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EDITORIAL

Ideology. The problem

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"*Ideology*, n. pl. *ideologies*, Origin: 1790–1800; cf. French *idéologie*

1. The body of doctrine, myth, belief, etc., that guides an individual, social movement, institution, class, or large group.
2. Such a body of doctrine, myth, etc., with reference to some political and social plan, as that of fascism, along with the devices for putting it into operation.
3. Philosophy

a) The study of the nature and origin of ideas.

b) A system that derives ideas exclusively from sensation.

4. Theorizing of a visionary or impractical nature"[1].

An *ideology* is an organized collection of ideas. The word *ideology* was coined by Count Antoine Destutt de Tracy[2] in the late 18th century to define a "science of ideas." An ideology can be thought of as a comprehensive vision, as a way of looking at things, as in common sense and several philosophical tendencies, or a set of ideas proposed by the dominant class of a society to all members of this society. The main purpose

[1] Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1) based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2006.

[2] Antoine Louis Claude Destutt, Comte de Tracy (July 20, 1754 - March 9, 1836), was a French Enlightenment aristocrat and philosopher who coined the term "ideology". See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destutt_de_Tracy.
Also, see http://cepa.newschool.edu/het/profiles/tracy.htm.

behind an ideology is to offer change in society through a normative thought process. Ideologies are systems of abstract thought (as opposed to mere ideation) applied to public matters and thus make this concept central to politics. Implicitly every political tendency entails an ideology whether or not it is propounded as an explicit system of thought.

However, ideology tends to refer to the way in which people think about the world and their *ideal* concept of how to live in the world. This is slightly different from philosophy in the sense that ideology encompasses the concept that one's ideals are the best way. Philosophy on the other hand may examine the way ideology affects others from a more distant perspective. Philosophy however may become ideology when a philosopher sets forth ideal concepts for the way people should live. Plato's *Republic*, for example, is his ideology of the best way to proceed in life.

Today the term *ideology* is used in so many ways, that it is often difficult to know how to describe it. In some ways, the common, shared beliefs of a community may be considered its common sense ideology, which often concerns the protection of the individual and community as a whole. Also, ideology can be used in a more specific sense to differentiate between different groups of thought. Understanding these competing ideologies allows one more insight into how to address cultures with which one has either hostile or peaceful contact.

Within an ideology, there is normally a range of beliefs. Religious ideologies are a very important part of contemporary ideologies.

The German philosopher Christian Duncker called for a "critical reflection of the ideology concept". In his work, he strove to bring the concept of ideology into the foreground, as well as the closely connected concerns of epistemology and history. In this work, the word ideology is defined in terms of a system of presentations that explicitly or implicitly claim to absolute truth [3]. Though the word "ideology" is most often found in political discourse, there are many different kinds of ideology: political, religious, social, epistemological, ethical, and so on.

[3] For further information, see http://www.ideologieforschung.de/en/.

> "The religion is part of the ideology of the group; the ritual is a non-discursive element of the ideology. Given that rituals can have a long life, it is likely that at different historical periods the ritual will have been associated with quite different sets of implicit beliefs and attitudes. Again what sorts of beliefs and attitudes most people in the society naively associate with the ritual, or 'express' by participating in it, may be very different from the conflicting theological interpretations conceptually sophisticated members of the society give to the ritual. So at one extreme one has a set of ritual actions, a 'non-discursive element' in the ideology, and at the other a perhaps very sophisticated, explicit theology - a body of systematically interconnected propositions - and in between varying kinds of more or less explicit and more or less sophisticated beliefs, attitudes, habits, etc. Thus, I may decide that I would like to retain a close connection between 'ideology' and 'idea', and hence use the term 'ideology' to refer only to the beliefs of the agents in the society, i.e. only to the 'discursive elements' of the ideology (in the purely descriptive sense)"[4].

As Jorge Larrain tells us in his *Introduction* at *The Concept of Ideology*,

> "Ideology is perhaps one of the most equivocal and elusive concepts one can find in the social sciences; not only because of the variety of theoretical approaches which assign different meanings and functions to it, but also because it is a concept heavily charged with political connotations and widely used in everyday life with the most diverse significations"[5].

* * *

Today, the term "ideology" has many definitions. The present issue of the *International Journal on Humanistic Ideology* will cover the *Contemporary Ideologies*, from the Death of God or religious pluralism to

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[4] Geuss, Raymond. *The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982 (Modern European Philosophy), p. 7.

[5] Larrain, Jorge. *The Concept of Ideology.* Athens, The University of Georgia Press; London, Hutchinson, 1979.

the philosophical problem of knowledge, gender studies, theories about truth and Nothing, mythologies or political ideology.

The *International Journal on Humanistic Ideology* is a biannual scholarly journal devoted to the study of Humanities, the nature and origin of humanistic ideas. The *International Journal on Humanistic Ideology* encourages interdisciplinary approaches engaging the following domains: philosophy, philosophy of religions, political philosophy, political science, history, history of religions, history of ideas, history of science, anthropology, sociology, educational science and communications theory. One of its primary aims is the integration of the results of the several disciplines of the Humanities such that its articles will have a synthetic character in order to acquaint the reader with the progress being made in the general area of Humanistic Studies.

I would like to thank to all the Professors from the Scientific Board of the *International Journal on Humanistic Ideology* for their support and confidence.

PROFILE

Antoine Louis Claude Destutt, Comte de Tracy

a French Enlightenment aristocrat and philosopher who coined the term "ideology".

Destutt de Tracy's Life

David HART
Online Library of Liberty Project

Destutt de Tracy was born in Paris on July 20, 1754 and died in Paris on March 10, 1836. He was a *philosophe,* one of the founders in the 1790s of the classical liberal republican group known as the Idéologues (which included Cabanis, Condorcet, Constant, Daunou, Say, Madame de Staël), a politician under several regimes spanning the Revolution and the Restoration, and an influential author. When the Estates General were called to meet in 1789 he, although a member of an aristocratic family which had been ennobled twice (hence his name), joined the Third Estate and renounced his title. He was later elected to the Constituent Assembly and served in the army in 1792 under the Marquis de Lafayette. During the Terror he was imprisoned and only escaped execution because Robespierre beat him to the scaffold. It was during his period of imprisonment that he read the works of Condillac and Locke and began working on his theory of idéologie.

He was made a member of the Institut National in 1796 (he was part of the Section of the Analysis of Sensations and Ideas in the Class of Moral and Political Sciences, which was later suppressed by Napoleon in 1803)

and later appointed to the French Academy (1808). During the Directory Tracy was active in educational reform, especially in creating a national system of education. His membership of the Senate during the Consulate and Empire gave him many opportunities to express his "ideological" opposition to Napoleon's illiberal regime, which culminated in 1814 with Tracy's call for the removal of the Emperor. For this, he was rewarded with the restoration of his noble title by Louis XVIII later that year. Nevertheless, he continued to support the liberal opposition during the restoration of Louis XVIII and Charles X.

Although Tracy was active in bringing to power a more liberal, constitutional monarchy during the July Revolution of 1830 he quickly became disillusioned with the results.

Tracy coined the term "ideology" shortly after his appointment to the Institute National in 1796 to refer to his "science of ideas" which attempted to create a secure foundation for all the moral and political sciences by closely examining the sensations and the ideas about those sensations which arose in human beings as they interacted with their physical environment. His deductive methodology for the social sciences has much in common with the Austrian school of economics which emerged after 1870.

For Tracy, "Ideology" was a liberal social and economic philosophy which provided the basis for a strong defense of private property, individual liberty, the free market, and constitutional limits to the power of the state (preferably in a republican form modeled on that of the USA). For Napoleon, "ideology" was a term of abuse which he directed against his liberal opponents in the Institut National and it was this negative sense of the term which Marx had in mind in his writings on Ideology (he called Tracy a "fischblütige Bourgeoisdoktrinär" - a fish-blooded bourgeois doctrinaire).

The impact of Tracy's political and economic ideas was considerable. His *Commentary and Review of Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws* (1811) was much admired by Thomas Jefferson, who translated it and had it published in America at a time when a French edition was impossible due to Napoleon's censorship. In the *Commentary* Tracy criticised Montesquieu's defence of monarchy and supported American-style republicanism which

operated in the context of a laissez-faire economic order. Tracy’s multi-volume work *Elements of Ideology* (1801-1815) is his magnum opus. Volume 4, which appeared in 1815 and which dealt with political economy, was also translated and published by Jefferson in 1817. The *Elements of Ideology* was quickly translated into the major European languages and influenced a new generation of Italian, Spanish and Russian liberals who were involved in revolutionary activity in the early 1820s (the Carbonari in France and Italy, and the Decembrists in Russia). One of Tracy’s key social and economic ideas was that „society is purely and solely a continual series of exchanges” and his broader social theory is based upon working out the implications of this notion of free exchange.

Within France, Tracy’s work influenced the thinking of the novelist Stendhal, the historian Augustin Thierry, and the political economists and lawyers Charles Comte and Charles Dunoyer.

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THE TOPIC: CONTEMPORARY IDEOLOGIES

India's Religions: Plurality and Pluralism
Religious Pluralism as Ideology *

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Abstract

Religions occupies an important place in both private and public domains in India. This paper present India's major religions as practiced in everyday life. Plurality of religions in India is described at two levels: first, the global level, and, second, the intra-religious level. We'll analize these aspects from ethnographic and historical perspectives rather than from a theological angle.

Keywords: religions, religious pluralism, ideology, cultural traditions, secularism, community.

If the term "religion" may be used to refer to particular aspects of India's cultural traditions, the country can be said to have long been the home of all religions that today have a worldwide presence. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, called the Indic religions, were born here. Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, and the Bahai faith arrived here from abroad at different points of time during the last two millennia.

The plurality of religions in India is often obscured by the fact that Hinduism is generally regarded both as demographically dominant and culturally characteristic, even hegemonic, religion of the country, not only in popular imagination but also by official reckoning.

We described[1] the diversity or plurality of religions in India at two levels. These were, first, the global level, at which the major religions of India were in focus, and, second, the intra-religious level, at which sectarian or quasi-sectarian movements operates. We have seen that a native distinction between pluralist Indic religions and homogeneous (fundamentalist) Indian religions of foreign origin is wholly misleading. It is obvious that, whenever a religious community comprises many regional cultural groups, and also has considerable numbers, running into millions, internal plurality becomes inescapable. However, whatever is present empirically may yet be denied or deprecated ideologically. The question then is: has the long history of religious diversity in India produced serious arguments supporting and justifying the phenomenon? In other words, has plurality generated pluralism? (see Coward, 1987).

Contemporary ideologues of secularism, understood as religious pluralism, speaking on behalf of or within the Hindu tradition, often claim that pluralism is as old as the oldest Veda. It is recalled that the *Rig Veda* (I. 164.46) proclaims that "the Absolute is one, although the sages have given it different names". The oneness of the Absolute is the primary assertion here, but the fact that the wise sages choose to state it variously must imply worthiness of pluralism. This pluralism is, however, internal to the Vedic tradition. It is silent on inter-religious pluralism. Similarly, it is pointed out that the *Manusmriti* (ii. 14) resolved the problem of conflict between contradictory revelations by laying down that they are all valid and must therefore be respected. Although revelation *(shruti)* enshrined in the Vedas and other sacred texts is respected, it does not follow that it is widely known among Hindus, like, perhaps, the Bible is among Christians or the Qurān

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* This article represents an important part of T. N. Madan's "Introduction" to *India's Religions. Perspectives from Sociology and History*, Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 26-32. © 2004 by Oxford University Press. Reprinted with permission from Oxford University Press.

[1] See T.N. Madan, "Introduction" to *India's Religions. Perspectives from Sociology and History*, edited by T. N. Madan, Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 1-26.

among Muslims. In the absence of a single core text - the *Bhagavad Gītā* has come to acquire such a position in relatively modern times - or a single founder, or a set of irrefutable fundamentals, or the practice of conversion from other religions, it is not surprising that the Hindu religious traditions from its earliest beginnings has been marked by pluralist tendencies. These have been in consonance with the cellular social organization based on the institution of caste and are essentially hierarchical in character (see Madan 1997).

A further observation is relevant. The making of the so-called Hindu tradition has been a gradual process of fusion. It has been documented by historians how the carriers of the Brahmanical tradition, as they travelled east and south, established their hegemonic position through give-and-take (propagation and accommodation) (see Chakrabarti 2001). Cultural anthropologists engaged in fieldwork in the 1950s wrote about the processes of parochialization (the downward flow and spread of elements of the Great 5 Sanskritic Tradition) and universalization (the upward rise and spread of elements of the Little Folk Traditions) (see Marriott 1955). The homogenizing tendencies never had free rein and diversities have remained resilient and a distinguishing feature of later Hinduism (see Marriott 1976). In short, pluralism is said to be inherent in Hinduism in relation to its internal structure.

Such pluralism as is present operates within the Hindu tradition and is only derivatively applied to other religious traditions. Hinduism tolerates difference by incorporating and hierarchizing them: Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism are all considered inferior varieties of Hinduism. Moreover, conflict has not been altogether absent, as the record of the persecution of Buddhists and Jains by various Hindu groups, or of inter-sectarian conflicts between, say, the Shaivas and the Vaishnavas, shows. One can say, however, that the traditional Brahmanical notion of the legitimacy of the right of a group to its own way of life (*svadharma*; *adhikāra bheda*), without conceding that the different ways are of equal merit, is a form of pluralism.

In modern times, the Bengali mystic, Ramakrishna (1836-86) and his renowned disciple Vivekananda (1863-1902) are credited with promoting

the ideology of religious pluralism by word and deed. Ramakrishna was no intellectual, but in his quest for spiritual experience he practiced a simplified Islamic life for some time, withdrawing completely from his Brahmanical observances. He also disregarded sectarian differences among Hindus (see Sarkar 1993). Vivekananda formulated an ideology of pluralism, but it was based on tolerance of other religions rather than their acceptance as being equal to Hinduism. Indeed, within Hinduism itself, he raised Vedanta above all other creeds, calling it the mother of all religions and truer than any other religion. He was explicitly critical of Buddhism and Christianity. The ultimate goal of the Ramakrishna Mission, which he established, was the spiritual conquest of humanity (see Basu 2002). Often referred to as neo-Hinduism, this late nineteenth century development was a reversal of traditional internal pluralism, which was wide in range, and accompanied by such a diversity of belief and practice, that some Western scholars writing from the perspective of biblical religion, doubted if Hinduism could be called a religion at all (see Weber 1958:23). In its place, an inter-religious pluralism, but within a hierarchical framework, was sought to be put in place. Both innovations had clear political implications: the forging of a national consciousness in the context of colonial subjugation, on the one hand, and the projection of Hinduism as a tolerant, universal religion, ready to provide spiritual leadership to the followers of all faiths, on the other.

While Bengal witnessed these developments, Punjab was the scene for the flowering of the Āryā Samāj movement, founded by Dayananda (1824-83) in Bombay in 1874. He not only rejected post-vedic forms of Hinduism as erroneous, and condemned what he called "blind faith" (e.g. idol worship) and "harmful customs" (e.g. practice of caste and gender discrimination), but also denied that Christianity and Islam could be considered divinely inspired religions. He made derogatory observations about them as well as Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. The teachings of the Āryā Samāj represent the exclusivist strand of Vedic Hinduism, and anticipate later, explicitly fundamentalist, developments (notably the thesis of Hindutva, or Hindu identity) and militate against pluralism as an ideology.

In the twentieth century, Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) put forward the most explicit formulation of religious pluralism when he announced on 30 May 1913 that, in his opinion, "the world as a whole will never have, *and need not have* a single religion" (emphasis added). By acknowledging his indebtedness to Christianity and Islam, Gandhi implied that Hinduism could be enriched by incorporating in it some of the truths discovered by other religions. While he maintained that all religions were equally true, he added that, because of the limitations of human intellect, they were also equally imperfect. He refused to hierarchize the relationship between different religions, and thus moved in the direction of a genuine religious pluralism.

Writing in *Young India* in 1920 (11 August), Gandhi conceded that his critics were often right from their perspective in considering his ideas and actions wrong, while he was, from his own point of view, sure that he was right. Expressing his admiration for the Jain doctrine of "many-sidedness" *(anekantavād),* he wrote: "It is this doctrine that taught me to judge a Mussalman from his own standpoint and a Christian from his."

According to Jain ontology, whatever exists has three aspects: substance *(dravya),* quality *(gund),* and mode of expression *(paryāya).* Substance is not matter, for even the soul is considered a substance. *Dravya* is the means through which qualities exist. These qualities are numerous and their modes are infinite. Therefore, no ordinary person can perceive the existent in its entirety or "many-sidedness" (see Jaini 1979: 90-1). Hence the epistemology of *anekāntavād* or manifold aspects of reality. This doctrine has certain consequences, a notable one being conditional assertion (*syādavāda*). Absolute, that is unqualified; statements about existential reality cannot be made. Four specifications are required. These are: the specific being (*sva-dravya*), location (*sva-kshetra*), time (*sva-kāla*), and state of being (*sva-bhāva*) of the reality under reference (ibid: 94ff).

Buddhist pluralism is even wider in its scope, and nothing is expressed in unities. The four noble truths are at the very core of the Buddha's teaching. The first of these truths, namely the universality of suffering has many causes, notably worldly attachments (the second truth). The way to ending both (suffering, attachment) lies through the eightfold

noble path (the fourth truth), which brings release (*nibanna*) (the third truth), of which there are at least two modes. For the laity, there are three refuges the Buddha, the Law (*dhamma*), and the community (*sangha*). According to Mahayana metaphysics, even the Buddhas are many.

Doctrines of ontological and epistemological pluralism within Jainism and Buddhism do not, however, translate into inter-sectarian toleration. The original teaching of the Buddha came to be regarded, as already noted above, as the lesser vehicle (*Hinayāna*) by the later Mahāyānists who virtually drove it out to Sri Lanka. Jain sects too are characterized by mutual exclusiveness.

Islam is, as we have seen, the second major religion of India. Except in Indonesia and Bangladesh, there are more Muslims in India today than in any other country. The attitudes of Muslims to the phenomenon of religious plurality are, therefore, of great importance for the future of the ideology of pluralism. Given the fundamental Muslim belief that Islam is the most perfect of all divinely revealed religions, and that the Qurān is the World of God, any attempt to project pluralism has to honor these beliefs. A careful reader of the holy book of Islam will find many passages on which an ideology of religious pluralism can be based. To give but one example: "To you your religion and to me mine" (109.3), although this is often said to be applicable only to peoples with a revealed book.

In the mid-seventeenth century, Dara Shikoh, heir to the Mughal throne, disciple of a Sufi master and a Sanskrit scholar, made a close study of the Upanishads and even translated some of them into Persian. He concluded that they were revealed scriptures, anticipating the divine message of monotheism elaborated in the Qurān. He described Vedantic Hinduism and Islam as "twin brothers": for this he was declared a heretic by the *ulamā*, and beheaded on the orders of his brother, Emperor Aurangzeb, who had usurped the succession.

In the twentieth century, the most elaborate effort to argue for religious pluralism on the basis of the Qurān itself was made by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958), a profound scholar of religion and distinguished political leader. His many-stranded argument focused on, among other issues, the attributes of God and the true nature of divine

revelation. He maintained that the manner in which "divine providence" (*rububiyat*), "divine benevolence" (*rahmat*), and "divine justice" (*adālat*) are defined in the Qurān, it is obvious that Allah is God of all creation, and that the oneness of humanity is derived from the oneness of God. As for divine revelation, for it to be itself, it must provide guidance to everyone without distinction. Like Dara Shikoh, he detected significant common truths and insights in Islam and Vedantic Hinduism on the foregoing and other key issues. His effort, in the form of an exegesis of the Qurān, ran into difficulties with the *ulamā* who detected in it many serious flaws, including an alleged devaluation of the intermediary role of the Prophet and of the importance of formal prayer. In the event, Azad never brought his monumental undertaking to its conclusion (see Azad 1962).

Pluralism, as an ideological stance within the Hindu and Indian Muslim religious traditions, recognizes and respects plurality, but stresses the oneness of the ultimate goal of different expressions of the religious quest. It is an invitation to coexistence, dialogue, and even syncretism. Religious devotionalism (*bhakti*) of the medieval period in northern India, expressed through "the voice of the seekers of the truth" (*sant vānī*), was echoed by the ecstatic mysticism of the Sufis. Nanak, the first Sikh guru, was a unique representative of the *sant* tradition. He sought emancipation from all external formalisms (rituals, customs, and social distinctions) through a valorization of the inner spiritual quest. He dismissed the meaningfulness of the prevailing religious distinctions. More than a reconciliation or synthesis, his teaching presented a transcendent third path. The last of the Sikh personal gurus, Gobind, also declared that the true Sikhs or the Khālsā ("the pure" or "the chosen") would have to be different from both Hindus and Muslims in physical appearance (unshorn and uncircumcised) as well as moral fibre (expressed through a code of conduct beginning with formal initiation or *pahul*). He too pointed to a higher path transcending not only the divide between Hinduism and Islam, but also the inner polarities of the former (e.g. domesticity versus renunciation). Like the Hindu and Indian Muslim perspectives on religious pluralism, the Sikh vision too is hierarchical. Moreover, as we move from Guru Nanak to the tenth and last personal guru, Gobind, there is an explicit tightening of the

definition of Sikh identity, differentiating it from the Hindu identity and homogenizing it internally. In this context, the drawing up of the codes of conduct, *rahitnāmas* (see McLeod 1989) for the Khālsā is a significant development. For Sikhs generally, the only true source of spiritual knowledge is the *gurubānī*, the word of the Guru, as present above all in the Guru Granth Sahab. Those born to other religious traditions are welcome to embrace the Sikh faith and identity (hence the *gora* Sikhs of North America), but a Sikh who is lax in the observance of the Sikh way of life or, worse, follows the practices of other traditions is a lapsed or fallen (*patit*) individual. In short, the Sikh faith in its Khālsā version is exclusivist not pluralist. The Bhindranwale phenomenon showed that a fundamentalist turn too was possible (see Madan 1997: Chap. 3).

Within Christianity too, the theological trends of ecumenism and rluralism have been gaining ground worldwide. The efforts of scholars such as Raimundo Panikkar (1981), who is equally well conversant with the Brahmanical and the Christian traditions, to move from an exclusivist towards an inclusivist theological model of relating to non-Christian faith editions are noteworthy. Moreover, a theo-centric conception of salvation, in place of a Christo-centric one, which also has a growing appeal among Christians everywhere, is bound to strengthen the pluralist orientation. These developments should obviously be of great interest to all liberal-minded persons and not to religious people alone.

The task of developing a well-argued ideology of religious pluralism on the basis of the religions of India awaits serious and competent attention. The emergence of state-sponsored religious pluralism, summed up in the slogan *sarva dharma samabhāva* (equal respect for all religions), and presented as Indian (in contrast to Western) secularism, does not go very far in strengthening inter-religious understanding and appreciation (see Smith 1963 and Madan 1997). These values are more profound than a working strategy of passive tolerance, and will have to be promoted by men and women of faith themselves. As Gandhi pointed out, the task of the secular state is to leave matters of religion to the people.

Contrary to the assumption of many modernists that religious faith is necessarily exclusive and therefore results in communal conflict, there is

considerable historical and ethnographical evidence that the common people of India, irrespective of individual religious identity, have long been comfortable with religious plurality. They acknowledge religious difference as the experienced reality: they do not consider it good or bad. In other words, social harmony, or agreement, is built on the basis of difference.

The traditional élite of the nineteenth century were familiar with this folk pluralism, but considered it as no more than the ignorance of unlettered masses. Today's modernist intelligentsia has opted for the ideology of secularism. In its extreme version, it seeks to drive religion into the privacy of people's lives, if not altogether eliminate it. More generally and eclectically, secularism in India stands for mutual respect among the followers of different religions and a non-discriminatory state. This ideology envisages a pluralism that is a concomitant of structural differentiation in society. Needless to emphasize, the two pluralisms - the people's and the intellectual's - are different in several crucial respects. For example, and most notably, the former is wholly spontaneous - the lived social reality - but the latter is ideological, and in that sense self-conscious or constructed; the former is based on a positive attitude towards religion, but the latter is skeptical. Indeed, there is a hiatus the two pluralisms, but this has not been so far examined with the seriousness it deserves (see Madan 1997).

To write about religion in India without querying the notion of religion as a discrete element of everyday life is to yield to the temptation of words. The point is not that the religious domain is not distinguished from the secular but rather is regarded as encompassed by the religious - even when considered opposed to it - and not independent of it. The relationship is hierarchical. That is, religion in indigenous cultures is believed to be the foundation of society, and the traditional vision of life is holistic. This is the first principle for any discussion of religions in India.

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The Deification of Death in Postmodern Thought: A Critical Examination

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Abstract

After a brief survey of some postmodern thinkers on the subject of death, this paper examines Jacques Derrida's deconstruction of Martin Heidegger on the subject of death before examining Derrida's grasp of death. Then, the paper reviews the rationale for the postmodern deification of death within the context of Nietzsche's prophetic proclamation of the death of God. Finally, this paper addresses some of the philosophical dangers involved with the deification of death for postmodern philosophers.

Keywords: postmodern thought, deconstruction, *difference,* deification of death, *Dasein*, philosophy, phenomenology.

In his phenomenological description and analysis of *Dasein* in his work entitled *Sein und Zeit*, Martin Heidegger describes it as always coming-to-an-end, discovering itself thrown into the possibility of death. Since *Dasein* exists ahead-of-itself, it possesses openness for all kinds of possibilities, although these possibilities are not infinite, and it never achieves its wholeness as long as it continues to exist because it is already its "not-yet," or lack of totality. *Dasein*, a being-towards-the-end, attains its wholeness by means of its death because death is nonsubstitutive or my own, which suggests that death is characterized by mineness.[1] By

[1] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Robinson and John Mcquarrie, New York, Harper and Row, 1962, p. 303.

connecting death to mineness, Heidegger wants to suggest that a person can only die his/her own death, which necessarily implies that it is impossible for someone else to substitute themselves in one's place and assume one's death. Moreover, death possesses a binding power because it completes the totality of the existence of *Dasein*. Although it achieves its wholeness by means of its death, *Dasein* still loses its being, and it ceases to be designated as a being-in-the-world.[2] The important role that death plays in Heidegger's philosophy has been influential upon several postmodern thinkers, who have not only reacted in support of Heidegger or reacted against him at several points, but who have even taken the phenomenon of death in a radical direction.

The fascination with death among some postmodern thinkers extends in the direction toward its deification. For instance, Edmond Jabès, an influential literary figure and thinker, conceives of death as a universal power: "All is dead, and you think that you are living."[3] Jabès also views death as a revelatory power, a position with which the literary critic and theorist Maurice Blanchot agrees because death possesses the power to reveal knowledge and is absolutely necessary for liberation.[4] In a slightly different vain, Georges Bataille connects death with eroticism, an excessive, boundless energy that represents an insane realm of play and anti-social activity, which he envisions as paving the way for death.[5] In contrast to these postmodern figures, Jacques Derrida wants to say what Heidegger cannot say in his attempt to recover what Heidegger left unsaid about death because of its secretive nature.[6] Moreover, Derrida calls into question the conceptual distinctions made by Heidegger because he perceives a limit with respect to the topic of death. The heavy influence of Derrida can be seen in the work of Mark C. Taylor, who thinks that humanistic atheists

[2] Ibid. p. 281.

[3] Edmond Jabès, *The Book of Questions Vol. II* (Four volumes in one), trans. Rosemarie Waldrop, Middletown, CT, Wesleyan University Press, 1991, p. 129.

[4] Maurice Blanchot, *The Gaze of Orpheus and Other Literary Essays*, trans. Lydia Davis, Barrytown, N.Y, Station Hill Press, 1981, p. 43.

[5] Georges Bataille, *Death and Sensuality: A Study of Eroticism and the Taboo,* New York, Walker and Company, 1962, p. 24.

[6] Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993, p. 74.

have lacked courage by failing to realize that the death of God represents simultaneously the death of the self. In this paper, I want to develop more fully aspects of the positions of these postmodern thinkers and to look at the results of their reflections on death: the danger of moving towards its deification. Due to his importance to the so-called postmodern era, this paper will concentrate a bit more fully on the contribution of Derrida to the subject.

Death as revelatory and excessive

For both Jabès and Blanchot, death possesses a revelatory power. The former thinks that death reveals space, something within all of us.[7] In another context, Jabès also thinks that death allows us to view the world in the past tense and the future tense: as it was and as it will be in the future.[8] By contemplating death, our future condition will be revealed to us, and we will come to also realize that it is not much different than our past.

The revelatory nature of death, which is limited in its power, for Blanchot causes him to write ambivalently about it. Blanchot wants to make clear that death is necessary for liberation and knowledge: "Death alone allows me to grasp what I want to attain; it exists in words as the only way they can have meaning. Without death, everything would sink into absurdity and nothingness."[9] There is a sense in which death is limited because it fixes the final day of life for a person, and yet it also defers the event of death until an undesignated time. It is this observation that motivates Blanchot to think that there is something mightier than death, which he identifies with dying, a power that flees and pulls indefinitely.

Lacking location and time, dying is not an event for Blanchot that becomes, lasts, or ends due to the fact that it lacks a now moment.[10] Although it continually comes, dying never fully arrives, and thus it cannot reach a point of fulfillment, an end point, or conclusion. There is also something banal about dying: "'Dying,' ... is pure insignificance, an event

[7] Jabès, *Questions*, Vol. II, p. 241.
[8] Ibid., p. 308.
[9] Blanchot, p. 43.
[10] Idem, *The Step Not Beyond*, trans. Lycette Nelson, Albany, N.Y., State University of New York Press, 1992, p. 108.

without concrete reality, one which has lost all value as a personal and interior drama, because there is no longer any interior: It is the moment when *I die* signifies to me as I die a banality which there is no way to take into consideration: in the liberated world and in these moments when freedom is an absolute apparition, dying is unimportant and death has no depth."[11] Dying cannot finish or accomplish itself because death paradoxically prevents a person from truly dying, which tends to suggest the excessive nature of dying. More specifically, dying is excessive because: "It wrests from the present, it is always a step over the edge, it rules out every conclusion and all ends, it does not free nor does it shelter."[12] What dying indicates is that one is already dead in a past that one cannot recall a lack of anamnesis on the part of the moribund subject. By his emphasis on dying, Blanchot wants to suggest the excessive nature of death. Dying is also transgressive and prohibitive in the sense that it represents a step beyond and a step that at the same time cannot be taken. Dying is paradoxically a step beyond and a not going beyond. If death is about an event in time, dying is about the non-arrival of death.[13]

From another perspective, Bataille also emphasizes the excessive and revelatory nature of death. It is death that reveals the plenitude and richness of life, while also dissolving social order.[14] The excessive nature of death is evident within the context of what Bataille calls eroticism, an extreme emotion that seeks sensual pleasure. Eroticism, which is an excessive and boundless energy that originates from the alternation of affirmation and denial, is an insane world of play in which work is not possible. It is a realm that simply responds to one's passions within a solitary context, rendering eroticism a secret and anti-social activity.[15] By striking at the center of one's being, eroticism gives one a revelation of continuity in contrast to the discontinuity in which one normally lives.

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[11] Idem, *Gaze of Orpheus*, p. 40.
[12] Idem, *The Writing of Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1986, p. 48.
[13] John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion,* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1997, p. 82.
[14] Georges Bataille, *Theory of Religion,* New York, Zone Books, 1989, p. 47.
[15] Idem, *The Tears of Eros*, trans. Peter Connor, San Francisco, City Light Books, 1990, p. 44; *The Accursed Share*, Vols. II & III, trans. Robert Hurley, New York, Zone Books, 1991, p. 167.

Representing a trespassing of the restrictions imposed by taboos, eroticism paves the way for death.[16]

In his erotic novel entitled the *Story of the Eye*, Bataille creatively illustrates the intimate connection between death and the erotic when the female libertine rapes a priest. By administering physical and sexual violence, the female protagonist brings the priest to an experience of simultaneous death by strangulation and sexual orgasm, a unitive embrace of death and eroticism. This narrative episode indicates that death is the final sense of eroticism.[17] The examples of sexual relations with dead cadavers in the same work also indicate the close relationship between eroticism and death. These kinds of episodes also suggest the importance of the role that excess, violence, madness, wastefulness, and decadence play in the work of Bataille.

This heterological path paved by Jabès, Blanchot, Bataille includes Mark C. Taylor, a self-confessed American atheologian, who embraces Derrida in his work. Taylor thinks that death is not negation because life dwells with death and the latter is in the former. He clarifies his position: "Death, in other words, is a force in life rather then merely the tragic demise of life. The play of the word ends repression and oppression by bringing life that is death and death that is life."[18] Within this relationship, death plays the role of a parasite upon life, although it should not be regarded as an improper intruder or stranger.

Contra Heidegger

In contrast to Heidegger's emphasis on the mineness feature of death, Derrida interprets this aspect of death differently than the German philosopher, even though Derrida agrees that death is characterized by mineness in the sense that it is irreplaceable. Derrida agrees with Heidegger that one person cannot die for anther person. But Derrida reinterprets "my death" to refer to the death of the other in me.[19] In contrast to Heidegger,

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[16] Idem, *Death and Sensuality*, p. 24.
[17] Ibid., p. 141.
[18] Mark C. Taylor, *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology,* Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1984, pp. 145-46.
[19] Derrida, *Aporias*, p. 76.

Derrida argues that one does not aim at death, even though he shares Heidegger's position that human beings anticipate death. Derrida adds that one can also imagine death within the context of a similar chain of significations that reflect the anticipation of death. This line of thinking is suggestive of a close relationship between death and imagination for Derrida.

The intimate connection between death and imagination means for Derrida that the imagination shares the representative and supplementary characteristics of death. In other words, death is connected to imagination because it belongs to the same chain of significations as the anticipation of death. Derrida states his position as follows: "Imagination is at bottom the relationship with death. The image is death."[20] Due to this relationship, imagination shares with death its characteristics of being representative and supplementary. From the perspective of Derrida, it is thus a mistake to establish borders between life and death, although Derrida means this in a relative sense: life is relative to death and vice versa. He does seem to mean something differently when he states in two different works that "life is death"[21] and that "the purity of life is death."[22] But placed within the larger context of his philosophy, the relationship of life and death are related like a supplement, a position that exposes a lack at the center of life.

Derrida disputes Heidegger's contention that *Dasein* can be conceived as being-towards-the-end because he thinks that it is possible to consider that *Dasein* is immortal in the sense of "without end." Not only does Derrida make a distinction between demising (*Ableben*) and dying (*Sterben*), he also argues that one is at least imperishable, if one is not immortal as the *Dasein* that one is in fact: "I do not end, I never end, I know that I will not come to an end."[23] Within this philosophical context, the term immortal is interpreted by Derrida not in the sense of eternal but rather in

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[20] Idem, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, p. 184.
[21] Idem, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1978, p. 203.
[22] Idem, *Glas*, trans. John F. Leavey, Jr. and Richard Rand, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1986, p. 118.
[23] Idem, *Aporias*, p. 40.

the sense of Heidegger's term *verenden* which can be translated as perishing, suggesting that it retains the sense of a passage of a limit. From Heidegger's perspective, Derrida confuses a basic distinction between animals and humans because it is the latter that perish, whereas the former actually die.[24]

Heidegger is convinced that life and death interpenetrate each other. In other words, death is not an external power or threat to me that arrives from the beyond, but it is rather co-present with life. Thus it is not an event that necessarily terminates one's life; it is in fact an intimate part of one's life. In contrast to Heidegger, death is repetitive for Derrida in the sense that its potentiality is dependent on the possibility of the absence of the repeated and itself manifests the potential for self-duplication.[25] Standing at the dawn of life because everything commences with repetition, death repeats itself by redoubling itself, distributing itself, and repeating itself through and in life.[26] By calling attention to the repetitive nature of death, Derrida wants to paradoxically assert that it cannot be represented and yet is the condition for all representation.

In *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger discusses the significance surrounding the observation that *Dasein* awaits itself. Derrida draws forth some of the possibilities associated with the meaning of the term "await," which presupposes arriving late and not early as one might ordinarily think. Along a path of argument that Heidegger could find congenial to his own position, Derrida observes that "awaiting" involves imminence, the anxious anticipation of something, and a triple transitivity that includes expectation, the waiting for something to happen in the future that is other than oneself

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[24] Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Tübingen, Verlag Günther Neske Pfullingen, 1959, p. 177.

[25] Derrida *Of Grammatology*, p. 292. In contrast to Derrida and Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas thinks that death represents an unforeseeable character that can be traced to the fact that it does not lie within any horizon that one could possibly encounter. Levinas thinks that "Death threatens me from beyond", (p. 234) in *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Eight Printing, Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1990.

[26] Idem, *Writing and Difference*, p. 299.

and a mutual waiting for each other.[27] Heidegger does not share, however, Derrida's emphasis on the otherness of death that awaits one.

By stressing that death is *Dasein's* ownmost potentiality-for-being which is non-relational and not to be outstripped, Heidegger is emphasizing in part its future certainty. In contrast, Derrida calls, however, the certainty of death into question by arguing that its certainty is heterogeneous to any other. Derrida begins by retrieving Heidegger's assertion about death "'as the possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all.'" Then, Derrida deconstructs Heidegger's statement in the following way: "The *als* means that the possibility is both unveiled and penetrated as impossibility.

It is not only the paradoxical possibility of a possibility of impossibility: it is possibility as impossibility."[28] After exposing the internal contradiction in Heidegger's position, Derrida claims that death is the most proper and the least proper because it is respectively both possibility and at the same time impossibility. Derrida clarifies his position: "If death, the most proper possibility of *Dasein*, is the possibility of its impossibility, death becomes the most improper possibility and the most ex-pro-priating, the most inauthenticating one."[29] By means of his criticism of Heidegger, Derrida is attempting to introduce the principle of the possible into an existential analysis of death and to view death as the possibility par excellence. This enables Derrida to argue paradoxically for the impossibility of borders, artificial limits, and conceptual demarcations of the existential analysis of death. Derrida operates by marking and erasing the lines of demarcation, which actually erase themselves, and tracing the delimitations as still possible while also introducing the principle of their impossibility. This line of argument by Derrida makes it difficult for him to agree with Heidegger's contention that one can encounter death.

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[27] Idem, *Aporias*, p. 66. With respect to the emphasis by Heidegger on the imminence of death, Levinas thinks that time represents an interval that separates me from my death: "To be temporal is both to be for death and to still have time, to be against death", (p. 235) in *Totality and Infinity*.

[28] Derrida, *Aporias*, p. 70. Levinas reacts differently to Heidegger's position because he thinks that one does not fear death in encountering nothingness, but rather one fears violence that extends to the fear of others (p. 235) in *Totality and Infinity*.

[29] Derrida, *Aporias*, p. 77.

According to Derrida, it is impossible for a person to encounter death, if we think of a person as *Dasein* because Heidegger wants to insist that death is the possibility of the impossible and the possibility of an appearance of the impossibility of appearing. Derrida asserts that no person possesses a relation to death in itself, although it is possible to have a relation "only to perishing, to demising, and to the death of the other, who is not the other."[30] Derrida claims that we never directly face death, but approach it circuitously through the detour of historical time and space. In contrast to Heidegger, Derrida stresses that we must be more intellectually honest when approaching the subject of death: "Rather, it seems to me that one should say the opposite: it is the originary and underivable character of death, as well as the finitude of the temporality in which death is rooted, that decides and forces us to decide to start from here first, from this side here."[31] Whatever methodological decision one might make about how or where to begin it involves certain consequences and assumptions. If one assumes that a given method is better than no method, there are shortcomings that one must expect, whereas to decide for a non-method like Derrida means that a few corollaries will follow that are desirable from his perspective. These corollaries include the following: death will have no border; a neutral politics of death will become possible; and a place will be made for mourning. These features are absent from Heidegger's treatment of death. We still need to examine Derrida's grasp of death more fully apart from his criticism of Heidegger in order to get a more complete understanding of his statements on the subject.

Death as abyss

We have seen that for Derrida human beings never aim at death, even though it is the end of life, and humans do not directly face death. Nonetheless, death possesses the potential to function as a revelatory power about the nature of the self in the sense that it points to the lack of its presence. According to Derrida, the experience of my death, as an "I am

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[30] Ibid., p. 76.
[31] Ibid., p. 55.

present," does not affect or modify me in any way. Derrida makes this clear in the following way:

> "The I am, being lived only as an *I am present*, itself presupposes in itself the relationship to presence in general, to being as presence. The appearing of the *I* to itself in the *I am* is thus originally a relation to its own possible disappearance. Therefore, *I am* originally means *I am mortal*. *I am immortal* is an Impossible proposition."[32]

As one indirectly encounters his/her own death, such a person therein constitutes his/her own subjectivity.[33] This tends to suggest that death is not an isolating factor in life, but is rather a unifying factor.

Derrida also connects death, a radical absence of both subject and object, with *différance*, which he uses in his philosophy as a neologism. Derrida clarifies the connection between them: "Death is the movement of difference to the extent that that movement is necessarily finite. This means that difference makes the opposition of presence and absence possible."[34] *Différance*, which is neither simply a word nor a concept, is a necessarily finite movement that precedes and structures all opposition. Without being active or passive, *différance* originates before all differences, and represents the play of differences. It is impossible for it to be exposed because it cannot reveal itself in the present moment and never produces presence itself, whose structure is constituted by difference and deferment.[35]

If death represents the movement of *différance*, it is a repetitive movement. According to Derrida, human beings cannot repeat, reproduce, or represent anything with any finality. And yet they continually repeat, reproduce, and represent. To assert that death is repetition means that it represents repeatability or the repetitions of repetition. This observation suggests that death is repetition in the sense that its potentiality depends on the possibility of an absence of the repeated, and represents the possibility

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[32] Idem, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 54.

[33] Idem, *Of Grammatology*, p. 69. In contrast to Derrida, Emmanuel Levinas thinks that solitude is disrupted by death and not confirmed bny it (p. 74) in *Time and Other*, trans. Richard Cohen, Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1987.

[34] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 143.

[35] Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 134.

of self-duplication.[36] At this point, the intention of Derrida is to indirectly demonstrate that death is an abyss, a term that implies that death is radically unknowable and intrinsically unnameable. This position also suggests that death cannot be formalized. By referring to death as an abyss, there is a possibility for repetition, a process that kills both the repeater and the repeated. Derrida is paradoxically asserting that death is both non-representable and a condition for all representation.

Deification of death

Heidegger is not the inspiration for the apparent deification of death by other postmodernist, even though the subjects of time and death play such a prominent role in his phenomenological work. Heidegger refers to death as the shrine of nothing, hi this way, Heidegger emphasizes that this shrine of nothing or death is the shelter of Being.[37] In fact, Heidegger does not claim that Nietzsche's proclamation "God is dead" means that there is no God in his work *Holzwege*. Drawing instead some other conclusions about Neitzsche's prophetic utterance, Heidegger states, for instance, that the claim that "God is death" means that the spiritual world is bereft of an effective power; it establishes nothing in the sense of the absence of a spiritual and binding world; it reflects the end of the goal for earthly life; it marks the end of Nietzsche's metaphysics; the words reflect anger; and it means that God is removed from living presence.[38] If the proclamation of God's demise by Nietzsche represents the end of his understanding of metaphysics, he remains guilty, from Heidegger's perspective, of forgetting Being.

The movement toward the deification of death by some postmodernist must be understood within the context of Nietzsche's prophetic proclamation of the death of God. Unlike Blanchot and Derrida, Jabès, for instance, connects the immortality of God with the equal immortal nature of death, which shares a common holiness.[39] In fact, death is prior to

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[36] Idem, *Of Grammatology*, p. 292.
[37] Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, p. 177.
[38] Idem, *Holzwege,* Frankfurt, Vittorio Klostermann, 1965, pp. 200, 203, 209, 240.
[39] Jabès, pp. 226, 293.

God in the sense that it existed before God.[40] God, an uncreated, created and destroyed deity, which means that: "God is before and after God. God died in creating, in creating Himself, that is to say in multiplying His death."[41] God, a sum of all differences, chose death in order to live, and he granted human beings life in order for them to die. From an even more ironical perspective, Jabès claims that "God is the death of man, and man a moment in the graven death of God."[42] Even though God is absence, Jabès wants to affirm that He is present in the book where writing ironically reflects absence and an empty page represents presence.[43]

In contrast, Blanchot more unequivocally equates God with death: "From the death of God it follows that death is God."[44] An imitative assertion is "Man is dead." Blanchot means that death eliminates the divine and allows for new possibilities. Moreover, the claim that man is dead points to his transitory nature. This can result with either the advent of a super humanity or the denunciation of humanity.

Contrary to Blanchot's direct equation of God and death, Bataille is somewhat more indirect because death must be grasped in connection with eroticism, a solitary activity that is secret. This is due not only to the centrality of eroticism in his thought, but is also due to the influence of Nietzsche. If the death of God for Nietzsche involved the transvaluation of all values, this same event provides Bataille with the foundation for a mode of thinking that is atheological.[45] Bataille perceives a symbiotic relationship between death and eroticism. On the one hand, consciousness of death opposes the advent of eroticism, an excessive joy. On the other hand, our sexual activity calls our attention to death. Thus the knowledge of death and sexuality are in tandem with each other. It is this awareness of death that "deepens the abyss of eroticism."[46] In fact, although death and sexuality are opposite processes, they can be reconciled to the extent of a fusion that

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[40] Ibid., p. 8.
[41] Ibid., p. 35.
[42] Ibid., p. 65.
[43] Ibid., p. 213.
[44] Blanchot, *Writing of the Disaster*, p. 91.
[45] Allen S. Weiss, *The Aesthetics of Excess*, Albany, N.Y., State University of New York Press, 1989, p. 14.
[46] Bataille, *Accursed Share*, p. 84.

represents a *coincidentia oppositorum* in which *eros* and *thantos* are united in a divine embrace. Referring to the erotic stone cravings on Hindu temples in India, Bataille uses these images as proof the divine.[47] By taking eroticism to its extreme, its final sense becomes death, and it, moreover, paves the way to death.[48] Therefore, the divinity and sacredness of eroticism reflects that which is excessive, mad, violent, heterogeneous, and death as divine.

Not unlike Nietzsche's prophetic figure, Derrida perceives something positive in the death of God: "The death of God will ensure our salvation because the death of God alone can reawaken the Divine."[49] It is the fault of human beings who have misused God to ruin the divine by allowing them to be separated from life by God, a sin against the divine. If God is dead, does this mean that human beings have nothing to fear? Derrida's answer is no because "It is not the living God, but the Death-God that we should fear. God is Death."[50] There is no reason to fear the so-called living God because the term "God" is a mere trace that names nothing-neither this nor that-that is permanent and does not even signify a divinity. This trace, which becomes legible at the edge of language, does, however, signify an event that renders speech possible.[51] This event assumes the form of a seal, which is inscribed with an indecipherable and uneffaced signature, which is committed to keeping a secret. This sealed event corresponds to a borderline experience, a movement of dislocation, at the edge of language that involves a twofold movement of withdrawing and overflowing. The event, a deferred action, represents the coming of writing, a kind of *post-scriptum* that is akin to a countersignature.[52] Derrida refers to a movement of transcendence, which represents a beyond that surpasses God Himself and His being, essence, selfhood, or divinity.

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[47] Idem, *Death and Sensuality*, p. 134.
[48] Ibid., p. 24.
[49] Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 184.
[50] Ibid., p. 246.
[51] Idem, *Psyché: Inventions de l'autre,* Paris, Galilée, 1987, p. 560.
[52] Idem, "Post-Scriptum: Aporias, Ways, and Voices", trans. John P. Leavey in *Derrida and Negative Theology*, ed. Harold Coward and Toby Foshay, Albany, N.Y., State University of New York Press, 1992, pp. 303-04.

Derrida wants to move beyond even apophatic statements about God. He is trying to point beyond God as name, naming, named, or nameable. He wants to avoid reference to the presence or absence of some thing. Borrowing from Heidegger the term *Gelassenheit*, Derrida wants to stress leaving God be beyond Being, to let God be beyond presence or absence. There is an advantage to be gained from practicing *Gelassenheit* with respect to God: "It opens the play of God (of God and with God, of God with self and with creation); it opens to the enjoyment of God."[53]

Following in the Derrida's deconstructive path, Taylor argues that the humanistic atheist must experience God as death rather than denying it. Taylor makes this absolutely clear: "'The death of God,' therefore, signifies not only the death that God suffers but also the death that is God's or that God is."[54] If God is equated with death, the absolute master becomes death. In a way similar to the philosophy of Nietzsche, a result of the death of God is that the highest values devalue themselves. Moreover, the murder of God is exposed in an act of self-deification. The murder of God lacks courage in the sense that "If God is death, then the murder of God seems to be the denial of, or flight from, death."[55] Not only is the murder of God an act of self-deification, it is also an extreme manifestation of narcissism, which in the final analysis is nihilistic. Taylor interprets the death of God as a liberating experience because it "unleashes the aberrant levity of free play."[56] This camivalesque play disrupts, inverts, upsets, and overturns traditional hierarchies, inherited values, and established meanings, creating a perverse and subversive world in which one can wander aimlessly.

Dangers involved

The movement toward the deification of death by some postmodern thinkers represents a response to the void created by the prophecy of the death of God. Moreover, the postmodern fascination with death culminates with its near deification or actual deification in some cases, if we accept the

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[53] Ibid., p. 317.
[54] Taylor, p. 25.
[55] Ibid., p. 30.
[56] Ibid., p. 159.

radical rhetoric of some postmodern writers. At the very least, death seems to have become an absolute criterion. The emphasis on heterology by these postmodern thinkers leads to a substitution of God as life and the source of life with its opposite or death because of the conviction that everything includes it opposite. The emphasis on eroticism, play, and irony within the context of death is also indicative of the decadent nature of much of postmodern thinking. With the possible exception of Heidegger, our thinkers as a group seem to suggest liberation of instinct and consciousness. If one follows someone like Bataille or Taylor, this new paradise of liberation is characterized by polymorphous perversity, which suggests a shift in sensibility, understanding and practices.

The change involves partly a will to death that becomes something positive. Lacking any philosophical foundations for these extreme skeptics, death assumes the role of the sole finality, whereas suicide becomes a revolutionary act, an authentic political gesture. Death and suicide are preferable to waiting for a political scenario to emerge because such a possibility will not be much different than the current situation to really matter. In the final analysis, there is no hope and certainty that the human situation will improve.[57] Death, suicide, and nothingness are embraced instead in a positive way.

The emphasis by some postmodern thinkers on nothingness, difference, and apophatic expression is evidence of a reaction against representational thinking. It is also evidence of a reaction against the philosophy of presence. From the perspective of Derrida, Heidegger's philosophy of presence, for instance, must be overcome because of its hidden metaphysical assumptions. In fact, it can be ironically asserted that Derrida, a master of irony himself, needs the so-called philosophy of presence to overcome. If writing leads to more writing for Derrida, he would have nothing to write about without the philosophy of presence.[58] From another perspective, there is another irony embodied in Derrida's notion of

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[57] Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 143.
[58] Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism (Essays 1972-1980)*, Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press, 1982; Reprint 1994, p. 108.

the inexorable nature of writing and death because the event of death brings about the end of writing.

I think that Heidegger is prophetic in his anticipation of the term postmodernism: "Western history has now begun to enter into the completion of that period we call the *modern*, and which is defined by the fact that man become the measure and the center of beings."[59] The vision of the end of metaphysics by Heidegger in his latter works serves as a philosophical inspiration for postmodern thinkers, as well as the Dionysian vision of Nietzsche with its call for frivolity, artistic creativity, and playfulness. It is ironical and even strange that some postmodern thinkers chose to replace the metaphysical God with metaphysics of death.

Within the context of his attempt to deconstruct western metaphysics, Derrida denies that there is any such thing as a metaphysical concept or name: "The 'metaphysical' is a certain determination or direction taken by a sequence or 'chain.'"[60] Derrida calls attention to the connection between visual metaphors and thought in western philosophy that makes it a captive to heliocentric metaphysics, in fact, metaphysical concepts are worn out metaphors, which themselves are metaphysical concepts.[61] If the term God is a worn out metaphor that is now dead, is not the substitution of or equation with death another form of metaphysics? Derrida's provocative comments about death appear to allow a negative type of metaphysics in the philosophical back-door, while he is attempting to deconstruction the metaphysics that appears at his front door.

Richard Rorty agrees with Derrida that visual metaphors play a major role in shaping our philosophical viewpoints. A basic presupposition from which Rorty argues his position is the role of the mirror in western philosophy: "It is pictures rather than propositions, metaphors rather than statements, which determine most of our philosophical convictions. The picture which holds traditional philosophy captive is that of the mind as a

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[59] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche Volume IV: Nihilism*, trans. Frank A. Capuzz and ed. David Farrell Krell, San Francisco, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1982, p. 28.

[60] Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981, p. 6.

[61] Idem, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986, pp. 258, 261.

great mirror … Without the notion of the mind as mirror, the notion of knowledge as accuracy of representation would not have suggested itself."[62] Although metaphors do not have a precise meaning, they can function as a new and useful way of speaking that can potentially produce an effect that steers a safe course between the hazards of realism, idealism, and skepticism.

In contrast to Rorty's philosophy, Derrida sees the western metaphysical tradition as representing what he calls logocentrism, a perspective from which the Greek logos implicitly connects the faculty of speech with the notion of reason. He views logocentrism as supporting "the determination of the being of the entity as presence."[63] Since there is only a closed chain of signifiers that point only to itself for Derrida, it is not possible to have a direct encounter with an object of language. Without anything external to the chain of signifiers, presence is always deferred. Logocentrism can be overcome by means of grammatology, a new discipline of writing. Since it is impossible to step outside of metaphysics, this new discipline uses the tools of metaphysics against it when deconstructing it. Although Rorty agrees with Derrida on the significance of metaphors in shaping our philosophical positions, he asserts that Derrida does not offer "rigorous arguments against logocentrism."[64] Moreover, Paul Ricoeur accuses Derrida of engaging in metaphysics, or more precisely, being ignorant of the "simultaneous play of unacknowledged metaphysics and worn-out metaphor."[65] Derrida responds to such criticism by replying that our thinking is necessarily metaphysical, and there is little hope that we will escape metaphysics in the future.[66] From Derrida's perspective, it is possible, however, to push philosophy to its limits and write about problems

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[62] Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 12.

[63] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 12.

[64] Richard Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers, Vol. 2*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 13.

[65] Paul Ricoeur, *The Role of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. Robert Czerny, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1977; Reprint 1991, p. 284.

[66] Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981, p. 17.

on the margins of the western philosophical tradition. Without an ontological or philosophical center, it is dangerous and risky to argue from the margins of philosophy. And it is possible to miss the dangers associated with the apparent deification of death and its ascension to a new metaphysical principle.

The understanding of Being as a logical problem

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Abstract

The present paper is not an interpretation of the Heideggerian conceptualizations about Being or logic, but an account of some aspects of Heidegger’s “encounters” with logic, namely:

1. Heidegger’s attitude regarding logic.
2. Why does logic have to become onto-logic, i.e. a more originary interrogation (as a questioning of Being).
3. Apory of thematizing: some comments.

The explanation of these aspects will be focused on identification in Heidegger’s writings of the respective fragments.

Keywords: Heidegger, *Dasein*, Being, logic, apory, understanding

1. *Heidegger’s attitude regarding logic*

For Martin Heidegger the problem of understanding Being and, therefore, the answer to the question “What is Being?” are not logical issues, at least not in the sense of the traditional logic or its formal varieties. The more so, as in questioning as such regarding what the Being is we already move ourselves in a primary understanding and which has nothing to do with logic.

> “Diese leitende Hinblicknahme auf das Sein entwächst dem durchschnittlichen Seinsverständnis, in dem wir uns immer schon bewegen, *und das am Ende zur Wesensverfassung des Daseins selbst gehört*. Solches ‘Voraussetzen’ hat nichts zu tun mit der Ansetzung eines unbewiesenen Grundsatzes, daraus eine Satzfolge deductiv abgeleitet wird”[1].
>
> “This guiding activity of taking a look at Being arises from the average understanding of Being in which we always operate and *which in the end belongs to the essential constitution of Dasein itself*. Such ‘presupposing’ has nothing to do with laying down an axiom from which a sequence of propositions is deductively derived”.

Then, in the field of analyses of identity and difference, for example, we do not find formal deductions of any kind, for in this register we do not prove anything, but point out many[2]. And the lecture course *What is Metaphysics*?, as Heidegger tells us in *Postscript* (1943), “declares itself against logic”[3]. Even the rejection of the inconsistencies, required by logic, will not be something derivable in the field of the essential thinking[4].

Why does Heidegger declare himself against logic?

The analysis of any philosophical concept in Heidegger’s work can give us an answer to this question. But cardinal remains the *ontological difference*, introduced in the form of a distinction between being and Being. This determines the other significant differences: ontical truth - ontological truth, calculating (logical) thinking - essential thinking.

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[1] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (*SZ*), Siebzehnte Auflage, Max Niemayer Verlag, Tübingen, 1993, 8; engl. transl., J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, *Being and Time*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1973.

[2] “Beweisen läßt sich in diesem Bereich nichts, aber weisen manches”, *Identität und Differenz* (*ID*), Neunte Auflage, Neske, 1980, 8.

[3] Martin Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik*? (*WM*), Siebte Auflage, V. Kolstermann, Frankfurt/M, 1955, Nackwort, 45: “Die Vorlesung entscheidet sich gegen die Logik”.

[4] “Alles Widerlegen im Felde des wesentlichen Denkens ist töricht”, *Brief über den Humanismus* (*BH*), in *Wegmarken*, zweite durchg. Auflage, V. Klostermann, Frankfurt/M, 1976, 336.

2. *Why does logic have to become onto-logic?*

Let us see, by considering the above conceptual pairs, Heidegger's reasons for rejecting the logic and his arguments for this approach.

a) The negation of logic, as an operation of reason, leaves out the possibility of thematizing Nothing (*das Nichts*).

> "Was ist das Nichts? Schon der erste Anlauf zu dieser Frage zeigt etwas Ungewöhnliches. In diesem Fragen setzen wir im vorhinein das Nichts als etwas an, das so und so 'ist' – als ein Seiendes. Davon ist es aber doch gerade schlechthin unterschieden. Das Fragen nach dem Nichts – was und wie es, das Nichts, sei – verkehrt das Befragte in sein Gegenteil. Die Frage beraubt sich selbst ihres eigenen Gegenstandes.
>
> Dementsprechend ist auch jede Antwort auf diese Frage von Hause aus unmöglich. Denn sie bewegt sich notwendig in der Form: das Nichts 'ist' das und das. Frage und Antwort sind in Hinblick auf das Nichts gleicherweise in sich widersinnig.
>
> So bedarf es nicht erst der Zürückweisung durch die Wissenschaft. Die gemeinhin beigezogene Grundregel des Denkens überhaupt, der Satz vom zu vermeidenden Widerspruch, die allgemeine 'Logik", schlägt diese Frage nieder. Denn das Denken, das wesenhaft immer Denken von etwas ist, müßte als Denken des Nichts seinem eigenen Wesen entgegenhandeln"[5].

> "What is Nothing? Even the initial approach to this question shows us something out of the ordinary. So questioning, we postulate Nothing as something that somehow or other 'is' – as an entity (*Seiendes*). But it is nothing of the sort. The question as to the what and wherefore of Nothing turns the thing questioned into its opposite. The question deprives itself of its own object.
>
> Accordingly, every answer to this question is impossible from the start. For it necessarily moves in the form that Nothing 'is' this, that or the other. Question and answer are equally nonsensical in themselves where Nothing is concerned.

[5] *WM*, 27-28. Engl. version from M.J. Adler (ed.), *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 55 (*Encycl. Britannica*), sec. ed., 1990 (Transl. R.F.C. Hull and A. Crick), with a minor modification: instead of "what-is" for "das Seiende" we set "being" (with small "b"!). Where no mention is made regarding translation, the translations belong to me (VD).

> Hence, even the rejection by science is superfluous. The commonly cited basic rule of the thinking – the proposition that contradiction must be avoided – and common 'logic' rule out the question. For thinking, which is essentially always thinking about something, would, in thinking of Nothing, be forced to act against its own nature".

What we have here is an *argument* concerning the impossibility of talking about Nothing. However, Heidegger speaks of Nothing, an important concept of his phenomenology. Which is the meaning of this concept and in which way finds it the place in the conceptual polarity Being-being?

"Nothing" as such is not a concept in *Sein und Zeit*. Here we find only: "*Nicht*", "*nichtig*", "*Nichtheit*", "*Nichtigkeit*", "*Wesen von Nicht*" (285). In Heidegerian philosophy the concept of Nothing appears for the first time in the lecture *What is Metaphysics*? And explicitly marks the meaning in which the Nothing belongs to the Being. We shall take a closer look at this.

Here, too, we encounter the distinction between the questioning with the means of reason (i.e. logic) and a more originary, the ontological one. Accordingly, we find, on the one hand, the negation of logic, "not", the negation (*Verneinung*), and the ontological form, more primordial with respect to logical negation, represented by "Nothing", on the other. What does "*das Nicht*" mean and what does Heidegger intend by this concept?

A definition of Nothing occurs in *WM*, 29:

> "Das Nichts ist die vollständige Verneinung der Allheit des Seienden"
>
> "Nothing is the complete negation of the totality of being".

By introduction of this definition only it is hard to see what Nothing does mean. First of all, because in this formulation the negation (*Verneinung*) has its logical meaning, as a rational operation and it is strictly applied to the assertions, therefore to some logical-linguistic structures, and what is intended is the negation of the totality of being, with respect to which the logical negation is not a meaningful operation. Then, because the bringing in an "idea" of the totality of being and its *logical* negation will destroy the difference between "*Nicht*" and "*Nichts*". Heidegger maintained this distinction by keeping the distinction between "*Erfassen des Ganzen*

des Seienden an sich" (comprehending the totality of being), a factical impossibility, and "*Sichbefinden inmitten des Seienden im Ganzen*" (finding ourselves in the midst of being-in-totality), a fact that permanently arises in *Dasein*. Hence, the difference is between *das Ganze des Seienden* (totality of being) and *das Seiende im Ganzen* (being-in-totality).

In *WM* the idea of "being-in-totality" occurs in constructions of the following form: "*Sichbefinden inmitten des Seienden im Ganzen*" (30), "*das Seiende im Ganzen*" (31), "*Wegrücken des Seienden in Ganzen*" (32) (withdrawal of being-in-totality), "*das versinkende Seiende im Ganzen*" (34) (the vanishing being-in-totality), "*das Seiende als ein solches*" (34) (being as such), "*Ermöglichung der Offenbarkeit des Seienden al eines solchen*" (35) (that which makes the revelation of being as such possible). All these expressions occur in the context of the revealing function of Nothing. But, the idea as such, of being as being, is not related in Heidegger's writings to "*das Nichts*": rather, the concept of revelation (revealability), "*Offenbarkeit*", is the correlated concept with this idea. In *Sein und Zeit*, for example, the questioning about the original truth (as disclosedness, *Erschlossenheit*) is a questioning about the possibility of the disclosedness of being as being. This is why the questioning about the truth and the theme of Being do coincide. We take now an example after the *Kehre*.

In *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* [6], the idea of being *as* being (as such) occurs frequently. On page 16, for example, we find locutions such as "*die Entbergung des Seienden als eines solchen*" (un-covering of being as such), "*das Seiende im Ganzen*", "*das Seiende als solches im Ganzen*" (being-as-such-in totality). Here the context of Heideggerian argumentation is that of revelation of being by its coming-out-from-coverness (*Unverborgenheit*), from where the equalization: "*das Seiende*" – "*das Offenbare*" (12). But the revelation of being, its state-of-un-covering (*Unverborgenheit*, 16), is the Being of being.

In this way there is pointed out the meaning in which the Heideggerian idea of being-in-totality (as such) is considered. Therefore, it

[6] Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* (*WW*) (*On the essence of truth*), H. Romback & Co., Freiburg i. Br., 1943.

is a matter of Being of being, an ontological concept, different from the cosmological-metaphysical meaning of the totality of being.

Let us see the way in which this meaning of being-in-totality is correlated with the idea of Nothing. In this case we have the "feeling" of finding ourselves in the midst of being-in-totality, not as a psychological and temporary mood, but as "ground-phenomenon of our *Da-sein*" (*Grundgeschehen unseres Da-seins*, 31). The mode of revealing of being-in-totality depends every time on the mode of this phenomenon. Since the meaning of Nothing cannot be grasped by logic, only the original experience of Nothing can tell us what *is* it. Here is the way Heidegger describes such an experience:

> "Alle Dinge und wir selbst versinken in eine Gleichgültigkeit. Dies jedoch nicht im Sinne eines bloßen Verschwindens, sondern in ihrem Wegrücken als solchen kehren sie sich uns zu. Dieses Wegrücken des Seienden im Ganzen, das uns in der Angst umdrängt, bedrängt uns. Es bleibt kein Halt. Es bleibt nur und kommt über uns – im Entgleiten des Seienden – dieses 'kein'. Die Angst offenbart das Nichts" [7].
>
> "All things, and we with them, sink into a sort of indifference. But not in the sense that everything simply disappears; rather, in the very act of drawing away from us everything turns towards us. This withdrawal of being-in-totality, which then crowds round us in dread, this is what opresses us. There is nothing to hold on to. The only thing that remains and overwhelms us whilst being slips away, is this 'nothing'. Dread reveals Nothing".

This fragment gives us a first hint at the role of Nothing in Heidegger's lecture. Since dread reveals Nothing and Nothing is not the same as being (so much the less an object), it follows a meaning of "to be" that covers Nothing *and* being-in-totality simultaneously, without speaking about two conjoined domains of existence. How is this possible? In this mood of dread "Nothing functions as if at one with being-in-totality"[8], in the sense that by the very act of drawing away from us, revealed by Nothing, being-in-totality reveals its presence. Therefore, Nothing nihilates (*nichtet*);

[7] *WM*, 32.
[8] "… das Nichts begegnet in der Angst in eins mit dem Seienden im Ganzen", *WM*, 33.

the essence of Nothing is nihilation (*Die Nichtung*), whose meaning is just the original overtness (*Offenheit*) as such, that it is and is not Nothing[9].

Being-there, as being projected into Nothing[10], is therefore, *the condition of the possibility of the revelation of being as being*. Since Nothing is not being, by Nothing *das Dasein* passes beyond being[11], that is, it *transcends*, and by transcendence only becomes *das Dasein* it itself. This is the way by which Heidegger inserts Nothing into the theme of Being.

For Heidegger Nothing is more original than negation, as a logical operation. Therefore without an (original!) experience of Nothing, we could not apprehend a (logical!) concept of negation. But it is hard to see how such a grounding could be realized. We do not find an explanation of this fact anywhere in Heidegger's writings, and it is hard to see what arguments can be given for such an idea. The motive of introduction of this "difference" is clear: the access to the original ontological interrogation is *not*, thinks Heidegger, a rational affair. Where it so, then the introduction of Nothing into the concept of existence could not be made, since it would contradict logic, the principles of which (e.g. the law of noncontradiction) must be rejected from the discourse about Being. But this thesis functions *only* as a presupposition, which, carefully investigated, reveals itself as an *inconsistency*: *how*, we ask ourselves, *is the sovereignty of reason rejected in the access to the original questioning if not by a logical negation (as a rational operation)?* The destruction of the coherence of discourse means, *stricto sensu*, the abandonment of any discourse *on Being*.

b) The understanding of Being requires a meaning of the principle of sufficient reason different from that of logic.

The principle of reason has the following expression: *nihil est sine ratione*[12] (nothing is without reason). In its affirmative form it says: *omne*

[9] „die ursprüngliche Offenheit des Seienden al seines solchen: daß es Seiendes ist – und nicht Nichts", *WM*, 34.
[10] "Da-sein heißt: Hineingehaltenheit in das Nichts", *WM*, 35.
[11] "Dies schlechthin Andere zu allem Seienden ist das Nicht-Seiende", *WM*, Nachwort, 45.
[12] This is the "principle of reason" which was firstly formulated in these words by G.W. Leibniz (comp. Leibniz, *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, ed. C.I. Gerhardt. Hildesheim: Olm, vol. IV, 1960, 232, vol. VII, 1965, 289, 310).

ens habet rationem (all that is has a reason). Therefore, the principle itself, too. In this case what is the reason for the principle of reason? If it is grounded on something, then it loses its characteristic of the principle. And if it refers to anything excepting itself, then this principle has no ground whatsoever and it becomes an arbitrary assertion.

Let us see how the problem of grounding of *what is* implies the problem of *what is not*, i.e. the theme of *Nothing*.

Martin Heidegger has radically reinterpreted this principle, especially in *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*[13] (1928), *Vom Wesen des Grundes*[14] (1929) and in the lecture course *Der Satz vom Grund* [15] (1955-1956).

In *Vom Wesen des Grundes* (*WG*), Heidegger derives the principle of reason from the transcendence of *Dasein*. The idea of *transcendere* is not a Heideggerian one. In order to clarify *a posteriory* knowledge it is necessary to *transcend* the already-constituted experience towards the structure of its constitution. According to Kant, philosophical knowledge investigates the *conditions of the possibility* of experience, i.e. this kind of knowledge is *transcendental*.

> "Ich nenne alle Erkenntnis *transzendental*, die sie nicht so wohl mit Gegenständen, sondern mit unserer Erkenntnisart von Gegenständen, so fern diese a priori möglich sein soll, überhaupt beschäftigt. Ein System solcher Begriffe würde *Transzendental-Philosophie* heißen"[16].
>
> "I call *transcendental* all apprehension that is concerned not with objects but rather with our mode of apprehending in general, insofar as this has to be *a priori* possible. A system of such concepts would thus be called *transcendental philosophy*".

For Heidegger the quest of ground is the questioning of the background of being (of all beings) and this is essentially the questioning of Being (of beings) in the *transcendental* philosophy.

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[13] In *Gesamtausgabe*, (*GA*), vol. 26.
[14] *Wegmarken*, in *Gesamtausgabe*, 9.
[15] *Der Satz vom Grund* (*SG*), 5 Aufl., Neske, 1978.
[16] I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M, 1968, B. 25; comp. M. Heidegger, *SG*, Zehnte Stunde.

WG presents us a threefold articulation of Being as the ground of being. And this analysis is related to the analysis of temporality, significance and world in *Sein und Zeit*. The essence of ground is explained here as "*Transzendenz*" of *Dasein*. *Dasein* is itself only in transcending, "overstepping" (*übersteigen*) the presence by the "for-the-sake-of" (*Umwillen*)[17]. The overstep (*Überstieg*) is also called "freedom" (*Freiheit*, *WG*, 163; *GA*, 26, 276-277). Freedom as transcendence is the origin of grounding[18]. Freedom *gives* ground, and *takes* ground[19]. What are the modes of grounding?

1. "das Gründen als Stiften" (the grounding as bestowal). Transcendent freedom establishes or projects (*Entwerfen*) the background in the sense of the "for-the-sake-of", a purpose which sets a sense to the being at hand[20].

2. "das Gründen als Bodennehmen" (the grounding as taking-ground). By its factical situation *Dasein* is already "taken in" (*eingenommen*), it is already "thrown" (*geworfen*) in a factical situation which delimits in advance the horizon of its own possibilities. And this limitation constitutes the essential finitude of *Dasein*'s freedom.

3. "das Gründen als Begründen" (the grounding as justification). This is not the logical meaning of "justification", because it grounds the possibility of revelation of being in itself, the possibility of ontical truth[21] and of the "why"-question (*Warumfrage*).

So, by the essence of ground is understood this threefold division.

> "Das Wesen des Grundes ist die transzendental entspringende dreifache Streuung des Gründens in Weltentwurf, Eingenommenheit im Seienden und ontologische Begründung des Seienden", *WG*, 171.

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[17] "Das Dasein kann in dieser Weise nur dann zu ihm als ihm selbst sein, wenn es 'sich' im Umwillen übersteigt", *WG*, 163.

[18] "Die Freiheit als Transzendenz ist […] *der Ursprung von Grund überhaupt. Freiheit ist Freiheit zum Grunde*", *WG*, 165.

[19] "Gründend *gibt* Freiheit und *nimmt* sie Grund", *WG*, 165.

[20] Comp. *SZ*, §§ 14-18.

[21] "… das Gründen als Be-gründen. In diesem übernimmt die Transzendenz des Daseins die Ermöglichung des Offenbarmachens vom Seiendem an ihm selbst, die Möglichkeit der ontischen Wahrheit", *WG*, 168.

"The essence of the ground is the transcendentally off-springing threefold scattering of grounding into world-projection, having-been-taken-in among beings and ontological justification of beings".

The insertion of the idea of "Nothing" in the theme of "*Grund*" and "*Sein*" can be seen in the following fragments.

"*Freiheit ist der Grund des Grundes*. […] Als *dieser* Grund aber its die Freiheit der *Ab-grund* des Daseins", *WG*, 174.

"*Freedom is the ground of ground*. […] However, as *this* ground freedom is the *lack-of-ground* of *Dasein*".

"Als Ab-grund 'ist' das Sein das Nichts und der Grund zumal"[22].

"As lack-of-ground, Being 'is' at once the Nothing as well as the ground".

In *WG*, too, as we saw, the idea of "grounding" does not have its logical form, as an argumentation in a theoretical context. "Grounding" is something articulated in transcendence.

The same problematic is encountered in *Der Satz vom Grund*. The logical problem arises from the interpretation of the principle of reason itself. *Nihil est sine ratione*, Nothing is without reason, All that is has a reason. But this proposition itself "is", and thus requires a reason. What is this reason?

According to Heidegger, the proposition in which the principle is stated can be read in two tonalities (interpretations), according to whether the accent is placed on "nothing" and "without" or on "is" and "reason", i.e.

1. *Nothing* is *without* reason.

2. Nothing *is* without *reason*.

In 1 the word "is" passes as something obvious, unobservable. In this case the meaning of the principle is: all that is has a reason. In the second interpretation the emphasis is different. In this case also the principle speaks of being, but from another point of view, we grasp being as being only when we consider the fact that it *is* and the mode in which it *is*. In order to do so we have to listen to what the word "is" says. Strictly speaking, here being is not the question, but the *Being* of being. In this tonality what the principle of

[22] *Besinnung* (1930), in *GA*, 66, Frankfurt/M, 1997, 99.

reason says is: belonging-together of Being and ground[23]. Thus understood, we grasp an answer to the question: what is Being? That is, "Being means ground" (*Sein heißt Grund*, 204).

The difference between these tonalities will be, for Heidegger, a radical one. It is the difference between something which *has* a ground (i.e. being) and something which *is* ground (i.e. Being).

> "Nur Seiendes hat und zwar notwendig einen Grund. Es *ist* nur als gegründetes. Das Sein jedoch, weil selber der Grund, bleibt ohne Grund. Insofern das Sein, selbst der Grund, gründet, läßt es das Seiende jeweils ein Seiendes sein"[24].
>
> "Only being has a ground, namely necessarily. It *is* only as something grounded. Being, however, for it is itself the ground, remains without ground. As far as Being, itself ground, grounds, let it being be every time a being".

From this fragment we conclude that *being a ground* and *having a ground* are reciprocally incompatible: since Being *is* the ground it has *no* ground whatsoever. So, Being and ground remain separate; this is what Heidegger considers in *SG*.

> "Sein 'ist' […] das Selbe mit dem Grund. Insofern Sein als Grund west, hat es selber keinen Grund. […] Sein bleibt als Sein grund-los […]. Sein: der Ab-Grund"[25].
>
> "Being 'is' […] one and the same as ground. As far as Being is ground, it itself has no ground. […] Being as Being remains ground-less. […] Being: lack-of-ground".

At first sight this fragment contains a grave incoherence, arising from the theses: *Being as ground* and *Being as lack-of-ground*; whence, with the assumption: *Being and ground: the same* we get *ground without ground*. Which is the Heideggerian "solution" to this problem?

The double interpretation of the principle of reason represents, for Heidegger, also the basis of the distinction between the thinking of Being by speaking of being and the thinking of Being *as Being*. In the first case the

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[23] "Sein und Grund klingen jetzt in einem Einklang. In diesem Klang erklingt, daß Sein und Grund in Einem zusammengehören. Der nunmehr anders klingende Satz vom Grund sagt jetzt: Zum Sein gehört der Grund", *SG*, 204.

[24] *SG*, 205.

[25] *SG*, 184-185.

concepts of reason and the logic are necessary and sufficient means. And in this case, the above-mentioned fragment is an inconsistency. But in the second case thinking makes a spring[26] from the domain of being's explanations to that of the *understanding of Being*. The spring is a leap just because between the two domains there are no bridges or intermediary deductions. The spring is a leap from the principle of reason, as a principle about being, to the principle of reason, as a *principle about Being*. In its second tonality the principle of reason, as a principle of ground, is a spring.

> "Der Satz vom Grund ist ein 'Satz' in dem ausgezeichneten Sinne, das er ein Sprung ist […]. Im Sinne eines solchen Satzes ist der Satz vom Grund ein Satz in das Wesen des Seins. […] Der Satz vom Grund ist ein Satz in das Sein als Sein, d.h. als Grund"[27].
>
> "The principle of reason (ground) is a 'principle' in the exceptional sense that it is a spring […]. In the sense of such a principle (spring), the principle of reason is a spring in the essence of Being. […] The principle of reason is a spring into Being *as* Being, that is: as ground"[28].

By making the spring, is thinking saved from inconsistency? An answer to this question certainly involves an analysis in the way Nothing is implied in the theme of Being. A first hint of its implication is given by the expression "*Sein: der Ab-Grund*", i.e. by the idea of Being as lacking of ground. The expression as such shows us that here we have a *negation*, whose meaning must be completely explicated, if we want it not to remain a simple operation of reason applied to Being. Certainly, we will do this, if we follow the thinking which springs into the domain of Being[29], that is, if we keep the difference between the thinking about being and the thinking about Being (the essential thinking). The features of the second can be grasped by a short analysis of the correlation of the following concepts: ground (*Grund*), principle (*Grundsatz, Satz*), and spring (*Sprung*).

"*Sprung*" is a marginal concept of Heideggerian thinking, but for the apprehending the aforementioned difference, it becomes a central one. The

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[26] *Sprung* = leap, spring, jump.
[27] *SG*, 96.
[28] Here "Satz" has the meanings: "proposition", "principle" and "spring", simultaneously.
[29] The thinking (*Denken*) as spring is the thinking that follows (*Nach-denken*) what is heard in the second tonality of the principle of reason.

difference between the thinking of Being and the thinking of being is the difference between thinking in-spring (*sprunghaft*) and deductive thinking, building bridges between its moments. Why does the spring reject logical thinking?

According to logic, a proof or an argument must not be circular. It is a finite sequence of formulas/sentences in which the last step is the proved formula or the argued sentence. By no means does this last step coincide with the initial step; otherwise we have a logical mistake: *circulus vitiosus*. What happens then with this requirement when the analysis is focused on a particularity domain of being, that is *Dasein*? In *Sein und Zeit*, for example, Heidegger's answer is clear:

> *"Seiendes, dem es als In-der-Welt-sein um sein Sein selbst geht, hat eine ontologische Zirkelstruktur"*[30].
>
> *"A being for which, as Being-in-the-world, its Being is itself an issue, has, ontologically, a circular structure".*

In this analysis (analytic of *Dasein*) the negative side of circular argumentation becomes the positive side of hermeneutical circle, for: "in answering this question [the question about the meaning of Being], the issue is not one of grounding something by such a derivation; it is rather one of laying bare the grounds for it and exhibiting them"[31]. Therefore, we have two different (incompatible) modes of argumentation: deductive and circular. The passing from one to the other is *not* itself a deductive one, here a spring being necessary "so that even at the start of the analysis of *Dasein* we make sure that we have a full view of *Dasein*'s circular Being"[32].

The difference between these modes of argumentation is here the difference between *beweisen* (to prove) and *aufweisen* (to show/to point out), this last mode being specific to ontological discourse. For what

[30] *SZ*, 153.

[31] "… weil es in der Beantwortung der Frage nicht um eine ableitende Begründung, sondern um aufweisende Grund-Freilegung geht", *SZ*, 8.

[32] "… um sich schon im Ansatz der Daseinsanalyse den vollen Blick auf das zirkelhafte Sein des Daseins zu sichern", *SZ*, 315. Comp. and *Zur Seinsfrage* (*ZSF*), 4. durdg. Aufl. V. Klostermann, Frankfurt/M, 1977, 20: "nehme ich den Zirkel als Zeichen dafür, daß hier das Runde eines Ganzen zu denken bleibt, in einem denken freilich, für das eine an der Widersprunchsfreiheit gemessene 'Logik' nie der Maßstab werden kann".

"Being" means, this is something remained hidden in the words of Greek philosophy and that cannot be scientifically proved[33].

The spring in the thinking of Being (i.e. of ground) means thus the thinking of something circular.

> "Er gilt als Grundsatz. Nach unserer Behauptung soll er der Satz aller Sätze sein. Ins Äußerste gesprochen heißt dies: Der Satz des Grundes ist der Grund der Sätze. Der Satz des Grundes ist der Grund des Satzes"[34].
>
> "It counts as a fundamental principle. According to our assertion, it is supposed to be the principle of all principles. Taken to its extreme, this means: the principle of reason is the ground (reason) of principles. The principle of reason is the ground (reason) of the principle".

The thesis of *circularity*, from the above fragment, involves, simultaneously with the idea of "spring", its development into another register: that of the way in which a "beginning" can already be an "ending". And this register will make explicit *another* way in which the circularity in thinking rejects the logical thinking[35].

When the spring leaves an interpretation of the principle of reason and sets up another on, it springs *from* something *to* something. What is there *between* these tonalities, what is this "in-between" (*Zwischen*)?

The "between" of these interpretations is the interval between Being and being. In *WG* this distance has the form of *ontological difference*[36], whose ground is the *transcendence* of *Dasein*. In *Nietzsche* II we are relating ourselves to being and remain in relation with Being. This means: "*We stand in the distinction between being and Being*"[37]. Such a "standing" explains phenomenologically the relation human being - Being, called by

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[33] "Was 'Sein" heißt, das bleibt geborgen in dem Geheiß, das aus den Leitworten des griechischen Denken spricht. Was dieses Geheiß sagt, können wir niemals wissenschaftlich beweisen und beweisen wollen", *SG*, 121.

[34] *SG*, 31.

[35] For other modes of circularity: *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (*US*), 4. Aufl., Pfulingen, 1971, 242: "Die *Sprache als die Sprache zur Sprache bringen*"; *SG*, 205: "Sein heißt Grund-Grund heißt Sein: hier dreht sich alles im Kreis", *ZSF*, 30 (for the circle and *the same* (das Selbe)), *Nietzsche*, II, Neske, 2. Aufl, 1961, 11 (for the circle and *eternal return*).

[36] "*ontologische Differenz*". Other Heideggerian expressions for *Differenz: Unterscheidung* (*Nietzsche* II, 209), *Unter-Schied* (*Identität und Differenz*, *ID*, 9. Aufl., Neske, 1957, 56-57: "Die Differenz von Sein und Seiendem ist als der Unter-Schied von Überkommnis und Ankunft der entbergend-bergende *Austrag* beider").

[37] "Wir stehen in der Unterscheidung von Seiendem und Sein", 207.

Heidegger "*ec-sistence*"[38]. The detailing of this idea occurs in the same text, where this relation is explained by appealing to the "*es gibt*". But, with "*es gibt*" the characterization of the relation human being-Being introduces the ambiguity required by the mode in which Being "there is" (confers itself) and which implies the spelling of "*Dasein*" as "*Da-sein*". This is also the way in which a form of *negation* arises. The fact that Being is *not* being, that it is *different from* being, is revealed by the thesis of Being as withdrawal (*Entzug*). The destiny of Being is the mode in which Being exists (*es gibt*): in its withdrawal or absence (*Ausbleiben*)[39], that is, there is Being in the absence of itself: in withdrawal.

The matter being the meaning of Being, the hyphen in "*Da-sein*" introduces the theme of the interval (*Zwischen*) as an opening for the spring in the essential thinking[40].

Therefore, regarding the two interpretations of the *principle of reason*: its original meaning is the principle as a principle of *ground*, this is, as a principle of Being. What is the status of the other principles: *identity* and *noncontradiction*? According to Heidegger, these principles also point to something more original (*auf Ursprünglicheres*) which "does not have the character of an assertion"[41].

The conceptualization of *identity*, for example, has as its starting point its *logical* meaning, but the result of Heidegger's investigation is different. If in the principle of reason the issue is one of the belonging-together of Being and ground, here the mater is the *belonging-together of Being and thinking* in what Heidegger calls *event* (enowning) (*Ereignis*).

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[38] "Das Stehen in der Lichtung des Seins nenne ich die Ek-sistenz des Menschen", *BH,* 323-324.

[39] *Nietzsche*, II, 358: "Das Sein selbst begabt sich, indem es sich in die *Unverborgenheit seiner selbst begibt – und nur so ist Es das Sein – mit der Ortschaft seiner Ankunft als der Unterkunft seines Ausbleibens.* Dieses Wo als das Da der Bleibe gehört zum Sein selbst, 'ist' Sein selbst und heißt darum das Da-sein". Comp. *SG*, 122: "Sein als lichtendes Sichzuschicken ist zugleich Entzug. Zum Geschick des Seins gehört der Entzug", and *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (*EM*), Sechste Aufl., Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 1998, 156: "… das Sein des Menschen ist, im strengen Sinn des Wortes, das '*Da-sein*'".

[40] Comp. and *Holzwege* (*HW*); Vierte Aufl., Frankfurt/M, 1963, 104: "Dieses offene Zwischen ist das Da-sein, das Wort verstanden im Sinne des ekstatischen Bereiches der Entbergung und Verbergung des Seins".

[41] *WG*, 173.

Similar to the principle of reason, the (logical) principle of identity does hold only if it is a law of Being, too[42].

In *Unterwegs zur Sprache*[43], in a reference to *ID* (24 and foll.) Heidegger correlates the meaning of *Er-eignis* with *Er-gebniss* and *Es-gibt*. This last term is correlated with Being and, on this way, with Nothing. The lecture *Zur Seinsfrage*, as we saw, takes again the questioning from *Was ist Metaphysik*? regarding the Nothing. It is an interrogation about something *different* from any being and which comprises the human *Dasein*. The human being is locum tenens for Nothing, for something that is *not* being but there is (*es gibt*). In this way, "*es gibt*" covers simultaneously two different (but correlated) meanings: Being and Nothing[44].

3. *Apory of thematization: some comments*

The theme of the original truth (*ursprüngliche Wahrheit*) is one of the main components of Heidegger's projects regarding the destruction of the thesis of "logical prejudgment", according to which the "place" of truth is the assertion (sentence/proposition)[45]. But with the differences Being-being, calculating (logical) thinking - essential thinking taken into consideration, the distinction originary-derived regarding truth Heidegger will create the suppositions of the destruction of the project itself. In what follows we limit ourselves to pointing out some difficulties closely connected with this project.

a. *Apory of thematization*. Any thematization of something has a double dimension. In the mode of *uncovering* (*apophantikos*), the thematic assertion says what a being is (letting it be seen). But, in the same time, an assertion is in the mode of *covering*, thus: it catches only one aspect of that

[42] *ID*, 12: "Als ein Gesetz des Denkens gilt der Satz nur, insofern er ein Gesetz des Seins ist…".
[43] *US*, 258; on "es gibt" comp. and *Kants These über das Sein*, Frankfurt/M, 1962, 35; *BH*, 334-335; *Was heißt Denken*, 5. Aufl., Max Niemeyer, Tübingen, 1997, 97.
[44] *ZSF*, 39: "'Der Mensch ist der Platzhalter des Nichts' […]. Dieses Nichts, das nicht das Seiende ist und das *es* gleichwohl *gibt*, ist nichts Nichtiges. Es gehört zum Anwesen. […] Das Sein 'ist' so wenig wie das Nichts. Aber Es gibt beides".
[45] Comp. *Logik. Die Frage nach der Wahrheit*, V. Klostermann, Frankfurt/M, z. Aufl. 1995, in *GA*, vol. 21. *SZ* § 44.

entity which constitutes its subject and omits (by abstracting) other ontological modes of the entity (i.e. hermeneutical understanding of that entity).

But this double character of the assertion determines immediately the next question: if thematic assertions also have the character of covering, and any interpretation is articulated by thematic assertions, then how can such an interpretation become an exhaustive and adequate theoretical explicitation of the way of being of hermeneutical understanding? In other words, *if any assertoric conceptualization is in its essence a cover, then what guarantee do we have that the Heideggerian interpretation (i.e. conceptualization) is an adequate one*?

Furthermore, as in the Heideggerian interpretation the apophantical is a derivative way of the hermeneutical, *the apory of thematisation receives the expression: how can something be thematically explicitated, that makes thematisation possible, if the thematical itself conceals access to that something which it thematises*?

This apory explicitates undoubtedly a conceptual difficulty. By phenomenology Heidegger understands an ontological construction seen as a science about Being of the being[46]. Can it be conceptually reificated the temporalization of temporality, as a meaning of Being, in a theoretization that requires the subsistence/presence of its theme? Doesn't it require phenomenology "to the things themselves" (*Zu den Sachen selbst*) and thus the parenthezation (bracketing) of prejudice of any kind (consequently of logical prejudice, too)? Doesn't the phenomenological method let to be seen what the entire traditional logic occulted by an obscure way of theorizing? Isn't Heideggerian analytic of the *Dasein* a way of thematizing with the specific intention of the explicitation of "prethematical"?

That Heidegger was often confronted with the problem of thematisation, we can demonstrate it on the grounds of some paragraphs

[46] "Sachhaltig genommen ist die Phänomenologie die Wissenschaft vom Sein des Seienden – Ontologie" (*SZ*, 37). Philosophy is "Vergegenständlichung von Sein als temporale bzw. transzendentale Wissenschaft, Ontologie" (*Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Frankfurt/M, 1975, in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 24, 466). "Phänomenologie ist die Zugangsart zu dem und die ausweisende Bestimmungsart dessen, was Thema der Ontologie werden soll. *Ontologie ist nur als Phänomenologie möglich*" (*SZ*, 35).

from *SZ*, but also of some texts preceding and following this work. In *SZ* for example, Heidegger rejects as a false problem the problem of the traditional theory of knowledge, respectively of its understanding as a relation between an object and a corresponding representation (idea). In the Heideggerian meaning of intentionality as Being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*), knowledge becomes possible through "already-being-in" the nearby of the world and thus as a deficient modus of Being-in-the-world. How then can the *Dasein* reveal a modus of Being (i.e. its world) that does not belong originary to knowledge's kind?

And if knowledge is a deficient and derivative modus of the *Dasein*, isn't knowledge itself, as an analytic of *Dasein*, in *SZ*, questionable? Doesn't such an interpretation remain encapsulated itself in what it intends to deconstruct, that is the logical prejudice?

With this argumentative trajectory, Heidegger introduces the *apory of thematisation*: *If the originary meaning of the truth reveals itself non-thematically, then how can it be thematized*? If the opening (*das Da*) of the *Dasein* is the authentic place of the truth, and not the assertion, then how can the assertions (of an interpretation) constitute an ex-position (exposal) of this truth? How can the exigencies of a scientific thematisation deal with the idea of the disclosedness of the originary truth? Does such an apory have any solution in Heidegger's work?

As any philosophy is bringing into discourse (i.e. theoretization), anything that is philosophically expressed becomes the thing around which the discourse is centred and receives simultaneously the character of subsistence. The discoursive explicitation of philosophy means exposing it to an essential *misunderstanding* of its nature. How can this misunderstanding or misinterpretation possibly be diminished? The only way through which the theses of the discursive explicitation and the theses of a *non-objectivant* thinking can be brought together resides, in Heidegger's conception, in the *indicator-formal character of philosophical concepts*[47]. The indicator-formal character depends, for Heidegger, on the

[47] "Dazu ist eine Besinnung auf den durchgängigen Charakter der philosophischen Begriffe notwendig, daß sie alle formal anzeigend sind" (*Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik (GM)*, in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 29/30, Frankfurt/M, 1983, 422).

method of phenomenological explanation itself. Phenomenologically interpreted, the object of the interpretation must be defined from *the way* in which it is actually possessed/understood[48]. But the object of philosophy is the meaning of Being, toward which philosophy does not position itself in a relation of exteriority. The philosophical discourse and the meaning of Being enter a relation of a very specific character: "philosophy is grasping (of something) through what it grasps and grasps what it (philosophy) is"[49]. The formal-indicator character of philosophical concepts resides in the "object" itself about which I am talking (the meaning of Being). As meaning of Being does not have the character of a simple subsistence, neither does the philosophical concept places itself in a descriptive relationship with its "object". Actually, we do not have here an object of the assertion, we rather have "*something that must be fulfilled*", as what it is indicated is not fully given.

As any bringing into discourse is thematisation, the solution must be looked for in the assertions themselves. Heidegger will make the distinction between the "mundane" assertions (*weltliche*) and the "phenomenological-categorial" assertions (*phänomenologisch kategoriale*). Even if both categories have similar structures, the first ones treat about subsistent beings and have a determinated value of truth, in contrast with phenomenological-categorial assertions, which contain the above mentioned philosophical concepts and thus indicate something that does not have the character of subsistence. And these assertions may be true or false. A tree may be the theme of the discourse as well as existence. But existence does not become a theme by the simple oppositive-assertionist positioning of it in relation to the object existence. Such an object does not exist. Existence becomes a theme only by its re-fulfilment, its re-considering, its explicitation from the non-thematic in the purpose of re-bringing it[50]. Having this character, the

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[48] "wie der Gegenstand ursprünglich zugänglich wird" (*Phänomenologische Interpretation zu Aristoteles* (*PIA*)), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 65, Frankfurt/M, 1985.

[49] "daß es / Philosophieren / sogar und gerade durch das Erfassen 'ist', was es erfaßt, und erfaßt, was es 'ist' " (*PIA*, 61, comp. and p. 51). "Sie / die Philosophie / ist '*formal*' anzeigend, der 'Weg', im 'Ansatz'. Es ist eine gehaltich unbestimmte, vollzugshaft bestimmte Bindung vorgegeben" (*PIA*, 20).

[50] Comp. *GM*, 423; *PIA*, 80.

assertorical thematising discourse of existence is situated in the neighbourhood of poetry[51].

With this, we open a new field of thematic investigation. Which we'll not deal with here. We only ask ourselves if the formal-indicator dimension of philosophical concepts constitutes also a solution to the apory of thematisation. We think it does not. It is true, after 1930 Heidegger will abandon the "scientific-transcendental" project of his ontology. He will do so it mainly because of the apory of thematisation, to which, in the horizon of the conceptualisations given by that period, a solution could not be found. But with this problem Heidegger will also deal after "*Kehre*", in spite of all his efforts to elaborate a non-objectivant conceptualization.

Because any thematisation, objectivant or not, supposes undoubtedly the presence of its theme. Is not the disclosedness of temporality (as a disclosedness of the meaning of Being) the originary truth because the temporalisation of temporality is a permanent presence (*Präesenz*)? It is true, the presence of the theme of an arbitrary assertion about a subsistent being and the presence of the theme of that *Zeitigung der Zeitlichkeit* are different notions. But something can be thematised only *if it is conceived and explicitated as something present*. Under this levelling aspect of the discursive register, Heidegger could not surpass any more than Husserl had already done it the horizon of logical prejudice.

b. What this apory shows us is the following aspect: the discourse about Being and so the understanding of Being must be conformable to the requirements of *logical* principles (identity, non-contradiction, sufficient reason). Any overlooking of these requirements, as "abandoning of the language of metaphysics"[52] gives rise to paradoxes, whose source is directly logical, such as: *speaking about the impossibility of speaking*. At best, this is the conclusion at which Heidegger himself arrives[53]. We will not analyse

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[51] Comp. *US*, 173.
[52] *ZSF*, 25. "die Frage nach dem Wesen des Seins stirbt ab, wenn sie die Sprache der Metaphysik nicht aufgibt, weil das metaphysische Vorstellen es verwehrt, die Frage nach dem Wesen des Seins zu denken".
[53] Cf. the fragment refered to: *WM*, 27-28. Comp. and *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (*EM*), Sechste Aufl., Tübingen, 1998, 18: "Das Reden vom Nichts ist unlogisch".

this aspect here. We limit ourselves to remarking the following fact. As Heidegger says *"… all ontology* […] *remains blind and perverted from its ownmost aim, if it has not first adequately clarified the meaning of Being, and conceived this clarification as its fundamental task" (SZ, 11*). This is certainly true. But it is similarly true that without the clarification of (methodo)-logical aspects required by the construction of the philosophical discourse itself, the problem of understanding Being remains a problem.

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Structure and Violence

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Abstract

Since its inception as a discipline, anthropology has often enough assumed the culture of the "other" (the classical object of its investigations) to be a closed system sufficient unto itself. Behind this academic myth has always lurked the reality of colonial penetration, in the wake of which ethnography has found its way. Today, in this post-colonial, post-structural, post-modern world, the contention of the cultural isolate is entirely untenable. Rather, it is all too often impositions and outbreaks of violence that define the existence of the citizens of the "third world." This paper examines violence as the emerging object of ethnographic study. Towards this end I differentiate between "structural violence" (violence that is embedded in the order of things) and "episodic violence" (which might be most simply understood as the violence of the masses.) The differentiation drawn, however, proves to be only analytical, as a main thrust of this paper is to suggest the complicated relationship and interdependence between these two "modes" of violence.

Keywords: structure, globalization, violence, nationalism, anthropology, ecology, language.

Introduction

Anthropology's locus of study has undergone a radical transformation.[1] The supposed "isolates" of the early twentieth century - whether real or imagined - have been washed away across the planet by a Tsunami of transnational capital, "modernization," and global processes. The walls of exclusion that had maintained oases of primitivism for the Malinowskis of the world to ponder the imponderabilia[2] have collapsed under the weight of colonial expansion, post-colonial imperialism, multi-ethnic nationalisms, ecological degradation and economic dependency. Space has been contracted.[3] Time has been accelerated to a fevered pitch.[4] The distance between Self and Other is no longer geographically contingent, it is constructed along other lines.

In 1980 Bernard Cohen quipped that the anthropologist, until that time, had followed the "missionary in the row boat" model, according to which "the anthropologist follows in the wake of the impacts caused by the agents of change, and then tries to recover what might have been."[5] In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, then, the anthropologist who looks back through the "impacts caused by the agents of change" in search of "what might have been" can be seen as more closely resembling the model of Walter Benjamin's *Angel of History*:

> "His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him

[1] See: Michel-Rolph Trouillot's introduction to his *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World.*

[2] The term is that which Malinowski himself uses to describe the "strangeness" of Melanesian culture in his *Argonauts of the Western Pacific.*

[3] In his 1977 publication *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century,* Wolfgang Schivelbusch details how new technologies of transportation have entailed "a temporal shrinkage (between destinations) that is seen as a spatial one" (34).

[4] Pierre Nora begins his multi-volume, collaborative work *Les Lieux de memoire* ("sites of memory") with an exegesis on "The acceleration of history... an increasingly rapid slippage of the present into a historical past that is gone for good" (7).

[5] Cohn, p. 199.

into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky".[6]

Also buried in the hail of this storm of progress is the former resident of that same unreachable oasis. The quaint or ferocious "primitive" - whether ideal or debased[7] - who was once fashioned to fill the "savage slot," has, likewise, lost all traces of his famed insularity. He has been dislodged. No longer does he dwell in the delimited domain of a self-sustaining structure; rather, he picks through the mounting heap of wreckage[8], dusting off a Nike cap to shield his eyes from a sun that has grown increasingly more dangerous as the atmosphere has thinned. He haggles at the international bourse for his fair share of potions from the brokers of the modern medicine man in order to combat treatable diseases that are decimating his societies. He sows genetically engineered seeds in the exhausted earth that have been foisted on him by Monsanto (and that have caused the earth to become exhausted). His warfare, too, has lost its ritualistic luster, he soldiers either in desperation against an entirely "modern" imposition on his dignity in the form of foreign occupation, or against his fellow countrymen, in the name of "revived" identifications that are, likewise, born of both modernity and despair. No longer, that is, does the native loll under the sign of "primitivism" in his isolated, if sunny, culture garden; rather, he labors under the painful and embodied signs of *violence* - a new sort of savage: disfigured, dislocated and disempowered.

In the essay that will follow I will examine violence in two different "modes" in an effort to reconstitute a viable locus of anthropological investigation that is in accordance with this newly signified "savage."

In his provocative work, *Pathologies of Power,* Harvard medical anthropologist Paul Farmer traces the lineaments of global disempowerment and inequality in an effort to detail "how large-scale social forces become

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[6] Benjamin (1969), pp. 257-258.

[7] In *Anthropology and the Savage Slot* Michel-Rolph Trouillot traces the roots of the anthropological Other to pre-Enlightenment Europe and the literary imagination of the "noble," or conversely, "wild" savage. (8).

[8] The image is from the cover of Dipesh Chakrabarty's 2002 Permanent Black publication *Habitations of Modernity.*

embodied as sickness, suffering, and degradation."[9] Such processes Farmer refers to as "structural violence." Though no concise definition is given, the gist is clear: structural violence is violence that is embedded in the "order of things," whether this order is conceived of as cultural, political, or economic, inasmuch as it is contingent upon patriarchy, state repression, or endemic poverty (for instance), this violence can be understood to be "structured" into this same order. The second mode of violence that I will investigate, for the lack of a better term, I will call (following Farmer) "episodic" violence. Episodic violence is violence that is characterized by a *breakdown* in the established order, it is the violence of the disenfranchised, "savage" violence, the free for all: "ethnic violence" in Sri Lanka (Daniel), "communal riots" in India (Das, Bhaba, Butalia), genocide in Burundi and Rwanda (Malkki), "religious violence" in Northern Ireland (Feldman), "sectarian violence" in Iraq, etc. Having set up this brief categorization I will detail each of these modes of violence in turn in an effort to outline a viable program for the anthropology of violence.

Structural Violence

In 1930, funded by the Colonial Anglo-Egyptian Government of a partitioned Sudan, E.E. Evans-Pritchard sets up his ethnographic field camp in the central Nile valley, south of Khartoum, where the White Nile and the Blue conjoin. Evans-Pritchard had arrived at this location at the request of the colonial government, in order to report on the social structure of the Nuer, a pastoral and tribal people about whom little, at that time, was known. Overcoming the "hostility" of the natives and the inconvenience of an environment that "has no favorable qualities,"[10] Evans-Pritchard was able to present the colonial government, as well as his anthropological reading audience, with an ethnography that paints "a classic picture of savagery."[11]

In this picture the Nuer are portrayed as an almost entirely undifferentiated horde - a dung-covered, bellicose, leaderless throng of savages who are capable of quickly amassing into yet larger hordes due to a

[9] Farmer, p. 15.
[10] *The Nuer,* P. 51.
[11] Ibid, p. 40.

social structure that is based on a system of segmentary lineage. This social structure can be understood, according to Evan-Pritchard, as a function of the ecology of Nuerland. It is also the ecology of Nuerland that structures the relationship that the Nuer have to their cattle, which further structures their relationship with neighboring peoples, including the Dinka. As such, the Nuer's "love of cattle" is understood from the standpoint of substantive, rather than rational, economics. Their raids on the Dinka, in this context, are likewise a matter of functioning of Nuer structure within a defined oecological field. Because the Nuer are poor agriculturalist,[12] their relationship to cattle, the aggressiveness with which they acquire them, and the lineage system that functions to facilitate this acquisition determine the conditions of their survival. However, poor irrigation conditions and scarcity of water, which impinges upon both pastoral and agricultural activities, may, at times, "inconvenience the Nuer to the point of famine."[13]

But something is missing from this picture. Though Evans-Pritchard makes allusions to certain variables of the larger structural order in which the Nuer system operates, the mechanics of the smaller order are understood as functionally complete. Before Evans-Pritchard's account can be canonized, however, several details need to be clarified. First: though Anglo-Egyptian military forces had secured a fairly easy victory over the Madhist Army in Northern Sudan by the turn of the century, the south remained "unpacified" well into the twentieth century: "In 1901 the Nuer and the Azande waged armed resistance." [14] The Nuer, in particular "did not easily accept colonial rule, nor the system of taxation that came with it."[15] Resistance continued, and though the military campaign against the tribal peoples of southern Sudan became harsher and increasingly more brutal, the Nuer continued to fight back. In 1927 the District Commissioner Bentiu in Nuerland was assassinated by Nuer insurgents. The colonial government redoubled its efforts of "pacification," enlisting Africans into the military, based on the model of British colonialism in India, and Belgian colonialism

[12] Ibid, p. 79.
[13] Ibid, p. 55.
[14] Wai, p. 375.
[15] Ibid.

in the Congo. According to these same models, the colonial government felt the need to elevate their *knowledge* of native society in order to fight the continuing insurgency. In a 1930 Memorandum on Southern Policy in Sudan, issued by the Civil Secretary's Office in Khartoum, and dated January 25th (just a few months before Evans-Pritchard's arrival), it was stated that:

> "The Policy of Government requires that officials in the South, especially administrative officials, should be fully informed as to the social structure, beliefs, customs and mental processes of pagan tribes. Study on these lines is of vital importance to the solution of administrative problems, and it is with this fact in view that a highly qualified expert has been detailed to work in the South".[16]

With this additional information, the fact that Evans-Pritchard was unable to identify a structure of definite leadership might be seen in a different light.

Second: the ecology of cattle throughout Africa had undergone a severe alteration during this same time period, a fact that is not adequately reflected in Evans-Pritchard's study. Invasive strains of rinderpest had decimated up to 90% of domesticate cattle in parts of Africa and had severely impacted herds throughout the continent.[17] Epizootic investigation revealed that rinderpest had been "brought [to Africa] by infected Indian cattle imported by Italians in their efforts to supply their campaign against Somalia."[18] Here we find a rather larger structural framework that might be understood to have been of some small influence upon the Nuer's relationship to their cattle, the aggressiveness with which they campaigned to acquire it, and the relations with neighboring peoples that was structured by this same aggressiveness. Although Evans-Pritchard makes reference to the rinderpest epidemic, it is never perceived as a *structural* factor in terms of the workings of the delimited social unit that he describes. Third: the ecology of the entire region had been further affected by the completion of the Sennar Dam, just south of Khartoum, in 1925. Based on the French colonialism that had come before it, the Anglo-Egyptian "condominium"

[16] Sconyers, p. 258.
[17] Phoofolo, p. 115.
[18] Ibid, p. 113.

government was eager to build upon the commercial infrastructure that they had inherited, most significantly the industry of cotton production (extraction of raw cotton through slave labor).[19] The Sennar Dam project was undertaken to irrigate vast expanses of land that the colonial government had appropriated during their "pacification" programs for cotton plantations.[20] Again, this massive alteration in the hydrology of the region must certainly find some small place in any discussion of scarce water conditions that at times, and according to Evans-Pritchard, were seen to "inconvenience the Nuer to the point of famine."

What is missing from Evans-Pritchard's account, then, is any focused analysis of the ways in which Nuer structures were penetrated and subject to larger, and at times superceding, structural forces. As a result the ethno-picture of Nuer society in 1930 [21] seems entirely incomplete. It is just such a limited analytical perspective that George Marcus points to in 1986, suggesting that ethnographers "have not generally represented the ways in which closely observed cultural worlds are embedded in larger, more impersonal systems... the world of larger systems and events has thus often been seen as externally impinging on and bounding little worlds, but not as integral to them."[22]

What I would suggest, and what I will be arguing for, is that it is exactly at the conjuncture of structure and violence that the interface between larger and more localized cultural worlds most often intersect, and it is at this conjuncture that anthropology might most productively examine the larger connections that Marcus points out as historically absent. This, then, would be the first task of an anthropology of structural violence: to expand the analytic field in order to include structural processes and institutional forces that do not merely provide the backdrop to the local culture, but penetrate them (most often) violently.

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[19] Roberts, p. 461-462.
[20] Wai, p. 380.
[21] In *Political Systems of Highland Burma,* Edmund Leach make the point, crucial to any critique of structuralism that all "structural" accounts – which tend towards certain timelessness – are in fact temporally *specific*. The "lifting" of the anthropological "object" out of time "gives us: Trobriand Society, Tikopia Society, Nuer Society, *not* 'Trobriand society in 1914,' ... 'Nuer society in 1935' " etc. (14).
[22] Marcus, p. 165-166.

In his *Critique of Violence*[23] Walter Benjamin posits a distinction between "law-preserving violence" and "law-making violence." Law-preserving violence is that which functions within the existing socio-political structural framework, maintaining power relations by means of structurally legitimate[24] violence. Law-making violence, on the other hand, is a moment of rupture, an unmediated disjuncture represented by an "external" violence that inscribes new power relations that will comprise an alternative structural order. Having failed to find analytic purchase from within the dynamic of "law preserving violence," which operates with hegemonic impunity, Benjamin points to "law-making violence" as an immanent critique, a point of structural realization, as it were, that remains open to productive analysis.

The problems with this model are readily apparent. The hegemony that Benjamin ascribes to law-preserving violence is in some ways just as smothering as the hegemony that Foucault, in his various works, ascribes to discourse. Again we are caught in the structuralist trap: violence is understood as necessity, not process. Alternatively, it can be argued, in as much as power can never attain to a seamless hegemony, all structural violence is, in some sense, both "law-preserving" and "law-making" simultaneously. As such, structure is reified in the very acts of violence that can be attributed to it.

Such is the basis of the argument advanced by Jean and John Comaroff in their introduction to *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination.* Taking the interventions of George Marcus[25] (as outlined above) to heart the Comaroffs grapple with the problems of doing ethnographies of complex "national and international forces and formations."[26] Foremost amongst these is the question of how to develop a working critique of power as it is implicated in these impersonal systems, and in light of the fact that it is *seemingly* seamlessly integrated therein. Against Foucault, however, the Comaroffs suggest that the hegemony of

[23] Benjamin, 1969.
[24] On Weber.
[25] Comaroffs, p. 11.
[26] Ibid.

impersonalized power is necessarily *incomplete*, and, moreover, does not emanate from an unidentifiable, and in this sense, extra-cultural locus. Rather, the Comaroffs contest, "Hegemony is that part of a dominant ideology that has been naturalized and, having contrived a tangible world in its image, does not appear to be ideological at all."[27] In as much as hegemony, then, is part of a *historical* process (the process through which ideology is "naturalized") it remains unstable (because it is historically contingent) and opens to contestation. In the midst of such contestation, the "signs and material practices... that come to be taken for granted" must again be "naturalized" by ideologically driven force (repressive violence).

Hegemony is stripped of its cloak of seamlessness and structures of power are reified as ideology. In this sense, the law-preserving violence of hegemonic power is forced out into the open as law-making (institutionalizing) violence. It is within this fissure in the facade of hegemony that "the (competing) ideologies of the subordinate may express hitherto voiceless experience, often sparked by contradictions that a prevailing culture no longer hides."[28] Similarly an anthropology of structural violence would look for the fissures in the hegemonic operations of power in order to identify the breaches that reveal the ideology behind a dominant worldview that "comes to naturalize structures of inequality."[29]

In short, the large structures of the modern world are never-closed systems sufficient unto themselves, nor do they represent a perfect order. Structure in motion, as process, must refigure the premises upon which it is based, shoring up its failed hegemony with ideology. In this context, Bourdieu's theory of practice and more particularly *habitus* (that "durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, (which) produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle"[30]) does go some way towards theorizing structure in motion, but can have little impact on an attempt to understand larger, impersonal systems. The large structures of the

[27] Ibid, p. 29.
[28] Ibid, p. 29.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Bourdieu, p. 78.

world are most productively understood, I have been arguing, not through an analysis of their regularities, but through an examination of their disjunctures. Often it is the necessary resort to, or engendering of, violence that reveals larger structures for what they are: processes of social relations, and corporate organization, that involve human agency - and all the imperfection that this implies. The structuralism of the mid to late twentieth century, having based its premises on closed models and closely observed local structures, offers little to inform the current practice of anthropology, which is confronted with a world in which isolated cultures and static systems are unlikely to be found. An anthropology of the violence that is embedded in modern social processes, on the other hand, shows more potential in the effort of understanding the cultures of the world today.

Episodic violence

In his first chapter of *The Wretched of the Earth,* "On Violence," Franz Fanon advances the argument that the internecine violence endemic to the de-colonizing world is a socio-psychological phenomenon directly related to the structural violence that this same population has been subjected to:

> "The colonist keeps the colonized in a state of rage, which he prevents from boiling over. The colonized are caught in the tightly knit web of colonialism. But we have seen how on the inside the colonist achieves only a pseudo-petrification.The muscular tension of the colonized periodically erupts into bloody fighting between tribes, clans, and individuals".[31]

A failure in hegemony has created the space for action, but this action, facing the impossibility of its object, is displaced from its vertical motivation to a horizontal praxis. Paul Farmer begins his work (mentioned above) on a similar note: "It is the central theme of *Pathologies of Power* that a rising tide of inequality breeds violence."[32] In truth, it is a simple equation to make: Structures of inequality distribute the risk of being engulfed in violence according to the prevailing logic of their structure. In

[31] Fanon, p. 17.
[32] Farmer, xxxvii.

any case, it can easily be conceded that the sort of violence about which both Fanon and Farmer are speaking is embedded in a structural framework that, if investigated, will go a long way towards explaining the *causes* of the "eruption." An ethnography of violence, however, would not be content to identify causes and be done. Apart from causes there are meanings enacted by and through this same violence. To return to Fanon: "The colonized subject discovers reality and transforms it through his praxis, the deployment of violence..."[33].

If structure can reveal a fair amount about the enactment of one mode of violence (structural violence) and something about the conditions of another (episodic violence) its use in terms of the *praxis* of the former is not as certain. However the structural conditions that underlie, and even precipitate, episodic violence are identified - whether they are imagined to be economic, "ethnic" or "communal", symbolic, or political - the consistency between determination and practice is often incomplete. In the "communal" violence that has wracked the South Asian sub-continent it has been repeatedly seen that determinants do not necessarily match up with enactments. What begins as economically motivated labor action devolves into "communalism,"[34] what begins as a "spiritual" protest takes on an unmistakably material tone,[35] the symbolic codes of "communal" organization are displaced by politics,[36] and what is motivated politically is displaced horizontally as bitter, internecine violence. If the advent episodic violence is understood as a departure from the established norm, from prevailing civic logics, and from the relative "order" of a *working* social system, a "transformation" of priorities and enactments should not be entirely surprising. But how to understand these transformations?

In his study of the "formations of violence" in Northern Ireland, Allen Feldman has identified a similar disjuncture between initial conditions (structural determinants) and violent practices. In his work, Feldman calls into question the relation between "*conditions of political antagonism* and

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[33] Fanon, p. 21.
[34] Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working-Class History in Bengal.*
[35] Amin, *Events, Metaphor and Memory.*
[36] Freitag.

the relational practices of antagonism."[37] In an effort to restore to an investigation of agency, therefore, Feldman takes stock of the structural factors that have conditioned antagonisms in Northern Ireland, but concludes:

> "Contexts for the inception of violence are frequently transformed by their ideological representation in the material reproduction of violence. Recognizing this mutation entails treating violence as a semantically modal and transformative practice that constructs novel poles of enactment and reception. Modal violence detaches itself from initial contexts and becomes the condition of its own reproduction. When this shift occurs, it is because chronic violence transforms material and experiential contexts and renders the relations between structure and event, text and context, consciousness and practice labile and unfixed".[38]

The "unfixing" of these otherwise structurally correlated binaries presents an acute problem of interpretation in any analysis of episodic violence. Here Bourdieu's concept of bodily *hexus,* "political mythology realized," provides a clue to a possible point of entry into the structurally destabilized field of episodic violence. In the "unfixed" semantic space of violent practice, an embodied discourse of meaning takes place almost by definition - physical violence is always a transformation of bodies, the agentive transformation of bodies is always a meaningful process. Feldman, in his work, comes to this same conclusion, but is not content with "reading" violence only through an interpretation of embodiments. The other prong to his approach is to analyze oral histories that comprise a record of the transformation of meanings as they are processed socially (rather than corporally) in discourse. After a more detailed consideration of the hermeneutic potentials of embodiment, I will return to this second means of entry into the problem of the interpretation of episodic violence.

In her ethnography of Hutu refugees in Tanzania, after the genocidal Hutu-Tutsi violence that took place in Burundi in the spring of 1989, Lisa Malkki investigates how antagonisms between communities were concretized and meanings forged both through the frenzied *praxis* of violence, in terms of embodiment, and in the wake of this same violence, as

[37] Feldman, p. 4.
[38] Feldman, p. 20.

they were generated by Hutu "mythico-histories"[39] told in exile. In the context of embodiment, Malkki notes: "Extreme violence was linked up with such *other* practices as the inscription of differentiating schemata on human bodies, visions of the mixing of categories that 'ought' to be kept distinct, and the structuring of totalizing inequality (emphasis mine)."[40] In some ways, I want to argue against the hidden premise here. By drawing a distinction between "extreme violence" and (other) semiotic practices *associated* with it, Malkki seems to be arguing for a compartmentalization of violence and practice. Rather, I would argue for an understanding of violence *as* semiotic practice, as the *enactment* of radical otherness in real-time by *means* of semiotically significant violence. "Reading" violence in action in a purely symbolic mode, leads us right back to a constraining structuralism. However, if Feldman's arguments for the departure from structural precedence can be accepted, and this departure entails, as well, a rapidly changing, and moreover instable, "semantically modal" arena, it might be argued, that symbolic reference too must remain in a state of flux. And, indeed, Malkki's "reading" of the symbolic nature of violence is done through the interpretation of Hutu ex post facto narratives. But how are semiotics working in medias res?

In an analysis of peasant violence in colonial India in 1857, Homi Bhaba examines the circulation of rumor and the detached sign[41] in the context of structural disorder, concluding: "The semiotic condition of uncertainty and panic is generated when an old and familiar symbol (*chapati*) develops an unfamiliar social significance as sign through a transformation of the temporality of its representation."[42] The "old familiar symbol," in this sense, is *detached* from its "old familiar" locus of reference and reemerges as "sign." This argument, when linked back to Feldman's

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[39] Malkki qualifies the historical aspect of the Hutus retellings in an effort to theorize the social work these stories entail: "What made refugees' narratives mythical, in the anthropological sense, was not its truth or falsity, but the fact that it was concerned with *order* in a fundamental, cosmological sense." (55)

[40] Malkki, p. 95.

[41] In this case the mysterious circulation, across Northern India, from town to town, of *chapatis* (Indian bread) and the various frenzied symbolic *interpretations* that accompanied this circulation, but could not be confirmed.

[42] Bhaba, p. 202.

theoretical considerations, gains additional weight. In this light, a look back to linguistics may provide some insight into the ethnography of episodic violence. In her essay, "When Talk Isn't Cheap: Language and Political Economy," Judith Irvine seeks to return language analysis from the clutches of structural linguistics to the analysis of "the material and historical conditions of linguistic performance."[43] According to Irvine, linguistic performance not only reflects social division, but also remains instrumental in structuring such differentiation. Thus language may function both indexically (as an index of an exclusive "language community") and iconically (a *mark* of radical otherness).

If these considerations are taken into account in the context of Malkki's ethnography a different picture emerges. If, rather than viewing the *praxis* of violence as the enactment of a symbolic discourse, violence is understood as the iconic marking of radical difference through the employment of detached signs and disfiguring embodiments, the *situational* meaning of violence can be returned to its roots in structurally conditioned antagonisms. In her description of the atrocities committed against Hutus in Burundi, Malkki details the particularly gruesome way in which Hutus were killed by driving sharpened bamboo poles from the victims anus through to their skulls.[44] This method of killing, Malkki suggests, was meant as a symbolic contamination of any idea of Hutu intellect through a forced connection between the excremental orifice and the locus of cognition. If, however, the insights of both Feldman and Bhaba are taken into account, it might be better understood that in "the semiotic condition of uncertainty and panic" the sharpened bamboo pole (which formerly may very well have had such symbolic references as "warfare" or "resistance" or "authority"[45]) is undergoing a transformation (in Feldman's sense) from pre-established symbolic referent, through to iconic representation of radical difference, and on again to *re-figured* symbol. The *work* of re-figuration is accomplished in the iconic forge of radical differentiation. It is only *after* the killing is done

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[43] Irvine, p. 248.
[44] Malkki, p. 92.
[45] Malkki, p. 93.

that a sharpened bamboo pole of a certain length comes to represent "dead Hutu."[46]

This analytic move has the additional advantage of allowing the ethnographer to consider the ways in which symbolic linkages (that have been generated through violence) are organized into a stable order of understanding and meaning through a process of structured social negotiation in the wake of violence. As many scholars who have taken violence seriously (Feldman, Bhaba, Laub, Mueggler, Scarry, Das, et al.) contest: the social *understanding* (the assessment of meaning) of violence and trauma is most often achieved, not from within the violent event, but rather during the process of social negotiation, collective retelling, and reflection that follows in its wake. For this reason scholars, such as Feldman and Malkki, have used oral narratives as an entry into the processes by which violent events are incorporated into the collective memory of the social body. And it is to this last point that I too will now turn.

In his essay "An Event Without Witness: Truth, Testimony and Survival," holocaust survivor, psychiatrist and Director of the Yale University Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Dauri Laub, asserts the ethical *necessity* of bearing witness to violence and trauma. Because the holocaust was a totalizing event, Laub argues, there was "no witness" to the atrocities committed, in a sense, because there was no "outside" from which to witness it. For this reason, "bearing witness to massive trauma does indeed begin with someone who testifies to an absence, to an event that has not yet come into existence... [in the sense that] the emergence of narrative... is the process wherein 'knowing' of the event is given birth."[47] The ethical necessity, then, is both internal (as a narrative of healing) and external (as a testimony of injustice). Realizing, however, that the "emergence" of knowledge of the violent event is inflected by the trauma that, until that time, "has become distorted in its submersion," Laub qualifies the "truth" of

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[46] In her discussion of this means of killing, Malkki describes how the Hutu in exile believed that the bamboo poles had been cut to a certain length that was related to the "measurements" of Hutus that were taken and catalogued by the former Belgian colonial government in their effort to differentiate Hutu from Tutsi.

[47] Laub, p. 57.

the telling as contingent, but does not question the ethical imperatives in relation to this same contingency.

In a similar mood of humanism, Veena Das advocates for the sharing of trauma on ethical grounds citing, again, the necessity of the publicity of pain, suggesting, "in order to create a moral community through the sharing of pain, as was envisaged by Durkheim, the individual pain must be publicly experienced."[48] Das here is referring to the piacular rites ("sad celebrations,"[49] such as mourning rituals) that Durkheim examines in Book 3 of *Elementary Forms of Religious Life.* Such a line of argument seems tenuous at best. The rites that Durkheim is describing are ritualized performances enacted according to prescribed protocols and procedures, and they are not envisaged to engender a "moral" community, but are, rather, understood to be related to a "mythology of mourning."[50]

What is more, Durkheim makes due note of the fact that the piacular rites are not limited to expressions of sadness and the sharing of pain. Rather, the injured community mixes pain with a "sorrow which reaches such a paroxysm [that it] is not without a certain amount of anger. One cannot fail to be struck by the resemblances which these practices present to those of the vendetta. Both proceed from the same principle that death demands the shedding of blood."[51] In this light, I would argue, it is a stretch to press the *necessary* ethical component of bearing witness and sharing pain beyond the indisputable *right* that should be guarded to ensure that willing testimonial is not silenced. The ethical nature of the community that arises around such shared testimonial, is a matter of contingency, and remains open to a critical analysis.

In the mythico-histories that Lisa Malkki collected and compiled in her fieldwork in Tanzania, one underlying theme was that the genocide in Burundi had been a sort of *Kristallnacht* to the Hutu in exile that concretized their notions of Hutu-ness, while confirming upon the Tutsis a collective identity as a community of members who were (in the Hutu

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[48] Das, 194.
[49] Durkheim, p. 434.
[50] Ibid, p. 447.
[51] Ibid, p. 439.

cosmological imagination) something *less than human.* Significantly Lisa Malkki sat writing her account "from distant California in April of 1994."[52] Her post-script to *Purity and Exile* bristles with concern for what was happening in central Africa at that time. The first reports were coming out of Rwanda that the Tutsis were being slaughtered. It would be another several months before the world would come to recognize - or admit to - the scale of the genocide that had been touched off in April. In a few short months of unremitting blood-letting up to one million Tutsis had been slaughtered, many more millions had been orphaned, dislocated, driven mad, brutalized. Once violence returns to structure, in the narrative mechanics of its retelling (i.e. in the construction of histories), it must be analyzed strictly from within that narrative context. The ethics of the ethnographer of violence should center on breaking the vicious circle between structural violence and episodic violence by means of an effort to expose ideologies of inequality, degradation, and dehumanization in *whatever* structure within which they have become normalized. This involves a consciousness of the trajectories that have given birth to structure as process.

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[52] Malkki, p. 259.

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Verbal communication and gender discrimination: A study from an Indian perspective

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Abstract

I have presented a short survey and analysis of the frequently found differences between Masculine and Feminine language *vis-à-vis* the traditional gendered outlook, with references to both Indian and Western culture and linguistic practice. My study is confined to inter-personal communication where we find various forms of covert violence. The social context, the politics of power, the gendered roles and the mental conditioning of men and women are found to be the cause of the domination of men over women in several societies and the discriminatory use of everyday language in most nations, around the world. The point to be taken into consideration here is that we need to find an alternative to such violent linguistic usage which are covertly denying freedom and dignity to a particular group of human beings who stand in "down" position in a "top-down" power structure. Within such a power setup, women are labeled not only as weaker sex but also as incapable of using the language that is intelligible and understandable by all (here "all" refers to men). However it is evident from this exposition that the language spoken and accepted as normal has many hidden nuances which are far from being respectful to women. No matter how much energy has been spent so far on dividing men's language from women's language, or for bridging the gap of communication between the two sexes, I find it more crucial today to enquire whether the so-called neutral masculine language can restore equality and dignity for all, irrespective of biological, psychological or any other differences. It is with the help of a few feminist critics, thinkers and sociologists that I have attempted to formulate some alternative ways of speaking in a more respectful, and non-violent manner.

Keywords: language, gender, communication, language and power, covert violence, discrimination, linguistic violence, male language, female language, languages in India, language of care.

The purpose of language is to enable a systematic means of communication for all human beings living in a society. All animals in the universe communicate non-verbally, through signs and gestures. Unlike other animals, humans uniquely possess the capability to communicate with each other through words; yet our internal self-communication is based upon feelings and images – most faint and unformed – and primarily non-verbal. As a verbal disposition, language is learned through our conventions, and it is associated with certain mental, physiological and behavioral aspects. A primary feature of all languages, as devices of communication, is that it occurs at least between two individuals – a speaker and a hearer. So far as languages are used as modes of conversation and communication between individuals, active participation of both speaker and the hearer is necessary. Speaking just for the sake of saying something, without being heard and understood is ineffective, futile and useless. We are here going to deal with language that is used in interpersonal communication. Hence we need to be aware of the factors which make our utterances powerful and appealing, or weak and unsuccessful. A speech act or utterance becomes weak and futile due to several reasons, such as the mental make up of the hearer and the speaker, the content of the speech, the phonetics, their historical background, their interests/goals as well as their social status or power positions. Under appropriate setup, even repeated utterances sound very interesting and refreshing to hearers: e.g. listening to fairy tales or the same epic or fable stories from grandparents in childhood is quite exciting and interesting. However, under hierarchical conditions, where top-down power setting prevails, even the best speech sometimes remains unheard.

Language or words has a tremendous impact on our thoughts and beliefs about us as well as others. Our utterances, when heard, are received positively or negatively. Every utterance conveys certain thoughts, attitudes

or opinions of the speaker if someone listens. This conveyed content of the speech is then either approved or disapproved by the hearer. Consequently spoken language (words/utterances) might cause delight, peace of mind, hope, despair or pain. Language is used appropriately or inappropriately, in skillful or artless manner, depending on how much the speaker has expertise on the language, and on the art to express her/his thoughts accurately through words and sentences. Even among users of the same language, there exists a kind of hierarchy depending upon the variation of this expertise. This hierarchy is what we are particularly concerned about here. In the rest of this study we are going to find out how language, especially in the form of interpersonal communication, can exhibit a form of violence, which is called "linguistic violence". We are going to see how language can violate other's (hearer's) dignity and identity, thereby ignoring, marginalizing and alienating a significant partner of our interpersonal communication. The term 'linguistic violence' stands for any use of words in any language, which involves covert violence. Language becomes a tool of oppression or violence especially in the hands of the powerful. Violent language causes more psychological harm than physical harm, and it brings with it alienation and marginalization of certain individuals or groups who are weak or powerless. Language is sometimes a means to humiliate, degrade and dehumanize others. Under critical analysis our daily conversations are found to be violent in subtle and unidentified ways. Generally, humans are violent when they are not able to control their emotions and states of mind. Hence we need to understand linguistic violence from similar perspective of human mind and emotion.

Almost all linguists and philosophers of language have perceived language itself as pure, bias-free and neutral. These theorists say that the real task of language is to depict or picture reality. Language, as conceived by most traditional scholars truly represents the world as it really is. They further state that there is a kind of link between language, world and our thoughts. Only language can connect human thoughts, experiences and reality. Philosophers have also claimed that the more the language is free from obscurity and vagueness (the more it is clear and distinct), the more accurate is the depicted reality or representation of the world through

language. The more accurately a language pictures reality the more it is impersonal and objective. When we confront violent language or instances of linguistic violence, these theorists suggest that the bias or violation comes from the users of the particular language in question, the speaker and the hearer may have partial perception, prejudices, assumptions or preferences, social surrounding which influence their forms of expression. Contemporary linguists and feminists question the assumed objectivity and neutrality of language. It is a very strange proposition that language by itself is absolutely bias-free and non-violent; what is more evident is that our use of certain words and expressions is capable of hurting, abusing, degrading, threatening the other individual/individuals. As a tool of communication language is used in several ways which are closely related to the context of the conversation and the social position and mental make up of the speaker and the hearer. Hence it is hard to be regarded as ahistorical, neutral, impersonal and unmotivated. Even the so-called ahistorical aspect of language is not natural; rather like language itself, it is also constructed and artificial. Some problematic issues arising in this context are language discrimination, and gendered language. Language discrimination occurs when a person is treated differently because of that person's native language or other characteristics of that person's speech. Language discrimination may also occur if a person is denied access to businesses or government services or any other form of official participation, because he or she does not speak the official language. Language establishes and maintains social relationships. It also sets the social identity of the speakers. Language is gendered when it is conveyed in terms of some specific thoughts of a specific speaker/group of speakers, and is used effectively for manipulating a particular hearer/specified group of hearers to play the role assigned to them by the powerful.

Feminist thinker William C. Gay defines linguistic violence as an example of covert institutional violence. In Gay's opinion, language is an institution and that its harm is more psychological than physical. By linguistic violence he meant violence in the form of alienation, oppression, silencing and domination of individuals or group of individuals through language. Linguistic violence refers to a form of cultural violence which

negates "identity, value and needs"; it also covers linguistic instances of "direct" and "structural" violence.[1] Language both shapes and reflects social reality. Violent or discriminatory language is both a symptom of, and a contributor to, the unequal social status of some individuals who are marginalized and ignored. Such individuals comprise of women, person with a disability, aboriginals and people from various ethnic and racial backgrounds. Language is a major vehicle for the expression of domination, hierarchy or discrimination. Some of the major features of discriminatory language are:

Extra Visibility or Emphasis on Difference - In many contexts a person's sex, race, ethnic background or disability is unnecessarily mentioned. This type of detailed specification may result in distress or hurt on the person's mind and cause a sense of inferiority. Such overemphasis on a particular characteristic, which is neither relevant to the context nor needed for the speech, creates an impression that the person referred to is somehow different and lacking.

Stereotyping - Stereotype is a generalized and relatively fixed image of a person or persons belonging to a particular group. This image is formed by isolating or exaggerating certain features; physical, intellectual, cultural, occupational, personal, and so on which seem to characterize the group. Stereotypes are discriminatory in that they take away a person's individuality; they are mostly misinterpretations or inaccurate descriptions owing to oversimplification. The status of minority groups, tribes or economically poor in society are often adversely represented by use of stereotypes.

Derogatory or Imposed Labeling - The discriminatory nature of derogatory labels used to describe members of minority groups and underprivileged people, who lack power to define them, are often obvious. This is also true for marginalized class of individuals in our society like women, old people, persons with certain disabilities and untouchables.

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[1] William C. Gay, "Linguistic Violence" in Robert Litke and Deane Curtin (eds.), *Institutional Violence*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1999, pp. 13-35.

In this paper we shall focus on the traditionally-drawn difference between feminine and masculine language, which is closely connected to the problem of gender. It is possible that after the examination of this difference, we can identify the inbuilt politics of domination and oppression that is covertly functioning through our daily usage. The issue of female vs. male language has often plagued linguists, sociolinguists, social psychologists and literary theorists. Most of the approaches start with perceiving differences in language use either as biologically based or as socially based. According to the former perception, women's inferior vocabulary and general linguistic skills are biologically determined rather than based on education. The perception that language is socially based has been founded on the premise that the socialization process is largely conducted through language, and has been explored by a number of feminist theorists and sociolinguists, including Sheila Rowbotham, Dale Spender, Jennifer Coates and Deborah Cameron. For instance, Coates suggests that learning to be male or female in our society means, among other things, learning to use gender-appropriate language. Further, by adopting a certain linguistic behavior, speakers actually perpetuate the social order which generates gender difference in the form of discrimination.[2]

According to Coates there are two main approaches to gender differences in language: (i) dominance approach and (ii) difference approach. The dominance approach perceives women as an oppressed group, and interprets linguistic differences between women's and men's speech in terms of men's dominance and women's subordination. This approach is based on the premise that men's use of language places them as central and positive, while women are blamed for any linguistic state or development which is regarded as negative or reprehensible. In this way, one may discover women's tendencies - to be indirect, to avoid verbal confrontation and not to interrupt another speaker, all of which are the traits of co-operative language mode. Yet they are seen as powerless and inferior when compared with men's use of language.

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[2] Deborah Cameron and Jennifer Coates, *Women, Men and Language, a Sociolinguistic Account of Sex Differences in Language*, New York, Longman, 1986.

Men's use of language often reflects traits like competition and self-assertiveness, which enhances their authority and centrality in the interaction/communication process. In *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*, Deborah Tannen suggests that if a particular linguistic strategy is used by a woman, it is seen as powerless; if it is done by a man, then it is seen as powerful.[3] Often, the labeling of "women's language" as "powerless" reflects the male view on women's behaviour. In a top-down power situation, women often find themselves framed as one-down. In contrast, the difference approach emphasizes the idea that women and men belong to different subcultures and those linguistic differences between the two genders may serve to maintain their separate identities. Hence, instead of claiming that one is superior to the other, this approach emphasizes the equality of gender-based linguistic differences.

A number of feminist critics have argued that the man-made properties of language make it impossible for women to express themselves verbally. In her book *Women's Consciousness: Man's World*, Sheila Rowbotham proposes that language leaves women silent because "as soon as they learn words, they find themselves outside them".[4] Several explanations are given for the oppression of women, such as, the lack of economic, legal, educational, social, and other opportunities which place women in a dependent position; and specifically the ideology of patriarchy, with its belief that men are inherently superior to women, which enables domination over women in all spheres of life.

In *The Language of Oppression*, Haig Bosmajian observes that while the language of racial and ethnic oppression is often blatant and relatively easy to identify, the language of sexism is more subtle and pervasive. Our everyday speech reflects the "superiority" of the male and the "inferiority" of the female, resulting in a master-subject relationship. The language of sexism relegates the woman to the status of children, servants, and idiots, to

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[3] Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*, London, Virago, 1991, p. 224.
[4] Sheila Rowbotham, *Women's Consciousness: Man's World*, London, Penguin, 1973, p. 190.

being the “second sex” and to virtual invisibility.[5] Rowbotham and Bosmajian imply that the existing language is man-made and therefore inappropriate for women to express her feelings and ideas. A number of feminist theorists expanded this idea in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and they began to explore the possibilities of women creating an alternative, woman-made language as a more suitable means of expression. Some thinkers propose that the only way women can be heard is if they create a language that could construct the reality of women’s autonomy, women’s strength, and women’s power. However feminist sociolinguists such as Coates and Tannen have criticized this approach, claiming that instead of creating a different and separate language from men, women should challenge the existing semantics by inscribing the interpretations of their own. Instead of trying to speak and behave like men, women should allow themselves to be different from men, while retaining, their linguistic and social equality. In other words, rather than changing male and female speech habits that are equally valid and part of their identities, one should endeavor to “change their responses to the habits of the opposite sex”. This also means a greater understanding of the fact that there is not one single definition of a single-gendered language and behavior. The fact that women’s use of language is found to be more co-operative does not mean that in some instances women speakers do not either use certain traits of competitive mode, or modify traits of co-operative mode, so as to gain the upper hand in the communicational hierarchy.

In *Women, Men and Language*, Deborah Cameron refers to the gender inequality at the base of patriarchal ideology when she suggests that in different historical periods women achieved social respectability through male approval.[6] Given the fact that social norms, gender divisions and particular language use are defined by a dominant group in a society, it is this group that has a potential to create a system of cultural, social and political beliefs and rituals which will perpetuate that group’s dominant

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[5] Haig Bosmajian, *The Language of Oppression*, Lanham, New York, London, University Press of America, 1983, p. 90.

[6] Deborah Cameron and Jennifer Coates, *Women, Men and Language, a Socio-linguistic Account of Sex Differences in Language*, New York, Longman, 1986.

position in their community. In both traditional and revisionist histories a dominant group has always been defined in terms of a class, and different aspects such as ethnicity and gender have often been disregarded. In our society, it is evident that the male occupies a dominant, authoritative and powerful position, as opposed to the female whose position is seen as marginal, subordinate and powerless. If this argument is extended to language, what follows is that, since language has been shaped by a dominant group of individuals who are male, it therefore serves, in accordance with the separate spheres model, to marginalize and oppress the subordinate group, that is, female.

Let us now explore society's attitude towards women, with evidence from Indian languages. A woman's place in Indian society is marginal; it is seen as secondary to that of man. A woman does not have identity as an individual per se. She is seen only in relation to man, *i.e.*, as a daughter, wife, mother, or even as a prostitute or a mistress. Barring a very few matriarchal and matrilineal societies, which are almost invisible now, women throughout India are perceived as the shadow of men, with inferior, or no intellectual abilities at all. Literature, from ancient to modern period, has depicted women as physical entities with beauty and, in its crudest form, as sex objects. It is a matter of serious concern that even in the twenty-first century; women do not find a place in literature for their intellectual capabilities despite the fact that woman's brain has the same potential for cognitive growth as man. A very powerful evidence for gender discrimination in a given society comes from the language of that society. Each language abounds in expressions which are indicative of society's differential treatment of women.

Linguistically gender discrimination finds expressions in two forms, namely, (i) in the language restricted in use to women, and (ii) language descriptive of women alone. Language used by women is often markedly different from that of men and the difference is perceived at lexical, syntactic, and other features. Evidence comes from color terms. It is widely acknowledged that women make far more precise discriminations in naming colors than do men. Words like "beige", "mauve", "aquamarine", and "lavender" are easily found in a women's vocabulary, but absent from that

of most men. Women generally use weaker expletives, like “goodness”, “oh dear”, but men usually prefer stronger ones like “shit”, “damn it”, etc. As far as syntax is concerned, it is found that women have preference for tag questions. A tag in its usage is midway between an outright statement and a yes-no question: it is less assertive than the former but more confident than the latter. A tag question like “You do love to see theatre, don’t you?” is found more commonly in women’s language. A person makes a statement when he or she is confident of his or her knowledge. A person asks a question when he or she lacks knowledge on some point. A tag question is asked when one stakes a claim, but lacks full confidence in the truth of that claim. Tag questions are examples which reflect women’s underlying sense of lack of confidence and assertiveness due to their marginal position in society. In English, the expression “henpecked husband” is used in a derogatory sense to demean a husband who is controlled by his wife. The parallel word of hen is cock, but the very fact that English does not have a parallel expression like “cockpecked wife” indicates a sexist bias. In other words, society expects the wife to be controlled by her husband, as a norm and not vice-versa. English also has a word that is used to refer to a man whose wife has been unfaithful to him, but it does not have a word to refer to a woman whose husband has been unfaithful to her. It simply implies that there is societal approval for man’s philandering habits. There are some words which are only used for women such as “prostitutes”, “witch”, and “whore house” and we can hardly find any parallels that refer to men. In Indian languages such exclusively female words are quite extensively used. It is also noticed that some parallel words - one applying to masculine beings, the other to feminine beings - are not parallel in their range of use and connotation. For example, the words “master” and “mistress” were, in all probability, simple male-female equivalents, analogous to bull: cow, cock: hen and drake: duck. However, these two words have acquired new divergent connotative meanings. The word “master” now generally refers to a man who has acquired some consummate ability in some field that has no gender connotation. But the word “mistress” is used only to refer to certain sexual connotation.

Indian languages, especially spoken languages, reflect gender discrimination at various levels. We will see some instances from Indian proverbs, idioms, and swear words that reflect society's bias and differential treatment of women. Bias against women is rooted in Sanskrit proverbs, the mother of most of the modern Indian languages. In Sanskrit there are sayings such as - "rivers, animals with paws, animals with horns, and women cannot be trusted." In Hindi there is a proverb which translates something like this: "drums, animals, uncultured men, shudras, and women deserve to be beaten." The origin of this adage is in *Ramcharit Manas* of Goswami Tulsidas. A new drum may not be pleasant to the ears. Repeated beating renders the drum pleasant gradually. Domestication of animals requires training that demands caning. The Shudras, the lowest among the four categories of castes in the Hindu caste system, are perceived as unintelligent people. Upper caste people traditionally treated them like slaves, and it was socially accepted as a norm. The underlying meaning of this proverb is that all these are objects of man's use and hence must be seasoned to obtain optimum utility. This simply implies that a woman is not perceived as a separate identity having a life of her own, independent of men; rather a woman is simply and only a man's possession.

Let us look at some proverbs commonly used in Indian conversations.

There is a Bengali proverb which translates like this: "A lucky man's wife dies and an unlucky man's cow dies". This proverb is heard more commonly in Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi feminist writer Taslima Nasreen has discussed this proverb in one of her essays in her much acclaimed book *Selected Columns*.[7] If a man's wife dies he can easily get married again. He will gain not only a new wife but also dowry at no cost whereas he cannot dream of getting a cow free of cost. There is another proverb in Bengali which means "rearing a woman is same as rearing a hen in a Muslim's house." Here the Muslim community is specified because rearing of hen was, at one time, associated with the Muslims. Hens are reared not for fun but for function. Once that function of laying eggs is over, the hen is of no

[7] Tasleema Nasreen, *Selected Columns*. Ananda Publishers, Ltd., Kolkata, 1992.

use. The function of women is equated with that of hens, *i.e*., bearing children for men. Thus, women are *hengsara buddhi monokal kelege* of use to men as much as hens are.

In Kannada there is a proverb. The literal meaning of this proverb is: "a woman's intellect lies below the knee." It implies that a woman is poor in her intellectual abilities. Hence a woman cannot be given equal right and freedom to speak about the important concerns of life. Another proverb in Kannada means that a woman is like a tumor in the family. By implication it means that woman is the root of all conflicts, miseries and problems in a family. A woman's existence centers around her body and not on her intellectual ability. Thus, by implication, a woman's participation is ruled out from serious concerns of life. Another Kannada proverb *mu:ru jade nu:ru juttu* means that three women alone can make the noise of hundred men. By implication, men are wise and laconic and women are foolish and talkative.

The status of women in Assamese society is not as low as in many other states. Unlike in other states they enjoy certain privileges and the society is free from the dowry menace. But this society is also essentially a male dominated society and, here too, language reflects bias against women is many ways. The proverb *katari sikun xile tirota sikun kile* literally means "stone keeps a knife in good form and beating keeps a woman in good form". If a knife becomes blunt, stone is required to sharpen it to make it useful. In the same way a woman can be made more useful and efficient if she is beaten. The proverb *ziorik zame nileu nia, zowaye nileu niya*, which literally means "whether a daughter is taken away by Yama (the Hindu God of Death) or by son-in-law means the same." A woman's life is at the mercy of her husband. Once a girl gets married she is not a part of her natal family and is almost non-existent for all practical purposes. This simply implies that a girl has no entity of her own and her fate is decided by her husband. This is suggestive of helpless and passive life of women. There is yet another proverb in Assamese which does not directly refer to women. But, nonetheless, its meaning is often extended to women. An extremely derogatory one, like *kukur sikun girihotor zoh*, means, "If a dog is healthy and attractive it reflects on the master," *i. e.,* the master has looked after the

dog well. By implication the master is well off and hence is capable of taking proper care of a dog. It is often extended to mean that if a woman is healthy, attractive, and well decorated (with gold, etc.) it is to the credit of her husband. In other words, a man's wealth and social status is reflected in the persona of his wife. This again confirms the well-established view that a woman has no entity of her own - she is only a possession of her husband. These kinds of proverbs are found in almost all the Indian languages in different forms.

A Marathi proverb says that *daal* (lentils) are good when pounded and so is a girl under pressure. Another Marathi proverb says "there is no difference between the mouth of a girl/woman and the mouth of a gutter".

The following Punjabi proverbs reflect the attitude that "There is no difference between a buffalo urinating and a woman weeping. If the wife dies, it is a blow on the ankle, if the husband dies it is a blow on the head."

Society's bias against women is reflected not only in the proverbs but also in the idiomatic expressions of that society's language. *Ardhangini* is one common word used euphemistically in many Indian languages, which is originally a Sanskrit word. This means that woman forms one half of a man. But the deep underlying meaning is that a woman is not looked upon as a complete individual but as a part of man. She has no identity of her own except through her husband. The idiom *hengsubuddhi* literally means "female intelligence" in Kannada. Ironically, even a man can be said to have *hengsubuddhi* if he is not sharp enough and lacks foresight. It clearly points towards society's perception of women as intellectually inferior beings. In Kannada there is another idiom *adige kelsa* which literally means work pertaining to cooking. But this is often used to refer to work that is considered trivial or meaningless. Cooking has traditionally been a woman's job and therefore, it is marginal to the serious concerns of life. When a man feels that he is doing something insignificant he says with contempt that he is doing *adige kelsa*. Assamese has an idiom *mekhela dhoa. Mekhela* means woman's skirt and *dhoa* means washing. Cynicism toward a man who is unable to do any significant work is expressed by saying that he is wasting his time by washing his wife's skirt. Nothing can be more humiliating for a man than washing a woman's skirt even if it belongs to his own wife.

Linguistic evidence of society's bias against women comes from swear words too. The English swear words like "bastard", "son of a bitch", etc., refer to the character of a woman or to be more precise, woman's sexuality. The Hindi word *haramjada* means that person's father is doubtful and indirectly it refers to the mother's bad character. In many Indian languages there are swear words which directly refer to the mother and have connotation of sex, for instance "prostitute's son", "illegitimate son" or "son of a widow". These swear words have vulgar sexual overtones of a mother's private life. In Assamese society, the father is responsible for a man's ill behavior - not the mother. However, if a girl's behavior is not as expected, then the blame goes to the mother. There are several proverbs to support this position. It is quite amusing to note that in Assamese it is not "son of a bitch" but "son of a dog." The swear words of many other Indian languages refer to woman's alleged tendency towards sexual promiscuity.

What is clear from the above analysis of the proverbs, idioms, and swear words is that there is a clear-cut pattern of gender bias in Indian society. Although urbanized women are getting education and employment and holding positions in society similar to men, yet the overall attitude of men toward women is not much different. Be she a rural girl, a farmer, a factory worker or an urban, educated, working woman - they are all conceived as deserving to be kept under control of patriarchy by any means, and their obedience to the rule of men is an assumed norm of morality. Consequently, many women still stand as marginal to the serious concerns of life, and lack their distinct identity and independent worth. They are seen as good so far as they serve men's wishes and contribute to the maintenance of the patriarchal order.

The idea that men and women differ fundamentally in the way they use language to communicate is a myth in the everyday sense: a widespread but false belief. Whether or not they are "true" in any historical or scientific sense, such stories have consequences in the real world. They shape our beliefs, and so influence our actions. We might here say like Rae Langton that the world is tailored in ways so as to fit the beliefs and desires of the powerful. The myth of Mars and Venus is simply the proposition that men and women differ fundamentally in the way they use language to

communicate. All versions of the myth share this basic premise; most versions, in addition, make some or all of the following claims:

1. Language and communication matter more to women than to men; women talk more than men.

2. Women are more verbally skilled than men.

3. Men's goals in using language tend to be about getting things done, whereas women's tend to be about making connections to other people. Men talk more about things and facts, whereas women talk more about people, relationships and feelings.

4. Men's way of using language is competitive, reflecting their general interest in acquiring and maintaining status; women's use of language is cooperative, reflecting their preference for equality and harmony.

5. These differences routinely lead to "miscommunication" between the sexes, with each sex misinterpreting the other's intentions. This causes problems in contexts where men and women regularly interact, and especially in heterosexual relationships.

Although women's and men's styles are shown to be different, in history, literature, and every other human enterprise, it is usually women who are shown to be deviant from the norm or standard; hence it is women who are told to change. It is our natural tendency to see the world in patterns which suit our idea of intelligibility, in order to make sense of it; but this natural propensity has unfortunate consequences too. It is undoubtedly offensive to reduce individuals to a category and it is also presumptuous to divide men and women into two clear cut exclusive classes. In Tannen's words "Denying real differences can only compound the confusion that is already widespread in this era of shifting and re-forming relationships between women and men."[8] She contends, by pretending that women and men are the same, we are hurting women, since their treatment is based upon norms which are appropriate for men. It also hurts men who intend to

[8] Deborah Tannen, "Women and Men Talking: An Interactional Sociolinguistic Approach" in *Women, Men and Gender: Ongoing Debates,* Ed. Mary Roth Walsh, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1977, p 84.

speak to women as they do with men and are puzzled by the unexpected failure of communication along with producing resentment and anger among women. There are gender differences in ways of speaking and unless we identify and understand them we cannot respect and respond to our own selves and our relationships, nor can we prevent the damaging effects of our contrasting conversational styles. Taking a sociolinguistic approach to relationships makes it possible to explain our dissatisfactions without blaming/accusing each other or discarding the relationship. A cross cultural approach to gender differences in conversational styles will save us from thinking that male dominance is the sole cause of our communication breakdown. The differences in our conversation style do not explain all the problems of the women-men relationship. Besides psychological problems, failure of love and care, loss of protection, selfishness, economic equity, there are many other factors related to unsuccessful communication. When women and men express their thoughts and feelings in different ways there is failure of communication.

Scholars and sociolinguists propose that language, being a major tool of human communication, serves as a part of culture and an instrument for transmitting and perpetuating implicit, historically-situated and culture-bound principles of social order and systems of belief that define and assign unequal social value to femininity and masculinity. Amy Sheldon suggests that one of the functions of language is to "perpetuate and enforce asymmetrical gendered behavior by means of reconstructing social relations between and among females and males in countless ordinary daily conversations."[9] If it is true that gendered behavior establishes and perpetuates itself by means of daily reconstruction of social relations between men and women, then it is clearly implied that language and gender differences are social constructs that place men in the central position and women on the margin.

We must remember that more women and men learn to speak in particular ways because those ways are associated with their gender. Men

[9] Amy Sheldon, "Pickle Fights: Gendered Talk in Preschool Disputes" in Deborah Tannen (ed.) *Gender and Conversational Interaction,* New York, Oxford, OUP, 1993, p. 84.

are more comfortable to speak in public while women are more comfortable to speak in the private domain. This difference can be captured by the notions of "report-talk" and "rapport-talk." For most women the language of conversation is primarily a language of rapport which is a way of establishing connection and negotiating relationships. Hence they learn from their childhood to feel comfort while speaking among close private groups. On the other hand, for most men talk is primarily a means to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchical social order. So they are more comfortable speaking in a larger group where they can exhibit their knowledge and skills through story telling, jokes, or imparting information. Their talk is more like reporting than establishing rapport. The difference between public and private speaking can be understood in terms of status and connection, both of which are bought with the same currency, communication. However, Tannen's generalized view is not accepted by all. Writers like Elizabeth Aries argue that Tannen draws conclusions about the role of gender in shaping people's behaviors without considering the current roles and social contexts that shape those behaviors. In her view "We see men in social roles and statuses that differ from those held by women and attribute the differences in their behavior to their gender rather than to their status or role. People who hold positions of superior power and status behave differently than subordinates, and more men than women hold positions of power and status. Variables other than gender serve equally well to explain the differences between men's and women's styles of interaction." [10]

In her book, *Language and Women's Place*, Robin Lakoff argues that this kind of disparities in use of words for women indicate their position in society, where women are given certain identities by virtue of their relationship with men, not vice versa.[11] The examples cited from the Indian social context are clearly symptomatic of the underlying attitude of discrimination and cruelty against women in Indian societies. We perceive

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[10] Elizabeth Aries, "Women and Men Talking: Are they Worlds Apart?" in *Women, Men and Gender: Ongoing Debates,* Ed. Mary Roth Walsh, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1977, p. 92.
[11] Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place*, Harper and Row, New York, 1975.

many differences between the behavior of women and men in our daily lives. All these differences are not natural; rather they may be due to differences in power and social roles taken up by individuals. In spite of considerable changes in the status and position of women in society in the present time, there is little alteration in gender stereotypes. Women often exhibit stereotypically associated behavior and use language in accordance with their roles, because that is what makes them feel protected in the patriarchy, and saves them from negative evaluation. People often behave in ways which are socially prescribed for them, even though they are not internalized, because any deviation from the set standard costs quite a price for the individual. Stereotypes have a critical effect on the evaluation of speakers. Hence, it is time for us to rethink our understanding of gender and to move away from the notion that men and women have two naturally contrasting mindset, thoughts, and web of beliefs, capacities and styles of interaction. All these are acquired during socialization. None of us is feminine or masculine by necessity, by nature. In particular contexts people exhibit different styles of speech and behavior because they encounter different social standards, demands and pressures.

Philosophically male-centered language encourages people to interpret the world around in a way which favor men and simultaneously make it appear normal or natural. For several decades the western world unquestionably accepted language as a neutral medium, as an impartial tool of communication through which humans express and convey their knowledge, thoughts, beliefs and feelings. This apparently innocent medium is now open to severe criticism and condemnation, since it is found to be historically constructed and shaped to maintain an existing status quo of hierarchy and domination. Since Kant, philosophers have started realizing that like knowledge and beliefs, our language too is our construction and hence it reflects the same power game that exists in our society. Our individual and social perspectives are great shapers of our perception. Similarly the meaning or interpretation we assign to particular words and expressions of our language are also made up by those who hold authority and control over language. Language in all respects is a tool to describe, categorize and interpret the world, its people and events as the powerful

wish to see them and manipulate them in their own interest. What the powerful say becomes just and true so far as it is accepted by the powerless, either by force or by camouflage of social norms. It is like Thrasymachus' view in *The Republic* that justice is what is to the interest of the stronger party. The stronger or the more powerful uses language to decide on the identity, standard of meaning, terms and conditions of inclusion/exclusion, moral value and responsibility of all who are part of the same social setup. Every language reflects the prejudices and biases of the society especially of the powerful. In consequence the sexist and excluding language patterns help the dominant group of individuals to maintain a hierarchical order in the society, which validates as well as encourages various forms of devalued and discriminatory practices towards women.

What is true is the sexual or biological difference between women and men, but there is no one-to-one correlation between sex difference and gender difference. Gender identity of women is a social construct which validates the improper projection of gender on women. Supporters of the exclusive nature and roles of women and men often ascribe all desirable qualities (such as, physical strength, capacity for abstraction, rationality, and detachment) to men and all inferior traits (like feebleness, emotion, hesitation, weakness of the will, and "situatedness") to women, holding thereby that each of these is naturally possessed by opposite sexes. Further all female traits are marked as lacking or inferior in comparison to male traits; this in turn puts men in a privileged position in society, gives a right to rule and oppress women. In such an arrangement, like all other devices, language is also constructed to tailor the needs of patriarchy. Language reflects gender hierarchy by associating male interest with sports, cars, the stock market and pornography, while women are identified as gossip makers, jealous, fault-finders and shallow-minded beings. None of these are related to the sex identities of women or men; rather they are all gendered features which are grossly homogenized to find exclusive patterns in both sexes. Ordinary people use various terms everyday in their conversations which are gendered stereotypes. It is needless to mention that the conditions of men who show so-called feminine traits and who use so-called feminine language are even worse than the women who exhibit masculine traits or use

male language. In patriarchal societies, such as those in which we live, the root of all relationships between women and men are built upon the sexual relation (of procreation). This is why our everyday language reflects the identity of women and men in terms of their sex organs. Our language is inseparably connected with our underlying beliefs and biases which are so deep rooted that we almost forget that they are our mental construction.

Critics of gendered language are simultaneously fighting against gender inequality in all levels, making of concepts, forming beliefs and attitudes towards individuals. Feminists have rightly pointed out that merely bringing external change to our use of language and our actions is not sufficient. We really need to change our attitudes and our form of life which enable us to attach specific meaning to our usage. To bring non-violent forms of speech and non-hierarchical pattern of communication, we must attempt to remove our prejudices and misconceptions about other humans, and our interpersonal relations. Change in our language implies change in the meaning and interpretation of language, as well changing our use of words which are derogatory, harmful or hurting for other individuals. Some feminist critics claim that language both helps construct sexual inequality and reflects its existence in society. Deborah Cameron states since language is part of patriarchy, so we need a radical theory of language. Cameron argues that linguistic determinism is a myth, that male control over meaning is impossibility, and that there is no reason in principle why language cannot express the experience of women to the same extent that it expresses the experience of men. She further notes that the institutions that regulate language-use in our own society, and indeed those of most societies, are deliberately oppressive to women. But the language, the institution, the apparatus of ritual, the norm, value judgement and so on, does not belong to everyone equally. It can be controlled by a small elite. Changing the masculine language may be necessary, but it is not sufficient. Along with linguistic transformation, cultural transformation is equally important. In other words, to expose and eliminate sexist language will not end violence against women. Sexist language is a symptom of deeper cultural violence. Nevertheless, when we realize the important connection between language and consciousness, we can also see how changing our language can lead to

not only changed thought but also to changed action. Thus, the feminist critique of sexist language is simultaneously making a contribution to the practice of linguistic nonviolence and to the quest for societies in which human emancipation, dignity, and respect is not restricted on the basis of such irrelevant factors as gender, race, or sexual orientation.

Contemporary psychologist Carol Gilligan has given an alternative ethic of care which she formulates through exploring women's mental development, especially moral development, on the basis of several case studies and examinations. She points out that women's experience, her way of perceiving and expressing events and thoughts is embedded in her lived perspective within patriarchy, where she has certain social responsibilities and a specific stereotype role to play. She argues that although patriarchy has ascribed to women the significant role of care giver, mother and protector of the child, with love and empathy, yet men in this system have not taken up nor do they share these important responsibilities along with women. In Gilligan's view, this ethic of care should to be adopted by both men and women so as to establish a relationship of co- feeling, connectedness and understanding; it is a kind of non-hurting, non-violent relation between individuals who have for so long kept poles apart, owing to their different ways of thought and expression. What is noteworthy here is that the importance of a relationship and relatedness is placed above individual differences. Hence, unlike the traditional trend towards abstraction, separateness and neutrality, the ethic of care offers a more "human form of life" which is beneficial for all, irrespective of sex, gender, and other differences. In her words "The most basic question about human living - how to live and what to do - are fundamentally questions about human relations, because people's lives are deeply connected, psychologically, economically and politically... It was concern about relationship that made women's voices sound 'different' within a world that was preoccupied with separation and obsessed with creating and maintaining boundaries between people."[12] However whether we are ready

[12] Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1988. p. xiv (Letter to Readers).

to accept and adopt such a different voice as the universal voice of men and women is a matter of independent enquiry.

All kinds of communication depend on certain structures or web of beliefs, either in the form of paradigms or in the form of culturally shares beliefs. Both are important for stabilizing meaning and understanding of language as well as for enabling communication. The former supply the basic schemata for communication which is actually regulated by the powerful speakers in the society. It is all inclusive and inescapable. The powerful speakers offer paradigms of meaning and use of linguistic expressions and everyone else has to converge to this paradigm in order to be meaningful. History shows how like power gender also contributes to standardization of dominant speech conventions. Gender enters into various levels of our context of communication. As Shefali Moitra points out in her *Feminist Thought*: "At the overarching level of communication occurs androcentrism, at the institutional level gender is incorporated in the form of patriarchy and at the interpersonal level of communication gender is exhibited in the form of sexism." [13]

Mainstream communication plays an important role in providing subtle tools for creating a top-down structure of language, where speaking is conceived as "speaking to…". A distinguishing feature of "speaking to…" is that here the speaker is given more importance than the hearer. The speaker has the authority to fix the theme and meaning, both of which are made in accordance with the intention of the speaker. In such a setup, language functions as an instrument to convey the speaker's intention. In this way language may also be used to hide or disguise real thoughts and coerce the hearer covertly. The scope of the hearer to rectify or capture the meaning does not exist. Hence the hearer is nothing but a coerced and captive participant. In our routine communication such "speaking to…" gives priority to rules, roles and conventions above individual differences regarding meaning or interpretation. The receiver or hearer hereby becomes

[13] Shefali Moitra, *Feminist Thought: Androcentrism, Communication and Objectivity*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. in association with Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, 2002, p. 83.

a passive recipient of the message transmitted by the speaker in a linear direction. In every society there is a group of privileged speakers which encodes the contents of communication and stipulates appropriate space-time conditions for its transmission. The receiver internalizes the information in such away as if there is complete mutual agreement and no hierarchical power hidden in it. In our patriarchal setup, we find that the men are representatives of knowledge and culture while women's experience is always mediated by male perception. Historically men are found to be the most pervasive group of powerful speakers, who in turn oppress others. The covert silencing, subjugation and regimentation of women, along with many other powerless individuals, from the domain of individual voice and interpretation exhibits one of the most pervasive forms of covert violence. The passivity involved in such linear communication helps the powerful men to sustain and justify relations of domination with women.

Ideally verbal communication is a cooperative affair where both the speaker and the listener have equal importance. The difference between hearing and listening is that the latter includes empathy or co feeling which is a vital ingredient in relational communication. Communication is not merely a one sided self-expression; any use of words is futile unless it is aimed at expressing oneself for someone who hears it and understands it. Just as a speaker has to consider the capacities and limitations of the recipient similarly the recipient or hearer also has to capture the intended meaning and reference of the speaker. In our daily conversations the nuances of particular words and expressions get connected with those of other words thereby making up a compact complex significance. Our history-consciousness, science-consciousness, gender-consciousness - all are related to such nuances of language. Similarly our understanding of different events and objects in our life and around us in the world are reflected in our language. On the other hand specific usages of words contribute in the making of various models of thought and different ways of conceptualization. Hence there is no significant meaning of a term in any language which is absolutely universal, fixed, context neutral and final. Of course, certain meanings do seem naturalized and permanent, due to

constant and uniform usage over a long period of time. The powerful and efficient users get control over the task of assigning meanings and deciding right and wrong applications of words in a language. Standardized meanings and interpretations help maintain the status quo of power. This brings failure of communication in interpersonal level. A person in power of a language makes a kind of imposition on the recipient without respecting the latter's right to be an active recipient. Simultaneously the same speaker will not be ready to listen to the speech of the powerless no matter how much important they are to the other. That is why it is said, "For successful communication, the right to speak as well as the right to be heard must be acquired." In the "speaking to…" form of communication either the hearer stops playing the language game after some time or he/she tries to replace the dominant discourse by a reverse form of discourse. However such reversal of power cannot guarantee deeper and better communication among men and women.

Here a better alternative would be the "speaking with…" mode of communication. This kind of communication is rooted in cognitive anxiety as there is insufficient information and comprehension to judge, organize and plan events which are faced by the speaker and hearer. In such kind of communication the hearer does not receive any complete unit of information; hence they enter into communication with an open mind. A non-violent form of communication is one that involves a respect for other and a freedom from prefixed rules and interpretations of some authority. In "speaking with…" language is open to be influenced by human personality. It acknowledges an irreducible plurality of perspectives, which may be altered by individual lived experiences. "Speaking with…" assumes that "seeing the world from one point of view reduces all possible worlds to a single generic perspective, whereas parallel perspectives may actually reveal different worlds and enrich our understanding by broadening our horizon"[14].

Feminists find the "speaking to…" mode as a narrow kind of communication whereas "speaking with…" mode as a broader form of communication. The former either interprets the unknown perspectives and words through their known lenses (rules and meanings) or else they regard

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[14] Ibid., p 94.

these perspectives as unintelligible. On the other hand, the latter mode accepts new content in language and liberalizes the tools of communication by diluting the norms of intelligibility. Substantive equality can be attainable only through the latter mode, since it is based on the premise that the communicating subject is located in specific structures of privilege and power, inequality and hierarchy. Karen J. Warren regards the "speaking with…" mode of power as a kind of power-with-power, which is not conceptually linked to domination or violence. Power-with power is based on a commitment to the intrinsic value, equality, worth, or independence of the other. We shall refer to the work Karen J. Warren whose view might be useful in setting the foundations of a feminist peace politics[15]. In her view, Patriarchy is the systematic, unjustified domination of women over men and its chief function is to maintain and justify male-gender privilege and power. This she regards an instance of power-over power. This kind of power serves to maintain, perpetuate and justify relations of domination and subordination by the coercive use or threat of force, imposition of harms and sanctions, or restriction of liberties of the Downs by the Ups. In opposition to this kind of power, Warren mentions another kind of power, namely, power-with power. This shares or maintains coalition, solidarity, and similar forms of equalizing relations with others. This is a kind of solidarity through respect for difference rather than unity through sameness or homogenization. This form of power might be useful for creating a non-discriminatory, non-violent relation between women and men, thereby opening the path for non-violent discourse.

We have to remember that we can bring harmony in our troubled world only through accepting and respecting the plurality of our identities that resists all forms of homogenization and categorization. Words matter and our language choices have consequences which are not always desirable. Hence, if we believe that women and men deserve social equality, then we should think seriously about how to reflect that belief in our using of language.

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[15] Karen J. Warren, "Towards an Ecofeminist Peace Politics", in *Ecological Feminism,* Routledge, London and New York, 1994, p. 182.

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The Ideology of the Archangel Michael Legion and Mircea Eliade's Political Views in Interwar Romania

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Abstract

Analyzing Mircea Eliade's political thinking, we observe that it evolved between 1935 and 1936, apparently under Professor Nae Ionescu's influence and probably also due to the suasion of political trends in fashion at that time. While in the early '30s he rejected fascism, by examining his articles of those years, we see that he gradually moved nearer to the ideology of the Iron Guard, in whose favour he published some supporting statements in 1937-1938. Still, Mircea Eliade always pleaded for the political non-involvement of his generation, and believed in the intellectual's power to change things. These aspects, together with "*Românism*" (Romanian nationalism), which played a significant role in Eliade's vocabulary in the '30s, were very important indications of his rightist orientation.

Keywords: Ideology, Orthodoxy, political movement, philosophy, anti-Semitism, fascism, *Românism*, Legion.

Like most European fascist movements, Romanian fascism emerged out of the political, economic, and ideological crises that followed World War I. However, the development of fascism in România is distinct from its development in Western Europe because of the unique political history of

the Romanian state. Romanian political history and the influence of Orthodox Christianity make Romanian fascist ideology peculiar.

A unique characteristic of Romanian fascism its the incorporation of Orthodox Christianity into its political doctrine and structure. The Legion of the Archangel Michael, also known as Iron Guard, the organization usually considered Romania's form of fascism, was a deeply religious organization, appealing first to the rural population, where religious beliefs were the strongest. The Iron Guard utilized religious themes in most of its propaganda. The widespread occurrence of "miracles" in Romania during the rise of the organization were used for religious propaganda to appeal to the superstitious rural population. A large percentage of the village priests embraced the Legion. In addition, the Legion's use of collective prayers, religious chants, and processions was highly effective in increasing its membership across the countryside. But the Iron Guard also appealed to many idealistic urban intellectuals, disillusioned with the weak and scandal - ridden government of the nation, with its call for the creation of a "new man". Many of the best-educated members of the "young generation" - believers in the "priority of the spiritual" - became adherents. For them too, Orthodox Christianity was an essential component of Romanian fascist ideology because it was considered one of the most important elements of the "historical continuity" of the Romanian people.

The Iron Guard was initially called the "Legion of the Archangel Michael" because it characterized the predestined character of the Legionnaire movement. The Legion was constituted on 24 June 1927 by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and four others: Ioan I. Moța, Ilie Gârneață, Corneliu Georgescu and Radu Mironovici, It out without a political program, a fact that raised doubts among members and other political parties.

The new organization "wasn't canned at law-court because Codreanu was thinking that the Legion of the Archangel Michael was not a political party, but a political and national movement".

But C. Z. Codreanu announced that "the Legion has a precise program which will be published at the right time"[1]. The justification for the Legion to constitute itself as a "movement", but without a program, is explained by Codreanu like this: "A movement does not mean a statute, nor a program, nor a doctrine"[2]. And this because "our purpose was to go forward, united. Going united together, with God and the righteousness of Romania before us, any destiny given to us, defeat or death, would be a blessing, and it would bear fruit for our nation."[3] Codreanu stated that "we did not bind ourselves together with those who thought like us, but with those who shared our feelings"[4].

Thus the Legion based its actions on feelings and it declared itself, from the beginning, a Christian movement, its sign/symbol being the icon of the Archangel Michael. "The Legion is a movement of a Christian type, the first Legion's members being, all of them without exception, believers"[5]. Prayer, uttered at the beginning of every day, is part of the Legion's ceremony, being considered as "a decisive element of the victory"[6]. But this prayer is addressed not only to God but also to "the mysterious forces of the unseen world", which Codreanu believed to be "the departed souls, the souls of our ancestors"[7]. After they have been perfected in life in the *cuib* (nest, smallest organizational unit), the work camp, and the "Legionary family," they will have become "new men", and Codreanu will imitate the Christ's scenario (the "Great Commission")[8] and send his Legionnaires into the world to live, to fight, to work, to suffer and to sacrifice themselves[9] for the Romanian nation.

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[1] C.Z. Codreanu, *Cărticica şefului de cuib*, München, "Europa" Collection, 1987, p. 14.
[2] C.Z. Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*, Sibiu, "Totul pentru țară" Publishing House, 1936, p. 332.
[3] Idem, p. 296.
[4] Idem, p. 299.
[5] Marta Petreu, *Un trecut deocheat sau* "*Schimbarea la față a României*", Cluj-Napoca, "Biblioteca Apostrof" Publishing House, 1999, p. 46 (Cited from *Pentru legionari*).
[6] C.Z. Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*, op. cit., p. 339. Cited from Codreanu, *Cărtica şeful de ciub*, p. 55, Pt. 54.
[7] Idem.
[8] From the Gospel according to Matthew: 28. Cf. Marta Petreu, *Un trecut deocheat sau* "*Schimbarea la față a României*", op. cit., p. 57.
[9] C.Z. Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*, op. cit., p. 308.

The Legion has to fulfil a holy mission: to solve the problems of the nation. "The fight to redeem the Country"[10] is the main goal which the Legion has to attain. Besides, the Legion wants "a new and long-awaited resurrection of the Romanian nation"[11].

Nationalism was another important and unique component of Romanian fascist ideology. Romanian nationalism is characterized by its chauvinism, romanticism, and racism.

The Legion of the Archangel Michael practiced a harsh nationalism, which involved, from the beginning, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. For Codreanu, the Jews, especially (and the corrupt politicians) are to blame for all the bad things in the country: they destroy the land and the Romanian soul, they shatter "our Daco-Roman racial structure"[12], their press „poisons us"[13], and their number is much too large: Codreanu speaks sometimes about two millions; other times about three millions Jews (in fact, there were a little over three-quarters of a million in the 1930 census, that is 4.2 % of the population). "Codreanu's anti-Semitism … is based on the authority of Romanian [founding-fathers] Conta, Alecsandri, Kogălniceanu, Eminescu, Heliade-Rădulescu, Hasdeu, Costache Negri, Xenopol, then on texts of Paulescu and A. C. Cuza" [14].

Anti-Semitism in Romanian fascist ideology was particularly violent, racist, and a uniquely mass phenomenon. Jews were considered an "inferior and degenerate race" and were often blamed for the "alteration" of Romanian culture and the socio-economic problems of the nation. From the very beginning, the Legionary Movement asserted its anti-Semitic character, specially since its founders were well-known nationalists. Gradually, the Legionnaires changed the direction of their propaganda from the Jews to the politicians. In Codreanu's opinion, the Jews had invaded the country, taking advantage of the politicians' complicity (who were corrupted as well) and of the gentle and tolerant spirit of the Romanians. The Jews, as seen by Codreanu, do not produce anything but only exploit, and their main purpose

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[10] C.Z. Codreanu, *Cărticica şefului de cuib*, op. cit., p.37.
[11] C.Z. Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*, op. cit., p. 319.
[12] C.Z. Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*, op. cit., p. 306.
[13] C.Z. Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*, op. cit., p. 384.
[14] Marta Petreu, *Un trecut deocheat sau "Schimbarea la faţă a României*", op. cit., p. 47.

is the destruction of the Romanian nation. A.C. Cuza too accused them of destroying the country, the churl being the one that suffers the most from the Jews' activities. This was due to the fact that the Jews bought from the peasants their agrarian products for a mere song, and infested the villages with taverns, thus transforming the gluttonous Romanians into drunkards. Then the Jews were also accused of occupying the best positions in the administrative field and due to that the Romanians became just a minority in such posts. The Jews were also accused of invading the universities and of holding a monopoly of the Romanian press; of becoming the proprietors of the largest industrial enterprises and the banks. Having money, they could afford to buy the corrupted politicians and thus run the country.

Also, "Codreanu's xenophobia and anti-Semitism are based upon his conception of the nation".[15] For Codreanu there are three distinct entities:

> "The individual.
>
> The existing national collectivity, i.e. the totality of the individuals belonging to the same nation, living in the same state at one point in time.
>
> The nation, that historical entity living throughout centuries with its roots well sunk in time immemorial and in an infinite future".[16]

That is, for Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, the race/nation is not only comprised of the living people but also of those who lived and sacrificed themselves for the country: "When we speak of the Romanian nation we mean: all Romanians, dead and living, who lived on this land from the beginning of time and also will live here in the future."[17]

Many intellectuals of that time were involved in sustaining and propagating the ideology of The Legion of the Archangel Michael: Nae Ionescu, Nichifor Crainic and Mihail Polihroniade, were the most important personalities. They all were editors of important newspapers in Bucharest: Nae Ionescu the Director of a popular daily newspaper, *Cuvântul* (until it was banned in 1934); Nichifor Crainic, Director of the newspaper *Calendarul* and the magazine *Gândirea* and Mihail Polihroniade, director of a newspaper *Axa*. They put these newspaper at the disposal of the Legion and through their own articles they promoted it.

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[15] Marta Petreu, *Un trecut deocheat sau* "*Schimbarea la față a României*", op. cit., p. 59.
[16] C.Z. Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*, op. cit., p. 421.
[17] C.Z. Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*, op. cit., pp. 423-424.

After the election of December 1937, in which the Guard won a significant percentage of the votes, the Legionary Movement had a strong ascent. Nae Ionescu reassumed the publication of *Cuvântul* which had been banned after the assassination of I.G. Duca. The few numbers that were published after the election were totally in favour of the Legion. In the article *Dictatură şi democrație* (*Dictatorship and Democracy*), Nae Ionescu, speaking about Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, wrote that this is "the man found by the crowd … Who is the man? There is no room for guessing here. The man of the crowd is the one it is. The one the crowd acknowledge *per se*. They recognize him. What is the method? They have faith in him".[18]

The cult of death and of martyred ancestors, as well as the acting out of pre-Christian folk rituals, assumed a new importance in the turbulent Romania of the 1930's, particularly among members of the Legion of the Archangel Michael. This group was a fiercely nationalist, rabidly anti-Semitic, anti-democratic, pro-Hitler [in 1938] movement. Historians have tended to discuss the Legion as a political phenomenon and to place it in the context of contemporary fascist and Nazi movements in neighboring states.

But for Eliade, as he testifies in his *Memoirs*, the Legionary movement had "… the structure and vocation of a mystical sect, not a political movement"[19].

The Call of the Archangel

Mircea Eliade believed ever since his youth that the destiny of his generation was to make culture, not politics. For him, politics was a "barren" activity, unworthy of a true intellectual. Politics should be left to the "political men"; the intellectuals have more important things to do.

While a assistant professor at the University of Bucharest (1933-1938), Eliade became active in nationalist politics. He and friends Emil

[18] Nae Ionescu, *Dictatură şi democrație. Pe marginea unei conferințe a domnului Iorga* (in) *Cuvântul*, year XV, no. 3126, 27 January 1938.
[19] Mircea Eliade*, Memorii,* 1907 - 1960, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1997, p. 352.

Cioran and Constantin Noica were by then under the influence of *Trăirism*, a school of thought that was formed around the ideals expressed by Romanian philosopher Nae Ionescu. A form of existentialism, *Trăirism* was also the synthesis of traditional and newer right-wing beliefs.

The concerns which, during the years 1932-1933 were minor became major during the following period. "We can therefore make the statement that Eliade's focus "shifted from the individual to society and the nation, from concern for the development of the personality to concern for the upbuilding of national culture"[20]. In the articles published especially in *Vremea* between 1934 and the beginning of 1938 Eliade expressed his opinions on "*Românism*/Romanianism" and the duties of the Romanian intellectuals within the society. He set the basis of a philosophy which militated for a "higher patriotism", adequate for the young generation of intellectuals of the nation. In Eliade's view, the young intellectual will be able to avoid politics and use his intelligence to elaborate important papers in the Romanian culture. The intellectual will be the one who, in Eliade's opinion, will lead the nation towards its true greatness and will provide it a place in history. Regarding the revolution which is to come, it will be a spiritual transformation and not a political or economic movement and will be accomplished by the "new man", spiritually renewed, and not by the political men.

At the beginning, Eliade deplored the fact that all previous intellectual generations from Romania's modern history were involved in politics and that many of those belonging to his own generation were drawn into the same vortex. "I don't think there is a country in the world which has spent so much energy in the field of party politics", Eliade wrote in 1935[21]. Not only the great intellectuals of the 19th century (Heliade-Rădulescu, Hasdeu, Kogălniceanu, Maiorescu, Eminescu) developed a "political passion", but the current occupants of the main academic chairs: Iorga,

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[20] Mac L. Ricketts, *Rădăcinile româneşti ale lui Mircea Eliade*, *1907-1945*, 2 volumes, Bucharest, Criterion Publishing, 2004; translated by Virginia Stănescu, Mihaela Gligor, Irina Petraş, Olimpia Iacob and Horia Ioan Groza, vol. 2, chap. 18, pp. 167-168.

[21] Beginning with the year 1935, Mircea Eliade wrote several articles which brought him closer to the Iron Guard in which he saw, as he often said, a political movement directly connected to the spirituality of the Romanian people.

Rădulescu-Motru, Gusti, Nae Ionescu, P. P. Negulescu, have done likewise, he continues. Such people, many of them philosophers, "by their preoccupations and spiritual structure ought to keep themselves as far as possible from the contingencies of political fights". And now, "after a glorious and spiritualistic beginning, the young generation has enrolled in political struggles", he laments[22]. In his writings during these years, Eliade fights with all his powers to keep his generation focused on the spiritual primacy ideal.

In 1934 Eliade thought that most of the intellectuals were cowards because they rushed to align themselves with political parties and movements in fashion, in order to move up: "Any time politic psychoses are floating in the air, any time something serious happens or is expected - a revolution, a severe reform, an assault, an essential change of the social order - the poor Romanian 'intellectual' loses his mind", Eliade complains. Writing towards the end of the year, he deplores the fact that "all Christian intellectuals were afraid of the successes of the 'Iron Guard' - and had begun to approve it, not because they liked the agenda of 'The Guard', but because they were afraid of being suspected and prosecuted after an its possible victory"[23]. This statement is significant not only for what it says about Eliade's attitude towards politics, but for what it reveals about his opinion regarding the Legionary Movement at that time.

One should mention that at the beginning of the year 1934 Mircea Eliade was still neutral from the political point of view, as it emerges from his articles published under the pseudonym Ion Plăeşu in *Credința* [24]. After one month, Eliade bursts out in an inflammatory article, in the pages of the same newspaper; he reproves at one time both the "right" and the "left": "What we are looking for on the right or on the left, I have never understood. How can we imitate Hitlerism which persecutes Christianity, or

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[22] Mircea Eliade, *Turnul de fildeş* (in) *Vremea*, year VIII, no. 382, 31 March 1935, p. 3. Reprinted in Mircea Eliade, *Profetism românesc II, România în eternitate*, Bucharest, "Roza Vânturilor" Publishing House, 1991, pp. 74-77.

[23] Mircea Eliade, *De ce sunt intelectualii laşi* (in) *Criterion,* year I, no. 2, 1 November 1934, p. 2, reprinted in *Profetism românesc II, România în eternitate*, op. cit., pp. 31-33.

[24] Ion Plăeşu (Mircea Eliade's pseudonym), *Ora prezentă* (in) *Credința*, 5 January 1934; *Împotriva dreptei şi împotriva stângii* (in) *Credința*, 14 February 1934.

communism which burns cathedrals [...]. Look to the right: people beheaded in Germany, thinkers persecuted in Italy, Christian priests tortured in Germany, Jews expelled. Look to the left: Christian priests put to the firing squad in Russia, freedom of thought punished by death, the hooliganism of communists in Paris ..."[25].

For this very reason the intellectuals should stay outside politics, Eliade considers, because their thinking is always ahead that of the ordinary politicians. In reference to "intellectuals," Eliade writes, "One should call them: *creators of deeds* - in distinction from 'practical people', who are but repeaters of deeds, calligraphers or robots. Because, 'the authentic intellectual' sees beyond the quotidian, understands the play of subterranean forces which are preparing the history of 'the day after tomorrow', and knows how to intervene in it"[26]. The true intellectuals are "history builders".

The majority of analysts agree that Eliade became closer to the Legion as a consequence of his friendship with Nae Ionescu, often called the ideologist of the Movement. Emil Cioran highlights Nae Ionescu's role in the orientation of the young generation towards the political right. "At the beginning, Nae Ionescu was the most important character after the king. At a certain time, I don't know exactly why, he broke with the king or the king broke with him. From that moment, he had only one thought: to get revenge. That is how he started to support the Iron Guard. This signing up was firstly a personal one and secondly a political one. It is certain that he drew us into his personal affair, and the last of the motives of his political game was revenge"[27].

In Eliade's case, his friendship with Professor Nae Ionescu led to his questioning in 1938 and retention by the Security, and to his imprisonment in the camp for Legionary prisoners at Miercurea Ciuc. Through Nae Ionescu's mediation, most of the members of the "young generation" were drawn into the politics of the right, captivated by its spiritual and ethical

[25] Ion Plăeşu (Mircea Eliade's pseudonym), *Împotriva dreptei şi împotriva stângii* (in) *Credința*, 14 February 1934.
[26] Mircea Eliade, *Poimâine* (*The Day after Tomorrow*) (in) *Criterion*, year I, no. 1, 15 October 1934, p. 5, reprinted in *Profetism românesc 2, România în eternitate*, op. cit., pp. 25-27.
[27] Gabriel Liiceanu, *Itinerarii ale unei vieți: E. M. Cioran*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1995, p. 86.

side and by the powerful personality of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. As Sorin Alexandrescu has said, "What Cioran, Noica and, in some way, Eliade admired in Codreanu, was precisely the courage to live to the end the political myths, which they, the true intellectuals could live just as ideas. The Legionaires wanted to achieve Romania's transformation, as expressed by Cioran: by fire and sword. How could Cioran not admire them? It was natural for them to be admired also by the philosopher of the sacred and spirituality, Eliade, who saw in them the most plenary Christian achievement of the Romanian people. We call this interpretation naiveté, from today's perspective. But, in their perspective, at that time, those *desperados* seemed to have the crazy courage to actually live the symbols"[28].

At the beginning of the year 1937, being part of the Iron Guard started to represent for Mircea Eliade the real culmination of his "generation" which had begun in 1927: "None of the revolutions which have been made […] developed so completely under the sign of the spiritual, as that of the Romanian youth. Not one, especially, has attempted such a perfect 'reactualization' of Eastern Christianity […]. If it will succeed completely - that is, if it will encompass the entire Romanian community - it will be the greatest revolution of the century"[29].

Just like his model, Nae Ionescu, Eliade believed that "nation is not a political instrument, but a cultural one"[30]. "Politics" should not be put in first place, but the State should make the progress of culture its first duty. Thus, the first duty of the State - again, in Nae Ionescu's words - is to "allow and assist each person in creating"[31]. Eliade had found the same idea

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[28] Sorin Alexandrescu, *Paradoxul românesc*, Bucharest, Univers Publishing House, 1998, p. 217.

[29] Mircea Eliade, *O revoluție creştină* (in) *Buna Vestire*, year I, no. 100, 27 June 1937, p. 3. Handoca, p. 50.

[30] Mircea Eliade, *Cultură sau politică?* (in) *Vremea,* year VIII, no. 377, 21 February 1935, p. 3; reprinted in Mircea Eliade, *Profetism românesc II, România în eternitate*, op. cit., pp. 62-65.

[31] Mircea Eliade, *România în eternitate* (in) *Vremea*, year VIII, no. 409, 13 October 1935, p. 3, reprinted in Mircea Eliade, *Profetism românesc II, România în eternitate*, op. cit., pp. 127-130; cf. *Reabilitarea spiritualității* (in) *Criterion*, year II, no. 6-7, January-February 1935, p. 1.

in the duty of the state at Eminescu, Iorga and Pârvan[32]. Although culture came first for Eliade, politics slowly slipped into his writings.

Between 1934 and 1938, Eliade felt obliged to participate in history, in the "civil life of his country", not by his signing onto a political party, but by trying through his writings in *Vremea* and other periodicals to bring changes to the national Romanian life. His orientation towards the right is clearly seen, maybe because of the fact that his professor had meanwhile become associated with Codreanu.

By that time, Romania had been infected for approximately a century with anti-Semitism and xenophobia. After the revolution in 1848, the concepts of "country", "people", and "nation" set the basis for an ideology founded on the cult of native traditions and values. The peasant, with his spiritual universe, became the prototype of the Romanian. The fear of foreigners, justified by the external dangers, was directed also upon the minorities. The regime, incapable of providing for the welfare of the country, looks for a scapegoat, and finds it in the person of the Jew, the foreigner within, who, in the opinion of the intelligentsia and the middle class, is to blame for the poverty of the entire people. In this context, the Legion of the Archangel Michael comes to "save" Romania and make it "proud as the Holy Sun in the sky". "*Românism*" was affirmed as the main "doctrine", and Orthodoxy became an end in itself.

"You are almost ashamed nowadays to say that you are a nationalist, that you believe in the style of your race, that you are Orthodox and believe in heroism - when you see who is shouting at meetings the same words as you do"[33], Eliade wrote in 1935. At that time, Eliade had realized the danger of using the term; he knew he risked being identified as a Nazi sympathizer, a racist, *which he was not*; but at the same time, he thought that the term deserved to be saved and rehabilitated. It is obvious that during those years, 1934-1935, Eliade did not want to be associated with the right extremists. In that period, Eliade's opinion was that "Any Romanian who wants to

[32] Mircea Eliade, *Cultură sau politică?* (in) *Vremea,* year VIII, no. 377, 21 February 1935, p. 3; reprinted in Mircea Eliade, *Profetism românesc II, România în eternitate*, op. cit., pp. 62-65.

[33] Mircea Eliade, *Cum încep revoluțiile*? (in) *Vremea*, year VIII, no. 380, 17 March 1935, p. 3, reprinted in Mircea Eliade, *Profetism românesc II, România în eternitate*, op. cit., pp. 69-72.

participate consciously in Romania's spiritual or social life [...] must assimilate the Eminescu-[Hasdeu]-Iorga-Pârvan tradition. Otherwise, he would be incomplete"[34].

For the moment, he sees in the Legion "the fulfilment of all his hopes for the young generation, the proof that he had not been mistaken in 1927 when he characterized his generation as one centered on spiritual concerns. If the Legion were to succeed in winning the allegiance of the whole nation - as it seemed, in 1937, on its way to doing - it would mean the triumph of the spiritual Romanianism, for which Eliade had been agitating for several years, it would mean the appearance of the Christian "new man", the fulfillment of Romania's holy mission"[35] .

In his enthusiasm, Eliade had lost his sense of perspective and overlooked the errors of the doctrines and practices of the Legion, which for years he had considered a movement of the extreme political right. Almost all Eliade's close friends - Haig Acterian, Marieta Sadova, Gheorghe Racoveanu, Constantin Noica and others - had become "sympathizers" of the Legion at the same time he did. All of them, except Mihail Sebastian, who noted this change with sadness in his journal during that period[36].

Although he sympathized with the doctrine displayed by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and knew many members of the Legion, Eliade did not enrol formally in the Movement. Besides, neither did his "model", Nae Ionescu, preferring to support it without being a member. In the report found in the SRI (Romanian Information Service) Archives and quoted by Florin Țurcanu[37], Mircea Eliade is presented as an "intimate collaborator of Professor Nae Ionescu" and editor of the latter's collection of articles entitled *Roza Vânturilor* (*The Wind Rose).*

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[34] Mircea Eliade, *Criza românismului*? (in) *Vremea*, year VIII, no. 375, 10 February 1935. Reprinted in *Profetism românesc,* 2, pp. 60-62, and *Textele 'legionare'*..., pp. 117-119.

[35] Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Rădăcinile româneşti ale lui Mircea Eliade*, op. cit., vol. II, chap. 22, p. 202; see also English version, *Mircea Eliade, the Romanian Roots*, vol. II, p. 925.

[36] Mihail Sebastian, *Jurnal, 1935-1944*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1996, p. 113; ibid, *Journal, 1935-1944, The Fascist Years*, trans. by Patrick Camiller, with an Introduction and Notes by Radu Ionid, Chicago, Ivan R. Dee, 2000.

[37] Florin Țurcanu, *Mircea Eliade. Prizonierul istoriei,* Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 2006, p. 338. The quotation reproduced by Florin Țurcanu is taken from the SRI Archives, FD, dossier 573, fº 15, the note of 21 March 1938.

His attachment to Nae Ionescu, together with the articles he wrote in support of the Legion, led to Eliade's arrest and his internment in the camp at Miercurea Ciuc. As he very clearly remembers in *Memorii* (*Memoirs)*, "I had been tracked down and arrested for my friendship with Nae Ionescu and because I was a contributor to his newspaper - which had reappeared with the full consent of the government"[38].

Eliade's most disputed "Legionary" article was one he denied having written. Entitled *De ce cred în biruința Mişcării Legionare?* (*Why do I believe in the victory of the Legionary Movement*?), the article was part of the series of answers to the survey taken by the semi-official newspaper of the Movement, *Buna Vestire* [39]. Eliade denied repeatedly that he was the author of this article. But, the pseudonymous piece comprises many statements to which Eliade subscribed at that time. The article systematically presents five reasons for which the putative author believes in the triumph of the Legionary Movement. These are summarized at the end: "I believe in the destiny of our people; I believe in the Christian revolution of the new man; I believe in freedom, in personality, in love".

* * *

Although important and problematic, Eliade's "Legionary episode" and all its consequences did not affect his perception as one of the greatest and most successful authors in Romanian literature and as an important personality in the field of history of religions, to whose progress he significantly contributed. His novels and short stories were translated into most of the international languages and his monographs on Yoga and myths are works of reference in these domains. Eliade's researches in the field of religious phenomenology have opened the way for many anthropologists and historians of religions, who acknowledge their debt to Professor Eliade. And I refer especially to those who were his students and collaborators in

[38] Mircea Eliade*, Memorii,* op. cit., p. 348.
[39] *De ce cred în biruința Mişcării Legionare*, a survey (in) *Buna Vestire*, 17 December 1937. Proeminent persons who answered the question were, among others, Professor Ion Găvănescul, on 9 December 1937, and Dr. Corneliu Şumuleanu, on 14 December 1937.

Chicago, during the last 30 years of his exceptional life and career. Although they remain somewhat surprised by his past, most of these researchers acknowledge his merits and, in their researches, take Eliade as model and source of information[40]. Regarding Mircea Eliade's literary work, the novel *Maitreyi* still continues to fascinate readers today.

Mircea Eliade's political past and the alleged influence of this past upon his scientific work has occasioned during the last few years the starting point for several controversies, which have been analysed by reputable scholars and rejected. Although the suspicions and accusations brought to Eliade have been numerous, his life and work should not be interpreted (only) on the basis of his political options during a very limited period of his life, simple sympathies from his youth and without taking into account the historical context which generated these sympathies.

The orientation toward the right extreme of some important Romanian intellectuals from the interwar period has been and is still a subject much discussed in Romania and in the cultural milieus from abroad. Emil Cioran, Mircea Eliade, Constantin Noica, Nae Ionescu and others have been carefully analyzed during the last years due to their "sliding toward the extreme right". Yet, their moral guilt cannot be doubted. It was as big as that of other contemporary *hommes des lettres* who, from different reasons, have let themselves be convinced by an extremist, antidemocratic ideology, either of the right or the left.

[40] For more details, see Mihaela Gligor and Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Întâlniri cu Mircea Eliade*, volume containing testimonies of his former students, collaborators and friends from the University of Chicago, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 2007. Also see *Professor Mircea Eliade. Reminiscences*, volume edited by Mihaela Gligor and Mac Linscott Ricketts, Kolkata, Codex Publishing House, 2008.

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Varia: Philosophical and Literary Studies

The Divine Love of Hafiz and Pushkin in Mircea Eliade's "The Captain's Daughter"

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Abstract

Mircea Eliade's "The Captain's Daughter" invokes the legacies of Hafiz and Pushkin to sacralize the world. In this enigmatic short story, the motif of boredom denotes the characters' immersion in profane time and in a mechanistic mode of being. A captain hires a peasant boy, Brânduş, to box with his son, Valentin. Brânduş subverts Valentin's socialization into reflexive violence, and reveals that he knows that the captain's daughter, Agrippina, had been left back a year at school. Intrigued, Agrippina tries to find out how Brânduş discovered the secret that was at once a family disgrace and transformative mystery. The young boy represents the spiritual freedom missing in Agrippina's suffocating social and family environment. In its recollection of the various cultural guises of love, in its return to origins, Eliade's story unifies cultures and connects us to the living universe.

Keywords: Eliade, *The Captain's Daughter*, Hafiz, Pushkin, Romanian short story, Romanian literature, Persian literature, Persian poetry, Russian literature.

The Romanian writer Mircea Eliade (1907-86) identifies the discovery of non-European spiritual universes as the prime phenomenon of the twentieth century (*Journal I* 163). These universes, Eliade observes, are not dead museum pieces but life-worlds that cause cultural alterations and metamorphoses *(Journal III* 7). In his enigmatic short story "The Captain's Daughter" (which takes its title from Alexander Pushkin's novella about the survival of an epic love under a brutal social order), Eliade conjures the spirit of the fourteenth century Persian poet Hafiz to sacralize the world.

The story opens with a group of boys awaiting trains that habituate them to predictable man-made rhythms:

> "As usual, they had gathered on the edge of the ravine to look at the trains passing by one another. As soon as the express train bound for Brasov left the station, it would pass by the commuter train, slowly making its way from Băicoi. Both would give long, simultaneous whistles, and then Năsosu would call out:
>
> 'Listen for the echo!'
>
> But they didn't all hear it, nor did they hear it all the time. That evening they knew the express train hadn't yet arrived at the station, so they stood waiting. There were only a few minutes left. The wait seemed long, and no one was in a mood to talk. The Prahova River had lost its silvery sheen, taking on the violet hues of deep and evil waters" (130).

The story's first two words, "as usual," evoke the menace of the mundane. As in the present time of global warming, destructive patterns of human existence cause nature to become ominous and vengeful, as can be seen in the evil waters of the river. The trains denote a thought process that, spiritually speaking, is a form of death. As Matei Călinescu notes, "in a world where the transcendent has become 'unrecognizable,' death also has its disguises. The scientific, and more specifically the mechanical, is such a disguise of death" ("Imagination" 15).

Brânduş, an orphaned peasant boy, does not stay to see the trains. Tellingly, he turns his head in boredom when an orderly comes to take him to the villa of a captain for a boxing match with the captain's son. When the orderly asks him if he is afraid, Brânduş shrugs his shoulders and spits, to show that he has not been socialized into reflexive fear. The captain, a stout, middle-aged man, waits by the gate, smoking furiously, with his hair

"gathered and plastered to his forehead, as if he were attempting to make himself look severe, even ferocious" (131). When Brânduş and Valentin put on their gloves, the captain ceremoniously begins what he wishes to be a stylized contest:

> "On your honor!" the captain's voice boomed. "Approach each other, look your opponent in the eye, and shake hands like gentlemen."
>
> As the boys were walking toward each other with stiff, clumsy steps, glaring at each other and trying not to blink, the captain's voice burst forth again, almost choked with nervousness:
>
> "Have your words ready! Enunciate them clearly, and don't stutter!"
>
> The boys now stood face to face. They grasped each other's gloved hands with great difficulty and shook them carefully several times for fear their gloves might slip before the next command came.
>
> "Say your words!" the captain went on, more nervous than ever. "Listen to my commands and give your challenges!"
>
> "Vir-tu-o-so!" Valentin said slowly, stressing each syllable. "Hafiz!"
>
> "Stop!" The captain raised his right hand and took a step toward the boys. "What was the word I gave you?"
>
> "Virtuoso," Valentin said, cowed. "Virtuoso and Hafiz were my words."
>
> "Who's that? I've never heard of him before," the captain interjected.
>
> "He's a Persian poet," Valentin replied.
>
> "How do you know about him?"
>
> "Agrippina told me."
>
> "Oh, well," the captain shook his head. "Start over. Three steps back, then forward. Say your words and give your challenges. One, two , three!"
>
> "Virtuoso! Hafiz!" Valentin called out as clearly as he could.
>
> He waited a few moments, then, bewildered, turned his head to his father. Brânduş had not said a word. He had merely lifted his gloved hands to his mouth, probably to conceal an enigmatic smile". (131)

Valentin's challenge word, 'Hafiz,' represents the very antithesis of boxing, for as Hafiz tells us, "when the enemy draws the sword, I throw the

shield away." ("Poem LXXVI" *Collected Lyrics* 116). To invoke Hafiz is to annul the mindset that conceives of life as a Punch and Judy show:

> I have come into this world to see this:
> The sword drop from men's hands even at the height
> Of their arc of anger
> Because we have finally realized there is just one flesh to wound
> And that is His -- The Christ's, our
> Beloved's. ("I Have Come Into This World," *Love Poems* 159)

Hafiz yearns for sparkling love-wine and the beloved. He conflates the sacred and the profane, the distinction between which is a recent invention (Eberle, 146). Haleh Pourafzal observes that "Hafiz is not just a poet. He's a wizard, a musician, a singer, a dancer... If you really want to know Hafiz, you must learn to dance like a writhing serpent in your mind… his philosophy is understood best by people who are free spirits" (7).

Brânduş is one such free spirit. When the captain tells him to say his word, Brânduş maintains a silence that at once hides and reveals the sacred. Charles H. Long reminds us that silence is radically ironic, since "silence forces us to realize that our words, the units of our naming and recognition in the world, presuppose a reality which is prior to our naming and doing" (148). This silence at once baffles and incenses the captain:

> "Come on, young man. Say your word!" the captain shouted. "Say something! Say a word, say any word! That's the rule! Come on; speak up, what the devil's wrong? Can't you talk?"
>
> "No, I can't," Brânduş whispered after a long pause. "I can't say my word. It's a secret." (132)

This secret also perplexes the reader, for Eliade conceals much of the story to oblige the reader to become his coauthor.

The captain, who does not realize that the 'challenge word' challenges *him*, shouts, "Go at each other! Just do it!" He thereby naturalizes violence as a way of life for Valentin, whose name denotes the feistiness that is his birthright. When the captain prompts Valentin to display his boxing skills, Brânduş merely drops his arms to his sides and then straightens them in front to keep Valentin away. Brânduş' alienating response thwarts Valentin's initiation into "manhood" and irritates the captain:

> "Listen, Brânduş," he began, his voice low, as if holding back tears. "Have you forgotten our agreement? What are you trying to do, make fools of me and my family?" He put his hands on the boy's shoulders and forced him to look him in the eye. "Listen here. Listen to me. I'm doing this for your own good. I want to mold you for life, for the life we live today. You have to understand once and for all that in boxing, as in all other sports, you must abide by the rules of the game. Is that clear?" (133)

Although Brânduş meekly assents, he continues to drop his guard, dodging blows by moving aside or extending his arms. When Brânduş is bloodied, the captain stops the fight, upset that Brânduş has not fulfilled his end of the bargain:

> "I'll give you one hundred *lei* for today, though you don't deserve it," he muttered, slipping the banknote into the boy's palm. "I'm doing this to encourage you. But if you don't obey the rules of the game next time, you won't get more than fifty. And if you keep on being stubborn and refusing to fight, I'll have to find somebody else. Is that clear?"
>
> "Yes, Captain," said Brânduş, gazing at the captain with compassion and respect. He did not dare wipe away the blood that was still trickling from his nose. (134)

Why does Brânduş gaze at the captain, a coarse and overbearing man, with compassion and respect? The answer may lie with Hafiz: "Start seeing everything as God, / But keep it a secret" ("I Am So Glad," *I Heard* 113). Hafiz erases the gulf between oneself and others:

> We are all Lovers, separated;
> Under a watchful, tenacious Eye.
> For God knows All:
> Our state is His design.
> Despair not. ("Thorns and Roses," *Hafiz: Dance of Life* 20)

Brânduş boxes to learn how to withstand punishment. He senses the initiatory purpose of suffering, which Hafiz expresses to the Friend: "The wound that you give is better than another's salve" ("Poem CCCLV," *Hafiz of Shiraz,* 63).

While the boys are washing up, the orderly calls out that the captain's wife and daughters are coming. The motif of boredom (introduced when Brânduş was with the boys waiting for the trains) recurs in a character that is immersed in profane time:

> Bored, the captain fumbled for the watch he had hidden in the small pocket behind his belt before the match had begun.
>
> "Run and bring me my tunic," he snapped at the orderly. Then, trying to sound indifferent, he urged the boys, "Hurry up and finish so the ladies won't see you. They mustn't see blood. They're too sensitive". (135)

The captain's daughter, we later discover, is intrigued by the strange peasant boy. Before Agrippina returns home, Brânduş discloses to Valentin that he knows a secret about her:

> "Is Agrippina your sister?" he whispered. "She's the one who had to be put back a year, isn't she?"
>
> Valentin froze, his cheeks red, his shirt limp in his hand.
>
> "That's not true," he said with an effort, after a long pause.
>
> "She was too put back a year," Brânduş repeated, with the same gentle smile. (135)

From Valentin's reaction, we sense that Brânduş has touched on a transformative mystery. We never discover why Agrippina lost a year in school, how Brânduş discovered her secret, or how Brandus came to be a foundling, for this tale conceals other tales. As Matei Călinescu reminds us, "any particular story has a hidden meaning, and this meaning is another story." ("Function" 156). The reader must create a personal meaning for a story in which Eliade withholds information from the reader as "part of a certain educational method" (*Ordeal* 48-9).

The precocious Agrippina likely revolted against traditional schooling, which fosters obedience and boredom, and which Eliade indicts: "Never have so many stayed in school so long to learn so little" (*Journal III* 109). She appears to have had a crush on a boy. Agrippina is trapped by the expectations of her status conscious father. Her name recalls that of the woman said to have been executed by her son Nero, the emperor of Rome known for his cruelty to Christians, as well as that of other women who were the mothers, wives, and daughters of Roman generals and emperors. The name evokes deeply rooted and oppressive social structures that foster violence.

A crowd of little boys jeers at Brânduş as he leaves the villa.[1] The captain catches up with Brânduş and accuses him of playing the fool in order to ridicule his family. Brânduş remains quiet when the captain asks him how he had come up with "this nonsense" about Agrippina being put back a year. Frustrated, the captain grabs the boy and shakes him hard. With people nearby, the captain softens his tone. He tells Brânduş not to be afraid, that he was speaking as a friend. Brânduş replies that he is not afraid, but that the captain must know his secret if he were to understand him.

The captain, whose own 'secrets' are rather mundane, cannot fathom Brânduş' hidden spiritual condition. After disclosing to Brânduş that he had taught Valentin how to knock someone out with a left-right, the captain demands to know what Brânduş' secret has to do with Agrippina. Brânduş tries to reassure the captain, saying that he knew that Agrippina had not been left back a year, and that he was only trying to anger Valentin so that they might fight without gloves. It sounds plausible:

> "Aha!" the captain exclaimed. "I see what you mean. You wanted to find a way – a means of challenging Valentin, of provoking him."
>
> "That's right."
>
> "You were trying to insult him."
>
> "Yes, I was."
>
> "But how dare you insult my family, you backwoods little snot from Breaza?" the captain burst out, his rage mounting. "What if someone in the street had heard you? Tomorrow all the people of importance in town would have thought that Agrippina was put back a year." (137)

For the captain, honor is bound with what others say. He cannot determine whether Brânduş is up to mischief and knows more than he lets on, or whether he stumbled on Agrippina's demotion by chance. Inevitably, the captain tries to intimidate the boy:

> "You have an evil streak in you," he said at last. "You are a strange, wicked child. When you have your gloves on, you refuse to defend yourself. You let Valentin beat you till you're bloody, and then, when I,

[1] One of the boys is nicknamed 'Năsosu' (Big Nose), perhaps a veiled reference to Jews. As a young man, Eliade was sympathetic to Romania's legionnaire movement which exalted Romanian peasant culture while denigrating non-Romanian minorities, including Jews.

the referee, declare the game's over, you insult my family and want to fight with your fists, like a common street urchin."

Brânduş looked at him steadily and kept his silence.

"But what I don't see, you little bastard, is how you of all people could come up with something like this. How could Agrippina, who's an educated young woman, have been put back a year? Why on earth couldn't you have thought of something else?"

He paused for a moment, then, enraged, raised his arm threateningly.

"Don't you ever say this again. Don't you dare. I'll beat the crap out of you. I'll whip you till you're flat as a pancake. Flat as a pancake. Do you hear me?" (138)

The following day, Brânduş walks along a road. He does not stop for the trains, ignoring profane existential rhythms. In a clearing, Brânduş gazes at the newspapers and greasy wax paper left by tourists, an image of a world defiled. As Brânduş resumes his walk, he sees Agrippina, wearing ill-fitting clothes on her awkward body. Brânduş ignores Agrippina but she grabs him by the arm, telling him that she knows about his boxing matches with Valentin. Agrippina is at once inquisitive and patronizing: "I've been wanting to meet you in person, to see what kind of a specimen you are. If you don't understand all the words I'm using, by the way, please let me know. Raise your hand, like they do in school. I'll stop and explain what they mean" (139).

Agrippina wants to know how Brânduş discovered her family secret, the fact that she had been put back a year in school. The cause appears to be a love that might exist only in her cloistered imagination:

"The whole town of Buzau knows I've been in love three times, but that it's only now for real. My fiancé is far away, far both in time and space. So you must be thinking he's a man who died a long time ago. A man?" she cried out, all at once serious, as if she were on the stage, trying to change her inflection. "Just a man? Oh, no, little boy. A poet, a genius, a Lucifer. That's the man I chose. And that's why it's only now that I'm truly in love." (139)

Agrippina reveals that her family avoided a spa that summer because gossips from her hometown might tarnish her family honor. Brânduş

reassures Agrippina that he had not heard anything. Agrippina then describes the loveless marriage of her parents:

> "What a pity you don't read real books, little boy – poetry and novels, I mean. My mother is like a character straight from a novel. My father, the captain, he's like one too, in his own way. First, he's a victim of his family, maybe even of society itself. He didn't want to become an officer. He didn't want to be our father either. He didn't want to get married – or more to the point, he didn't want to marry Mother. I found that out when I was five. It's not as if it were a secret. Mother would tell him this every Sunday after dinner, while Father was making the coffee. She doesn't any more," she went on, lowering her tone confidentially. "She stopped telling him long ago, because she's had something else to cast up to him for years now. She keeps reminding him that he failed the major's exam three times, that he'll retire and be pensioned as a captain, that he'll grow old and die as a captain. But these are all family secrets." (139-40)

Although she understands the banality of her father, Agrippina, with her inbred snobbery, is nonetheless very much the captain's daughter, internalizing a shame that explains the captain's severity towards Brânduş. Still, Agrippina identifies with the much younger Brânduş, the boy with deep, dark eyes, who resists social conditioning. Morbidly overwrought, she conceives of love as a romantic Lucifer:

> "If you were five or six years older, seventeen, like me, I might fall in love with you. I like it that you can keep secrets though you have a short memory. But later on you must be sure to be a little crazy, to go a bit mad. When you're eighteen, tall and handsome and strong as all eighteen-year-old boys are, I'd like to know that you had a pair of invisible wings on your shoulders, the unnatural fatal shadow of madness. Then you'll wander through the world with a melancholy forehead and disheveled hair, your temples bare and your eyes half-closed…" (140)

Brânduş' secret is somehow related to his magical capacity to withstand pain. Brânduş tells Agrippina how at the age of five he saw his tomcat pull out clothes from a cauldron of boiling water, brush its head over the hot coals, and spit over them. His story about a mystical communion with a cat spirit sounds like fantastic nonsense to Agrippina. She reminds Brânduş to speak grammatically and tells him that he lives in a world of

folklore. Agrippina wants to convey her own secret, describing how she was regarded as a prodigy at school until her brush with the ineffable:

> "*It* happened. Nobody knows about it. And even if they did know, they wouldn't understand. It can't be put into words. You'll understand later what I mean by *it.* It's a real mystery. It was revealed to me alone, and only by an act of grace. It was a gift. Of course I was punished for it. They put me back a year, and all of Buzau found out about it. But they only found out about the punishment. Because the real cause, the cause of it all, the *it,* is incomprehensible to the others." (143)

While the sacred has transformed Agrippina, her neighbors only now about a scandal.

Brânduş is not interested in Agrippina's mystery. Agrippina notices Brânduş looking at the forest and tells him that she will write about their meeting and his fear of the dark in a story about a witch who tortures peasant boys. Like her father, Agrippina uses fear as a means of control. Brânduş, however, has overcome fear, just as Hafiz advises:

> Write all that worries you on a piece of parchment;
> Offer it to God.
> Even from the distance of a millennium
> I can lean the flame in my heart
> Into your life
> And turn
> All that frightens you
> Into holy
> Incense
> Ash. ("Troubled," *Love Poems* 168)

Agrippina projects a psychic divide, calling herself half princess, half witch. Brânduş makes it clear that "the witch" cannot frighten him:

> "If I'd been scared, I wouldn't have let Valentin beat me up like that. I would've knocked him down with one good punch. But I wanted to prove to him and his father that I'm not afraid of pain. That I can stand anything he gives me… I'm learning how to face adversity. I'm always preparing myself. I'm not like the others, you see. I'm a foundling. So I'll never be ordinary. Some day I'll become famous, more famous even than Alexander the Great. One day I'll rule the world." (146)

Brânduş' reference to Alexander (who was said to possess a mirror that reflected the past and future) recalls Hafiz's couplet: "A bowl of wine is the mirror of Alexander. / So that it might display to you the state of Dara's kingdom" ("Poem V," *Collected Lyrics*, 25-26). The ruins of Darius' empire, which Alexander conquered, teach us the uses of time. Agrippina ridicules Brânduş with mock pathos ("Your Highness! Let me touch you. Let me kiss your hands" [146]), but Hafiz would have recognized his royal lineage: "Today why isn't the beggar boasting of sultanship, / When a cloud is the tent's shade and the banquet hall, the edge / of the field" (*Collected Lyrics* 117).

Suffocated by her social environment, Agrippina dwells on her physical ugliness to Brânduş, revealing her spiritual deformity. Agrippina tells Brânduş that she writes anonymous letters to wealthy, popular girls. This spite, Hafiz observes, is a condition of the misguided:

> Forget every idea of right and wrong
> Any classroom ever taught you.
> Because
> An empty heart, a tormented mind,
> Unkindness, jealousy and fear
> Are always the testimony
> You have been completely fooled!
>
> ("A Golden Compass," *I Heard* 45)

Like Hafiz, Pushkin is the subtext of Eliade's story. Agrippina tells Brânduş about a story that she wrote in the style of Pushkin, the first in a series called "The Captain's Daughter." In both Pushkin's and Eliade's "The Captain's Daughter," the themes of education and upbringing are paramount. These stories of sensitive souls in a hostile world challenge received notions of honor and morality. "How is liberty possible in a conditioned universe?" wonders Eliade in his journal (*No Souvenirs* 31) and, like Pushkin and Hafiz, he strives to answer this question.

Pushkin's novella is about a young soldier, Piotr Griniov, who learns harsh lessons about 'honor.' His father, a retired major with a narrow outlook, hired a former French mercenary to tutor Piotr when he was just twelve. The tutor took little interest in Piotr and was dismissed when Piotr's

father found him dead drunk. When Piotr comes of age, his father has him sent to a distant fort near Kazakhstan. Before Piotr departs, his father admonishes him to remember the maxim "Look after your clothes while they are new, and your honour from your youth up."

On his way to the fort, Piotr dozes off and dreams that he has somehow returned home. His mother greets him in sorrow, telling Piotr that his father is sick and dying, and that he should ask for his blessing. When he approaches his father's bedside, Piotr finds a peasant lying in bed instead of his father. Bewildered, Piotr turns to his mother, who tells him to kiss the peasant's hand. When Piotr refuses, the peasant jumps up, brandishing an ax. Piotr tries to run away, but slips on the floor that is covered with blood. Just as the peasant tells him not to be afraid, Piotr awakens from a nightmare that projects his disgust for his father.

Unknown to Piotr, the Cossack who is guiding him to the fort is Pugachev, who will soon lead a rebellion against Empress Catherine. Pugachev has no coat, and is especially grateful when Piotr, disregarding his father's maxim, gives him his hare-skin coat. This impulsive act of generosity will save Piotr's life. Upon arrival at the fort, Piotr is befriended by Shvabrin, a fellow soldier. Shvabrin sees Piotr as a rival for Masha, the daughter of Captain Mironov, the fort commander. Piotr is soon drawn to Masha, a girl of feeling and good sense. He writes a love song about her and shows it to Shvabrin, who ridicules it, claiming to know from experience that a pair of earrings would bring Masha to his room. Piotr falls into the trap, a victim of honor. He calls Shvabrin a liar, giving the more experienced soldier an excuse to challenge Piotr to a duel. [2] Before the duel,

[2] Piotr's duel recalls the circumstances of Pushkin's own death. Because Tsar Nicholas wanted Natalia, Pushkin's lovely wife, in his court, Pushkin had to serve as a gentleman of the king's chamber. Pushkin was killed in a duel by a military officer who fancied his wife. Thus ended a life that resembled a Pushkin tale. At twenty-one, Pushkin was banished to southern Russia for his "Ode to Liberty." The tsar's censors harried Pushkin thereafter, forbidding the poet to travel abroad and causing him to write, "It was a devil's trick to let me be born with a soul and talent in Russia." (Edmonds 7-8). His death was a rallying cry against a repressive monarchy. Mikhail Lermontov, a military officer who died in a duel shortly before reaching his 27th birthday, eulogized Pushkin in a poem that begins, "The Poet is dead: a slave to honor" (quoted in Bevington 19). This slavery to honor recalls that of the family of Agrippina, who describes her parents as characters out of a tale and her father as a victim of society.

Masha questions the honor of men who would murder one another over mere words. Masha senses that Piotr has not begun the quarrel. She tells Piotr that Shvabrin had proposed to her a year earlier, making Piotr want to punish Shvabrin even more. In the duel, Shvabrin badly wounds Piotr who finds Masha tending to him when he regains consciousness.

Piotr and Masha awaken to love as Pugachev's rebellion erupts. He sees an old Bashkir arrested for spying. The Bashkir, whose nose and ears had been cut off by the authorities long ago, remains silent until Captain Mironov orders him whipped. Groaning, the old man opens his mouth to show the short stump that remained of his tongue. The brutality of a decadent political order mirrors that of the rebels. When they capture the fort, the Cossacks slaughter Captain Mironov and his wife, but spare Piotr, whom Pugachev recognizes. Piotr joins the garrison at Orenburg but returns to save Masha from Shvabrin who commands the fort for the rebels. Because Pugachev grants Piotr and Masha safe passage, the military sentences Piotr to exile for life in Siberia for alleged treason. As the daughter of a martyred captain, Masha obtains an audience with Empress Catherine who commutes Piotr's sentence.

In Pushkin, love providentially survives a brutal world. Pushkin's poem "From Hafiz" begins, "Don't be lured by warlike glory." Love is the touchstone of reality for Hafiz, the utterance of whose name is an act of exegesis and revelation in Eliade's story. Pushkin's contemporary, Ralph Waldo Emerson, wrote: "Hafiz defies you to show him, or put him in a condition inopportune or ignoble. Take all you will and leave him but a corner of Nature, a lane, a den, a cow-shed, far from letters and taste and culture, he promises to win to that scorned spot the light of the moon and stars, the love of man, the smile of beauty, the homage of art" (413). Hafiz had a magical whimsy and a lover's quarrel with God. Nietzsche wrote of Hafiz in *The Will To Power*:

> Only the most enlightened of beings can benefit from the deepest human joys because within such beings resides a unique force of freedom and rapture. Their awareness rests in the house of spirit and their soul mates with their awareness, meaning that which is discovered through awareness emanates from their soul and that which shines in the soul is

> known with awareness. This unity of spirit and mind is the legacy of Hafiz (Pourafzal and Montgomery, 46).

The Sufi message resonates strongly in this age of late capitalism: Rumi is now the best-selling poet in the United States. Cyprian Rice notes that:

> If, in the past, [the function of Sufism] was to spiritualize Islam, its purpose in the future will rather to make possible a welding of religious thought between East and West, a vital, ecumenical commingling and understanding, which will prove ultimately to be, in the truest sense, on both sides, a return to origins, to the original unity…The combination in Sufism of mystical love and passion with a daring challenge to all forms of rigid and hypocritical formalism has had a bewitching and breath-taking effect… In this way Persia has conquered a spiritual domain far more extensive than any won by the arms of Cyrus and Darius, and one which is still far from being a thing of the past (10-11).

This return to an original unity defines the fiction of Eliade who was, in the words of Thomas J. J. Altizer, 'the great shaman of his time' (267), and who, like Hafiz, bridged civilizations. When Brânduş says that he will one day rule the world, he anticipates the triumph of the love that Goethe understood to constitute our essential unity: "Only with you, Hafez, do I wish to compete, for the older you get the younger you become… And religion is no obstacle, for if the word 'Islam' means to submit to God, we all live and die in Islam" (*Hafiz: Dance of Life* 1).

In Eliade's story, Agrippina tries to dazzle Brânduş with fairy tale love:

> "If you were a few years older, you'd kiss me and the scales would fall from your eyes, and you'd see me for who I really am. The fairy of all fairies, the wonder of wonders. I'd teach you how to love me, how to hold me in your arms, and I'd show you the stars, one after another, as only I know how. And I'd reveal the poets of the world to you. I'd teach you rare unknown words… I'd teach you how to say 'apodictic, choeforic, shalimar' (145).

For Brânduş, however, certainty is not a grandiose word like 'apodictic,' but an experience befitting the advice of Hafiz to "always exercise your heart's knowing" (*I Heard* 71) and cherish the sentient

universe. With night falling, Brânduş tells Agrippina that he would spend the night in the mountains to see the moon rise from a mountain peak. The climb to the peak symbolizes spiritual ascension. In *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, Eliade describes the moon as a unifying force whose metaphysical role is to live and die and yet remain immortal (155, 162). As Hafiz knows, the moon heralds the marvelous:

> I bow to God in gratitude,
> And I find the moon is also busy
> Doing the same.
> I bow to God in great happiness,
> And I learn from where the suns
> And the children
> And my heart
> All borrow their Light.
> I bow to the Friend in deep reverence
> And discover a marvelous secret carried in the air:
> This whole Universe is just as blessed
> And divinely crazed as I,
> And just as lost in this Wonderful Holy Dance.
> My dear,
> After such a long, long journey,
> God has made another soul
> Free!
> Now all Hafiz wants to do
> Is open a beautiful Tavern
> Where this Sacred Wine
> Of God's Truth, Knowledge and Love
> Is forever and ever
> Freely offered to you.
> O bow to God in gratitude,
> And some day
> You will see how
> The moon is also busy doing the same.
>
> ("The Moon Is Also Busy," *I Heard* 37)

Cosmic love defines Brânduş, whose name recalls the word *'brânduşa'*, which in Romanian means 'primula', a wild flower that

blossoms early in spring.[3] A child of the universe, Brânduş sleeps in the mountains. He claims that he can climb trees without the birds being aware of it and hopes to someday slide down a ravine without hurting himself. Daniel Ladinsky, who translates Hafiz, observes that "divine principles cannot be learned through words, books, or value systems but through love" (*I Heard* 39). Hafiz asks,

> Why carry a whole load of books
> Upon your back
> Climbing this mountain,
> When tonight,
> Just a few thoughts of God
> Will light the holy fire". ("Why Carry?," *I Heard* 41)

Brânduş divines a cause of Agrippina's social rejection, for when he tells her that boys stay away from her because she talks too much, Agrippina begins to cry. Hafiz cautions us not to confound the loquacious with the divine:

> I have a thousand brilliant lies
> For the question:
> How are you?
> I have a thousand brilliant lies
> For the question:
> What is God?
> If you think that the Truth can be known
> From words,
> If you think that the Sun and the Ocean
> Can pass through that tiny opening
> Called the mouth,
> O someone should start laughing!
> Someone should start wildly Laughing –
> Now!
> ("Someone Should Start Laughing," *I Heard* 43)

Like Scheherezade in *The Thousand and One Nights*, Agrippina seeks to live through her stories, but Brânduş is not enthralled by a girl who,

[3] I am indebted to Fevronia Novac for this observation.

though sensitive, is cruel. Hafiz wonders, “Is not most talking / A crazed defence of a crumbling fort? (“Silence,” *I Heard* 129), and advises:

> Run like hell my dear,
> From anyone likely
> To put a sharp knife
> Into the sacred, tender vision
> Of your beautiful heart.
>
> (“We Have Not Come To Take Prisoners,” *The Gift* , 28)

Invoking the mystical poetry of Hafiz and the romantic storytelling of Pushkin, Eliade recalls the various cultural guises of love, which inheres in the world and which we desperately need at this time of ecological holocaust and manipulation of fear. Eliade’s fantastic fiction is a cultural alteration that bridges East and West. Eliade summed up his work thus: “In the last analysis, whatever fate the future may hold for our world… insofar as my research succeeds in revealing long-forgotten ideas, beliefs, and meanings, and in revealing them just like the rose reveals itself to me, my work will henceforth find its justification in that” (*Journal III* 187).

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Modernizing, the Reform of the Calendar And Symbolic Concurrent Times

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Abstract

The problem of Time had always been a preoccupation of philosophers and science men. The following paper intends to analyze modernization and the reform of the calendar as this was perceived in the Romanian ethos, making some correspondence with what Time meant to philosophers and anthropologists and, also, to Romanian peasants, in order to show that people live in their own socio-cultural experience related to time, an existence in itself.

Keywords: Modern culture, traditional culture, cultural codes, time, linear time and circular time, the ways of symbolizing time, social concurrent times, history, post-history, modernization, reform, tradition, the reform of the calendar.

Time between pre-symbolic and symbolic systems

“So, what is time? If nobody asks me, I know; if I want to explain to the one who asked me this question, I no longer know”, St. Augustine writes in *Confessions,* Book XI. The ignorance “confessed” by St. Augustine did not prevent him from trying to explain the mystery of time, just as this fact did not stand in the way of the philosophers who were his predecessors and successors. The first definition of time was given by Plato in *Timaeus*, considering it as born at the same time with the world as an immanent

movement. Then, Aristotle uses this definition offering its first analysis. Continuing with Husserl and Heidegger, it seems that there is no important philosopher who did not consider time an important issue. That is why we cannot complain about the poor interpretation of time but, on the contrary, we may have some problems related to the extraordinary diversity of points of view. In fact, time seems to be a favourite topic not only for philosophic and scientific discourse, but also for the mythological and religious one. Consequently, the most difficult issue consists in putting order in this interpretative mass which functions on many levels and in finding a criterion which may justify the specific organization.

An excellent guide is offered by Paul Ricoeur's foreword to an anthology of studies on time[1]. Not only does the philosopher present the 13 studies of his work, but also he builds a real system that is intended to put them in order. So, at the first level, there are the *pre-symbolic* interpretations "en ce sens que le genre d'analyse qui y est proposé ne fait pas non plus appel à des interprétations culturelles, mais, se borne également à décrire le squelette rationnel de la significations du temp".[2] These discourses are structured according to the *formal-material axis.* The discourses which have a formal nature are the ones which refer to analytical philosophy[3] and they have only relations (before, after, while), not attributes. The most eloquent type of material discourse is the one proposed by Marxism and related movements.[4] In this case, there are not the relationships that matter, but the fact that the objects which support different changes are perceived. The first

[1] Paul Ricoeur, Préface, *Le temps et les philosophies*, Études pour l'UNESCO, Paris, 1978, pp. 11-30.

[2] Ibidem, p.12.

[3] In the cited work, Ted Honderich, *Rélation temporelle et atributs temporels,* pp.139-152. But the bibliography dedicated to this problem of analytical philosophy is very rich. See also D.H. Mellor, *Real Time,* Cambridge University Press, 1985, where you can find the most important contributions in the field: Mc. Taggart, Ayer, Quinne, Reichenbach, Putman, Davidson, Prior etc. Likewise, Richard M. Gole (ed.), *The Philosophy of Time. A Collection of Essays,* London, 1968.

[4] Yakov F. Askin, "Le concept philosophique du temps," in *Le Temps et les Philosophies,* pp. 127-138. For similar orientations, see Mario Bunge, *Physique et métaphysique du temps*, Procedings of the XIV-th International Congress of Philosophy, I, Vienna, 1968. Moreover, M. Bunge, "The Asymmetry of Time, Its Inversion and Irreversibility," in *Science and Philosophy,* Bucharest, 1984, pp. 177-190.

category of interpretation has as a starting point *the discourse* about time (what *is said* about time), the other begins from the *reality* (from the evolutions observed in *reality*), but what is characteristic to both categories is the fact that they speak about only the essential, the main aim being the creation of a *minimum conceptual basis* for understanding the essence of time. Therefore, the two interpretative versions neglect the psychological and socio-cultural aspects of experiencing time. But only if they relate themselves to this experience can people have a *certain attitude* situated on the *activity-passivity axis* and a *certain orientation* according to the *past-present-future axis.* In fact, in the preceding words, we simplified to a minimum level the whole range of feelings which appear as a consequence of experiencing time. But it is precisely this vast amount of feelings that imposes a transition from *the minimum conceptual list* to a reflection on the *symbolic structures* which serve as a mediator for the cultural experience of time. Paul Ricoeur is the one who borrows the same meaning of the symbolic structures from the well-known work of Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, applying them only to the experience of temporality:

> "Les ensembles culturels offerts à la description de l'antropologue, de l'historien, du sociologue, du psychologue, sont structurés par des normes, des règles, des représentations, des croyances, qui constituent pour chaque culture une grille de lecture à travers laquelle elle interpète sa propre existence. Nulle sociéte n'est placée, directement et immédiatement, en face de son propre vécu. Chacune lit son propre devenir en fonction des prescription de son propre code culturel. Ces codes sont pour l'homme ce que sont les codes génétiques pour les éspecès animales: à savoir des modèles organisateurs de l'expérience. Au niveau humain, ces modèles opèrent à la fois comme «modèles de...» et comme «modèles pour...». Ils reflètent et ils prescrivent. Il ne font pas l'un sans l'autre. C'est pourquoi on peut toujours trouver dans tout code culturel l'expression de ce qu'une société est dans l'épaisseur de sa vie économique, sociale, politique etc. et un ensemble de directives pour engendrer des changements. En tant qu'expressions, reflets (modèles de...), ces systèmes symboliques prennent la forme d'idéologie justificatrice, lorsqu'ils mettent en jeu les ressources rhétoriques des figures du discours.

En tant que prescriptions de changement (modèles pour...), ces systèmes symboliques engendrent prophétie, eschatologie et utopie".[5]

In reality, these structures are *semiotic systems* which constitute the basis for different cultures to read and interpret their own cultural experience, including the temporality problem. The semiotic character of these structures underlines the dialectic of relationships *between codes* and *messages,* between *depth* and *superficial structures*, between what is *latent* and what is *manifest.* These structures entirely organize the experience of time inside different cultures, an experience which has at the same time a *narrative aspect* and which can be found in the great diversity of stories, myths, fables, proverbs, epics and tragedies, chronicles or registers, going so far as including history, which has a scientific side, and literature (short stories, novels etc.) Ricoeur explains the *narrative aspect of temporal experience*, expressed by symbolic structures through the universal character of the narrative genre, by its variety and by the value earned by this experience through the interpretation of culture. This narrative level of interpreting time and its properties represents *the first level of symbolic structures* and it is related to the time of telling stories:

> "Les hommes articulent leur expérience du temps, s'orientent dans le chaos des modalités potentielles de développement, jalonnent d'intrigues et de dénouments, pour le cours trop compliqué des actions réelles des hommes. De cette façon l'homme narrateur rend intelligible pour lui-même l'inconstance des choses humains, que tant des sages, appartenant à tant des cultures, ont opposée à l'ordre immuable des astres".[6]

Once the individualization of our temporal experience by symbolic structures is done, *its cultural transition* is done also, and the next step consists in the recognition and the respect shown to the *diversity* of symbolic systems which organize this experience. Just as in the case of language, as Ricoeur states, we cannot talk about only one way of symbolizing time, but there are a multitude of methods which vary from one culture to another and within the same culture.[7] Thus, the symbolic systems

[5] Paul Ricoeur, op. cit, p. 15.
[6] Ibidem, p. 16.
[7] Had I wanted to speak also about a concept belonging to the philosophy of culture, from the epoch, regarding the symbolizing of time, I would have chosen Blaga, of course. An even more

of time constitute *cultural-specific codes* according to which the temporal experience of different cultures is interpreted.

Starting from these symbolic structures which can be called temporal *interpretations of the first degree,* scientists elaborate interpretations situated of different levels of symbolism. At the very next level, which will be called *the intermediate level of symbolism,* we can find the theories having an anthropological, historical and sociological nature which are attempts *at writing* the symbolic systems already *used in speaking* by people who are part of a specific cultural community or, to be more precise, which are attempts at *re-writing* what other people *read* in their own socio-cultural existence related to time.

Finally, *the second degree of symbolism* is to be found in philosophical speeches, but also in scientific ones (biological time, physical, geological, etc.), their role being that of ending the interpretations. Despite the formal line (analytical philosophy, physics and the other sciences) or the material one (Marxism and all types of philosophy derived from natural sciences), these interpretations are *non-symbolic*, not judging things after their name; they are either *pre-* or *post-symbolic*, but the main aim is still the elaboration of that *conceptual schemata* that we have already mentioned.

What should be kept in mind from Ricoeur's presentation whose summary we have made is the fact that there is no culture and no human being directly exposed to the experience of time; individual symbolic structures always make the necessary transition which may be verbal or not - in fact, this aspect has little importance. Furthermore, we should underline that, inside various cultural spaces, there is never one single form of symbolizing temporality, but many ways that are sometimes not only different, but also parallel and sometimes convergent; this is what partly explains the conflicts and the debates between the ”modernist” trend and the ”traditional” one within cultures. Such conflicts appear in all societies that have fallen behind the dominant *trend*, such as the “developing countries”; this phenomenon appeared in Romanian society between the World Wars,

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speculative version of this matter was written by Mircea Vulcănescu (*The Romanian Dimension of Existence*, 1941*).*

which was in a process of rapid development regarding economy, society, politics, law and culture. All these aspects related to the pathology of time (non-synchronical cultures and groups which form the same culture, one-sided points of view on history, strange autochthonous adaptations in former colonies, etc.) are motivated by the mechanisms which symbolize temporality at different levels.

In this study, I will analyze two theories applied to folk time characteristic to Romanian culture (symbolic structures of the first level). I will refer to an anthropological interpretation of events caused by the calendar reform and to another one which is part of the sociologic folk culture. So, I will try to analyze the *re-writing* of first-degree symbolic structures at a secondary level of symbolizing.

Context-time, history, modernizing

Each history of the last half century can be regarded as a history of modernizing economic structures, socio-political and judicial, a modernizing process which became one of the great debated issues at the level of spiritual life. Even if it was coagulated by the revolutionists in 1848, the topic did not stop to attract the intellectuals and the Romanian politicians before the outbreak of World War II; moreover, the literature written on this topic is so vast that only for the enumeration of titles, several typed pages would be necessary![8] Without going into details, I mention that the problem of modernizing gave birth to strong debates between its supporters in the inter-war era (this was a way of synchronizing with the West) and those who were in favour of autochthonous tradition; the last

[8] I mention a few more important moments of this problem: Garabet Ibrăileanu, *The Critic Spirit in The Romanian Culture* (1909); E. Lovinescu, *The History of Modern Romanian History* (1924-1925); Şt. Zeletin, *The Romanian Bourgeoisie. Its Origin and Historical Role*; V. Madgearu, *Agriarianism, Capitalism, Imperialism. Contributions to the Study of the Social Romanian Evolution* (1936) and *The Evolution of The Romanian National Economy* (1940); C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Romanian Culture and Politicianism* (1940), *The Romanian Spirit, The Catechism of a New Spirituality* (1936) and *The Romanian Ethnicity* (1942); M. Manoilescu, *The Role and Destiny of the Romanian Bourgeoisie* (1940); Nichifor Crainic, *Cardinal Points in Chaos* (1936) and *Orthodoxy and Ethnocracy* (1938). For the Marxist orientation: C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea, *On Socialism in the Underdeveloped Countries* (1911); Lucrețiu Pătrăşcanu, *The Agrarian Reform in the United Romania and its Consequences* (1925) and *Under Three Dictatorships* (1945).

were part of the organic line, who did not oppose progress, but they wanted to establish some major points aiming at the definition of the national specificity. It is well known for that epoch that the subject of the national specificity was one of the most debated.[9] Leaving aside these theoretical debates, it is obvious that the Romanian structures in the second half of the XIX-th century knew a process of modernizing which grew stronger and stronger after the First World War, when Romania regained its territories which had been part of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires (Bessarabia, Northern Bucovina and Transylvania). In "The United Romania," the process of modernizing was very much accelerated due to the new economic resources and people that the newly-constituted country could offer. But it is known that modernizing is a phenomenon related to *time and history,* because it takes place in connection with the historic dominant trend which, for the inter-war period, it is that imposed by the western manner of evolution. Having in view the saying characteristic to the old civilization, *Ex Oriente Lux,* and that imposed by the fall of the Roman Empire, *Ex Septentrione Lux*, for most countries in the European space, a new epoch began, having as a saying *Ex Occidente Lux.* After the revolution of 1848, Romania was no exception to the rule of historical evolution.

There is no cultural or political inter-war orientation which was not related to the Western way of historical evolution and the understanding of this phenomenon, which was either considered a model or rejected. Otherwise, history itself, as a scrolling western invention forged on the Judeo-Christian meaning of time, which opposes totally the circular one of the ancient Greeks.[10]

By approaching so insistently problems related to modernization, the Romanian culture is forced to transform *time* and *history* into extremely important matters, which sometimes become obsessive. Not only for historians - the most important names of the period are Nicolae Iorga, Vasile

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[9] See Klaus Heitman, *Die rumänischen Phänomen seit 1900,* in "Sudost-Forschungen", XXIX, 1970, pp. 171-236.

[10] Roger Caillois, *temps circulaire, temps rectiligne,* in *Obliques precede par Images, images…,* Stock, 1975, pp.130-149.

Pârvan and Gheorghe Brătianu - but also for philosophers, sociologists, psychologists and ethnographers, time has become one of the most interesting topics, and the two analysis on folk time discussed in the present study are just a small sample of the bibliography in this field.[11] A contemporary interpreter explained the obsession of time observed at the Romanian intellectuals as the specificity of the relation which the Romanians, in general, have with time, with the pressure of history and also, as the forefeeling of the end of history and the entrance in post-history:

> "De toutes les nations de l'Europe Centrale et Orientale, la Roumanie entretient sans doute la relation la plus anxieuse et la plus profondément ambivalente avec le temps. Celà est sans doute dû au souvenir et à la crainte de grands désastres historiques. Mais aussi - la Roumanie étant un pays essentiellement agricole - au conflit existant entre le «non-temps» propre aux sociétés rurales traditionnelles, et à cette conscience typiquement moderne du temps, en tant que norme du succès ou de l'echec, on tant que dispensateur d'occasions et de défis, de risques et de récompenses, d'éspoirs, prométhéens et de promesses d'accomplissement. Mais quelle que fût leur orientation idéologique, les intellectuels roumains ont toujours eu comme Eliade[12] - de manière toujours plus profonde durant les trois premières décennies du siècle - le préssentiment que cette sort de temps des possibilités ouvertes était compté, que cette sort de temps des possibilités ouvertes était compté, que ce n'était qu'une pause, avant le terreur de l'histoire".[13]

Without contesting the pressure of history felt by the intellectual class from interwar Romania - otherwise, the young generation had committed itself entirely to cultural activity as if Armageddon had come[14] -

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[11] For an almost complete bibliography on this topic in the Romanian culture, see Ilie Bădescu, *Time and Culture,* The Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1988.

[12] Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), writer and historian of religions. After 1940, he lived abroad, first of all in London and Lisbon, as a diplomatic employee, then in Paris and, starting with 1956, in the United States, where he was a professor of history of religions at the University in Chicago. Being a close friend of E. M. Cioran and others, Eliade is the one who theorizes the concept of post-history, referring to the epoch after the World War II in the Eastern Countries.

[13] Matei Călinescu, *Comment peut-on être Roumain?* "Cadmos", Geneve, VI, 1983, no. 23-24, pp. 30-44.

[14] See Liviu Antonesei, "Le Moment Criterion — un modèle d'action culturelle", in *Culture and Society* (edited by A. Zub), Iaşi, 1985, pp.178-192. Moreover, Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Mircea Eliade, Romanian Roots (1907-1945)*, East European Monographs, Boulder, New York, 1988, pp. 652-713.

I will try to show that the rural traditional population is not characterized by what the author called *non-time*, but it is defined by a specific manner of understanding time, which is in conflict with the intellectuals' concept which followed the Western model of temporality.

The Calendar Reform and concurrent social times

After the reforms which took place in Romania following World War I (the agrarian reform, the introduction of universal suffrage, the unification of the judicial system and, of course, that of the educational system for all provinces), in 1924, *The Romanian Orthodox Synod* promulgated a law which decreed the transition from the Julian Calendar to the Gregorian one. If, at the level of intellectuality, this seemed a matter of mere chronology, a conventional act, this decision had a catastrophic meaning for the level of folk understanding and behaviour. Many believers did not go to church anymore, others became schismatics and kept "the old style" or did not adhere to Neo-Protestant denominations; there were cases of priests physically abused by parishioners due to their intention of imposing religious holidays according to the new calendar and also priests who joined forces with those who refused the new calendar.[15] The question is: why an apparently insignificant change, a gap of two weeks of the dates in the calendar, succeeded in receiving such violent reactions from the peasants, why the church itself was threatened with the schism? The true answer was offered, at that time, by Vasile Băncilă[16] in a series of articles where he tried to explain this phenomenon using the tools of the history of philosophy, of ethnic psychology and of the economy of the peasants' life. From a historical point of view, as the author says, the Romanian people

[15] Vasile Băncilă, *The Reform of the Calendar, "The European Idea",* VI, 159, November, 30-December, 7 1924, pp. 1-2. Also see Ernest Bernea, "Contributions to the Reform of Calendar in Cornova Village*,* in *The Archive for Science and Social Reform,* X, 1932, pp. 191-205. Moreover, the entire press in that year signalled the protest wave against the new calendar which had been introduced in Romanian villages.

[16] The article continued with numbers 160 and 161. On the 15th of March 1925, under the heading "Late Remarks on the Reform of the Calendar", Băncilă answers to a violent attack against his interpretation, published by Marius Theodorian-Carda in *Christian Culture* from Blaj.

were in the stage of ethnographic culture[17], not in that of historic culture, like the Western world; during this period, the culture was composed of traditions and had an organic character. By tradition, Băncilă means "a prejudice which is historical, collective, and practical and considered unchangeable"[18]. During this time of cultural and social development, traditions dominate all aspects of folk life and there is a certain solidarity among them, which makes it impossible to interfere at the level with one of them without affecting the whole. For the mentality of the ethnographic period, even the simple idea of reform was excluded. For the communities which are in the middle of such a historical stage, *the calendar is a part of tradition* and an important one. This is why the calendar reform in 1924 engaged the whole spiritual life of people and caused - as Băncilă said - a true "metaphysical apprehension" and, in the same time, a strong instinctive resistance. Despite the opinion of the religious and civil authorities, this reform is not at all peripheral, but it had an essential importance. For the popular mentality, the calendar was not a conventional invention, kept as long as it is safe for measuring time and changed when it is no longer adequate and outdated, but it became a part of the ethnic and religious tradition. This is why its change may destroy totally the spiritual equilibrium and the image which the Romanian peasant had about the world in which he was living. By going into details, Băncilă reveals the importance of the religious cult in the Orthodox religion, which is the religion of most people of the nation. Consequently, the calendar is part of the cult by definition. Of course, it is not a scientific acceptation of the term, but it explains what the rural people thought. Moreover, as Băncilă said, "From a psychological point of view, no distinction can be made among the other elements of the cult, the disposal in time of religious processes and calendar."[19] The replacing of calendar implies for the believer one of the elements which is essential for Orthodoxy, the other one being the esoteric immersion in faith, having in view salvation. Moreover, it should be

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[17] For this form of culture, the philosopher C. Rădulescu-Motru used terms such as "semi-culture" and "semi-barbarity", and Lucian Blaga and Emil Cioran, "minor culture", these two writers valuing the concept in the opposing direction.

[18] Vasile Băncilă, "The Reform of the Calendar," in *The European Idea*, VI, 159, 1924, p.1.

[19] Ibidem.

emphasised that the folk character of Orthodoxy is more pronounced than in the case of institutionalized Catholicism or individualized Protestantism, so people were frustrated at the thought of having lost something very important.

For the simple Orthodox man, religion is not the emanation of one's own conscience, but a revelation imposed forever. This is why "the calendar is not a useful human computation, but it represents a revelation"[20]. Consequently, the holidays in the calendar are not at all a convention or a simple occasion for resting, but they represent the elements of a true cosmology. For the peasant, the change of holidays which unroll according to an eternal schedule was a logical impossibility - how could they ever change when they are unchangeable and remain the same forever? The peasant, who would have accepted the calendar as a convention, had had to accept also the fact that religion and faith are also a convention, but this would have been a true sacrilege which he could not commit thanks to his traditional mentality. He could not accept a change of calendar which came from someone else except for God, which means he would have accepted it only when divinity had warned people that "it will appear, differently, at another temporal date"[21].

Băncilă completes the explanations given by the nature of Orthodox life and folk psychology by bringing arguments related to the biological circles which run the economic life of peasants. This economic life is entirely related to the old calendar, so the peasant would have kept the first calendar even if he accepted the second one, and for a good time, he would have been obliged to use them both[22].

To sum up, Băncilă discovers that the way in which the calendar's reform was imposed deeply troubled the peasant, causing a triple change.

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[20] Ibidem, p. 2.

[21] Ibidem. In the press of the time, it was announced that there had been cases of individuals having had visions (Jesus Christ, The Holy Virgin, Saint Peter etc.). People were told to accept the new calendar. The protests were encouraged by ecclesiastic authorities, frightened by the popular reaction.

[22] Ernest Bernea, op. cit., shows that in Cornova, like in most villages, not only from an economic point of view, but also a religious one, people used two calendars, the peasants having two series of holidays. In some villages, under the pressure of the population, priests had religious ceremonies for the two styles. In Cornova, two Easter ceremonies were in 1926.

First of all, a religious confusion, because he makes no difference between religion and calendar; secondly, an ethnic one, because the calendar is for him an element of tradition; thirdly, from an economic point of view, the calendar's reform uselessly complicated the discipline of his own work. The effects are considered to be immeasurable: "… And all these accumulated effects lead to a radical change, insofar as his own metaphysic is engaged. We are talking about the destruction of his personal structure and his frame of mind regarding life; consequently we can anticipate a metaphysical revolution, a loss of his identity, a deterioration of the world, as the peasants themselves say".[23] The author considers that the reactions to the calendar's reform underline the ethnic and religious antagonism of people. It is obvious that an acceptance without any reserve would have been more dangerous.

In the second sequence of his interpretation, Băncilă examines the reasons which made the authorities propose this reform. The reasons are the following: 1. all other Orthodox states had adopted the Western calendar; 2. all citizens living in Romania should have the same calendar; 3. by using one calendar, different options are eliminated (for the old profession or for the new one); 4. the new calendar is closer to scientific truth. By analyzing these arguments, the author shows that the first is not a very serious one, being mimetic. The second seems to be more serious, but, in fact, it imposes the majority's transition to the calendar of a minority, which seems to be a concession made to the Great Powers who signed the peace treaty. It seems that such a reform would have been better welcomed before the war, not after it, when Romania was among the winners. The third argument is less interesting because of the sudden interest of the church for economic life, without thinking of the fact that most important religious holidays won't have the same date (Easter, for example), so that starting from this moment, The Romanians will have - officially! - more holidays. Finally, the last argument, which comes from the Church, is not only shallow, but almost dangerous because it confronts the scientific truth with the religious one, the truth of knowledge with that of revelation. Consequently, Băncilă notices

[23] Vasile Băncilă, op. cit., p. 2. The author underscores the idea that in the Western part, where the reform was proposed in 1584, and 200 years passed before the new calendar was accepted.

that in the encyclical, one can find a *pro domo* pleading, not an effective argument on the necessity of introducing the calendar's reform.

In the following number of the magazine[24], the author considers that the true causes of the reform imposed by the Patriarchy were: 1. the lack of observations referring to folk psychology and especially, to the religious character of the Romanians; 2. the decrease of authentic religious feeling at the level of intellectuals and even the church people; 3. the increase of the practical spirit in the institutionalized church.

Basically, Vasile Băncilă is not against the calendar reform, but he believes it should have been done after special preparations and with a more careful organization. So, in the social field, it should have been introduced in the phase of historic culture and not immediately after the war, when the reforms were only at the beginning. Moreover, he believes that it would have been more appropriate to gradually introduce the new calendar, not unespectedly and by sudden decree.

The explanation which Băncilă finds for the events produced as a consequence of the calendar reform is interesting and satisfying for the methodology chosen, which is also the methodology of his epoch. If we *try* to focus our attention on these events using the tools offered by modern anthropology based on the symbolic structures which function within different cultures, we could continue our explanations. For the beginning, we must say that the folk reactions to the ecclesiastical calendar reform are in fact the reflex of the conflict between two types of structures symbolizing time, to be more precise between the Western structures, adopted by the intellectual class, by Church people after their contact with the Western civilized world, and the structures of most people, which were transmitted through tradition and which function according to some very well-established codes. Because folk time had an organic meaning, almost a mystical, non-conventional one, the reform was perceived as an *aggression* and was rejected. This means that every time the political class or the cultural elite wanted to introduce a reform or a radical transformation, this action was done by affecting traditional structures. A similar phenomenon

[24] *The European Idea*, VI, 160, pp. 2-3.

took place after the war, in the process of the collectivization of agriculture which determined the peasants' opposition, an antagonism which was mostly passive, but very bitter, not only due to economic reasons, but also religious and cultural, almost metaphysical ones, which are bound by the specific type of relationships with the land[25].

Basically, no reform can offer the expected results if it is not based on a good knowledge of the reality that it wants to reform, especially if the right time is not chosen or if it was not carefully prepared and organized. The reform of 1924 was done as if a cultural time had existed; forgetting the fact that what we call "cultural time" is the universal time of great cultures[26], regarding their own historic evolution and interests. By interpreting Agnessy's text, Paul Ricoeur notices:

> "L'auteur, en effet, met en garde le lecteur occidental contre la tentation proprement ethnocentrique de considérer les expressions culturelles des sociétés industrielles avancées comme étant de droit universelles. On se demandera d'ailleurs plus loin si ces sociétés ont une expérience temporelle unique, canonique, ou si leur édifice culturel n'est pas lui-même une maison divisée contre elle-même."[27] As the philosopher continues, "nulle part, en effet, on n'observe de société vouée à un temps unidimensionel. Le décalage entre les temporalités semble être la loi qui régit non seulement les différences inter-culturelles mais les différences intra-culturelles". [28]

The claim of an ascendent history and the illusion of a universal time, homogenous for all societies and for all social classes, are determined by the lack of knowledge of the symbolic character of interpretations given to temporal experience. This illusion is based - as Ricoeur shows - on the abstraction of determined time, characteristic of societies centred on economy. But, in the use of this abstract notion, on one hand, the idea that this time is separated from the ensemble of the cultural field is neglected;

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[25] Ibidem, VI, 161, pp.2-3.
[26] Started in 1949, this process almost ended in 1963, the economic results not being at the level of demands and objectives. There is the risk that the actual rural modernization gets different results from the expected ones, especially due to the rushed character of its realization.
[27] Honoret Agnessy, *Intérpretations sociologiques du temps et pathologie du temps dans le pays en development,* in *Le Temps et les philosophies,* pp. 95-108.
[28] Paul Ricoeur, op. cit., pp.17-18.

but, on the other hand, one does not notice that the priority accorded to economy in the Western societies is a *choice* in itself, an interpretation based on a specific style of symbolizing.[29]

Consequently, the reform of the calendar was proposed, taking into account the symbolized time of the dominant intellectual and political class, according to fragile, recently-borrowed symbolic structures; the population's reactions were natural because people worked with a solidified concept of time, interpreted in connection to symbolically different mechanisms, well-fixed in the mentality of collectivity.

A Sociological Interpretation of Popular Time

For a long time, Ernest Bernea, a sociologist who was part of "The Monography School in Bucharest,"[30] studied the problem of explaining temporal mechanisms of traditional peasants. In his first study, published in 1932, he focused on the issues posed by the calendar reform. Having as a theoretical base the study written by Băncilă, he used the important analysis of a concrete study within a rural community[31]. Thus, the author arrived at the conclusion that in Cornova, a village in Bassarabia, the calendar reform was the cause of a serious gap within the community, because a part of the population abandoned the old calendar, while another one left the church:
"But almost all had in their soul a real tragedy, some of them for leaving the old calendar, others for being obliged to abandon the church."[32] Some people respected two series of religious holidays; others had none, not an official one, at least. From the point of view of the social division of the community, Bernea says that the new calendar was accepted mostly by wealthy peasants, which are called "positivistic", having deep connections

[29] For different social times of the Western-type societies, see Abel Jeannière, "Les structures pathogens du temps dans les sociétés modernes, in *Le Temps et les philosophies*, pp. 109-126, and for varied temporalities of societies from the Underdeveloped World, see Saul Karasz, "Le temps et son secret en Amérique Latine", in *Ibidem,* pp. 153-170.

[30] "The School from Bucharest", created by Dimitrie Gusti, was the most important manifestation of Romanian sociology. Together with "The Social Romanian Institute", its goal was to find the best ways of modernizing the country, according to the saying: "knowledge and action for the benefit of the nation".

[31] Ernest Bernea, "Contributions to the Reform of Calendar in Cornova Village", in *The Archive for Science and Social Reform,* X, 1932, pp. 191-205.

[32] Ibidem, p. 197.

to the authorities and the city. So, we are talking about peasants who had a contact with the type of symbolist characterization specific to the city, much influenced by the western model of abstract planned time.

But this study is, in fact, a case study which follows the theoretical assumptions of Băncilă. Having as a starting point an enormous documentary base made during the campaigns which Gusti's school initiated in the country's villages in the thirties and forties[33], Bernea, after several years, would elaborate a complete theoretical explanation of the rural concept of time.[34] We are talking about a research concerning the inner life of peasants, trying to decipher the process of thinking that explains the intellectual and affective bases of temporality. This manner of living time is a phenomenon related to beliefs and traditions; thus, it is a time which is symbolized, and consequently it is impossible to separate from collective, magical and religious rules. If we consider Bernea's approach from the point of view of anthropology, we reach the conclusion that his work is oriented towards the deciphering of symbolic structures of time which are characteristic of traditional folk culture. The sociologist's study has two essential operations - on one hand, the description of the phenomenon of temporality just as it is presented in the spiritual life of the peasant, on the other hand, the deciphering of the characteristics of this way of symbolizing time, by underlining the meaning and the features of this phenomenon. Consequently, the material gathered in ten years must be interpreted theoretically twice.

At the beginning - on the path opened by Băncilă - Bernea situates the problem of temporality in rural mentality which is transmitted by tradition. Being considered as an element of it, the peasant's time is no longer regarded as being something abnormal, strange, but as a natural phenomenon which makes sense: "This is why there is a difference between the time lived by the Romanian peasant and the physical and mathematical time"[35]. Being totally different from the urban time which is borrowed from

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[33] H. H. Stahl, *Memories and Thoughts from the Old School of "Sociological Monographs"*, Bucharest, 1981, passim.
[34] Ernest Bernea, op. cit., p. 22.
[35] Ibidem, p. 15.

Western civilizations, the peasant's time "is not linear, without its own physiognomy and monotonous (…), but, on the contrary, it is organic, having different aspects and musicality."[36] It is not a quantitative and homogenous time; it is qualitative and "coloured".

The first part of the study presents a description of rural time, referring to the following aspects: 1. time as horizon of one's life (what signifies the fact of being - existing) in time; "century" and eternity; the beginning and the end, 2. time - condition of actions (which also means a condition of positive acts, ritual acts) and 3. the organization of time - the calendar (the calendar reform and the village; what is the calendar?; arguments against the new style; the organization of time and the function of the calendar).

For the peasant, there are *two faces* of time, "the century" (the epoch) and eternity (forever), and when he is living in the first, he cannot stop dreaming of the second. Living in "the century" means living in the present world, which is characterized by the fact that it is passing, the most powerful feeling of the Romanian peasant being that of "the great passage" (of his evolution towards death)[37]. Everything in this world passes by, even a man's life, but the peasant is dominated at the same time by the consciousness of his connection to something outside the notion of time; it is related to something eternal and linked to divinity. This is why "the century" which seems to be what is called *historical time* is more than that. If *historic time* is a positive notion, *"the century"* has a spiritualized meaning, almost a mystic one. Moreover, historical time refers exclusively to past, "the century" has a deeper meaning, encapsulating past, present and future in the same time: "'The century' is, for the Romanian peasant, this time, the time of this world, when he exists, the time of his existence. 'The century' is the whole-length time."[38]

After underlining the idea of time and the feeling of duration, we must keep in mind two essential notions, the beginning and the end. In as far

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[36] Ibidem, p. 16.

[37] Lucian Blaga, one of the most important Romanian poets and philosophers, chooses the title *The Big Passing* for one of his volumes of poetry.

[38] Ernest Bernea, op. cit., p. 22.

as for the peasant, time is related to eternity and divinity; the notions *beginning* and *end* depend on the same parameters. Being different from the mathematic and physic time of sciences, where the beginning and the end are chronological conventional landmarks, for the Christian, the beginning and the end are two worlds in themselves, the beginning concurs with the Genesis, while the end is Doomsday. Every beginning and end is related to these two privileged notions. Consequently, they both can be solved, in the absolute: "The beginning and the end are part of the past, but they cannot be found only in time. One can find their meaning only if one considers that eternity is present, not past or future, just as our world has the tendency [toward it]."[39] The peasant has the *feeling of being a part of eternity* starting from this world, and his existence in time is considered something living, not invented, having some conventional landmarks.

Despite the feeling of participating in eternity starting from "the century", the peasant is not a purely contemplative being, but an active one, even if the landmarks of his activity are different from those that we show to ourselves. For him, to act means to do something in time, but he is not at all a being in a hurry, interested in starting and finishing actions as soon as possible. For him, the rhythm and the efficiency of his actions have little importance, what matters is *the moment of the action,* which should be appropriate because all things should be done "in their time", including positive and ritual acts. All the activities specific to the peasant (agricultural work, building a house etc.) start or take place in certain moments of the day, of the week, of the month or of the year that are considered favourable. These are strictly respected; there is a real series of temporal interdictions which govern his activity. Consequently, one never starts a long journey on Tuesday or at midnight, women never start weaving on Tuesday or on Saturday (they're "three bad hours"!) , the building of a house should start on a Monday morning etc: "In a nutshell, if we want our work to be successful, we should respect the condition of time as much as we can."[40]

Moreover, ritual acts should be done taking into account these conditions: "Time is responsible for the lack of efficiency of a ritual act. If

[39] Ibidem, p. 26.
[40] Ibidem, p. 31.

the peasant starts such an act, he should take into account the evolution of time which forces him to do some things, according to the qualities of the moment. The peasant knows that only if he respects time, which means doing acts at their time, these make sense and truly become reality."[41]

Here there are some examples: the dead body is buried after three days, while it is woken; ritual crying can be heard at daybreak; incantations and charms are performed at daybreak also, while the rituals of black magic usually take place in the evening, at midnight or at daybreak. Not only do specific moments of day or night have favourable qualities to some acts, but also the phases of the moon or the moments of appearance of some stars (Planet Venus, for example) are important for the scrolling of some rituals. During holidays, there are an impressive number of traditions and ritual acts (Palm Sunday, Saint George's Day, etc.), because the time of holidays (holy days) is considered a good sacred time.

Due to this difference between good and bad time (favourable or not), between sacred and profane time, between effective time or not, the calendar appears as an organization of religious time: "The calendar is the most organic and eloquent for understanding time in a community such as the Romanian village. Almost all characteristics of time are expressed in the calendar just as they are lived by the peasant; we can conclude that the calendar is the place to search for the rhythm and organization of time."[42]

After studying again the events caused by the calendar reform as an organic part of tradition, the sociologist orients himself towards *the nature of time* and its characteristics in the popular view. In the generally-accepted scientific view, time is a linear, continuous phenomenon which can be measured. But, for the peasant, time is not an abstract notion, but a concrete, coloured and living reality. So, the hours of the day measured using a clock has no meaning for him, because he uses other indications: the daybreak (between 4 and 5 a.m.), the sunrise (immediately after 5), morning (between 5 and 7) and so on. Moreover, the 1st of January would not have meant anything for him if it was not patronized by a saint who gave its name in the calendar. Even for months, the peasant has other names, which are more

[41] Ibidem, p. 33.
[42] Ibidem, p. 37.

expressive and lively, because they refer to events from his community and to economy (Gerar [January], Cireşar [June], Brumar [November], etc.) But more important than months are events, such as the fasting days or the meat days or the weeks that mark the beginning or end of some important holidays.

This *concrete* time is a *qualitative* time, each of its moments having a different state from the others, a special quality. So, the peasant reflects, before doing an action, if it is a favourable moment or not, if it is similar to another one or is different, if it is connected or not to another moment. It is not a conventional time like the abstract time, but a lively time, mostly creative, sometimes destructive. This is the reason why the peasant speaks about these "powers of time" which can have a positive or a negative influence, a creative or a destructive one. Consequently, there is a *good time* and a *bad one*. By excellence, time is good, creative, it is, as we have already said, *the holiday.* All unfortunate events, all negative things are determined by "the bad hour" in the peasant's mind.

From the fact that the nature of symbolized time in the popular view is defined by the quality, the activity and the concrete element, the following supplementary characteristics result: because we have a concrete qualitative time, it is also *heterogeneous, discrete* and *irreversible.* The moments of time which have various dimensions (hours, days, months, years, etc.) are different; time has stops marked by holidays or happy moments, which happen once in a lifetime. There are also *important dates* (periodical holidays) which mark the important moments between temporal durations which, from a qualitative point of view, are heterogeneous. If we consider things better, in one's life, time is never continuous, that's why there are some *rituals of passing* from one age to another, at birth, in childhood, adolescence, at weeding, funeral. The rituals of passing signify the transition from one state to another one which is qualitatively different. Even if human life has continuity, organically speaking, it is not continuous in the mechanic sense.

In 1985, one of Bernea's works was published posthumously, called *Frames of the Romanian Folk Mind*, which contains two more major interpretations of folk mentality: *space and causality,* this book comes to

complete the study on temporality. As far as the ways of symbolizing time are concerned, despite the author's research, no new elements appear, but a chapter which should be studied more carefully is the one about "the phases of time", past, present and future, which confirm the image realized by the Romanian rural space as a territory of tradition: "It is generally believed that, considering the relationships established among these phases of time, the accent falls on the past, which explains more forms and rules for living that are presented here."[43] The importance of the past comes from the fact that it is a kind of "initial producer resource of time". If the present is a moment, and future is something possible, the past "appears concretely and consistently, as an existence in itself."[44] This past is not dead, because it is the engine which generates present and future. How can this be possible? Because "time is a mysterious keeper of time; it is like a seed which contains the flower and the fruit. In the system of traditional folk beliefs, the past is the keeper of time, generally speaking."[45]

Time has its roots in the past because everything is contained by "the genesis"; this concept about the phases of time, once deciphered, can lead us to the understanding of the idea of *faith, destiny*, which is another essential characteristic of rural thinking which will be discussed by the author in the chapter about the representation of causality.

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[43] Ernest Bernea, *Frames of the Romanian Rural Mind,* Bucharest, 1985, p.157.
[44] Ibidem, p. 158.
[45] Ibidem, p. 160.

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Idea of a Basic Myth - Cosmogonic Myth

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Abstract

Myths are one of the important components of religion through which it manifests itself in a religio-cultural community. Cosmogony or the birth of world being one of the most frequented themes of myths, this paper intends to produce a descriptive analysis of the meaning, nature and significance of Cosmogonic myths in any culture and tradition. We try to classify and analyse Cosmogonic myths on the basis of their symbolic structures expressed either through the process of creation or emergence, and through the agency of an earth diver. The paper also makes an attempt, through a descriptive discussion of Cosmogonic myths of various cultures; to establish Mircea Eliade's idea of Cosmogonic myths as being the basic myth of any tradition, the other myths of the tradition having been derived from the theme of Cosmogonic myths.

Keywords: Religious Studies, Religious Phenomenon, Myth, and Cosmogony.

The religious phenomenon Myth is one of the important components of religions. Religion manifests itself through myths in any religio-cultural community, or in a social community. As insiders, individuals belonging to a religious community believe the myths to be facts, often miraculous; those happened in the remote past yet have an active presence in the religious psyche. Myths are thought to report "realities" and "events" like the origin of the world that make the basis and purpose of all other existence. According to Mircea Eliade myths are deeply rooted in traditions. They are

the living index of thoughts, convictions, faiths and fancies of people and tribes. Myths are construed to hold the key to the development of religions. The mythical characters are often gods and goddesses, sometimes animals, plants, mountains or rivers, each with innumerable themes. Here, cosmogony or "the birth of world" is one of the principal mythical themes. A Cosmogonic myth is often specific to the culture in which it is found, reflecting the pattern, mood and tradition of that culture. There are many views and themes surrounding the origin of the world. This paper intends to bring forth a descriptive analysis of the meaning, nature and significance of Cosmogonic myths in any culture and tradition. Moreover, the paper makes an attempt to classify and analyse the Cosmogonic myths on the basis of their symbolic structures, such as the theme of the creation from nothing, from chaos, from a cosmic egg, or creation through a process of emergence, from world parent, and creation through the agency of an earth diver However, cosmogonic myths are in no way limited to any of these classifications. They are only classified to emphasise a dominant motif in the myths. Through a descriptive discussion on Cosmogonic myths of some selected cultures, the paper also makes an attempt to establish Mircea Eliade's idea of Cosmogonic myths being the basic myth in any tradition and that other myth of the tradition having been derived from the theme of Cosmogonic myths. This description establishes that cosmogonic myths give rhetorical, stylistic and imaginative portrayals of the meaning of creation of the world that are always culture-specific.

To accomplish the above, the paper is structured in the following manner. The first section makes a descriptive analysis of the meaning, nature and significance of Cosmogonic myths in any culture and tradition. The second section attempts to classify and analyse the Cosmogonic myths on the basis of their symbolic structures. The third section attempts, through a descriptive discussion of Cosmogonic myths of several cultures, to establish Mircea Eliade's idea of Cosmogonic myths as the basic myth in any tradition and that all other myths are derived from the theme of Cosmogonic myths. Eliade's conception of Cosmogonic myth as the basic myth in any religious tradition is analysed in the fourth section of the paper, followed by the concluding observations in the fifth section.

1. *Cosmogonic Myth - Meanings and Nature*

The word cosmogony is derived from the combination of two Greek terms, *Kosmos* and *Genesis*. *Kosmos* refers to the order of the universe, and *Genesis* means coming into being - a birth. Therefore, Cosmogonic myths stand for the narratives regarding the birth or creation of the universe as an order, or the descriptions of the original order of the universe. They give rhetorical, stylistic and imaginative portrayals of the meaning of creation of the world that are always culture-specific. Thereby, a classification of Cosmogonic myths is always possible according to the cultural-historical strata in which they appear. However, Cosmogonic myths may also be classified in terms of the specific religious or cultural-geographical areas. As for an example, in terms of the ancient Near Eastern myths and Hindu myths, or in terms of the linguistic group like Indo-European myths. In Cosmogonic myths, the symbols give expressions to the religious imagination of creation of the world, which when expressed in Bronislaw Malinowski' words is "…a charter for conduct…,"[1] for other aspects of that culture. Cosmogonic myths are also found among primitive people, and among the people living in the remotest of lands. Thus, Cosmogonic myths may also help to trace back that remote antiquity.

2. *Classifications of Cosmogonic Myth*

In one way, it could be said that the Creation myths are of two kinds. First, is the aetiological myth, concerning the beginning of things that stems from the primitive speculations about the origin. Second, is the ritualistic myth - essentially connected with various periodic ceremonies particularly at the New Year - designed to ensure the continuation and well being of the state or of the world. Again, Cosmogonic myths could also be classified according to their symbolic structures. The various themes that emerge from this sort of classification are the following:

2.1. Creation from Nothing: The myths of creation, based on this theme, are found in the monotheistic religions of the Semitic tradition - that

[1] Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*, Garden City, New York, Doubleday, 1948.

is, in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and are also found in the Hindu tradition. They presuppose a religious history before they come into existence. In these types of myths, the presence of a very powerful symbolism of the deity who creates from nothing could be found as a symbolic force. The symbolic force that is against the impacted empirical cultural histories forms the basis for a new founding or ordering of the world and the human community. The power of the deity in myths of these types establishes the cosmos and its creation, as enunciated in the myths, being unrelated and discontinuous with all other structures or the human condition. The sky or 'sky deities' often symbolize the creator deity in the myths of these kinds. The 'Creation from Nothing' myths emphasize that creation is not a mere ordering or even founding, but also a powerful religious-magical aura from the almighty Supreme Being.[2] For example, in the *Ṛig Veda*, in a more abstract and a very sublime hymn (v. 10. 129), it is affirmed that nothing existed in the beginning - all being void. Darkness and space enveloped the undifferentiated waters (cp.10. 82^{6}. 121^{7}, *Atharvaveda*. 2. 8). The only primordial substance or *ekam* was produced by heat. Then desire, or *kāma*, the first seed of mind or *manas* arose. Thus, the bond between the non-existent and existent was created and by this emanation, the gods came to being. A short hymn of three stanzas (v. 10. 190) forms a sequel to, that has been just described, the more general evolution. Here, it is stated that order or *ṛta* was produced from heat or *tapas*. Then came the night, the ocean, and the year. The creator or *dhata* produced in succession sun and moon, heaven and earth, air and ether.[3]

2.2. Creation from Chaos: Cosmogonic myths based on the theme of creation from chaos describe how the creation arose out of *a priori* matter or stuff that was either negative or confused. The chaotic conditions are depicted either by primordial water, or by a monster, and so on so forth. As in the Near Eastern and Hindu myths, chaos came in the form of a serpent-like monster. In the true model of the 'Myth of Creation from Chaos', the

[2] Charles H. Long, "Cosmogony: An Overview", in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, ed. by Mircea Eliade, 16 vols., New York, Macmillan, 1987, vol. 4.

[3] Nagendra Kr. Singh, "Source of Vedic Mythology", in *The Vedic Mythology: Cosmogonic Speculation about the Origin of Universe in Rig Vedas*, New Delhi, A.P.H. Publishing, 1997, pp. 27-29.

'drama' in it shows how the forces and the potencies of creation are energized to move. It shows that the constant flux in chaos is induced to a measured movement where the tendency to dissipation is balanced by a force of cohesion and integration. As the deployment and expansion of the order starts complementing this tendency.[4] In Saharan Africa, the world was originally made out of the numerous segments of the sacrificed cosmic serpent *Minia*, God's first creation - an event remembered in animal sacrifice in the region to this day. There is a similar cosmic drama in Assyro-Babylonian myth when the celestial king *Marduk* slaughters the serpent *Tiamat*, the feminine principle of chaos, and divides her enormous corpse. From one half *Marduk* constructs the vault of heaven, from the other the solid earth. In Norse mythology, the three creator gods slaughter the bisexual primeval giant *Ymir*, forming the earth from his body, the sea from his blood and the sky from his skull. Like a Vedic hymn of the Indian tradition that tells how *Pursuha*, a primordial being, is sacrificed: his bodily parts then become the many components of the universe, including gods, man and animals.[5]

2.3. Creation from a Cosmic Egg: In this pattern of Cosmogonic myths, is the presence of the symbolic cosmic egg or an ovoid shape out of which the creation - the first created being, emerges. Myths of these kinds are found in Polynesia, Africa, India, Japan, and Greece. The egg is, obviously, a symbol of fertility. In the "Cosmic Egg" myth, the form of the egg contains the potency for creation. The symbolism of the egg is also a connotation of the state of primordial perfection out of which the created order proceeds.[6]

2.4. Creation through the process of Emergence: Another classification of Cosmogonic myths is the creation through the process of emergence. This theme is quite similar to the theme of creation from cosmic egg. The "Emergence Myth" describes the creation of the cosmos in the symbolism of gestation and birth. The most prominent symbol in myths of this kind is that of earth as the mother. The earth is depicted as the source of

[4] Charles H. Long, "Cosmogony: An Overview", op. cit.
[5] Roy Willis, ed., *World Mythology,* London, Duncan Baird, 1996, p. 19.
[6] Charles H. Long, "Cosmogony: An Overview", op. cit., p. 95.

all power and potencies. Within the womb of the earth are all the seeds and eggs of the world. They exist in an embryonic form within the earth. The emergence of different forms of the world from the womb describes the process, whereby; the maturation of the forms takes place within the earth before appearing on the earth. The myth of this kind emphasizes the earth as the mother or the womb - the container of all powers and potential realities.[7]

The best example of Cosmogonic myths from both the categories of creation from cosmic egg and emergence as described above is the *Dogon* myth from West Africa. There, the god *Amma* creates a world egg, with incubating twins inside, as the first order of creation. In time, the twins were to come forth as androgynous beings, indicating perfection also at the level of sexuality.[8]

2.5. Creation from World-Parents: In some Cosmogonic myths, creation is the result of the reproductive powers of primordial world-parents. In "World-Parent Myth", the parents in most of the cases are the second phase of primordial ordering. Before the appearance of the world parents, there was the chaotic or the indeterminate phase.[9] For example, in the Babylonian creation myth, *Enumaelish*, it is stated that water and earth co-mingled as a single body in a state of indeterminacy. The Polynesian myth of *Rangi* and *Papa* speak of a darkness blanketing everything. According to the *Maori* cosmology this was because the Supreme creator beings - *Rangi* the male sky and *Papa* the female earth - were locked together in the primordial void in a static embrace. All gods tried to separate them but ultimately only the God *Tane* could do so. *Tane*, putting his head against the mother earth and his feet against the father sky, strained and pushed to gradually separate the two, who then assumed their present position[10]. Similarly, in the Egyptian myth, *Ra Atum*, the first deity of creation, came into being on the primeval mound and planned the multiplicity of creations in his heart. He caused the division into male and female. He took his semen in his mouth and spat or sneezed out to form

[7] Charles H. Long, "Cosmogony: An Overview", op. cit.
[8] Roy Willis, ed., *World Mythology*, op. cit.
[9] Charles H. Long, "Cosmogony: An Overview", op. cit.
[10] Roy Willis, ed., *World Mythology,* op. cit., p. 294.

Shu, the god of air and *Tefnet*, the goddess of moisture. Through the sexual union of *Shu* and *Tefnet*, the Earth God S*eb* and the Sky God *Nut* came into being.[11]

2.6. Creation through the agency of an Earth-Diver: The Earth-Diver Myths constitute the primordial stuff of the beginning. Here, water or the primordial stuff in its undifferentiated indeterminacy covers everything in a manner of chaos. A cultural hero, usually as an animal, dives into the primordial waters to bring up a particle of sand, mud, earth, or any other substantial form of matter, out of which a subtler mode of order might be established.[12] In the *Cheyenne* text of North America we find that *Maheo* created the great water together with the water creatures. The birds grew tired of flying and in turns dived into the water to look for land. It was ultimately redeemed through the efforts of the humble water coot in salvaging from the depths of water a beakfull of mud, which was then transformed by the *Maheo* into a ball of dry land. The old grandmother Turtle could then carry it on her back and there the mud ball continued to grow. In this way the first land was created[13].

3. *Cosmogonic Myths of Different Cultures*

3.1. Cosmogonic Myths of Palaeolithic Culture: The remains of Palaeolithic culture reveal a great concern associated with the phenomenon of birth, both of human and of animals. The emergence of a child from the womb of its mother must have been an impressive demonstration of the being of a new creature, whether human or animal. The earliest creation myth instinctively used this imagery of biological birth. The evidence of Palaeolithic art shows that the Palaeolithic people were aware of the mysterious power of creation - as reflected when they drew the image of an animal on the blank wall of a cave or fashioned a piece of stone into the figure of a woman.

3.2. Cosmogonic Myths of Neolithic Culture: With the invention of pottery during the Neolithic times further stimulus was given to the

[11] Roy Willis, ed., *World Mythology*, op. cit., p. 40.
[12] Charles H. Long, "Cosmogony: An Overview", op. cit.
[13] Roy Willis, ed., *World Mythology,* op. cit., p. 222.

conception of creation. In a particular myth, the creator god was imagined as the divine potter who fashioned men out of clay. Thus, in the earliest written Cosmogonic or creation myths we find a mixture of thoughts and images about the beginning of things. The myths deriving both from the new needs of the civilized society and from the cruder concepts of the pre-literary past.

3.3. Cosmogonic Myths of the Egyptian Culture: The earliest evidence of ancient Egyptian thought about the beginning of things occurs incidentally in the Pyramid Texts. *Atum* was a mysterious deity, whose name meant, "the not yet completed one, but who will attain completion". Under the composite title of *Re-Atum* he was also identified with the sun god *Re*. Various passages in the Pyramid Texts reveal that the priests of *Heliopolis* believed in the original existence of only a primordial waste of water without any shape or order, called *Nun*. The first "time" started when *Atum* emerged from this primordial deep and began the work of creation. In order to begin this work *Atum* needed a firm place on to stand, and this too emerged with *Atum* out of the *Nun*. This primordial hill was identified with the site of *Atum*'*s* temple at *Heliopolis*, thus making it the most ancient and sacred place in Egypt, since it was there that the creation of the world began.[14] The *Heliopolitan* priests, having thus accounted for the four chief "continents" of the cosmic universe, namely, Air, Moisture, Earth, and the Sky, did not describe the origin of vegetation, animals, or in fact even humanity. Instead, they depicted the origin of humans from the union of *Geb* and *Nut*, which resulted in the birth of two pairs of deities, namely - *Osiris* and *Isis*, *Set* and *Nepthys*. This depiction perhaps significantly reveals the real motive behind this myth of creation. The four deities of *Osiris*, *Isis*, *Set* and *Nepthys* were the most ancient and important deities, not only of *Heliopolis* but also in the other parts of Egypt. Therefore, this earliest example of a creation myth was designed to acclaim *Atum* as the supreme creator, to whom other gods owed their existence and the temple at *Heliopolis* as the most ancient and holy place in the entire Egyptian world.[15]

[14] S. H. Hooke, *Middle Eastern Mythology,* London, Penguin, 1975, p. 72.
[15] S. G. F. Brandon, "Creation Myths", *Man, Myth and Magic: The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown*, ed. by. Richard Cavendish, 12 vols., New York, Marshall Cavendish, 1983, vol. 2,pp. 533-538.

3.4. Cosmogonic Myths of the Sumerian Culture: The Cosmogonic myths of ancient Sumer focus more on the beginnings of civilization and humankind than on the origins of the world *per se*. The goddess *Nammu*, as personification of the sea, is called the mother. Their belief has been that the ancestors giving birth to all other ancestors also gave birth to the gods. However, god *Enki*, associated with the fresh water, figures as the creator in the early Sumerian texts. He was depicted as arriving by sea in Sumer, in a kind of golden age at the dawn of time and impregnating the *Ninhursag,* or 'The Mother of the Land'. *Enki*'*s* fertilizing activity produced the plants necessary for food. He also invented the pick-axe and the brick mould—the two essential implements of Mesopotamian economy.[16] Another source says that the Sumerian cosmogony has to be pieced together from a variety of origin myths involving a number of deities. Their activities were not easy to reconcile and seemed to reflect the rivalry between the gods of different Sumerian cities. However, it could be emphasized that the ultimate origin of all things was the primordial sea personified as the goddess *Nammu*. She gave birth to the male sky god, *An*, and the female earth goddess, *Ki*, whose union in turn produced the 'great gods'. Among them was *Enlil* - source of the ordered universe, responsible for vegetarian cattle, agricultural tools, and the arts of civilization. Man was then created to serve the gods and provide them with sustenance.[17]

3.5. Cosmogonic Myths of the Indian Culture: The Hindu Cosmogonic myths are found in the *Vedas*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Aranyakas* and the *Upaniṣads*.

Cosmogonic Myths of the Vedas: In the ancient Indian scriptures, it is seen that the creation mythology of the *Ṛig Veda* fluctuates between two theories that are not mutually exclusive, but may be found in combination within the same verse. One theory regards the universe as the result of a mechanical production; the work of the carpenter and the joiner's skill, while the other theory represents the universe as the result of a natural generation.

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[16] Idem.

[17] S. H. Hooke, *Middle Eastern Mythology,* op. cit., p. 32.

A Cosmogonic myth, involving neither manufacture nor generation, is given in one of the latest hymns of the *Ṛig Veda* - the well-known *puruṣa-sūkta*. (v.10, 90) Several details in this myth point to the more recent periods of the *Ṛig Veda*. However, the main idea is very primitive since it accounts for the formation of the world from the body of *Virat Puruṣa* (5th mantra). When the gods performed a sacrifice with him, his head became the sky, his navel the air, and his feet the earth. From his mind sprang the moon, from his eyes the sun, from his mouth *Indra* and *Agni*, and from his breath *Pawan*. The four castes also arose from him. From his mouth emerged the *brāhmaṇa*, from his arms the *rājanya*, from his thighs the *vaiśya*, and from his feet the *śūdra*. The interpretations given in the hymn itself are pantheistic, for it is said (v. 2) that *Puruṣa* is all this, both for what has become and what shall be. Both in the *Atharvaveda* (v. 10, 17) and in the *Upaniṣads* (*Muṇḍ.Upaniṣad* 2.1.10; *Chānd.Upaniṣ*ad 2.7.5) *Puruṣa* has been pantheistically interpreted as being identical with the universe and with *Brahma*. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, (v. 11.1,6[1]) *Puruṣa* is the same as *Prajāpati*, or the creator.[18]

There are two other Cosmogonic hymns in the *Ṛig Veda* that both explain the origin of the universe as a kind of evolution of the eminent from the non-existent or the *asat*. It is said (v. 10, 72.6) that *Brahmaṇaspati* forged together this world like a smith. From the non-existent, the world was produced. Then in succession arose the earth and the spaces - *Aditi* with *Dakṣa* and after *Aditi* the gods were born. The gods then brought forward the 'sun'. There were eight sons of *Aditi*, but she cast away her eighth son, *Mārtānda*; *Aditi* brought him to be born and then to die; that is to rise and set. Three stanzas could be distinguished in this hymn: in the first, the world is produced; in the second, the gods; and in the last, the sun. In the *Ṛig Veda*, in a more abstract and a very sublime hymn, (v. 10, 129) it is affirmed that nothing existed in the beginning - all being void. Darkness and space enveloped the undifferentiated waters. (cp.10, 82[6].121[7], Atharvaveda.2,8) The only primordial substance or *ekam* was produced by heat. Then desire, or *kāma*, the first seed of mind or *manas* arose. Thus, the bond between the

[18] Pelang, and Chaubey, *The New Vedic Selection*, ed. by. Dr. Brajabehari Chaubey, 8th ed., 2 parts, New Delhi and Varanasi, Bharatiya Vidhya Prakashan, n. d., vol. 2, p. 450.

non-existent and existent was created, and by this emanation, the gods came to being. However, here the poet, overwhelmed by his doubts, gave up the riddle of creation as being unsolvable. A short hymn of three stanzas (v. 10,190) forms a sequel to, that has been just described, the more general evolution. Here it is stated that order or *ṛta* was produced from heat or *tapas*. Then came the night, the ocean, and the year. The creator or *dhata* produced in succession sun and moon, heaven and earth, air and ether.[19]

*Cosmogonic Myths of the Brāhmaṇa Texts***:** In the *Brāhmaṇas* it is said that wood and tree built the heaven and the earth; *Brahmā* was the wood and the tree (*Taittirῖya Brāhmaṇ*a, 2, 8, 9 [6]). Heaven and earth are often described as having been supported, or *skabh*, or *stabh*, with posts or *skambha* or *skambhana*, but the sky is said to be rafter less (v. 2,15 [2], 4,5 [6 3]; v. 10,149[1]), and that it never falls is a source of wonder (v. 5,29 [4] ; v. 6,17 [7]; v. 8,45[6]). The framework of the door is called *ātā*; in such a frame of heaven, *Indra* fixed the air (v. 1, 5 [65]). Thus, *Savitr'* made fast the earth with bands (v. 10, 149[1]), *Viṣṇu* fixed it with pegs, (v. 7,99[3]) and *Bṛhaspati* supported its ends (v. 4, 50[1] cp.10, 89[1]). The agents in the construction of the world were either the gods in general or the construction depicted in details the requirement of, *Tvas't'r'*, or the divine carpenter, or the deft-handed *Ṛbhus*. Little is said about their motive; but as man built his house to live in, it is indicated that *Viṣṇu* at least measured or stretched out the regions as an abode for man (v. 6, 49 [13.] 6 $_{9}$ [5], cp.1, 155 [4])[20].

Similar to *Ṛig Veda*, (v. 10, 129) is a *Brāhmaṇa* passage declaring that formerly nothing existed - neither heaven, or earth, or atmosphere, which being non-existent resolved to come into being (*Taittirῖya Brāhmaṇa* 2, 2, 9[1]ff.). The Cosmogonic view of the *Brāhmaṇa* requires the agency of a creator who is always the starting point. The creator here is *Prajāpati* or the persona *Brahmā*, who is not only the father of gods, men, or demons, but is the 'All'. Here, *Prajāpati*, is anthropomorphic representation of the desire that gives the first seed, spoken of in *Ṛig Veda*. (v. 10, 129) [21].

[19] Nagendra Kr. Singh, "Source of Vedic Mythology", op. cit., pp. 27-29.
[20] A. A. MacDonnell, *Vedic Mythology*, Delhi, Motilal Banarassidass, 2002, p. 11.
[21] Nagendra Kr. Singh, "Source of Vedic Mythology", op. cit., pp. 27-29.

Cosmogonic Myths of the Upaniṣads: In the section two of *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* it is stated that in the beginning there was nothing whatsoever in the universe. This universe was enveloped by death, or *Hiraṇyagarbha*, or Hunger alone; for hunger is death. 'He' produced the mind or the desires, also called fire. He moved about worshipping himself and while worshipping himself, water was produced from the fire as an element of worship. Thus, water was produced after ether, air and fire, and the above describes why fire is called *Arka*. Moreover, worship of water meant happiness of the *Brahmā*. Furthermore, water as well is *Arka*. The froth of water that was there hardened and it became the earth. In this myth of creation, the creator *Prajāpati* was tired, fatigued, and affected, so that from him came forth his essence as lustre or fire. It is said that in the beginning this universe was very much the self or *Virāj*, in the form of a person. He pondered and beheld nothing else but himself. Because he was the first among the aspirants to the status of *Prajāpati*, he consumed all evils before the whole group could do so. Therefore, he came to be called as *Puruṣa*. He thus consumes who knows very much and therefore wishes to be the creator or *Prajāpati* in advance of him. This did not make him feel very happy at all. Hence, one still does not feel happy when alone, and thereby desires a mate. *Virāj* took the form of a man and his wife, embracing each other. He then divided his own very body into two, from which husband and wife came into being. Hence, the wife is supposed to fill this void very much. *Virāj* united with her and from that humans were born. He created the fire from its source - the mouth and the hand, and created all that is liquid from his seed - the moon. As 'He' created all, he came to be known as the 'Creation', in this creation of '*Virāj*'.[22]

Cosmogonic Myths of the Bhakti Cult: According to the *Bhakti* Cosmogonic myth, the world supports all beings. All beings having evolved from parts of the body of the deity are 'true' - *i.e.* are an aspect of the deity, and they are an agent that moves the beings towards their final stage.[23]

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[22] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka.Upaniṣad*, trans. Swami Madhavananda, 6th ed., Calcutta, Advaita Ashram, n. d.

[23] W. Randolph Klutzily, "Cosmology: Hindu and Jain Cosmology", in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, ed. by Mircea Eliade, 16 vols., New York, Macmillan, 1987, vol. 4, p. 108.

Cosmogonic Myths of the Purānas-Sāṇkhya Theory: The form in which the Cosmogonic myths of the *Purānas* have come down to us and the later developments are described in the *Sāṇkhya* theory. It is about the oneness of *Brahmā*, assuming that *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛiti* are but two forms of the Supreme Deity. The Supreme Deity had been generally identified with the then popular god, reflecting the sectarian character of the work. In the *Viṣṇu Purāna*, the self-existent *Brahmā* is *Vāsudeva*. He is originally and essentially one, still he exists in three successfully arranged forms - *Puruṣa*, *Pradhāna* - both the evolved and the unresolved, and *Kāla* or time, with *Kāla* acting as the bond connecting *Puruṣa* and *Pradhāna*. When the Supreme Deity enters *Puruṣa*, *Pradhāna* being the equilibrium of the three *guṇas*, produces *Mahān* or *Buddhi*, which in its turn produces *āhaṃkara*. Hence, the five subtle elements, all the gross elements, and the eleven organs are produced, very much in the same way as depicted in the *Sāṇkhya* Philosophy. Thereafter, the gross elements combine into a compact mass to give the world egg or *brāhmānanda* that rests on water, wind, fire, air, *āhaṃkara*, *Buddhi*, and *Pradhāna*.[24]

3.6. Cosmogonic Myths of the Chinese Culture: The most important account of Chinese Cosmogonic myth describes how the world was formed by a primal deity called *Pan ku*, whose cult still survives in and among the minority peoples of South China like *Miao*, *Yao*, and *Li*. *Pan ku* is said to have been the offspring of the *Yin* and *Yang*- the two vital forces of the universe. Inside the darkness of a huge primordial egg, *Pan ku* came into being, where he incubated for eighteen thousand years until the egg split open. The lighter and clearer parts of the egg floated up to from the heaven, and the heavy and opaque parts sank to form the earth. *Pan Ku* stood up to prevent the fluid earth and sky from coming together again. He grew taller and taller forcing the ground and the heaven apart by ten feet a day. After another eighteen thousand years, the earth and the sky solidified in their present position, and *Pan Ku* wearily lay down to rest. When he died, his breath became the wind and the cloud, his voice the thunder, his left eye the sun, his right eye the moon, his hair and whiskers the stars in the sky, and

[24] Dhirendramohan Dutta, and Satischandra Chatterjee, “Samkhya Philosophy”, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 8th ed., Calcutta, Calcutta University Press, 1984.

his sweat was transformed into rain and dew. The other parts of his body became the elements that made up the earth—mountains, rivers, roads, plants, trees, metals, gems, and rocks.[25]

3.7. Cosmogonic Myths of the North American Cultures: Despite the enormous diversity of cultures in North America, there are relatively very few types of Cosmogonic myths. Most of the Native American people attribute the conception, if not the making of the universe, to a supremely divine Spirit or the 'Great Spirit'. This 'Great Spirit', for example, known as '*Gitchi Manitou*' to the *Algonquian* tribe of the Northeast Woodlands, or as '*Wakan Tanka*' to the *Lakota* tribe of the Plains. The most prevalent creation myth is that of the Earth Diver, an often-lowly creature that goes to the bottom of the primordial sea and retrieves the mud that then expands to from the earth. The world here is often said to rest on the back of a turtle - a common character in the mythology of the Americans.[26]

3.8. Cosmogonic Myths of the African Cultures: Most of the African mythologies are not concerned with the creation of the cosmos but with the emergence of human beings in an already created universe. One of the famous among them is the 'Myth of the Heavenly Blacksmith'. In African mythology, the divine blacksmith, commonly described as having descended from the sky, often plays a crucial role in preparing the universe for humanity. For the *Fon* tribe of *Benin* in West Africa, the heavenly blacksmith was *Gu*, the eldest son of the twin creator divinities, *Mawu-Lisa*. *Gu* was brought down to earth by the male twin, *Lisa*, with the help of a ceremonial iron sword. It is said that *Gu* was then given the charge of making the earth habitable for humans, a task that he has never given up. *Gu* showed the people how to fashion tools out of iron so that they could obtain food, cover their bodies, and build shelters. The creator god of the *Dogon* tribe, *Amma*, made the 'Spirit Blacksmith' from the placenta of *Nommo*. Since the spirit had no fire, he stole a piece of the sun from the heavenly *Nommo* twins and came down to earth in a celestial ark. Another myth of the Sahara region relate how the first blacksmith made a hoe from the skull

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[25] Roy Willis, ed., *World Mythology,* op. cit., p. 90.
[26] Idem.

of the heavenly antelope, *Bintu*, and then descended on the earth with it in order to teach cultivation to the newly created human race.[27]

4. *Mircea Eliade on the Cosmogonic Myth as the Basic Myth*

Eliade granted primary ontological status and central structural and functional role to Cosmogonic myths. His selections, arrangements, descriptions and interpretations of myth are dependent on the paramount importance that he gave to the Cosmogonic, origin and other forms of creation myths. Those forms of creation myths are interpreted as continuing and imitating forms of cosmogonic myths. Eliade claimed that the mythology of every living tradition not only constitutes a sacred history but also "...reveals a hierarchy in the series of fabulous events that it reports. In general, one can say that myth tells how something came into being, the world, or man, or an animal species, or a social institution, and so on. But the very fact that the creation of the world precedes everything else, the cosmogony enjoys a special prestige. In fact… the cosmogonic myth furnishes the model for all myths of origin. The creation of animals, plants, or man presupposes the existence of a world." [28]

Eliade classified Cosmogonic myths mainly into four broad categories as Creation *ex nihilo*, Creation by Earth Diver Motif, and Creation by dividing a Primordial Unity into two, and Creation by dismemberment of a Primordial Being.[29]

The first category of classification of Cosmogonic myths by Eliade is based on the theme of Creation *ex nihilo*, where a great Being creates the world by thought, by word, or by heating himself in a steam-hut, and so forth. Eliade used the example of the *Maori* Polynesian Cosmogonic myth in this regard in his several books. "According to this myth in the beginning there were only Water and Darkness. *Io*, the Supreme God, separated the Waters by the power of thought and of his words, and created the Sky and the Earth. He said: 'Let the Waters be separated, let the Heavens be formed,

[27] Geoffrey Parrinder, *African Mythology*, London, The Hamlyn Publishing, 1969.
[28] Mircea Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1969, p. 75.
[29] Douglas Allen, *Myth and Religion in Mircea Eliade*, New York, Routledge, 2002.

let the earth be!' These cosmogonic words of *Io*'s by virtue of which the World came to existence, are creative words charged with sacred powers. Hence one utters them whenever there is something to *do*, *to create*."[30] Polynesians believed that these cosmogonic words of *Io* brought light from darkness. Therefore, this myth is still repeated during all kinds of rites and activities. Eliade said that this myth serves as a model for every kind of creation and hence could be applied on different planes of reference, as it has the capacity to transform diverse and fragmented experiences of despair into a meaningful, hopeful, creative and unified mythic mode of existence. It is believed by the Polynesians that all negative, desperate, and apparently irremediable situations such as an unsuccessful war, sickness, darkness, discouraged heart, or a poet's lack of inspiration or any other situation, in which man is driven to despair, are reversed by the recitation of the Cosmogonic myth. Thus, for Eliade this myth presents a direct and incontrovertible testimony concerning the function of Cosmogonic myth in a traditional society. [31]

The second category of Cosmogonic myths by Eliade is based on the theme of Creation by Earth Diver Motif. Here the God sends aquatic birds or amphibian animals, or dives himself, to the bottom of the primordial ocean to bring up a particle of earth from which the entire world grows. An excellent illustration can be found in Eliade's lengthy investigation of "The Devil and God: Prehistory of the Romanian Folk Cosmogony" in his book titled *Zalmoxis, The Vanishing God: Comparative Studies in the Religions and Folklore of Dacia and Eastern Europe*.[32] Here Eliade analysed numerous myths of the Cosmogonic dive comprised entirely of the folk cosmogony of South Eastern Europe. He insisted that the interpreter of the myth must attempt to make sense of the dualism in which God, deciding to create the Earth, sends his adversary, Satan, to the bottom of the primordial

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[30] Mircea Eliade, *From Primitives to Zen: A Thematic Source Book of the History of Religions,* New York, Harper and Row, 1967, pp. 86-87; cited from, E.S.C Handy, *Polynesian Religion,* Honolulu, Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 34, 1927, pp. 10-11.

[31] Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, trans. Williard R. Trask, New York, Harper and Row, 1963, pp. 30-33.

[32] Mircea Eliade, "The Devil and God: Prehistory of the Romanian Folk Cosmogony", in *Zalmoxis, The Vanishing God: Comparative Studies in the religions and Folklore of Dacia and Eastern Europe*, trans. by Willard. R. Trask, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1972.

water to bring back to the surface some of the seeds of the Earth. As cosmogonic diver Satan subverts God's instructions, finally surfaces with a little mud under his fingernails, and even attempts to drown God. To Eliade all these dualistic events are essential for an interpretation of Cosmogonic myth on the creation of the Earth and the subsequent nature of the world and the human condition. [33]

The third category of Cosmogonic myths by Eliade is based on the theme of Creation by dividing a Primordial Unity into two. Eliade further classified this theme into three variants.[34] The first variant is based on the theme of Separation of Heaven and Earth or the World-Parent Myth, an example being the Babylonian creation myth, *Enumaelish*, where it is stated that water and earth co-mingled as a single body in a state of indeterminacy.[35] The second variant is based on the theme of Separation of an original amorphous mass - the 'Chaos', as exemplified by the Polynesian myth of *Rangi* and *Papa* that speaks of a darkness blanketing everything. Similarly, in the Egyptian myth of *Seb* and *Nut*, primordial chaotic waters precede the coming into being of the world parents.[36] The third variant is based on the theme of cutting of a cosmic egg into two parts, as in the *Dogon* myth from West Africa, the god *Amma* created a world egg with incubating twins inside as the first order of creation. With time, the twins would come forth as androgynous beings, indicating perfection also at the level of sexuality. [37]

Eliade's fourth category of Cosmogonic myths is based on the theme of Creation by dismemberment of a Primordial Being. In these myths the dismemberment of the Primordial Being take place either by a voluntary, anthropomorphic victim or by an aquatic monster conquered after a terrific battle. An example for the former could be the Indian *Puruṣa* or the Chinese *Pan-ku*, as mentioned earlier in section 3.5 and section 3.6, respectively. An example of the latter could be the myth of *Tiamat* of Babylon. Where the combat that took place *ab origine* between *Marduk* and

[33] Idem.
[34] Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, op. cit., pp. 30-33.
[35] S. H. Hooke, *Middle Eastern Mythology*, London, Penguin, 1975, p. 72.
[36] Idem.
[37] Roy Willis, ed., *World Mythology,* op. cit.

marine monster *Tiamat*, put an end to the chaos through the final victory of God. *Marduk* thereafter created the cosmos from *Tiamat*'s dismembered body and created man from the blood of the demon *Kingu*, *Tiamat*'s chief ally. The commemorations of this creation have been in fact a're-actualization' of the cosmogonic act shown by the rituals and in the hymns recited during the various religious ceremonies.[38]

5. *Observations*

Though mythical themes are innumerable, Eliade believed the theme of Cosmogonic creation to be the principal theme of myths. He said that irrespective of whether the subjects of myths are acts of deities or any other events, myths always take us back to the "beginning of all things". Cosmogony is the archetype of all creation. Cosmic time that cosmogony brings forth, is the paradigmatic model for all other times - that is, for the times specially belonging to the various categories of existing things. For the religious man of the archaic cultures, every creation, every existence, begins with 'time'. Before the cosmos came into existence there was no cosmic time. Before a particular vegetable species was created, the time that now causes it to grow, bear fruit and die did not exist. It is for this reason that every creation is imagined as having taken place '*in principia* at the beginning of time'. Time gushes forth with the first appearance of a new category of existents. Cosmogonic myths play such an important role because they reveal the way in which a reality came into existence. Hence, cosmogony or the birth of the world becomes the principal theme of myths. The essential elements of human existence, like the staple food, tools, and the basic provisions etc., that occur in Cosmogonic myths vary from the hunting communities, to the pastoral societies and to the most complex form of historical cultures. In fact, all other myths are based on Cosmogonic myths, as the themes of all other myths are drawn from Cosmogonic myths exclusively. They reflect the history of a tradition. In the Babylonian culture during the course of the *akitu* ceremony, which is performed during the last

[38] Bryan Rennie, ed., *Mircea Eliade A Critical Reader*, London, Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2006, p. 222.

day of the ending year and the first day of the New Year, the 'Poem of Creation', *The Enumaelish* was solemnly recited. This ritual of recitation reactualized the combat between *Marduk* and the marine monster *Tiamat* and the way *Marduk* created the cosmos. This commemoration of the creation has been in fact a're-actualization' of the Cosmogonic act shown by the rituals and in the hymns recited during the ceremony.[39] Myths are neither purely rational nor purely non-rational. These narratives are present in all the traditions and cultures reflecting their varying patterns and moods. In the Vedic period the myths were mostly based on nature. The *Vedas* talked about the cosmos as the 'Father Sky' or the 'Mother Earth'. In the Palaeolithic and Neolithic ages, people were aware of Cosmogonic myths from the inception of new creation like the birth of animal, or child, and through the germination and growth of plants. When pottery was invented in the Neolithic times, further stimulus was given to the conception of creation. In several mythical narratives, the Creator god is imagined as the 'Divine Potter' who fashioned men out of clay. In most of the traditions Cosmogonic myths are significant and evident because whatever may be the themes of other myths - about the origin of animals, plants, institutions, or anything else, it has been taken for granted that the myths are based on the Cosmogonic myths of that tradition. In Fiji, the ceremony for installing a new ruler is called 'Creation of the World' and the very same ceremony is repeated to save threatened crops. But it is Polynesia that exhibits the widest application of Comogonic myths. The words that *Io*, the Creator, spoke *in illo tempore* to create the world have become ritual formulas. Men repeat them on many occasions to fecundate a sterile womb, to heal mental and physical ailments, to prepare for war, to stimulate poetic inspiration, and also on the occasion of a death.[40] Thus, Cosmogonic myths for the Polynesians serve as the archetypal models of all creation, on whatever plane - biological, psychological and spiritual. In Cosmogonic myths, therefore, a reflection of the mixture of thoughts and images about the beginning of things could be found. The myths deriving both from the new

[39] Idem.

[40] Eliade Mircea, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. Rosemary Sheed, New York, Meridian Books, 1963, p. 410.

needs of the civilized society and from the cruder concepts of the pre-literary past. As for Eliade, "…the cosmogony is the exemplary model for every creative situation: whatever man does is in some way a repetition of the Pre-eminent 'deed', the archetypal gesture of the Creator God, the Creation of the World".[41] Eliade asserted that symbolically man became contemporary with the cosmogony as if he was present during the creation of the world. The memory of that marvelous time continuously haunted the religious man and periodically he sought to return to it. The cosmogony is the supreme divine manifestation, the paradigmatic act of strength, superabundance and creativity, comparable to the greatest powers displayed by the gods *in illo tempore*. The religious man thirsts for the real and seeks to reside at the very source of the primordial reality by any means that are at his disposal. Myths and rituals act as means here. Thus, the Cosmogonic myth serves as the model for all kinds of creations, and Eliade rightly called it the basic myth.

Eliade claimed that even in traditions with no Cosmogonic myths as such, there has always been a central myth that describes some primordial history having a beginning. There are always mythical events accounting for either how or why the world began, or became what it is today. In short, Cosmogonic myths "…serve as the model for all kinds of 'creations'."[42] The other myths of origin, like myths of the origin of human beings, animal species, plants, mountains, birth and death, social relations, institutions etc., are in effect related to the primacy of the cosmogonic myths.

Thus, in all religious traditions and cultures, the fact that Cosmogonic myths are the basic myths emerges clearly from the above discussion. All other myths, in effect, are based on the Cosmogonic myths. The themes of all other myths are drawn from the Cosmogonic myth of that tradition. They are the model for all kinds of creations and therefore, inspire other mythical themes. Most of the countries and traditions have some type of Cosmogonic myth or else origin myths drawn from the idea of the Cosmogonic myth. They reflect the history and culture of a tradition and are said to be culture-specific. In the Cosmogonic myths or creation myths, the

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[41] Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, op. cit., pp. 31-33.
[42] Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, op. cit., pp. 36-38.

thoughts and images are based on the basic needs and characteristics of the civilized society in which they were formulated. For example, in the Neolithic era, when pottery was discovered, Cosmogonic myths grew upon the theme of pottery. So also, in case of the Mesopotamian culture, Cosmogonic myths developed on the theme of sea. Moreover, the Cosmogonic myths also express the religious life of a community and thus provide the basis for all creative activity in the cultural life. Therefore, Eliade stands vindicated by terming a Cosmogonic myth the 'basic myth' for any socio-religious culture.

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REVIEWS

Bryan S. Rennie (ed.), *The International Eliade*, Albany, The State University of New York Press, 2007, vi + 318 p., ISBN - 13: 978-0-7914-7087-9, hardback and paperback editions.

Bryan S. Rennie (ed.), *Mircea Eliade, A Critical Reader*, London, UK and Oakville, CT, Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2007, viii + 448 p., ISBN - 9781904768944, hardback and paperback editions.

Reviews by Mac Linscott RICKETTS
Louisburg College

In the same year, 2007, two volumes of materials by and about Mircea Eliade, collected and annotated by Professor Bryan S. Rennie of Westminster College, Pennsylvania, USA, appeared. By happy coincidence, they were released in the centennial year of Eliade's birth, but. both had been expected for a long time, and their appearance came after frustrating delays. However, their contents are such that they are timely, and will remain so indefinitely.

Mircea Eliade, A Critical Reader, may be considered a sequel to Rennie's collection of sixteen articles, *Changing Religious Worlds: The Meaning and End of Mircea Eliade*, published in 2001. That book, to some extent, was the outgrowth of a session on Eliade held at the American Academy of Religions annual meeting of 1996. The idea for the new collection came from Rennie's attendance at the Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions in Durban, South Africa, 2000, where persons from many countries presented papers on

Professor Eliade. Some of these presentations, plus articles subsequently located by the editor, are included among the total of thirteen items in this volume.

With regard to the contributors, the new book is truly international. Romania is represented by two, as are Argentina and the United States, and there are one each from Germany, Korea, France, India, Japan, Norway, Italy, Belgium, and Canada. While there are none from Africa, Australia, the Middle or Near East, many readers no doubt will be astonished at the diversity of countries represented. Rennie has attempted to group at least two or three articles under a major heading ("The Sacralization of Time," "The Interpretation of History," The Interpretation of India, and Eliade's 'Traditionalism,'" and "Eliade's Fiction" - which includes a translation of one of his plays), but four articles are presented alone, in separate categories. The editor has chosen to comment on each selection in his Introduction. For me, the articles by Liviu Bordaş and Natale Spineto on Eliade's alleged "Traditionalism" are two of the best-researched. Okuyama Michiaki's paper suggesting the influence of Eliade on the Nobel laureate Õe Kenzaburõ's writings (he is known to have read Eliade) is also outstanding in my opinion. The Reverend Dr. Wilhelm Dancă of Bucharest, a Catholic parish priest, has discussed the influence of Eastern Orthodoxy on Eliade, criticizing him for a lack of moral sensitivity. Also among the more erudite and important articles are those of Philip Vanhaelemeersch (Dutch), Ulrich Berner, Michel Meslin, and the Argentineans, P. Wright and C. C. Cernadas (who co-wrote an article).

The second book to be discussed here is *Mircea Eliade, A Critical Reader.* This tome is an anthology of key works by Eliade, intermingled with basic texts about him, written by knowledgeable scholars, most of them American. It is a large (and expensive) volume, but indispensable for instructional purposes in a one-semester college course on Eliade, or as a reference work in a course on the History of Religions. The editor faced a daunting task when he set out to choose selections illustrative of Eliade's multifaceted works from the approximately sixty years of his life as a writer and scholar. Of course, many things had to be passed over that a knower of Eliade's life work would have expected to see included. Rennie himself admits that he regrets having to omit reference to certain aspects of the Professor's work, especially his commentaries on art. Likewise, the pre-World War era has been largely ignored, except for three articles of 1937. What Rennie has tried to do is to assemble a body of short readings by Eliade, especially ones that are not readily available, and a wide variety of studies and critical essays about him representing differing viewpoints.

One of the most valuable pieces is that by the editor: "The Life and Work of Mircea Eliade" (Part I, 2). The selection by Eliade in Part I, appropriately, is his introduction to *The Sacred and the Profane* (1957, 1959). Following this, the remainder of the book is divided into three major parts of varying size: Part II, "Eliade's Understanding of Religion," with 21 selections; Part III, "Eliade's Methodology," with 8 selections; and Part IV, "Problems and Themes in Eliade's Thought," a miscellaneous section with 11 selections. The "Parts" are subdivided under various headings, with several items each group. All of the articles are introduced by extremely helpful commentaries by the editor.

Out of a total of 43 numbered items, 21 are from the writings of Eliade. It would be impractical to attempt to discuss them individually in this review, or even to list all their titles. Suffice it to say that the majority of them deal with his methodology and his understanding of the nature of religion. The basic concepts of the sacred, the dialectics of the sacred and the profane, morphology, hierophany, "*Homo Faber and Homo Religious*," *coincidentia oppositorum*, phenomenology, symbolism, mythology, sacred time, shamanism, the terror of history, etc. are all amply represented in Rennie's selections.

The three articles by Eliade all from 1937 will surprise readers unfamiliar with Eliade's prewar writings. Selection 43, the last in the book, was written in February 1937. Here Eliade compares the burning of churches (in Spain and Paris) and the mass executions in Russia by Communists with the relatively mild persecution of the Jews by Hitler (up till that time!). In view of what would come later, Eliade's views seem naïve in the extreme - yet how could he have foreseen the future? In November of the same year, he published "Blind Pilots" (item 42), often fragmentarily cited by Eliade's critics today. The "blind pilots" are the nation's leaders who have allowed the unchecked immigration of foreigners into the country, so that in the border provinces native Romanians are becoming the minority. The immigrants Eliade fears most, it seems, are Slavs (Ruthenians and Bulgarians, chiefly), Hungarians, and Jews from the northeast. *But he does not blame them* - he blames the Romanian governing powers, who don't know how to govern. "Folklore as an Instrument of Knowledge" (Selection 4), published in April, is one of several similar articles Eliade wrote in the 1920s and 1930s dealing with the "paranormal," in this case *cryptesthesia pragmatica*, levitation, and the incombustibility of the human body. These "miraculous powers," well-attested in "primitive societies," should be taken seriously for what we can learn from them, Eliade argues. Rennie includes a pair of photographs from an old *Time* magazine that show a yogi apparently suspended horizontally some three feet in the air.

The articles about Eliade and his work represent numerous viewpoints, but all of them except one (number 29, by E. Leach) are, in my opinion, written by scholars who respect the canons of decency and are sufficiently knowledgeable to make responsible critiques. The majority of the articles about Eliade are favorable, but selections 28-32, and 35-36 are partially or wholly critical of him and his methodology. Rennie does not include any articles or excerpts from books (like those of Dubuisson and Laignel-Lavastine) that do not represent honest scholarship.

Part IV contains two articles by Eliade (33, "The Terror of History" and 34, "Historical Events and Structural Meaning in Tension."), followed by three 35, 36, and 37) somewhat critical of his views on "history." Then the subject switches to commentaries on Eliade's fiction (selections 38 and 39) and on his religion (40 and 41). Both of the latter relate Eliade's thought to Eastern Orthodoxy.

No one has ever undertaken to make an "Eliade anthology" on such a grand scale as this, and yet there are lacunae - probably due to limits imposed by the publisher rather than to any fault of the editor. There are numerous missing articles from Eliade's "Romanian period," beginning at least as early as 1927, which Romanians would consider essential. Also, a few selections from his adolescence and youth would be expected. Rennie includes three important and interesting articles from 1937, as noted above, but refrains from citing a specifically "Legionary" article. There is nothing from the period of his diplomatic service in England or in Portugal, although Rennie summarizes all these things concisely in his splendid opening article (number 1). Most of all, I regret that he was unable to find places for one or more novellas or short stories, though I can see how they would have added too much to an already overweight volume.

Comparing the two books under review here, *The International Eliade* is definitely more suited to the advanced Eliade student, in my opinion. The *Critical Reader*, the editor says, is intended for a broad spectrum of readers. But it is also heavily weighted toward theory and methodology - and it could not be otherwise, given the nature of Eliade's work. He wrote a very great deal, but he was unable, it seems, to state his thoughts in a clear, systematic way. This book should be a great aid to anyone struggling to understand this great mind.

Akbar Ahmed, *Journey into Islam: The crisis of Globalization*, Brookings Institution Press, Penguin/ Viking, 2007, 323 p., ISBN - 13: 9780815701323.

Review by Santosh Kr. SINGH
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9/11 is not merely a mathematical construct today. It universally connotes horror and bloodshed of the kind which perhaps changed the way mankind would understand and most significantly express violence in the 21st century - by freezing it in the form of disembodied numbers to conceal its goriness. The terrorist attacks on the USA symbolized that the logic of violence is vicious, non-discriminatory and it operates in a circle. Sadly, with the United States' strategy of war (instead of peace) against terror, the world lost out on a chance to conclusively debunk the myth of violence as the means to a civilized end.

After 9/11, the world seems to have irrevocably changed. The US-sponsored war against terror appears to be heading nowhere and everywhere at the same time, at least in terms of its spirit of hatred, leaving a trail of blood behind. There is a fear that humanity may face apocalyptic doom if the fault lines are not cemented fast. Increased worldwide phenotypical identification of the Muslims as terrorists and Islam as inherently violent is threatening to destabilize world peace and the earth's very existence. The acceptance and irresponsible invocation of words such as 'Islamophoboia' and 'Islamofascism' by the West has further alienated the Muslim community and made it behave as a monolith in defense of increasing demonisation of the faith.

The process of globalization seems to have further widened these fault lines. Thanks to the boom in communication networks, the engine of globalization, the package of hatred and campaign of vilification and negative stereotyping, generated by the USA in particular against the Muslims, are transported to every nook and corner of the world within no time. If the barbarism of Abu Gharaib and Guantanamo Bay by the American soldiers rubbed salt on the bruised collective psyche of the Islamic believers, the gory video footages of Saddam's cold-blooded hanging when beamed across the world through satellite networks marked the nadir

of crisis of globalization and its role in fomenting the most dangerous divide ever in the history of mankind.

To find out the reasons and ramifications of this dreadful engagement between the West and the Islamic world, Akbar Ahmad, the author of the book under review here and an internationally renowned bureaucrat turned Islamic scholar from Pakistan - and now a professor at an American university, led a team of his young American students on a daring and unprecedented tour of the Muslim world, which he calls ‘an anthropological excursion’. From the mosque of Damascus to the madrassahs of Karachi (Pakistan) and Deoband (India) to the homes of Jakarta, Ahmad and his companions met with Muslims from all walks of life. They listened to students and professors, presidents and prime ministers, sheikhs and cab drivers, revealing stories of hopes and horror among the Muslims. Critiquing globalization as a process without any “moral-force” Ahmad agrees with sociologist Anthony Giddens for whom the process of globalization is nothing but a little more than a “global pillage” which puts a few on the fast track to prosperity while leaving the vast majority to languish in misery and despair. Placed in the vortex of tumultuous change and between the pulls of market and the mosque, Muslims today find themselves increasingly at the receiving end of the process of globalization, both existentially and symbolically.

Ahmad at this juncture talks about three models for the Muslim world, namely the **Ajmer** model, the **Aligarh** model and the **Deoband** model. While the Ajmer model[1] represents mystical Islam with its emphasis on humanism, universal brotherhood and harmony, the Aligarh model[2] represents the west-savvy Islam with

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[1] Ajmer is a well-known pilgrimage town in the state of Rajasthan, India. The famous 12th century Sufi-saint Moin-uddin Chisti’shrine happens to be here. It is believed that when Moin-uddin chisti had made a pilgrimage to the tomb of the prophet in Medina to reflect on the nature of God in one of Islam’s holiest places, the prophet appeared to him in a vision urging him “to go to Hindustan (India) to spread the word of Islam” and handed him a pomegranate revealing the chosen destination, Ajmer. Chisti left on his mission immediately and in time came to be known as the “deputy of the prophet in India”. He introduced Islam without alienating the other religions there, converting Hindus not through the sword but through peace and love. Ajmer therefore stands as a major seat of tolerant and non-aggressive face of Islam. Not just the Muslims but the people from all faiths visit the shrine to pay obeisance to the great Sufi-saint.

[2] Aligarh is a place in the North India, closer to Delhi and known for its famous Aligarh Muslim university, initially designed and founded by Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan to introduce and expose the Muslims to the modern, liberal and Western knowledge system. Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan (1817-98), was the most influential Muslim statesman of his time. He pioneered modern education for the Muslim community in India believing that the future of Muslims was threatened by their orthodox nature and outlook.

"reason" at its centre. The Deoband[3], in contrast, is orthodox and faith-bound. The problem with the Ajmer model is it is far too "world negating" in its orientation and hence even though it remains an ideal emancipatory model it does not really help an average Muslim to come to terms with the complicated set of existential challenges that he is faced with. The Aligarh model, though it is loaded with possibilities, ends up looking like a compromise model in contemporary scenario. Ironically it is the Deoband model which seems to have prospered in the age of globalization and comes across as a formidable force to reckon with. Ahmad reasons that the more belligerent and violent the position of the West vis-à-vis Islam, the more it helps the Deoband to consolidate. Ahmad argues for a more dialogic engagement between the West and the Deoband, instead of dismissing the latter as a band of fanatic suicide bombers. Based on his experiences from the field, Ahmad talks about the immense possibilities and the ultimate hope in this interface and interaction based on mutual trust and respect for differences.

Notwithstanding the spirit of inter-faith and inter-community dialogue and stress on the common thread of compassion and love that runs through various faiths as articulated in the book, Ahmad's prognosis on the whole issue is a bit blinkered. It is true that the West, especially the Americans, have made a mess of their relations with the Muslim world. They needed an enemy in the post-cold war period to show their economic clout and bullish hegemony and they found it in Islamic societies. Yet it does not help to continue harping about the injustices of the West alone. For it does not explain the rot within us, in our society, the failures of our own political elites, most of them representing the much celebrated Aligarh model, the corrupt and dictatorial regimes one after another collaborating against their own, the almost uncontested rise of religious fundamentalism instead of literacy and life-chances enabling avenues. Where has the saner voice of the intelligentsia of our society disappeared? What led to the marginalization of the 'Sufi' element as represented by the Ajmer model in the Islamic world view? What made a faith which considers "the ink of a scholar more sacred than the blood of the martyr" so irrational and susceptible to violent appeals? We may not be partners in Al-Qaeda's violent acts, but neutrality is no intervention anymore. Our

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[3] Deoband is a town situated a hundred miles north of Delhi where a madrasa (religious school) was established in the year 1867. The Deoband madrasa brought together Muslims who were hostile to the British rule and committed to a liberal and austere interpretation of Islam. Considered conservative and orthodox, the school argues that the reason Islamic societies have fallen behind because of the impact of westernization and its amoral and materialistic orientation.

silence and refusal of any self introspection and internal criticism are equally damaging.

Journey into Islam by Ahmad is too America-centric and critical, and pays too scant attention to the internal contradiction of the Islamic societies. Hence, everything that is happening in Pakistan today, from the increase in extremism to the prolonged suspension of democracy is linked to and explained with the common tool of the West's anti-Islamic agenda. Moreover, Ahmad falls in to the trap of Samuel Huntington's much-maligned thesis, and throughout the book he continues to refer to the problems of the West with Islam as problems of two civilizations - a thesis that contests many of his own arguments, as presented by him so passionately in the book. That America, for instance, dictated by its powerful military-industrial lobby, sells expensive defense equipment and weapons to us has some rational-economic logic, but why do we buy them? Ahmad's book is surprisingly silent on such critical issues. Similarly, while he adores Jinnah, the architect of Pakistan, he mentions Gandhi merely in passing, which looks a bit odd given that his arguments more often than not echo Gandhian understanding on religious coexistence and non-violent solutions to a crisis. Also Ahmad comes across essentially as an ideologue from Pakistan which is a limiting factor as far as his analysis of the situation in the subcontinent is concerned. Yet despite these ambiguities and caveats, the book, written with urgency and compassion, makes a strong case for forming bonds across religions and cultures for a peaceful world. Hence it is worthy of the attention of scholars, researchers and all those who are concerned with the post 9/11developments.

Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007, 253 p., ISBN - 13: 9780520247451.

Review by Janam MUKHERJEE
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

In her recent monograph, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary,* anthropologist Veena Das revisits two critical events in Indian history: the Partition riots of 1947 and the violence against Sikhs following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1984. Though Das has grappled with the complex (and sometimes tortured) analysis of these same events in previous works, *Life and Words* represents an important departure from her earlier (more narrowly) ethnographic essays. In this new work the author readjusts her focus towards a theoretical/philosophical interrogation of the "ordinary" in an effort to complicate existing temporal and epistemological assumptions that have characterized studies of violence in India. The book is a two-part study, examining, first; the way in which extraordinary violence (in this case the violence of Partition) gets "folded" into the everyday lives of those who have survived catastrophe, and, second, the way in which the violence of everyday life provides the necessary conditions for "eventful" eruptions of collective violence (in this case violence against Sikhs in 1984.) In blurring the boundaries between the ordinary and the eventful, Das is also able to gain significant insight into the interface between the individual and the collective, the local and the supralocal, as well as between the historical and the anthropological.

In the first part of *Life and Words* Das characterizes the "communal" riots of Partition as the "founding violence" of the nascent Indian Republic. Central to this foundation was a concern for the repatriation of "abducted women" from both sides of the communal divide. This concern, Das argues, was a masculine one, and was, in fact, predicated on a conflation of the originary social contract with a "sexual contract" that subordinated female subjects of the new republic to patriarchal rule. Women's bodies, in this sense, became the "map" of independent India, a map, also then, of the violence that gave birth to the nation. Yet the violence that was charted on the bodies of women could/cannot be effectively

narrated (because of its magnitude), but must, instead, be apprehended in its continuing trajectory of everyday survival and accommodation. The anthropologist's task, therefore, is not simply to recount (or collect) stories of Partition, but to track the ways in which the "poisonous knowledge" of Partition violence has insinuated itself into the daily lives of survivors. In this context Das examines the ways that particular women have "reinhabited" everyday life after having survived extraordinary violence, detailing the social negotiations, internalized grief, and (almost) incidental gestures of loss that color their descent *back* into the ordinary.

If Partition represents the "founding violence" of the Indian State, Das argues (following Walter Benjamin's well-known dialectic), events such as the anti-Sikh violence of 1984 can be understood as the "maintaining violence" of the state. The state here, however, is not conceived as a transcendent entity, able to impose its will from above, rather, the real "magic" of the state, according to Das, lies in its illegibility. As such, the signature of the state is never fixed, but instead can be reproduced, forged, or foisted according to context and contingency. It is with this understanding in mind that Das investigates anti-Sikh violence in 1984 in a specific locality of Delhi (Sultanpuri), convincingly demonstrating how violence, rumor, and impunity circulate according to local logics that emerge from the existing social configuration. Thus the everyday exigencies of class, caste and political rivalry provide the key towards understanding the *specificity* of collective violence. It is, perhaps, this insistence on the contingencies of local specificity that makes *Life and Words* essential reading for students and scholars of collective violence. Das reminds us that the devil of "world-annihilating violence" really is in the details, and, correspondingly, that understanding the social strategies employed by survivors must also be a matter of particular and painstaking analysis, rather than an ascent into meta-theory, which would, again, only deprive survivors of their individual subject-hood.

Jerry L. Walls (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford/New York, 2008, 724 p., ISBN - 978-0-19-517049-8.

Review by Răzvan TATU
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The effort of Mr. Jerry L. Walls, Professor of Philosophy of Religion at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, is considerable and extremely useful. The publishing of *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology* is truly an important moment for all the students interested in comparative eschatology. Eschatology is the study of the last things (p.4): death, judgment, the afterlife (that is, individual eschatology), and the end of the world (cosmic eschatology). It is the doctrine of the final moment of creation.[1] The *Handbook* shows us that the eschatological concern can be met within all the great religions, having different colours from one to another (encompassing all the conceptions with regard to the afterlife, heaven, hell, immortality of the soul, re-born and transmigration or reincarnation, as in the Asian traditions, the final judgment and the transfiguration of the world. Every chapter in this book proves that eschatology has always influenced the human behaviour in a lifetime, in all ages. In fact, the *final chapter* of the ***eschaton*** seems to be really the most important in a religious-philosophical system, as this book proves. There is no religion which can be thought without eschatology.

The book is composed of three parts : Part I – *Historical Eschatology* – deals with *Old Testament Eschatology and the Rise of the Apocalypticism* ; *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Ancient World* ; *The Eschatology of the New Testament Church* ; *Eschatology and the Quest for the Historical Jesus* ; *Eschatology in the Early Church Fathers*, this section being entitled *Biblical and Patristic Eschatology* (pp.23-109). Another section of Part I deals with the concept of *eschatology in world religions*, that is Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu eschatologies, and an essay on the false prophecies with regard to the end and

[1] Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia dogmatică ortodoxă*, ed. a II-a, Ed. I.B.M.B.O.R., Bucureşti, 1997, vol.3, p.143; C. J. Bleeker, *Types of Eschatology*, in *The Sacred Bridge. Researches into the Nature and Structure of Religion*, "Studies in the History of Religions (Supplements to *NUMEN*)", VII, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1963, p.251.

violence in recent religious eschatologies (pp.113-212). Part II – *Eschatology in Distinct Christian Traditions and Theological Movements* searches to provide us a quite adequate understanding of what the issue of eschatology means in Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant traditions, then offering a vision of the *eschaton* question within the framework of religious fundamentalism, pentecostal and charismatic theology, process eschatology, liberation theology and, finally, the Christian feminist concerns with eschatology (pp.215-342).

Part III of the book debates some of the most important issues or concepts that one may meet in the Christian theology (*Theological Issues*) and philosophy : Church, ecumenism, eschatology, millennialism, resurrection, heaven, hell, purgatory, universalism, annihilationism, death, final judgment and the meaning of life. Important ideas are to be met in the section of *Philosophical and Cultural Issues*, such as : modernity, history and eschatology ; eschatology and politics ; eschatology and theodicy ; human nature, personal identity, and eschatology ; ethics and eschatology ; cosmology and eschatology ; eschatology and epistemology ; time, eternity and eschatology ; near-death experiences and eschatology ; eschatology in fine art ; eschatology in pop culture and some conclusions on the emerging themes in the eschatology of the 21st century (pp.347-689, followed by an index). Despite its almost exhaustive character, unfortunately, contrary to our expectations, this handbook lacks exactly one of the most important chapters in the history and evolution of the eschatological concept, the *Zoroastrian* one, which stands in deep connection with the eschatology of the great monotheistic traditions[2]. Still this lack is compensated by the famous names of the contributors to this volume, of whom we would mention especially : Richard Bauckham, William C. Chittick, John J. Collins, Brian E. Daley, Andrew Louth, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Peter C. Phan, Christopher Rowland, Gerhard Sauter, Carol Zaleski.

In an individual eschatology, the human behaviour will determine the final destiny of man post mortem, whereas in a universal one the whole humanity's and cosmos' destiny is overviewed. The cosmic eschatology, based upon the concept of cyclical time, recognizes that the mundane history's periods repeat from a perfect condition to the fall of a crisis period and, finally, the return to a purified and

[2] For a useful survey, see Christopher C. Hong's very unique *A History of the Future: A Study of the Four Major Eschatologies*, University Press of America, Washington, D. C., 1981; and Norman Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith*, 2nd Edition, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2001.

renewed condition[3]. Judaism, Christianity and Islam relevate time's linear and singular dimension, unlike the other philosophical and religious systems of the ancient world, which permanently endured the burden of time, under the impulse of an *eternal return*. With our Lord's coming and the foundation of the Church, time will acquire a totally different value, becoming or being converted in the period during which mankind has to follow the way to deification (*theosis*), the plenitude of human being in the Holy Spirit, through God's uncreated energies, waiting for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come (as the *Symbol of Faith* says, art. 11 and 12). All the dead in Christ will be raised[4], as Christ was resurrected, conquering the powers of death. According to the Christian Orthodox teaching, death doesn't mean a total disappearance or aneantization of the person, but passing to an incorruptible existence with God in eternity. In a way, some of the introductory words of Prof. Walls, really christian in their essence, confirm this statement : 'Eschatological faith, then, is a daring hope, an 'insane expectation' that refuses the consolation of stoic resignation in the face of loss and devastation. It dares to continue to believe that our most painful losses, even those due to death, are not irretrievable. For our world, though fallen, was originally a gift from an infinitely powerful and loving Creator who has redeemed it and promised to restore it as the perfect gift it was intended to be' (p. 6). We would say there is no need for more words, just that the standard of scholarship in this volume is impeccable. The *Oxford Handbook of Eschatology* is a necessary reading for both theologians, historians, sociologists, psychologists and historians of religions, who are interested in the emergence and development of the eschatological idea and its deep impact on the human mind, behaviour and culture. One may say that this book reminds us of regaining the sacred feeling of communion with the whole world, in the sense of a sacred gift, because all the existence, seen and unseen, is the very gift of God.

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[3] R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, *Eschatology: An Overview*, in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd Edition, Lindsay Jones Editor in Chief, MacMillan, New York, 2005, vol.4, p.2834.

[4] St. John of Damascus, *Dogmatica*, tr. by D. Fecioru, 3rd Edition, Ed. Scripta, Bucureşti, 1993, p.202.

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