of them are right and wrong to certain extend. However, it might be safe to say that going back to the roots is the place to begin. Complex mechanism of society is based on interpersonal relationships of individuals. Individuals are shaped by the society they live in. To understand how this process intertwines and where is the place for the empathy, if it is at all needed, in the present article is approached through the phenomenon of conceptual schemes and consciousness in the theories of Donald Davidson and Daniel Dennett. Through understanding of the ways of processing

and storing information for further use and decision- making, we will see what are the dangers of over-using empathy, and argue for usefulness of rational compassion.

"Scratch an 'altruist', and watch a 'hypocrite' bleed" – said Michael Ghiselin once. What does this mean and how is it related to the subject of empathy? Does that mean that human beings can only care about themselves without ulterior motive? Would that make human kind to be monstrous creatures, willing to sacrifice others for own pleasure or benefit? Or are things not quite as simple as that? Perhaps, it is fairly safe to claim that human nature is not all black and white: that human can either only be altruists, disregarding own profits, or to be completely selfish, disregarding the well- being of others. However, for the purposes of the present articles we are not going to focus on the subject of the evolution, but rather we are going to explore the subjects of empathy and rational compassion, the difference between them and their role in social interactions though the phenomenon of conceptual schemes to make a step towards understanding the scale of importance and reliability of empathy in social encounters. The article, being an ambitious attempt to give a diversified overview of empathy and the hidden hazards of it, and to advocate for a rational compassion as an alternative, the present article is interdisciplinary, contains references to neuroscience, psychology and psychiatry since the subject of empathy is complex and multi- dimensional, and to get a glimpse of the different aspects, it is important to establish interdisciplinary connections regarding the subject.

In the matter of the role of empathy in interpersonal relations and in its effect on an individual, not only the definition of empathy or the extent of it should be established. In order to enable the process of understanding of the complexity of the matter and to make a step towards certain clarity, we will address empathy from the perspective of Philosophy of Mind, in particular we will use the concept of the conceptual schemed in an interpretation of Daniel Dennett, with the links to Donald Davidson's theories.

In past several decades the subject of empathy and its role in interpersonal and intercultural communication has become widely discussed among social scientists, philosophers, psychologists, journalists and even politicians (for instance, Barack Obama's speech where the former president of the USA has claimed that the "empathy deficit is more serious than federal budget deficit).

In its very essence, the idea appears to have a potential of being panacea for many, if not most, of the problems that modern society is facing: intolerance, violence, discrimination, – hostility against everyone who is not one- of- us, be that gender, nationality, religious believes, body type, or any other quality that can be used for distinguishing a person from others or what is more essential: from us. If we actually feel what the other one is feeling, the assumption is that witnesses, influenced by the feelings of the suffering of the other person that they feel into, are more likely to interfere with injustice, violence, or any other type of harmful behavior against an individual or a group of individuals that are being victimized. It is not enough to have good intention of helping the other, but it has to be put into action to achieve good results, as Hume had claimed. However, Hume's description of 'sympathy' is not identical to modern definition of 'empathy.' Understanding of feelings and experience of others can be useful and can serve for the purpose of the ethical assessment for the individual, however, according to Hume, this experience should not be decisive. Further in the article it will be analyzed in more details whether empathy can be held as a reliable argument or ethical guidance of the moral justice. Although now it can be mentioned, that stimulated emotional response to the experience of the others caused by empathic identification with the other, can be misguiding, and furthermore, it can be used to achieve immoral

goals by manipulating individuals to make impulsive decision while being under the strong influence of emotional response, rather than analyzing the situation rationally and coming to be a better and more adequate, rational solution.

Empathic response according to Adam Smith, implied not mere imagination of having the experience of suffering of another, but rather identifying self with the other and the feelings they experience as if we are them. The grief of the other becomes a grief of the individual as if his/ her own. Therefore, the experience is not in the least selfish. This, however, raises an important question: with what amount of others one individual can identify him/ herself with? It is essential to emphasize, that the statement Adam Smith has made comes from the 18th century. Even if from purely theoretical or philosophical point his argument sounds consistent and logical, and practiced consistently by all the individuals it would, perhaps, lead to the world with a lesser amount of suffering: identifying self with each suffering individual would serve as a strong motivation to take good actions for the good result. However, the issue here is with the accessibility of the information in 18th century and in the 21st. Even if it does not directly reflect on the quality of the argument of the complete identification, it does, as aforementioned, raise an important question: how many others one individual can identify with? Does someone, who is perceived as an outsider (outsider as an individual outside of one's 'community': be that someone with different believes, values, or any other separating qualia) is possible to identify with to the same extent as with someone towards whom an individual experience certain affectionate feelings, be that parental or romantic feelings, friendship or any other affections of the positive connotations?

This will be discussed further, in the context of Donald Davidson's theories.

First, Dennett

Before pursuing with an overview of conceptual schemes, perhaps it is adequate to explain a direction of the further argument: why is it important to address Philosophy of Mind when talking about such phenomenon as empathy. Here one can be quick with an answer: to understand how and why to use or not use empathy, or how to make a moral judgment, it is necessary to take a step back and up to analyze what influences decision- making process, but not purely from psychological and mechanical position where it can be measured in a laboratory, but from philosophical perspective. Humans are able to analyze data before decision making due to being conscious and possessing an ability of critical thinking, therefore it would not be enough to measure and determine what part of a physical brain is activated when an individual experiences certain emotions and feeling. To be able to make a judgment and build arguments one has to take a meta position and try to establish connection between external stimuli and internal responses, the correlation between those and the positive or negative outcome of uncritical or critical decision making.

Mind is – according to Daniel Dennett – a product of environment and culture an individual is raised and lives in. Deprived of social life and culture, a human is to be deprived of an opportunity to develop a kind of mind as is accepted to perceive to be human one. For instance, Dennett mentions children raised by animals. Not being exposed and accustomed to human language nor to cultural traditions and habits, these individuals have not developed conceptual schemes that would allow them to integrate and successfully function in a human society as a productive member, who is capable of critical thinking and of rational decision- making. Human mind, therefore, can be described as a collective product of external influence of the surroundings that shape an individual, culture and a language it is exposed to.

Conceptual schemes are created through the experience of external stimuli and expand with each extension of individual experience and knowledge (e.g. an individual is exposed and learns a new language. Experience of this type is to create a new conceptual scheme).

Perhaps, since the term 'experience' has been mentioned so many times in the present article it might be useful for the purpose of avoiding misconception and misunderstanding in the further discussion to make an attempt to define the meaning in which the term is used in the present discussion. For this, we shall refer to Daniel Dennett's definition of the intentional stances. In his Brainstorms (1981), intentional stances play the key role in connecting mental states to abstract phenomenons, but also in processing constructive (physical) stances. Human mind, unlike any other living forms' mind, has a need for explanation and understanding of a creation and functionality of an object in order to process it. First presented in the Beloit College lecture from the 23rd February 2011, Daniel Dennett used a curious example, comparing an anthill to the Sagrada Família – The Basílica i Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Familia, a Roman Catholic church located in Barcelona (Spain) and designed by architect Antonio Gaudi. If one is curious enough to look for photos or can recall the images in their mind, the similarities between both objects cannot be neglected. However, for a human mind to produce such a product as the aforementioned Sagrada Família, for instance, the understanding of multiple concepts is necessary (such as religion, architecture, church, anthill, and others). For ants, on the other hand, the concept of functionality is not the condition for creation and usage of an anthill.

Based on the aforementioned, the term 'experience' is used here as a description of a complex intentional process of connecting abstract and physical stances – through understanding their functionality – with mental states. Learning behavior of other individuals and attempts to understand their mental states require vast intentional process and are not predetermined, based on Dennett's theory. Inability to interpret or explain certain type of behavior or unclarity is temporary, and if an object is observed through intentionality (connecting to own experience), model of certain behavior be determined and defined.

Human mind has ability to connect abstract and physical stances, which gives humans a possibility to observe and understand motived of certain behaviors, which gradually brings us back to the main subject of the present paper: empathy and its role in human interactions. However, before we pursue with the discussion about empathy per se, it is useful for the discussion to clarify one more term that was mentioned earlier: behavior. Dennett defines behavior as pre- determined on a genetic level, those expressions of behavior that possess "truly rational models" necessary for the survival of the species. For instance, during the process of evolution, turtles have "learned" to grow a shell to protect themselves from the external dangers and from an evolutionary perspective this is highly rational behavior. To take an example from human behavior, one of the most widely used is, perhaps, an example of a crying baby: since it has not yet developed other means to communicate its needs, is not capable to provide for its own needs nor capable of protecting itself, a baby has to make a loud noise to attract attention of an adult that can protect them, and ensure baby's survival.

Also, when we address the matter of experience, we can not neglect that an individual is exposed to external impact whether they are conscious of it and experience it, or if they do not have access to certain experience due to being exposed to events while not being conscious. As Daniel Dennett says in his book:

> There is much that happens to me and in me of which I am not conscious, which I do not experience, and there is much that happens in and to me of which I am conscious. That of which I am conscious is that to which I have access, or (to put the emphasis where it belongs), that to which I have access. Let us call this sort of access the access of personal consciousness, thereby stressing that the subject of that access (whatever it is) which exhausts consciousness is the person, and not any of the person's parts.

According to the quote, the only experience an individual is able to access and therefore also to use is conscious experience, which has involved intentional process of connecting external physical and abstract objects with mental stances that has allowed a mind of an individual to create meaningful connection that affect also human behavior and perception of others.

At this point, we can address a statement that the human mind is a product of a culture and an environment an individual is exposed to. As it was discussed earlier, behavior is treated as a pre-determined, genetically programmed for survival, while the mind is responsible for creating connections between external physical and abstract stances and mental stances, creating experience. Conceptual schemes store the experience and we can assume that they do expand with every new gained experience which allows and individual to establish stronger connection between external stances and mental stances. With gaining more conscious experience, an individual extends own ability to understand more complex concepts and, perhaps, make more rational decisions since a decision would be based on more data than the one of a less experienced or less rational individual.

Here, however, appears a new temptation to continue an argument and insist on building it in favor of empathy: the more experienced an individual is, the better an individual can understand and, perhaps, experience, mental stances of other individuals. However, here it is important to distinguish ability to understand and experiencing the same emotion which empathy requires. Understanding of the emotional and/ or mental stance of an individual does not require from an individual to force themselves into the same mental or emotional stance. We are not going to discuss the possibility of experiencing the same emotional stance as another individual. Perhaps, it might be possible with completely identical individuals, who were exposed to the same culture, have created the same mental stances while experiencing the same physical and abstract stances. In the present paper, of the interest is the relationship between empathy and rational compassion, and what issue both pose.

Mind is a product of a culture and environment one is exposed to, where an individual creates experience. Since experience is constructed out of concepts that internal processes connected to mental stances, it can be connected to a language one is exposed to. Here we will address Donald Davidson's theory of conceptual schemes to empathize issues of transferability of emotions and ability to experience the same feelings as another individual.

Second, Davidson

Donald Davidson's approach to conceptual schemes is mainly based on a language, since concepts are linguistic phenomenons. In his book On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme (2001) Davidson explores issues of translatability and defines two main phenomenons: partial and complete non-translatability of conceptual schemes. Completely non- translatable schemes are those schemes that differ to the extent where they have nothing in common and translation is not possible. In such a case, neither of the languages posses predicates of experience that are present in another language. That can lead to a complete dismissal of one of the languages: if the concepts are not translatable, are they even

real? Davidson claims, that if a concept is not translatable, it is not possible to accept that a concept is meaningful. How can it relate to the question of empathy?

Considering afore discussed Davidson's understanding of concepts as linguistic phenomenons, we can state that emotions are also linguistic concepts that express mental stances. Since mental stances are affected by external impact (physical and abstract stances) it is safe to assume that if one of the external stances varies in different cultural environments, mental stance will be affected differently as well. Being a product of a culture, human mind, therefore, will experience distinguishing external stances with different mental responses that are appropriate in the culture where an individual has been raised. Therefore, the extend of experiences emotions also varies, even if experienced emotions are conceptually similar, but this difference already denies an ability of experiencing empathy: an individual who belongs to a different culture can only experience the stance that is familiar to them, not what another individual experiences, even if the concept of a certain emotion is translatable. So, the identification with another individual's emotions, who does not share an individual's conceptual scheme and does not belong to the same 'community', will not be complete.

However, experiencing full identification with the other's emotions possess certain issues also when it comes to individuals who share conceptual scheme. Paul Bloom, Canadian- American psychologist, in Against Empathy: The Case of Rational Compassion (2016) brings up multiple issues empathy poses including undeniable bias that individuals experience towards representatives of certain groups. It is more likely that the jury – in the USA legal system – will feel more empathic towards an accused if a defendant is good- looking, has a respectable background or appeals to the jury on a personal level. A defendant who fits into certain negative stereotypes, does not have appealing looks nor right background, or belongs to a certain race or religion, is more likely to be found guilty and get a harsher sentence.

Furthermore, Bloom empathizes that an individual can feel empathic towards a limited number of others. It is easier to focus empathy if an individual can relate to feelings based on own experience, or is provided with a back story of a subject. For example, when charity campaigns take place in order to collect funds for a support of victimized group, for a region that has suffered from a natural disaster or is at war, it has become apparent that using an image of a suffering child is more effective in getting more resonance and response from a society than providing numbers of victims and costs of destruction. This leads us to another issue that empathy poses. Since it is apparent that certain images and other external stimuli can cause stronger emotional, empathetic response, it can be used for manipulating human minds in order to get rash and irrational, emotional response to a situation. Bloom claims, that strong feeling of empathy is likely to lead to a rash decision and even to violence: an individual, experiencing pain of a victim of a violent crime, can have an impulse to seek for revenge since in their conceptual scheme causing pain to innocent individuals is not acceptable and should be punished.

Also, empathy can prevent an individual from action. Being overwhelmed by emotions of another individual, an individual can be incapacitated which can lead to serious consequences. Bloom mentions several examples. For instance, a psychologist who is highly empathic towards his patients is not capable of providing any help and guidance for resolving an issue, since he will be drowned in it himself.

Besides this, empathy requires a lot of mental resources from an individual and is not sustainable long-term. Using psychological terms, it leads to emotional exhaustion according to Bloom. Experiencing

struggles of others and more often than not feeling inability to provide any help while being overwhelmed by emotions can leave an individual internally empty: an individual perceives external stimuli that address mental stances responsible for providing help, protection, or other similar response of justice, emotional comforting and etc., takes a lot of internal resources from an individual and shifts the focus of own well- being.

Rational compassion – on the other hand – calls for rational analysis of the situation. It does not exclude emotional experience though. Processing and analyzing external stimuli and data, an individual can feel compassion and yet be able to give appropriate response to a situation, be that comfort of a crying child, support of a charitable organization, or political vote. Unlike empathy, rational compassion does not require from an individual to experience whatever emotional stance is another individual experiences, but to be able to understand the stance and provide rational analysis of a situation. Rational compassion, therefore, can serve as a sustainable tool for interpersonal relations since it is less affected by biases that an individual might express towards representatives on another 'community.' However, an argument against empathy can cause some misunderstanding regarding the stance on the value of emotional response and the consequences of the lack of such. In past several decades, psychiatry has advanced a lot in studying and analyzing human psyche, identifying various conditions, including one that is of particular interest in the present paper: psychopathy. These findings can not be neglected by philosophical society: once a condition is identified and conceptualized, multiple questions come along with them, including those on the value of empathy and potential dangers of its absence.

Neuroscientists, due to technological advances in the field of neuroscience have been able to link feeling of empathy to a part of brain called cerebral cortex, and amygdala. Apparently, if it does not function correctly, an individual is deprived from the ability to feel empathy. This inability (or is it sort of emotional disability?) is linked to such mental disorders (or we can call them conditions) as psychopathy, sociopathy and narcissism. Jon Ronson in The Psychopath Test (2012) researches into the individuals who express traits of low or no empathy and are diagnosed with psychopathy. For the purpose of his research Ronson interviewed Robert B. Hare, a researcher in the field of criminal psychology, author of the Hare Psychopathy Checklist, which is used for the identification of psychopaths. The list consists of twenty points one of which is lack of empathy (it also includes lack of remorse, poor behavior control and other). In the interview, Hare shared the findings of his own research on psychopathy, confirming that psychopaths' brain is indeed different. Amygdala – a part of brain responsible for the emotional response, to put it simply– , in psychopaths' brain when being exposed to unpleasant stimuli (electric shock) did not respond in the way it supposed to respond in a normal brain.

> [A] mygdala, the part of the brain that should have anticipated the unpleasantness and sent the requisite signals of fear over to the central nervous system, wasn't functioning as it should. [...] Bob learned something that Elliot Barker wouldn't for years: psychopaths were likely to reoffend.

In case when an individual does not experience feelings of empathy when being exposed to images depicting violent scenes, neither s/ he experiences fear of pain or punishment, an individual, according to the research conducted by Ronson and other expert researchers in the field of criminal psychology – for example, Christopher Berry- Dee, known for his best- selling books Talking with Serial Killers (2003) and Talking with Psychopaths and Savages (2017) – are likely to be of danger to society. According to them, inability to feel empathy does not affect one's intellectual abilities. An individual who does not

experience empathy can be of high intelligence, and might use his/ her mental capacity against others, regardless of their belonging to his/ her community in order to gain personal profit.

Description of psychopathy can serve as a strong argument for empathy: without it a human being turns into anti- social, primal predator, who disregards rules of the society to pursue personal benefits. He uses his cold, cunning minds against others, and, assuming that such an individual possesses high intelligence, is capable of understanding human emotions if only conceptually, which enables him to use this knowledge against other members of society, posing danger to its other members. However, these statements are not accurate in an account of value of empathy in this specific case. Paul Bloom in Against empathy ... emphasized that it is not empathy or lack of such is the reason for an individual to become a dangerous, anti- social element of the society. Environment an individual is expose to is more likely to stimulate proneness to violence than lack of empathy. Empathy – Bloom argues – can provide strong insight into internal processes of another individual and their mental stances which can be used in order to deliberately cause harm.

Rational compassion should aim on providing an individual with an insight to another individual's mental stance, and seeking for the most appropriate actions in a certain situation. Rational compassion does not exclude the possibility for an individual to experience empathy, but serves as a better stance for decision making since it allows an individual to maintain ability of rational thinking and rational behavior. In a dangerous situation, rational compassion can lead to a better risk- calculation, content behavior and provide sustainable solutions. Also, since individuals' conceptual scheme expands due to gaining new experience, the response to the situation and provided solutions might improved as an individual's mind develops his conceptual schemes. It means that, unlike empathy that is purely based on emotional response and does not require a development of a human mind, rational compassion is affected by conceptual schemes.

Therefore, it can be concluded that empathy as a concept of experiencing another individuals' mental stance, is not a tool for solving and overcoming societal issues. Strong empathic response can cause more damage, while rational compassion can help to keep mental stance emotionally stable and capable of rational decision-making.

Conclusions

To sum up, it can be said that human mind is a complex phenomenon and experiences various internal processes to create connection between external stimuli and mental stances. Conscious mind creates experiences and is shaped by culture and environment it is exposed to, and human culture and environment are essential in order for a human mind to develop. Not being exposed to any human culture, for instance, children that have been raised by animals, can never integrate into a human society. All human experience, gained under the influence of the culture, is structured in human mind as conceptual schemes that help distinguish different mental stances and establish connections between concepts, and therefore, expanding conceptual schemes affects rational compassion and quality of decisions.

Empathy, being tempting and popular concept, has various issues that can cause issues if it is used for decision- making and as a tool to overcome societal problems. Empathy, being rooted in emotional response to an external situation, is not rational and does not allow an individual to analyze a situation rationally to make the most suitable decision. Empathy can be used for manipulation and to achieve

desirable results, and therefore should be treated with caution and should not be cultivated as a solution for misunderstanding. Rather development of conceptual schemes through gain of a new experience, including experience of another cultures, religions, races, can be more beneficial in social situations.

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