SPOTLIGHT 120

Wordtrade Reviews: Sol, Sin, Suffering: Authoritarian Counterstrategies

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Editorial Appraisals:

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

BEYOND MOLOTOVS - A VISUAL HANDBOOK OF ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN STRATEGIES edited by International Research Group on Authoritarianism and Counter-Strategies and kollektiv orangotango Funded by: Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung [Edition Politik transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, ISBN 9783837670554] Open Source

Authoritarianism operates on a visceral level rather than relying on arguments. How can we counter authoritarian affects? This publication brings together more than 50 first-hand accounts of anti-authoritarian movements, activists, artists, and scholars from around the world, focusing on the sensuous and emotional dimension of their strategies. From the collective art and aesthetics of feminist movements in India, Iran, Mexico, and Poland, to sewing collectives, subversive internet art in Hong Kong, and even anti-authoritarian board games, the contributions open new perspectives on moments of resistance, subversion, and creation. Indeed, the handbook itself is a work of anti-authoritarian art.

The editors behind the »International Research Group on Authoritarianism and Counter-Strategies« and »kollektiv orangotango« are: Aurel Eschmann, Börries Nehe, Nico Baumgarten, Paul Schweizer, Severin Halder, Ailynn Torres Santana, Inés Duràn Matute, and Julieta Mira.

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The International Research Group on Authoritarianism and Counter-Strategies (IRGAC) is an initiative of the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung that brings together scholar-activists from across the Global South to research the authoritarian Right and strategic responses from the Left.

kollektiv orangotango is a circle of critical geographers and friends who have been in coevolution since the 2000s. As popular educators, they strive for a collective horizontal production of knowledge; as militant scholars, they link practical interventions and theoretical reflection. They place their work at the service of emancipatory processes in youth clubs and community gardens, in schools and autonomous social centers, on park benches and in lecture halls, in favelas and in rural communities.

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Authoritarianism can be defied and defeated: that is the most important lesson of this book. Around the world, countless people, collectives, and movements develop powerful and creative strategies to oppose nationalist, racist, classist, and anti-feminist forces. Many of these strategies go well beyond a narrow definition of "defending democracy" or "resistance". They do not defend the catastrophic status quo against the far right, but propose different, more just and more democratic ways of being together. These strategies and struggles carry ideas, emotions, and practices that are the seeds of another world. Yes, it is true that imagining a fundamentally different world has

become more difficult recently, and yet, it is possible. It is actually being lived out in anti-authoritarian strategies worldwide.

"BEYOND MOLOTOVS – A VISUAL HANDBOOK OF ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN STRATEGIES" brings together first-hand accounts of anti-authoritarian struggles from around the world, focusing on strategies that address the sensuous, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions of authoritarianism. These are neither the only, nor necessarily the most important, strategies of resistance. From classical antifascist organizing and monitoring work on the ground, to mobilizing broad social strata in defence of democratic rights, to militant struggle against oppressive regimes, a wide variety of initiatives is needed to counter the authoritarian attacks on democracy and social rights. By proposing to go "beyond molotovs", we are not disregarding the importance of these myriad forms of resistance. Instead, we want to enrich them by bringing in new perspectives focused on dimensions that are all too often neglected when we discuss our strategies against authoritarianism.

Reclaiming futures

Addressing these dimensions is of crucial importance for at least three reasons. The first is that a century of scholarship on authoritarianism has repeatedly shown that authoritarianism operates fundamentally at the level of the visceral. It mobilizes and channels insecurities, fears, and anxieties, and cannot be reduced to rationality. Nevertheless, much of the opposition to authoritarianism still relies on the illusion of the most convincing argument or political agenda. But this hardly ever weakens authoritarian forces. Quite the contrary, it seems that the less they engage in reasoned argumentation, the more successful they are. We, thus, need to ask ourselves: how can we respond to authoritarian populist discourse and its "affective offer"? What other emotions and imaginaries – indeed, what other forms of seeing and being – do we have to offer? And how can we massify them? This must surely mean actively playing in the field of how people interpret and give meaning to the world, a process that is still too frequently thought to be mediated merely through words and ideas, though it is now clear that affect plays a fundamental role in it.

We briefly alluded to the second reason for focusing on the sensuous: we feel that this is where the utopian energy for alternative ways of imagining and living can be found. A lot has been said about the "crisis of the left" and, more generally, about the impossibility of imagining the end of capitalism. There are many reasons for this, but we remain convinced that the ideas of emancipation and social justice are not outdated, nor do we lack proposals for how they can be achieved. Years of neoliberal conditioning – as well as the profound contradictions of historical socialist experiments – have stripped these ideas of much of their appeal and capacity to move peoples' bodies and minds. In order to re-think and re-invent emancipatory politics and offer a different vision of the future, beyond coherent political programs, we need to revitalize their concrete utopian appeal and energy. In other words, we have to win back hope, not as an abstract idea or empty slogan, but as a collectively crafted and lived reality. This book is about producing hope and reclaiming the future even in the most adverse conditions.

The third reason why it is of crucial importance to look at the dimension of emotions and aesthetics is that authoritarian tendencies are deeply inscribed within the affective as well as the institutional landscape of capitalism itself. These tendencies boil up violently in moments of crisis. Thus, we cannot approach authoritarian capitalist affectivity as a phenomenon that is external to us. Instead, we need to recognize and reflect on the fact that as subjects in late capitalism, we are necessarily shaped by these dynamics in one way or another. Capitalism is constantly exploiting our anxieties and desires, be it by commodifying our need for recognition on social media platforms, or by mobilizing our fears and aspirations through meritocracy and competition.

The intimate relation of capitalism and authoritarianism should come as no surprise. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the many by the few, and on an ever-greater concentration of wealth and power to the detriment of our well-being and capacity to determine the course of our own lives. While democracy is about equality and collective decision-making, capitalism is systematically unequal, hierarchical, and exclusive. This produces constant tensions and antagonisms between the two, and this

is why democratic rights have had to be – and must continue to be – conquered and defended against the dominant classes that will try to shield the exercise of power from popular interference. Likewise, from the outset, global capitalism has been intimately interwoven with patriarchy, racism, and colonialism. They form the very foundation for depriving most people in the world of their rights and facilitating the direct exploitation of both the people themselves and the spaces they live in.

Neoliberal capitalism emphasizes the authoritarian tendencies within capitalism. Over the past decades, popular and workers' organizations, social welfare structures, and mechanisms for the redistribution of wealth have been under attack. Simultaneously, the ideas, images, and concrete politics of social justice, solidarity, and democracy have been increasingly hollowed out.1 Neoliberalism demands from individuals permanent competition, performance, and flexibility – that is, an active subjugation under the logic of capital – while simultaneously stripping them of any social safety net. It thus constitutes a colonization of life itself. Neoliberal capitalism extends the logic of accumulation, exploitation, and commodification to all fields of our existence, including the very way we experience life itself.

As we explain in more detail below, contemporary authoritarianism constitutes, in many ways, an exaltation of these dynamics but in a neo-Darwinist guise. This is why it would be useless to aim for the sort of restoration of a near past that is envisioned by current liberal opposition to the far right. Rather, we take the authoritarianism inherent in capitalist society seriously, and believe, as such, that consistent anti-authoritarianism must aim to overcome this social form. It must, once again, take up the search for post-capitalist social relations and aesthetics.

What is authoritarianism all about?

To say that capitalist states and societies inherently comprise authoritarian dimensions does not mean that nothing has changed. For a decade or so now, the world has steadily become a less democratic and more violent place. This trend is often portrayed by focusing on its most outrageous manifestations and their frequently bizarre protagonists, such as Donald Trump in the US, Narendra Modi in India, or Javier Milei

in Argentina. The electoral successes of European far-right parties and the openly repressive military regimes of Myanmar and Syria provide further evidence of this disturbing development. In an effort to understand and describe this phenomenon, a number of terms have come to constitute an increasingly important part of our vocabulary, including "populism", "neo-conservatism", "illiberalism", "ultra-nationalism", "post-fascism", "fundamentalism".

Many of these concepts are very useful in describing certain facets of the phenomenon. But we feel that one important disadvantage in this multiplication of terms is that it does not allow us to grasp the simultaneity and commonalities between the different, yet interconnected, processes of global authoritarian transformation. Against this background, we propose recovering and expanding the notion of authoritarianism. In contrast to the reductive ways in which this concept is frequently used, we see it as a complex social phenomenon that is not limited to the state and its institutions. Although there is an authoritarian agenda that is consciously pursued by specific actors, it is not a conspiracy of demagogues and ruling elites who trick the masses into politics that go against their own interests. Though it gains its strength from mass support, it is not just a reactionary "popular revolt". It's neither exclusively top-down nor bottom-up. Authoritarianism is a redefinition of power relations and mechanisms of exploitation that occurs simultaneously in the social, cultural, political, and economic spheres. As an analytical concept, it does not compete with other descriptions of the phenomenon that are, at times, more specific. Rather, as we have already stated elsewhere, authoritarianism allows us to build "a conceptual arc between the concrete expressions of a global trend towards an increasingly weaponized regime of capital accumulation coupled with processes of de-democratization and brutalization of social and political practices and relations".

A world in crisis

At the heart of the current authoritarian turn of global capitalism lies a shared experience of a world in crisis. This polycrisis of global turmoil sees shifts in the geopolitical balance of power and the ecological crisis coinciding with regional and

national political crises, economic dislocations, and a long train of other interconnected and mutually reinforcing crises pertaining to migration, health, and social cohesion. Established political actors and arrangements seem less and less able to deal with the situation, leading to a massive loss of legitimacy in terms of political representation as well as, more fundamentally, the liberal values on which that representation is based.

It is impossible to determine exactly where or when this crisis began, but many people point to the financial crisis of 2008 as the first, and most spectacular, manifestation of what is increasingly experienced and understood as a general collapse. Since then, neoliberal capitalism has been losing its hegemonic aura and appeal, and at an ever-greater pace. It seemed, at first, that we were in the midst of a hopeful and transformative moment. In the aftermath of the crisis, there was an eruption of powerful social movements, from the Arab Spring to Occupy Wall Street, from Hong Kong to Chile, and from Gezi Park in Turkey to the Indignados in Spain. However, rather than finally giving up the ghost, neoliberalism has returned as the living dead. Stripped of its liberal imagery and its promises of an institutional rule of law, of a borderless market economy in which any conflict can be resolved, of liberal social values, and of a better future, it now wanders the earth as naked commodification, exploitation, propertization, and precarization.

We are experiencing what Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci referred to in his writing on Italian fascism as an interregnum, that is, a crisis which consists in the fact that "the old is dying but the new cannot be born", and in which "a great variety of morbid symptoms appear". Authoritarianism is a symptom – and thus an indication – of the helplessness of both the dominated and the dominant. The first "no longer believe what they used to believe" but have, thus far, not come up with a viable alternative to a system that produces ever more suffering and destruction. As for the ruling classes, there is no longer any consensus in terms of how to move forward. The implosion of the political landscapes around the world speaks to the profound conflicts

within the elites as to how the general and, indeed, hegemonic crisis should be addressed.

An increasingly weaponized, authoritarian version of neoliberalism, which is systematically insulated from democratic interference (and for which the European Union can be seen as a prominent example) is currently competing with an active and reactionary ideological mobilization that is represented by authoritarian populism. This "solution" to the crisis – which currently seems to be the more successful – combines authentically neoliberal ingredients with others that are both reactionary and, at this stage, all too familiar. We, thus, see an unhinged market economy coupled with familialist, religious, and racist topoi, and unlimited individual "freedom" with updated versions of social-Darwinism.

If we take a close look, it becomes clear that authoritarian ideological components often converge in specific amalgams from one context to another. But what all these manifestations of authoritarianism have in common is that they activate resentment and hate against particular Others who are generally perceived as weak and, at the same time, menacing. As such, authoritarianism addresses real needs and desires. It channels people's frustrations, fears, and a genuine, though often unarticulated, longing for things to change – because change they must, given that these frustrations and fears are very real. However, authoritarianism leads them down a destructive path, one that can only deepen the existential malaise. In exchange for the momentary pleasure of superiority – as Whites, males, patriots, and so on – the infrastructure of suffering is left intact.

An anti-fascism for the 21st century

This constellation poses huge challenges to those fighting for a just and democratic society. The global expansion of authoritarianism and the disintegration of the liberal consensus requires us to re-think our strategies. One fundamental premise, as we mentioned above, is that we have to go beyond "resistance": there is no going back, and the defence of what is, is simply not an option.

If historical anti-fascism in Europe after World War II has proven anything, it is that a successful anti-authoritarian strategy must address people's needs. Anti-fascism has never been solely about morals, symbols, or humanist convictions. In order to be effective as mass politics, it must safeguard against corporate power and redistribute rather than concentrate wealth. But human needs and desires extend beyond the materialistic and into the psychological. In our everyday experience, the economic and the cultural are inseparably intertwined. In this book, we are interested in how counter-strategies interact with material and immaterial needs and desires, and how they respond to the authoritarian ways of addressing them.

One key aspect of contemporary authoritarianism is that it allows for what has been termed a "conformist rebellion", that is, it serves as a valve for frustration and rage that lack an addressee. It thus channels both the desire to "change everything", and the desire to have everything remain the same, insofar as the existing relations of power and domination go completely unchallenged. If we want to achieve real and enduring social change, it is thus pivotal to understand the sensuous and sociopsychological dimension of counter-strategies. As psychotherapy shows, change cannot be imposed from the outside but must arise from within, as rooted in a genuine desire.

To make people yearn and strive for fundamental change, we must understand our emotional attachments to the world as it is. Our beliefs and convictions serve important psychological functions for our self-perception, for coping with existential problems, and for stabilizing our precarious existence in a world full of uncertainties. In fact, many counter-strategies understand and address the wounds within neoliberal subjectivity and the way authoritarianism engages them affectively. Often without consciously spelling it out, they develop affective countermeasures.

One cross-cutting theme in this book is the resistance to the cult of death that unites authoritarianism and capitalism, especially in the face of crisis. At the heart of capitalism lies destructiveness: of nature, of living bonds, of any hope for a future, of life itself.5 The authoritarian solution to this destructiveness is to fetishize it. As Walter Benjamin put it, facing the rise of fascism: "[humankind's] self-alienation has reached

the point where it can experience its own annihilation as a supreme aesthetic pleasure." Today's counter-strategies must address the authoritarian reverence for death and destruction, for compartmentalization and alienation. Consequently, one crucial aspect that binds all the contributions in this book together is that they celebrate life over death, connection over individualization, multiplicity over reduction, and chaos over order.

Counter-strategies as potentiality

Not all anti-authoritarian movements achieve lasting social change. In fact, most of them do not. But even though they may fail to achieve their immediate goals, they often go beyond themselves, changing the people involved. By that, they transcend their own particular historical moments and can reappear elsewhere, on another occasion and in another guise, much like in the famous saying: "they buried us, but they didn't know we were seeds." By looking at counter-strategies in practice, we understand the marks they leave in the world beyond the direct political change they aspire to.

In examining these practices, we also begin to grasp what actually makes people resist and fight authoritarianism, even against seemingly improbable odds. Indeed, as anybody who has blocked a road or participated in a strike knows, the sense of joy, comradery and empowerment is as important as critical analysis.

There is another reason why we should engage with struggles, including – indeed, with particular attention to – those that seem to have failed. That history unfolded the way it did does not mean that this was the only way it could have happened. This contingency makes it worthwhile to revisit the moments of ambiguity and of multiple possibilities, as well as learning strategic lessons from them. Our focus thus shifts towards the concrete potentiality of the moments of struggle: to the glimpses of possible worlds. These moments, when social antagonisms become explicit, are privileged sites for gaining knowledge about the world that is, and about the world that can be. As conceptual fetishes implode, moments of social and political creativity open up, and other identifications and social relations momentarily become a reality.

One of the key questions that underpin this book is how anti-authoritarian struggles affect us, and how we affect others. This is why all the struggles portrayed here bear some relation to arts and aesthetics, as they often have the greatest power to touch and affect us. Everything in this book is art, whether it be graffiti scribbled by protesters, chants sung by mass movements, an anti-authoritarian board game, or an exhibition in a museum. All the contributions in this book speak of a transformative affect that is the essence of art.

Decentering anti-authoritarianism

Notwithstanding the many cross-cutting themes and concerns, the contributions in this book are very diverse. One reason for this is that authoritarianism takes on different forms in different contexts. There is no reason to believe that authoritarianism in Brazil will look exactly as it does in Myanmar, and the same applies to "colonialism" and "patriarchy" (or neoliberalism, for that matter). Nevertheless, they exist and have enough features in common for us to name and think about them together, as well as to recognize our many struggles against them as one.

This is also how we approached the issue when we reached out to the contributors for this book. Rather than formulating an explicit definition, we reckoned that those who know best what authoritarianism actually looks like in each context are those who are organizing against it. What is more, we realized that we can learn a great deal about global authoritarianism and its different manifestations by looking at local struggles and strategies against it.

Consequently, some of the struggles portrayed in this book could also be understood as feminist, some as environmentalist, others as fights for democracy or for indigenous rights and so on. The contributions also vary in scale. Whereas some engage with shared symbols of political mass movements, others explore the bonds that result from co-creative practices carried out in small collectives, or explore the effects of patriarchy on the life of one's own mother through a single painting. Some speak of struggles that transgress national boundaries, while others look at struggles that are highly localized. Some are meticulously organized, while others are spontaneous and chaotic.

We do not aim to reduce all these approaches to a list of universal lessons. In fact, this would defeat the very purpose of the book. Although we decided to call it a handbook, rather than a step-by-step guide, this book is an exploration of the beauty of anti-authoritarian resistance. It combines diverse accounts from different contexts, showcasing a relational approach to producing knowledge, referred to by the political philosopher Boike Rehbein as Kaleidoscopic Dialectics. The aim is not universality, but an appreciation of the complex web of traits shared among different counter-strategies, like the Familienähnlichkeiten (family resemblances) described by Wittgenstein. No single trait is shared by all the counter-strategies, so we cannot distil universal traits of affective counter-strategies. Yet, each counter-strategy shares a trait with certain others. These intersections and overlaps are where understanding beyond the individual case emerges. However, this understanding only reveals itself when we look at the entire mosaic. In this, our approach to editing resembles the "decentering" that is proposed on pages 242-247, where contributions and their arrangements are understood as "zones of encounter marked by the remarkable ability of ideas to touch and travel". One of the many possible learnings from this relational approach is found in the table of contents (one of three) titled "Strategies" and is explained in more detail below.

Zones of encounter

When it comes to knowledge production, we engage in decentering insofar as we do not maintain the paralyzing and illusory boundaries between academic theory, art, and activism. Most contributions to this book unite different approaches in unique ways. Nevertheless, we decided to separate some texts from the rest visually, as they constitute broader reflections, based upon a prior reading of, and critical engagement with, many of the other contributions. The articles by Eva von Redecker, Gustavo Robles, Lorena Zárate and Firoozeh Farvardin thus offer key ways of understanding – as well as possible pathways through – the mosaic of struggles and strategies within and outside this book.

To highlight the multiplicity of connections between the contributions, we propose three different ways of looking at their relations, which are represented by the three tables of contents. The most straightforward, Places, groups the contributions by physical location, highlighting similarities and differences because or in spite of geographical position. But the map also reveals the limitations of our positionality as editors. It would, of course, be problematic – not to mention impossible – to attempt to represent the entire world in a book, but we did strive for geographical diversity. Nevertheless, some regions – principally Europe and Latin America – are relatively overrepresented as compared to others, most notably Africa and Oceania. This is due, in part, to the fact that our search for contributions was limited by the networks we have as editors, by linguistic frontiers, and, very likely, by certain differences in understandings of authoritarianism. The second table, entitled Contents, follows a narrative flow that escapes clear categorization yet appeals to our own intuitive perception of the relations between the contributions. This is also the sequence that the contributions are in if you read the book from beginning to end.

Anti-authoritarian strategies through the kaleidoscope

The third way of ordering the contributions is called Strategies. The strategic dimensions we refer to are neither the methods they employ nor the political demands they formulate, but the ways they address the sensuous and the affective. The focus, here, is on the things that happen while protesting, striking, resisting, and defying, on the collective emotions cultivated, on the subject states experienced, on the bonds that are woven, and the senses that are tingled. It is an approach that also involves distilling what we conceive as their underlying idea of transformation. These six categorizations represent the main l earnings from the kaleidoscopic approach mentioned above. The similarities and overlaps in their affective approach help to give us a more general idea of how counter-strategies aim to achieve profound transformation. Given that the affective can often only be approximated by language, each chapter is represented by three words that triangulate what we see as the essence of the strategic approach discussed in each case.

When the range of what is speakable and imaginable is minimal, and the beautiful multiplicity and chaotic fabric of life is reduced to compartmentalized reductions and reproductions of the "normal", what remains is the orderly tyranny of capital and commodification. Authoritarianism wants nothing more than for you to sit back on your sofa and not care. The anti-authoritarian interventions united in disrupt retake transfigure break through numbness, resignation, and the retreat into the private, through the unidimensionality imposed on discourse, life, and space. They make visible what has been suppressed. With huge wall-paintings and tiny stickers, naked bodies, rap songs, dwarves, and street signs, they remind the world that they are still here, that they have a voice, and that there are other ways of living. They can be silent reminders, or the gong that shatters the illusion. They reconquer public life, revitalize the streets, defy "common sense", and bring back what has been repressed.

Authoritarianism often works by rewriting both the past and the present, by distorting perspectives and silencing those who are inconvenient. As the contributions brought together in expose accuse remember show, exposing tools of deceit and mechanisms of power, and crafting a counter-narrative, can be an effective counter-strategy. Be it through a viral campaign that exposes government killings, or by counter-cartographies that unmask continuities of colonial violence, such strategies can lift veils, incite anger, light fuses, stir up the collective unconscious.

Keeping score of injustices and atrocities is also important not to lose yourself amidst relativization and gaslighting. These strategies direct our gaze to where systemic violence and destruction reveal themselves. They make us feel the brutality of the status quo, be it through poems, performances, drawings, paintings, or maps. When they want you to forget, remembering can be an act of resistance. But it can also open a pathway to a radically different understanding of ourselves, our relation to others, and to the world, for example when "mapping decolonial Berlin" (see pp. 234-241).

In the chapter subvert hijack divert, we bring together struggles and practices that use authoritarianism's own tools and expressions against it. They appropriate, sabotage, and repurpose the oppressive meanings, materials, and intentions inscribed in

advertisements, monuments, political parties, memes, and riot fences. In the face of a seemingly omnipotent, all-penetrating authoritarian apparatus, making use of whatever it throws at us is a necessity. But it is also a powerful way of affectively taking back control. The one thing that can never be fully subjugated is how we feel about things. As Albert Camus' smiling Sisyphus knows, our own emotional response can become the last refuge of self-determination, as well as a powerful resource for regaining agency. It is enormously liberating to laugh at the things meant to instil fear, to turn the tools of control into agents of emancipation, and separators into vessels of relating. The strategies turn destruction into creation, silence into communication, and forbidden fruits into resistance.

Only when we get a taste of liberation, can we truly strive to be free, and desire change both in the world and for ourselves. This is why it is important to create spaces in the here and now where we can experience glimpses of a liberated life, a process we have given the title explore transcend desire. Even if these spaces are only islands of performative prefigurations, these real utopias are powerful antidotes to authoritarian neoliberalism's suppression of softness, and its destruction of hope and future time. The strategies in this section write dreams on walls, overcome failures of communication by taking on the role of boardgame players, find utopian ways of life amidst a city in revolt. They explore the aesthetics of utopian communities, radically different ways of looking, of collective editing, and staring into the abyss while getting a taste of utopia.

At its core, liberation always contains a notion of universalist humanism. This is why it is crucial to make sense of the world collectively, to make common cause with others who are fighting to define and create a world in which we can all flourish. Recognizing ourselves as one in spite – and, indeed, because – of our differences while being recognized, in turn, by others, is powerfully transformative. The contributions in sense convey assemble speak of creating spaces for collective resonance and reverberation; a shared language, made of songs and symbols, rituals, artefacts, and gestures of defiance. These strategies use pots and pans, songs, post-its, scarves, hand gestures, lightning

bolts, and Pokémon. They ignite passions, circulate ideas, create shared identity, and unite in collective creation.

Finally, link weave nurture pays tribute to human creation as, and in, social relation. We can only reproduce in society what we experience in our lived relations, and finding the courage for radical change often depends on the strength we gain through our surroundings and our relations to others. Fighting against the forces of authoritarian violence, precarity, atomization, and dispossession means finding new ways of feeding, nurturing, reproducing, and reclaiming life. These contributions speak of the materialities of solidarity, of companionship, and of collective action. They weave networks by cooking, eating, drinking, marching, or sewing together. They explore the materiality of resistance by looking at tarpaulin tents and artwork made from food wrappers. They develop powerful infrastructures of tenderness and solidarity, they cross oceans and take back the means of (re-)production.

About us

This book is a collective effort that started three years ago. It was born out of discussions that showed us again and again that although we know a lot about the workings of authoritarianism, we know astonishingly little about counter-strategies, and even less about the way they emotionally engage us. Virtually none of the literature on anti-authoritarian struggles seems to express how we actually feel and what we share with friends about these struggles. What makes us join ant-fascist rallies or roadblocks, and what happens there? What makes people, even in the most adverse circumstances, oppose authoritarian regimes? How do they do so? And what potentiality do these struggles have for a fundamentally different world?

Particularly in view of the globalization of authoritarianism, we realized that we need spaces where we can systematically exchange experiences and reflect on counter-strategies. Opposition to authoritarianism operates under extreme pressure and heavy surveillance. Those who fight often lack the time and resources to document, archive, or reach out to others that are not immediately connected to their cause, especially to those in other countries and on other continents. Considering this, we also wanted to

provide an infrastructure within which we can exchange and engage, we can bond with and recognize one another, and we can celebrate the courage and creativity of anti-fascism.

For the authors of this introduction, the International Research Group on Authoritarianism and Counter-Strategies (IRGAC) that brings together around 20 scholars and activists from the so-called Global South, has served as a key space to discuss and advance these issues. Similarly, the work of kollektiv orangotango, which is somewhere between activism, artistic intervention, and counter-cartography has been an important source of inspiration. Particularly their book "This Is Not an Atlas"8 shows how to produce and curate collective, decentred knowledge, as well as materializing that knowledge in the form of beautiful and powerful objects (books, maps, graffiti, and so on).

In 2021, Aurel Eschmann and Börries Nehe formed an editorial collective together with Paul Schweizer and Severin Halder from kollektiv orangotango, IRGAC fellows Inés Durán Matute, Ailynn Torres and Julieta Mira, as well as Nico Baumgarten, who is also the designer of this book. The collective soon devised a call for contributions that was translated into several languages, and disseminated via the networks of the Rosa-Luxem bu rg-Stiftu ng, the IRGAC, and kollektiv orangotango. We received over 130 proposals from 46 countries. Reading them was an indescribably encouraging experience as it demonstrated, first and foremost, just how many resistances, strategies, and forms of struggle there are, how little we know of them, and how much we can learn from each other.

After selecting around forty proposals, we identified many possible connections between them as well as certain blind spots. We then reached out in order to fill some of those gaps. We approached this task much as an artisan might build a mosaic or weave a tapestry. Without ever aiming to definitively represent the incredible multiplicity of struggles around the globe, we assembled and arranged, linked and weaved, in a collective process that combined theoretical reflections with considerations that were artistic and, in that sense, consciously subjective. We hope

that "BEYOND MOLOTOVS – A VISUAL HANDBOOK OF ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN STRATEGIES" will be a tool for the internationalist anti-fascism that our times require, and a testimony to emancipation. <>

RELIGION IN THE SECULAR AGE: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE HUMANITIES edited by Herta Nagl-Docekal and Waldemar Zacharasiewicz [Wiener Reihe, De Gruyter, 9783111247441]

What does it mean to be religious believers for people whose living conditions are defined by an increasingly secularized environment? Is the common distinction between faith and knowledge valid? The 21 essays cover approaches from various fields of the humanities. Some explore post-Kantian thoughts, discussing, i.a., American Pragmatism, M. Buber, M. Horkheimer, H. Putnam, J. Habermas, Ch. Taylor and variants of deconstruction, while other essays focus on ways in which the conflict between agnostics and seekers is addressed in US literary works, as in Fl. O'Connor, W. Percy, N. Hawthorne, J. Updike and in novels dealing with pandemics, for instance by L. Wright, E. M. Wiseman and R. Cook. Historical studies examine the intermingling of the sacred and the secular in the American South and neo-scholastic objections to modernity. Theological issues are being re-framed in essays discussing the relevance of pluralism, the relation of religious conviction and public opinion, the situation of scientists who believe and the thoughts of N. Frye and M. McLuhan. Finally, essays pay attention to religious aspects in works of art, e.g. in Ukrainian poetry, G. Mahler's symphonies and in a TV show presenting new "American Gods" of globalization.

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When Jurgen Habermas was awarded the Peace Prize of the German Bookdealers in 2001, he noted in his acceptance speech — "Glauben and Wissen (Faith and

Knowledge)" — that the contemporary societies "need to expect the perseverance of religious communities in the context of an increasingly secularized environment°. The notion "secular" refers here to a process that has characterized modernity: the irreversible severance of core segments of public life from religious ties. Today, public spheres such as constitution and law, the sciences, art and education are all based on specific criteria of argumentative legitimation.

The title of the present book alludes to Charles Taylor's masterpiece A Secular Age, published in 2007, which focuses on the fact that, in our time, "faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others." Elaborating a complex reflection, Taylor first notes that we all share "the immanent frame" that is constituted by the insight that the various structures we live in are part of a "natural, or this-worldly order which can be understood in its own terms, without reference to the 'supernatural' or `transcendent'". He emphasizes that "this order of itself leaves the issue open, whether, for purposes of ultimate explanation, [...] or final sense-making, we might have to invoke something transcendent". The central thesis of this book is that we need to face the fact that "the whole culture experiences cross pressures, between the draw of the narratives of closed immanence on one side, and the sense of their inadequacy on the other, strengthened by encounter with existing milieus of religious practice". Taylor's own approach is revealed as he raises doubts whether the longing for human "fullness" that believers as well as non-believers share could be captured appropriately within the limits of "closed immanence".

In the recent debate, one crucial question has been this: What does it mean for human beings whose living conditions are defined by the principles of modernity —who do, for instance, identify with the idea of the liberal constitutional state, and to whom it is a matter of course to consider results of research in their decision making — to be religious believers? Is it possible for people today to avoid the following dichotomy: to either adhere, like many conventional believers, to a premodern theological conception of "ordo" that clearly contradicts the secularized conditions, or to consider themselves "enlightened" in the sense of regarding religion toto genere as obsolete? The

most contested concept in this debate has been "reason": As the widely accepted scientistic understanding of that term implies the view that religious convictions represent the "other of reason," employing an "extraterritorial"' language, the question arises whether believers and, indeed, converts are required to perform a sacrificium intellectus, or whether the concept "reason" rather allows for a more comprehensive definition. Along this line of thought the question arises whether, or how, a mutual enrichment of faith and knowledge might be possible today. In which way could views based on religion contribute to enhancing the differentiation and sensitivity of public discourse?

It seems obvious that these issues, which concern the fundamental question whether the human existence ultimately might make sense, do not belong exclusively to the domain of theology. This volume assembles a variety of approaches to these issues representing the perspective of diverse fields of the humanities; the contributions cover reflections ranging from philosophy — including American pragmatism, critical theory, Jewish philosophy and deconstruction — through studies of US and Canadian literature and modern history as well as media studies, to contemporary theology, musicology, and Slavic poetry.

Part 1: Post-Kantian Approaches to Religion begins with an essay by Irene Kajon, "God as the Infinite: Martin Buber's Interpretation of Kant's Concept of Religion", who examines whether there might be an understanding of religion that fits our secular age. She draws attention to the way in which Martin Buber employs Kant's concept of "antinomy" as he explains "how we, finite beings with all our weaknesses and fragilities, nevertheless come into positive contact with the infinite or eternal". Introducing Buber's reflections on the "nearness-distance" between humans and the divine, Kajon highlights his view that the core of Kant's thinking lies in the thesis that human beings encounter "a God whom they conceive as a Subject who acts with goodness and justice in the world". As she explains, this reading of Kant provides the basis of Buber's claim that there exists a dialogical relationship between the human being and God, as elaborated in his I and Thou. The very essence of this relationship is the sphere of

ethics: eternity becomes a "Presence" when we encounter other "Thou"s: God is the medium (Mittlertum) of all our relations (Beziehungen) in the world. Underscoring Buber's view that this concept of God "could perhaps be accepted by both believers and non-believers in our secular societies," Kajon addresses a topic that is also discussed in some other essays in the present volume. Non-believers, she suggests, might acknowledge that Buber offers a new perspective on religion — most notably, by provoking the question which understanding of the term "religion" might be most appropriate for our time. She advocates reading this word, rather than with traditional references to "relegere" (Cicero) or religare (Lactantius), with the Hebrew term "da'al" in mind, which means "ligare": a term that "means not only to connect, but — taking into consideration the term legati — also to entrust: human beings are charged to act in the world as if they were messengers of the Infinite".

One most pressing moral issue is addressed in the essay — "(Secular) Theodicy, Antitheodicy, and the Critique of Meaning: Pragmatist Reflections" — by Sami Pihlström, who deals with the grave evil marking the history of humankind, as experienced, in particular, in the horrendous suffering caused by the totalitarian political systems of the twentieth century. His focus is on the concept of "theodicy" that philosophers of religion' have introduced to signify theories seeking to morally excuse God's allowing the world to contain such pointless pain. As he highlights the "theodicist tendency to view suffering as (necessarily) meaningful in some deeper [...] sense", he notes that such thoughts are expressed not exclusively in religious but also in metaphysical and secular terms. In contrast, the essay elaborates an "antitheodicist critique" that challenges "the pursuit of meaning(fulness) [...] associated with theodicies". This "project of defending antitheodicism", Pihlström claims, "is crucially based on broadly Kantian premises". He provides a specific argumentative edge, however, by emphasizing that "antitheodicism is a normative view according to which we should not approach the problem of evil and suffering by offering, or expecting others to offer, theodicies". In other words, "antitheodicism urges us to ethically acknowledge the victim's experiences of the meaninglessness of their suffering". Discussing the search for meaningfulness, Pihlström pays particular attention to the

diversity of reactions to the extreme suffering of the Holocaust. His survey culminates in the thesis that what is needed today is "a philosophical and ethical critique of the very project of meaning-making", based on the insight that we rather need to carefully reflect on the way in which "we respond to the evil and suffering around us". In this manner, Pihlström pleads for an antitheodicism that is defined "as a thoroughly humanistic project," while emphasizing that this ethical critique of theodicist views "is not directed at God and does not even have to take any stand whatsoever regarding the question concerning God's existence". He suggests adopting a pragmatic critique of meaning, inspired by classical American pragmatism, especially William James. The essay concludes with a caveat, however, as Pihlström argues that pragmatist antitheodicism must be aware of the potential problem of a "return" of theodicism.

The relevance of American pragmatism and of Martin Buber for today's discourse on religion in a secular age is addressed again, albeit from a different angle, in the essay "Beyond Dogmatic Scientism: Hilary Putnam on Religious Faith" by Ludwig Nagl. The introductory segment of this essay highlights, with reference to John Rawls and Charles Taylor, that modern states, unlike traditional ones, are decoupled from a (substantial) religious legitimation. In modern societies, Nagl notes, religious faith has thus attained, as William James argues, the status of an "option". The main focus is then on the way in which Hilary Putnam's thoughts on religion have evolved since the 1970s. Nagl first recounts Putnam's neo-pragmatic critique of the self-sufficiency of "dogmatic scientism", pointing out that the Harvard philosopher investigated, "with reference to Wittgenstein, Dewey and James, the complex question whether our secularistically configured democratic culture inevitably leads us to a world-view that is in toto immanence-focused". Putnam argues that we can "keep the 'immanent frame' open to what lies beyond the observable", and thus makes room for the "hypothesis" of religious belief. As Nagl explains, these thoughts are elaborated "in a Kant-informed, post-Kantian manner" that supports "a non-relativistic, affirmative interpretation of religion which at the same time is sensitive to pluralism." In its main section, Nagl's essay focuses on Putnam's book Jewish Philosophy as a Guide to Life. Rosenzweig, Buber; Levinas, Wittgenstein (2008), drawing attention to Putnam's thesis that religious faith

remains an abstract "object of description and control" as long as it has not become personal: "Religions are communal and have long histories, but religion is also a personal matter or it is nothing." From this perspective, a theistically configured image of the Absolute, which implies a practical, motivating force, is for Putnam "far more valuable than any metaphysical concept of an impersonal God, let alone a God who is 'totally other'." It is in this context that Putnam discusses Buber's reflections on the basic words I-You, which are focused on an "ultimate You". As Nagl highlights, Putnam summarizes these reflections in the following two theses, which, while avoiding anthropomorphism, are at the same time person-related: firstly, "it is impossible to describe God, or to theorize about him"; and secondly, "what one can do is speak to God, or rather to enter into an `I-You' relation with God". — The final part of the essay takes a look at Putnam's defense of religious pluralism in his essay "Let's Stop Using the Notion of `Idolatry".

The essay "Angles and Angels: Charles Taylor and Steven Pinker on Moral Progress in History" by Ruth Abbey refers primarily to Taylor's paper "History of ethical growth", first presented to the Czech Christian Academy in 2021. Summarizing Taylor's thesis that human history has been shaped by "a drive to ethical ascent", Abbey underscores his reference to the concept of the Axial Age, as conceived by Karl Jaspers"9. As she points out, "Taylor detects two key features in this watershed in humanity's history of ethical growth": the first is that these teachings "offered new ideals of the human which were genuinely universal," the second is that no single tradition could capture the full gamut of this growth; rather, Taylor argues, we find here "the germ of what we now recognize as the ecumenical sources of ethical growth: this is not sustained and furthered alone by any one spiritual source." With regard to the criterion Taylor applies in order to support his claim of a continued, although very gradual, ethical growth across history, Abbey notes that "the reduction of violence turns out to be central to Taylor's account". With regard to this key concern, she suggests relating Taylor's approach to Steven Pinker's thoughts on that matter, elaborated in his book The Better Angels of our Nature: Why Violence has Declined (2011). Thus her essay arranges a confrontation between the two authors, guided by the claim that "there are a number

of ways in which Taylor's developing ideas about moral growth in history could profit from an encounter with Pinker's work". Specifying the difference between the two authors, Abbey notes "what really divides Taylor and Pinker is the status of religious belief in modernity. Pinker self-defines as a Jewish atheist," who qualifies "as one who is content to live the immanent frame in a closed way, not feeling any lack or shortcoming in the absence of personal religious belief". In contrast, "as a religious believer, Taylor strives to persuade that the immanent frame can be lived in an open way that is amenable to the experience of transcendence." Discussing this cleavage, Abbey addresses the question whether the perceived distance between those who are and those who are not religious is indeed warranted. She suggests recalling Taylor's view, elaborated in A Secular Age, that "when it comes to understanding fullness, we need 'a conversation between a host of different positions, religious, nonreligious, anti-religious", and she argues that this view should also apply to the shared dilemma "how to make sense of violence". Furthermore, Abbey claims, "engaging with Pinker would exemplify and extend the ecumenism that Taylor identifies and values about the Axial Age".

Part 2: Religion in Critical Theory and Deconstruction explores approaches to religion that were elaborated in the context of schools of thought that dominated the 20th century intellectual discourse across the globe. The first two articles represent the diversity of theories articulated against the background of the Marxist tradition. The essay "Benjamin's Time of Healing: The Messianic as Remembrance, Happiness and Justice" by Brendan Moran focuses on the way in which Walter Benjamin challenges the common view "that past injustice is complete (over and done with, so to speak)" in terms of the "messianic time". "Benjamin draws upon the motif of the Last Judgement insofar as this motif attests to the time that heals with the justice of release from imposed fate", claiming that, in messianic time, "happiness and justice converge in the hope that finds healing as the breaking of an ostensible fate." While citing Benjamin's view "that the sole irrevocable significance of notions of God, and of God's remembrance, is that there is always something beyond the meaning ascribed by humans", Moran underscores that Benjamin, however, "does not say that he believes in

the Last Judgement." Thus he draws attention to Benjamin's way of entrusting the (ideal of the) historical materialist with the messianic task: "theology is conceived by Benjamin as integral to historical materialism. Without messianism, the legacy of hope for healing is more likely to be diminished in scientistic and brutal versions of Marxism"; accordingly, Benjamin blames the latter versions of Marxism for tending "to legitimize the purported necessity for certain sufferings and deaths". In contrast, the concept of messianic time, as described in Benjamin's On the Concept of History, claims that it is the people of the present day "who are the hope of past generations". Having summarized these key reflections, Moran makes it his task to reveal their subtle implications and to explain their connections with the work of other authors representing Jewish thought. He suggests, for instance, that an anticipation of Benjamin's concept of time can be found in Hermann Cohen's Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism (1919), as "Cohen refers to 'the overcoming of the person of the Messiah' and 'the dissolution of the personal image [Sinnbild] in the pure notion of time'." Moran also argues that Benjamin "is not far from one of Scholem's many accounts of tikkun — mending" which does not associate this term with "someone divine entrusted with 'redemption' (Erlösung)"; as Scholem shows in "Kabbalah and Myth," tikkun rather pertains to "'your deed and mine' as a possible 'guarantor' of the 'restitution of all things' [Restitution aller Dinge]." Demonstrating further convergences that include the work of Franz Kafka, Karl Kraus and Jacques Derrida, Moran manages to invoke the image of a complex web of thoughts.

A significantly different way of addressing religion against a Marxist background is discussed in the essay "Re-considering the Distinction between Atheists and Believers, or: Max Horkheimer's Reading of Kant" by Herta Nagl-Docekal, which focuses on one of the founders of the Frankfurt School. The essay refers primarily to the conversation with Horkheimer on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday, published in Der Spiegel in January 1970, in which Horkheimer advocated a "theology of hope", challenging the common Marxist expectation that humans will eventually be able to overcome their pains by means of establishing just socio-economic conditions. Insisting on the unsurmountable finiteness of humans, Horkheimer raises the issue of the meaning of

life in a radical manner, Nagl-Docekal shows. As he refers in particular "to the heinous crimes committed under the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century, Horkheimer claims that, facing the tremendous pain that has been inflicted on innocent people, we find ourselves unable to accept the idea that there might be no ultimate 'sense'. Thus, "we feel a longing that the murderer must not triumph over the innocent victim" — a longing that indicates our hope "that the injustice which characterizes our world [...] may not represent the final verdict." As Nagl-Docekal highlights, Horkheimer contends that this rudimentary "theology of hope" is shared by all people, arguing that a "desire for the totally other" is known even to atheists. He adds, however, that this desire does not represent a transition into an explicit religious conviction. Nagl-Docekal emphasizes the convergence of Horkheimer's thoughts with Kant's thesis that "the purely moral religion", as distinguished from the plurality of historical churches, is shared by atheists as well as believers. In her search for further arguments that may underpin the claim that humans share a longing for transcending their finiteness, she turns to Hegel. While Kant and Horkheimer refer to morality and justice, she notes, Hegel's concept of love draws attention to the way in which utmost grief over the loss of a beloved person gives rise to hope for a reunion in another world. Finally, the essay discusses the question whether, under the contemporary economic and technological conditions, humans may be about to lose their intuition for understanding the ultimate meaning of their lives. Nagl-Docekal cites Horkheimer's anticipation of "the totally administered world" that is bound to have a devastating impact, confronting both believers and non-believers with the "eclipse of reason" that causes "spiritual misery". The final section of her essay adds that, about twenty years after Horkheimer's Spiegel conversation, Charles Taylor, in A Secular Age, voiced similar concerns, warning that we might be doomed to encounter the "suffocation of the spirit".

A recent approach to religion that represents far-reaching transformations of the thinking of the Frankfurt School is taken up by Maureen Junker-Kenny in her essay "Defining what is 'extraterritorial': Religion and Utopia in Habermas and Ric-oeur". Her focus is first on Habermas's major work, Auch eine Geschichte der Phi-losophie (2019), which presents an "in-depth reconstruction of the development towards post-

metaphysical thinking made possible by the encounter of Greek philosophy with biblical monotheism", concluding with a re-confirmation of Hab ermas's earlier position that religion is "extraterritorial", while -reason' prevails as a 'secular' power on its own". Junker-Kenny's account underscores that Haber-mas, while reconstructing this process of detachment, attributes to religion a genuine potential, as, "from its foundation in ritual, religion is deemed capable of offering inspiring resources that support self-reflection and renew the dwindling motivation for solidarity. Its position outside the realm of reason thus harbors a heuristic potential for detecting and addressing problematic directions." More precisely, she notes, Habermas considers religion as "not simply 'irrational'," albeit "extraterritorial," "opaque" and "profoundly alien to discursive thought". The key concern of the essay is to examine the plausibility of this perception by comparing and contrasting it with Paul Ricoeur's approach. Unlike Habermas, who focuses on major turning points in Christian theology that have shaped European thinking, Ricoeur treats "religion" mainly as it appears in the foundational scriptures of religious traditions, with a special focus on Hebrew and Christian biblical texts, Junker-Kenny points out. "The new dimension its genres open up is accessed under the rubric of the 'poetic'? In contrast to the "otherness" of ritual in Haber-mas's division of the field, "religious scriptures are part of the symbolic mediations through which humans access reality". Junker-Kenny addresses the relevance Ric-oeur attributes to the imaginative power of "utopia", which "serves as the counter-pole to established conceptions of social and political life". In this context, she explains, he employs the term "extraterritorial" in a way that is clearly distinct from Habermas's usage: while, for Ricoeur, utopias present what is "extraterritorial" to the existing social order, as they envisage what is radically new to their current context, "they are seen at the same time as drawing on symbolic resources projecting a fulfilling life, and on memories of the hopes of past struggles which did not come to pass". Paying particular attention to the way in which the two authors differ in the evaluation of Kant's philosophy of religion, Junker-Kenny cites Ricoeur's defense of the link between religion and hope provided in Kant's doctrine of postulates: "Kant explicitly brings religion to the question 'What can I hope for?' I do not know any other

philosopher who has defined religion exclusively with that question." With reference to the fact that the postulates are anchored in practical reason, she emphasizes Ricoeur's insistence that Kant "keeps a space within reason for a transcendence which cannot be proven but assumed without verging into the irrational".

The imaginative power of humans is also of central significance for John D. Caputo, whose essay "Secularizing both Religion and Reason: Upending the Secu-lar/Religious Distinction" represents the specific approach taken in "postmodern theory" by means of "deconstruction". Emphasizing that the key concern is to dismiss the "classical" idea of a "transcendent God", he advocates "the beginning of another and radical post-theistic theology" that he defines in the following way: "To say God does not exist, is to say, God insists, God calls — and it is up to us to respond", which means "putting the burden of the response [...] on us" with the implication that "we may or may not respond". In the first paragraphs of the essay Caputo refers to the German Lutheran theologians Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Karl Barth and Paul Tillich, whose proposals for a "religionless Christianity" and a religion that has abandoned "supernaturalism" he deems to be only "one step away" from a postmodern approach. Suggesting a more consequent mode of proceeding, the main sections of the essay explain that two moves of "suspension" are required in order to make room for post-theistic theology: first, "the suspension of the supernatural attitude", secondly "the suspension of the transcendental attitude". Through the first move "religion is translated without remainder into the world", so that the distinction between the religious and secular "looks more like the distinction between poetry and prose". From this perspective, Caputo claims, theology is "better understood as theopoetics, where the logos of theology is weakened into a poetics". The second suspension challenges Kant's concept of pure reason that Caputo blames for its transcendental pretense of having "kept itself pure of empirical contact". Arguing that "transcendentalism (masquerading as `reason') and supernaturalism (masquerading as 'faith') share a common otherworldliness, a common degradation or distortion of the saeculum", Caputo claims that both need to "come down to earth", to live "in the saeculum". He adds, "I am trying to 'secularize' both religion and reason", that is, "I am trying to embody religion in the world", so that

"the so-called secular culture can be seen to be permeated with religious motifs and religion can be seen to be an intrinsically cultural form of life." Addressing the issue "whether religion has a future", Caputo concludes that "it is time to move on and look for other ways to address the mystery of our lives".

An emphatic refusal to accept the separation of the religious and the secular is also discussed in the essay "'This Incredible Need to Believe': Julia Kristeva's Reinvention of Secular Humanism at the Crossroad of Religion, Psychoanalysis, and Politics" by Gertrude Postl. Focusing on Julia Kristeva's This Incredible Need to Believe, this paper examines the way in which Kristeva counters the evils of secularized Western societies. "In her view", Postl notes, "we live in a society of the spectacle [...], a culture dominated by media images, commodity exchange, and the superficiality of entertainment. Art and literature have lost their meaning, immediate satisfaction is the goal". Examining Kristeva's response, Postl points out that she locates this loss "in the failure to recognize a prelinguistic 'need to believe", that is a need that "has always been with us; it is built into the psychic development of early subject formation, it becomes the foundation for the speaking being itself, a `prepolitical and prereligious need". Kristeva's claim that "traces for this 'need to believe' may be encountered in two related areas: psychoanalysis and the psychoanalytic process on the one hand, language, literature, and art on the other" informs the two main parts of Postl's essay. As to the first area, Kristeva argues that there exist significant affinities between (Christian) faith and psychoanalytic theory, noting "Religions, in short, seem to be a recognition of what Freud calls das höhere Wesen im Menschen, the higher side of man' in which the subject's freedom is inscribed". Based on her specific conception of psychoanalysis, Kristeva describes the sacred, the divine, in terms of the human transition from a prelinguistic state to the realm of signification, claiming "not to eradicate the sacred but to rediscover it in the very depth of language". — Regarding the second area, Kristeva's notion of the sacred source of art and literature, Postl focuses on the way in which the subjective belief of the early stages of subject formation is related to Kristeva's concept of 'intimate revolt' that provides the basis for her proposed 'radical reformation of humanism' and its political implications: "Intimate revolt is a response

to the failure of secularized Enlightenment humanism, which focused too strongly on a disembodied form of reason". On this basis, Kris-teva pleads for a "'radical reformation of humanism' which, in her view, means a humanism freed not only from metaphysical dichotomies but also from its seeming rejection of religion". Emphasizing the political potential of these thoughts, Postl points out Kristeva's thesis that literature and art, together with psychoanalysis, "offer themselves as laboratories of new forms of humanism" which allow us "to confront the new barbarities of automation".

Part 3: Religion in US Literature and Politics in a Global Context begins with the essay "Critical Perspectives on Self-Sufficing Humanism in Southern Fiction" by Waldemar Zacharasiewicz. Few modern US American authors were as widely read in philosophical reflections and treatises as Walker Percy, whose relatively late successful entry into the literary scene mirrors his intense reading of S. Kier-kegaard, of the early pragmatist philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce and of existentialist thinkers, such as Gabriel Marcel and Albert Camus. As Zacharasiewicz shows, several of Percy's novels exhibiting dystopian features demonstrate the conflict between modern agnostics and complacent behaviorists or hedonistic scientists, on the one hand, and seekers investing emotionally in a religious vision. Like the fiction of Percy's fellow Southern writer Flannery O'Connor, who was preoccupied with the dramatic clash between fundamentalist Christians and arrogant deniers of an inexplicably mysterious — transcendent — dimension, Percy's narratives offer Charles Taylor in his magisterial study of the shortcomings of a self-sufficing humanism in The Secular Age significant examples in modern literature which take the reader beyond such a restricted attitude. In two dystopias Percy — in line with Kierkegaard's exposure of a merely aesthetic stance — links the grave ethical problems of several of his characters with the alleged/ presumptive hedonistic aspects of Viennese musical culture, and alludes to the inhumane ac lions of ostensibly sophisticated aesthetes in Nazi Germany (including annexed Austria). All this adds a very personal note and some topicality to his fiction.

While the fiction by these two Catholic authors from the American South reflects to some extent the collective experience of Southerners of defeat in the Civil War and a

rejection of the hyper-optimistic embrace of the American Dream in the rest of the country Charles R. Wilson's historical survey — "The Southern Civil Religion: The Intermingling of the Sacred and the Secular in the American South" —traces the emergence of the regional southern variant of the American "civil religion", the religious nationalism manifest in the public rituals in the USA. This was developed in the late nineteenth century by the white Evangelical Protestants dominant in the South, who came to celebrate the military and political leaders of the defeated Confederacy and their devotion to the "lost cause". The essay shows how they turned public spaces, soon studded with monuments, into the arena for quasi-religious rituals, blending the sacred and the secular when affirming white supremacy and excluding African Americans in Southern communities. But Wilson draws attention also to the adoption of a variant of this civil religion, offering a hagiography of deceased leaders by the spokespersons of the civil rights movement, especially by Martin Luther King and other activists of the formerly marginalized ethnic and cultural group.

Wilson's scrutiny of the application of the paraphernalia of religious practices in the American South in the late 19th century is followed by a very detailed study of the complexities of the opposition of Catholic clergy and theologians to the strong secular influences which threatened to marginalize the Catholic church in the course of the nineteenth century. Michael Hochgeschwender's essay "Catholicism in Defense? The Critique of Modernity in Catholic Neo-Scholastics" explains that, modifying philosophical practices of the Middle Ages, the proponents of neo-scholastic concepts developed ideas which distanced them from the advocates of liberalism and linked them with the strong movement of "ultramontanism" in an era in which the papacy was under siege by nationalist movements in Italy and defended its stance through pronouncements at the Vatican Council. The bulk of the essay considers the complex arguments in which theologians, often with great reservations concerning democracy, challenged modern trends and were involved in culture wars, especially in Bismarck's Prussia. It examines the different directions in which two influential theologians, the Jesuit H. Pesch and the Dominican A. M. Weiss, tried to lead society. The former is shown to have been a "social realist" with training in political economics and interested

in social reform, and a sharp opponent of Manchester capitalism and liberalism, while the latter was a "social romanticist" who disseminated concepts favoring a paternalistic attitude in society, which eventually led to the establishment of a "Ständestaat" in twentieth century Austria. The complex picture of the development of the Catholic church in the USA, where its adherents were for decades excluded from positions of responsibility, includes hints at the replacement of "Gentlemen Catholics" by more reform-oriented Irish immigrants, as well as the indirect influence of the ideas of H. Pesch on John A. Ryan, and more democratic practices in the church. The essay also refers to the later marginalization of the so-called "Americanism" by the religious authorities.

The following essay by Manfred Siebald — "Competing Quests for a Hidden God in John Updike's Roger's Version" — examines one of the trio of novels by the modern US American fiction writer John Updike which through the complex intertextual relationship(s) of their characters with the protagonists in Nathaniel Haw-thorne's mid-nineteenth century masterpiece The Scarlet Letter evoke an image of the progress of secularization in (formerly Puritan) New England. In this novel, Roger's Version, major obstacles to faith in contemporary American society, the apparent invisibility of God and the dramatic advances of science, which has explained so much formerly deemed mysterious, are presented in the interaction of two characters linked through their names to Hawthorne's romance: Roger Lambert, a cynical former minister, originally a disciple of the Protestant theologian Karl Barth and an adherent of his assertion of God's inscrutability, but now an immoral figure who commodifies religion and exhibits numerous contradictions, and Dale Kohler, an ostensible believer, who as a computer nerd is eager to prove God's existence technologically. The obvious failure of this project and the wavering of the convictions of both figures, which seem also to reflect Updike's own pronounced radical religious uncertainty, and the immoral conduct of the two protagonists may arguably be read as a negative assessment of the decline of religion in secularized modern America, a process which had begun much earlier in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The rejection of organized religion despite a yearning for spirituality shapes the conduct of the protagonists, all scientists, in the trio of modern American novels set in times of multiple crises examined by Carmen Birkle in her essay "Science and Religion in U.S.-American Pandemic Literature". These novels were written before the COVID-19 pandemic: Robert Cook's Pandemic (2018), Lawrence Wright's The End of October (2020) and Connie Willis's Doomsday Book (1992). While Cook's novel about the serial deaths of patients who had received organ transplantations includes features of a detective novel and exposes the narrowmindedness of fundamentalist Christians, who readily see such deaths as God's punishment for immoral behavior, Wright's dystopian novel traces the complex evolution of attitudes to religious beliefs, especially in the central protagonist, a medical expert and epidemiologist: Henry Parsons studies the spread of a genuine pandemic from a camp in Indonesia through the Muslim hajj to Mecca, and witnesses the reaction of a religious Muslim medical man and leading politician to this terrible emergency, and then, in his American family, the response of his wife, who succumbs to the pandemic. While the brutal experiments of a German scientist. Indigenous people and then globally, echo earlier hetero-stereotypes of unscrupulous evil Teutonic actors (but possibly also the action of Crake in Margaret Arwood's Oryx and Crake), Henry's secular humanist ethics, which enables him to discover the origin and spread of the virus from the Arctic circle to Indonesia, cause the recognition of his genuine humanity by his religious Indonesian colleague; his medical skills make it possible for him and other inoculated individuals to survive the global pandemic, waiting in a submarine until the pandemic ends. Willis's dystopia, set in 2054, adopts the scheme of time travel, taking a young historian, Kivrin Engle, back to the time of the Black Death in an English village as a result of some incorrect application. After having been infected with a virus which spread (in Oxford) after its dissemination following archeological digging in the present, and after having recovered in the Middle Ages, the time traveler is interpreted as a saint and messenger from God by a clergyman. He is confronted with the Black Death killing the villagers and converses with her until he himself becomes a victim of the plague, while Kivrin herself, as a convinced agnostic, is ready to return via the "net" to her mentor, the

history professor back in Oxford, who critically observes the conduct of the people and their religious ministers during the contemporary pandemic, which reminds him of the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918.

Part 4: Re-framing Theological Issues and Individual Convictions presents, in the first section, two innovative contributions from the field of Roman Catholic theology, both providing reasons for challenging the widely shared view that religious language ought to be excluded from secular public political discourse. William Sweet, whose paper is titled "Philosophical Pluralism and Religious Faith in a Secular Age", suggests focusing first on the pluralism that has evolved in the discipline of philosophy in recent times. As he explains, "philosophical pluralism reflects general (secular) values such as equality, inclusiveness/openness, fairness, comprehensiveness and justice, and this leads to the inclusion of [...] marginalized philosophies and philosophers". Sweet's key proposition is that the inclusiveness of philosophy may serve as a model for dealing with the expression of religious convictions in the public sphere. Specifying four reasons why such expression does "fit in a pluralistic, open, secular context", he argues, for instance, that "just as philosophers are curious about new or marginalized philosophies, there should be a genuine, secular, pluralistic curiosity in the public sphere about the faith and the beliefs of those of religious faith". More specifically, Sweet claims that granting a place for religious expression in public discourse is not only consistent with secular values but is also required "alongside the range of expressions of ethnicity, culture, tradition, sexual orientation, and so on, present in a pluralistic society". Seeking to support this proposal, the final part of the essay addresses four likely objections to it, including the thesis that "it is only when there are shared standards for discussion," such as publicly observable evidence, that we can have a "level playing field"; Sweet counters these objections with the argument that such standards would require excluding many other "comprehensive ethical views and beliefs" from the public sphere.

Plurality is also a key concern in Klaus Viertbauer's essay "Religious Convictions and Public Reason: On the Way to a Two-Stage Epistemology of Religion". The first part

summarizes three distinct concepts that have dominated the discourse on the place of religion in the context of a secular society: civil religion, laicism, and secularization. Viertbauer describes these concepts as being based on key paradigms of modern political philosophy, linking civil religion to communitarianism, laicism, and secularization to liberalism. Pointing out their embeddedness in specific national contexts, he labels civil religion as the American, laicism as the French, and secularization as the German model. With reference to Robert N. Bellah and Michael Walzer, Viertbauer deems the communitarian approach unsuitable for current Western societies, where religious communities can no longer be concisely identified with whole civic groups. In contrast, he explains the merits of the liberal perspective, highlighting John Rawls' emphasis on religious plurality. Specifying the two variants of the liberalist approach, he explains that laicism is oriented toward negative religious freedom, while secularization is oriented toward positive religious freedom. The second part suggests approaching these issues in terms of epistemology. Viertbauer argues that two distinct modes of understanding religious conviction need to be distinguished. The first is constituted by believers who consider their convictions as "a worldview that is not simply one perspective among others, but rather provides an interpretive framework within which the other bodies of knowledge about the world can develop their reality-defining power in the first place." This perception, he claims, "poses a serious problem for liberal democracy", as religious communities threaten to stand monolithically opposite both one another and the state. The second mode, which is committed to modern society's pluralism, views religious belief as "a form of life". Viertbauer emphasizes the relevance of Jurgen Habermas's thesis that believers need not be excluded from public debate, provided they follow the rules of liberal interaction, for instance by accepting that the members of other religious groups must be treated as equal partners in discourse, and by acknowledging that the principles of the constitutional state are based on profane morality rather than religious doctrines. On this basis, Viertbauer pleads for a "paradigm shift", arguing that believers need to transform their religious convictions from a worldview into a form of life, understanding their religiosity as one form of life among many.

The essay "Scientists Who Believe" by Christoph Irmscher takes its departure from his extensive research for his monograph on the Swiss polymath and immensely influential nineteenth century Harvard biology professor Louis Agassiz, one of Charles Darwin's chief opponents and of the latter's rejection of belief in a benevolent deity. Irmscher comments on one of Agassiz's ms. notes, which rejects the psalmist's humility in the face of the cosmos in Psalm 8, and stresses the pride of the scientist, who demonstrated the achievements and progress of human science by referring to the French astronomer Le Verrier, who merely through mathematical deductions had been able to confirm the existence and location of the planet Uranus as the cause of irregularities in the motion of Neptune. While Agas-siz may thus be read as an advocate of conversion to science rather than to the Christian religion, the two contemporary American scientists who profess their belief are the prominent physician-geneticist Francis S. Collins and the climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe. The former, who was a leader in the Human Genome Research and for thirteen years director of the National Institutes of Health, in a widely published bestseller The Language of God (2006) shared his personal conviction that there are plausible arguments for the existence of God, and that belief is thus the result of a rational choice. While Collins's appreciation of the Moral Law positively regulating human behavior provides arguments supporting belief, his trust in the evolution of the cosmos offers a basis for making science and belief compatible. Through her role in the Evangelical Environmental Network, Katharine Hayhoe works as a scientist and activist with a mission for the ecological survival of the world, but has to struggle with "the anti-science attitude" among many evangelical Christians. She can, however, draw on the Biblical concept of man's stewardship of the Earth, as her recent personal confession and narrative of her encounters with her audiences in Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World (2021) shows.

David Staines's essay on "Two Canadian Christian Thinkers" stands out among the contributions to this volume through its very personal touch, as he was intimately familiar with the two celebrated but very different professors teaching in Toronto's colleges, who were also mentors and paternal friends of his: Northrop Frye, an ordained United Church minister, early rebelled against the fundamentalism of his mother and

distanced himself from Christian tenets; but his influential development of myth criticism from his first study of William Blake onwards and recurrent references to the Bible as the archetype of Western culture culminated in his comprehensive studies of its text from the angle of literary criticism in The Great Code: the Bible and Literature (1982) and Words with Power: Being a Second Study of "The Bible and Literature" (1990). He has been credited with having made a religion of literature. Marshall McLuhan, by contrast, in the course of his academic career in several American universities, among them the Jesuit St. Louis University, was originally a conservative critic who converted to Catholicism and became a regular communicant; but in his trail-blazing studies of popular culture (The Mechanical Bride; The Gutenberg Galaxy; Understanding Media), which were intended to reach generations of his students, earned him the reputation of being a visionary theorist with a rare understanding of contemporary social reality, he avoided any overt reference to the religious basis of his personal identity. In these very different ways the two celebrated Canadian intellectuals, who did not accept many academic offers to move elsewhere, represented significant aspects of religion in the secular present.

Part 5: Religion in Poetry Music and Visual Media is devoted to the presence of religious themes in literature and the arts. It opens with Alois Woldan's essay "Religious Aspects of Ukranian Poetry — the Case of Vasyl' Stus" that analyses the poetry of Vasyl Stus, who died as an imprisoned dissident in a Soviet labor camp. His numerous lyrics, which were collected only after Ukraine's achievement of independence, reflect his personal sense of a patriotic mission closely linked to the religious tradition of his country saddled with the anti-religious ideology of the Soviet era. The intense experience of the personal ordeal is expressed by the lyrical speaker with the help of liturgical forms and biblical phrases; he includes images of destroyed churches in Kyiv and dwells on the suffering of the prophetic individual in a world dominated by evil forces. The existential crisis of the courageous victim of barbarous repression and persecution takes the speaker to the limits of endurance and occasionally evokes images of wrestling with a seemingly passive God in a quarrel as godlike evil powers dominate the world.

The sphere of music is addressed by Federico Celestini whose essay "Gustav Mahler's Symphonic Transcendence and its Counterparts" investigates the sources of and inspirations for Gustav Mahler's symphonic representation and adaptation of religious concepts. He discovers them in the composer's indebtedness to Siegfried Lipiner's poetry and criticism, thus drawing attention to this respected younger contemporary of Richard Wagner and Friedrich Nietzsche. The essay initially dwells on Lipiner's early lecture on "the religious renewal in the present age" and on his poem The Unbound Prometheus, and reflects on his continuing focus on religious themes. It illustrates the continuing use of biblical elements and stresses his combination of art and a pantheistic form of religion, which shapes his concept of the tragedy, showing his increasing distance from Nietzsche, whose thoughts he had earlier fused with Schopenhauer's and Wagner's. Celestini underlines Lipliner's stress on the human desire for transcendence, before explicating in detail the transfer of some of Lipiner's inspiring ideas in the symphonies of his admirer Gustav Mahler, which develop the model of Beethoven's great symphonies, and offer symphonic narratives (especially in the first and third symphonies), including moments of "tragic collapse" followed by a "breakthrough", and in the finale a concluding jubilant apotheosis.

Another very specific variant of the contemporary secular attitude to religious concepts is analyzed in Jörg Turschmann's essay "Serial Baroque in the TV Show American Gods" that analyzes the American TV show American Gods, which, in

limited run of three seasons, presented the dramatized encounter between gods from the old world and new gods in the form of allegorical figures. Turaschmann relates this combination to the inclusion of such personifications in late medieval and Baroque literature before discussing the neo-baroque actualization of this received mode in the appearance of old gods in the guise of migrants to America who are met in a "road trip" by contemporary deities of globalization, new technologies and new media. Various stages of American history, which are rendered in several episodes, prompt reflections on the strategic use of metalepsis in the contemporary film genre, which in this series does not, however, explode the illusion, but accepts the reality of the gods, with the old

gods struggling for supremacy with the new divinities. Turschmann also speculates on the reasons for the favorable reception of this TV show in the Balkans and in Turkey, and relates this phenomenon to the important role of religion in their societies, which differ from western countries in which secularization has progressed much further. <>

The Persistence of the Soul in Literature, Art and Politics edited by Delphine Louis-Dimitrov, Estelle Murail [Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN 9783031409332]

This book analyses the evolution of literary and artistic representations of the soul, exploring its development through different time periods. It argues for the relevance of the soul, even as it becomes more removed from its origin in ancient or Christian theology. The scholars draw on diverse textual and artistic representations of the soul, analyzing the links between text and image to explore the soul in philosophy, religion and psychology, and in relation to literature, art, history and politics. Hence in this volume combines literary, aesthetic, ethical, and political considerations of the soul in texts and works of art from the seventeenth to the twenty-first centuries, spanning cultures and schools of thought. Drawing on philosophical, religious and psychological theories of the soul, it emphasizes the far-reaching and enduring epistemological function of the concept in literature, art and politics. The authors argue that the concept of the soul has shaped the understanding of human life and persistently irrigated cultural productions. They show how the concept of soul was explored and redefined by writers and artists, remaining relevant even as it became removed from its ancient or Christian origins.

CONTENTS

Rewriting the Soul: The Persistence of a Concept by Jacques Arènes, Delphine Louis-Dimitrov, and Estelle Murail

The soul has long been exiled from humanities studies. The term itself is often considered as obsolete and rarely employed by critics when literature, art, history, or politics are at stake. Scholars who have recently studied the concept of the soul take note of the climate of mistrust or hostility that it generally encounters in academia (Goetz and Taliaferro 2011, 1; Le Fustec et al. 2015, 7; Cheng 2016, 11–12; Le Fustec et al. 2022)—if not of its "eclipse" from academic discourse, including from some dictionaries of theology (Bossi 2003, 1–2). In his letters on the soul (De l'âme), French writer and academician François Cheng nonetheless makes a claim for the relevance of

the concept of the soul, understood as a life-giving, unifying principle defining an individual's identity through time and circumstances, as opposed to the alterable nature of both body and mind (Cheng 2016, 27). Far from being restricted to the religious sphere, the soul stands for the unity of consciousness and is often apprehended as an expression of individuality.

For all the academic reticence that it encounters, the idiom of the soul persistently irrigates cultural productions, from literary texts and artworks to philosophical, historiographical, and political essays. The word now most commonly refers to "the spiritual or immaterial part of a person considered in relation to God and religious or moral precepts" (OED, "soul", II.7.a), but it has a rich history and a variety of meanings. In line with the ancient notion of the original breath animating living beings, the soul (psyche/anima) has been understood as the principle of life accounting for animate existence. The term also designates the principle of thought and action defining an individual's spiritual (as opposed to corporeal) nature, or the seat of emotions and sentiments in an individual. In different ways, representations of the soul convey a sense of persistence which turns out to be central to the concept. To persist—from the Latin persistere, to stand firmly—is to consistently continue in a particular course in spite of opposition; hence the idea of pursuing one's existence in time (OED, "persistence", 1, 2.a). Inherent to representations of the soul is a sense of resistance, insistence, and ability to stand against obstacles. From a metaphysical perspective, the persistence of the soul refers to the notion that the soul may survive beyond the boundaries of individual life—whether detached from bodily existence or through reincarnation or metempsychosis. From a psychological stance, it refers to the ability of the soul, within the timespan of human existence, to act as a unifying principle defining individual identity beyond considerations of change and potential fragmentation of the self. As a principle of resistance and determination, the persistence of the soul may also account for an individual's capacity to overcome obstacles while pursuing a course of action, whether in individual life or in the fields of history and politics.

Although the philosophical and theological understandings of the soul have often been examined, its presence in cultural productions has largely remained unexplored.1 In Soul and Form (first published in Hungarian in 1910), György Lukács laid the groundwork for a reconsideration of the soul by exploring metaphysical, existential and ethical significance of aesthetic forms (Lukács 2010, 16–34). In the wake of this seminal work, the present volume analyses how writers, artists and thinkers have apprehended the persistence of the soul and given shape to their metaphysical object, making it seizable by the senses and the intellect. Combining literary, aesthetic, ethical, and political considerations of the soul in texts and works of art spanning cultures and schools of thought, this collection of essays emphasizes the enduring presence of the soul as concept and idiom in a selection of literary, artistic and theoretical works which rely on, and sometimes bring together, distinct frames of interpretation—the various mythological, religious, philosophical and psychological frameworks within which the concept is set. This book examines how literary and artistic representations of the soul have contributed to the understanding of individuality and subjectivity, and how the soul was endowed with collective significance expressing the ethos of a particular nation, culture, and time, or responding to history as an idiom of resistance and political or ethical action. While theories of the soul shape the apprehension of the individual, of history and of politics, literary and artistic works reinterpret and extend the meaning of the term, sometimes bridging some of its seemingly divergent dimensions. This collection of essays thus sheds light on the historicity of the soul as idiom, understood as its capacity to traverse time through literary and artistic forms, and to relate to history and specific cultures. The volume focuses on the Western world and more specifically on British and American cultures, but through intertextual networks and influences Eastern and Middle-Eastern interpretations of the soul also come into play.

The Metaphysical Vision of The Soul

Belief in the persistence of the soul dates back to time immemorial and unfolded in religious and mythological frameworks before becoming an object of philosophical discussion. The Old Testament, as well as Egyptian, Greek, and Latin mythologies,

provide a rich breeding ground for further developments. Philosophical inquiry into the nature of the soul and its persistence through time started developing with the Presocratics. While some early Greeks, such as the proponents of Orphism, still had "pre-philosophical, unexamined, and uncritical beliefs about the persistence of the soul after death" (Sisko 2019, 8), Presocratic thinkers opened metaphysics to rational discussion and laid the groundwork for subsequent reflections. Early philosophical theories addressing the question of the persistence of the soul at that time delineate two opposite fields, "mortal-ism" and "immortalism" (Sisko 2019, 9). Mortalism refers to the belief that the soul does not subsist beyond corporeal death. Immortalism, which defends the opposite view, is embraced by most philosophers who posit immaterial/material dualism (Sisko 2019, 14) and falls into three categories: "weak immortalism" (the idea that the soul is long-lived but not eternal), "strong immortalism" (belief in its eternal subsistence), and "conferred immortalism" (the belief that the annihilation of the soul is metaphysically possible but that a divine being, possessing immortality, confers it to the soul) (Sisko 2019, 13). They also elaborate on distinct modes of soul persistence, including reincarnation—survival of the soul in a new body—and metempsychosis—the transmigration of the soul among the bodies of different species (Sisko 2019, 8)—, which both imply that the soul outlasts the body without it necessarily being eternal. Metempsychosis, which originates from Orphic mysteries, if not from Egyptian cults, was a prominent belief in the early poetic and religious traditions of ancient Greece (Sisko 2019, 26). The doctrine subsisted in Presocratic metaphysics and was embraced by such thinkers as Empedocles and most notably Pythagoras (Sisko 2019, 10).

With Plato, the metaphysics of the persistence of the soul became grounded in an ontology of the soul: establishing its nature was considered to be a condition for further discussions on its duration (Sisko 2019, 23). Plato understood the soul (psyche) not just as a principle of life— imparting life to the body—but also as a principle of philosophical wisdom. Since it belongs in the world of eternal and immaterial Ideas and strives to contemplate them, the soul is immortal (Phaedo 79b–80b). The body therefore stands as a prison for the soul (soma-sema) (Plato 1925, Phaedrus 250c) and as

an obstacle to the knowledge and contemplation of Ideas (Phaedo 64d–e). Short before drinking the hemlock, Socrates affirms that while his body will perish, he—meaning his soul—will live on in the world of eternal Forms. Yet Plato also writes that the soul will later return to the world of the living (Plato 2001, Phaedo 70c–72e), in coherence with the belief in reincarnation which was widespread in ancient times (Goetz and Taliaferro 2011, 8–9).

Like Plato, Aristotle refers to the soul as an active principle of life—the first principle of living beings (Aristotle 1902, De Anima 17). He considers the soul to inform and animate all things in nature, including animals and plants, with yet a hierarchical distinction between three entities (Aristotle 1902, De Anima). The "nutritive soul", common to human beings, animals, and plants, sustains biological life understood as something which must "be given to everything that grows and dies" (Aristotle 1902, De Anima 138). The "sensitive soul", which accounts for the faculty of sensory perception—distinguishes animals from plants (Aristotle 1902, De Anima 56) and includes the nutritive one. The "rational soul", which contains the souls of the lower levels, is specific to human beings and sustains the faculty of thinking (Aristotle 1902, De Anima xxvii). Contrary to Plato, he claims that the soul does not exist independently from the body that it informs. It is the individual in terms of both a soul and a body who experiences sensations and thoughts (Goetz and Taliaferro 2011, 22–23).

From classical antiquity onwards, the apprehension of the soul went hand in hand with the understanding of its disorders, hence the use of the expression "disease of the soul" in philosophy. Such questions were at the heart of ancient psychopathology. In the wake of Stoicism, the "passions" were also defined as diseases of the soul. According to the classical Stoics, no exterior physician could be called upon to cure diseases of the soul (unlike those of the body). For Pigeaud, this meant that "ultimately, the disease of the soul, whatever its definition, was the responsibility of the individual, and that the only possible doctor [wa]s oneself" (2006, 538). This notion of the "disease of the soul"

put a real emphasis on interiority and on the subject's responsibility, which the Stoics themselves fore-grounded in their work on the passions.

However, this understanding of the diseased soul as the responsibility of the individual was not shared by the physicians of antiquity, who obviously developed a vision in which their intervention played a more significant role. The Hippocratic-Galenic doctrine, which dominated medical thought until the seventeenth century, insisted that the soul depended on the body, and more particularly on the brain. Diseases of the soul were then considered to be stemming from damage to the brain or other organs (Gourevitch 2004). Galen's theory of temperaments—sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and mel-ancholic—was based on the predominance of one of the four humours (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, or black bile) in the individual. For Galen, diseases of the soul were caused either by direct damage to the brain, or (by sympathy) by damage to other organs affecting the brain. The Galenic model was based on physiology, which implied that any diseased soul required medical intervention (through diet, pharmacopoeia, or surgery).

Christian thinkers initiated a new stage in the reflection on the soul which nonetheless drew on previous theories. While considering the soul in the light of their religious faith, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas were strongly influenced by Plato and Aristotle respectively (Goetz and Taliaferro 2011, 30). St. Augustine made a claim for the substantiality of the soul, defining it as "a special substance, endowed with reason, adapted to rule the body" (Greatness of the Soul 13.22, quoted by Goetz and Taliaferro 2011, 33). He developed the idea of self-awareness of the soul which would later be further developed by Descartes (Goetz and Taliaferro 2011, 34). His vision of the soul relies on three superior faculties—mem-ory, intelligence and will—which also remain relevant to the modern understanding of individuality. Reinterpreting the Augustinian vision of superior faculties, Cheng, for instance, sees the soul as the locus of desire, memory, and heart intelligence (Cheng 2016, 44–45). St. Thomas Aquinas, like Aristotle, distinguished between different kinds of souls (nutritive, sensitive, and rational) and claimed that the soul informs the body. To account for its subsistence beyond bodily

death, he argued that the soul may be maintained in existence by God (Goetz and Taliaferro 2011, 49–50, 60). In mediaeval thought, the Aristotelian-Thomist conception of the soul was subdivided into three distinct planes or levels of perfection. It made it possible to account for the differences between humans, animals and plants—the former only being endowed with a rational soul. Rational beings are distinguished from other animate beings through their spirituality and their capacity to transcend matter. This three-tiered conception of the soul would later recur in some secular theories of interiority (including Freud's psyche).

The rationalistic turn that took place with the Enlightenment brought about a new understanding of the soul which did not depend on religious faith and contributed to ground the modern conception of the self. In his Meditations, Descartes rationally establishes the existence of the soul and its independence as substance from the body (Descartes 1967. For him, the "I" is the soul ("[...] this 'I'—that is, the soul by which I am what I am—[...]", Descartes 1985, I, 127), which he also equates with the mind (Descartes 1967, I, 141). It is "a thing that thinks" (res cogitans), which is aware of its own existence (Descartes 1967, I, 135), and which is united to the body without being located in space and without "exist[ing] in any one of its parts to the exclusion of the others", as he explains in The Passions of the Soul (Descartes 1967, I, 345). The soul, as he understands it, is distinct from the body, yet interacts with it and experiences "passions" that are no longer considered as a disease.

The Secularization of The Soul and The Emergence of The Psychic Subject

With the decline of religion and metaphysics in the Western world that followed from the Enlightenment, the soul underwent a gradual process of subjectivation and secularization which culminated in the twentieth century (Arènes 2011, 2012). In The Disenchantment of the World, Marcel Gauchet writes about this gradual fading away of religion as a structuring system of Western society. For him, this waning of religious power has led individuals to shape their beliefs on their own: the contemporary world is now culturally structured around a separation between the subjective dimension of belief and the absence of religion (Gauchet 1999, 162–190). Gauchet situates belief at

the heart of the believer's subjectivity, as psychologist William James had already done a century before him.2 One may think about the subjectivation and psychologization of the soul as stemming from the rational, scientific discourse which emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but this process started as early as the seventeenth century both within and without the religious discourse. It was already visible in Rembrandt's paintings, as Georg Simmel remarked. Talking about religious figures painted by Rembrandt, Simmel noted that piety was an individual phenomenon produced from the deepest well of each soul: "People are no longer in an objectively pious world, but rather they are, as subjects, pious in an objectively indifferent world" (Simmel 2005, 115).3

From the nineteenth century onwards, the journey of the soul away from organized Christian religion and towards the realms of psychology and psychotherapies contributed to rewriting its meaning over time. Although one might understand this journey as one of secularization, religious and metaphysical understandings of the soul heavily influenced the field of psychology. Freud himself spoke of the soul (he used the word Seele), which also remained central to Jung's theory. There is an interesting circularity to the history of the term, since the development of psychology leads us back to the ancient Greek psyche. The soul has crossed boundaries, moving between mythology, philosophy, religion, and modern science.

The history of the move of belief towards subjectivity, and towards a more psychological understanding of the soul, is not linear. The alliance between ancient traditional spiritual healing techniques, romantic expressiveness, rationalism, and positivism gave birth to the continuum of psychotherapies which shapes our current understanding of the soul as psyche.

For centuries, in Christian Europe, the soul had been the preserve of theologians such as St. Augustine or St. Thomas Aquinas. However, belief slowly started moving "inward"—towards each individual's own subjectivity—and towards something resembling psychology within religious discourse itself, as with the "cure of souls" (Seelsorge), also known as "pastoral care", a form of pastoral therapy based on speaking

which was very influential in the Protestant world. Within this tradition or "technique", the minister cares for the faithful (Arènes 2011, 151–153). Penance is not just a recognition of one's past sins, but it is also a remedy against one's present and future sins. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, within pietist movements, "the cure of souls" progressively became a form of therapy for the soul. Pietism was a Protestant movement which greatly stressed the importance of interiority within one's faith. This movement contributed to building the idea of the original subject's own "psychology", born out of his or her own individual journey. This movement, which gave "psychological" attention to "diseased souls", was poised between direction (influence) and shared conversations. "The pietist tradition insists on the necessity of the personal bond between the soul healer and the faithful, the faithful being an individual or a small group. Ministers exert their influence through their own words, be it through a conversation or a sermon. Progressively, however, the focus moves towards the accounts of the faithful, especially in biographies, accounts of conversions, or spiritual narratives" (Mengal 2000, 37), in which each individual narrates their own singular journey towards God. The soul healer denounces the illusions of the ego and guides the diseased soul towards the love of God. Within the "cure of souls" tradition, Protestant ministers were considered to be endowed with a spiritual gift that enabled them to obtain the confession of "troubling secrets" from distressed souls (Ellenberger 77). Though they were not bound by the rules of professional secrecy, as Catholic priests were, these ministers were extremely attentive to secrecy. This theme of the "pathogenic secret" clearly fell into much more secular hands, especially when the first hypnotists came about at the end of the eighteenth century. It also became a central theme of a certain type of literary production. Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter (1850) and Henrik Ibsen's The Lady from the Sea (1888), which also evokes a pathogenic secret, both come to mind. It has become a pivotal idea for therapeutic thinking, even today in its contemporary developments with, for instance, the current fascination with transgenerational therapy and repressed secrets. The theme of the "pathogenic secret" also influenced the development of "dynamic psychotherapy" (Ellenberger 1994, 80). Oskar Pfister, a pietist minister from Zurich and "curer of souls",

came into contact with psychoanalysis in 1908 through his extensive correspondence with Freud. With him came the transition between the cure of souls and psychoanalysis. Throughout his life, he remained keenly interested in pathogenic secrets, certain aspects of which were compatible with Freudian catharsis.

Michel Foucault analysed these ancient religious confession techniques, especially through the angle of spiritual guidance and confession, and saw them as closely linked to Christianity as original forms and practices of subjectivation. These ancient religious confession techniques were therefore also at the root of other secularized practices. This religious interest in what was later called "psychology" fostered the rise of psychotherapies at the end of the nineteenth century. Seen through this historical lens, the modern psyche appears as a direct descendant of the soul.

The very term "psycho-therapeutic" was coined by an English physician, Daniel Tuke, in 1872. The word primarily designated the influence of the patient's mind over his or her own physical ailments (Tuke 1884, xv). The meaning then spread to mental conditions needing medical treatment. Hippolyte Bernheim, one of the founders of medical hypnosis, took up Tuke's ideas, and introduced the term "psychotherapy" on the continent, while stressing the role of imagination as therapeutic. Bernheim borrowed the words "hypnotism", "suggestion", and "psychotherapy" and amplified them to oppose them to an "organicist"4 definition of human beings, rooted in positivism (Carroy 2000, 11). As a result, a new type of therapeutic relation and a new psychological culture emerged in the nineteenth century. This new culture created a space for the technique of suggestion, which is built on the idea that the patient is an ally whose words are acknowledged as relevant, whose symptoms are interpreted in psychological terms, and whose collaboration is called upon. The relationship between this new culture, these new therapies, and religious (or spiritual) matters, is complex. If Freud advocates cleansing psychoanalysis from any direct religious or hypnotic association (Freud 1970), French psychologist Pierre Janet, on the other hand, does not break away from previous forms of therapy, be they magnetic, religious or hypnotic (Janet 1983). In France, these therapies are seen as psychological, and nothing other

than psychological, and are more and more "secularized" and cleansed from religious references. In Great Britain and the United States, the nascent field of psychology is much more accepting of the religious experience, as is the case for William James, for instance.

Some aspects of the philosophy of nature and romantic philosophy also contributed to creating the idea of the modern psyche. Certain themes of Christian anthropology, such as that of the tripartite view of humankind (mind, body, and soul) were echoed in philosophy, as for instance in von Schubert's philosophy of nature (Ellenberger 1994, 235–237). Some para-religious vitalist principles, such as the idea of an absolute unconscious being, the very substance of the universe, were also at the root of Eduard von Hartmann's Philosophy of the Unconscious (1869). These ideas, which were imbued with spiritualism, were an essential aspect of the cultural background in which psychoanalysis was created and "secularized". The continuations and breaks between these different movements were numerous. Jung saw himself as following in the footsteps of von Hartmann or von Schubert, while Freud tried to differentiate his theory of the unconscious from that of his romantic predecessors.

The nineteenth century was also the period during which the question of the "psychic subject" emerged. This subject emerged at the very moment when, on the one hand, the notion of "culture" was becoming more prominent and, on the other hand, individualism was becoming an ideology. Theories about "the social being" or "the psychic being" were based on a systematization which was no longer supported by a transcendent subject. These theories became mutually reinforcing just as the notion of religion as all-encompassing was disappearing and as interiority was becoming secularized. The nineteenth century became the century of "the ages of life", in which human developmental stages were scientifically analysed from conception to death. It fostered the interest in the process of psychological development and in identifying certain key stages, such as adolescence (Caron 2003). Psychology—and psychoanalysis—emerged from this secular model of an interior space, which was in conflict with the previously prevalent spiritual model. On the one hand, exterior reality

had become devoid of the presence of the gods, and on the other hand, interiority, having become the only place for believers, was becoming inventoried by a scientific discourse whose aim was to objectivize mental processes. The psychic person became quantifiable, and was the culmination of a process of deconstruction of philosophical and metaphysical discourses. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the boundaries between the soul and the psyche became blurred. Historian and philosopher Hippolyte Taine, for instance, defended the psychological value of a discourse about the soul, which he defined as observable inner life (Taine 1883).

During that same period, conscience and the soul became medicalized. In the first half of the nineteenth century, as religion was seen as having the potential to save souls, chaplains would routinely go to asylums, where secularized religious practices were also common. The following decade constituted a turning point in the medicalized approach of religious practices. The medical argument penetrated to the very heart of the Church. In that period, the physician progressively took the place of the priest and became an expert of the soul and a director of conscience (Guillemin 2006, 11). The very fierce debate about hypnotism was at the heart of conflicts about matters of the soul. Besides, the role of the brain and memory in the analysis of psychopathological difficulties was discussed at length at the end of the nineteenth century and became linked with the debate about the place of the soul. This debate deeply transformed our current understanding of the soul, as Ian Hacking points out: "A feature of the modern sensibility is dazzling in its implausibility: the idea that what has been forgotten is what forms our character, our personality, our soul" (Hacking 1998, 11). In this context, the notion of the soul is not an essence, a spiritual anchorage point which upholds the subject. It is a more modest concept, which "stands for the strange mix of aspects of a person that may be, at some time, imaged as inner" (Hacking 1998, 6).

As a result of this shift towards medicalization in the second half of the nineteenth century, religions started to look at the emerging practices of psychoanalysis and modern psychotherapies to reject some, validate others, and form an empirical relationship with them, trying to share the territory between spiritual guidance and the

healing of souls. This dialogue between theology and psychology is ongoing to this day: in his 2016 book, Peter Tyler argues that the soul "is a call to hold theology and psychology together" (Tyler 2016, 181). However, in contemporary society, real power over the psyche—or the soul—has largely come to rest in the hands of medical doctors, more specifically in those of psychiatrists and neuroscientists. These doctors' relationships with psychologists and psychotherapists can go from outright hostility to close collaboration.

Postsecular Souls

With contemporary society's move away from religion, the soul has become a much more fluid, polymorphous concept. It is even now being redefined by society's renewed interest in spirituality, which has resurfaced in a much secularized, and indeed postsecular Western culture as something rooted in the quest for the self. Personal identity is now seen as unstable and is constantly being constructed and deconstructed.

The entrance into the postmodern era in the mid-twentieth century largely affected the understanding of the subject. Historically speaking, postmodernity consists in the breakdown of temporal frameworks and the dismissal of references to tradition and progress. Postmodernity does not believe in metanarratives anymore. It is grounded in doubt, enhanced references to subcultures and personal ethics rather than the collective construction of meaning, while reason is no longer called upon as a universal paradigm (Freitag and Bonny 2002, 45–94). The postmodern subject accordingly is a disunified, fragmented one. As Kathryn Hume points out, previous conceptions of the soul had preserved the unified vision of the self: the Christian concept of a soul "guaranteed the self as a unitary being—all of the soul was saved or damned, not parts of it", and Freud's studies of the unconscious opened complex possibilities which did not yet contradict the notion of a subject's unity (Hume 2020, x). However, in the postmodern period, "theorists talk[ed] about multiple subjectivities with no underlying unity" (Hume 2020, x), which called for remodelled frames of representation. Though "multiple subjectivities have found an answering resonance in some properties of

polytheistic myth" (Hume x), such as the Egyptian notion of a plurality of souls, the understanding of the soul as a unifying principle persisted in cultural representations, often pervading them in a diffuse manner.

The persistence of the notion of the soul in literary and artistic works and in the political thought of the second half of the twentieth century is an expression of the postsecular turn that took place in post-World War II secular societies as part of the ontological, epistemological, and aesthetic questioning of the postmodern era. As a sociological concept notably developed by Habermas, the "postsecular" refers to the persistence of religion within increasingly secular environments, and to the coexistence, interactions, and reshaping of religious and secular mentalities (Habermas 2008, 111–112). The concept has subsequently been used to refer to the resurgence of the religious in non-institutional forms within secular societies after the second World War. In the field of literature, postsecularism more specifically hints at expressions of spirituality in contemporary fiction, especially postmodern, by such novelists as Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Charles R. Johnson, Leslie Marmon Silko, Gloria Naylor, Toni Cade Bambara, or Louise Erdrich. In Partial Faiths, Postsecular Fiction in the Age of Pynchon and Morrison (2007), John A. McClure has shown that postsecular works explore new forms of spirituality and invent religiously inflected modes of being that remain partial and open-ended. Bringing the soul centre stage, these works take the form of a quest for transcendence and dramatize processes of conversion that disrupt secular structures of reality while being at odds with dogmatic forms of religiosity (McClure 2007, ix, 3). Such texts also articulate spiritual practices with progressive political projects sustaining "self-transformation" and "collective empowerment". Postsecular spirituality consequently is "not just personally but politically enabling"; it is "a valuable resource in the community's ongoing struggle to survive" (McClure 2007, 105).

Building on McClure's analysis of the postsecular in literature, Amy Hungerford has suggested in Postmodern Belief. American Literature and Religion since 1960 (2010) that the "syncretic and personalized spiritualism" (137) that thrives in the second half of

the twentieth century is to be found in works imagining "nonsemantic aspects of language in religious terms" (xiii), as can be seen for instance in texts by Allen Ginsberg, James Baldwin, Cormac McCarthy and Don DeLillo. Such uses of language bring about a new approach of the soul. They make literary works a condition for the persistence of spiritual expression in a (post)secular time and reveal the "religious valence of the literary in the secular context of twentieth- century America" (Hungerford 2010, xiii). Though such forms of spiritual expression are essentially to be found in the second half of the twentieth century, McClure and Hungerford have shown that postsecular spirituality has roots among the Romantics and modernists (McClure 2007, 3; Hungerford 2010, xiii). For instance, the Bible was the primary source of inspiration for pre-Romantic artist and writer William Blake. He created a highly idiosyncratic mythology despite his strong opposition to organized religion. Blake's "The Soul Hovering over the Body, Reluctantly Parting with Life", an engraving he made to illustrate Robert Blair's poem "The Grave" in 1813, and which is reproduced on the front cover of this book, clearly shows his indebtedness to the Christian concept of the soul. However, Blake contests the idea of the separateness of body and soul in his 1790 work The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: "Man has no Body distinct from his Soul; for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age" (Blake 1906, 9). Postsecular spirituality also has roots in transcendentalist thought, which resolutely opposed theological dogmas and institutional forms of religion.

Spirituality in modern and postmodern times was reshaped through the fusion of different influences, including that of ancient and Eastern religions. To give but one example, Buddhist concepts such as Atman (individual soul) and Brahman (universal soul) have become some of the tools with which people explore their interiority. This form of modern spirituality also contains certain elements of modern psychotherapies, especially those centred on personal development. Spirituality in contemporary Western culture provides a private space for the creation of individual belief, while sacred collective rites have become less visible. It may be seen as an attempt to respond

to the anguished concerns of subjectivity. It is both in opposition and in collusion with the world of psychotherapies.

Apprehending The Soul and Its Persistence

This collection of essays attempts to capture understandings of the soul across literature, art, and politics. It does not mean to conduct an exhaustive study of the significance of the concept of the soul to literature, art, and politics—which would be a vain endeavour anyway; it rather seeks to open new perspectives that may pave the way for further inquiries. The book moves across disciplines, taking the literary form as its point of departure in the first section, "Writing the Soul". From there, it investigates the confluence of categories such as the visible and the invisible, the mind and the spirit, and life and death. In the second section, "The Aesthetics of the Soul", it reflects on how the soul is apprehended and expressed in poetry, prose, and other art forms, such as music, dance, and sculpture. The third and final section, "The Ethics and Politics of the Soul", interrogates how such understandings of the soul shape action, particularly in the social and political realms.

Writing the Soul

The first part of this collection, "Writing the Soul" shows that literature plays an active role in both reflecting and shaping the changes that affect the construction of the soul from the nineteenth century to the present. Focusing on soul persistence within and across literary texts, the five essays of this chapter take the soul beyond the boundaries of the individual mind and explore the intertextual correspondences and echoes that connect seemingly distant souls together. They highlight the echoes and continuities in the representation of the soul across time, texts, and cultures, from antiquity to modernity through the romantic and Victorian periods. They underline the soul's palimpsestic nature, the persistence of which precisely stems from these multi-layered borrowings from other texts and cultures.

In "Egyptian Souls in Victorian Minds: The Transmigration of the 'Ba' and the 'Ka' in Archaeological Fiction", Nolwenn Corriou focuses on the discovery of the ancient Egyptian conception of the soul as formed of the "Ka" (double) and the "Ba" (soul), and

its influence on Edwardian and Victorian literature. As the traditional understanding of the link between the body and the soul shaped by Christian beliefs was starting to be questioned by the findings of geologists and archaeologists, more and more thinkers were paradoxically drawn to the occult and supernatural answers to the mysteries science could not quite explain. Many occult orders, including the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, were widely influenced by the discoveries of Egyptology and by forms of worship inspired by ancient Egypt. The idea of the transmigration of the soul offered fascinating possibilities in a world in which magic seemed to be vanishing. A number of Victorian and Edwardian writers explored the Gothic possibilities offered by the motif of the haunting of the Victorian mind by an ancient Egyptian soul. Bram Stoker in The Jewel of Seven Stars (1903), Henry Rider Haggard in "Smith and the Pharaohs" (1913) and Algernon Blackwood in The Wave (1916), among others, imagined the devastating effects of the awakening of an Egyptian soul within a modern character. In these texts, the archaeological work undertaken by Egyptologists to excavate the buried past of ancient Egypt soon becomes an archaeology of the modern psyche: a psyche haunted by the return of the archaic and imperial repressed, which often takes the terrifying form of the mummy.

Thalia Trigoni offers further insight into the construction of the modern subject in "E. S. Dallas's Literary Theory: The 'Hidden Soul' and the Workings of the Imagination". As stated earlier in the introduction, from the 1850s onwards, the budding field of psychology slowly started replacing the "soul" with the "mind" or "consciousness" as its object of study. However, psychology as a discipline was not only shaped by scientists. Questions about the mind and soul were also propagated and discussed in the popular press and literary fiction of the period. This essay sheds light on the pivotal role of literary critic and writer E.S. Dallas, whose work is representative of the tectonic shift in the way contemporary thinkers and psychologists thought about the human mind. Within a period of fourteen years, there was a shift away from the metaphysically imbued "soul" discussed in Dallas's Poetics (1852) to a theory that turned from the divine realm of spirituality to the inner, physiological workings of the mind in The Gay Science (1866). Dallas theorized that human nature is a conjunction of two souls, one

conscious and familiar, and the other "hidden" and unconscious. Dallas, whose terminology found its way into numerous literary works, became one of the most respected and prolific critics of the period. He participated in the nineteenth-century shift from the metaphysics of the soul and its cognitive components to psychology.

In the early twentieth century, literature became a site for the philosophical and psychological investigation of the soul. In "'You haven't let me call my soul my own': Soul, Psyche and 'the thrill of nothingness' in May Sinclair's Fiction", Leslie de Bont examines May Sinclair's philosophical understanding of the soul and its influence on her fiction. She shows that in her philosophical essay, A Defence of Idealism (1917), May Sinclair refers to dreams as "experiments with the soul that is to be" and thus clearly challenges the notion of a transition between soul and psyche. Indeed, her philosophical system, which she later called "New Idealism" (1922), is built on her idiosyncratic combination of idealist philosophy, Spinoza's monism, animism, mysticism, and Jung's analytical psychology. Leslie de Bont explores Sinclair's understanding of the "soul", which proves central to her reflections on consciousness, individuation, identity, the absolute, ultimate reality, sublimation, and the libido. After attempting to reconstruct Sinclair's theoretical approach to "souls", she studies the way Sinclair represents this notion in her fiction. Indeed, Sinclairian souls always seem to refer to the irreducible individuality of female characters and involve an active spiritual quest that relies on mystical visions, sensory keenness, and rebellion against the Anglican religion. Sinclair's Bildungsromane often focus on the protagonists' gradual discoveries, explorations, and eventual reappropriations of their souls. However, the final pages of Mary Olivier (1919) depict the "thrill of nothingness" experienced by the heroine's "stripped soul", indicating that the advent of the soul is also an ambiguous "adventure" or "risk" that elicits emptiness and significant sacrifices.

In her essay on "Spectrality and Narrative Form in George Saunders's Lincoln in the Bardo", Stefanie Weymann-Teschke reflects on the literary construction of the persistence of the soul in a postmodern context. In this 2017 novel, recently deceased Willie Lincoln, the son of President Abraham Lincoln, finds himself in a strange place:

while his lifeless body is interred in a Georgetown cemetery, Willie "tarries" in a realm between, no longer part of the living, but not quite ready to depart either. Saunders's construction of the souls haunting the cemetery results from a complex entanglement of different influences, including that of traditional ghost stories, Christian religion, and Tibetan Buddhism. The author reads the novel as a narrative exploration of the state of in-betweenness and focuses on the challenge of narrating spectrality. While quotes from historical sources and the Buddhist concept of bardo provide the narrative backbone, she argues that it is the dialogic form of Saunders's novel that captures the disembodied, haunting presences inhabiting the cemetery as a liminal space. She highlights the hybridity of the soul as a literary construction while examining how literary form can reflect the fluidity of ghostly souls.

Although recent criticism has argued for the emergence of the "new atheist novel" over the claims of religion, Stephen Burn writes that "much post-postmodern fiction seems to yearn for at least a partial return to religion and spirituality" and that "a distillation of this impulse is also palpable in the heightened resonance the word 'soul' carried in much post-postmodern fiction." Béatrice Pire, in "Forging in the Smithy of David Foster Wallace's Postmodern Soul" studies this postsecular "return of the soul" in recent fiction by focusing on David Foster Wallace's "metaphysical ache", including his several attempts to convert to Catholicism, the revisitation of Hamlet's ghost in the burlesque creation of a filmmaker wreath in Infinite Jest, and an "underworld" dialogue with James Joyce. She focuses on Wallace's short story "The Soul Is Not a Smithy", a parody of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man based on Lacan's reading of Joyce in Seminar 23 and playing with St. Thomas Aquinas' influence on Joyce's fiction. Following Joyce's "forging" and "uncreating" of the Irish soul, she eventually examines the return of traditional narrative technique and conventional subject matter in post-postmodern novels as mostly exemplified in Jonathan Franzen's major "Great American novels". She shows how they illustrate John W. De Forest's 1868 definition of the Great American Novel as a work meant to capture "the American soul", close to Ernest Renan's 1882 definition of a nation as "a soul, a spiritual principle" (Renan 1990).

The Aesthetics of the Soul

The second part of this collection, "The Aesthetics of the Soul", deals with the challenge of representing the soul and its persistence through various art forms, from seventeenth-century religious emblems to sculpture, architecture, paintings, drawings, music, and dance. The contributors to this chapter examine how these art forms give a material or sensory expression to the invisible, explore the link between body and soul, or convey the idea of the persistence of the soul beyond bodily existence.

Religious emblems stand at the crossroads of art and religion. In "Transmutations of the Soul: Anima and her Heart in Christopher Harvey's School of the Heart (1647)", Emilie Jehl studies the representation of the soul in emblem books, a literary and pictorial genre that was born in sixteenth-century Europe and relies on the semiotic codes of both texts and images. She looks at a few emblems of the heart, a category of emblematic literature which proposes to observe the soul's travails via the symbolism of the heart, with a focus on the English collection Schola Cordis, by Christopher Harvey (1647). She shows how Catholic images are re-used by an author affiliated to the English established Church. These representations stage a series of operations performed by Christ on the heart: it is assaulted by arrows of love shot by Christ-Cupid, who engraves its flesh with divine law, and also distended, crowned with thorns, or crushed with a hammer. Heart emblems postulate a relationship between the material and the spiritual. Spiritual processes thus find a material expression in the space of the book; but it is also through the body and its manifestations that the soul becomes tangible, and spiritual progress possible.

Like emblem books, funerary monuments closely depend on—yet remodel—religious representations. In her essay entitled "Let us go Forward: The Soul, Spiritualism and the Funerary Commemoration of Richard Cosway, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Evelyn de Morgan", Cherry Sandover reflects on the profusion of funerary monuments to dead artists that began to populate the churches, cathedrals, and new cemeteries of England during the nineteenth century. The styles of these commemorative monuments mirrored the myriad of religious ideas that were to be found at the time. These were

informed by the celebration of the individual as promulgated during the previous century, alongside the impact of further scientific discoveries and experimentation casting doubt where there had been certainty. They might also have been influenced by the peculiarly English historical arguments over doctrine and other issues of religious practice. Cherry Sandover considers the ways in which the funerary monuments erected in respect of three nineteenth-century painters, Richard Cosway (d.1821), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (d.1882) and Evelyn de Morgan (d.1919), came to be influenced by the growth in esoteric notions of the soul as the root of spiritual love, and its persistence into the afterlife. That each memorial was either designed, or commissioned, by a "soul-mate" or with one in mind, adds further interest in the exploration of the designs with reference to the Victorian soul as the key to an unbreakable connection despite death.

In contrast to such memorials which consider the soul as separate from the body, dance may lend it a bodily representation. In "Dancing the American Soul: Modern Dance and the Persistence of American Founding Myths", Adeline Chevrier-Bosseau shows how dance can convey not just the individual soul, but also the soul of a nation—the American soul. Her essay explores the quest for genuine, organically American movement in the works of dance pioneers such as Isadora Duncan, Loïe Fuller, Ruth Saint Denis, Ted Shawn, but also George Balanchine, Agnes De Mille, and Martha Graham. What is notable in their works is the persistence of the folklore that came to be known as "Americana", but also of the founding myths of American society—such as Manifest Destiny and the pioneer spirit—as well as references to the literature of the American Renaissance, in a prolonged search for the American artistic identity and cultural independence. She examines how American choreographers have attempted to "dance the American soul", to capture Americanness through movement while also exploring the transcendent, divine dimension of the soul. She considers these choreographers' engagement with the divine soul in the light of their fascination for Eastern philosophy and spirituality, especially Brahmanism.

If dance is liable to capture the soul, so is sculpture, which "in stillness, can transmit what may not be seen" (Gormley 1987). In "Casting the Soul: Antony Gormley's

sculptures", Coralie Griffon explores the presence of the soul as a principle of life in Gormley's body cases and reflects on suggestions of its immortality. Departing from the dualistic dichotomy of body and soul, Gormley considers the body and the senses as "windows" and "gateways" to the soul. By resorting to specific techniques previously used by other artists to go beyond the materiality of the body and of artworks, he aims to open up a metaphysical dimension in his sculptures and symbolically convey the articulation of body and soul. Coralie Griffon shows how the tensions between the visible and the invisible, the inside and the outside are poetically intertwined in Gormley's works, insufflating the breath of life in seemingly abstract statues.

Of all artforms, music is the medium most often associated with the soul, and soul music most explicitly expresses this link. In "Sweet Soul Music", Adrian Grafe examines its palimpsestic roots and polyphonic characteristics and reflects on what gives soul music its soul. Reaching back to the origin of its name, he delves into the works of some of the artists associated with the genre: Wilson Pickett, Sam and Dave, Billie Holiday, Etta James, Sam Cooke, Al Green, Stevie Wonder, Motown artists like The Four Tops, the Temptations, and Diana Ross and the Supremes, among others. While strongly relying on Gospel spirituality and imagery, soul music serves primarily as a language of feelings, but it is also a vehicle for expressing political and social consciousness.

The Ethics and Politics of the Soul

The final part of the collection, "The Ethics and Politics of the Soul", focuses on the soul understood in its capacity to convey values and principles of action relating to the collective sphere, whether to give shape to cultural and national identities or on the contrary to bring forth counter-discourses as well as patterns of resilience, resistance, or dissidence.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), the "Bard of Concord" and founder of the American transcendentalist movement, developed a metaphysics of the soul—or "Over-Soul"— understood as a principle of unity in nature. Placing the soul at the core of the universal "song of laws and causes" (Urbas 2016), he defined it as the causal, ontological principle of the universe—the "cause" and "life by which things exist" ("Self-Reliance"). He saw it

as a principle of eternal causation in nature (Urbas 2020) as well as the "causal power on the stage of human history" (Urbas 2016, 24). In her essay entitled "Colliding Circles: Ralph Waldo Emerson's Concept of the Dynamic Soul and its Political Ambiguities", Olga Thierbach-McLean reflects on how Emerson's concept of the soul brings together its transcendental essence and a practical dimension unfolding in the historical sphere. She points out that while readings of his work long remained dominated by the image of the withdrawn "Bard of Concord" whose quest for spiritual truths unfolded beyond the world of politics, more recent scholarship has underscored his role as an active social reformer and major figure in the emergence of a distinctly American political mentality. As part of this scholarly approach, she analyses the continuing resonance of Emersonian tenets in American culture and demonstrates that his concept of the soul, which is central to his individualistic philosophy, is a cornerstone of the dualism whereby, in Stanley Cavell's words, Americans are still a "half-Transcendental, half-pragmatic people." Emerson described the soul as a divine spiritual essence, but at the same time as a decidedly practical force calling for real-world application. She relates his vision of the soul's dynamic nature to his assertion that "our life is an apprenticeship to the truth, that around every circle another can be drawn" (Emerson 1983, 403). This statement casts the process of self- realization as a perpetual aspiration to more—a deeply idealist vision of ongoing personal growth, but also as a paradigm of unrestrained materialistic expansion. Her essay investigates the resonance of Emerson's ideal of the soul in contemporary U.S. culture and politics and explores the inherent tensions between spirituality and materialism, personal freedom, and public interest; it also interrogates the premise of abundance in a socioeconomic reality characterized by dwindling resources and ecological crisis.

While accounting for a nation's particular ethos and historical identity, the idiom of the soul also gives access to a counter-history, one that investigates the ghostly existence of those who were counted as "souls" while their very humanity was denied. In "Souls on Board: A Counter-History of Modern Mobility", Susan Zieger investigates the maritime custom of counting the enslaved as "souls on board"—a practice that airplane captains still use to enumerate the number of living individuals on their crafts. Her essay

considers how invocations of the soul framing different kinds of voyages—that of the enslaved, the tourist, the immigrant, the soldier—inflect the word across an ethical and political range. Officially deprived of their names, made to suffer in the cramped ship's hold on the Middle Passage, tortured on deck, and often thrown overboard when ill, the enslaved—though counted as "souls"—were dehumanized. Yet Zieger shows that in the bonds they forged with each other, and in their resistance to oppression, lie roots of African American culture, especially the idiom of the "soul" as expressing sadness or poignancy.

The Negro Spirituals, the "sorrow songs" which W.E.B. Du Bois perceived as an expression of the soul (Du Bois 2007, 167–177), bear testimony to this legacy while also relying on the soul as a principle of inner resistance and resilience. The idiom of the soul has retained much of this significance in African American culture. The literature of the African American women's Renaissance of the 1970s and 1980s in particular relies on the soul to express dissident claims related to gender and race. Claude Le Fustec's essay on "Spiritual Rebirth in African American Women's Fiction" considers the spiritual upsurge of African American writers such as Toni Cade Bambara and Alice Walker on the literary scene, under the aegis of Toni Morrison. Her analysis relies on Soul Talk: The New Spirituality of African American Women (2001) by African American critic Akasha Gloria Hull, which argues that the 1970s–1980s were a time of spiritual maturation "as preparation for grappling with social issues on a more profound level" (Hull 2001, 24), radically departing from the generally held view that this was a time of regress in the light of the political ferment so active in the sixties. Hull notes that an upsurge of spirituality developed around 1980 in the wake of the Civil Rights movement and of the early ferment of the feminist movement. Building on Hull's work, Le Fustec's essay focuses on the literary expression of spiritual resilience in fictional writings of the period, in relation with gender and politics. She argues that beyond militant political action, these works convey a quest for unity and for higher global spiritual consciousness, with the potential to impact political action.

Just as in the slavery and civil rights context, the notion of "soul" has acquired political meanings in the colonial, postcolonial and decolonial contexts. Scholars have taken up the term to adapt its meaning, defining it for instance as a political tool used to control colonial subjects. In her essay "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism", Gayatri Spivak describes the imperialist project as "soul making" (Spivak 1985, 236–237). According to her, "soul-making" is "the imperial project cathected as civil-society-through-social-mission" (Spivak 1985, 236–237). In this case, the colonialist project goes as far as trying to shape the very soul of the colonial subjects, who are supposedly devoid of one.

This postcolonial lens is at the heart of Claire Wrobel's essay, which examines the political stakes of the persistence of the soul through the reflection on national unity in Frankenstein in Baghdad (2013, transl. 2018), a novel by Ahmed Saadawi which received the International Prize for Arabic Literature in 2014. Claire Wrobel is interested in the rewriting of the myth of Frankenstein in a different cultural context. In "Persisting Souls in a Persisting Myth: Appropriation and Transmutation in Frankenstein in Baghdad", she shows that through the treatment of the soul, Saadawi's satirical rewriting of Shelley's novel metaphorically explores how national unity and a collective destiny may emerge out of a fragmented body politic here represented by the creature. Frankenstein in Baghdad appropriates various meanings of the soul—its common understanding as a principle of life, as well as religious, Islamic interpretations— to convey a reflection on national unity. Just as the principle of life supposedly unifies the monster's body which is made of parts from diverse backgrounds (ethnicities, tribes, and social classes), the soul here becomes the principle that turns a country into a nation; but it is also a principle of potential chaos and political fragmentation. The paradigm of the soul thus proves liable to express political anxieties and to unsettle national representations.

In all its different guises, it seems that the soul has from the start been a peculiarly fluid concept. It has never lost its significance and relevance, even as it has become further and further removed from its origins in Greek philosophy or Christian theology. This

elasticity, which has opened the door to reinterpretations of all sorts by thinkers and artists as well as appropriations within popular culture, may well be the source of its singular longevity and resilience. The distinct categories of literature, art, and politics around which the book is structured should not occult the permeability of their boundaries and the ability of the concept of the soul to traverse different disciplinary fields. This exploration of the soul hopes to shed light on the epistemological richness of a long-neglected concept, on its ability to bring together seemingly distant or antagonistic disciplines, and on its enduring relevance to humanities studies and to the modern world. <>

T&T Clark Handbook of Suffering and the Problem of Evil edited by Matthias Grebe and Johannes Grössl [T&T Clark Handbooks, T&T Clark, ISBN 9780567682437]

THE T&T CLARK HANDBOOK OF SUFFERING AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL provides an extensive exploration of the theology of theodicy, asking questions such as should all instances of suffering necessarily be understood as evil? Why would an omnipotent and benevolent God allow or perpetrate evil? Is God unable or unwilling to reduce human and non-human suffering on Earth? Does humanity have the capacity to exercise a moral evaluation of God's motives and intentions?

Conventional disciplinary boundaries have tended to separate theological approaches to these questions from philosophical ones. This volume aims to overcome these boundaries by including biblical (Part I), historical (Part II), doctrinal (Part III), philosophical (Part IV), and pastoral, interreligious perspectives and alternative intersections (Part V) on theodicy.

Authors include thinkers from analytic and continental traditions, multiple Christian denominations and other religions, and both established and younger scholars, providing a full variety of approaches. What unites the essays is an attempt to answer these questions from the perspective of biblical testimony, historical scholarship, modern theological and philosophical thinking about the concept of God, non-Christian religions, science and the arts.

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Suffering and the Problem of Evil by Johannes Grössl

In theology, the problem of evil is often — in a too narrow sense — equated with theodicy: how can an almighty, omniscient, and benevolent God allow horrendous suffering and evil in the world? Most literature on the topic focuses on the attempts to reconcile these divine attributes with the reality of suffering caused either by the evil acts of free agents or by natural causes.' This handbook aims to deal with the problem of evil and the reality of suffering not only from a logical but also from a wider perspective. While conventional disciplinary boundaries have tended to separate theological approaches from philosophical ones, this volume seeks to surpass these divisions by addressing the nature of suffering and the problem of evil from biblical, historical, systematic-theological, philosophical, ethical, as well as pastoral and interreligious perspectives. Authors of this volume include thinkers from analytic and continental traditions, conservative and liberal backgrounds, multiple Christian denominations, and other religions.

This introduction provides an overview of classical and modern approaches to deal with the problem of evil. In classical theodicies, explicit and implicit premises of the problem of evil are challenged, for example by redefining certain divine attributes or by arguing for a reason or meaning behind all suffering. Following this, practical attempts to ease the problem or else avoid it altogether are presented; adherents of the latter strategy reject implicit arguments such as the human ability to understand God, his motives, or attributes. Finally, the problem of evil is discussed in light of a religious epistemology: Is it necessary to answer the problem of evil in order to have a rational (or at least a non-irrational) belief in God? How does the problem relate to other arguments for and against the existence of God?

The Argument from Evil

Theodicies can be construed by challenging an argument that concludes that, due to the existence of evil, God does not exist. Here one must distinguish between theodicies and defenses: A theodicy seeks to show why God is justified in allowing or being unable to prevent certain instances of suffering and evil. A defense only looks to show that there is at least one possible world in which God and evil coexist; it is thus a humbler approach.

But let us turn to the argument from evil first, which is based on Epicurus (341-270 BCE) and Leibniz (1646-1716 CE), here in a formulation by philosopher Michael Tooley:

1. If God exists, then God is omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect.

2. If God is omnipotent, then God has the power to eliminate all evil.

3. If God is omniscient, then God knows when evil exists [and how to eliminate evil].

4. If God is morally perfect, then God has the desire to eliminate all evil.

5. [Gratuitous] evil exists.

6. If evil exists and God exists, then either God doesn't have the power to eliminate all evil, or doesn't know when evil exists, or doesn't have the desire to eliminate all evil.

7. Therefore, God doesn't exist.

In showing that this argument is not sound, by rejecting one of the premises, one can only construe a defense, since it only shows that the reality of evil does not necessarily lead to the nonexistence of God. But even if one can show that this problem is in principle solvable, this does not say anything about the plausibility of such solutions. One can avoid the logical problem of evil (as formulated here) but still be challenged by an evidential version of the argument, which only concludes that from what we know about God and the reality of enormous, horrible suffering in the world, it is more likely

that God does not exist. I will turn to this latter issue later. First, I will summarize classical defenses and other ways to avoid the logical argument from evil. Since there are six premises to the argument, there are six different ways to question the soundness of the argument.

Classical Solutions

Rejecting Premise 1 leads to a redefining of the concept of God. Process theologians assume that God is not omnipotent, since primordial matter and God exist coeternally. Kenoticists might believe that by creating the world, God had to (temporarily) give up his omnipotence.4 Open theists assume that God's omnipotence is limited by created agents' free will, and God's knowledge is restricted by an essentially open future.' Divine voluntarists reject divine benevolence for it contradicts divine sovereignty.' Developmental theists assume that God is not (from the beginning) omnibenevolent but rather needs to develop his moral character in the way humans do. Euteleological theists go as far as to reject or reinterpret all the given attributes by insisting that God is not a person at all but rather an abstract teleological principle guiding the cosmos to actualize certain goods.'

Premise 2 — God's power to eliminate evil — is rejected by most free-will theists. Omnipotence can be defined as the power to do anything that is logically and/or metaphysically possible. If God created genuinely free agents, for example, he would have needed to accept the possibility that creatures act contrary to God's will. If free will is understood as the power to choose between good and evil (or different morally significant options), God cannot create free agents without allowing evil to happen. As open theists argue, to "take back freedom once it is given on the grounds that it is being used wrongly would mean that freedom was never given in the first place". Still, the question remains as to why God cannot diminish the impact of evil decisions, whether horrible evils are justified by the existence of free will, and, most particularly, why God does not prevent those evils which do not result from decisions of free agents (so-called natural evils). The argument here can be easily reformulated to focus on severe natural evil or horrible moral evil (instead of simply on "all evil").

Premise 3 — God's knowledge of evil — is harder to reject. Even open theists assume that God knows all possible futures including probabilities of possible outcomes; he knows when and how to intervene in history in order to let less suffering occur without compromising any greater goods. A combination of strict eternalism, divine impassibility, and aseity, however, may result in the view that God cannot know anything contingent, as this would make him dependent on creation. Accordingly, in this premise, God only knows the necessary facts, including logical truths and the set of all metaphysically possible worlds." But still, in this view, his moral perfection would necessitate his creation of the best of all possible worlds (with the best initial conditions) or at least a sufficiently good world. But there might still be enough reasons to assume that the actual world is not sufficiently good. Thus, questioning this premise does not solve the problem."

Premise 4 — God's desire to eliminate evil — can be rejected by presenting reasons as to why a benevolent God might not want to eliminate evil. God might have the desire to inflict some evils as a punishment for our wrongdoing, since God is not only benevolent but also just." Evil may be a by-product of a much greater good (such as free will and the power to love) or may have another important function in reality, for example to enable healing and moral growth, possibly even increase moral responsibility of those creatures who have the power to assist in eliminating evil. However, there is too much suffering and evil in this world, where we cannot construe any reason why a benevolent God would allow or even inflict it on creatures."

Rejecting Premise 5 is only possible if one denies that there is genuine gratuitous evil in the world. After certain horrible events in human history this strategy seems absurd; however, rejecting genuine evil does not necessarily imply the rejection of the reality of suffering. In the history of Christianity, before the plague hit Europe in the fourteenth century, it was common to explain suffering as a penalty by God for one's sins. But the pointless suffering even of flawless people who were thought to be in God's grace is strong evidence against this assumption. In Eastern religions, the problem is eased due

to the theory of reincarnation: suffering in this life might be a result of immoral actions one has committed in a former life.

Another variant of a rejection of the reality of evil is the privatio boni thesis from Platonism: if evil is just the "absence" of good, evil does not exist." However, this only changes the problem to why there is not more good in the world. If God were omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent, he would have been able, would have known how, and would have wanted to bring about a world featuring less the absence of good and more the reality of goodness."

Premise 6 and the validity of the argument seem indefeasible. Logically, one can change the argument to not dealing with "all evil" but only with "gratuitous" evil, which makes it a lot harder to reject certain premises. Analytic philosophers tend to discuss the logical soundness and validity of such arguments, reformulate the argument, and discuss divine and human nature, the reality of free will, the metaphysics of time, and related issues. However, to this day, there is no universally accepted solution to the theodicy problem even among philosophers. Indeed, for quite a number, the unsolved problem is a reason not to believe in an almighty and benevolent God at all."

Genuine Theodicies

A rejection of certain premises of the problem of evil goes hand in hand with the story of what God's intentions might have been in permitting evil. A theodicy ("justifying God") claims that God did or does have these intentions and that these intentions do explain the reality of suffering and evil. However, few thinkers assume that certain theodicies explain all instances of evil. For example, God's intention to create free beings may explain the reality of moral evil (evil perpetrated by human beings) but not of natural evil. There are attempts to explain all evils by moral evils, with the price of interpreting the biblical story of the Fall in a very literal way or even defending the reality of supernatural beings who are — by their free will — responsible for the "fallenness" of creation." But usually, it is assumed that the free-will defense is not a theodicy, since there are too many instances of suffering that cannot be explained by acts of free agents.

Adherents of a natural law theodicy try to extend the free-will approach in order to create a full-fledged theodicy: "In order to have a world with creatures who can choose freely, the environment in which they are placed must be set up in certain well-defined ways." However, it is challenging to show why only a world with our natural laws, with all its natural evils, is capable in bringing about free beings in an evolutionary process. Instead of our world being "the best of all possible worlds" (at least regarding its initial conditions), it seems evident — given the amount of gratuitous evil in the world — that God could have created a better world which includes free agents but less natural evil." Proponents of a natural law theodicy reject this intuition, claiming that in order to make such an argument, we need to specify alternative laws that enable humanity's freedom: "For all we know, the laws that govern our world are the only possible laws; alternatively, for all we know, there are very tight constraints on what sorts of adjustments in the laws can be permitted while retaining life-sustaining capabilities." Natural evils are thus considered a by-product of a world which is designed to make intelligent life with free will possible.

A soul-making theodicy, introduced by Church Father Irenaeus (c. 130-202 CE) and made prominent by John Hick, claims that no suffering counts as genuine evil since suffering can always be used to form character." In some Jewish and Islamic theodicies, a similar point is made when referring to certain evils as opportunities to remain faithful to God, sometimes interpreted as God testing his creatures. While there is certainly some suffering that helps to build character or strengthen personal faith, this strategy sounds cynical when applied to horrendous evils like earthquakes eradicating whole villages or the actions of serial killers.

Consequently, if at all possible, a theodicy drawing the "big picture" needs to combine several strategies, comprising the free-will thesis, the natural law (no-better-world) thesis, and the soul-making strategy.

Specific Theological Strategies

In the history of Christian theology, theodicies were discussed which would not count as such from a philosophical point of view but could still help believers to reconcile

their faith in God with their experience of suffering and evil. Of course, these strategies may not convince atheists who reject God primarily because of the problem of evil. Even for strong believers, the reality of suffering can prompt profound doubt, though in this case, the problem of evil is a challenge to strengthen one's faith in the light of suffering. When Paul says in his Letter to the Romans, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (8:18), he does not present reasons for present sufferings, which for early Christians included the reality of torture and death as a consequence of faith in Christ. Paul simply asks the reader to trust in the existence of heaven as a place from which, retrospectively, the earlier sufferings are viewed as not as bad as they are perceived without the eschatological perspective.

From the viewpoint of an Anselmian or Lutheran cross-theological soteriology, in which the suffering and death of Jesus were essential for our salvation, a Christian might argue that a world full of suffering is necessary for the atonement, or at least that the greater goods of the incarnation and the atonement need to be included in a Christian theodicy.

Among theologians, there is also discussion of "practical theodicies", which focus not on how to solve the logical problem of theodicy but on how to deal with this problem as believers. One reason for the skepticism concerning a theoretical theodicy is that in history it was common to justify the suffering of others for some higher good — not only in communist political systems but also within religious institutions. Until today, some church authorities are convinced that covering up sexual abuse is justified for the "higher good" of the integrity of the institution. Justifying evil might be a great source of evil, which is why one should be very careful in attempts to solve the problem of theodicy by giving reasons for people's suffering. Nick Trakakis even claimed that theodicies "mediate a praxis that sanctions evil" and should thus be avoided.

Possibly, religious faith is the only way to deal with the enormous suffering in the world, because the dual eschatological perspective ensures justice for both victims and perpetrators. Of course, practical theodicies are only significant for those who already

possess faith and especially for those whose faith is not ultimately challenged by the problem of evil. Believing that God suffers with us, that God suffered to an even greater degree when, incarnate, He hung on the cross, being abandoned by those He loved, may comfort the believer when in a state of suffering. As the common proverb says, a sorrow shared is a sorrow halved. Moreover, considering Christ's suffering from the perspective of the resurrection might help believers to evaluate their suffering from the viewpoint of the resurrection. The narrative of Christ's suffering might also lead them to trust — even if they do not currently perceive a reason for their suffering (just as Christ may not have fully understood the atoning function of his suffering) — that there might be a reason for their suffering which is just not accessible to them at that moment.

Apophatic and Skeptical Approaches

There are some religious people who believe that the theodicy problem is an insoluble one, even a paradox. The challenge for this approach is to show why this assessment should not count as an argument against theism but might even be a result of a proper concept of God.29 There are different variants of this strategy: strong fideism holds that "human" logic (including the law of noncontradiction) does not apply to God; apophatic theology rejects the possibility of attributing properties (such as omnipotence or benevolence) to God in a univocal sense; skeptical theism — the weakest variant, defended by quite a number of philosophers — holds that God's reasons to do or allow evil are not accessible to our cognitively limited human minds. The advantage of the latter strategy is that it still allows for an understanding of God's reasons at some time in the future, by either acquiring enhanced minds or God choosing to share his reasons with us — in this life (by revelation) or in the afterlife (eschatological verification of theism).

The assumption that all our concepts only apply to God in an analogical way renders logical arguments from evil invalid. God might be omnipotent but in a way different as we understand power; God might be benevolent but in a way different as we understand goodness." Even if one assumes that the apophatic approach stands in

contrast to the task of theology as reasoning about God, it can still serve as a reminder that all our models of God are preliminary and that God is always greater than our favored concept of God. Moreover, even apophatic theologians and skeptical theists require a certain "idea of a story that contains both God and all the evils that actually exist," which is, as already noted, referred to as a defense rather than a theodicy. Eleonore Stump describes the strategy of a defense as such:

> [A defense] does not claim either that the morally sufficient reasons for God's allowing suffering which the defense proposes should be taken to be those (if there are any) which in the actual world do in fact justify God's actions in permitting suffering (if in the actual world there is a God). A defense, then, makes no claim about the way the actual world is or about any actual intentions and reasons for allowing evil on the part of God.

Theodicy and Religious Epistemology

Even if one does not fully share an evidentialist probabilistic epistemology (such as that defended by Richard Swinburne), it can help to show what role arguments from evil can play in a person's faith. We can assume that proofs for the existence of God are neither wrong nor indefensible but rather increase the epistemic probability of theism. Correspondingly, arguments from evil are neither simply unsound nor do they disprove God's existence but rather decrease the epistemic probability of theism." Additionally, personal religious experience and experiences shared by others can work to slightly increase this probability; disappointments in one's religious life, unanswered prayers, or the observation of immoral actions by religious leaders can slightly decrease this probability. In this probabilistic framework, defenses dealing with certain instances of suffering (such as the majority of moral evils or certain natural evils) can be sufficient to lower the negative impact of the problem of evil on the rationality of theism to a point such that theism becomes a viable or even the most rational option." Thus, even if one cannot solve the problem, it may still be worth attending to it.

Pragmatist attempts within religious epistemology do not necessarily hold that theism need be more rational than atheism in order to maintain a "rational faith". Sometimes it is justified to act upon a strategy based on an unlikely state of affairs, but this is only the case if it is the strategy most promising to achieve one's goals. According to Pascal's

wager, it is rational to believe in God even if the theoretical probability of His existence is less than 50 percent, since, if God exists, the risk of eternal condemnation as a consequence of nonbelief outweighs the risk of losing finite goods in this world as a consequence of practiced religious belief if God does not exist." Based on such an approach, it might be sufficient to solve the logical problem of evil, showing that the amount of evil in this world is principally compatible with the existence of an omnipotent and benevolent God. Even if the defenses given remain not fully convincing, they enable practical-rational faith. In this case, the problem of evil is to be understood more as a problem of how to deal with and overcome evil and not a problem of apologetics. It is a challenge as to how to understand one's own life, despite all suffering, failure, and disappointment, as ultimately meaningful:

> The search for meaning in life is arguably an ineradicable part of what it is to be human, and that search cannot be satisfied merely by security, comfort and convenience . . . Given the kind of creatures we are, a life that is meaningful, subjectively and objectively, in the end requires some attempt to understand our human predicament, and that in turn requires us . . . to come to terms with our own "evil doings" . . . and to realise how these impact the lives of others. The struggle is not just to endure the evil that may impinge on us through the actions of others but also to rise above the evil in our own flawed nature, and to understand that both kinds belong to our common humanity.

To learn how to lead a meaningful life and how to maintain religious faith in the light of an unsolved problem of evil and one's own experience with suffering and evil is indeed a practical task from which we cannot be released by scholarly work. But hopefully, theological scholarship on the problem of evil can be useful not only for those interested in the coherence of theism but also for those engaging in the practical task of trying to believe despite the reality of inexplicable evil.

Conclusion and Outlook

From a Christian perspective, it is valuable to analyze the way that biblical authors, figures in biblical stories, Church Fathers, and medieval theologians deal with the problem of evil. It is quite likely that purely philosophical attempts have neglected important perspectives on the problem. There might be certain insights into the problem of evil that can only be acquired through revelation or other types of religious

experience, possibly even through narrative, art, and music. If reformed epistemology is true, religious believers might be empowered to certain insights which are inaccessible to secular reason. If Vatican II is correct in saying that in other religions there is a "ray of that Truth which enlightens all men" (Nostra Aetate 2), then in the same way Christian theology may be enriched by or even rely on the ways that non-Christian theologians deal with the problem of evil. Finally, it is critical to listen to the voices of those who are or have been suffering; there can be no theodicy without recognizing psychological and physical illness, discrimination, oppression and slavery, genocide, and other instances of evil affecting specific individuals. Ultimately, the problem of evil is both an intellectual challenge and a practical responsibility. <>

SOL: IMAGE AND MEANING OF THE SUN IN ROMAN ART AND RELIGION, VOLUME I by Steven E. Hijmans [Series: Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, Brill, ISBN: 9789004406698]

SOL: IMAGE AND MEANING OF THE SUN IN ROMAN ART AND RELIGION, VOLUME II by Steven E. Hijmans [Series: Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, Brill, ISBN: 9789004514720]

With this analysis of Sol images, Steven E. Hijmans paints a new picture of the solar cult in ancient Rome. The paucity of literary evidence led Hijmans to prioritize visual sources, and he opens this study with a thorough discussion of the theoretical and methodological issues involved. Emphasizing the danger of facile equivalencies between visual and verbal meanings, his primary focus is Roman praxis, manifest in, for instance, the strict patterning of Sol imagery. These patterns encode core concepts that Sol imagery evoked when deployed, and in those concepts we recognize the bedrock of Rome's understandings of the sun and his cult. Case studies illustrate these concepts in action and the final chapter analyzes the historical context in which previous, now discredited views on Sol could arise.

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This study has been long in the making. I first became interested in Sol almost thirty years ago, when I set out to study the broader iconographic context of that famous image from mausoleum M in the Vatican necropolis that has been identified as Christ in the guise of Helios/Sol. I soon realized that there was no iconographic context to study as there are no other images in which Christ was actually depicted as the sun. This cast doubt on the identity of the so-called Christ-Helios, but in the process I also realized that we actually knew very little about the pagan Sol-imagery to which, iconographically, the Vatican image adhered. I decided to shift my focus from the non-existent Romano-Christian images of Sol-as-Christ to the Roman iconography of the sun. My new goal, somewhat naive, was to write a close analysis of the extant images of Sol, focusing on what those images could tell us about the chronology, origin, and nature of the cult of Sol in the Roman world.

Work progressed well and resulted in a number of articles (Hijmans 1994, 1995, 1996a and b, 1997), but it became increasingly clear to me that many of the images of Sol in my database did not depict Sot, if by Sol we mean the Roman Sun god. What they did depict was less clear to me, and more importantly, I was not entirely sure how to find out. At this point I found myself facing a choice between pragmatism and principle. With relatively little extra work I could have published an iconographic discussion of the kind that has a long tradition in our field. But its shortcomings, in this particular case, were simply too obvious, and in the final analysis I felt certain that I would come to regret that choice as a missed opportunity.

Once I had decided that there was no point in amassing a catalogue of images without knowing what intended meanings those images convey, I next spent a significant amount of time attempting to find a suitable body of visual or material culture theory to provide a framework for my planned analyses of the image groups in my database. I felt like an anthropologist attempting ethnographic fieldwork without really knowing prerequisite languages. To put it simply, I could not interpret the texts because I did not understand the words. The problem with Roman images is that they are not as straightforward as they often seem (or are deemed) to be. That social codes govern how

images function is a given, of course, and that those codes are by definition neither universal nor transparent is also clear. What is often overlooked, however, is just how remarkably rigid and durable visual codes were in Rome. Consistently, for centuries, Romans depicted the sun as a youthful beardless male charioteer. This does not mean that Romans actually thought the sun was a youthful beardless male charioteer, just as they did not think that Eternity, for example, was a woman bearing the severed heads of the sun and the moon on her outstretched hands; it was simply the way they visualized the concept.

What concept? The obvious difference between image (beardless youth) and the depicted (ball of fire) underlines the importance of the social coding in Rome's visual system. To understand Roman art, one must be privy to those codes, which we often are not. But that is only part of the problem. Too many classicists still apparently assume that ancient images somehow speak for themselves, and hence "mean" whatever seems the most logical to the viewer. There is, for example, a tendency to ascribe "divine" or "solar" connotations rather indiscriminately to a wide range of Roman artistic conventions used to depict radiant light: emanating rays, radiate crowns of various types, nimbi, with and without rays, in various colours. These are routinely treated as roughly synonymous (and often explicitly solar) in meaning. But far from being solar, certain forms of symbolic light were actually never used in depictions of the sun. They did not convey "solar connotations" but quite the opposite, because the fluent Roman viewer knew unequivocally that a figure thus adorned could not be Sol. The fastidiousness with which such iconographic conventions and differentiations were observed by Roman artists is a testament to their importance. Even seemingly minute details could change the meaning of an image through their presence or their absence.

While this system of conventions was by no means static, it was remarkably durable. Many of the rules governing how Sol was depicted remained stable for a millennium or more throughout the Greco-Roman world. We must pay those conventions the same

painstaking respect that the Romans themselves did, for how can we hope to interpret images if we are ignorant of the rules governing their composition?

Yet even after we have learned the rules that allow us to establish securely that an image "is" Sol, we still hardly know what that means. One might think that we can side-step this problem by assuming that the Roman image meant the same as the most closely associated Latin word: the image of Sol is "Sol". But this would mean that an image of Sol and Luna would be Sol Lunaque, quod non; it has long been recognized that as a pair, Sol and Luna evoke, inter alia, the concept of aeternitas. It should in any case be obvious that verbal and visual modes of communication differ too profoundly to allow any such direct translation between the two. The primary dimension of verbal communication is temporal, not spatial, whereas visual communication is primarily spatially organized, rather than temporally. An inscription is a poor alternative for a cult statue in visual terms, but to effectively make that argument you need words, not pictures.

To return to my search for a theoretical framework for my analyses: I soon found myself in the quandary so typical for our field, of knowing too little for a sophisticated art historical analysis and too much for the wide-ranging approaches of prehistorians. I realized that really I had no choice but to attempt to gain a more fluent understanding of the basic potential meanings of an image of Sol — the range of predefined possibilities a Roman would have in the back of her mind as she viewed a particular image — before trying anything more theoretically ambitious. This led me to loosely ground my study in a very basic semiotic framework, with as default position the assumption that meaning(s) associated with an image do not emerge naturally, but are socially constructed.

Equally important: images evoke meanings that cannot, or at least cannot easily, be expressed in words. How does one effectively recognize and define such meanings in our verbal academic discourse? How does one deal with all the other images that contribute to our understanding of the image of Sol? Do we know their meaning any better? What is the most effective methodology to decipher the social codes that

govern the agreed upon meanings of a given type of image, and how does one deal with the inevitable gradual change of those meanings over time? These methodological and theoretical questions came to drive much of the research now presented here.

This study does not come close to answering these questions. Indeed in many respects it barely scratches the surface. But it does attempt to acknowledge their importance, and the impact that they have, or should have, on every step of the interpretative process. The common denominator in all these questions is that they force us to reflect on the complex factors at play in the interaction between viewers and the viewed. Tackling these questions challenged me to rethink some of our most basic ideas about the role and nature of the sun in Roman religion. They show that long-held notions concerning, for instance, the origins and chronology of solar cults in Rome, the nature and importance of those cults, the role of solar cult in the deification of emperors, and many other such occurrences must be reconsidered or even simply rejected. I believe this study demonstrates the potential of this type of visual analysis; the stark conclusions with which I open chapter one drive home its importance.

This study is a thorough, and quite extensive reworking of my PhD thesis. Previous versions of a number of chapters have also appeared as articles.' This book includes a very large number of images, for which I am deeply grateful to Brill. Images are at the core of this study and must be seen, not merely described (one anonymous reviewer even suggested that images of all entries in the catalogue be supplied). That said, neoliberal policies are making this type of visually grounded research exceedingly difficult, because of the often extraordinary fees one has to pay merely to obtain an image for research — not to mention what it costs to acquire the right to publish. Let me first stress that most museums provided digital images of objects in their collections free of charge or at a nominal cost. That said, a significant number of major museums demanded astronomical sums — up to $200 — for a single image. Such prices are no doubt the result of political pressure on museums to generate revenue, but nonetheless remain completely unjustifiable. Every single illustration in this book is of a work in the public domain, and museums have an obligation, both legal and ethical, to facilitate

access to these objects, not restrict it. By charging such high fees and by attempting to monopolize their right to provide images, these museums do the opposite. As stated, there are fortunately numerous museums that make high resolution digital images freely available on their websites, or provide them for a modest handling fee. It is in large part thanks to these museums that I was able to obtain a reasonable number of pictures illustrating objects in the catalogue. <>

CHRISTIAN SOLAR SYMBOLISM AND JESUS THE SUN OF JUSTICE by Kevin Duffy [T&T Clark, 9780567701756]

This pioneering study of Christian sun symbolism describes how biblical light motifs were taken up with energy in the early Church. Kevin Duffy argues that, living in a world of 24/7 illumination, we need to reconnect with the sun and its light to appreciate the meaning of light in the Bible and Christian tradition. With such a retrieval we can appreciate Pope Francis's insistence that, like the moon, the Church does not shine with its own light, and assess the claim that the Eucharist is to be celebrated 'Ad Orientem', that is towards the rising sun in the East. Liturgy, architecture, poetry and the writings of saints and theologians such as Augustine, Hildegard of Bingen, Francis of Assisi, and Thomas Traherne offer abundant resources for a much needed ressourcement. While Christ was preached as the True Sun among sun-worshipping Aztecs, and the consecrated host was placed in a solar monstrance on Baroque altars, in the modern era solar themes have been neglected. In this accessible work, the author suggests that we rebalance a spiritual symbolism that has over-emphasised darkness and cloud at the expense of light and sun. He proposes a creative retrieval of the traditional title of Christ as the Sun of Justice. This title blends the personal, the social and the cosmic/ecological, and speaks powerfully to a secularising era that contemporaries Friedrich Nietzsche and Thérèse of Lisieux both described as one where the sun does not shine.

Review

"This is a fascinating study from Kevin Duffy. ... Unlike many studies of this genre, it is at all times thought provoking and readable." —*Irish Theological Quarterly*

"The volume is a pleasing book product, stimulating, easy to consult and the sort of book that might be retained as a personal possession and re-read from time to time. It contains well-honed thoughts that may grow on a reader in different moments of life's seasons." —*Ephemerides Liturgicae*

"The joy of sunrise, the melancholy of sunset, the Sun which gives us light, and warmth, and life. We rarely do anything without some reference to it - our local star. Yet for much of Christian history our references in a religious context have been complex: Jesus is the Sun of Justice who visits us like the rising Sun, and we have a solar liturgical year, but we are dismissive of 'solar cults' and 'Sun worship' - yet it is by the visible that we speak of the invisible. At last, we now have a book that addresses the whole topic and does so thoroughly." —Thomas O'Loughlin, The University of Nottingham, UK

"A timely and pioneering study retrieving the symbols of light and sun to counterbalance a tradition often preoccupied by darkness and cloud and tracing their implications for Christology, spirituality, and liturgy." —Declan Marmion, St. Patrick's College, Ireland

"In his fascinating study of sun symbolism, Kevin Duffy has created something truly fresh, informative, and-dare we say it-illuminating! Tracing the history of the symbols of sun and light and their interplay with darkness reveals a rich symbol of the divine presence, rooted in the Scriptures, reflected in aspects of our tradition, downplayed for too long a time, and now ready for a vigorous revival. Theologians, spiritual writers, poets, and everyday Christians will find this a splendid and inspiring work." —Donald Senior, Catholic Theological Union, USA

"Kevin Duffy's thorough and painstaking research lays a solid foundation for the retrieval and development of solar metaphors and the symbolism of light in contemporary theology. Such theological language would not only assist Christian thought in addressing the climate crisis of our time, but to reinscribe Christ as the "Sun of Justice." —Susan Roll, Université Saint-Paul University, Canada

"Susan Roll, Université Saint-Paul University, Canada
This illuminating and erudite plea for the retrieval and renewal of Christian sun symbolism takes readers who are sadly familiar with the current eclipse of faith on a delightful journey from antiquity up to the present. Duffy's masterful study sheds new light on this neglected and yet vitally important theme." —Beáta Tóth, Sapientia College of Theology, Hungary

"Kevin Duffy's *Christian Solar Symbolism and Jesus the Sun of Justice* offers us a broad-brush sweep of Christian sources for a concrete, contemplative and natural theology of the place of Jesus Christ in the universe and in human history. By piecing together so many sources of solar symbolism, Duffy makes a mosaic pattern of breathtakingly colourful and rich pictures from an all-but forgotten tradition. We experience Christ in the brilliance of warmth, light and power in a way that opens up our minds and imaginations to the impulses behind much contemporary Christological thinking. Duffy's book is as welcome as a ray of sunshine." —Gemma Simmonds CJ, Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, UK

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The present work started with a remark about Muslims. I mentioned how impressive it was to see Muslims lay down their mats and pray facing Mecca in Abidjan airport in West Africa. A confrere replied that if early Christians came to earth today, they might well make the initial mistake of identifying Muslims as their coreligionists, since early

Christians prostrated themselves and faced eastwards when they prayed. I started exploring what seemed a potent symbol, collecting related ideas such as Christ returning from the east, and the eastern location of the garden of Eden, only to discover that a list of such related ideas was drawn up by St John Damascene in the eighth century, and was readily available on Eastern Orthodox websites.' It also became clear that Christian sun symbolism has deeper roots in the Bible and in tradition than orientation to the east, and yet solar motifs hardly figure in recent Catholic theology and spirituality. Then, at the conclave where he was elected pope, Francis declared that the church had forgotten the patristic symbol of a lunar church that receives its light from the sun.' I could find no general book on Christ and the light of the sun. Hence this work.

In That They May Face the Rising Sun, John McGahern places a complex of Christian sun symbolism at the heart of a novel set in rural Catholic Ireland. A twilight graveyard scene where several of the principal characters in the book are assembled gives the work its name. They are digging a fresh grave in an ancient graveyard, bordering a ruined abbey, when Patrick Ryan notices that they have dug the grave in the wrong direction. The head is in the east. 'I kind of knew as soon as we saw the bones. When the fault is put right one of the others asks him whether it makes any difference that the deceased's head now lies in the west. 'It makes every difference, lad, or it makes no difference'. He explains:

> `He sleeps with his head in the west ... So that when he wakes he may face the rising sun: Look face to face and drawing himself to his full height, Patrick Ryan stretched his arm dramatically towards the east. 'We look to the resurrection of the dead:
> The shadow from the abbey now 'stretched beyond the open grave, but the rose-window in the west pulsed with light, sending out wave after wave of carved shapes of light towards that part of the sky where the sun would rise.
> `You never lost it, Patrick' Jamesie said.

`You never lost it, Patrick' plays at two levels - the character's theatrical gifts and the persistence of the past. The final word is given to another gravedigger, John Quinn: 'It'd

nearly make you start to think: [John McGahern, That They May Face the Rising Sun (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), pp. 296-7.] Where did this Christian sun symbolism come from? How did it weaken without disappearing? In Part I, we address these two questions. In Part II, we ask: how can we re-activate a largely dormant pattern of symbols in a technological and urban world quite different from the world we see disappearing in John McGahern's elegiac novel? <>

Cultures of Eschatology:

VOLUME 1: EMPIRES AND SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITIES IN MEDIEVAL CHRISTIAN, ISLAMIC AND BUDDHIST COMMUNITIES. VOLUME 2: TIME, DEATH AND AFTERLIFE IN MEDIEVAL CHRISTIAN, ISLAMIC AND BUDDHIST COMMUNITIES edited by Veronika Wieser, Vincent Eltschinger, and Johann Heiss [Cultural History of Apocalyptic Thought / Kulturgeschichte der Apokalypse, De Gruyter Oldenbourg, ISBN: 9783110690316] Open Source

In all religions, in the medieval West as in the East, ideas about the past, the present and the future were shaped by expectations related to the End. The volumes *Cultures of Eschatology* explore the many ways apocalyptic thought and visions of the end

intersected with the development of pre-modern religio-political communities, with social changes and with the emergence of new intellectual and literary traditions.

The two volumes present a wide variety of case studies from the early Christian communities of Antiquity, through the times of the Islamic invasion and the Crusades and up to modern receptions, from the Latin West to the Byzantine Empire, from South Yemen to the Hidden Lands of Tibetan Buddhism. Examining apocalypticism, messianism and eschatology in medieval Christian, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist communities, the contributions paint a multi-faceted picture of End-Time scenarios and provide their readers with a broad array of source material from different historical contexts.

The first volume, *Empires and Scriptural Authorities*, examines the formation of literary and visual apocalyptic traditions, and the role they played as vehicles for defining a community's religious and political enemies. The second volume, *Time, Death and Afterlife*, focuses on key topics of eschatology: death, judgment, afterlife and the perception of time and its end. It also analyses modern readings and interpretations of eschatological concepts.

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Medieval Apocalypticism and Eschatology

In all religions, ideas about the past, the present and the future were shaped and made meaningful by beliefs and expectations related to the End Times. Such beliefs in the Last Things, ta eschata, have been integral to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, especially in the pre-modern era, and range from the final battle between good and evil and the dawn of a new, divine order to death, divine judgment and eternal afterlife. They also include the dreadful tribulations that every human will supposedly have to face before salvation. In the medieval West as in the East, eschatology seems to have been part of the foundation upon which societies were built. This period is often associated with anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ (parousia) or the advent of messianic figures such as the Hindu Kalkin and the Buddhist Maitreya that could bring both hope and fear. There was also a strong concern with the dates and exact circumstances of these events. In Islamic eschatology, stories about death, the afterlife, and the end of the world play a vital role in the Qur'an and Hadīth literature, as almost "every sūrah refers to eschatology, particularly to the physical rewards and punishments of heaven and hell", reminding believers that earthly deeds had an everlasting impact on the fate of the soul. From an anthropological and phenomenological point of view at least, this belief has much in common with Hindu and Buddhist conceptions about retribution for actions and the type of punishment or reward one can expect to experience in hell or in heaven. Parallels to the Christian expectation of Christ's Second Coming can be found in the prediction that the community of Muhammad would last for 167 years and thirty-one days after his death, creating a general atmosphere of expectancy or fear. Quite similarly, Hindus and Buddhists throughout Asia engaged in sophisticated calculations concerning the beginning and end of the kaliyuga, the advent of Maitreya or the final demise of Buddhism.

In Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu theologies, ideas regarding the end of the world and the advent of messianic figures developed alongside chronological models, revelatory literature, apocalyptic imagery from holy texts and the ongoing process of commenting on them, particularly in exegetical and historiographical works. These visions can not only be seen in a wide variety of theological and historiographical sources but also in hagiography, sermons and poems, and even in sources that we would nowadays group under the moniker of "pragmatic texts", such as charters and maps. In the Bible, the Books of Daniel and Ezekiel, the Revelation to John, and in the Qur'an, sura 18, 33, 41 and 81–84, which all mention the Last Judgment and the Hour among other things, offered key tools to decode God's plan for the community of believers. This plan would be revealed at the end of time, but would also be presaged on earth by signs and wonders. These texts provided central models for the medieval perception of the world and its peoples, for the interpretation of socio-political changes, for the understanding of astronomical and natural phenomena, and for the individual's path to salvation. In much the same way, narrative and/or normative Hindu literature such as the Manusmiti, the Mahãbhãrata and the Purãnas record End-Time-related interpretations of the health and morality of Brahmanical society, the legitimacy and relevance of royal policies, taxes, life expectancy, and cosmic and military events etc. At the same time, these bulky documents provided the Brahmanical elites with a rich repertoire of ready-to-use images and symbols that could give meaning to people's social, economic, political and religious experiences. This also applies to Buddhist canonical literature, which the Buddhist literati constantly resorted to in order to locate the present on the "timetables of decline", to find criteria to estimate the degree of the community's degeneration and to develop potent rhetorical tools to enjoin its repristination.

Texts containing divine mysteries and knowledge that could only be obtained and understood by true believers or insiders are central aspects of Jewish and Christian apocalypses, a Greek word referring to a divine secret (about the imminent end of time and of history, and the fate of the dead) that has to be revealed. Thus, in the context of Jewish and Christian apocalypses, the term "apocalypse" refers to both a particular

prophetic literary genre in the widest sense incorporating specific textual phrases and motives, and a scenario that gradually unfolds at the end of time. This concept of a divine truth that is revealed to a prophet can also be found in the Qur'an, and is known and referred to as The Revelation (al-tanzïl), God's message sent down to Muhammad.

In both Islamic and Christian theology, eschatology is bound up with a linear understanding of time, colliding at the end of the world. Time, history and the world itself, individuals and earthly powers, kingdoms and nations were thus subject to a divine plan. Eschatological ideas on temporal mutability, the transience of the world and political communities were often used to explain periods of political transition, scenarios of social decline or catastrophic events. To be sure, stories about the rise and fall of any empire could be framed with dates and decisive events, or according to the success or failure of its political and military leaders. However, the same stories could also be told as part of an apocalyptic scenario, as can be observed for the Late Roman Empire or in contemporary Byzantine commentaries on the expansion of Islam.

The Christian centuries have seen many different ways of proclaiming that the end was nigh, that the world was teetering on the brink of disaster or on the edge of a new epoch. Declarations of this type were the subject of numerous controversies over the course of medieval history, which connected religious authorities, theologians, ascetics, historians, radical thinkers, rulers, reformers or prophets of doom. The calculation of the end of the world using passages from the Bible or the interpretation of the Book of Revelation and its integration into the developing Christian canon were – and would remain – highly controversial issues. Central to many of these medieval debates was the question of whether apocalyptic visions or motifs were to be interpreted in a literal or in a spiritual sense. The belief in the imminence of the end of the world reverberated persistently throughout the Middle Ages and found its most prominent expressions in the expectation of the real advent of a messianic age coinciding with the return of Christ and the establishment of a one-thousand-year-long saintly reign on earth, which, in Muslim belief, has its equivalent in the appearance of the Mahdï and in the idea of paradise on earth. These concepts encouraged the establishment of parallels between

apocalyptic motifs, such as the Antichrist/al-Masï al-Dajjãl and Gog and Magog, and real-world events or peoples, creating an apocalyptic topography spanning from Jerusalem via Dabiq to the Caspian Gates, where the various prophesied End-Time scenarios could eventually unfold. Much the same can be said of Indo-Tibetan ideas pertaining to the city of Shambhala as it appears in Kãlacakra literature. Here, the dominant apocalyptic narrative, Kalkin's destruction of Muslim troops in Mecca, could be interpreted exoterically as referring to future events in the macrocosm and esoterically as reflecting processes at work at the level of the devotee's subtle physiology. And although apocalyptic ideas have often been held to convey dread and terror, destruction and devastation, their use and interpretation in reference to contemporary circumstances was not merely a theological reaction to political events. Apocalyptic imagery also concerned the very souls of believers living through what was thought to be the End Times and could be a driving force behind movements of reform as well as of personal transformation.

A question that occupied the minds of many medieval religious authorities was how to integrate apocalyptic imagery into religious identity. This need not have stemmed from a conscious decision on the part of the authorities to control "the" apocalyptic discourse but rather from an awareness of potential spiritual challenges facing the community. In general, pondering the relevance of apocalyptic notions to medieval societies belonged not only to intellectual controversies and doctrinal disputes but was also a matter of establishing authority and orthodoxy (if not orthopraxy), of balancing political power and social cohesion. Apocalyptic literature certainly contains a clear revolutionary potential, with its visions of the destruction of earthly powers and its promise of divine justice and liberation from oppression (Rev. 20; Dan. 2). These texts not only depicted scenarios of crisis and violence but could also be used to instigate political action, social change or revolutionary violence in pursuit of the millennium. In medieval Christian and Islamic communities, conquest, mission and expansion would be grounded in eschatology, with the crusades and jihãd being the most prominent examples. On the other hand, apocalyptic literature could also be used to express and overcome trauma, and to find relief and consolation.

Eschatology is often perceived as being inextricably connected to monotheistic religions, especially to the revelatory religions of the Book and their linear concept of time. However, eschatology and the drive to give history meaning by reference to existing prophecies and scenarios of the end are also integral to Hinduism and Buddhism, in spite of the fact that these religions operate with cyclic time. For, cyclic as time may be, the periods in which it unfolds are so big that their repetition makes no difference in terms of the devotee's and the community's conception of their present-day experience: that Maitreya will discover and preach Buddhism anew in a few billion years does not make the imminent loss of Buddhism less dramatic; that a new katayuga or "golden age" will rise at the consumption of the present kaliyuga or "iron age" does only little to alleviate the miseries of those suffering from terrible illnesses, the ferocity of soldiers, natural cataclysms and unrighteous kings. In other words, the cyclic time of dogmatic cosmologies is by no means incompatible with the linear time of human experience. Buddhists reckon with cosmic eras or eons organised into smaller periods, during which human life expectancy increases from ten to 80,000 years, before decreasing back to ten. According to their dogmatics, the final phase of a period of decrease is characterised by a set of five degenerations or corruptions (kalayas), which operate at the level of cosmic conditions (warfare, illnesses, famine), life-span, morality, wrong opinions and defilements. Down to the present, these five kalayas have been read as unmistakable signs of the End whenever Buddhist communities going through times of crisis and hardship thought that they perceived them in their immediate environment. Mutatis mutandis, the same can be said of the imagery of the demise of the good law (= Buddhism)â€ (saddharmavipralopa in Sanskrit; "æœ", mofa in Chinese and mappo in Japanese), perhaps the most central motif of Buddhist apocalypticism, according to which Buddhism, the very means of human salvation, is going to disappear after a period of gradual decline of 500, 1,000, 1,500, 5,000 etc. years. Again, that a new cycle will start, or that Buddhism will be "renovated" after a period of extinction, does not make those events less dramatic and their experience less linear.

Given this plethora of topics and different approaches, eschatology and apocalypticism constitute a dynamic field of research and have received much scholarly attention over

the past forty years, especially from the beginning of the new millennium onwards. The results of this renewed interest appear in a number of important publications combining studies in the literary traditions of apocalypticism with research on the social functions and cultural history of and the theological elaborations on apocalyptic imagery. For example, the three volumes of The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism (1998), the Oxford Handbook of Eschatology (2007), the Oxford Handbook of Millennialism (2011), the compendia Abendl Ãndische Apokalyptik (2013) and Penser la fin du monde (2014), and the Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature (2014) offer systematic, encyclopedic treatments of eschatology and apocalypticism from the ancient world up to the present day, from Jewish and Christian traditions to secular, post-apocalyptic appropriations. Building on the results of these substantial studies, the present volumes aim to introduce new, pre-modern perspectives to the field by comparatively addressing eschatology and apocalypticism in Christian, Islamic and Buddhist communities. While many studies so far have focused primarily on Europe, Cultures of Eschatology actively engages in cross-cultural comparison in order to shed light on specific literary, iconographic, intellectual and religious traditions. Apocalyptic thought is analysed from a multi-disciplinary and "trans-areal" angle, including contributions from history, social anthropology, religious studies, Christian theology, art history and philology. Through ing the geographical scope from medieval Europe to the Mediterranean world, the Near East and Asia, including India, Tibet, China and Japan, the contributions seek to come closer to an understanding of: how apocalyptic thought influenced and factored into the political and religious perception and self-definition of communities; what role it played in the construction of a community's identity or in the perception of an "other"; how eschatology contributed language, images, metaphors and models for framing history; how it impacted on individual perspectives on life, the world and the afterlife. Bringing together scholars with different research backgrounds provides a unique opportunity to reflect on the various ways in which divine presence was felt in the course of history.

The volumes Cultures of Eschatology paint a multi-faceted picture of End-Time scenarios in medieval communities. While providing their readers with a wealth of

information and a broad array of source material, these volumes also testify to the scholars' ongoing efforts to address the theoretical, methodological and terminological challenges of dealing with eschatology/apocalypticism. The terms "eschatology" and "apocalypse" have been subject to many scholarly debates in the past, and all attempts at providing them with generally applicable definitions remain controversial and problematic. Furthermore, even if Christian eschatology is not the primary focus of our volumes, we are aware that the terms and concepts we use in order to describe apocalyptic traditions and phenomena, including non-JudeoChristian ones, are deeply rooted in Jewish and Christian cultures and scholarly traditions, as well as in the traditions of an "enlightened Bible"40. Therefore, it is important to emphasise that, in general, we are using eschatology and apocalypticism as low-threshold terms in order to allow for a more pragmatic approach to comparison, even though some authors engage actively with the question "what is eschatology/apocalypse/apocalypticism?" from the perspective of their respective fields of research (Appel, Bergmeier, Günther, Heil, Lobrichon, Shoemaker, Zolles).

However, the heterogeneous understanding of "eschatology" and "apocalypse" may reflect not only different scholarly traditions but also the polyvalent and polysemic character of apocalypticism/eschatology itself in its different historical contexts. Our aim is thus not to generate new and disputable definitions or to advocate hermeneutic unity but to provide concretised perspectives. We therefore focus on five important features of pre-modern eschatology that could serve as vantage points for comparison in all religions under scrutiny and that are reflected in the individual sections of the volumes:43 first, collective eschatology provided medieval societies with a hermeneutic tool for understanding and deciphering the past, the present and the future, a universal and "divinely" foreordained framework for history and historiography, in which socio-political events were thought to unfold. Unravelling the meaning of historical events, change and crises often involved bringing the exegesis of holy scriptures, symbols and prophecies to ever deeper levels, the revealed texts being in turn, as it were, validated by history. Second, and in close connection to the above, eschatological scenarios tended to generate and to structure conceptions of cosmological time, be it linear (with

or without Final Judgment and like events) or cyclic (often involving a degeneration process). Third, eschatology defined and transformed space, differentiating between otherworldly and thisworldly dimensions and bringing together the universal/cosmic and the local. This could comprise a cosmic as well as a concrete earthly dimension, as when cosmic entities such as angels or demons were believed to interfere in earthly events or otherworldly, divine places were sought to be located or established on earth. Fourth, eschatology had a strong bearing on the constitution and strengthening of communities, providing them with powerful tools for identifying and fighting against disruptive forces, threats and enemies and expressing their concerns about their fate (salvation or restoration of a nation, a people or a group). Fifth, eschatology is not only concerned with the fate of empires and nations but also of individuals. All religions provide scenarios and itineraries for the personal afterlife that are mapped onto traditional, at times mystical cosmologies (certain areas of which can be strongly debated, such as Purgatory or some "karmic" destinies) and are conditioned by divine or purely mechanical retribution for individual deeds. Ideas of retribution and redemption combine the fear of death and salvation with ideas of judgment, repentance, reward or punishment in the hereafter.

Keeping these intersections in mind, we are not looking for direct parallels and prima facie similarities between Christian, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist eschatology. This is important insofar as the establishment of literary traditions, which could flourish for centuries, and the (re-)use of similar apocalyptic motifs and language over a longer period of time could result in longue-durée patterns of apocalyptic thought emerging that might at the same time obscure changing underlying concepts of time, identity and community at a specific point in history. Therefore, our aim is to trace the social dynamics and discursive strategies behind phenomena that either actually were or could be subsumed under the heading "apocalyptic" in order to construe heuristic hypotheses regarding possibly overlapping/converging scenarios, motifs and strategies.

The Contents of the Volumes: An Overview

The present volumes explore the many ways apocalyptic thought and eschatological visions intersected with the development of medieval political and religious communities, with social changes and with the emergence of new intellectual traditions. The chronological range runs from the early Christian communities of the first century through the times of the Islamic invasion and the Crusades and up to modern receptions in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The geographical focus spans from Carolingian Spain to the Byzantine Empire and from South Yemen to the legendary Caspian Gates, and also encompasses the Hidden Lands of Tibetan Buddhism and Japanese Shintõ culture. The contributions bring together topics that are central to eschatology, such as death, resurrection and afterlife, the end of time and musings about the transience of the world or of an empire, and consider them all as elements integral to visions of the Last Things rather than as separate phenomena.

The case studies draw on material from various historical contexts. They include the results of new fieldwork carried out in Tibet, India, Italy, Greece and Turkey (Bergmeier, Eltschinger, Gelle), as well as new findings from the study of ancient and medieval manuscripts – such as translations of newly found or underappreciated sources as well as a first critical edition of one recension of a wellknown apocalyptic text – or of material culture (Chen, Däumer, Dunn, Grifoni/Gantner, Heiss/Hovden, Kramer, Lobrichon, van Oort, Warntjes). While some contributions offer overarching perspectives on the different types of apocalyptic thinking in different religions (Appel, Buc, Chen, Doufikar-Aerts, Dunn, Günther, Lobrichon, Scheid, Tiefenauer, Zolles), others present in-depth case studies of a single source, of an individual's approach (Christys, Czock, Lucas, Sommer, Treml), of the use of a particular apocalyptic motif (Afentoulidou, Gelle, Heiss, Tealdi, Tiefenauer, Tottoli) or of a specific local context which helps to further elucidate the concept of eschatology/apocalypse at a specific point in history (Günther, Heil, Kramer, Palmer, Shoemaker, Ward).

While comparison is an important aspect of our analytical approach, it does not play an equally important role in all contributions. In some, comparison is the central starting

point of the analysis, either cross-culturally or within a specific context (Buc, Palmer, Ward). In other instances, comparison is carried out through examining how ideas of eschatology were introduced into different (religious) communities (Chen, Dunn, Scheid), how apocalyptic images and texts travelled (Bergmeier, Doufikar-Aerts, Grifoni/Gantner, van Oort) or how intertextual relations were established (Däumer, Eltschinger, Heil, Sommer).

The first volume, Empires and Scriptural Authorities, starts by examining the formation of literary and visual apocalyptic traditions and considering how these were embedded into religious communities and how they reacted to social developments and political life. The section Literary and Visual Traditions brings together overarching perspectives from medieval Christian, Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu communities. This first section starts with Guy Lobrichon's chapter on the overall role and pastoral function of the Church with regard to questions of the Last Judgment and salvation. Taking a closer look at the reception of the Book of Revelation and its medieval commentaries between the ninth and twelfth centuries, Lobrichon examines the various possibilities for interpreting its apocalyptic message, either in a literal or in a spiritual sense, which could in turn lead to the formation of radical ideas or result in attempts by the church authorities to channel the apocalyptic discourse. Lobrichon shows how, in the Carolingian era, Christian literary production, specifically of apocalyptic literature, became the task of ecclesiastical elites, while in later centuries apocalyptic discourse coalesced with the writing of history, most prominently in the works of Joachim of Fiore. Turning to Antiquity, Uta Heil argues in her chapter that in early Christian communities apocalyptic writing, specifically apocryphal apocalyptic texts, was primarily part of a literary tradition rather than an expression of cultural-historical notions. These texts, which were still being produced after the formation of the Biblical canon had been completed, did not deal with the end of the world and with apocalypticism as a cultural phenomenon, but had, as for instance the Didaskalia, a specific function in ecclesiastical practice and law.

Muslim apocalyptic literature, its rhetoric and imagery are analysed in Sebastian Günther's chapter. While the production or proliferation of apocalyptic texts is often related to an atmosphere of crisis or an event perceived as a catastrophe, Günther shows that apocalyptic ideas were inextricably embedded in a broad medieval Islamic discourse. This resulted in the development of a rich body of Arabic literature discussing topics that are central to eschatology.

Surprisingly, eschatological concepts entered the realm of visual arts relatively late in the medieval West and Byzantium. The complex relationship between text and image is addressed in Armin Bergmeier's chapter, which shows that medieval textual and visual discourse on the End Times did not develop synchronically. While images referring to the Book of Revelation had been in use since Late Antiquity, it was not until the high Middle Ages that a distinctive eschatological visual tradition emerged. Bergmeier discusses a rich corpus of Last Judgment iconography, introduces new perspectives on its interpretation and offers insights on recent scholarly debates on eschatology in art history. The development of Hindu and Indian Buddhist eschatological doctrines, literature and cosmologies is discussed in Vincent Eltschinger's article. It deals with the most significant instances of the Indian Buddhist appropriation of the kaliyuga – a central aspect of orthodox Brahmanical/Hindu apocalyptic prophecies – and engages in a detailed discussion of the question of whether and in which circumstances buddhas appear in the End, be it only of a single cycle.

Questions about the reinterpretation and recontextualisation of apocalyptic texts from a philological perspective are brought to the fore in the cluster on Scriptural Traditions and their Reinterpretations. This cluster deals with the question of how apocalyptic texts were rewritten over the course of time, how they were introduced into different communities and new contexts, how intertextual links to previous traditions were established and how new meanings were generated. The section starts with Michael Sommer's chapter, which analyses the intertexts in the Book of Revelation. Introducing different scholarly approaches and readings, Sommer examines the issue of the text's

authorship and intended audience, and shows how various scholarly prophetic traditions, debates over religious identity and the text's political dimension coalesced into a complex system of intertexts. Two centuries later, in the third century, Jewish-Christian communities, especially the Elcesaites, and their lively prophetic traditions provided a fertile ground for the development of the gnostic movement of Manichaeism, centred on the eschatological prophet Mani. Manichaean eschatological thinking spread from Mesopotamia as far as Roman Africa and Spain in the West and China in the East. In his chapter, Johannes van Oort argues that the newly discovered manuscripts of the Mani Codex demonstrate that various religious traditions, Iranian as well as Jewish and Christian, influenced the features of Manichaean eschatology.

One of the most famous early medieval apocalyptic texts were the Revelationes of Pseudo-Methodius, a world history that locates the events of the Islamic expansion within the context of Christian salvation history. Originally composed in northern Mesopotamia (Iraq) in the late seventh century, the text was quickly translated from Syriac into Greek and Latin, and a high number of medieval Latin manuscripts testify to its wide distribution and influence. One reason for its popularity was its multifunctionality. Examining the different redactions of the Third Recension, Cinzia Grifoni and Clemens Gantner show how the Revelationes could be easily adjusted to the interests of a Latin Western audience. A first critical edition of the Third Recension, using a newly discovered witness, is included. Questions of textual authority and community are also addressed in Matthias Däumer's analysis of the apocryphal Book of Watchers, which traces its images and ideas – such as the motifs of forbidden knowledge and forbidden gifts – from the Qumran fragments to chronological religious works from the high Middle Ages. Focusing on textual traditions, Däumer argues that eschatological motifs drawn from apocryphal literature could traverse different literary genres, such as the otherworldly journeys of Enoch that were revived and integrated in the popular genre of Jenseitsreisen in the high Middle Ages.

Apocalyptic texts such as the Revelationes, which emphasised and discussed scenarios of threat and crisis, played an important role as vehicles for propaganda, for defining a

community's religious and political enemies and for rallying people behind a joint cause. The cluster Empires and Last Days 1 analyses the role of empires in medieval apocalyptic literature and examines how musings about the stability or continuity of political communities, the perception of enemies, conflicts over religious orthodoxy, or acts of violence could be connected to ideas of the imminence of the end. Philippe Buc offers a comparative analysis of the role of eschatology in provoking violence and martyrdom in medieval Japan, Catholic Europe and the Islamic world. He shows how, during the First Crusade, biblical motifs of martyrdom and divine revenge were enacted in armed violence and in the liturgy, as people were convinced that they were living through the Last Days. The central role of imminent eschatology in early Islam is examined more closely in Stephen Shoemaker's chapter, which anchors this notion in a broader trend in the Mediterranean world of Late Antiquity, specifically in the political eschatology of the Byzantine Christian communities. Imperial eschatology played a significant role in the apocalyptic thinking of the time and finds an echo in Muhammad's teachings and the beginnings of Islam. The Islamic conquests, in particular, were often connected to eschatological hopes and ideas of inaugurating the events of the eschaton. Ann Christys' chapter zooms in on the question of how the expansion of Islam and the conquest of Spain were narrated in the works of the ninth-century Andalusi scholar Ibn Habib. Christys shows that in his History, which ends with an account of the rise of the Umayyads and a prediction of their downfall, apocalyptic ^adïth traditions are elements integral to the narration of historical events. Moral commandments and warnings that sinful behaviour would bring about the Hour stand at the centre of Ibn Habib's eschatological approach towards history. A complementary perspective on events in medieval Spain from the Christian communities is provided in James T. Palmer's chapter, which examines three different case studies concerning Christian writers in Iberia and Francia in the eighth and ninth centuries: the Adoptionist debate, the conflict over the martyrs of Córdoba and the Chronica Prophetica of 883. Palmer shows how apocalyptic thought offered a conceptual yet flexible repertoire to define Christian identity, to establish orthodoxy and to express ideas of inclusion and alterity with regard to heretical beliefs.

The contributions in the last section, Apocalyptic Cosmologies and End Time Actors, examine the connection between cosmological concepts, natural phenomena and political prophecy, and consider how they were embedded into apocalyptic discourse. In Tibetan Buddhist cosmology and eschatology, the tradition of treasure texts (gter ma), their revelation and the prophecies of the Hidden Lands all played an important role. Analysing the example of the Hidden Land of Yolmo, a mountainous area in Nepal northeast of Kathmandu, Zsóka Gelle shows how warnings of future decline, foreign invasion and catastrophes were interwoven with moral and salvific guidelines and ideas of a safe haven for an idealised version of Tibetan society to create a complex eschatological tradition. Faustina Doufikar-Aerts then examines on a broad level the motif of the apocalyptic peoples of Gog and Magog, which is central to medieval Jewish, Christian and Islamic apocalyptic discourse. She investigates its development and dissemination in medieval literary sources and cartography as well as in religious traditions, and shows that it was not only restricted to the medieval world but was also used in early modern times to signify struggle against imperialism, colonialism and political injustice. The apocalyptic interpretation of natural phenomena in Islam is examined in the chapter of Johann Heiss and Eirik Hovden, who analyse a story about a hailstorm hitting a village in the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula with regard to its religious and political implications. They show how apocalyptic interpretations were instrumentalised by Zaydï authorities in order to legitimate their war against the Mu^arrifiyya and to draw boundaries of inclusion and exclusion within the community of believers. The close reading of this case study allows us to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of a specific branch of Islamic eschatology and cosmology that has yet to be studied closely. In medieval apocalyptic literary traditions, not only Gog and Magog, unusual natural phenomena and the Antichrist have a prominent role but also the figure of the End Times emperor. The chapter of Elena Tealdi examines the depiction of the latter in the prophetical commentaries and works of the Friar Minor John of Rupescissa. Written against the background of the changing political landscape in Western Europe, his comprehensive œuvre is characterised by a belief in the

imminence of a millennial reign of peace. Tealdi examines the development of Rupescissa's prophetic concept and its transformation over the course of time.

The second volume, Time, Death and Afterlife, focuses on key topics of eschatology: death, judgment, afterlife and the perception of time and its end. The first cluster Death and Last Judgment starts with Roberto Tottoli's discussion of eschatological topics in Hadïth literature and in the stories of the prophets, focusing on how prophets were depicted facing death and reacting to the Angel of Death in Islam. These episodes touch on important theological aspects in Islamic thinking, such as the tension between confidence in God and fear of the Last Judgment. Tottoli's analysis underlines the significance of eschatological and apocalyptic beliefs in early Islam. While discussions of medieval apocalyptic thought often revolve around the development of computistic, astrological and cosmological ideas, Pia Lucas shows in her article that devotion and fear of God's Judgment played a vital role and could be factored into historiographical concepts. In the works of Gregory of Tours, written in early medieval Francia, the cult of the saints and their relics served as a sort of preview of the Last Things, making tangible fundamental Christian doctrines such as the afterlife of the soul, the resurrection of the body and the Last Judgment. By bringing the Last Things into the here and now, the cult of the saints reminded believers of the imminence of the end.

In the Carolingian world, biblical exegesis on the Book of Revelation and a general discussion of ideas about the future in times of political crisis could be connected to concerns about salvation and personal betterment. Miriam Czock's case study of Dhuoda's Liber manualis and her exhortations to her son to lead a pious Christian life examines the complicated nexus of temporal models, biblical revelation and exegesis, and assesses its impact on the discourse of Carolingian correctio, an issue neglected up to now. It shows how admonitions associated with specific ideas about both the future within the world and the spiritual future were set out in relation to ideas about redemption and the Last Judgment. In Japanese cultural history, fears and taboos related to death pollution are a pervasive motif. While Shintõ deals with life and the

concerns of this world, Japanese Buddhism specialised in religious services for the dead. In his chapter, which examines sources from the seventh to tenth centuries, Bernhard Scheid shows how Buddhist clerics became specialists in dealing with death and the ensuing pollution.

The idea that the souls of the deceased would undertake a journey and had to meet obstacles on their way was common to many religions and is examined in the cluster Afterlife and Otherworld Empires. Studying textual and visual sources, Marilyn Dunn examines the role of the belief in Last Judgment and an afterlife of souls in the process of the Christianisation of Anglo-Saxon England and considers how problems were addressed and adjustments made in order to accommodate eschatological beliefs. In early medieval Anglo-Saxon society, the deposition of grave goods with the bodies of recently baptised Christians shows how their previous belief in funerary ritual as a rite of transition to a relatively undifferentiated afterlife remained prevalent after their conversion to Christianity. The idea of "otherworld passports" also existed in the Chinese Buddhist afterlife, which was created, as Frederick Shih-Chung Chen argues, as a mirror-image of the living world, where the otherworld authority is modelled on a pre-modern Chinese bureaucratic empire and ruled by Indian Buddhist and local Chinese deities. Using mortuary texts and archaeological material, Chen shows that the adoption of imperial metaphors for the otherworld went hand in hand with the unification of Chinese feudal states during the Qin-Han period. Similarly, in Byzantine Christianity, the literary afterlife traditions and imagery reflected earthly political and administrative structures, as Eirini Afentoulidou shows in her chapter. Adverse powers such as military opponents or tollkeepers were part and parcel of these literary traditions, which were widespread in the Byzantine Church. In India, the development of hell as a place of judgment and torment went hand in hand with the emergence of ascetic religious movements and an increase in the range of divinities that promised salvation to their devotees. In his chapter, Marc Tiefenauer examines the development of the concept of hell in Hindu literature which went hand in hand with the emergence of ascetic movements, of Buddhism and Jainism, in the fifth century BCE. This concept can be found in particular in the Purãnas, which cover all cosmological topics.

The cluster Empires and Last Days 2 revisits the questions of the role of empires in medieval apocalyptic literature. It starts with an in-depth case study of aspects of the Gog and Magog story, which is analysed more broadly in the first cluster. Johann Heiss' chapter examines how different literary traditions were generated at certain points in the history of Arab peoples in northern as well as in southern Arabia. Heiss analyses, for instance, the work of Ibn Khurradãdhbih, which describes a mission undertaken to the dam against Gog and Magog under the caliph al-Wãiq. The other contributions in this cluster examine the nexus between the concept of linear time, apocalyptic expectations of Christ's Second Coming and the development of chronographical models, and the influence of ecclesiastical elites. Immo Warntjes' chapter on early medieval countdowns to the end of the sixth millennium examines both the complex traditions of the early medieval calculation of the date of Easter and the development of the incarnation era in the light of the religious, moral, intellectual and political interests of a Christian elite. In the Carolingian world, the eschatological understanding of empire played an important role in the formation of Christian identity. In his chapter, Graeme Ward examines three different Carolingian commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew, paying special attention to their use of the late antique historiographical work of Orosius, which was a valuable source of information for the birth of Christ. The text's focus on Roman imperial eschatology, advocating a succession of world empires, was transferred to the Church in Carolingian exegetical works. Ward shows how the great temporal distance between the works and the profound political changes that had taken place in the meantime led to different interpretations. Rutger Kramer then presents an in-depth case study of the enigmatic Chronicle of Moissac and examines the issue of the Carolingian reinterpretation and adaptation of earlier historiographical works. The composition of this text, which was based on a plethora of earlier works, reflects the interest of Carolingian intellectuals in the Apocalypse and emphasises the interdependence of Church and Empire at that time.

The final section, The Afterlife of Eschatology, examines modern readings and interpretations of eschatology, focusing in particular on the eschatological concepts of

time, history and messianism in the works of three widely received and important contemporary thinkers, Giorgio Agamben, Jacob Taubes and Michel Foucault. Kurt Appel examines Agamben's analysis of apocalyptic thought and the corresponding concepts of time on the basis of his interpretation of Paul's Epistle to the Romans and the Book of Revelation. He demonstrates Agamben's influence on the genesis of the essential Western concepts, categories and constellations of eschatology and highlights their political and noetic significance for the present age. Appel considers the development of current concepts of time and traces key categories of Agamben, who responded to today's virtualisations with the concept of messianity. Martin Treml examines Jacob Taubes' eschatological thinking and political theology and shows how his study of religious and biblical texts was interwoven with events in politics and with ideas of salvation and redemption. On a political level, Treml highlights two strands of Western religious thought, which were still influential during the Age of Enlightenment: revolution and its repression on the one hand, and the apostle Paul as role model and guide to an eschatological Lebensform on the other. Finally, Christian Zolles analyses the correspondences between Jacob Taubes' and Michel Foucault's respective theories about Jewish and Christian apocalypticism and touches upon what could have been illuminating discussions between the two on "the use and abuse of history". After providing an overview of the apocalypse as a historical concept, the common characteristics of Foucault's theory of genealogy and Taubes' conception of eschatology are outlined.

Most of the scholars involved in the making of these volumes, especially those who took part in the three-day conference in Vienna, remember warm and fruitful discussions between representatives of widely different disciplines and areas. In one way or another, these exchanges helped to shape the final form of the essays summarised above. Some of us also recall the medievalists' openness to enriching their apocalyptic and eschatological repertoire with non-Western materials. We editors hope that the present two books have remained true to this original spirit and that they will strengthen the belief of specialists in the strong heuristic value of the comparative approach to the study of apocalypticism, messianism and eschatology. <>

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