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TIME FOR ANOTHER ENLIGHTENMENT: RECONSTRUCTING MODERNITIES WITH CHINESE PHILOSOPHY AND WORLD PRAGMATISM[1]

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This year sees the 30th Anniversary of the initial publishing of Heiner Roetz's pathbreaking work *Confucian Ethics of the Axial Age: A Reconstruction Under the Aspect of the Breakthrough Toward Postconventional Thinking* (first in German in 1992[2], then in English in 1993). Roetz (inter alia) offers a profound challenge to the field of (neo)pragmatist (largely American-dominated), informing intercultural comparative philosophy and sinology at large. A central component of Roetz's argument regarding the need to "reconstruct" Enlightenment universality involves the claim, "the Weberian as well as the pragmatic discourses [regarding axiological transcendence] fail to appreciate the fundamental nature of China's classical philosophy in general and Confucianism in particular" (Roetz 1993, 2). He locates that basic nature as a "crisis of the established context and the inherited tradition", recognizing that both "Hegel and Weber were wrong" in answering in the negative regarding the question whether traditional Chinese thinking "knew of any context-transcending reflexivity." Roetz then goes on to question whether pragmatist-inspired sinology is wise to be rejecting the "very question [Hegelian-Weberian] as springing from an unjustified generalization of modern Western idiosyncrasies." In recounting a particular sinological Hegelian response to the "esoteric Sinophilia"[3] of our time for "preposterously seeking 'ways to the self' in a culture one of the characteristics of which has been exactly not to develop a self-separated from nature," Roetz asks whether in critically interrogating the works of authors such as Herbert Fingarette, Henry Rosemont Jr., David L. Hall, and Roger T. Ames and others representing a trend in pragmatist and sinologically informed comparative philosophy we might arrive at the conclusion that it is part of a deeply problematic assurance and legacy of post-Modern anxieties to be suggesting that:

> China can teach us to recognize that the mentality of self, autonomy, and freedom has run its course. Together with the Chinese, we should recall our "communal rituals, customs, and traditions" and "inherited forms of life." We should abandon the "myth of objective knowledge," and adopt a "thinking that avoids the disjunction of normative and spontaneous thought." Confucius especially presents us a model which for our world is perhaps "more relevant, more timely, more urgent" than it has been even in China herself" (Roetz 1993, 2).

Roetz developed this critique of a philosophical imagination of Confucius as "moral philosopher" who can save the decadent West. Further, in a 2013 article *A Comment on Pragmatism in Chinese Studies*, Roetz suggests that we may need to return to the hermeneutic circle again in engaging with the classical pragmatist tradition itself. He proceeds in order to clarify that some of the aforementioned pragmatist-inspired sinological methods might not only be misrepresenting (or perhaps more charitably 'creatively misreading' Chinese philosophy, even perhaps in profoundly good faith in a postmodern-neopragmatist tradition of philosopher-poets bravely risking a "strong misreading" in the interest of creative advance), but in what may be an even more ironical gesture. The collaborative and singular work of Roger Ames has largely presented a post-modernist, communitarian, and neo-pragmatist reading of Confucianism as part of a broader movement of counter-discourses, or perhaps

[1] I would like to thank Joe Harroff for his insightful comments to this introduction.

[2] The title image is meant to refer to the original cover of Roetz's book, which was published in German and depicts the Chinese character ren, which is usually translated as humaness or benevolence. It is one of the key concepts of classical Chinese philosophy – especially of Confucianism. Roetz's book begins with a quotation from Paul Thiry d'Holbach "Humaneness is a knot to link the citizen of Paris with the citizen of Peking". Although every pragmatist-oriented philosopher is aware of how difficult it is to develop universality in ethical or political issues, this quote can still be seen as an impulse to philosophize further on global affairs in a certain specific way.

[3] Roetz refers here to: (Trauzettel 1977).

exit strategies to the European origin (if not domination) of the Enlightenment and its limitations for moral theory—e.g. Confucian role ethics certainly goes beyond the myth of the foundational individual and the sole sovereignty of nation-states. Though Roetz maintains that this approach cannot possibly do justice to the indebtedness of pragmatism to this very Enlightenment, especially its better angels of communicative rationality, radical political equality, and any other aspects of Enlightenment thinking practices, and the historically emergent ensemble of institutions that in some ways contribute to the realization and preservation of the freedom, flourishing, prosperity and dignity of all persons around the globe. The conditions requisite for sustaining ethical-political cultures promoting universality and a truly inclusive modernity for all peoples and nations are part a robustly convivial cosmopolitical vision, and why not trace this to at least in part the problematic legacy of the colonizer-colonized dialectical struggle that gets roughly and euphemistically shorthanded as "the Enlightenment." It is in this spirit of philosophical reconstruction that Roetz has proposed a different approach while appealing for the relevance of basic pragmatist tenets for an ongoing project of a critical modern "reconstruction", rather than a simple restoration of Confucianism or any other possible set of conventional values inherited from archaic traditions. This concrete ethical claim and specific hermeneutic task before us, as well as the other aspects of Roetz's philosophical corpus, have been analyzed and criticized from various positions.[4] Yet there remains a big task for future research, in regards to reconstructing the complexity of a larger discussion concerning the plausibility and desirability of a sort of "second Enlightenment", freed from its Western-centric imperialist hubris and with the figure of Confucius as educator and moral philosopher at the heart of a hermeneutic undertaking. What is needed is for philosophers to continue to expand the conversation about ethical universality beyond the bad universalisms haunting the hypocritical deployment of human rights discourse in the past, so as to get a grip on our neo- imperial present. Although we could surely trace these discussions much further back, we do well to highlight a particularly resounding intensification of this philosophical conversation to the year 1987 when Roger Ames and David Hall published *Thinking Through Confucius*, as all of the debates surrounding that text and its methodological proposals became part of a philosophy and cultural politics of *ars contextualis*.

In understanding how this debate, especially the need for a clear-eyed approach to China philosophy as method, we should appreciate the importance of this philosophical culture, offering us alternative resources capable of realizing a "post-conventional" modernity on its own terms. Such an ethos can free us from the transcendental pretenses and ontological anxieties of the liberal West. By presenting this special issue of Pragmatism Today we hope the contributors have found the opportunity to be creatively reflective on just how it is that pragmatist elements might facilitate more effective intercultural understandings, or otherwise be ethically generative in projects seeking to "reconstruct" viable ethical and political philosophies from classical Chinese sources. Simply put, how is pragmatism as a philosophical tradition and method of thinking still relevant to unearthing what Chinese philosophers might have to say from the Warring States Period contributing to bringing conceptual clarity and ethical resolution to our uneasy global present? Answering these and related questions, we hope to avoid the all too frequent and scandalously amorphous "road-blocks" to inquiry that John Dewey lamented in his preface to the inaugural publication of the *Philosophy East & West.* written in Waikiki in 1951 during the early stages of the Cold War. Dewey would seem to require that at the very least we take seriously

[4] Cf. Hall, David, L. – Ames, Roger T. (1995): *Anticipating China. Thinking though the narratives of Chinese and Western Culture.* Albany: SUNY; Jullien, François (2004): *Detour and Access. Strategies of Meaning in China and Greece.* New York: Zone Books.

Roetz's challenges to be more fully acknowledging the provincial elements of much of pre-existing pragmatist literature, and perhaps to proceed more radically from a temporal register of modernity (or perhaps better 'contested and sometimes conflicting enculturated *modernities*'). With such a theoretical recognition of the diverse plurality of contributing "chronotones" foregrounded we might hope to avoid any conservativism regarding past institutions or the valorization of certain entrenched ritual grammars of society in reimagining universality as a central value in the field of global ethics.[5] By submitting the received past traditions and more recent discourses regarding universalism to a deep "hermeneutics of suspicion" we might in this issue also hope to remain alert to the lost potentials that a "hermeneutics of trust" might reclaim for us—that is by listening carefully and in relational humility to the words of wisdom that the living tradition(s) of Confucianism and the ever evolving, communicative ends-in-view of "World Pragmatism" might be voicing for our shared globalized subjectivity formation in this age of increasingly profound precarity and disjointed world solidarity.

In four articles of this special issue offers a conceptual proposal for a universal pragmatic methodology. Firstly, **Ole Döring** explores how philosophy and language can constructively engage cultural horizons, considering their epistemic telos and expression, according to the structure of judgement. **Gloria Luque Moya**'s article shows that Confucius' thought is a philosophy of life that can offer a valuable contribution to human culture. That is, Confucius does not present his thought as a potted ideology or a static doctrine, but above all as an "art of living". In order to reconstruct the complexity of this philosophy, she analyzes the notion of harmony (hé) from a comparative approach that blends Confucius' thought and Dewey's philosophy. **César E. Giraldo Herrera** develops a response to Heiner Roetz's critique of Hall and Ames' work. His focus, however, reflects on the roots of pragmatism as an inherently intercultural philosophy, the fruit of the encounter between Native American and European thought. Guided by some of the insights of the debate between Roetz, Hall and Ames, he explores the paths afforded by a reencounter between pragmatism and Native American thought. In the last article focused on the topic of this special issue, **Leah Kalmanson** offers a speculative exercise in reimagining "modernity" as a diverse phenomenon occurring in multiple locales under a variety of different conditions. The exercise proceeds by method of case study, grounding its major topics and ideas in the context of Tokugawa-era Japan (1603–1867) to envision "modernity" from that standpoint.

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[5] See Massimiliano Tomba's *Insurgent Universality: An Alternative Legacy of Modernity* (Tomba 2019, 14) for more on how "anachronistic institutions are *reactivated* in a new configuration of the present; and to show how that reactivation makes it possible to trace an *alternative legacy of modernity*" beyond reductive and imperialist, hegemonic forms of universalism.

Chapters

EXPLORING THE MARGINS OF THE WAY. HERMENEUTIC PRAGMATISM IN KANT AND CONFUCIUS

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ABSTRACT: This paper offers a conceptual proposal for a universal pragmatic methodology, to explore how philosophy and language can constructively engage cultural horizons, considering their epistemic telos and expression, according to the structure of judgement. Hermeneutics is interpreted to this effect, followed by a case study of reading the *Lunyu*. It will be argued that pragmatism stands fully aligned with philosophy of reason and enlightenment, in the Confucian and Kantian creed, which are appraised not only in retrospect but in view of their learning potential.[1]

1 Introductory remarks on Philosophy and Language

Considering the variety of ways in which „philosophy" is defined and practiced, an initial short exposition of this term is pragmatically in order.

Philosophy is global thinking. In the most comprehensive sense, it captures reality, reason and language[2], with a mind focused on the truth. Philosophy, as an ongoing operation, to unify all intellectual activities by making sense of diversity, and rooting ethics and knowledge in reason, characterizes Kantian and Confucian approaches. As it will be elaborated below, „Kantian" is referred to here as methodological self-explication of reason called „transzendental", whereas „Confucian" designates the quality of cultivation as the „way" of reason.

This definition takes up Kants framework, in a way that agrees with the holistic pursuit of knowledge in Confucian texts, such as I venture to elucidate it in this article. Engaging in the work of reason, our „faculty of principles",[3] or, pragmatically, our „faculty of the unity of the rules of understanding under principles",[4] connects concepts and perceptions, of any kind, making them sensible and offering terms and sentences that introduce order, to ever increasing degrees of complexity. This is a description of how reason works, according to our experience. It is phrased as a general rule that helps us to overcome the despair about individual and collective limitations. Hope is encouraged in the operations of our Power of Judgement (Urteilskraft). This power sets in motion a process of aesthetic reflections about unity of knowledge, that is orchestrated by the teleological trajectory of judgement, connecting what we are with how we ought to be. This way of weighing matters and affairs, according to their respective telos (end),[5] is related to aesthetics, suggesting an intrinsic purpose, the meaningfulness of which requires us to start at knowing one's self, because we are responsible for our agency, along the entire continuum of making decisions that work as causes, as authors of practical judgements. The beginning of this philosophy lies in this awareness of intentional subjectivity. It is understood as an enquiring mode of critique, not determination. Its prospect can be called teleologic-translational, in order to emphasize the openness of horizons towards learning, about the true interdependence of our real causality and intentions.

[1] I would like to acknowledge and thank two, unfortunately anonymous, peers who took pains to evaluate the first version of this paper. I am grateful for two almost contradictory responses which forced me to revise the language and reconsider statements, to elucidate the argument that remains as a contribution to a larger work in progress. I hope that the lines of thought drafted here will invite colleagues and students to think the unthinkable - that good philosophy is simple. It is our thinking and language that suggests the opposite. All remaining issues are decidedly mine.

[2] „Gegenstand der Philosophie ist das Ganze der Wirklichkeit, der Vernunft, der Sprache": Spaemann, Robert (1994): *Die kontroverse Natur der Philosophie*. Stuttgart: Reclam. 120. This includes the entire range of expressions, including, forms of individual experience and social practice, visual schematics, metaphors, narratives, modes of persuasion and presentation of argument.

[3] Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A299/B356.

[4] Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A303/B358.

[5] *Daxue*: In his interpretation of the Great Learning, in Zhang Zai (1020-1077) discusses the bifurcated body of knowledge (一物两體). It holds ‚things', 物 *wu,* referring to the objects of knowledge, following nature's course when growing a *Gestalt* of 'roots and treetops', 本末 *benmo*, and actions, namely the ‚affairs', 事 *shi,* that include human causality in determining the course from 'beginning to end', 終始 *zhongshi*. This program is described as "extending knowledge by investigating things" (格物致知 *gewu zhizhi*). As Zhang describes it, knowledge as the 'one thing with two bodies' (一物两體), contains, distinguishes and reconnects 'empirical knowing' (聞見之知) and the 'knowing of natural virtue' (天德良知). Notably, this bifurcated integrative structure of knowing is a synthesis of aesthetic and teleologic acts of thinking, not a dialectic of thesis and antithesis. See Kim, Jung-Yeup (2015): Zhang Zai's philosophy of Qi: a practical understanding. Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books.

Pragmatism benefits from the clear distinction, between, first, the overarching faculty of principles (Vernunft) and, second, the faculties of sensible wit (Verstand). To prevent us from mixing them up, in puddles of „reason" or exercises of „mind", and to align them for mutual support, is the task of Judgement (Urteilskraft). The intended objective in all these operations is the best judgement an individual can conceive of, either in the broad sense of cultivation or in the specific sense of philosophy as legislation,[6] as an exercise of reason. This propensity drives philosophy so that it can generate meta- and higher meta-levels, to reflect and re-ascertain what we know and, more importantly, how it is that we know. The structure carries the substance, whereas the expression of truth is entangled with the form of the statement. This process cannot be reduced to continued abstraction or mediation, while both play their part in it. Abstraction is valid only, when it includes acts of justification, as to how it represents and clarifies its concrete reference, while maintaining coherence. Thereby, it can engender new knowledge content.

Mediation must respect the primacy of the authorship, of both intention and interpretation, over the relativity and instrumental character of the means. Thereby, abstraction can become an extension of the concrete theme it relates, engendering an intelligible transformation of empirical concepts and logical connections, to make conceptual integrity. Philosophy differs, from rational fiction in that it intentionally matters, and from objective sciences in that all partial judgements, methods and interests must align to serve the syntheticizing unity of the pursuit of truth. As lying is an intended distortion of known truth, philosophy is the unreserved defense of truthfulness.

[6] „In its scholastic meaning, philosophy is all about skillfulness; in relation to the concept of the world, on the other hand, she is about practicality. In the latter respect, she is a doctrine of wisdom: the legislator of reason. And the philosopher is therefore not an artist of reason, but a lawmaker." Immanuel Kant (1800). Logik. Ein Handbuch zu Vorlesungen. III. Begriff von der Philosophie überhaupt: Philosophie nach dem Schulbegriffe und nach dem Weltbegriffe betrachtet. (My translation, OD).

Language, in this context, is the expressed (self-) reflection and to-be-expressed experience, not just expressed „knowledge". We can make sense only when we embrace the quality *that we are when we understand*, in experiencing the experience of understanding. This awareness quality *is* the primordial connection between ourselves, owning meaning, and the propensity to pretend or simulate, so that we must enter into the re-connecting mode of judgement, to make sure we are aligned, on the way of honest understanding. Philosophy's genuine interest lies in, thereby, weaving epistemic connections throughout the entire social ecosystem of practice, including symbolic forms and conversations about knowledge and humanity. The clues to observe, in this enquiry, are simple, as they must be, since their function is elementary. To know what you say and to say what you know. Don't trade in empty words or blind action, both of which cannot serve reasonable purpose. Language is the living intelligible presentation of the resulting socialized knowledge. It includes the rules as well as the plasticity of ways to interact and share meaning, or speculation or pretense. Our language cultures are encompassed by permeable and provisional horizons of aggravated experience that indicate the demarkation lines between blind and entrepreneurial understanding, balancing the efforts of judgement that lend substance and orientation to the teleologic-translational enquiry.

2 Language and languages

What, then, is the language of philosophy? It is obviously not English, or German or Chinese, or any other given natural language. The Babylonic multitude of self-centered horizons is there to remind us of the structural hubris that stems from our cultured experience of the success in making sense. It encourages us to extend our horizons and doesn't know on its own, when to stop - but it can adapt, learn and merge. It can form and express, abstract, transcendent and methodological judgements.

However, it is bound by its genuine subjectivity, just like the individual experience of experience of knowing is bound by the bifurcated structure of judgement,[7] when relating to and expressing content. There cannot be one natural language of philosophy with a narrow, self-centered, all including aspiration. But the plasticity, structural direction and richness of these (and other cultural) languages includes the propensity to enter into processes of extension, so that they can share the form (grammar), content (semantics) and quality (aesthetics) of the experience (Erlebnis), to understand, even when the issue of understanding the object of the enquiry must remain undetermined. The method is hermeneutics. It creates its own spontaneous interim language version, just for the purpose of the expression at work, that can leave its mark on the natural language. This draft creation is the spark of learning.

When we communicate, we are always translating,[8] between individual, communal, jargon or natural languages. Translation is an epistemic social practice that expresses, transforms, re-contextualises and shapes the ways in which we think, behave and *are*, by, first presenting them to us as shareable. This is much more than some mediated „input and output", namely a process of cultivation. In translation, *we turn* our attention to phenomenology, into self-reflection rather than descriptive and comparative exercises. *We turn* our interest in speculation and creativity, into a methodologically organized invitation of others, in order to support understanding across cultural families and horizons. *We turn* questions of What into questions of How. The How is the nature of the turning, the What determines the direction. Attention to translational affairs means, to address and overcome unreflected as well as instrumental or ideological use of language, knowing when to stop turning and how to move on, within the language of philosophy, across cultures, that is, methodically.

In an ironic twist, by returning to philosophy as a methodology, we build the foundations of the possibility of a new, globalized *natural language*. We remain fully aware that there is and can be no „single language", which reflects the teleological structure of judgement, but we continue to sustain the aesthetic demand, to be creative, becoming better in our ways to make language good. The sovereign (naturally competent) engagement of language diversity in philosophy, when conversing amongst philosophers with distinct cultural backgrounds, in a deliberate naive manner, makes us momentarily „forget about" translational language issues, returning to the original „Erlebnis" of understanding for fresh substance and clarification. Experiencing the practice of philosophy, in different languages, is an opportunity to draw, gather and share unaccustomed insights and prospects, inspiring an ambi-cultural philosophy. This is a philosophy that is experienced as epistemic practice, alike ambi-cultural artists intuitively understand to engage different symbolic systems or bilingual people switching naturally between dreams in different narratives. The possibility of this experience hinges upon the axiomatic assumption that there is only one humanity and faculty of reason, and we share the primordial mode of experiencing understanding and making sense, just as humans.

On this base, we shall assume and expect that there is no principled reason for one language, not to be able to capture and express the rules, experiences or judgements expressed in another, of course, not taking anything for granted. Naturally, these expressions differ in form and quality, so that their phenomenologies may appear to be incommensurable, even when their intentions seem to align. When affinity of expressions cannot be described between languages, the root can be found in the history of experience of expressing truth, for example, that there has been no cause or opportunity or need to pursue such a theme in such a manner, in that

[7] Frank, Manfred (1998): ›Unendliche Annäherung‹. Die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
[8] Steiner, George (1975/1992): After Babel. Aspects of Language and Translation. London: Oxford University Press.

language's context. This explanation is obvious when we consider metaphors, such as the idiomatic „black swan" (when there is no notorious example of the ignorant rejection of real objects in that culture), or institutions, such as „democracy" (when political institutions in that culture where designed to address issues, different in kind from those in Europe), that are contingent on history. The same applies to „false friends", such as when metaphors or institutions have been described in similar terms, without sharing the underlying experiences of understanding.

Such cases of asymmetric expression between cultures typically can be mended through mutual learning and discourse. Notably, there must be limits to allow appeals to contingencies, to prevent „de-construction" of the dependence of language on truth. It may be true that one culture has developed no understanding of a „black swan", but the truth cannot be a „black swan". That's what is, or should be, self-understood.

Within the theoretical bounds of these lean heuristics, diversity of languages can be arranged in discourse, so that they become resources instead of obstacles, in order to systematically support communication, translation and transformation of expression, within the global horizons of our times. The real phenomenology of languages offers encouragement to that effect. Natural languages are not only different from each other and specifically true to themselves, such as the conventional framing of the „language families" narrative suggests.[9] Languages are primarily connected, as explained above, on the elementary level of shared humanity. Humans are gifted with speech and reason, which extends to every such „family" member, being part of the human community. Even when types of languages represent the genesis of cultural horizons, these types overlap, vary and differ. Thereby they offer a wealth of ways to study, how to get better, in understanding each other. For example, one can learn from morphological typology that, Chinese, English or Danish fall under the analytic languages, whereas German, French or Russian are fusional[10]. Grouped according to the one copula verb use, Chinese, English and German belong to the same type.[11] On the other hand, Chinese is one of only a few languages that express plural without a marker.[12] Each of these findings enriches, non depreciates the individual's contribution to the shared learning.

Moreover, when we include written text as a specific symbolic system of language, reading and translating, from alphabetic or non-alphabetic writings, for example, presents readers from one culture with difficulties in appreciating the kind of difficulties they encounter when exploring the other. At the same time, these encounters offer rich opportunities for mutual learning, between both cultures, regarding form and content as well as actual understanding of knowledge.[13] Speaking metaphorically, the diversity in forms, shapes and materials of fishing nets, by and in which our languages weave, capture and present us with understandings of meaning, certainly bring in different harvests of fruit, which can all be shared and appreciated as nourishment, and sustain the provision of humanity.

These and further constellations of cultural distinctions offer connection points and differences for comparative and communicative exploration, but no evidence for assumptions of strong distinction or incommensurability. In engaging cultural horizons with teleological judgement, we do not depend upon „clashing" narratives in an existential drama but may rest confidently, in the „gentle courage" that the Enlightenment requires and encourag-

[9] E.g., https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/c.php?g=251131&p=1673165

[10] https://linguisticmaps.tumblr.com/post/120857875008/5-1-3-morphological-typology-tonal-languages

[11] https://linguisticmaps.tumblr.com/post/184804858113/copula-typology-the-verb-to-be-is-a-copula-verb

[12] https://linguisticmaps.tumblr.com/post/186420391338/plural-marking-typology-how-languages-mark-the

[13] This goes along well with incentives to study the history of relevant translational experiences. Thomas S. Mullaney 2017. The Chinese Typewriter: A History. Columbia University.

es.[14] Language as cultural practice includes the prescriptive knowledge, to deliver us from the totalitarian rule of bio-organic utility, expressing freedom of reason .

What is said in a language and how it is said does not reflect what can be said but represents some of that what has been said, and the ways in which this took place. Over more than three centuries after Kant had criticized his respected colleague, Hume's philosophy as „dogmatic" and the philosophical alertness it inspired as „slumber", so as to awaken from it and transform philosophy into a specific methodology of enquiry, we may query - why does English, still, offer no word for „transzendental"? It follows from the previous argument that this is not a question of capability of perception, understanding or grammar, nor one of lingual creativity. This notable abstinence can only be attributed to judgement, explained or unexplained purpose, a resolve, not to play along.[15] It remains plainly wrong to translate transzendental as „transcendental", because the latter means metaphysical, which is exactly the nature of the horizon Kant endeavored to overcome.[16] As with other German terms (Freude, Lust, Angst, Kindergarten), it could be kept as loanword in the original spelling (transzendental) or circumscribed according to the definition: „transzendental" is not something that „goes beyond all experience, but that precedes it (a priori), and yet is not destined for anything more than just to make experiential knowledge possible"[17].

As to the actual translation of key words, such as „transzendental" or 道 or judgement, we are invited to experiment. „What is the correct German translation of an English play on words? Maybe a completely different play on words".[18] This is not an arbitrary or whimsical move, but a method to re-ascertain that the rules are properly understood, namely, experienced as meaning and with plasticity in various circumstances. Wittgenstein refers to meaning as *physiognomy*, further merging philosophy of language with hermeneutic anthropology. „The familiar physiognomy of a word, the feeling that it has taken up its meaning into itself, that it is an actual likeness of its meaning"[19], as it transforms objectivity through sincere, critical engagement of the subject in the open-minded, mind-opening activity of understanding. Rupert Read emphasizes, „what matters is whether Wittgenstein's chosen methods work. And what matters is whether we can learn to go on."[20] If this makes sense, there is no point in avoiding the trial or speculating that it would be futile or impossible to proceed, but rather, *sapere aude*! To credit reason is not a proof but a promising approach that has been tried and misunderstood but never been refuted as being unreasonable. Veena Das indicates the plain direction, how and where to go on to: through a life living with texts and „in the process al-

[14] Séamus Mulryan offers this teleologic-translational interpretation, based on a discussion of phronesis, as the virtue of the warrior, between Aristotle, Shambhala Buddhism and Gadamer: „the universal concept of courage can be applied to the particular phenomenological account of dialogue as one that allows us to face our anxiety about death with the courage of a warrior. Yet we do so with a gentleness that opens up a space for us to affirm our selves without destroying our own or the other's claims to truth." The Courage of Dialogue Séamus Mulryan, Philosophy of Education In *Philosophy of Education 2009*, edited by Deborah Kerdeman, pp. 141-148. Urbana, IL: 2009. 148.

[15] Without venturing to explain this observation in detail here, it may suffice to remark that such a purpose will be one of ideology or politics that prevent or repel progress from innovation, under the criticized conservative frame of mind, rendering the challenge invisible or impotent. The mere inconvenience of a „new play", however, is compensated by the experience of making it work.

[16] This what I refer to as Kant's method of „washing gold": to explore the condition of the possibility of thinking of something *as reasonable*. The transzendental methodology is not about being true or false, provable or refutable by perception - but about being at all reasonably conceivable. This is the „credit" demanded of Practical Reason. The word transzendental does not mean „a relationship of our knowledge to things, but only to cognition," Kant, Immanuel (1951): *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können*. Ed Karl Vorländer. Hamburg, § 13 (III 49), my translation (OD). What we lose in certainty of determination we gain in courage to exercise our reason-freedom.

[17] Prolegomena § 13 (III 151), my translation (OD).

[18] Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1982). Last Writings on Philosophical Psychology. Volume I, Oxford: Blackwell: 278.

[19] Wittgenstein, Ludwig (158). *Philosophical Investigations.* Oxford: Blackwell: 128.

[20] Read, Rupert (2007). Applying Wittgenstein, London: Continuum: 4. Read presents Wittgenstein's philosophy as a pragmatic work of ethics beyond language nativism , in his properly named book, Read, Rupert (2020). Wittgenstein's Liberatory Philosophy. Thinking Through His Philosophical Investigations. New York: Routledge.

lowing myself to be educated in public".[21] The largest extension of public spheres is humanity. A pragmatic turn, accordingly, is deliberately forward-looking and humble.

3 Pragmatic Hermeneutics

German scholar Heiner Roetz, a pioneer in the philosophical exegesis of ancient Chinese ethics and political philosophy, has reconfirmed the close affinity of pragmatism and Enlightenment philosophy.[22] I would like to further elucidate, on these grounds, the unity of Enlightenment as a way, namely a *transzendental* methodology for judgement, in terms of a pragmatic superstructure[23] that connects Confucian and Kantian approaches. This unity is called a „way", in that it does not just provide a conclusive cognitive toolbox for weighing claims and handling problems, but cultivates the agent according to teleological aesthetic refinement. Thereby, the enlightening operation is well informed and also rehabilitated through experience of good practice.

The Way is that what, apriori, cannot be left for an instant.[24] It is structured by experience and enquiries about the proper meaning (謂) of instruction for learning (教), practice (道) and the nature (性) of natural order (天命). Hence, when deviation, denial or ignorance do not constitute the leaving of the Way, why would they matter, why would our effort to understand and engage in good practice make sense in the first place? How would learning and correction be needed and indeed possible, when there is no comparative progress to be gained?

I would like to paraphrase the above, based on a slightly different assumption, regarding the meaning of Way. Way 道 is neither, noun or verb or adjective, but precedes this grammatical form. It allows each and all of these structuring functions, but is not based on their categorial distinction. The Way 道 is a conceptual time-space continuum for experiencing, learning and observing practice while exercising reasonable judgement within our real social-ecological life. That means, there is no logical problem in expressing the meaning of any specific form of thought, but an additional option. That is, In the same vein, 道 can express the connectivity in the relations of the aspects that are shaping this semantic field of 道, as an act of synthetic judgement introducing a new quality, that is, something different from the aggregation of its attributes and from the postulate of substances. How to understand the need and opportunity of the above mentioned *turning*, to re-position, and what does repositioning mean? The way of answering will lie in the adjustment of position, on the way, according to judgement, without losing the coherence of agency. It lies in learning by owning what has been understood, in terms of integrity.[25] It simply means that all we are ever willing and doing and experiencing is part of practice. We cannot escape from practice. Our margin of options lies between more good and less bad ways of practice, while pursuing a clear methodology and semantic notion of what this means. This hypothesis will be interpreted as an argument for the

[21] Das, Veena (2020). Textures of the Ordinary. Doing Anthropology After Wittgenstein. New York: Fordham University Press: xi.
[22] Roetz, Heiner (2013): A Comment on Pragmatism in Chinese Studies. Confucianism in Inter-cultural Perspectives: Modern Developments. Papers from the Fourth International Conference on Sinology Taipei: Academia Sinica: 279-299.
[23] A theoretical superstructure explains, on a meta-level, not only the theories it can describe but also ways in which to connect them within one framework. For an inductive example, Marxism regards culture and institutions as superstructure emerging out of the underlying real economy and society with their related explaining and legitimating narratives. A deductive superstructure, transzendental methodology, explains how utilitarian, virtue, metaphysical or realistic theories can support a larger purpose, when arranged within a critical framework that supports their respective strength and checks their limitations. The Categorical Imperative is a way to enter the operation of this superstructure through its characteristic quality and form of deliberation.
[24] The *Zhongyong* begins with a hermeneutic self-explication, including a programmatic clarification of the unity of all knowledge and its process character. „The Way can not be left for an instant. If it could be left, it would not be the Way. 道也者, 不可須臾離也, 可離非道也." Text taken from https://ctext.org/liji/zhong-yong/ens , my translation (OD). Cf. Ole Döring,
[25] Ole Döring (2015). „Cheng 誠 als das stimmige Ganze der Integrität. Ein Interpretationsvorschlag zur Ethik". In: Auf Augenhöhe. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Heiner Roetz. Herausgegeben von W Behr, L Di Giacinto, O Döring, C Moll-Murata; Bochumer Jahrbuch für Ostasienforschung. Band 38. München: Iudicium: 39-62.

reason-enlightened and *therefore* pragmatic character of this Confucian school of philosophy.

In preparation for this case discussion, it will be helpful, to learn from Roetz' exercise in clarifying a basic misunderstanding about Pragmatism and Confucianism. Roetz has taken pains to offer a fair criticism, conceding that pragmatism „informs an important trend in the interpretation of Chinese, and in particular Confucian, philosophy. This is above all due to the work of David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames".[26] How do Hall and Ames understand pragmatism? I believe that Roetz has demonstrated exhaustively in a scholarly elaborated manner, that Hall and Ames inform a specific school of pragmatism, following Rorty's approach. But he rejects their association with classical of pragmatism, together with the philological and theoretical plausibility of their suggested reading of Chinese texts.

Further, Roetz responds to the perceived politicization of philosophy, from within a framework of democracy, which is a popular though problematic trend, in that it employs philosophy for political purposes instead of using philosophy as a critique of the margins of reasonable political thought. The political appeal might constitute a mésalliance of *false friends*, with efforts to defend the openness of Confucianism, in order to discuss its relation to democracy in an unbiased and honest manner, regarding conditions and challenges.

Considering the greater picture of philosophy, Roetz shows how pragmatism, as a philosophical methodology is deeply rooted in the European Enlightenment, and that it would be welcome, if the values Hall and Ames ascribe to merely the „West" were valid for humanity in total, contradicting the culture relativist reservation the authors enact. Summarizing his analysis of their argument, Roetz states, „the discussion has taken a direction that appears to be problematic and might undersell pragmatism on the one hand and the possibilities of Confucianism on the other."[27]

[26] Roetz (2013): 280.
[27] Roetz (2013): 297.

Roetz' discussion reflects that the categorial change of the „Copernican Turn", from dogma to methodology[28], is a pragmatic turn and liberation, towards transzendental enquiry instead dogmatic confrontation. It offers schools and cultures of knowledge ways out of the slumber in their relative boxes, exactly without imposing dogmatic norms. This is accomplished by re-establishing their positions, as both, relational to a certain methodical focus and directional in their teleologic pursuit of reason-guided judgement. The intellectual space created thus for time allows discourse, mutual learning and collaboration, within the open „court of reason", to employ language-bound knowledge as a resource rather than an obstacle for fair judgement. But this pragmatic turn is an awaking, no neo-pragmatic revision, in the sense that Richard Rorty centers on language and regards the self is as a "centerless web of beliefs and desires".[29] Instead, it connects the given self and its future image, with work on integrity as the core.

In the same vein, with the Kantian classical pragmatic turn, hermeneutics can avoid the culturalistic and historicistic traps of a mere philological exegesis[30]. Both

[28] This is the core of Kant's described awakening from the „dogmatic slumber" that he associates with Hume's philosophy. Kants *Critique of Pure Reason*, is submitted as the solution to the "Humean problem in its greatest possible amplification". *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as a Science*. Gary Hatfield (trans.), in *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, Henry Allison and Peter Heath (eds.). 2002. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 4:260–61.
[29] Rorty, Richard (1991). "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy," in Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). 175-96: 191.
[30] Rorty's figure of the „ironist" is a compelling political agent. Philosophically, it could be interesting to engage a discussion between this ironist and Camus' happy *Sisyphus* and the *Revolte*. However, the narratives of theses poetic creations require culturally deep and rich reconstruction, owing to their elaborate anthropological allusions and political connotations. Such irony is extremely difficult, as a genre, to translate between English, French, German or Chinese, reflecting the specific teleologic-aesthetic unity, of rational order and subjectivity constructions, habituated in these different language cultures. It would require a fully fledged hermeneutic methodology to utilize it seriously in a Chinese-European conversation. Such a methodology is desirable but not yet elaborated. It will benefit from the re-habilitation of the later Wittgenstein, according to Charles Taylor, (compare Taylor, Charles (2016): The Language Animal. The Full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity. Cambridge Mass.). With all its flaws, aspirations and inspirations,

fallacies result from the false substantiation of abstract concepts, reifying them or making them virtually pointless. History and culture, both rational constructs of world-concepts, subsume phenomena under categories. The validity of these categories, beyond their function as hypothetical abstracts, must be confirmed by reason, especially when they claim normative force. Philology, like other research methodologies, might forget to account for the subjectivity bond and intentionality of the text. Likewise, history might overlook that the development of collectives is influenced by human decisions, not natural laws, or that interactions among individuals constitute the real concrete roots of history, not the grammatical subject abstracted from groups.

The discussion of Hall and Ames' positions in the light of classical pragmatism reminds us of the continued need to defend Enlightenment against positivism, relativism, utilitarianism and dogmatic scholastics as much as it helps us to re-appreciate the merit of the Copernican Turn, as a language-transcending methodology. It can describe language as experience of understanding and thereby connect subjectivity and normativity in a teleological interpretation of centrality.

Rather than further prolonging the debate about what may and may not be subsumed under a theory of pragmatism, in relation to Confucianism, in this article, I venture to go back to the literal meaning of pragmatism as embedded epistemic practice, and the reflected operation of judgement - reason's beauty in the poetic drawing of truth and ethics. After all, it is pragmatic, to understand theory work as a practice. Even „sacred" words and „holy" thought are tools and spaces, to explore prediction, problem solving, and action. Being reminded of the humble vanity of all human works and the lure of hubris, we escape the structural bait of literally thinking in „two worlds" and reject the idea that the function of thought is to describe, represent, or mirror reality, of a lower or a higher order. After all, reason introduces the trajectory of unity, to employ judgement in order to organize practice, thus making everything, including theory, agency and objects, part of *pragma πρᾶγμα* practice in time.

This plain pragmatic theory holds no bias for consequentialist approaches, naturalistic or utilitarian. To the contrary, we can conceive of consequences only based on an underlying understanding about the respectively required judgement, especially assumptions about causality, social process and responsibility. The unity of ethics, epistemics and aesthetics, in its actual composition, remains within the scope of pragmatic enquiry. To be enquiring about consequences and maxims in a reason-guided discourse belongs within the same continuity of judgement that is the core business of philosophy,[31] and formalized in the Categorical Imperative.[32] Judgements about Beauty, Truth and Goodness are inseparably conjoined and cannot be reduced to mere instrumental exercises. The unity of 道 as a constructive quality of epistemic practice reminds us of the reasonable requirement, to re-contextualize any judgement that results from methodical reduction.

Even though Kant distinguishes the moral presentation of „ought" from the pragmatic „ought", both serve as inseparable contributions to the same act process of practical judgement. Pragmatical imperatives present the empirical aspect of actions as connected with natural laws and natural science.[33] The related judgements function as intellectual filters. They inform our deliberation about the range of realistic options and scenarios, under

Rorty's framework is much too heavily culturally loaded to be reliable for culturally transcending or transzendental translations, of irony or self. See Patricia Rohrer (2000): „Self-Creation or Choosing the Self: A Critique of Richard Rorty's Idea of Democratic Education". Philosophy of Education Archive: 55-62.

[31] Kant, Immanuel (1800).

[32] Kant, Immanuel (1990). Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and What is Enlightenment (2nd ed., revised), translated with an introduction by L. W. Beck. London: Collier Macmillan.

[33] Kant, Immannuel (2011). Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View. Translated by Victor Lyle Dowdell .Revised and Edited by Hans H. Rudnick. With an Introduction by Frederick P. Van De Pitte. Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press. https://silo.pub/anthropology-from-a-pragmatic-point-of-view.html

the moral imperative, as a question of pure practical reason. Pragmatism goes far beyond strategies of convenience or prudence. Even when it investigates the empirical „nature", it is not reduced to technology, biology or physics. It remains in a domain of reason, not trivial practicality, or utilitarianism or scientific positivism. Along the same lines, German philosopher Julian Nida-Rümelin, argues for a "pragmatic humanism" and assumes that, "in the end of all justification stands the whole unity of the practiced life form"[34].

The credit of reason that Kant attaches to freedom can be extended to credit those who seriously pursue such a course. One of the pioneers of philosophical pragmatism in the English speaking world, William James, responding to contemporary and anticipating future critics, invited „a little imagination in philosophy. The unwillingness of some of our critics to read any but the silliest of possible meanings into our statements is as discreditable to their imaginations as anything I know in recent philosophic history. Schiller says the truth is that which ‚works.' Thereupon he is treated as one who limits verification to the lowest material utilities. Dewey says truth is what gives ‚satisfaction'! He is treated as one who believes in calling everything true which, if it were true, would be pleasant."[35]

This seems to describe a timeless attitude. Rekindling the critical rigor and broad scholarship of pragmatic scholars, such as Peirce, Dewey or Mead and seeing them in a line with Kant and Schiller, as we owe it to James, is a step to extending such a line dimensionally, to open a playing field and take up Confucianism.

Not in spite, but because of the differences in methodology and language, we can and should try form a to greater agora. These different ways to integrate accounts of experiences of philosophical insight had contributed significantly to the nuanced and humble appearance of pragmatism in the 19th Century, though of a lesser cultural complexity than would be required in the 21st Century. Pragmatism has no need for dramatic change of theory that call for prefixes such as neo- or post- or trans-. It can add to the value of universal scholarship, in the continuing spirit of Enlightenment.

The „Eurocentrism" that Hall/Ames reject under their assumed non-„Euro-centric" version of pragmatism is, on the other hand, a political term loaded with moral zeal. It can inspire cultural and institutional criticism, and it merits scientific critique. It is, however, not a concept that can inform or provide orientation of a specific philosophical kind. Like the marks of a „compass" (East / West / North / South) or optics (black/white/yellow/red), their proposed theory represents objectifying views instead of subject-accommodating perspectives and cannot judge the moral or epistemic questions it poses. In this light, their „pragmatic" approach turns out to be not pragmatic but dogmatic.

One of the results of such a politicized narrative is that it provokes, common sense as well as the conscientious philosopher. Indeed, Hall and Ames, together with other neo-pragmatic peers, seem to claim that a different „Non-Western" anthropology applies to Chinese, so that a „muddling-though" reconstruction of Classics is due[36], or an exclusive theory of language in order,[37] thus imposing a different propensity for political systems, on cultural grounds.

There is a fine but decisive line between a teleological-aethetic methodology of reason and an ideally fixed essence of human progress with a defined material or eschatological endpoint. Kant and Confucius describe

[34] Nida-Rümelin, Julian (2012). Vernunft und Freiheit. In: Dieter Sturma (Hrsg.): Vernunft und Freiheit. Zur praktischen Philosophie von Julian Nida-Rümelin. Berlin: De Gruyter. 9-38: 11. (My translation, OD).

[35] James, William (1907). Pragmatism, A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking. Popular Lectures on Philosophy. New York: Longmans, Green, and Company: 90.

[36] Hall, David and Ames, Roger (1987). Thinking Through Confucius. Albany: SUNY Press.

[37] Roetz, Heiner (1993). "Validity in Zhou Thought: On Chad Hansen and the Pragmatic Turn in Sinology," in Hans Lenk and Gregor Paul, eds., Epistemological Issues in Classical Chinese Philosophy. Albany: SUNY Press.

this line, the first as a hedge, the other as a way, for cultivation. Thereby dignity is encouraged to walk upright instead of confidently muddling in the twilight. Notably, Confucians frequently refer to the boundless Tianxia 天下, as a universal concept of everywhere, and refer in unqualified general ways to humans, 人 as everyone, explaining universally applying rules of conduct and, how they are to be observed specifically in relational practice. They were fully aware of the phenomenal diversity of individual and collectives of human beings, had no illusions about honesty and interests, and were convinced that only pragmatic reason can guide virtue on the way of enlightenment. The point of political philosophy, to establish sustainable and just order under conditions of dynamics of real complexity, lest the world plunges into chaos, prioritizes the quality of real fulfillment of the „mandate" 天命 over the name and status of the institutions. An unjust king is not a king. A just ruler is kingly just, even when he or she or it is not called king. This is where the way and the hedge converge.

It would be implausible and unlikely to assume that Kant would have granted a carte blanche in support of a particular political idea or system. He credited reason and dedicated his work to explore transzendental methodology. He was just as close to a mon-archic rule or reason as Mencius, without favoring an institutional political form or process. There is great merit and difficulty in working out the autonomy base, critical reason and humanistic aspiration at work in the Confucian Ethics of the Axial Age, as well as to address inconsistencies and contradictions in these schools.[38] Like with language, in philosophy, political criticism cannot answer to a-historic questions or venture to transplant experiences the outcomes of historical practical judgements across cultures. But it can present related observations, to inform prospective teleological judgements. To reduce this philosophical task, in preference of a certain historical form of political system, would render yet another paradoxical and anachronistic service,[39] if on a higher level. What can be expected from both views, regarding politics, is a continued reminder of the primacy of moral substance over form or pretense, and relentless ethical process, in order to critically assess any legitimacy claim.

A pragmatic approach in philosophy demands that we do what we say and say what we do. Through this courageous move, towards embracing the faculty of enlightenment, philosophy frees us from our self-induced immaturity in facing the future. The key lies in our resolve to change, to turn to the pursuit of learning propriety and stay focused on true judgement. I would like to illustrate this with the discussion of an example, how to understand returning to good order as a way towards best practice. What is needed is not the claimed ownership of a certain political idea, or the privilege to operate within an appealing system design, but the ability to philosophize. Judgement means to turn to all relevant aspects of things and affairs while keeping a steady balance in making the law of reason work.

4 A Case in turn: 克復仁 - How can we Master the Turning to Ren?

In the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 12.1), Confucius' opening remark in answering his student Yan Yuan's question about *humaneness* 仁 (*ren*) is: 克己復禮為仁, commonly rendered as „Mastering oneself and returning to propriety is ren", or, „restrain yourself and return to propriety makes you humane".[40]

4.1 To approach the turn

When we observe that the meaning of a word is not constituted by its reference, but rather by how the word is

[38] Roetz, Heiner (1993). Confucian Ethics of the Axial Age. A Reconstruction under the Aspect of the Breakthrough Toward Postconventional Thinking. Albany: SUNY Press.

[39] Roetz 2013: 299.

[40] Originally leaning towards Legge, all translations are mine, except when stated otherwise.

used,[41] we cannot presume to be understanding the meaning of these words „as they were originally" used. Neither can we speculate what they meant at their time, without introducing a direct connection to the usage. From our relative downstream position in time, what we may claim, however, is establishing a usage that includes our knowledge about how we express meaning, when we assume that humans are humans in this regard, experience is a constant presence that can be referred to. At least, we have no means to positively distinguish, knowing about our present fellows' experience of understanding truth, from that of the ancients. With this triangulation in mind, connecting past and present through the common experience (Erlebnis) of knowing something as humans, we avoid historicism as well as the pretense of truth as being something to be discovered, rather than the work of a process of „gold washing", as explained above.

With this license, I would now like to offer a translation that ventures to play out the truth of this passage. Rather than a *case in point* it will be thought of as a *case in turn*, to emphasize the difference between nailing down „the truth", once and for all, and understanding it pragmatically, while pursuing it.

We then must ask ourselves, how do we use these words today, including what we know about the margins of admissible semantic understandings we have learned, about the history and culture of the practice they originate from. Moreover, how does the arrangement of these words in sentences support a truthful interpretation? Finally, it will become clear that the positive formulation of the translation does not really make a substantial difference. We may confidently use any solid scholarly translation, if we take it upon ourselves to read and not consume it, but let it speak to us and keep an open mind on learning. The difference lies in owning the truth by connecting it with our experience in a meaningful way. The true gain is in the quality of the experience of understanding that we can use, when reading or conversing about it in this sense, as *homines ludentes* in a play.[42]

Here is, first, the text, with standard punctuation introduced by Hu Shi in 1919, and James Legge's translation.[43] It should be noted that, with Western punctuation inserted, Chinese writing became structurally hybrid. The distinction between symbolic and semantic markers of structure suggests a linear presentation of the argument, as it had been established in European writing, without attempts at a mediating cultural learning process, in the Cultural Movement of May 4, 1919. The enforced marriage of Western punctuation with the traditional Chinese way of writing, the latter including symbolic, syntactic and semantic conventions which need to be re-ascertained, at each reading occasion, according to context, occurred by ways of submission of a nuanced, connotative, poetic stream of expression, under a foreign and rigid superstructure. This much less responsive form, when recognized, can be acknowledged and ignored at the same time, just as we can see through glasses undisturbed when focusing on the relevant layer beyond. The competent reader will be open, for experiences of understanding that stimulate the entire array of reasoning sensibility. Thereby, the fluidity, rhythm, tone and contextual structural clues of the classical text can still be observed, by the conscientious reader who understands how to turn and search when reading. This is obviously not a mysterious task, but a rational learning exercise.

4.2.1 First reading (Legge)

顏淵問仁. 子曰: „克己復禮為仁. 一日克己復禮, 天下歸仁焉. 為仁由己, 而由人乎哉?" Yan Yuan asked about perfect virtue. The Master said, "To subdue one's self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue. If a man can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety, all under heav-

[41] Horwich, Paul (2016). Wittgenstein on Truth. *Argumenta* 2, 1 (2016): 95–105: 103.

[42] Huizinga, Johan (1949). Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

[43] For convenience, this version can be accessed at: https://ctext.org/analects/yan-yuan . The translations except indicated otherwise are mine, OD).

en will ascribe perfect virtue to him. Is the practice of perfect virtue from a man himself, or is it from others?"

顏淵曰: „請問其目." Yan Yuan said, "I beg to ask the steps of that process."

子曰: „非禮勿視, 非禮勿聽, 非禮勿言, 非禮勿動." The Master replied, "Look not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not to what is contrary to propriety; speak not what is contrary to propriety; make no movement which is contrary to propriety."

顏淵曰: „回雖不敏, 請事斯語矣." Yan Yuan then said, "Though I am deficient in intelligence and vigor, I will make it my business to practice this lesson."

When truth is not about 禮 (propriety) as a term, but about its use in relation to 仁, we start by asking what it tells us to do. Later this will help us in finding ways to rephrase this morally and historically loaded term in a way that speaks to us plainly. We are told to engage with all sensible ways of judgement (look, listen, speak, go on), and grasp the relevant experience in relation to „propriety". We are encouraged to gather momentum for learning, from our stated natural impulse, to reject what is wrong.

Legge's translation emphasizes the distance of the text as associated with its assumed authority. 仁 is not translated but explained as „perfect virtue". This explanation provides a shortcut for European readers with a Christian or Classical education. The „perfect" contradicts the progressive character of learning by doing, that makes cultivation a constant practice of improvement. This bias is confirmed when we consider the blunt translation of 克己 as „subdue oneself", which might appeal as reminiscent of certain religious practices, introducing an „false friend" into this discussion. Lexically, „subdue" is as admissible as „restrain", however, the experience of subduing oneself contradicts the actual point of the entire episode. That is, to encourage the student to master his own moral agency. Moreover, in maintaining a grand language, Legge misrepresents the frugal stile of the written words.

Legge takes his license in inserting content, too. There is no strong basis in the text for „ascribe - to him", in „all under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him", neither verbally nor semantically. 歸 can mean something in the semantic field, „to gather, go back, belong, or marry", but simply is no dative case. There is nothing to contradict Legge either, but there are more plausible options that do not demand such a license.

There are, on the other hand, admissible licenses. Considering the reader in the 21st Century, the translation does not need to specifically mention the student's name, 顏淵 Yan Yuan, for the purpose of a philosophical understanding, especially because, here he is spoken of, too, as a potential role model, not as the historical individual. Moreover, to write 仁 or *ren* in order to highlight the cultural distance of this term, doesn't add relevant new information at this point either, but might disrupt the reading act, so that the root meaning, *humaneness*, would be preferred. These examples indicate how the translation can try to accommodate both, readers' interest in clarity and translators' philosophical task, in the same move.

4.2.2 Second reading

顏淵問仁. 子曰: „克己復禮為仁. 一日克己復禮, 天下歸仁焉. 為仁由己, 而由人乎哉?"

A student asked about humaneness. The teacher said, „Master yourself, return to propriety, this is humane. If you can for one day master yourself and return to propriety, how should not the whole world regain humaneness! [Now let us consider,] is humaneness something from one's self, or is it coming from others?"

顏淵曰: „請問其目."

The student said, „Please explain this plan."

子曰: „非禮勿視, 非禮勿聽, 非禮勿言, 非禮勿動."

The teacher replied, „When it goes against propriety, don't observe it; when it goes against propriety, don't listen to it; when it goes against propriety, don't say it; when it goes against propriety, don't set it in motion."

顏淵曰: „回雖不敏, 請事斯語矣."

The student said, "Me, though not being smart, may I act upon these words?"

In this interpretation, the cohesion of nuances of the argument stirs up a more coherent impression, that here is something interesting to learn. The point of the instruction is now obvious. The teacher's strategy is first, to make the student expect that there can be a plan and second, to point him towards his own initiative in exercising his own judgement. First, the „world" is introduced, as all other human beings (under heaven), and a sense of responsibility elicited. The student accepts that he is immature but embraces the task, following the model, based on confidence in his own, contextually guided judgement. The ostentative modesty is not just a token, but acknowledges that being aware of one's shortcomings contributes to the next steps. Thereby, the 克 acquires the sense of „pull yourself together" rather than submission. The relevant plan, 目 (the eye), turns out to be practical advice, something to observe and respond to. The student is asking, not for a manual, but for evidence.

The order of steps alerts the reader as to intellectual details and movements, that serve to illustrate the plan, then hands the evidence back to the student. He is in a position to reading the situation and to make sense of it is a holistic, social affair in which he can refine his practical judgement. The first orientation finds a disturbance of the embedding norms 非禮 that exist before the individual can enter the picture. Here, heteronomic teachings would rest and leave it all to persuasion and imitating behavior. But this is were this teacher just begins.

The next, naturally easy reaction is, to distance oneself by closing the eyes (勿視), when confronted with evident adversity. Greater effort is required then, not to listen (勿聽). Then, responsible action begins to express itself, in how we chose to limit our words (勿言). The most complex challenge is, finally, how to respond in the face of repelling practice, in the process of becoming a socially conscious agent, namely to *cease being a cause* (勿動) when so required. Each step prepares for the following one. Only when all these four beginnings of learning have been initiated, the holistic motivation and teleology can be aligned in a process of self-cultivation that realizes humaneness and thereby reinvigorates the affirmation of 禮, through one's agency. In this sense and manner, humaneness comes from the very self that has mastered himself.

This explorative enlargement is reflected in the ways in which the text can be ascribed to relevant persons. Depending on the maturity of the reader or student, the grammatical subject can be extended, in the abstract or communal sense. „I" can become „we" or „someone" or „anybody" or an abstract or institutional „it". This range of options requires that decisions are deliberated and can be explained, so that the underlying judgement is taken up, into the content of the text, making it communicative and showing the patterns of the translation. Not only is it not prescribed, which subject interpretation should be preferred. Such a decision would limit the actual wealth of expression. Ideally, the „plan" should work for any agent who understands 克己, in our contemporary sense of self-discipline.

4.2.3 Third reading

顏淵問仁. 子曰: „克己復禮為仁. 一日克己復禮, 天下歸仁焉. 為仁由己, 而由人乎哉?"

A student asked about humaneness. The teacher said, „Master yourself, turn[44] to propriety, makes hu-

[44] In changing the „return" to „turn", I am moving from a conservative-traditionalist retrospective outlook on truth, toward prospective progression of ways to enable genuine experience of understanding. Helmuth Plessner discusses the mental movement of the „eccentric positionality", through which man differs from other life forms. It expresses the double aspect of humanity: being humane and physical at the same time. As a physical thing, we look like any other thing (and can therefore also be viewed empirically), but as a self we are more than that. Man "has" himself and is noticeable to himself, he "expresses" himself and knows about himself. (Plessner 1981: 161) "He not only lives and experiences, but he experiences his experience". (Plessner 1981: 364) This is the prerequisite for a Me to be able to see himself as an actor in the first place. To „turn" then means to pay attention to the experience of experiencing understanding. (Plessner, Helmuth (1981): "Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch. Einführung in die philosophische Anthropologie". In Dux, G, Marquard, O, Ströker, E.. (Ed.) (1981): Plessner, Helmuth: Gesammelte Schriften. Volume IV, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp.)

maneness. If for one day you master yourself by turning to propriety, all under heaven can regain humaneness like this. [Now consider,] is humaneness coming from one's self, or from others?"

顏淵曰: „請問其目."

The student said, „Please show me how this looks like."

子曰: „非禮勿視, 非禮勿聽, 非禮勿言, 非禮勿動."

The teacher replied, „What goes against propriety, you must not observe; what goes against propriety, you must not hear; what goes against propriety, you must not say; what goes against propriety, you must not do."

顏淵曰: „回雖不敏, 請事斯語矣."

The student said, "Please allow me, though not being competent, to act upon your advice."

This exercise in layering plausible translations in an evolving hermeneutic narrative of reading-reflection can be continued. The versions are not intended to contradict the previous reading but to tease out a truthful formulation that the reader can embrace and extend within his own mindset. After the first three reading steps, can we be confident that we can follow the plan? Or do we feel uncertain, because of the translation of the words?

4.3 Interpretive context

Although the Core Measure 中庸 clearly states that, „The Way is something that cannot[45] be left even for an instant. What can be left is different from the Way" (道也者, 不可須臾離也, 可離非道也.)[46], there is no illusion in the Confucian classics about the human capability to keep the balance on the *Way*. Without guidance, especially those who do not show Yan Yuan's sense of humility, we are lost. For example, *Zhongyong* says,

子曰: "人皆曰'予知', 驱而纳诸罟擭陷阱之中, 而莫之知辟也。人皆曰'予知', 择乎中庸, 而不能期月守也".[47]

The Master said, „Everyone says, I know!' But if they go out and then see themselves caught in a noose or a trap, they don't know how to escape. All people say, ‚I know!' However, once they find the Core Measure 中庸, they can't even keep it for a month."

Roetz explains the architecture of the interdependent reasoning about humaneness and social norms 禮 that he calls rites or system of rites , in *Lunyu* 12.1, with reference to *Lunyu* 3.3 (人而不仁, 如禮何):

Humaneness „can become the corrective of all role rules as defined in the canon of rites, without simply abolishing this canon. *Lunyu* 12.1 and 3.3 determine the relation of ren 仁 and li 禮 as complementarity:

> If you don't have humanity as a human being, what do you want with morality? (*Lunyu* 3.3)

Lunyu 12.1 should therefore not be understood in such a way that humanity has nothing more to add to the observance of role-specific morality rules and rather exists in it. *Lunyu* 3.3 also states that the rite canon loses its meaning if humanity is not already assumed, in a heuristic sense. This means that a moral life can only be justified if it does not violate the commandments of humanity, that is, when the role bearer is at the same time a human being

[45] Lexically, 不可 can be translated as „cannot" or „may not" or „should not" be, though there would be stronger options, to express a clear imperative. This distinction is, however not following the Chinese semantic but the Latin grammar. Based on Latin grammar, the related factual and normative statements should be logically discriminated. Thereby, we are reminded that translators are challenged to suggest a formulation that brings the Is and the Ought together within one train of thought without committing the naturalistic fallacy, or to ontologize ethics (Paul, Gregor (1996): "Grundprobleme idealistischer und neokonfuzianischer (Li xue) Philosophie. Die Ontologisierung der Ethik, Tradition, Moderne und Humanität". In: R.A. Mall / N. Schneider: *Ethik und Politik aus interkultureller Sicht*. Amsterdam – Atlanta: Rodopi, 183–197.) This strategy is accommodated by the teleologically regulated openness of a transzendental approach. When we respond to Is with an Ought that includes an imperative to reform the Is accordingly. The seeming logical impasse is resolved with time.

[46] 中庸 1: For convenience, this version can be accessed at: https://ctext.org/liji/zhong-yong. (The translations except indicated otherwise are mine, OD). There are numerous translations of 中庸, here I deliberately suggest a new one that emphasizes the ambiguity and fluidity of the name of a self-explaining learning program for cultivation. To acknowledge the ambiguity does not suggest ambivalence, because the normative direction is well defined.

[47] 中庸 7: For convenience, this version can be accessed at: https://ctext.org/liji/zhong-yong. (The translations except indicated otherwise are mine, OD).

and thus the role behavior is morally controlled. It also means that the system of rites is taken under the care of the moral man, by an autonomous conviction coming ‚from oneself' (you ji 由己). The ‚Return to the li' shows a solidarity with the endangered tradition, which, despite all its problems, makes our existence possible, which in itself is a commandment of humanity."[48]

My own assessment of this clause from *Lunyu* 12.1 reads 克己 as the task, to work along the lines of one's self-cultivation, in view of our „good nature" 性善 (similar to self-cultivation 修身), and 復禮 as a proper means to this end. Accordingly, 復 does not mean „return" as retrograding or restoring some „good old ways", but to pursue a progressive course of continuity. Our attention shall then turn to judge, what is good, as an ongoing process - like weaving a piece of texture: connecting past, present and future, an interlacing practice, working out the classic thread 經 of making sense, promoting wholesome practice in a healthy, just and orderly world. Weaving the classical thread is not merely a means to serve others or abstract duties, but firstly a means to revise and ascertain one's own performance. Thereby, enlightenment is aligned with self-strengthening and an imperative for action.

This constructive hermeneutic is further corroborated when we consider that 為 does not just mean „is" but indicates a synthetic act, such as „to make". Thus 仁 is clearly not a state or substance that could be ordained or claimed, but a quality that requires adherence, continued social agency in the co-authorship of good practice.

Consistently, Heiner Roetz interprets 克己 *keji* in the context of alienation under conditions of existential disorder, as the turning point, in order to re-ascertain one's own moral standing and to reconfirm the rites 復禮 *fuli* in terms of an ethics of responsibility. Accordingly, 仁 is pursued through the imperative that determines the possibility of an orderly, peaceful and just society. Actively owning this quality provides every individual with the capacity to support humaneness in general by being truly oneself in particular.

The reading of *Lunyu* 12.1 as a program to turn a quartet of negative impulses into positive action acknowledges the influence of *Mengzi* 2a6.[49] This passage illustrates, how 仁 depends upon an integrated dialectical effort to accommodate and absorb the experience of understanding virtue and principle, within the horizon of

[48] Roetz, Heiner (2018). „Nur ein Rollenträger oder auch ein Mensch? Überlegungen zur Doppelstruktur der konfuzianischen Ethik". Hans-Christian Günther (Hrsg.) Menschenbilder Ost und West, East and West. Philosophy, ethics, politics and human rights. Nordhausen: Verlag Traugott Bautz. 263-334. (My translation.)

[49] 孟子曰:「人皆有不忍人之心。先王有不忍人之心, 斯有不忍人之政矣。以不忍人之心, 行不忍人之政, 治天下可運之掌上。所以謂人皆有不忍人之心者, 今人乍見孺子將入於井, 皆有怵惕惻隱之心。非所以內交於孺子之父母也, 非所以要譽於鄉黨朋友也, 非惡其聲而然也。由是觀之, 無惻隱之心, 非人也; 無羞惡之心, 非人也; 無辭讓之心, 非人也; 無是非之心, 非人也。惻隱之心, 仁之端也; 羞惡之心, 義之端也; 辭讓之心, 禮之端也; 是非之心, 智之端也。人之有是四端也, 猶其有四體也。有是四端而自謂不能者, 自賊者也; 謂其君不能者, 賊其君者也。凡有四端於我者, 知皆擴而充之矣, 若火之始然, 泉之始達。苟能充之, 足以保四海; 苟不充之, 不足以事父母。」
Legge translates: „Mencius said, 'All men have a mind which cannot bear to see the sufferings of others. 'The ancient kings had this commiserating mind, and they, as a matter of course, had likewise a commiserating government. When with a commiserating mind was practised a commiserating government, to rule the kingdom was as easy a matter as to make anything go round in the palm. When I say that all men have a mind which cannot bear to see the sufferings of others, my meaning may be illustrated thus: even now-a-days, if men suddenly see a child about to fall into a well, they will without exception experience a feeling of alarm and distress. They will feel so, not as a ground on which they may gain the favour of the child's parents, nor as a ground on which they may seek the praise of their neighbours and friends, nor from a dislike to the reputation of having been unmoved by such a thing. From this case we may perceive that the feeling of commiseration is essential to man, that the feeling of shame and dislike is essential to man, that the feeling of modesty and complaisance is essential to man, and that the feeling of approving and disapproving is essential to man. The feeling of commiseration is the principle of benevolence. The feeling of shame and dislike is the principle of righteousness. The feeling of modesty and complaisance is the principle of propriety. The feeling of approving and disapproving is the principle of knowledge. Men have these four principles just as they have their four limbs. When men, having these four principles, yet say of themselves that they cannot develop them, they play the thief with themselves, and he who says of his prince that he cannot develop them plays the thief with his prince. Since all men have these four principles in themselves, let them know to give them all their development and completion, and the issue will be like that of fire which has begun to burn, or that of a spring which has begun to find vent. Let them have their complete development, and they will suffice to love and protect all within the four seas. Let them be denied that development, and they will not suffice for a man to serve his parents with." Cf. https://ctext.org/mengzi/gong-sun-chou-i .

one's 心. This heart-mind represents the internal cultural-sensible sphere that vitalizes meaning. 仁 is not just a duty, virtue or principle, but also effective and self-explaining practice guidance. We know, want, feel and understand, how humaneness is good, in a sense that every one can relate to it, in action and thought. If we decide to adhere to it, once we have established the momentum of empowering self-limitation, 非禮勿視, 非禮勿聽, 非禮勿言, 非禮勿動.

A compassionate heart[50] is the starting position for humaneness, 惻隱之心, 仁之端也, the self as the experience-center of a web of causality and reasoning that weaves subjective biographies. For the individual moral agent, 仁 is rooted in anthropology: everyone has a heart-mind that is alarmed for compassion, 皆有怵惕惻隱之心; we cannot but need to do something about a fundamental, unnatural wrong, that is, human suffering 不忍人之心. Compassion is a feeling to strangers in the sense of culturally or socially unrelated individuals (rendering the „child" a perfect stranger). It is not an acquired knowledge. This description is not a proposition but ventures to express a human natural law, seen as our reason-nature. Moral, aesthetic and epistemic suffering is not a passive, pathetic experience, but active - a proper English term could be sym-passion rather than compassion, like the role of a musician contributing to orchestral harmony by actively doing his best and not just letting the instrument resonate, like a sounding board depending on others. This way, autonomy as self-legislation according to non-heteronomous norms can be exercised and conceived, integrating individual contributions and transcending their value.

[50] "Here we are, with two different conceptions of compassion. The one, which is of weak mind and sentimental, rather an impatience of the heart", to get rid of as quickly as possible off the shameful excitement over someone else's misfortune; this compassion that is rather not a com-passion but an instinctive rejection of others' pain, not allowing it to affect my soul. And there is the other one, which only counts, the non-sentimental but creative compassion. It knows what it wants, it resolves me to endure, with patience and charity, all that it takes, to exhaust myself beyond any limit of self-concern [to partake in this suffering]." Translated from Stefan Zweig, Ungeduld des Herzens, Kapitel 1 [Impatient heart].

5 The Endgame

What kind of game is it that we play when we take a pragmatic approach, to read „Kant and Confucius" in a discussion of truth? It is disciplined and free, pre-occupied and open-minded, sober and exciting, frustrating and encouraging. It is a game of understanding that we win only while playing and that we understand only when we experience progress. On this abstract level, little remains of truth. But that little is precious. We cultivate the rules that have become truth in our languages.

Pragmatically, we are thereby enriching ourselves and each others. When we adjust expectation by inspection, and perception by exploration, there will hardly be certain facts that we won't argue about. But we will be confident in the argument. What we lack in dogma, we gain in methodology. When we stop to define our position, it is just another opportunity to judge and decide, how to turn and where to move next.

In this way, translating connects individuals who emerge from introspective dialogue with cultural collectives that try to make sense. Patience, respect and generosity provide a spirit of humor that binds together clear and strict sentences of judgement. The nuances of serious irony that help us pay attention, to cultivate the subtleties of conversations about the gravest, most existential and intractable problems of humankind, may carry us on, to a unified effort to use the diversity of human knowledge, rather than give up hope.

In the above, I have demonstrated that a hermeneutic understanding of pragmatism, as an expression of universal thinking, offers an effective and efficient approach, to escape monocultures and conformity, in the search for wholesome cooperation. If not only for its reason and ethics, it could be for the beauty of good practice, that we find our ways out of the silos of disciplines and identities, to turn humane.

PHILOSOPHY AS A WAY OF LIFE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CONFUCIAN NOTION OF HARMONY, HÉ (和)

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ABSTRACT: Confucian philosophy has recently attracted growing interest from academics, because this model of thought can make valuable contributions to the articulation of our present world. Nevertheless, most of this research has described Confucius as a moral philosopher and has addressed the potential of this tradition exclusively from a distinctively ethical approach. The aim of this article is to show that Confucius' thought is a philosophy of life that can offer a valuable contribution to human culture. That is, Confucius does not present his thought as a potted ideology or a static doctrine, but above all as an "art of living". In order to reconstruct the complexity of this philosophy, these pages analyze the notion of harmony (*hé*) from a comparative approach that blends Confucius' thought and Dewey's philosophy. Both of these traditions emphasize the importance of cultivating a harmonious and creative relationship with one's surroundings, and the dialogue can offer benefits to present-day reflection.

Keywords: harmony, aesthetic experience, balance, creativity

Introduction

In his famous essay *Confucian Ethics of the Axial Age: A Reconstruction Under the Aspect of the Breakthrough Toward Postconventional Thinking*, Heiner Roetz criticizes how pragmatic approaches to China's classical philosophy have failed to overcome a general normative criterion. What is more, according to Roetz, this "devotedness to context and tradition, regardless of what the intentions of the various authors may be, is conspicuously blind to the experiences of history" (1993, 3). He believes that this contextualist approach, developed by authors such as Roger Ames and David Hall, cannot do justice to Confucian thought and offers a mistaken image of this tradition.

> Nevertheless, we can find the first comparison between pragmatism and Confucianism in Chinese territory a century ago. On John Dewey's sixtieth birthday, during the banquet, the Chancellor of Beijing University, Cai Yuanpei, portrayed Dewey as a modern-day Confucius. He highlighted how both authors were educators of the common people and insisted on the unity of thought and action. As Jessica Wang has remarked (2007, 14–15), this description is "risky", and Dewey did not enjoy the honorary appellation of "the Second Confucius". However, this event shows that putting Dewey and Confucius into dialogue is not a naïve endeavor.

More recently, American philosophers have not been the only scholars who have attempted to relate Deweyan pragmatism to Chinese Confucianism. Sor-hoon Tan (2004, 2007, 2012), for example, through a detailed study of relevant concepts and theories in Confucianism and Dewey's pragmatism, proposes the possibility of Confucian democracy as an alternative to Western liberal models. May Sim (2009) has presented Dewey's and Confucius' views regarding moral education as being due to the importance of self-development and social relations.

Nowadays, we find a fruitful dialogue between Confucianism and Deweyan pragmatism taking place in an intercultural context. For instance, the recent anthology, *Confucianism and Deweyan Pragmatism*, edited by Roger Ames, Chen Yajun and Peter D. Hershock (2021), aims to promote new ethical approaches that blend these two traditions. However, as Heiner Roetz has pointed out (1993), we cannot see Confucius as a moral philosopher who has the recipes to improve our present world. Such approaches anticipate a kind of "Confucian democracy", which I take to devalue the richness of his thought.

By contrast, these pages employ a pragmatic approach to analyzing Confucius' thought as a philosophy of life. My view is based on those previous studies of comparative philosophy that have asserted that pragmatism seems to share with Confucius a central philosophical concern with "the way". In contrast to Western philosophy, which has speculated about "What is the truth?" "What kind of things are there?" and "What is this?", pragmatism and Chinese wisdom ask "how" questions (Hall and Ames 1998, 103-104). That is, they inquire into how to live meaningfully in one's world. They do not seek universal principles or theories, but rather a way of acting that promotes a harmonious existence.

This paper relates Confucius' thought and Dewey's philosophy, through the analysis of the Confucian term of harmony, *hé* (和), and the Deweyan notion of aesthetic experience. The goal of this comparison is to provide a new approach to the field of comparative philosophy, and particularly to the philosophy of Confucius' *Analects*. First, I consider the resonances between Dewey's *emergentism* and what Roger Ames and David Hall call the Confucian ontology of events (1987, 5). Secondly, I define the Confucian concept of harmony and the Deweyan notion of aesthetic experience. Then I establish a comparison between these two notions, showing how Deweyan pragmatism facilitates a more effective understanding of Confucian thought.

A Contextualist Philosophy: The Confucian Ontology of Events and Dewey's Emergentism

To begin, I would like to introduce a common background of Dewey's and Confucius philosophy. Both authors seem to share the central philosophical concern about "What is the way?" In other words, they do not seek universal principles or theories, but rather the way of acting that promotes harmonious existence. According to Confucius and Dewey, we live in an immanental world, which does not have an established order, but needs to be constantly achieved by creating new modes of interaction. That is, they do not employ transcendent modes of thought to explain the universe, but categories and principles that are created by human beings.

> Thus, these distinct approaches, Ames and Hall explain, have resulted in two different understandings of order (1987, 16; 1998, 111). Western philosophy seeks a logical or rational order, which may be realized by imposing principles derived from transcendental laws, categories, impositions or substances. Confucius' thought, on the other hand, presents an aesthetic order that can be achieved by creating new patterns. Thus, aesthetic order involves a contribution to a given context and is concerned about the activities of specific people in particular situations.
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> Confucius does not develop a philosophy of qualities, attributes or characteristics, but rather "an explication of the activities of specific people in particular contexts" (Hall and Ames 1987, 15). In this sense, Confucian philosophy can be denominated a contextualistic philosophy. This point has been harshly criticized by Roetz, who believes that Confucian philosophy does not leave the final say to the "ontology of events". Roetz rightly argues that Confucius philosophy cannot be understood following our innate standards of laws or morality. By contrast, he maintains that the Golden Rule of the *Lunyu* no longer pertains to traditional thinking, but rather paves the way for a timeless paradigm related to general human needs and aspirations (1993, 193).
>
> Roetz defends Chinese axial age ethics as the ethics of an epoch of enlightenment. Confucianism is an awareness of the problems of the epoch to which an answer had to be found. According to him, "the challenge faced by the Zhou philosophers which stirred up philosophical thought as a systematical questioning in the first place is the crisis of the established conventional morality" (1993, 43).

Thus, he points out that Confucianism is a moral system which offers deliberations that can be reappropriated by any human being who is ready to learn. Nevertheless, this approach focuses on the ethical philosophy for a particular crisis, and it seems to forget the human quality of creativity. This is especially relevant if we consider the question that Roetz sets out in his essay: "Was Confucius any better than a mere authority for a system which secured harmony at the expense of freedom?" (1993, 9). In order to offer an answer to this question, I will introduce some parallelisms between the philosophy of Dewey and Confucius, as a means of enriching our understanding from an aesthetic perspective.

Although Roetz criticizes contextualism, this approach can help us to understand Confucius' philosophy as an art of living. But what is contextualism? In his fruitful dialogue between East and West, Lewis E. Hahn introduces the term "contextualism" to explain a philosophy of change: a kind of pragmatic naturalism that is espoused in varying ways and degrees by C. S. Peirce and Dewey, among others. Hahn explains how, according to contextualists, the single most distinctive mark of the real is change; and, in the same way, the *Analects* makes clear that change is great and comprehensive of all. As Thomé Fang has pointed out, "to respond to change the Confucian sage must exalt his life of virtue and widen his field of accomplishment, for the perpetual continuance of fulfilled nature in life is the gate of the Tao and righteousness" (Fang 1981, 111).

Contextualism is a philosophy of change that deals with happenings or occurrences, viewed not as something past and done with, but rather as dynamic, living presences, affording an important way of making comprehensive sense of our world (Hahn 1998, 74). Likewise, Confucius characterizes people in terms of events, rejecting the consideration of agency or isolated actions. "The agent is as much a consequence of his act as its cause" (Hall and Ames 1987, 15).

Similarly, Dewey, rejecting realism, presents a project based on the continuity of living creatures and surroundings in the immediacy of situations. His new ontology, which has been called emergentism, presents nature in continuous change, a place where new forms emerge. Following Darwin, as Eames says, "for Dewey, new forms or species emerge out of old ones. Where nature is ongoing, that is, where new forms have survival value and do not pass into extinction, these new forms make new demands upon other parts of nature" (2003, 25).

That is, the process of life implies a series of events in which organisms continuously interact with their surroundings. Living creatures try to restore the harmony of these interactions be-

cause of the necessity of equilibrium (2008c, 34). Dewey does not attribute this characteristic exclusively to human beings, but to all living beings:

> Capacity for maintenance of a constant form of interaction between organism and environment is not confined to the individual organism. It is manifested also, in the reproduction of similar organisms ... As long as life continues, its processes are such as continuously to maintain and restore the enduring relationship which is characteristic of the life-activities of a given organism. (2008c, 33)

Through this kind of philosophy the immanent cosmos is emphasized, as human beings interact with their surroundings. What is more, Ames and Hall stress two significant implications of this ontology: the idea of order and creativity in an immanent universe (1987, 16-17). Acquiring an order does not imply a logical or rational order, but an aesthetic. In contrast to the Judeo-Christian notion of *creatio ex nihilo*, Confucian terms allude to creative actions within the world of natural events. Therefore, in the Appendix III, section I of *Yi Jing*, we can read:

> It is heaven and earth that furnish models and patterns. It is Time that changes and evolves. It is the sun and moon that are the most bright. It is wealth and nobility that are the most exalted. It is the sages that prepare things for practical use, and invent instruments for the benefit of the world.
>
> They (the sages) all understand the ways of nature and know the needs of man. They thus made the skillful things for the use of the people. (quoted by Fung 1923, 124)

For Dewey, human beings' participation in natural rhythms induces them to introduce order where none existed; and this is the "aesthetic activity in germ" (2008b, 153). In his words:

> The man was not satisfied with adapting to natural changes, but he used them to give harmony and order to that world, to celebrate its relationship with nature: Then the apprehended rhythms of nature were employed to introduce evident order into some phase of the confused observations and images of mankind. Man no longer satisfied his activities of necessity to the rhythmic changes of nature's cycles, but used those which necessity twisted upon him to celebrate his relations from him to nature as if she had conferred upon him the freedom of her realm. (2008b, 153)

The succession of activities in life is teleological: the order implies series, although this continuous interaction is marked by rhythms with disequilibria. For Dewey, every living creature has the necessity to restore equilibrium, and the higher the organism, the more elevated will be the disruptions and the more energy will be required to achieve this harmony.

> Similarly to Dewey, Confucius asserts the necessity of restoring equilibrium through the notion of harmony (和**)**, which involves the existence of multiple and diverse possible relationships. As Chenyang Li (2006, 589) has asserted, the Confucian vision of the world does not portray it as an isolated element, but rather as a myriad of interacting things. Thus, personal growth is a fundamental aspect of human lives, characterized by its creativity; that is, "realizing oneself as a person is an art" (Hall and Ames 1987, 66).
>
> Dewey shares with Confucian thought a belief in the continuity of beings, as a key element of his ontology, but also as an essential element of his aesthetic. As Roger Ames and David Hall assert with reference to Confucian thought, "*aisthesis* as praxis requires a world composed of the termini of aesthetic acts. Praxis as *aisthesis* is fundamentally to be understood in terms of processes of self-creativity grounded in perspectives defining the forms of preoccupation with the world" (1987, 133). Moreover, some scholars have also emphasized how Chinese philosophers do not have a myth of a created and fixed world, but instead have a belief in becoming. Thus, F. W. Mote says:
>
> The basic point which outsiders have found so hard to detect is that the Chinese, among all peoples ancient and recent, primitive and modern, are apparently unique in having no creation myth; that is, they have regarded the world and man as uncreated, as constituting the central features of a spontaneously self-generating cosmos having no creator, god, ultimate cause, or will external to itself. (1971, 17–18)

In this way, pragmatist philosophy permits "responsible access to Confucius' thought", because it rejects an idealist and realistic ontology, as well as a representational understanding of knowing, and substitutes static terms. And this kind of philosophy should be understood not as a mere response to a conflict, but as an aesthetic and meaningful way of life, which attempts to promote a harmonious interaction between human beings and their environment.

Defining Our Terms: The Confucian Notion of Harmony, Hé (和), and the Deweyan Concept of Aesthetic Experience

The Confucian notion of harmony is a central theme in Chinese philosophy that has attracted increasing interest

in the recent decades. Many authors (Ames 2014; D'Ambrosio 2019; Fan 2021; Li 2014; Li, Kwok and Düring 2021; Rosker 2013; Wang 2012; Yao 2011) have developed an approach that addresses the importance of this notion for understanding Confucian philosophy. Chenyang Li has defined it as a creative tension that can emerge at various levels (2006, 588). First, it can take place in the individual sphere, that is, between the different elements that constitute human beings (body, mind, heart and the different activities that unfold in its organic occurrence). Second, harmony can happen between individuals (within the family, within the community, within the nation or within the world). Third, harmony can exist between human beings and the natural universe.

> Similarly, Dewey defines aesthetic experience as the harmonious interaction of the living creature at these three levels and locates it as a phase prior to knowledge, in the realm of the immediacy of situations. Human beings are constantly widening their horizons of meaning, and Dewey introduces the aesthetic quality to mark those experiences, opening up meaningful endings and accomplished actions.
>
> Aesthetic experience is thus more complete and more inclusive than other experiences because it involves a process of growth in which human beings create new interactions and achieve a new equilibrium with their environment. For Dewey, as for Confucius, the world does not have an established order, but must be continuously restored. Therefore, despite their undeniable differences, both notions can be defined as that generative and aesthetic process in which the diverse and heterogeneous elements of the cosmos are engaged in harmonious relationships.
>
> This section analyzes both notions and their features, pointing out that Deweyan aesthetic experience and Confucian harmony are integrated into philosophical projects whose aim is to improve people's lives. That is, both concepts can be described as creative processes that emerge in situations of tension in which human beings are immersed, and imply a continuous reinvention of people's interactions and relations with their environment.

Confucian Harmony as a Creative Process

There are several problems with translating the Chinese character *hé* (和) as "harmony". As Chenyang Li has asserted (2014, 7) the term "harmony" in English is defined as mere agreement; hence the character *hé* is often treated as something ingenuous. That is, under the influence of a Western reading of Confucianism, this notion has been misunderstood as a fixed scheme of things that reduces diversity to a fixed order. The Confucian notion of harmony is not mere conformity or concert, but a dynamic process that seeks to balance conflicts through a creative response. It concerns a continuous renewal of human beings' interactions and relations with their environment. In Roger Ames' words:

> The Confucian notion of harmony is conceived of as a generative, creative, and (dare we say) 'aesthetic' process in which the heterogeneous and diverse elements of the cosmos including the human worlds—what are often referred to as 'the myriad things' (*wanwu*)—are orchestrated into deep, harmonious relations that resonate with each other and entail productive tensions and resistance as well as agreement. (2014, xi)

Thus, Confucius rejects the idea of a fixed order, and instead emphasizes that the world, as well as our interactions, are constantly changing. This point is particularly important because harmony characterizes the relation between humans and nature, in contrast with Roetz, for whom harmony is only related to individuals and society. According to the latter, "nature for most Chinese was primarily an economic resource", and he alleges that the idea that nature is an important aspect of Confucian philosophy is "one of the many myths about the East" (1993, 109).

> Nonetheless, as Chenyang Li has asserted, the Confucian proposal does not treat the world as a single element to exploit and utilize for human interests, but rather takes it is to be made up of an infinity of elements in continuous interaction (Li 2006, 589). The Confucian form of harmony implies different levels of human engagement with their social and natural environment. Thus, we can understand harmony as a notion that alludes to an incessant assignment that never ends for human beings and nature.
>
> In particular, the Chinese concept of harmony (和) is not an invention of Confucius, but rather a traditional notion that we can find in bronze inscriptions. In fact, Confucius primarily used this concept in relation to music. As Yao has asserted (2000, 171) the character *hé* is defined as "harmonising multi-tones", and he alludes to the

creative response that touches human hearts and adjusts their conducts. In other words, harmony in music is understood as a new unity, which comes into being from different elements.

In Confucian thought, harmony is related not only to music, but also to human character. The cultivation of one's own character is described as harmony in the first passage of the *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸 *Zhongyong)*:

The moment at which joy and anger, grief and pleasure, have yet to arise is called a nascent equilibrium (*zhong*); once the emotions have arisen, that they are all brought into proper focus (*zhong*) is called harmony (*he*). This notion of equilibrium and focus (*zhong*) is the great root of the world; harmony then is the advancing of the proper way (*dadao* 達衜) in the world.

Pleasure and anger, sorrow and joy: before they emerge they are called centered; emerging by the proper rhythms they are called harmony. Centered: this is the great root of the world. Harmonious: this is the ultimate *Dao* of the world. Reaching centered harmony, heaven and earth take their proper places and the things of the world are nurtured.[1] (Hall and Ames 2000, 86)

By analyzing this passage, we can highlight several key aspects. First, harmony is a human state in which emotions follow the mean (*zhong* 中). Everyone has feelings, but not all of us can express them properly. When these feelings emerge, and each of them attains due measure and degree, we restore harmony. Thus, we need to cultivate our human nature to achieve harmonization: a dynamic balance with our environment.

This leads us to the second key aspect: harmony is the primary goal of moral training. For Confucius, virtue is based on the inner realization of the state of *zhong* and *hé.* The cultivating people must realize these two states: first performing the state of *zhong*, characterized as stillness and concentration; and then realizing harmony in the everyday world. Thus, harmony derives from the original stillness, and vice versa; stillness can only be achieved by maintaining the harmony of life and the universe.

Thirdly, harmony is also addressed in the context of the relationship between nature and human beings. This can be defined as the underlying principle of all relationships, the balanced interaction between humans and nature, between beings (the living) and things (the existent), between the social and the natural. In other words, despite living in a world of conflict and tensions, human beings and nature have an inclination to correct disorder and chaos in order to attain peace and harmony. As Chenyang Li has asserted:

[…] if human beings follow through this central path of cultivation, the world will be harmonized so that the *dao* will become prevalent; the prevalence of the *dao* should be achieved and the foundation of the world should be maintained because in such a state of grand harmony everything falls into its proper place and thrives. (2004, 177–178)

Therefore, *Zhongyong* offers a vision of the world centered on harmony, and answers the questions about why and how human beings should participate in the world and contribute to restoring harmony. As Filippo Costantini has pointed out (2016), we can find two different but interconnected levels, the individual human world and the cosmic world. In the first, harmony is related to the balance of feelings, the inner state of equilibrium. The second level shows the harmony in the natural world as the natural pattern of the cosmos, which tends toward restoring equilibrium. Without the as this sentence would be incomplete.

This inclination to restore harmony implies creating novel patterns and is the *modus operandi* of human beings and the cosmos. As Fung Youlan says, "when the one equalizes the other there comes what is called harmony, so that then there can be a growth in which new things are produced" (1952, 34). Creativity is placed in a situated process, which will be continually modified by the effects of actions. And these new patterns involve a process of improving our lives. That is, we cannot understand the character *hé* as simply a product, harmony; just as we should not translate the character *xing* (性) as simply "nature" because, unless we take into account the conception of philosophers like Dewey or Whitehead, we may lose the processual cosmology of China.

For Confucius, individuals are agents who are mutually implicated in the changing process of life. In this sense, they are human beings, but also human becomings (Ames 2021), as creative creatures in this continuous becoming. Therefore, the Confucian concept of harmony entails a sense of creativity that can be described, as Roger Ames puts it, in terms of "particularity, temporality, collateral relationality and productive indeterminacy" (2014, 453). This definition emphasizes how harmony involves an enhanced significance that human beings create in a particular context. Because we are engaged in a social environment these situations are not limited to isolated moments. As Herber Fingarette has said, "for Confucius, unless there are at least two human beings, there can be no human beings" (1983, 339).

Harmony, therefore, is a creative process that emerges in situations of tension in which human

[1] 喜怒哀乐之未发,谓之中;发而而皆中节,谓之和中也者,天下之大本也;和也者,天下之达道也。致中和,天地位焉,万物育焉。

> beings are immersed. Thus, the importance of ritual relies not on repeating a habit, but rather on a creative dimension. The Master said, "Achieving harmony is the most valuable function of observing ritual propriety" (1:12).[2] This process entails two key aspects: *creativity*, that is, the spontaneous emergence of novelty in a continuing present; and *growth*, whereby new relationships entail meaningful relationships that improve our interaction with our environment.

Aesthetic Experience as a Form of Creation

Dewey distinguishes experience that occurs continuously in the life process from aesthetic experience or "an experience". Current researchers have addressed this notion in respect to the third chapter of *Art as Experience* (1934), entitled "Having an experience". Nonetheless, it is necessary to consider it within Dewey's emergentism. For him, experience is not a mere perception of nature, but a mutual interaction as human beings participate in nature, and nature is modified by human beings. These interactions constitute the vital process and are not necessarily cognitive. People are constantly expanding their horizons of meaning, and Dewey introduces the quality *aesthetic* to point out those experiences that open towards significant endings and completed actions. Aesthetic experience is thus more complete and more inclusive than other experiences, because it involves a process of growth in which human beings create new meanings and reach a new harmony with their environment. According to Dewey, aesthetic is no intruder in experience from without, whether by way of idle luxury or transcendent ideality, but that it is the clarified and intensified development of traits that belong to every normally complete experience. This fact he takes to be the only secure basis upon which aesthetic theory can build. (AE: 52-53) Therefore, the aesthetic quality does not imply transcendental luxury or ideality, but is rooted in life and will be an essential quality of our daily process. Every experience is potentially aesthetic: as Thomas Leddy underlines, aesthetic experience could be situated in one's daily displacement to work, in the workplace, in the shopping center, in places of entertainment, and so on (2005, 3).

> For Dewey, human beings overcome factors of opposition and conflict in the continuous process of life, and these creative responses lead to a more meaningful life. In this way, he is not reducing the aesthetic quality to a mere organic struggle, but rather identifying our organic background as the roots of aesthetics. Thus he says: "The biological common places are something more than that; they reach to the roots of the aesthetic in experience" (2008b, 20). Nevertheless, we find distraction and dispersion in our daily life, hence we only have an aesthetic experience when the process comes to an end. In Dewey's words: "In contrast with such experience, we have an experience when the material experienced runs its course to fulfillment" (2008b, 42).
>
> Aesthetic experience is a complete act, what happens in our lives when we are more alive and focused on our engagement with the environment. This kind of process reveals the meaning of the human encounter with the world: an interaction that implies a creative response to our surroundings. According to Dewey, life involves energy and attention, but also pulses or stimulus; life is a process of interacting and interchanging, through which the human being dynamically organizes his environment.
>
> Accordingly, the American philosopher gives the same value to change and order; in fact, if there is greater change or variation, there will be a more interesting aesthetic response. Dewey shows how living creatures restore harmony to their environment and adopt a meaning, and this is possible because our environment is in flux. As Thomas Alexander said, "meaning is only possible in a world which can be disrupted, in which ambiguity, change, and destruction play a role" (1987, 176-177). Our lives are developed in variable and disruptive situations and places that need sense; hence human beings signify different phases of their lives at every moment.
>
> Aesthetic experience is a full act of perceiving what happens in our lives when we are both most alive and most concentrated on our engagement with the environment. At every single moment, every living creature experiences the world and organizes their energies, which involves past experiences and creating new meanings. This configuration is the aesthetic cause of its creative feature, but also it is vital and functional: it is how people develop their lives, the way whereby human beings could experience a fulfilled life. This process does not cease; being alive implies creat-

[2] 有子曰：禮之用，和為貴。先王之道斯為美，小大由之。有所不行，知和而和，不以禮節之，亦不可行也。

ing new relationships in different contexts with different consequences. Dewey emphasizes the process, not the result.

According to Dewey, our surroundings are not immutable and eternal, but rather a changing environment where problematic situations arise, contributing to a reconstruction of meanings. Thus, on numerous occasions, he expresses his firm belief that the human condition can be improved, and that aesthetic experience has a vital role in attaining that goal because it promotes a harmonious way of life. That is, he underlines the direction and orientation through which we constantly reinterpret our interactions in the immediacy of situations.

Our everyday lives entail different experiential qualities, depending on our orientation toward the activity or event in question. This kind of orientation fits with the important term "meliorism". This pragmatist notion alludes to that particular interaction that attempts to improve our lived experience, and which, as Scott Stroud has said (2011), has an essential role in aesthetic experiences.

In this way, Dewey's notion of aesthetic experience can be understood as a *modus vivendi*: a creative and engaged interaction with our surroundings. This contextualist approach feeds into a philosophy of life that takes events and situations as its key factors, viewing them as dynamic presences.

Points of Comparison: Towards a New *Modus Vivendi*

As pointed out above, Confucius and Dewey both see philosophy not just as a body of doctrines, but above all as an "art of living". They are not searching for some essential reality, but instead seek to cultivate harmonious relationships with one's surroundings. Both philosophers focus on people as living creatures adjusting to their changing environment through a creative process, named as *hé* and as "aesthetic experience". In this section, I analyze the five basic features that Chenyang Li has outlined in his work on the Confucian notion of harmony (2014, 2021) in relation to the qualities of the Deweyan notion of aesthetic experience, as a way of enriching both proposals without underestimating their differences.

(a)The first quality of harmony is heterogeneity. That is, the coexistence of different elements within the same process: the unity of its various parts. Chenyang Li illustrates this by drawing on a culinary example from a pre-Confucian minister (2006, 585). A soup is made from different ingredients with its own properties and characteristics, which form a unit. As Fung Youlan explains, harmony is achieved by mixing up different ingredients and flavors according to certain measures:

Yen Tzu said: They are. Harmony may be illustrated by soup. You have water and fire, vinegar, pickle, salt and plums, with which to cook fish. It is made to boil by the firewood, and then the cook mixes the ingredients, harmoniously equalizing the several flavors, so as supply whatever is deficient and carry off whatever is in excess. (Fung 1952: 36)

For Confucius, harmony cannot be achieved without unity. Nevertheless, as Fung (1952), Chenyang Li (2006, 2014) and Yao (2000) have pointed out, this unity should not be understood as equality. The Confucian notion of harmony is difficult to understand due to its assimilation with the mere notion of conformity or equality. The Chinese word for the latter (*tong*, 同) can mean identical existence, but also agreement in action. Therefore, its negation (*bu tong*, 不同) not only implies difference, but also divergence in action. However, as Confucius himself explains in the *Analects*: "Exemplary persons seek harmony not sameness; petty persons, then, are the opposite" (13:23).[3]

This does not mean that Confucius rejects any type of equality, but only the excess of equality or conformity, and the confusion between unity and uniformity. Excessive sameness is opposed to harmony. Li borrows a Chinese expression "a pool of dead water" (一潭死水) to show how this perpetual uniformity implies the absence of life. The process, despite presenting unity, will be dynamic. Thus, Confucius consciously differentiates harmony (*hé*) from identity (*tong*) because *tong* simply implies replication, whereas harmony involves creating something new. As Yao asserts (2000, 171), to be harmonious is to produce (*sheng*), to transform (*hua*) and to enlarge (*da*).

In the same way, Dewey defines aesthetic experience as a process that comes together in a single and self-sufficient whole, despite the different phases and stages of the process. That is, "[…] we

[3] 君子和而不同，小人同而不和。

have an experience when the material experienced runs its course to fulfillment" (2008b, 42). Hence aesthetic experience cannot be reduced to an isolated event, but rather emerges in our daily lives, when that unity and closure of the process occurs.

It is important to note in this regard that Dewey introduces unity as a quality that permeates all the parts of experience despite the variations between them. Therefore aesthetic experiences have pauses or silences, but not breaks or gaps. "The existence of this unity", Dewey says, "is constituted by a single quality that pervades the entire experience in spite of the variation of its constituent parts" (2008b, 43).

Aesthetic experience, characterized by the indeterminacy of its analysis, reaches its consummation when it is experienced as a whole, when it flows from one point to another; that is, it is a process with different parts, through which the living creature unfolds its potential to signify its immediate existence. Thus Dewey says: "Because of continuous merging, there are no holes, mechanical junctions, and dead centers when we have an experience. There are pauses, places of rest, but they punctuate and define the quality of movement. They sum up what has been undergone and prevent its dissipation and idle evaporation" (2008b, 46).

(b) This leads us to the second key aspect, tension. Harmony implies unity in difference, in tension and conflict. Chenyang Li points out that there are these three different levels of relationship between things, and harmony can be achieved when equilibrium is restored (2014, 12). This point is especially significant because the emphasis on the notion of harmony must not lead us to underestimate the importance of difference, tension and conflict.

For Confucius, as well as for Dewey, harmony requires difference, but also tension, struggle and imbalance that generate a conflict between the parties and encourage the creation of new relationships. That is, such relationships are necessary to introduce the creative orientation: the aesthetic quality. As Roger Ames and David Hall have shown (1987, 36), the aesthetic order begins with the singularity or the particularity of an aspect in tension, in which the parts are interrelated.

For this reason, plurality and tension must be considered prior and necessary aspects of this unity. Similarly, for Dewey, the life process is characterized by activities that, even with greater or lesser success, depend on this incessant interaction with the environment, in which the creature seeks to recover its balance in moments of tension. Although ruptures can happen in this interaction, the living creature has a need to restore this balance:

> The higher the organism, the more serious become the disturbances and the more energetic (and often more prolonged) are the efforts necessary for its reestablishment. The state of disturbed equilibration constitutes need. The movement toward its restoration is search and exploration. The recovery is fulfillment or satisfaction. (2008c, 34)

This tension should be considered not as problematic, but as the stimulus that allows us to unfold our creative potential. At every single moment, every living creature experiences the world, and human beings create novel patterns when they experience tension and problematic situations. As Hall and Ames explain (1987, 172), the harmony achievable in human society is not reducible to "universally acceptable ethical principles". By contrast, human beings, like nature, must constantly create new forms of interaction to accommodate the emergence of problematic circumstances. Thus, for Confucius, "reviewing the old as a means of realizing the new—such a person can be considered a teacher" (2:11).[4]

> In the same way, Fung Youlan has pointed out that Confucianism takes from the *Book of Changes* (*Yi Jing*) the notion of change as an essential quality of life:
>
> The method of Qian is to change and transform, so that everything obtains its correct nature as appointed (by the mind of Heaven); and (thereafter the conditions of) great harmony are preserved in union. The result is what is advantageous, and correct and firm. (The sage) appears aloft, high above all things, and the myriad states all enjoy repose.[5] (*Yijing* 1:1)

Therefore, life is a process of interacting and interchanging, and people try to restore unity and equilibrium in situations marked by tension and conflict. Confucius, like Dewey, proposes an interaction with our environment that is characterized by creativity.

(c) However, achieving harmony with one's natural or social environment, as well as with oneself, is not an easy path. Rather, it requires the complete involve-

[4] 溫故而知新, 可以為師矣。
[5] [...] 乾道變化, 各正性命, 保合大和, 乃利貞。首出庶物, 萬國咸寧。

ment of all parties; it implies coordination and cooperation. In this way, for Confucius and for Dewey, conflicted situations demand the complete involvement and coordination of the person to provide a new equilibrium. To illustrate the coordination and cooperation involved in the process of harmonization, we can consider one of the key aspects of Confucian thought: the rectification of names (正名 *zhengming*). According to this notion, if a name designates an object that does not correspond to it, confusion and disharmony emerge. Thus, the sage must rectify the name:

> "Were the Lord of Wey to turn the administration of his state over to you, what would be your first priority?" asked Zilu.
>
> "Without question it would be to insure that names are used properly (zhengming)" replied the Master.
>
> "Would you be as impractical as that?" responded Zilu. "What is it for names to be used properly anyway?"
>
> "How can you be so dense!" replied Confucius. "An exemplary person (junzi) defers on matters he does not understand. When names are not used properly, language will not be used effectively; when language is not used effectively, matters will not be taken care of; when matters are not taken care of, the observance of ritual propriety (li) and the playing of music (yue) will not flourish; when the observance of ritual propriety and the playing of music do not flourish, the application of laws and punishments will not be on the mark; when the application of laws and punishment is not on the mark, the people will not know what to do with themselves. Thus, when the exemplary person puts a name to something, it can certainly be spoken, and when spoken it can certainly be acted upon. There is nothing careless in the attitude of the exemplary person toward what is said." (13.3)[6]
>
> This text shows how unity occurs in a dialectical process in which the parties, which are in tension and conflict, will finally converge towards a realization and renewal of the situation. This confluence will only be possible through a cooperative and coordinated interaction of individuals with their environment. Obviously, Dewey does not talk about the rectification of names, but he proposes the notion of form as a coordinated organization of energies and new meanings. It is defined as "the operation of forces that carry the experience of an event, object, scene, and situation to its own integral fulfillment" (2008b, 142).
>
> For Dewey, form is a dynamic configuration human beings develop in problematic situations. According to him, we experience tensions requiring us to make new configurations. This kind of organization involves us coordinating the different parts in a balanced way. So, form is not a mechanical conjunction of different elements, but a coordinated pattern created by human beings.
>
> (d) The fourth characteristic is transformation and growth; that is, coordination entails changes and modifications, which will propitiate the transformation of tension into a harmonious relationship. Confucius analyzes and promotes the creative interactions that a person displays, in which one extends and deepens one's relationship with one's environment. Personal growth is fundamentally creative and results in the constant emergence of situations.
>
> As pointed out above, for Confucius, human beings have a need to restore balance with their environment through creative answers, thus treating the process of becoming a person as an art. In this sense, we read in the *Book of Changes*: "the 'greatness' and 'originating' represented by *Qian* (creativity) refer to it as (the symbol of) what gives their beginning (to all things), and (also) secures their growth and development" (*Yijing* 1:1).[7]
>
> Similarly, for Dewey, one's relationship with the world is not characterized as a struggle. What is external to the subject is presented not in opposition to him, but rather as an infinite field of possibilities in which a human being can develop his widest potentialities.
>
> The reality is the growth-process itself; childhood and adulthood are phases of a continuity, in which just because it is a history, the later cannot exist until the earlier exists ('mechanistic materialism' in germ); and in which the later makes use of the registered and cumulative outcome of the earlier—or, more strictly, is its utilization ('spiritualistic teleology' in germ). (2008b, 210)
>
> Experience is an explorer of the world, a transformer, and when aesthetic experience occurs, the most perfect harmony with the environment is achieved in that situation. Thus, despite distant cultural contexts in time and space, both authors believe that humans are in continuous interac-

[6] 子路曰:「衛君待子而為政, 子將奚先?」子曰:「必也正名乎!」子路曰:「有是哉, 子之迂也! 奚其正?」子曰:「野哉由也! 君子於其所不知, 蓋闕如也。名不正, 則言不順; 言不順, 則事不成; 事不成, 則禮樂不興; 禮樂不興, 則刑罰不中; 刑罰不中, 則民無所措手足。故君子名之必可言也, 言之必可行也。君子於其言, 無所苟而已矣。」

[7] 《乾》元者, 始而亨者也。利貞者, 性情也。

tion with their environment through a process that implies growth, which will unfold in the context of situations.

(e) The fifth characteristic is renewal; that is, harmony is not reached as a final state, but as a state of a continuous process. For Confucius, the cultivated person has the capacity to organize and create new relationships with their environment; and this is a process that never ends. Confucian philosophy emphasizes tension and human beings' ability to restore balance, to promote an interaction based on the continuous organization of energies and meanings, according to new circumstances.

Reality is immanent, relative and contingent; for this reason, Confucius' philosophy is not characterized by a search for truth as correspondence, but rather by a constant search for the harmonious mode of interaction with one's environment. According to Confucius, the process of existence is characterized by the changing events and situations that determine the human vital process. Accordingly, we can read in the *Analects*:

The Master said: "You can study with some, and yet not necessarily walk the same path (*dao* 道); you can walk the same path as some, and yet not necessarily take your stand with them; you can take your stand with them, and yet not necessarily weigh things up in the same way." (9:30)

That is, harmony is not a static identity or a stable state, but a result of constant changes. As Yao has said, "it is the Confucian view that opposition arising from the fundamental forces of the cosmos will necessarily lead to harmony" (2000, 178). Confucius' way of harmony implies a continuous adjustment, because people need to overcome the new conflicts and tensions which emerge in life.

Similarly, for Dewey, human interaction with one's environment is not "a matter of perception", knowledge, or domination. Aesthetic experience is presented as a reconstructive activity that is not imposed as a definitive structure of action, but is defined by its contingent nature. In other words, aesthetic experience must be understood as a process that does not end. The organization of energies, then, is not imposed as a definitive structure, rather, it should be understood as an endless process. In Dewey's words:

Only that is carried on which is led up to; otherwise there is arrest and a break. For this reason consummation is relative; instead of occurring once for all at a given point, it is recurrent. The final end is anticipated by rhythmic pauses, while that end is final only in an external way. (2008b, 142)

Conclusion

In these pages, I have explored the benefits of understanding Confucius' philosophy from an aesthetic perspective. Confucius is well known as a moral philosopher, but this kind of view has generated a lively debate about Western approaches to this philosophy. By studying the *Analects*, as well as *Zhongyong* and *Yijing*, I have attempted to highlight how his philosophy is not a mere album of snapshots depicting an exemplary life, but a way of developing a meaningful life.

In this way, I have argued that the aesthetic interpretation of Confucius can be enriched by connecting it to Deweyan philosophy. However, it was not my intention to develop a hybrid Confucian-Pragmatist theory, but rather to pay attention to the resonance between Dewey and Confucius. I think that these pages have shown the real value of a potential conversation between these two authors, not only because of the similarities in their positions, but also because they are mutually illuminating and reinforcing.

The Confucian tradition is a long-established historical system of thought, which has extended through time and space and includes different features and versions. My main suggestion has been to extend the traditional ethical interpretation of this kind of philosophy and promote a view that emphasizes his philosophy as an art of living.

Drawing on the comparison made here, I have shown how both authors propose an ontology of events or situations, which does not require recourse to "substances", "qualities", or "attributes". Thus, instead of searching for some essential nature, Dewey and Confucius are more concerned with the interaction of specific people in particular contexts. Human beings, like our surroundings, are not a fixed entity, but rather involved with their continuous processes of becoming. Accordingly, Confucius' works are about the mode of action, i.e. "the path". In this sense, both authors present their philosophical project as an art of living, "an art of contextualizing" (*ars contextualis*), which seeks harmonious interaction with the universe through active and creative participation.

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NATIVE SOURCES TO PRAGMATIC ENLIGHTENMENT, PATHS TOWARDS RE-ENCHANTMENT

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ABSTRACT: This paper will develop a response to Roetz's (2013) critique of Hall and Ames' (1992) "A pragmatist understanding of Confucian democracy". Our focus, however, will be reflecting on the roots of pragmatism as an inherently intercultural philosophy, the fruit of the encounter between Native American and European thought. Guided by some of the insights of the debate between Roetz, Hall and Ames, we will explore the paths afforded by a reencounter between pragmatism and Native American thought. We will examine the possibilities to reenchant creative democracy to acknowledge the more-than-human character of the communities constituting reality and find paths out of the ecological crisis. We will examine Hall and Ames' understanding of democracy in Confucian hierarchical harmony. Then we will assess the grounds for Roetz's critique, questioning the unilineal evolutionary history of ideas which seem to be underlying it. Then we will take at heart Roetz's call for acknowledging the history of the philosophies that conversed into pragmatism. We will show how rather than progress towards a singular truth, in this case, the correct understanding of democracy, there is a plurality of theses and histories of ideas interacting with one another. We examine legacies of the Enlightenment inherited by pragmatism, highlighted by Roetz, how they have a more profound history in Judeo-Christian thought and their instrumental role in colonialism. Then, building on Pratt (2002), we examine the Amerindian roots of pragmatism. We trace commonalities between pragmatism and the ways of thinking of historical communities along the Americas and the Caribbean. We highlight the conversations between pragmatism and American anthropology. Finally, we examine how historical and contemporary Amerindian philosophies unleash pragmatism from the straitjacket of European doctrines and how enabled by forms of democracy at work in hierarchical harmony, they offer a path towards the re-enchantment of our world. That is, not a return to religion, but the acknowledgement that reality is constituted by more than human communities.

Disenchanted realities disenchanting democracies

The debate between Roetz, Hall and Ames on pragmatism in Chinese studies is more than a philosophical debate about potential consensus between western and eastern philosophies. It is a debate about the political postures and conditions in which consensus has been reached and their consequences for the constitution of communities, reality, and its governance, with profound implications for intercultural philosophy beyond China. The debate expresses different positions towards China under changing political circumstances. Writing at the peak of American influence, the Hawaiian and Canadian pragmatist sinologists demonstrate a self-critical, conciliatory tone, willing to be pragmatic in their positions toward China, searching for parallelisms and acknowledging the democratic possibilities inherent even in Confucianism (Hall and Ames 2003). By contrast, ten years later, as the rise of China was already evident and authoritarianism seemingly unabated, the German sinologist called for a firmer stance, defending western philosophical traditions and emphatically demanding democratic reforms aligning with pragmatic ideals (Roetz 2013). Twenty years later, the call for a defence of democratic conditions is well warranted in China and worldwide, facing the staggering growth of inequality and the rise of authoritarianism. However, following Roetz´s call for re-evaluating those earlier conversations that gave rise to pragmatism, it becomes evident that the colonial circumstances in which these conversations developed leave much to be desired and are the source of many currently troubling issues.

Individualism, universalism, and human exceptionalism, the western institutions Roetz defends as Enlightened achievements, demonstrate more profound and troubling histories of *disenchanting* complicity with colonisation. Weber borrowed Schiller´s ambiguous notion of *disenchantment*, nostalgic for yesterday's gods and their magic, to imbue it with the connotation of embracing scientific rationality and overcoming superstition (Lyons 2014). As Weber remarks, disenchantment preceded the Enlightenment. Initially, it was closely associated with Christian theology until modernity turned it around on religion. Indeed, the reliance on rationality depends on claims to universalism, first advanced in the name of monotheistic religion, but also on its assumptions of human exceptionalism, on the free will of the human individual and the notion that communication was only bridged through language. Weber also notes the role of disenchantment in the constitution of bureaucratic

domination. But disenchantment is particularly insidious as a critical aspect of the colonisation of thought, actively shaping what reason is: Disenchantment has been a means to undermine local understandings and commitments, fracturing communities and their realities, alienating them, and forcing upon them consensus that rationalises their exploitation as dehumanised resources. Disenchantment disempowers and sows disinterest. It is at the root of a profound and growing inequality increasingly aggravated by the concurrent environmental crisis it continuously fosters. Even if, as claimed by Rorty, disenchantment facilitates political tolerance (Metzger 2010), it constitutes a hindrance to democracy.

On the other hand, we will track how those innovative characteristics in pragmatism: its commitment to interaction, community, pluralism and growth have clear precedents and strong genealogical connections in Native American thought. Revaluating these Native American precedents, parallels and connections with pragmatism allows us to recognise some insights that were obscured in the inequal encounter and translation that gave rise to American philosophy. It allows us to develop an alternative approach to enchantment through notions like the Iroquois *orenda,* forms of personhood and agency that express what different beings are and are acknowledged through deep engagements with them. These forms of enchantment express what makes life significant (James 1899). In this way, enchantment is revealed as a pragmatic expression of the knowledge binding more-than-human communities, calling for a reappraisal of Native American epistemologies.

Finally, returning to Hall and Ames' insights on the democratic possibilities inherent in the harmony of hierarchy, we will explore how such harmony underscores the means to operationalise Native American acknowledgement of more-than-human communities and operationalise it in a more inclusive creative democracy (Dewey 1998).

Pragmatic parallels and their discontents

Hall and Ames (2003) seek pragmatic ways to foster the development of democracy in China. They note the failures of earlier attempts at the direct translation of democratic institutions, which have been hijacked by other more problematic western institutions or forms of thought. They propose to develop a pragmatic approach to fostering democracy in China by expanding on Dewey's parallels between pragmatism and Confucianism. They explore the context in which Dewey established such equivalence, noting how as a visiting professor and Beijing University, he sought to compromise and accommodate Chinese understandings of personhood and community.

Following Dewey, Hall and Ames (2003) analyse Chinese notions of being, which are not essentialist but relational, derived from having (you 有); the person is coterminous with their roles in the community. That is, the person's roles are the source of their personhood, instead of an essential individuality upon which those roles are superimposed and incidental. They argue that this hierarchical relationality problematises understandings of democracy as a simple numerical equality game. Indeed, suppose the roles of a member of a hierarchical structure define them as persons. In that case, their political positions in a democratic decision are not the simple expression of their "individual" interest but an expression of the compromises of the hierarchical structure upon them. E.g. The political positions of the head of a family who is the head of a clan are expressions of the balance of political positions and the power of each family head and, in turn, of each family member.

Hall and Ames (2003) also note how, for Dewey, equality is a fruit ripened by a community, not a starting premise but something to be achieved. Similarly, social contracts and, consequently, the rights of the persons in China are under constant negotiation and result from the community's relations and interests, rather than from

transcendental assumptions about their individual rights. Thus, Hall and Ames (2003) explain why attempting to directly translate the liberal understandings of individual rights as universal premises in this context has often been counterproductive. Establishing rights as premises implies the simultaneous imposition of burdening counterweight duties, given that the majority's interests overpower individuals' rights.

Hence, Hall and Ames (2003) attempt to reach compromises rather than forcing their principles by imposing a complete translation. Following Dewey, they identify the potential for democracy in the Confucian harmony of hierarchical structures. They determine how Confucian approaches to behavioural change privilege ritual propriety over the explicit external imposition through laws and right. Hall and Ames also examine the impact Confucian approaches have on collective decision-making. Hall and Ames follow the work of anthropologists and political scientists like Zhou (1996). She analyses how Chinese farmers pushed for and achieved reforms and transformations in China, overcoming the resistance of bureaucrats. Thereby, Hall and Ames identify how culturally sensitive readings of Chinese society allow us to see the successful changes toward democracy these structures can perform on their own.

Roetz seeks to undermine theoretical parallels between Confucian and Deweyan thought, highlighting how a series of statements pronounced by Dewey while visiting China positioned him as representative of modernity, western philosophy, and technoscience.[1] He then reasserts the influence of European thought in the development of pragmatism, emphasising how early pragmatists accommodated western canonical positions towards individualism, universalism and transcendentalism, and democracy. He remarks on how the notion of the subject is fundamental to conceptualize intersubjectivity and elaborates on how by belonging simultaneously to different groupings subjects achieve forms of autonomy, replacing the notion of the atomistic individuum. Similarly, he argues that Peirce's 'indefinite community' actualises western universalist and transcendentalist positions.[2] He emphasises the significance of pragmatism, introducing the notion of democracy to China without considering the failings of those attempts or how the Chinese or other non-western contexts may offer better alternative political solutions. He claims that the only possible bridge between Confucianism and pragmatism would be a profound reformulation of Confucianism through the full adoption of western style democracy already pursued by neo-Confucianists.

Roetz criticises Hall and Ames' relativisation of democratic principles as apologetic of the Confucian undemocratic positions and thereby as an anachronic disservice to the core values of pragmatism. He dismisses the notion of democracy in the harmony of hierarchical structures, arguing that numerical equality is the only guarantee for individuals amidst hierarchical power differences. However, this argument presupposes the primacy of individual selfhood in the constitution of the persona and the idea that people are most empowered as individuals, notions particular to the West. Suppose personhood is primarily constituted from members' roles in a community or derived from their position in a hierarchical structure rather than from a sense of self. In that case, political positions are likely to correspond to those commitments rather than to their 'individual' interest. In these circumstances, the decisions of community members will be mainly a reflection of their office and roles, actively subverting the role of numerical equality. Numerical equal-

[1] Dewey was a visiting professor at Peking University between 1919 and 1921, in that condition he travelled and lectured extensively through the country.

[2] Pearce elaborates on the "indefinite community" (Peirce 1868), arguing against Descartes that although we are individually incapable of knowing reality, reality can be thought as that which is agreed upon by a community of knowledge without definite limits and open to new and alternative points of view. Peirce hence is relativizing rather than universalizing reality; we might be able to perceive reality as it is but we will not have absolute certainty about it in specific cases.

ity can misrepresent people if they stand for more than themselves.

Roetz also critiques Hall and Ames' take on Classical pragmatism when they argue that one of the characteristics of pragmatism is a rejection of universalism, privileging historically specific communities as a point of departure for knowledge (Hall and Ames 2003). As if the history of philosophy were to be unilineal, Roetz counters that:

> Pragmatism, at least in its classical phase, does not subscribe to the historistic, relativistic conclusions that European philosophies (Nietzsche, Heidegger, Wittgenstein) have drawn from the 'end of metaphysics. (Roetz 2013)

Again, the implication is that beyond the plurality of philosophies, there is a single progressive history of ideas.

Emphasising the purported universalism of Classical pragmatism, Roetz argues that the community pragmatists had in mind was the American democracy which, unlike ancient China, had already incorporated universalist values such as individual rights into its constitution (Roetz 2013). Moreover, he asserts that the Peircean notion of the "indefinite community" encompassing all rational beings provides a horizon of universality and transcendence, giving meaning to sociality.

However, Roetz idealizes American democracy. It is anachronistic to attribute contemporary understandings of equality and democracy to the American society of the 19th century. Even while American society had incorporated Christian universalist notions into its constitution, the universality of rights was mired in contradictions: The US was still actively engaged in reducing, when not exterminating, Native peoples. As well, it had barely abolished slavery and was still far from acknowledging women, Native peoples, and African Americans with citizenship or with such "universal" rights. More importantly, Roetz neglects that the United States remains a representative democracy rather than a direct one. Elections are ultimately defined by the hierarchical structure of an electoral college, with local elections awarding all votes in a district to the district winner. Furthermore, instead of awarding equal voting rights to every person, votes weigh according to the place of residence, traditionally disfavouring poorer, immigrant, and non-white districts and, more recently, adjoined states. Hence, American democracy is distant from the absolute liberal ideal. It is important to emphasise that these are not minor imperfections, especially when other peoples are supposed to measure themselves up to the mythical standards of an ideal liberal political system for a bridge between philosophies to be considered. More crucially because this system with its colonial backdrop, its subsequent flaws, and inherent injustices, might indeed be the model for the consensus building system that now seeks to constitute reality. Contemporary academia is indeed built on societies that mimic American democracy, and it holds an important if still limited, sway on world politics.

Contrary to Roetz´s presumptions, early pragmatists had a broader purview into various Native American and settler community experiments, with diverse histories of establishment, development, and approaches to governance. These experiments provided a vast repertoire from which early pragmatists could draw insights and expectations about what communities could be or do. Some of these communities, like the Kwakiutl and the Puritans, were highly hierarchical, not unlike those analysed by Confucius. Others communities, like the Hopi or the Quakers, were far more egalitarian. These later and others still other communities involved the participation of people who were not fully acknowledged as persons and whose rights had not yet been enshrined by the American constitution, such as women.

Classical pragmatists needed not to resort to an "end of metaphysics" to be relativistic. They were often accused of such because of their pluralism. Moreover, Dewey was a close ally and collaborator of Boas (Colón and Hobbs 2015), one of the founding figures of American anthropology. Working along with Native communities, Boas became the proponent of cultural relativism and

historical particularism. These postures constituted alternatives to the concurrent European mainstream evolutionist and diffusionist discourses, which he demonstrated flawed because of their untested and untestable universalistic premises (Boas 1920).

And although indeed Peirce and Mead sought to accommodate universalism, they also developed broader definitions of what it means to be human, which they understood to be bound to specific if undefined communities; connecting human experiences can be one of the horizons of the 'indefinite community'. However, this horizon can be misleading unless we acknowledge that our reality is not determined solely by reaching a reasoning consensus but rather by being in consensus. Reality includes more than humans, as one can say indefinite communities are also ecological ones. Cognitive justice (Visvanathan 1998) requires that we acknowledge that we inhabit and partake of realities which are indefinite, ecological communities emplaced, but open and with uncertain limits.

Through this section, we examined some parallels between pragmatism and Confucianism: the communitarian understandings of personhood, the importance of practices and rituals over beliefs and laws, and the democratic potential of the notion of hierarchical harmony. We also examined the objections to Hall and Ames's pragmatic relativisation of the idea of democracy and their attack on western thought. We listened to the calls to acknowledge the indebtedness to earlier philosophical conversations. Finally, we deflated Roetz's critique by showing some of the nuances of early 20th-century American society. In the following section, we will take at heart his call to acknowledge the conversations that give place to pragmatism.

Dwelling on debts and the many sources of pragmatic Enlightenment: Immanent positions, transcendental translations

In his critique of Hall and Ames and their take on the parallelism and potential relations between Confucianism and pragmatism, Roetz (2013) appeals to an understanding of the progress of philosophical ideas. The main flaw he finds in their argument is the naïve apostasy of western thought, which, he argues, they project onto Classical pragmatists. In his view, such apostasies and their projection onto the past are naïve because they are only possible due to the "historistic and relativistic developments of European philosophies" to which Classical pragmatists did not subscribe while influencing Hall, Ames, Rorty, and other new pragmatists. Moreover, these new pragmatists allegedly also fail to acknowledge the indebtedness of pragmatism to earlier European Enlightenment developments which arguably were fundamental for the constitution of pragmatism.

According to Roetz (2013), the provincial character of pragmatism leads Hall and Ames to neglect how Confucianism had already contributed to western thought through Jesuit translations or that Neo-Confucian developments had already bridged with the west through the reformation of Confucianism. Purportedly, this double neglect leads Hall and Ames to develop a restorative approach, apologetic of the undemocratic aspects of Confucianism and the Chinese state, betraying democracy, one of the core values of Deweyan pragmatism.

Although not explicitly stated, at least not with Hegelian hubris, through each of its components, Roetz's critique seems to imply that there is a single history of philosophical ideas and one correct direction for intellectual progress. Although contrary to pragmatist commitments to engagement (Peirce's Pragmaticist Maxim), pluralism, and community, such a position would not be surprising. It was characteristic of the Dominicans who oversaw the Inquisition, one of the most orthodox branches of Catholicism. It is a position that persists in many protestant churches. It constitutes one of the legacies of Christian philosophy, which remained largely unchallenged through the Enlightenment, further perpetuated through the modernist project. The latter found in progress a way to re-articulate transcendence as the globalised paro-

chiality of western thought, continuously translating, reinventing, appropriating, and purifying the thought of all others: In the name of progress, western thought assumes as its own positions it had previously rejected as traditional and backward thinking, thus avoiding giving credit where credit was due.

Or how forthcoming have European philosophers been to acknowledge their debts? Is the cited Heidegger not shrouded in controversies over his failure to disclose the influences of Zhuangzi and Dōgen on his notion of Dasein?

Leibniz appreciated the moral fortitude of Native Americans:

> "But even today entire tribes, such as the Hurons, the Iroquois, the Galibis and other peoples of America teach us a great lesson on this matter: one cannot read without astonishment of the intrepidity and well-nigh insensibility wherewith they bereave their enemies, who roast them over a slow fire and eat them by slices. If such people could retain their physical superiority and their courage, and combine them with our acquirements, they would surpass us in every way, Extat ut in mediis turris aprica casis. They would be, in comparison with us, as a giant to a dwarf, a mountain to a hill: Quantus Eryx, et quantus Athos, gaudetque nivali Vertice se attollens pater Apenninus ad auras.
>
> All that which is effected by a wonderful vigour of body and mind in these savages, who persist obstinately in the strangest point of honour, might be acquired in our case by training, by well-seasoned mortifications, by an overmastering joy founded on reason, by great practice in preserving a certain presence of mind amid the distractions and impressions most liable to disturb it..." (Leibniz 2005[1710], 284)

Nevertheless, he does not seem to acknowledge the clear precedents available in the descriptions of missionaries and explorers to his concept of panpsychism, e.g. (Breton 1665, de Rochefort, de Rochefort, and de Poincy 1997 [1658]).

Shamanism informed Goethe's and Schiller's poetry colouring their positions towards enlightened disenchantment (Flaherty 1992, 12). Nevertheless, they wrote their odes to Greek paganism (Lyons 2014). Kant, too lectured about shamanism:

> Between a *shaman* of the Tunguses and the European prelate who rules over both church and state, or (if, instead of the heads and leaders, we only want to look at the faithful and their ways of representation) between the wholly sensuous *Wogulite,* who in the morning lays the paw of a bear skin over his head with the short prayer, "Strike me not dead!"I7[1] and the sublimated *Puritan* and Independent in Connecticut, there certainly is a tremendous distance in the *style of faith*, but not in principle*;* for, as regards the latter, they all equally belong to one and the same class, namely of those who place their service of God in something (faith in certain statutory articles, or the observance of certain arbitrary practices) which cannot by itself constitute a better human being.

Kant dismisses shamans, equating their religiosity to that of Puritan prelates. Yet, he distinguishes how the formers sensuousness and contrasts it with the abstraction that dominates the latter's word (Kant, Wood, and Di Giovanni 2001, 6: 177). Although Kant does not explicitly connect Vogul (whom today are called Mansi) or Tungusian ways with his own thinking, that distinction likely fed into his views about two distinct forms of cognition, i.e. sensibility vs understanding, as well as his emphasis on the value of practical reason. Moreover, while some anthropologists have noted on the Kantian ways of orientating in their Polynesian interlocutors (Levinson and Levinson 2003, Majid et al. 2004, Levinson and Brown 1994), we tend to forget that Kant was (mis-)reading ethnographies of the Pacific (Strack 1996), and other reports riddled with perceptual relativity (Eckstein and Schwarz 2019).

Even if European philosophers had acknowledged their debts to non-westerners, who is to say that they were, at the time, prepared to converse with those other ways of thinking? Were 18th-century Jesuit missionaries qualified to translate Confucius while conveniently omitting his Taoist basis and counterparts? How much do we trust philosophers, under the intense scrutiny of the Inquisition or equivalent protestant institutions, to translate or interpret other people's knowledge? On the other hand, conversing requires more than a one-time interaction, and any translation attempt requires critical appraisals of the notions that were translated from the source language.

As is pointed out by Roetz, it is vital to recognise the "indebtedness" of pragmatism to conversations that have been going on, at least since the Enlightenment. Indeed, it is crucial to acknowledge and clarify the nature of those debts, to appreciate the developments of those many modes of thinking over time, and how many of their positions have long histories, sometimes offering alternative paths.

No one denies the influence and impact of European philosophies. Seeking acknowledgement of their European counterparts, early 20th-century American philosophers and historians of American philosophy emphatically sought to highlight their European powers, often characterising their role as peripheral and their contributions as subordinate. The critical positions adopted by Dewey, Rorty, Halls and Ames towards European philosophical influences and fashions must be read as a response to those earlier ethnocentric attitudes of Euro-American and European philosophers. However, if a critical reading fails to engage with the past, it risks missing out on the other parties in the conversation, on their actual positions and on other potential contributions that got lost through processes of translation and purification.

As Roetz remarks, pragmatism is a response woven in conversations with analytic and "continental" philosophies, which have a parochial character (Roetz 2013). The foundational postures of European philosophies, e.g., universalism, individualism, and human exceptionalism, are Judeo-Christian legacies cultivated by monastic orders in the European peninsula during the Middle Ages. Through the Middle Ages and onwards political powers employed these religious philosophical postures to underpin and justify their power. Thereby these notions played a fundamental role in the consolidation and expansion of Christianity. Thomistic individualism, the notion that the body and the soul, the source of human *free* will, were a single indivisible entity (Aquinas 1920), played a crucial role in the process of the "reduction" of Native communities (Owensby 2011). Individual free will was Christianity's Trojan horse. It disaggregated and disentangled Native peoples from their worlds, resulting in their alienation and ethnocide. Individualism grounded the idea that people were being liberated. They were free to renounce the oppression of their communities, free to become Christian subjects of distant monarchs. The promise of universalism rearticulated the "free-willed" into the transcendental projects of Christianity and civilised modernity (Dussel 1997, 65). At the same time, human exceptionalism established an exploitative hierarchical system that took advantage of the increasingly disenfranchised, those who could not or would not become Christian monarchic subjects and thereby were not acknowledged as persons: pagan Natives, women, enslaved people, children, animals, plants, rocks, land… These beings disassociated from one another became wards or properties to be had. These fundamental Christian postures underlie Christianity's capacity to divide and integrate others, cementing the power of medieval monarchies and colonial empires. These ideologies have been highly refractory to change and endured through the Enlightenment. Rather than dismissed, they were recast into the scientific and philosophical discourses developed through the Enlightenment (Schaeffer 2005) and weaponised through technoscientific and civilisational discourses and later through developmental discourses.

On the other hand, as is also pointed out by Roetz (2013), during the Enlightenment ' 'European' philosophies started displaying a considerable degree of richness. Western tradition attributes this awakening to the genius of individuals under liberal regimes. However, from the 14th century onwards, in the process of establishing global empires, European missionaries, explorers, and scientists forcibly came into dialogue with African, Amerindian, Asian, and Oceanic thinkers, with their realities and ways of understanding that dramatically challenged European intellectual traditions, nurturing their philosophies (Flaherty 1988, Raj 2013, Lutz and Neis

2008, Latour 2010). Ames and Hall's alternative understanding of globalism as *"mutual accessibility of cultural sensibilities"* (Hall and Ames 2003) is not just a take on contemporary dynamics. Still, the acknowledgement of a history of contact and interactions shaping and informing the development of philosophies worldwide, preceding and enabling the Enlightenment, and pragmatism in turn too.

Through this section, we examined the conversations that gave rise to the Enlightenment. We acknowledged the importance of notions like individuality and universality. We tracked their roots to their parochial Judeo-Christian context, establishing their ideological significance for the expansion of Christianity and the centralisation of monarchic power. Then we showed that European expansion enabled the mutual accessibility of cultural sensibilities that challenged European thought and gave rise to the Enlightenment. In the following section, we will examine the other part of the conversation that gave rise to pragmatism.

Native American precedents to pragmatism and their genealogical connection

If we dwell on unaccounted sources at the roots of pragmatism, it is crucial to attend to Native American Indigenous or Amerindian ways of thinking. There are many parallelisms between the tenets of pragmatism and contemporary Native American Indigenous philosophy (Waters 2021, Burkhart 2016, Cabnal 2010). However, as Pratt (2002, 19-37) demonstrates, there are precedents in Native American thinking for the characteristic tenets of pragmatism: the commitments to interaction, pluralism, community, and the understanding of growth. These distinctive features, which distinguish it from earlier and coetaneous European philosophies, were central aspects of Native American thought and had been clearly and reiteratively expressed by Native American thinkers such as Miantonomi, Neolin, Tenskatawa, and Sagoyewatha, in their dialogue with European settlers. Moreover, Pratt demonstrates how these principles also feature implicitly, in earlier Euro-American thinkers, like Benjamin Franklin. In the course of official capacities, the latter interacted intensely with Native American communities. He also established the scientific and philosophical circumstances that gave rise to early pragmaticism. Thereby, he constitutes a genealogical linkage between Native American thinkers and pragmatists (Pratt 2002, 198-206).

Pratt (2002, 77) analyses how Native notions of value designated concrete actions that were correlated with specific moral behaviours. For example, the Delaware *wunnégin:* which could be succinctly translated as "welcoming" constituted the tantamount of upright and courageous attitudes evidenced by welcoming strangers (even cannibals), engaging with them, respecting their otherness, and accommodating their needs. The most prominent aspect of pragmatism, which simultaneously defined it as a novelty in philosophy and for a long time undermined it in the eyes of European philosophers, was its central concern for practical matters. This displacement of transcendental for mundane concerns might have been a novelty for philosophy. However, as is evident in Delaware *wunnégin*, Amerindian value notions were intrinsically associated with practical actions. *Wunnégin* called for practical actions concrete implications, grounding the ethical thought of the Delaware. The idea is imbued with pluralist premises of conviviality and respect for others and their ways of being, constituting communal notions tightly associated with places.

This is not unique to the Delaware; a frequent complaint amongst missionaries in the Americas and the Caribbean would go along the following lines:

> "[The Callinago]…knew only what they could see and refused to acknowledge what they did not see or did not use… abstract notions are scarce… they lack words for spiritual and political matters" (Breton 1665).

Breton, complainingly, explains why making them believe in an invisible God for the sake of an indemonstrable transcendental existence was not an easy task.

A similar problem arises when translating Nahuatl thought and preconquest thinker Netzahualcoyotl, whose approaches to the "truth" associated moral qualities with actions and beings acting like "being rooted" instead of deriving them from abstract notions (Purcell 2021).

European missionaries actively sought to dissociate notions like *wunnégin* from their concrete actions. They employed them to translate abstract ideas of goodness, understood as whatever God provides, imposing *a priori* universal values (Pratt 2002, 99).

Missionaries similarly struggled with Native myths of origin, which accounted for the origin story of given places but remained unconcerned for universal creations or for the creation of Europeans, who were understood to have arrived and to have an impact on Native places (Pratt 2002, 147). In many cases, those myths of origin actively questioned European universalism.

The Callinago, for instance:

> "True, your God made the Heaven and Earth of France and causes the wheat to grow there, but our gods made our Country and cause our manioc to grow." (de Rochefort 1665, 288)

Such pluralist origin stories were highly problematic for European missionaries because they questioned their assumptions about universal moral schemes. Missionaries emphasised that if there were many origins, there would be as many ethical frameworks (Pratt 2002, 155). Such European thought could only be conceived as a singular truth, a position which persists (Russell 2013 [1945]). At the very best, missionaries and settlers endeavoured to tolerate the "perversities" of those who thought differently. Tolerating differences is far from respecting and accommodating them. It is indeed very distant from pluralism.

Native American thought was an essential contributor to the conversation that gave rise to pragmatism, and there is a genealogy connecting them. In the following section, we will examine how beyond the evident influence of Native thought on early pragmatism, Native thought often has gone further than pragmatism risked and offers insights to resolve some challenges of disenchantment recognised by Dewey in modern society.

Paths towards re-enchantment

In his collaboration with Hallowell (2002 [1960]), the Ojibwa chief Berens reveals a much more radical view of the principle of interaction, resolving objections of anthropocentrism levered by Russell against Deweyan pragmatism (Russell 2013 [1945], 826). Hallowell was inquiring about animism, which at the time was understood as the proclivity of Native thought towards a generalised attribution of life to inert matter or of human qualities to non-human beings. Berens, in turn, challenges the European notion of the inert as counterfactual and problematic: Of the things we experience, what does not decay, transform and change? What is inert? The Ojibwa scholar challenges how European thought unquestioningly generalises purportedly "human" attributes, like cognition or intentionality, attributing them to all humans even while humans do not necessarily exercise them continuously.

By comparison, Ojibwa thinking is more cautious: if, in the course of the due engagement, a human, an animal, or a rock behaves in ways that defy expectations and require the acknowledgement of qualities entailing what could be called personhood to negotiate with them; they may then be considered as persons. Similar understandings of personhood were found in other Native American communities. The Iroquois notion of *Orenda* designates a similar interacting agential capacity which simultaneously demonstrated the influence of diverse beings affording them to be and to become known (Hewitt 1902):

> "…in the stress of life, coming into contact or more or less close relationship with certain bodies of his environment more frequently and in a more decided manner than with the other environing bodies, and learning from these constraining relations to feel that these bodies, through the exercise of their *orenda*, controlled the conditions of his welfare and in a like manner shaped his ill-fare, he came gradually to regard these

> bodies as the masters, the arbiters, the gods, of his environment." (Hewitt 1902)

Such notions likely influenced Colden, a physician and surveyor who, after spending 30 years amongst the Mohawk and being adopted by them, turned to philosophy, criticising Newtonian inertia as passivity. Colden was a foundational figure influencing Franklin and laying the foundations of American sciences and pragmatism (Pratt 1996).

Yet, Native thinking, like that of the Ojibwa, went beyond pragmatism in its ability to engage with other beings in the world and to acknowledge them as persons, as subjects of knowledge, with whom it might be necessary to negotiate. Native ontologies, like the Ojibwa, were more radical in their pluralism, acknowledging the need for conviviality not only with other humans but with other species. In turn, that also translates into many Amerindian notions of community and their logic of place, which are not limited to humans or human interests but encompass other species of the ecological community constituting a place.

This has profound implications for Native American understandings of hospitality, growth and democracy, which consider the interests of others and not just human others.

Gunadule scholar Abadio Green Stocel (2015 [1998]) brings another echoing voice to Confucious, Hall and Ames, pointing out the limitations of

> "…the formal recognition of rights, which has occurred simultaneously with the reduction of our [Native] autonomy and the refusal of our right to decide what happens in our territories."

Green Stocel (2015 [1998]) demonstrates that Native laws are not trivial. They are not obsessed with criminals or profit, but emphasise "harmonising" activities beyond personal interests, going beyond human interests, taking into account the interest of the community, the whole ecological community, harmonising actions. As well Native laws are made not to just attend to human activities but also the activities and interests of other-than-humans the *"labour of rocks and soil"*. He makes a case examining Embera Chami laws:

> "If you need a plantain, you should plant two. For one may die. You should plant enough to provide for everyone, also for the squirrels and the monkeys."

The Embera Chami recognise how other species already depend on the fields where they plant; they have interests at stake that can place them in conflict with human interests if unaccounted for. This context reveals how the democracy of harmony is not restrictive but expansive. It is not subduing the individual to the collective but acknowledging how human and other-than-human persons can and must be considered. The more-than-human harmony counterbalances the human community's interests and hierarchies. Consequently, the Amerindian notions of being as layered co-constituted by the beings with which they interact (Santos-Granero 2012).

To account for those other interests, Native peoples developed rituals like the *Yurupari performed* by several different Amazonian peoples. Green Stocel (2015 [1998]) explains how *Yurupari* rituals, through which people take on the strength, capacities and worldviews of the beings represented by their masks, are not representative rituals but have a transformative character. They require a preparation which is not just intellectual but a matter of the heart.

> "To go to the other and come back from the other is a matter of the heart."

It is necessary to be able to empathise. Otherwise, the person cannot see through the other's eyes and cannot really come to understand:

> "People may come back and forth, but without understanding, they will step over sacred herbs thinking them weeds, profane the earth seeing it as business, and violate water with their indifference."

As in pragmatism, Amerindian thought recognises how pluralism affects the constitution of the person and how there are as many persons as people you engage with.

> "For the heart of each person to be able to fly, everyone must come together. The ritual of *yurupari* is only successful in a community; without the community, it is empty."

Amerindian thought recognises the plurality and permeability of persons and how being, not just knowing, is inherently intersubjective. This allows Amerindian thought to extend the notion of engagement in terms of epistemology, acknowledging dreaming and visionary experiences as fundamental realms of experience (Morse and Lomay 2021, Kopenawa and Albert 2013). Whereas Western thought subordinates dreaming to the walking experience, Amerindian thought approaches dreaming as real experience in and for itself.

Following Freud (1913), dreaming has been understood as a private internal construct, an expression of the private self, constituted out from memories of previous interactions and elaborating on perceptions derived from walking experience (e.g. Rosen 2018). Meanwhile, Amerindian thinkers like Kopenawa (2008) or Netzahualcoyotl (In Portilla 1995 and Maffie 2005) or give primacy to dreaming over other forms of experience, they regard dreaming as a realm where it is possible to continue to engage with and communicate with other beings in the world, both human and other-than-human.

Amerindian thought unleashes pragmatism from the straitjacket of western thought, resolving its anthropocentric inconsistencies. Amerindian thought demonstrates how Hall and Ames' notion of democracy in harmony enables ways of articulating the more-than-human into democracy. Finally, Amerindian thought challenges western understanding of dreams and experience, offering paths towards the re-enchantment of the world.

Conclusions

As Hall and Ames point out, pragmatic approaches to fostering what we deem desirable qualities in others must arise from their practices and understandings. Through that process, we develop novel sensibilities and may realise the limitations of our understanding of those qualities and alternative solutions to our aporias. Following Rotez's call for the acknowledgement of intellectual debts, we found its Amerindian roots, how Amerindian thought may liberate pragmatism from its anthropocentric inconsistencies. We can also now continue to investigate how pragmatist Confucian notions of democracy in harmony, and the importance of rituals over rights, might continue to articulate, and acknowledge, the interests of more-than-human persons.

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THE MULTIPLE HISTORIES OF PHILOSOPHY: OR, REIMAGINING MODERNITY FROM TOKUGAWA JAPAN

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ABSTRACT: This essay offers a speculative exercise in reimagining "modernity" as a diverse phenomenon occurring in multiple locales under a variety of different conditions. The exercise proceeds by method of case study, grounding its major topics and ideas in the context of Tokogawa-era Japan (1603–1867) to envision "modernity" from that standpoint. As we see, from the vantage of certain scholars in the Tokugawa, the pivotal modernizing moment would have been located in China's Song dynasty (960–1279). Through this speculative engagement with an alternative modernity, we uncover the entrenched structural barriers in academic philosophy today that work *against* precisely the outcome of diversifying our historiographical practices and, as a result, our discipline. By questioning the exclusivist use of "modernity" within the conventional narrative of philosophical historiography, we can perhaps think constructively about the prospects for enlightening episodes in our shared future.

In an edited volume of the same name, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt describes "multiple modernities" as the idea that the contemporary world is "a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs."[1] Proposing this framework as a method in sociology, he notes that it goes against mainstream views in both scholarly and popular discourses. Certainly within academic philosophy, entrenched structural barriers prevent us from conceiving of "modernity" outside of a Eurocentric worldview, reflecting the special importance of modernity and the Enlightenment for philosophy's self-identity as a discipline. This essay is a speculative exercise in reimagining modernity—or, multiple modernizing episodes—with attention to the workings of such a method in the philosophical context. It proceeds by way of case study, grounding its major topics and ideas in the context of Tokogawa-era Japan (1603–1867) to envision "modernity" from that standpoint. Through this speculative venture, we gain a better sense of the obstacles we face in the shared and ongoing project of diversifying our canon, our curriculum, and our standards for professionalization. With these obstacles in sharper focus, we can perhaps broach the question posed in this special issue: Is a "second Enlightenment," freed of Eurocentrism, possible?

"Modernity" and the Myth of European Uniqueness

In a 2017 work on the intellectual history of Western thought, Jason Ā. Josephson-Storm makes a claim that may sound puzzling to some professional philosophers when he says that, although the notion of the "Enlightenment" as a historical period dates back to nineteenth-century Germany, "'the Enlightenment' mainly came to occupy a place in the shared memory of the Anglophone world in the 1950s, and began flourishing only in the 1980s as the conflicting critiques and defenses of the Enlightenment and its presumed project proliferated."[2] (58). Of course, we philosophers are likely thinking: *Surely, we were aware of the Enlightenment before the 1950s*. And we were—this particular historiography revolving around a key turning point known as the "Enlightenment" has especially close ties to the discipline of academic philosophy.

As Jonardon Ganeri discusses in a 2011 study of modernity in India, philosophers tend to adopt a narrative that "presents modernity as involving a thorough rejection of the ancient—its texts, its thinkers, its methods—as starting afresh and from the beginning."[3] He goes on to say that this narrative "has dominated the standard history of philosophy, which speaks of a revolution in philosophy in the early seventeenth century, one in which the Aristotelianism of the schools—with its obscure terminology, doctrine of forms and final causes, and schoolmen

[1] Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," in *Multiple Modernities*, edited by Eisenstadt, 1–30 (London: Routledge, 2002), 2.

[2] Jason Ā. Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 58.

[3] Jonardon Ganeri, *The Lost Age of Reason: Philosophy in Early Modern India 1450–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1.

who 'loved Aristotle more than the truth' . . . is cast aside in favor of a new mechanical conception of natural explanation."[4] However, he concludes: "Recently, however, this familiar account has begun to unravel."[5] He cites sources such as John Cottingham, who says that "any picture of Descartes as a lone innovator setting out on a new quest for certainty cannot survive serious scrutiny,"[6] and Dan Garber, who points out that Descartes' correspondents did not find his project seriously in conflict with their own progressive Aristotelian ambitions, and hence speaks of "the revolution that did not happen in 1637."[7] In other words, the so-called Enlightenment is a moment named in hindsight that dramatically over-simplifies the complexities and nuances of the historical unfolding of events.

Related to the problem of over-simplifying the historical situation are the issues that result from a tendency to view the presumed watershed of the Enlightenment as special to the European context. Josephson-Storm comments that "the founders of the human sciences all tended to take as a given the idea that there was something distinctive and original in 'modern' European thought and culture, even as they treated the specifics of European history as the blueprint for universal history that all cultures were supposed to follow."[8] That is to say, *all* history was believed to unfold along a developmental trajectory from ancient and primitive modes of thought to modern and enlightened ones; but, tellingly, Europe was believed to hit all the important benchmarks first, ahead of other cultures. We see such a dynamic at play when we claim, on the one hand, that philosophy addresses questions of universal human concern and, on the other, that circa fourth century BCE all the numerous cultures worldwide lacked philosophy except for the Athenians. Josephson-Storm continues: "There were necessarily invested interests, both colonial and disciplinary, in maintaining this claim to uniqueness."[9] As philosophers, we must ask ourselves: What are the "disciplinary interests" of philosophy in "maintaining this claim to uniqueness"?

I have discussed elsewhere,[10] and it bears repeating: the historical claim regarding the uniquely Greek origin of philosophy emerges concurrently with the development of theories of racial essentialism in the late 1700s, as discussed by Peter K. J. Park in his 2014 book *Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon*. As he says: "That philosophy was exclusively of Greek origin was an opinion held by only three published historians of philosophy in the eighteenth century."[11] Namely, these were Christoph Meiners (1747–1810), Wilhelm Tennemann (1761–1819), and Dieterich Tiedemann (1748–1803). Part of Park's research agenda in the book involves demonstrating the outsized influence of these three thinkers on Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and G. W. F Hegel (1770–1831) and, accordingly, the outsized influence of Kant and Hegel on the academic discipline of philosophy today.

As Park says, there were numerous philosophical historiographies produced in and before the time of Kant. These contextualize the influence of the Athenians in a variety of ways, but the majority did not posit the Greeks as the originators of philosophy, and many thought that Greek culture itself developed from Asian migration in the region. By my count, Park surveys over twenty his-

[4] Ganeri, *The Lost Age of Reason*, 1. Ganeri's citation is to Christia Mercer, "The Vitality and Importance of Early-Modern Aristotelianism," in Tom Sorell, ed., *The Rise of Modern Philosophy: The Tension between the New and Traditional Philosophies from Machiavelli to Leibniz*, 33–70 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 34.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Qtd. in Ganeri, *The Lost Age of Reason*, 1. Ganeri's citation is to John Cottingham, "A New Start? Cartesian Metaphysics and the Emergence of Modern Philosophy," in Tom Sorell, ed., *The Rise of Modern Philosophy: The Tension between the New and Traditional Philosophies from Machiavelli to Leibniz*, 145–166 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 150.
[7] Ibid. Ganeri's citation is to Dan Garber, "Descartes, the Aristotelians, and the Revolution That Did Not Happen in 1637," *The Monist* 71.6 (1988): 471–476.
[8] Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment*, 62.
[9] Ibid.
[10] See Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach and Leah Kalmanson, *A Practical Guide to World Philosophies: Selves, Worlds, and Ways of Knowing* (London: Bloomsbury 2021); and "Views from Everywhere," *Aeon* (March 7, 2022), https://aeon.co/essays/how-academic-philosophy-can-become-truly-diverse-and-global.
[11] Peter K. J. Park, *Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2014), 8.

tories of philosophy written between the late 1500s and late 1800s, which either attribute the origins of philosophy to a non-Greek source, or which locate multiple origins of philosophy across multiple peoples, including, for example, Chaldeans, Jews, Persians, Indians, Phoenicians, Phrygians, Egyptians, Ethiopians, Libyans, Thracians, Druids, the Malabar, Chinese, Japanese, and, in one case, "Canadian," i.e., Indigenous American.[12] What happened to this lost enthusiasm for diversity among our colleagues in the discipline of philosophy? How has the theory of Greek uniqueness come to play such a prominent role in our historiography, our curriculum, our canon, and our disciplinary identity?

Park's book has generated debate and discussion, as have other recent attempts to challenge the persistent Eurocentrism of philosophy. We need only recall the rowdy comments section at *The New York Times* post "If Philosophy Won't Diversify, Let's Call It What It Truly Is" and the subsequent *Daily Nous* blog posts addressing the uproar.[13] Despite the disagreements over Park's work, philosophers must seriously consider the fact that the theory of the uniquely Greek origins of philosophy came to prominence only alongside an emerging racial schematic that, for the first time, allowed the Greeks to be called "white." The historical dynamics that led to the slow whittling down of our philosophical lineage to a single origin have also established the undeniably Eurocentric canon and curriculum that undergird philosophy's disciplinary identity today.

European Uniqueness and the Discipline of Philosophy

By saying that Eurocentrism indelibly marks academic philosophy today, I do not mean our individual research specializations (which may indeed be diverse) but rather the structures of our academic programs that produce and maintain our standards for professionalization. For example, consider the usual "history of philosophy" courses such as "Ancient Philosophy" and "Modern Philosophy," which are common core requirements in most US departments. These do not usually begin with the Chaldeans, Phoenicians, Indians, or Egyptians—rather, they recapitulate the whittled down historiography that traces a single path from "ancient Greek" to "modern Europe." For another example, consider departments that do include courses in areas such as Asian and African philosophies, but only as electives, or as candidates for a single "non-Western" degree requirement. All in all, this gives the impression that non-Western traditions are monolithic, ahistorical, and marginal to the discipline. In other words, the core Eurocentric philosophy courses are mapped out and organized with attention to internally diverse content areas (logic, ethics, epistemology) and a historical trajectory that communicates intellectual progress (from ancient to modern), whereas most non-Western classes are named by geographic region ("Chinese Philosophy") or sectarian title ("Buddhist Philosophy"). Students learn a lot just by looking at the course catalogue.

Note here that the issue of historical periodization is a structural problem that cannot be solved by including more non-Eurocentric content in our existing ancient or modern courses or by offering separate courses titled something like "Ancient Chinese Philosophy." Why? As postcolonial theorists such as Dipesh Chakrabarty have long been saying, "ancient" and "modern" are not neutral historical markers but rather refer to a teleological view of European progress.[14] To call the scholars of Chi-

[12] Ibid., 70–77.

[13] I.e., the op-ed by Jay L. Garfield and Bryan W. Van Norden, "If Philosophy Won't Diversify, Let's Call It What It Really Is," *The New York Times*, May 11, 2016 (https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/11/opinion/if-philosophy-wont-diversify-lets-call-it-what-it-really-is.html). See also *The Daily Nous*, "Philosophical Diversity in UN Philosophy Departments" (http://dailynous.com/2016/05/11/philosophical-diversity-in-u-s-philosophy-departments/) and "When Someone Suggests Expanding the Canon" (http://dailynous.com/2016/05/13/when-someone-suggests-expanding-the-canon/).

[14] See, for example, Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History," *Representations* No. 37 (1992): 1–26.

na's Han dynasty "ancient" is already to acquiesce to this Eurocentric accounting.

Another option would be to refer to different traditions with terms indigenous to their own accounting practices and internally diverse subject areas. Examples might include Song-dynasty Lixue, Kamakura Buddhism, or in the case we will discuss below, Tokugawa Ruism. But this option speaks to our central dilemma: there is no coherent place for a class named "Tokugawa Ruism" in our current curriculum. It simply does not fit on the Kantian historiography that still structures the discipline of philosophy at departmental and curricular levels.

Nonetheless, let us imagine the following version of Ganeri's earlier quote: "a revolution in philosophy in the ~~early seventeenth century~~ *Song dynasty*, one in which the ~~Aristotelianism~~ *Mengzi-orthodoxy* of the schools—with its obscure terminology, doctrine of ~~forms and final causes~~ *rigid hierarchies*, and schoolmen who 'loved ~~Aristotle~~ *passing the civil service exam* more than the truth'. . . is ~~cast aside~~ *creatively re-invigorated* in favor of a new ~~mechanical~~ *egalitarian* conception of ~~natural explanation~~ *self and cosmos*."[15] The revisions to Ganeri's quotation invoke Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), his pedagogical reforms at the academies of the Song (960–1279), and his editorial reforms to the literati canon. As this speculative exercise suggests, various negotiations with the past and revitalizations of traditions occur and recur in different times and places. As a speculative philosopher who sought universal "principle" (*li* 理) via "investigating things" (*gewu* 格物) and "extending knowledge" (*zhizhi* 致知), and moreover as a pivotal figure in the civilizational shifts marked by the Song, Zhu Xi certainly seems to be part of a "modernity" that occurred much earlier than Europe's. Or, as JeeLiu Loo says in her exhaustive study of Song scholarship, the intellectual period of Zhu Xi and his colleagues is "comparable to what 'Modern Philosophy' accomplished in Western philosophy," in that it "revitalized classical philosophy and expanded the traditional philosophical discourse, adding new dimensions and attaining new heights."[16] But the myth of European uniqueness makes it difficult for us to speak of modernity—or modernities—in this pluralistic way. As we will next see, to reimagine "modernity" along these lines requires major structural interventions that ask us to rethink the entire history of philosophy and how we teach it.

Reimagining Modernity from Tokugawa Ruism

As indicated, we speak here of "Ruism" and not "Confucianism," a word choice related to the overall issues raised in this essay. The latter term portrays the historical figure of "Confucius" (Kongzi 孔子, 551–479 BCE) as the founder of a philosophical or religious movement. Its usage dates to early European studies of Chinese traditions. However, the tradition known in Chinese as *rujia* (儒家) well predates the life of Kongzi, and Kongzi himself denies being an innovator.[17] Rather, he was a member of the "lineage" or "family" (*jia* 家) of the *ru* (儒), a term better translated as "scholar" or "literati." The Ru were members of China's educated elite: they were most often employed as educators or government officials, they were versed in the classic philosophical and literary texts, and they were qualified to preside over various state rites and civic ceremonies as well as the rituals performed at ancestral shrines. Viewing "Ruism" as a generic category, like "philosophy"—and moreover a category that may have some cross-cultural applicability—is part of the project of the case study and thought experiment that follows.

Our goal is to revisit early cross-cultural encounters that took place before certain European terms and categories, such as "philosophy" or "religion," were translated into Asian languages. The episode below is set in Japan

[15] Ganeri, *The Lost Age of Reason*, 1, with my revisions in italics.

[16] JeeLoo Liu, *Neo-Confucianism: Metaphysics, Mind, and Morality* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 2.
[17] *Lunyu* 論語, 3.14.

the sixth year of the Hōei period (1709 CE) and involves two main characters: the Tokugawa Ruist Arai Kimiyoshi 新井君美, who published under the penname Hakuseki 白石, and the Sicilian priest Giovanni Battista Sidotti, who had snuck into Japan illegally to evangelize. Upon arrival, Sidotti was arrested and detained by officials who called on the assistance of Hakuseki, a well-known Ruist intellectual of the time who specialized in so-called Western studies. This episode is discussed and translated in part in Jason Ānanda Josephson's 2012 work *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, a study of the difficulties that Japanese scholars and officials encountered in their attempts to parse the meaning of the word "religion" from European languages. Most of the translations below follow Josephson, though I have re-translated some passages from Hakuseki's original text to highlight issues most relevant to our current topic. The correct attribution for specific passages is marked in the notes.

During Hakuseki's interrogation, the priest Sidotti begins by trying to introduce Hakuseki to the way the world works, as he understands it: "In general, each section of the world has its own doctrine [*kyōhō* 教法]."[18] The terminology reflects Hakuseki's own attempt to translate what Sidotti is saying. Presumably, they got by with Sidotti's Italian, Hakuseki's knowledge of Portuguese and Dutch (reflecting Japan's major trade partners), and perhaps some shared Latin. As Josephson explains, *kyōhō* had a distinctly Buddhist usage in Japanese, meaning literally "teaching of the *dharma*." Thus Hakuseki's rendition would imply, for his Japanese readers, "that every region of the world has its own type of Buddhism, its own dharma [i.e., *hō* 法]."[19] Sidotti continues: "There are only three different types [*shū* 宗, lit. lineages or sects]. One of these is called Christian. This is the law of Jesus. . . . The second type is called heathen or gentile. . . . The third [type] is called Mohammedan."[20] Hakuseki is confused by the heathen sect—his translation of *shū* 宗 indicates that he is thinking of all three types as unified lineages or sets of teachings. He says: "When I asked him about this heathen law or sect, he told me that they erect numerous buddhas and serve them. But if this was in fact a teaching, he failed to explain in what it consisted."[21]

Then Sidotti goes on to say something that only adds to the confusion: "Furthermore," he says, "in China they have a style of reverence, and they call this learning 'Confucius' [*konfuujosu* コンフウジョス]."[22] Note, here, Hakuseki attempts to reproduce Sidotti's Latinized pronunciation of Kongzi's name with the Japanese syllabary used for foreign terms. This requires some explanation for Hakuseki's Japanese readers. For one, he clarifies that the school of "*konfuujosu*" refers to "Ruist matters" (*jusha no koto* 儒者の事).[23] In this moment, we see a sort of power play of categorization, even though perhaps neither Hakuseki nor Sidotti are aware of it. Sidotti is working with a still nascent European understanding of religion as a category, which in his time tended to include only three or four members (often, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and "idolatry" or "heathenism").[24] For Sidotti, this thing called "Confucianism" is possibly included under "religion," but ambiguously. Hakuseki takes this European classification and replaces it with the more familiar Japanese schema, which differentiates dharma and the Ru-lineage as two separate categories, not members of any higher category such as "philosophy" or "religion."

But, for Hakuseki, this results in inconsistencies. The conversation was originally, he thought, about different dharmas in other parts of the world. How do

[18] Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, *Seiyōkibun* 西洋記聞, 83. My translation.
[19] Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 69. Bracketed material is mine. Note this author also publishes under the name Josephson-Storm and his works are listed accordingly in the list of references.
[20] Josephson's translation from *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 263. Bracketed material is Josephson's.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., with my modifications. Bracketed material is mine.
[23] Hakuseki, *Seiyōkibun*, 84.
[24] For more on the history of the category, see Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention World Religions: Or How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005).

Ruist matters relate to the three dharma-types that Sidotti had just mentioned? Hakuseki speculates:

> This is what we call the study of the arising of things [*shizen no gaku* 自然之学] of Ru-scholars [*jusha* 儒者]. According to Sidotti's teachings, the cosmos, earth, and myriad things did not come into existence by themselves. According to him, Deus [*deusu* デウス] created all of these things. However, in contrast to this, for the Ru, the Great Ultimate [*taikyoku* 大極] produced the initial distinction [*ryogi* 両儀, i.e., *yin* and *yang*, or earth and cosmos]. Therefore, the Great Ultimate is another word for structure [*ri* 理] itself [a major cosmological term]. It is said to be nothing more than this.[25]

This explanation, rich with the cosmological assumptions of the Ruist tradition, leaves out a point so obvious that Hakuseki sees no need to mention it to his Japanese readers—namely, the Ruists believe that the cosmos, earth, and myriad things *do* come into existence by themselves, based on certain views about the relation between structure or principle (*ri* 理) and the matter-energy matrix of existing things (*ki* 氣). The study of how things arise (i.e., *shizen no gaku*自然之学) is the investigation of the principle according to which things spontaneously self-generate—in particular, the investigation centers on the principle, or *ri*, according to which primordial *ki* tends toward spontaneous differentiation and eventual diversification into the myriad things. This is why Hakuseki notes a contrast between Sidotti's notion of Deus and the Ruist concept of the cosmological principle known as the Great Ultimate. As he says, the Great Ultimate is just another word for *ri*, not a separate entity like the creator deity "Deus."

This passage shows remarkable complexity, especially given how much miscommunication was going on between these two. Hakuseki readily picks up on the distinction between saying that things are created by a creator and saying that things self-generate. He also seems to appreciate the nuanced point of describing the Great Ultimate as a principle of self-generation but not itself an entity like Deus. To our ears today, Hakuseki and Sidotti are having what might be called an interreligious dialogue, or a philosophical discussion of cosmology, or maybe a theological disagreement—but accurately characterizing their conversation is difficult. There were no words in Japanese at the time that would have corresponded to religion or philosophy as major categories. That is to say, Hakuseki would have had difficulties understanding the claim that Buddhism and Ruism are "two types of religion," or "two branches of philosophy," or so forth.

Of course, some readers may associate both Buddhism and Ruism in the Chinese context with two of the "Three Teachings" (*sanjiao* 三教), a term dating back to at least the Tang dynasty (618–907 BCE), which Hakuseki certainly would have known. Yet, as Josephson has said, in Hakuseki's time (and, I would add, before), *jiao* (Jp. *kyō* 教) could be used variously to refer to "divisions within Buddhism, distinctions between Daoism and Confucianism, and different strands of intellectual thought (such as different schools of painting or mathematics)."[26] In other words, *jiao* is so broad that it includes "teachings" from areas well outside either philosophy or religion. Although *sanjiao* may pick out three especially important, even exemplary, teachings, nonetheless this phrase does not thereby group all three into a separate category that itself might indicate a specific type of *jiao*.

This underscores the point that, for Hakuseki, dharma and the Ru-lineage were not types of anything else but were themselves types, that is, generic categories with some degree of cross-cultural scope. After all, he had no difficulty accepting the idea that Sidotti was going to tell him about different dharmas in other parts of the world. And, so long as we recall that the Ru-lineage refers to a general type of

[25] Hakuseki, *Seiyōkibun*, 84. Bracketed material is mine.

[26] Josepgson, "When Buddhism Became a 'Religion': Religion and Superstition in the Writings of Inoue Enryō," *Japanese journal of religious studies* 33/1 (2006): 143–168; 144.

scholarly practice, not to the sect of the followers of "Confucius," then we can begin to imagine a world—Hakuseki's world—where modernity happened in the lifetime of the great Ruist modernizer Zhu Xi.

In Hakuseki's world, the confusion over Sidotti's mention of Ruist matters is understandable. Once Sidotti brings up Ruism, the conversation is now no longer about things somehow classifiable as "dharma." Sidotti appears to be mixing categories or applying terms inconsistently. Because of this, Hakuseki is forced to conclude: "The Westerner's explanations are incoherent and superficial, and therefore not worthy of further discussion."[27] To imagine a world where dharma and Ruist matters are still coherently distinguished from each is to imagine modernity from the vantage point of Tokugawa Ruism, where the Song dynasty serves as the pivotal period in which key dynamics between major category terms were negotiated. From such a vantage point, we might revisit Hakuseki's question, "What type of dharma is 'religion'?" We might ask, "What type of Ruist study is 'philosophy'?" rather than, "Is Confucianism a 'virtue ethics'?" Or, we might ask, "What are the dharma-aspects and Ruist aspects of 'philosophy'?" not, "What are the philosophical and religious aspects of Buddhism?"

These questions can be difficult to parse—they push back at categories that function today as default generic classifications. The view of modernity from Tokugawa Japan raises *these* questions, in particular, precisely because Europe's notion of modernity is so deeply tied to the developments that lead to "philosophy" and "religion" becoming the distinct categories that we now take as norms—namely, the rejection of the theological strictures of Scholasticism and the embrace of a new method of naturalistic investigation called "philosophy" (to invoke the earlier quote from Ganeri). Hence, through this case study of the Hakuseki–Sidotti interview, we gain the vantage point needed to see a different modernity, one that produced different default categories and disciplinary practices, and one that shaped worldviews all around East Asia until the abrupt importation of a host of European and English words that entered into translation via colonial pressures in the 1800s—not only "philosophy" and "religion," but terms such as "nature," "science," "society," and so forth.[28]

Alternative Modernities and the Discipline of Philosophy

My hope is that this case study opens not just a vantage point but a vista in which new worlds of philosophy can be imagined. From within this rich landscape, we may now return to the question: Where might we fit a class called "Tokugawa Ruism" in our current philosophy curriculum? Moreover, how might we fit it, so that it is not marginalized as an elective option but coherently contextualized within an intellectual history whose major points of development include eras such as the Song dynasty and the Kamakura period? As we have seen, our current curricular structures reflect a philosophical historiography rooted in racial essentialism, a disciplinary identity rooted in one Europe-centered episode of modernity, and a canon shaped over time by an increasingly narrow understanding of what counts as philosophy.

Were we to launch a serious engagement with Tokugawa Ruism, philosophy itself would be transformed. To find a place for this course among our degree requirements would necessitate structural changes at the institutional level, involving the disciplinary practic-

[27] Josephson's translation from *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 263.

[28] Josephson, in *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, looks in particular at how the translation of "religion" into Japanese required corresponding translations for terms such as "secular" and "superstition." For more on the translation of political terms, see Douglas Howland, *Translating the West: Language and Political Reason in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001). A quick search will turn up multiple articles devoted to the topic of the difficulties of translating "nature" into either Chinese or Japanese, in particular, and to the translation practices of Meiji-era scholars and officials, in general.

es that regulate what a philosophy major is and what it means to obtain one. Accommodating such changes would produce hybridized discipline that would likely be unrecognizable to our more mainstream colleagues. Here, I have barely scratched the surface—not only would the standard curriculum and canon be revised but our day-to-day practices as scholars might shift as we explore the contemplative methods and ritualized forms of study common in traditions such as Ruism.[29]

In the end, the most constructive response, at least in the short term, may be for philosophy departments as a group to embrace a certain amount of messiness. In other words, a neat and tidy historical narrative is almost always misleading, just as a neat and tidy canon is almost always exclusionary. The best course of action may be to let our curricular and degree requirements reflect the realities of those complex and nuanced historical developments that cannot be captured in simplified terms like "the Enlightenment." We may also need to embrace a certain amount of variance across departments regionally. My own department could indeed offer a class on Tokugawa Ruism, and we could do our best to make the changes needed to do so without marginalizing it. The results for us, in terms of the hybridized identity this would produce, would look quite different from a department fortunate enough to employ a specialist in Yorùbá cosmology, for example.

Those of us working in any so-called non-Western area often feel like tokenized representatives of diversity, regardless of our own demographic data—i.e., I am white and Jewish, so perhaps not the best representative for Tokugawa Ruism. Nonetheless, I would like to imagine a vista from which such specialists are not tokens, but anchors, or compelling centers of gravity whose very presence begins the work of shifting the disciplinary narrative in our own places of employment. This is already happening and has been in progress for years. My goal in this brief essay, through a speculative exercise in reimagining modernity from the Tokugawa vista, has been to unearth some of the deeper assumptions that stand in the way of such progress so as to facilitate the conversations needed to continue the work.

Concluding Thoughts

Perhaps this speculative venture has gone beyond even what Eisenstadt meant by "multiple modernities," as one might argue that the consequences of this line of thought, if pursued, would reduce history to a mere series of events and turn historiography into chronology. For his part, Heiner Roetz, in responding to Eisenstadt, resists the idea of "multiple modernities." As he says, the Enlightenment is not just any pivotal moment in a given culture's intellectual history but a specific pivot that completes the turn initiated in the so-called Axial Age. Indeed, when this axis is reduced "to an explanatory device in historico-sociological functionalism [then] 'axis' is no longer the *world historic* moment when the *unity of mankind* becomes imaginable in an exemplary (rather than exclusive) manner, but the *historic* moment of the formation of *different* cultural programs that form basic patterns of long-term developments, the multiplicity of which finally produces culturally distinct 'multiple' modernities."[30] In other words, Roetz resists a plurality of modernities not because he sees modernity as the province of one culture, but because he refuses to abandon the possibility that modernity might yet lay claim to us, demanding that we ourselves complete the project of

[29] For more on this, see my article "The Ritual Methods of Comparative Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West* 67, 2 (2017): 399–418; and "Theory and Method in the Philosophy of Religion in China's Song Dynasty," in *Global-Critical Philosophy of Religion: Critical Methods and Theories*, ed., Nathan Loewen and Tim Knepper (London: Bloomsbury, forthcoming).

[30] Heiner Roetz, "The Axial Age Theory A Challenge to Historicism or an Explanatory Device of Civilization Analysis? With a Look at the Normative Discourse in Axial Age China," in *The Axial Age and Its Consequences*, edited by Robert N. Bellah and Hans Joas, 248–273 (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2012), 255.

"transcending [our] own historical and cultural framework in the direction of a 'modern,' all-encompassing communicative orientation."[31] In defending Karl Jaspers' notion of the Axial Age, Roetz argues against cobbling together a "pseudo universalism that consists in the generalization of the beliefs of specific systems of self-assertion" in favor of "a true universalism that overcomes the logic of self-assertion itself."[32]

But, in the end, I am too Levinasian not to worry about the totalizing reach of any purported "true universalism."[33] On the one hand, the Ruists involved in the modernity of the Song were certainly making universal proposals, addressing themselves to *all* of humanity, on the assumption that their baseline terms and categories had cross-cultural scope. If we do not engage the universalizing aims of their work as potentially laying claim to us, then we have failed to engage them seriously. On the other hand, I wonder if our striving toward universality functions best as just that—i.e., a *striving* toward an ideal that remains regulative. The attempt to render the ideal in a real and concrete form is where, as it were, we run into problems. This seems to be Eisenstadt's point when he notes the "tension between [the] inclusivist universalist claims [of Axial cultures] and their exclusivist tendency, rendering their institutionalization potentially destructive."[34] In other words, the risk of totality—as *totalitarianism*—rapidly increases the more we believe that we have authentically captured the universal. Better, then, to treat universality as a perpetually regulative ideal, a dynamic that reflects, in the words of Bret Davis, "the inexorable condition of human philosophizing, which always takes place *between* particular and universal as *a particular approach to universality*."[35]

Hence, though there may be common ground to find, I do not want to make the more robust assertion that Eurocentrism and Sinocentrism can eventually be reconciled within a more inclusive universal. Against all such all-encompassing aims, I cannot help but welcome that space of incommensurability that serves as the guard against what Levinas would call "totalization" or the editors of this special issue have called "bad universalism." I suspect that the only "good universalism" is one that remains on the horizon, and one toward which we strive, but one that we acknowledge we see only from our own cultural and historical perspective. My hope, indeed, is that the exercise of imagining modernity from the vantage of Tokugawa Japan is precisely to enter into the striving toward the universal from a different direction.

This is not to concede to relativism. Rather, to feel the compelling pull of multiple world-historiographies, to feel the striving toward universality from a new vantage point, is to irreversibly broaden one's perspective. From there, we do not remain pulled in two directions forever—like Levinas might say, we approach each other in conversation.[36] If a "second Enlightenment" is possible, I would hope that its sense of universality is perpetually disturbed by the specter of *other* universalities. This

[31] Ibid., 266–67.
[32] Ibid., 255.
[33] E.g., Leah Kalmanson, "The Messiah and the Bodhisattva: Anti-Utopianism Re-Revisited," *Shofar* 30, 4 (Summer 2012): 113–125.
[34] Shmuel Eisenstadt, "The Axial Conundrum between Transcendental Visions and Vicissitudes of Their Institutionalizations: Constructive and Destructive Possibilities," in *The Axial Age and Its Consequences*, edited by Robert N. Bellah and Hans Joas, 277–293 (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2012), 277.
[35] Bret W. Davis, "Introduction: What is Japanese Philosophy?" in *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Philosophy*, edited by Bret W. Davis, 1–82 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 1.
[36] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alfonso Lingis, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979), 51. However, I am pushing Levinas's point beyond his original meaning, and I agree with the insightful input from one of my anonymous reviewers that the comparison between Levinasian alterity and cultural difference is fraught. I would add that Levinas's own track record on discussing differences between and Asian and European cultures is highly problematic. For context, see Simon Critchley, "Five Problems in Levinas's View of Politics and the Sketch of a Solution to Them," *Political Theory* Vol. 3, No. 2 (2004): 172–185. See also Levinas's discussion of Asian historical consciousness in his *Unforeseen History*, translated by Nidra Poller (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 108. I discuss these issues in more depth in a forthcoming work "Jewish Perspectives on Charity: A Philosophy for Hopeless Times," in *Applying Jewish Ethics: Beyond the Rabbinic Tradition*, edited by Jennifer Thompson and Allison Wolf, in production with Lexington Books. I'd like to thank the anonymous reviewer for an especially rich engagement and only wish I were able to incorporate the constructive feedback more concretely.

is not the menace of relativism but an acknowledgment that the modernizing task can never be safely set aside with the confidence that we have finally "got it right." In the words of the Rabbi Tarfon (c. first century CE), "It is not your responsibility to finish the work, but neither are you free to desist from it."[37]

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[37] *Pirkei Avot* 2:15–16.

Variable

SUBJECTIVITY AS A TOOL – ADVOCATING STRONG NOTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL SUBJECTIVITY IN RORTY

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ABSTRACT: There is a well-known tension in Rorty when it comes to our linguistic agency. Famously, Rorty follows Wittgenstein, Quine, Davidson and others in that there are no private languages. However, in Rorty, the innovator of our language is an individual - the "strong poet" - who Brandom calls Rorty's "genius self". This tension in Rorty is well described and has been problematized many times and from various angles. Going against the common compulsion to mitigate Rorty's commitment to individuality and normative detachment, this article provides a rationale for what I will call Rorty's "vocabulary of rupture" which follows: A) from fully implementing Rorty's particular version of antirepresentationalism, B) from taking temporality into account. Concerning A, once we embrace that words and theories do not represent the world as it is in itself but rather function to serve particular aims, there are contexts by which insisting on the possibility of normative detachment becomes interesting and worth pursuing. This is the case when the aim of writing is to motivate people to engage in democratic practices and embark on creative endeavors. As for B, once we bring temporality into play, we can switch between the Davidsonian perspectives of triangulation and radical interpretation to freely choose which perspective we favor for describing the moment of emergence of new vocabularies, in that we can favor either the first or the third-person account of meaning.

Keywords: neopragmatism, antirepresentationalism, conceptual engineering, subjectivity, temporality, normativity, Rorty, Davidson

Introduction

With this article I investigate Rorty's use of individual subjectivity and the possibility of normative rupture in the various contexts of his writings. In particular, I address a critique that has often been given of Rorty's account, namely his position in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989, from here on CIS) and beyond. In these sources Rorty has been understood as committing the romantic pitfall of championing autonomous self-creation (Hampe 2006), because individuals seem to have the power to detach themselves from the normative constraint of the public domain. This critique comes in various flavors, the most prominent of which are political (e.g. Fraser 1999) and semantic (e.g. Ramberg 2011), with both lines highlighting that radical normative detachment from the linguistic or socio-political community is untenable.

The political version of the discussion centers around Rorty's private-public-distinction in CIS, and it has produced a large body of scholarship. The usual technique employed by Rorty-defenders in this political discussion is to try to give a version of his account which either weakens the private-public distinction by retranslating his individualistic version of vocabularies into a community first approach, or to distinguish between the differing ends of the two spheres. When reading the later interpretation, we understand Rorty as insisting that "what can be considered their enemy (egotism) and the method of redemption (self–enlargement) are akin in character" (Llanera 2016, 334). An example of the former approach is Leypoldt defending Rorty from Shusterman's attacks by stating that "[…] it is hard to see why Rorty would have to be told […] that firm public-private distinctions are 'untenable because the private self and the language it builds upon in self-creation are always already socially constituted and structured by a common field'" (Leypoldt 2008, 150, cit. Shusterman 1992, 259).[1] The latter approach is Tracy Llanera's sophisticated proposal.

The semantic discussion is less well researched and is connected to the political debate insofar as, for Rorty, the private and public sphere are cashed out in terms of two different vocabularies. However, the semantic discussion is not about Rorty's particular formulation of the private-public distinction in CIS but about Rorty's shift-

[1] See further e.g. Curtis 2015, Kremer 2009, Müller 2014, Rodeiro 2018, who " hopes to definitively dismiss the strict interpretation [i.e. the sharp distinction between private and public domain] as being wholly inconsistent with Rorty's own views and overall philosophical project" 2018, 2. Kremer stresses that Rorty "emphasizes the distinction only on a theoretic level" (2009, 195). I intend to reclaim the sharp distinction, for strategic reasons. On Rorty's political theory more largely see e.g. Bacon 2007, Bacon&Dianda 2021, Chin 2018, Dielemann 2019, Voparil 2006.

ing between insisting on the primacy of the first-person stance and the primacy of the third-person stance when it comes to meanings and minds in general. In this line of critique, Ramberg problematizes Rorty's use of the "final" vocabulary metaphor in CIS, against the background of his positions in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979, from here on PMN) (Ramberg 2011). In the same vein, Brandom criticizes Rorty's "genius self" - a critique to which Rorty seems to succumb in a late discussion when he admits that one "can never do more than invent some variations on old themes, give the language of the tribe some new twists" (Rorty 2000, 188).

This article is a contribution to this second debate. Going against the grain, I will *insist* on Rorty's "genius self" and the possibility of normative closure of vocabularies by giving a rationale for why Rorty stresses this possibility and what he needs it for. The move centers around two key-assumptions: a) Rorty needs to be read as a Rortyan, i.e. also the language of his own books follows the Rortyan logic of being a move in Cultural Politics (hence Rorty is not representing but taking linguistic action); b) that the dimension of temporality is paramount when talking about meaning and meaning-change.

The upshot is, within a Rortyan antirepresentational framework, and when temporality is taken into account, one can go *both ways*. Namely, one can insist on either continuity or rupture with public norms when describing the change of vocabularies. Further, Rorty *did* go both ways, as he insisted on continuity with the normative realm when writing in the genre of semantics, and on rupture when writing in the genre of political theory. To have this flexibility of focus and narrative is a corollary of Rorty's "Politics first!"-credo or his belief that there is no non-value-laden inquiry and no purely descriptive theory. For Rorty, language is a tool, not a medium of representation. Theories and language serve certain goals, and it is the usefulness to these goals that determines the validity of the respective theory or the adequacy of a particular language.

There is a historical trajectory to the strategic-operative dimension of Rorty's writings. In his piece "Recent metaphilosophy" from 1961, he defines philosophy as:

> the greatest game of all precisely because it is the game of 'changing the rules'. This game can be won by attending to the patterns by which these rules can be changed, and formulating rules in terms of which to judge changes of rules. […] Since any metaphysical, epistemological, or axiological arguments can be defeated by redefinition, nothing remains but to make a virtue of necessity and to study this process of redefinition itself […] (Rorty 1961, 301).

As Ramberg and I have recently argued, Rorty took a more engaged approach to the process of redefinition in later years, looking to *bring about* change in certain directions rather than to merely *study it*. In short, Rorty switched from being a philosophy scholar to being a philosophical activist (Huetter-Almerigi & Ramberg 2022). Pushing this line of thought further, I am arguing here that insisting on a strong concept of subjectivity in CIS - his "genius self", his insistence on the metaphor of "final" vocabularies - was Rorty's way of ensuring the possibility of *radical* change by keeping high people's motivation to embark on creative and socially disruptive endeavors. Putting it in a catchphrase, 'Don't think about what subjectivity *is*! Think about what "subjectivity"-talk *lets you do*!'

The outline of the article is as follows; I will, first 1) recap the general problem with subjectivity and the final vocabulary-metaphor (= the rupture-view) in semantic terms in Rorty by detailing Bjørn Ramberg's critique. Secondly, I will try to give a Rortyan answer to this critique by: (2.1) insisting on the importance of purposes for the evaluation of language and theory in light of what Brandom has called Rorty's "vocabulary-vocabulary", i.e. Rorty's successor notion to the language-theory-distinction, and by sketching how this connects to what is now known as "conceptual engineering"; (2.2) differentiating between Ramberg's and Rorty's varying purposes and showing how their language choice relates to their agendas; (2.3) giving a picture of Rorty's version of language and theory-change that takes the key notion of

temporality into account and follows the logic of continuity and rupture. (2.4) provides a rationale to Rorty's language-choice by insisting on the motivational character of individual agency in western, liberal contexts; (2.5) strengthens this position by giving another example - this time not in political theory, but in the context of philosophy of mind - where Rorty endorsed the possibility of theory-reduction. Therewith, I will be providing a blueprint for developing the possibility of anomalous supervenience of vocabularies.

In sum, the article makes a case for why what I intend to call the "vocabulary of rupture" - i.e. Rorty's strong notion of subjectivity and the possibility of normative detachment – is a convenient tool; I will show what its theoretical underpinnings are and how it is connected with the "vocabularies of continuity", which Rorty's critics favor.

1. Subjectivity as intersubjective pattern – Ramberg's critique

It is well known that Rorty subscribed to what Ramberg calls "Davidson's revolution", i.e. that subjectivity and rationality are both intersubjective categories. This includes the "fundamental commitment to the priority of the third-person stance in philosophical accounts of meaning and mind" (Ramberg 2011, 47). "*Contents*, whether of sentences expressed or of thoughts entertained or of action-explaining attitudes, have their identities settled by their location in patterns of such contents that are fixed in *radical interpretation*" (Ramberg 2011, 47).

Radical interpretation is Davidson's account of how meaning gets (temporarily) fixed. Building on Quine's concept of radical translation, from *Word and Object* (1960), radical interpretation takes place between two or more speakers in a common environment and is not restricted to the idealized situation of the field linguist, who is trying to deal with an agent who speaks a radically unknown idiom. Rather, radical interpretation is how communication always works - implicitly inside the same speech community. According to Rorty, Davidson's stance concerns communication as always depending on converging passing theories regarding what the other speaker might have meant, while keeping in mind our continuous adaptive actions with respect to these supposed and constantly re-interpreted meanings.

Davidson enlarged and slightly changed the focus of his concept of radical interpretation when transiting to the concept of triangulation. For Davidson:

> [T]he objectivity which thought and language demand depends on the mutual and simultaneous responses of two or more creatures to common distal stimuli and to one another's responses. This three-way relation among two speakers and a common world I call 'triangulation' (Davidson 2001a, xv).

While the metaphor of "radical interpretation" still calls to mind a picture of distinct entities – different speakers and their environment – the gap between which needs to be bridged by (at least temporary convergence in) meaning, the metaphor of the "triangle" focuses on the relation between the various speakers and their environment. The three-way relation expressed in the metaphor of "triangulation" is explanatorily primary to the three single corners which constitute the triangle when it comes to describing what meaning is. This is what Ramberg, as cited above, called the "fundamental […] priority of the third-person stance in a philosophical account of meaning and mind" (Ramberg 2011, 47).

No ontological or metaphysical commitments can be gleaned from this third-person-first-account of meaning and minds, as Davidson's concept of triangulation does not start from and explain how independently given, distinct speakers and their environment are subsequently put in connection via linguistic action. Rather, Davidson sustains that only by presupposing and starting from communication do rationality and subjectivity become interesting categories for investigation in the first place.[2]

[2] See e.g.: "In the end, the idea is as simple as that of ostensive learning, but with an insistence that triangulation is not a matter of one person grasping a meaning already there, but a

Rorty follows Davidson here, as Rorty talks about minds and subjects in PMN. For both the question is not of the existential or metaphysical sort. For Rorty, alike to Davidson; "the subjective […] is a perspective on the world characterized by a particular set of propositional attitudes, expressed in speech and other actions as these are construed by principles of rationality" (Ramberg 2011, 49). According to Ramberg, in PMN Rorty naturalized the subject by dismissing the "classically conceived" notion of the individual subject. Rorty's subject is no "experience receiving representor" but a "tissue of beliefs and desires", "narrating and re-narrating a self, that is a mind in so far as it is an organism with language" (Ramberg 2011, 49). Put another way, Rorty's subject in PMN is not an entity that *has* the potential to assume mental states and use and alter vocabularies. Rather, for Rorty the subject, with their subjectivity, *is* its vocabulary and intentional states. In CIS, Rorty recaps this point succinctly by marking the difference to the "traditional picture of the human situation" where "human beings are not simply networks of beliefs and desires but rather beings which *have* those beliefs and desires. The traditional view is that there is a core self which can look at, decide among, use, and express itself by means of, such beliefs and desires"(CIS, 10). In contrast, Ramberg states that Rorty's subject is a node in a web, existing "only in so far as there are language-using creatures interacting to create the pattern that makes locations for individual perspectives available at all" (Ramberg 2011, 49). [3]

According to Ramberg, problems arise when Rorty introduces the concept of "final vocabulary" in CIS because the "final" in "final vocabulary" seems to let the first-person stance back in, through the backdoor. In accordance with his position in PMN, Rorty dedicates the first chapter of CIS to spelling out the contingency of language, selves, and communities, defining the self as "*centerless* web of beliefs and desires" (CIS, 88, my emphasis). However, he then insists that what distinguishes the diverse nodes in the intersubjective web is their *final* vocabulary. Ramberg thinks that: "Against this background [that subjects are nodes in a web], it is easy to think of a *final vocabulary* precisely as what marks the characteristic normative profile of some particular perspective, what identifies a node (or a family of nodes) in the pattern as just the node that it is - the characteristic normative boundary of a specific subjectivity" (Ramberg 2011, 49).

There would be no problem with this approach if the nodes were still to be understood simply as necessary angles of the primary concept of triangulation, and, therewith, always in the context of *public* meaning. However, Ramberg maintains, and I think rightly so, that Rorty's definition of final vocabularies is open to more radical readings, where the "final" gets in the way of the "centerless". How far can "the characteristic normative boundary of a specific subjectivity", as Ramberg calls it, be pushed in Rorty? Ramberg thinks the boundary can be pushed at least up to the point where the "final" in final vocabularies means potentially (up to completely) distinct from other nodes. If so, the individual subject in a strong, community-detached sense would be back, freed from normative pressure outside themselves - a clear step back from "Davidson's revolution" as described above and more in line with the classical picture, where nodes are first and relations between them play a role only on a secondary level.

Ramberg fears this might sound like opening the door to "arbitrary individualism" and leaving us with no possibility to supply norms with authority (2011, 45). Therefore, Ramberg strives for "a significant reinterpretation of Rorty's notion of a final vocabulary" (Ramberg 2011, 59). Parallel to dissolving the subjective as potentially

performance that (when fully fleshed out) bestows a content on language" (Davidson 2001a: xv).

[3] In line with what I want to sustain in the following, one could add that as a trained Rortyan re-describer one could work to undo this pattern which produces subjective nodes. One could use this ladder called "subjectivity" to overcome subjectivity and substitute it with something else. However, this is not what Rorty did, and I will provide further arguments as to why. It is, however, exactly what certain philosophers in the continental tradition are currently doing. I will come back to this below.

normatively enclosed, Ramberg wants to dismiss the final-vocabulary-metaphor and draws on Gadamer and the hermeneutic tradition.

> Heeding the hermeneutic emphasis on the generation of authority as a process in which the subject is engaged through a capacity for appropriate response rather than through (self) assertion, we recognize the individualistic conception of a final vocabulary as a distortion. […] A final vocabulary, then, is not final at all. Rather, it is the momentary shape of our rational responsiveness to the world and our dynamic ability to engage the world, and to be engaged by it, as thinking and thus ever changing agents (Ramberg 2011, 59).

Ramberg intends to *use and change* Rorty's concept of redescription[4]. Ramberg thinks "That redescription alters the patterns of our engagement with the world we live in is hardly a controversial point. What may provoke is the subjectivist spin Rorty […] seems to put on it; it seems to suggest that we may simply tailor our descriptions to suit our preferences, apparently leaving us with no constraint on permissible desire but our own lack of inventiveness" (Ramberg 2011, 55). Ramberg then goes on to use Rortyan redescription "with the specific end in view of altering the terms we make use of in this very process" (Ramberg 2011, 54). Ramberg's purpose is to allow for richer descriptions of subjectivity which are neither "purely mechanical (non-interest-guided) nor inherently propositional" (Ramberg 2011, 58), allowing for a broader spectrum as we describe ourselves and others on naturalist grounds. In Ramberg's proposal:

> Final vocabularies […] are […] something we as thinking agents operate in and through. They are not objects of reflective awareness to be endorsed or rejected or explicitly compared one with another. *Reasoned modification* of final vocabularies happens not through choice, nor through analysis, but through the judicious, careful and tentative *application* of vocabularies, as something that we as thinking creatures *are engaged in and engaged by*, in new ways, or in places where we have not before been (Ramberg 2011, 58f).

Put in the terms of this article, Ramberg argues for a translation of Rorty's rupture view into a vocabulary that stresses continuity with the larger normative realm. I think Ramberg is right in pointing to the theoretical possibility of (up to complete) normative detachment from the larger pattern in Rorty. Although leaving space for this possibility is, at first glance, at odds with Rorty's overall Davidsonian picture, as it has been described so far, it is vital for my discussion. What I intend to do in the rest of the paper is to supply a rationale that renders Rorty's seemingly incoherent point strategically necessary and theoretically possible within the Rortyan project.

2. Individual subjectivity as tool – a Rortyan response

In my opinion, Rorty's "individualistic conception of a final vocabulary" in CIS is not "a distortion" (Ramberg 2011, 59) but needs to be understood as a "strategically placed lever" (Rorty CIS, 176).[5] I think this can be stated when taking into account the different target audiences and topics of PMN and CIS (i.e. philosophers of mind and language for PMN vs. political theorists in the liberal tradition for CIS), and when insisting that the overall antirepresentational outlook of Rorty's idea of what language is necessarily comprises the language of his own books. This means that when language is understood not as neutrally describing but as actively guiding our interaction with the world, the language Rorty employs needs to be read as in the service of his agenda. Put differently, Rorty's individualistic conceptions of a "final vocabulary" and the figure of the "strong poet" served operative not descriptive goals insofar as it is possible to make a meaningful distinction between operationality and descriptiveness inside a Rortyan, antirepresentational picture of language (2.1). The subsequent sections spell out what

[4] "Redescription" is Rorty's word for meaning/theory-change: by describing something differently we change how we interact with it.

[5] Rorty uses this notion to characterize Orwell's novel *Animal Farm*. The first, and, to my knowledge, only other scholar so far, to stress the utility of the lever-metaphor for an interpretation of Rorty is Chris Voparil in his brilliant book (2006, 35-59).

this means with respect to Ramberg's and Rorty's agendas (2.2); show how temporality is the key to integrating the metaphors of "rupture" and "continuity" (2.3); insist on the motivational character of vocabularies of rupture in the western liberal societies which were the target audience of Rorty's CIS (2.4); and further strengthen the strategic utility and theoretic possibility of the vocabulary of rupture by reconsidering Rorty's endorsement of Davidson's anomalous monism in light of Ramberg's interpretation from 2000 (2.5).

2.1 Antirepresentationalism, the "vocabulary-vocabulary", and the purposes we serve

Brandom powerfully describes Rorty's picture of language in his contribution to *Rorty and His Critics* (2000) where he insists both on the radicality of Rorty's approach and on the problems that this radicality entails. In Brandom's narration, Carnap and Kant distinguished between meaning as a priori and beliefs as a posteriori; then Quine in *Two Dogmas* removed the distinction and insisted instead on a "continuous dimension" (Brandom 2000, 156), "For we simply do not see sharp differences between changes of meaning and changes of belief of the sort that model predicts" (Brandom 2000, 156). Rorty writes that "Quine's suggestion that the difference between a priori and empirical truth is merely that between the relatively difficult to give up and the relatively easy brings in its train the notion that there is no clear distinction to be drawn between questions of meaning and questions of fact" (Rorty 1982, 5). Famously, Rorty endorses this dismissal of the language-theory-distinction in the most radical way.

However, how can we speak about language and theory having dismissed the distinction? According to Brandom, Rorty's metaphor of the "vocabulary" is a "suggestion for a successor notion" (2000, 157); a notion that encompasses both meaning and belief, language and theory, and where every change of meaning is always also a change of belief and the other way around (Brandom 2000, 157).[6] Helpfully, Brandom further suggests - and Rorty embraces this (Rorty 2000a) - distinguishing between what he calls "the vocabulary-vocabulary" and particular vocabularies. The "vocabulary-vocabulary" is the successor notion for the highest order language-theory-package; it "replaces meaningbelief talk" (Brandom 2000, 177), whereas particular vocabularies are the particular packages of meanings and beliefs that we use to make sense of our lives or certain practices.

Redescription, then, is the way to change vocabularies. How this change occurs is the point of controversy between Ramberg, Brandom, and Rorty, and it is this point I am addressing in this paper. Ramberg and Brandom suggest we change vocabularies in passing - it "happens not through choice" (Ramberg 2011, 58), the "tribe" not particular "genius selves" are the motor of renovation (Brandom 2000) -, whereas Rorty wants to change them consciously, attributing the power to do so to every single one of us. Ramberg and Brandom stress the continuity of the process, as Rorty insists on punctual ruptures.

The point of this article is that, once we embrace Rorty's picture of language, the adequacy of descriptions is determined by the degree of compliance with what we want the description to do. Our evaluations are intrinsically connected with our goals. This brings Rorty nearer to certain current strands in analytic philosophy which run under the heading of "conceptual engineering" and "conceptual ethics".[7] These terms cover a multitude of diverse projects, ranging from conceptual analysis in the Wiener Kreis tradition to projects of more constructivist flavor in conceptual revision, with the line between the two unclear.[8] Forerunners of the term "conceptual engi-

[6] In Brandom's eyes, Quine (and Rorty) were "overdoing" (156) it because distinguishing between belief and meaning is something that Brandom still thinks is worth preserving. In the same train of thought, Brandom still famously insists on the concept of "representation", though in what he thinks to be a sanitized version of the term.
[7] See e.g. Burgess&Plunkett 2013ab, Burgess et.al. 2020.
[8] See e.g. Dutilh Novaes 2020, also Haslanger 2016: 143 fn 7.

neering" come from the pragmatist tradition (Blackburn 1999, Brandom 2001). However, the more pronounced philosophical project in conceptual revision, that is pertinent to my discussion is Sally Haslanger's ameliorative approach (e.g. 2012). In her famous paper "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?" (2000) she shifts the philosophical task from asking "What is X?" to "What is the concept of X for?" Evaluative criteria for successful theories and concepts for social or political ameliorative projects are determined by the answers to the questions "What is the point of having this concept? What work do we want this concept to do for us?" (Haslanger 2000, 33)

This is also the background against which Rorty's "strong poet" and his final-vocabulary metaphor should be evaluated. This is not to say that Rorty was a "conceptual engineer" in the sense the word now assumes, rather, it is to say that, today, there is a strand in analytic philosophy that seems potentially more hospitable to Rorty's ideas, than the field was in his own days.

For Haslanger, "theorizing is a practice that has goals or purposes. What counts as a reason within the practice depends on its rules and norms. The practice itself - its ends and what it employs as means - is also open to critique" (2016, 142). Without pushing the parallel too far, there is congruency between Haslanger's approach and Rorty's overall project when it comes to insisting on the pragmatist theme that theory and practice are inextricably entrenched. Rortyan redescription can be seen as a project of amelioration, though not the amelioration of "concepts", as in Haslanger's case, but more generally of our engagement with others and our environment via linguistic means.

A major difference between Haslanger and Rorty is that Haslanger, though she also embraces Quine's *Two Dogmas* paper in her introduction to *Resisting Reality* (2012, 13), ultimately remains - as she herself underlines (2012, 14) - inside a representationalist picture of language insofar as she divides between meaning and belief, language and theory, scheme and content.[9] In contrast, Rorty's version of antirepresentationalism allows for a *strategic* distinction of degree between semantics and epistemology when it comes to defining the subject matter and core questions of certain disciplines, but no *clear-cut*-distinction of kind between language and theory, meaning and belief. Here, what Brandom termed Rorty's "vocabulary-vocabulary" kicks in and, on the first order level regarding particular practical domains, "redescription", or what Rorty later calls "Cultural Politics", is the "only game in town" (Rorty 2007a, 8).[10]

2.2 Ramberg's agenda vs. Rorty's agenda

If the adequacy of descriptions is determined by the degree of compliance with what we want the descriptions to do for us, then the context of application and the aims pursued are of major importance. Therefore, what were Ramberg's and Rorty's agendas, in their respective pieces?

Ramberg's agenda was (a) to supply an ampler notion of the subjective thereby avoiding the threat of irrational individualism, and (b) to allow for a conceptualization of experiences which are of non-linguistic nature (2011). Ramberg's agenda is a Rortyan agenda insofar as Ramberg's aim is to enrich our vocabularies. Ramberg wanted to open new fields of application and experience to which we had been previously blind and numb (e.g. animal subjectivity) because the tools to even see or feel them were lacking.[11] Ramberg pursues this agenda by opening the normative borders of the subjective, which he individuated in Rorty's account in CIS, towards the outside by further dissolving the node in the web. Ramberg's critique of Rorty needs to be read against the goal of his article, which was to make space for the concept

[9] On how she can still be read as in line with the pragmatist tradition, especially in recent years, see Santarelli 2022.
[10] On the transition from "redefinition" to "redescription" and "Cultural Politics" see Voparil 2011. On Rorty's varying use of the notion "Cultural Politics" see Wortmann 2022.
[11] See also Fricker 2007; see further Dieleman 2017 and Penelas 2019 on how to entrench Rorty with Fricker.

of animal agency. Insisting on *normative continuity* with the environment and other nodes, as well as dismissing Rorty's final-vocabulary metaphor, served Ramberg's goals.

This is much in line with an overall Rortyan approach but Rorty's *particular* aim in CIS was a different one. In CIS, Rorty did not want to make space for animals in the realm of agency. Rorty's self-declared agenda in CIS was to give "an improved self-description" "of liberal culture" (CIS, 52) and, in my opinion, Rorty thought that insisting on "no constraints" and radical "inventiveness" - the possibility to detach oneself from the normative pressure of the group - served exactly this agenda.

CIS, followed by *Achieving Our Country* (1998b), is commonly understood as comprising Rorty's "political theory", but one needs to be cautious with the term "theory". Rorty's "improved self-description" of liberalism (CIS, 52) is a *Rortyan re-description* - a move in Cultural Politics. Rorty is not representing; he is taking linguistic action. Therefore, his theory needs to be evaluated against the background of inner coherence *and* with respect to its presumed real-world impact. I assume that his plea for rupture is theoretically coherent (2.3) *and* politically motivated (2.4).

2.3 Taking temporality into account: The importance of continuity *and* rupture

Rorty starts CIS by recapping his antirepresentational and antifoundational positions of PMN which he declines for the purposes of CIS. To recapitulate Davidson, meaning is only ever temporarily established in actual communicative practices with our fellow speakers (CIS, 14-16). This is the key-point Ramberg stresses in his critique: we do not have all strings in our hands; we are also played by others and need to go with the game. Thus far, Rorty's view in CIS is in line with his views in PMN and elsewhere as outlined in 1. This is the continuity-view.

In short, the continuity-view stresses that meaning is constrained by public norms. Our utterances in order to *be* utterances and not just noise (Rorty 1991) need to make sense in their target discursive environment, meaning at least some of the norms of the discourse need to be met. As Brandom would put it, "Pacta sunt servanda" (Rorty 2000a). Transposed from meaning to selves, the continuity-view holds that the individual self has no center and no fixed boundaries towards the rest of the net. This is what Rorty spells out in much detail in the chapter on Freud (Chapter 2 of CIS). The I has many voices that speak inside herself: the self insofar as it *is* its vocabulary is polyphonic. No *clear* boundary can be set towards the outside, though one can stress different equilibria or what Dennett would call centers of narrative gravity, and all of this is much in line with PMN.

The specificity of CIS is that this continuity view is complemented by the rupture-view, which Ramberg and Brandom criticize. As spelled out above, Rorty, though in large parts following the Davidsonian picture, *also* seems to make space for private languages: he insists on the possibility to detach ourselves from the group; to have our *own* vocabulary. Instead of trying to mitigate this view, I think Rorty really *did* contemplate this possibility in the strong sense which has been the target of much polemic, with the restriction that , when spelled out in semantic terms, these at their moment of emergence private languages *count as* languages only once they have been taken up. What comes into being privately – detached from other nodes – can only be classified *as* language retrospectively once the vocabulary has spread over the system once it has accomplished having more than one speaker. To put it succinctly, rupture needs continuity, *if* one wants to persist over time. For Rorty:

> the difference between genius and fantasy is not the difference between impresses which lock on to something universal, some antecedent reality out there in the world or deep within the self, and those which do not. Rather, it is the difference between idiosyncrasies which just happen to catch on with other people - happen because of the contingencies of some historical situation, some particular need which a given community happens to have at a given time (CIS, 37).

Leaving aside the larger topic of antifoundationalism Rorty is championing here,[12] catching "on with other people" and their concerns semantically means uptake.[13] In the moment of emergence, the strong poet is no different from an idiosyncratic person or a fool, yet what transforms the eccentric individual into a "strong poet", once retrospection is available, is having had impact and legacy.

> [S]trength is thus the line between using language which is familiar and universal and producing language which, though initially unfamiliar and idiosyncratic, somehow makes tangible the blind impress all one's behavings bear. With luck - the sort of luck which makes the difference between genius and eccentricity - that language will also strike the next generation as inevitable. Their behavings will bear that impress (CIS, 29).

What the strong poet is for selves, metaphor is for language. Metaphors mark the moment of rupture and detachment from the rest of the normative universe that allows for radical novelty and which – to be perceived *as* novelty instead of as folly or nonsense – needs to find a way to reconnect with the language in place. Following Wittgenstein and Davidson, for Rorty "To have a meaning is to have a place in a language game. Metaphors, by definition, do not" (CIS, 18).

> "But this is not to say that it may not, in time, *become* a truth-value candidate. If it *is* savored rather than spat out, the sentence may be repeated, caught up, bandied about. Then it will gradually require a habitual use, a familiar place in a language game. It will thereby have ceased to be a metaphor - or, if you like, it will have become what most sentences of our language are, a dead metaphor" (CIS, 18).

As metaphors are, by definition, not determined by the normative realm[14] they subsequently enter when dying, they are described in causal vocabulary. Metaphors are "producing effects" rather than "conveying a message" (CIS, 18). Still, metaphors are conceivable only against a background of "normal", passing-theory rule-following languages which are bound by the process of triangulation as described in 1 and, therewith, ultimately and in retrospective, follow the primacy of the third-person stance:

> The strong poet's fear of death as the fear of incompletion is a function of the fact that no project of describing the world or the past, no project of self-creation through imposition of one's own idiosyncratic metaphoric, can avoid being marginal and parasitic. Metaphors are unfamiliar uses of old words, but such uses are possible only against the background of other old words which are used in old familiar ways. A language which was 'all metaphor' would be a language which had no use, hence not a language but just babble. For even if we agree that languages are not media of representation or expression, they will remain media of communication, tools for social interaction, ways of tying oneself up with other human beings (CIS, 41).

To not deliver "babble", but to "tie" himself up with others, and to facilitate uptake, Rorty, in my opinion, decided to mainly speak the language of the group he was intending to contribute to. For CIS this was declaredly "liberal culture" (CIS, 53), which operates with a strong notion of the individual subject. I will address this point in the following section.[15] My point in this section is that Rorty, given his overall theoretical outset, could have gone both ways - speak rupture or continuity - when it comes to the normative determination of meaning and selves. Further, my point is that Rorty *did* go both ways, adapting his utterances to the different contexts he was talking in. He stressed continuity in PMN in contexts of semantics and epistemology and he stressed rupture in CIS in contexts of political theory.[16]

[12] Which is the target of much polemic, but for different reasons.

[13] As suggested by a sharp reviewer, the semantic and ethical-political level cannot be completely disentangled. Nevertheless, I am focusing here on the semantic part to make my point - it is a matter of emphasis in what can be seen as a continuum not of distinctions between supposedly radically different spheres. On ethics in Rorty and especially in CIS, see e.g., Voparil 2020.

[14] The "normative realm" is not to be understood as something fixed. Rather the norms that make up the normative realm are contingent and in constant change.

[15] This is not to negate the fact that Rorty also had an idiosyncratic preference for vocabularies of rupture. Rorty described himself as a romantic, not just for the antirepresentational and antiauthoritarian reasons he gives in many places (see e.g. 2007a, 2007b) but presumably also due to completely accidental, existential selective affinity (Rorty 1999).

[16] However, this distinction is not intended as hard and fast.

This can be brought in line with the Davidsonian picture, as the third-person stance is primary when we are talking about meaning once it is temporarily established: there simply is no meaning without all three angles of the triangle. The view through the lens of "triangulation" is one of simultaneousness; triangulation provides a snapshot from outside time. However, it depends on which question one asks: if we want to look at *what meaning is*, in Davidson we *necessarily* need to take the third-person-first look. Every time we encounter meaning, triangulation has already happened. As an alternative, if we want to look at *how meaning gets established in time*, a version of radical interpretation which underwent the further demystifying purification of triangulation suits best: we do have angles which *act separately in time*, yet these angles are not to be understood as separate ontological givens but as nodes in a pattern, the positions of which are assigned through the very same process of meaning-determination. Here the first (and second)-person-view take precedence.[17]

On purely theoretic grounds, continuity and rupture do not contradict each other because rupture, when it does not embrace nonsense or social suicide, needs to find its way into continuity. In this sense, Ramberg and Brandom are right when insisting on the "tribe". We do not have all the cards in our hands. We need other speakers to change vocabularies. But one can shift the emphasis and ask what happens in the exact moment of emergence - who is proposing new meanings and shifts, and how important are these proposals or how important do we want them to be?

Rather choosing between continuity and rupture is in general possible in both fields (politics and semantics) and it depends on evaluating context and aims to decide which of the two possibilities to go for. I am indebted to the comment of a perspicuous commentator to clarify this point.

[17] See e.g. Davidson 2001b, where he stresses that "speaking a language […] does not depend on two or more speakers speaking in the same way; it merely requires that each speaker intentionally make himself interpretable to the other" in an actual conversation (2001b, 115). See also Davidson 2001c.

2.4 Individual subjectivity's motivational character and radical novelty

In my opinion, Rorty's insistence on rupture and individual subjectivity in CIS has to do with what I want to call, borrowing from Huw Price, the "motivational character" (Price: 185) of rupture and individuality in the western liberal contexts in which Rorty was writing. Price uses this strategy to make his case for the concept of "truth" by insisting on the functions it serves. He asks what the term enables us to do and how a world without the notion of "truth" would look. Price thinks that without the concept of truth people would not be *motivated* to embark on projects of investigation; they would not go the extra mile, driving their research beyond the state of the art but remaining satisfied with simply some opinion (Price).

I would like to ask in analogy how our current western, democratic, liberal societies would look once we dismiss the strong concept of individual agency. Is this really a workable option given our conceptual history and our current educational, political, and legal system? Would we be *motivated* to engage in political or any other creative practices? I don't think so. The anthropologist and cultural theorist Arjun Appadurai has recently noted that in our current post-enlightenment setting in the West, the individual seems to be the "invisible condition of possibility for all political, economic, and moral thought" (Appadurai, 102). What do we do with such a constatation?

Obviously, in a Rortyan setting, one could work to weaken this condition, to stress the deep existential, semantic, and socio-political entanglement of the self with others - to insist on continuity instead of on rupture and that is what many theorists in the continental tradition are currently doing.[18] However, there is another option available and this is the one, I believe, Rorty was choosing: given that we *already have* this strong notion of the individual

[18] See e.g., Appadurai, Raunig, Stratherns, who are all trying, from different perspectives and with different aims in mind, to develop concepts of agency that are not predicated upon the in-dividual but upon the Deleuze-inspired dividual.

and given that it performs exactly the important functions Appadurai states, why not put the concept to work for our purposes? As I have spelled out, this proposal is not necessarily at odds with other proposals (e.g. that of Appadurai, or Ramberg or Brandom) but can be understood as a complementary enterprise; which vocabulary one employs depends on which purposes one wants to further.[19]

Rorty starts his chapter the "The contingency of selfhood" by citing a poem by Philip Larkin, wherein the lyrical I is expressing his "fear of dying, of extinction" (CIS, 23). Rorty comments: "What he fears will be extinguished is his idiosyncratic lading list, his individual sense of what was possible and important. That is what made his I different from all the other I's. To lose that difference is, I take it, what any poet – any maker, anyone who hopes to create something new – fears" (CIS, 23).

Rorty is making an existential point[20] which he is complementing with a semantic one:

> […] that fear blends into the fear that, even if they are preserved and noticed, nobody will find anything distinctive in them. The words (or shapes, or theorems, or models of physical nature) marshaled to one's command may seem merely stock items, rearranged in routine ways. One will not have impressed one's mark on the language but, rather, will have spent one's life shoving about already coined pieces. So one will not really have had an I at all. One's creations, and one's self, will just be better or worse instances of familiar types. This is what Harold Bloom calls "The strong poet's anxiety of influence his "horror of finding himself to be only a copy or a replica" (CIS, 24).

Rorty plays with our Freudian urges, as we may well describe ourselves as "centerless webs of beliefs and desires" (CIS, 88), alias the continuity view, but:

> We shall see the conscious need of the strong poet to *demonstrate* that he is not a copy or replica as merely a special form of an unconscious need everyone has: the need to come to terms with the blind impress which chance has given him, to make a self for himself by redescribing that impress in terms which are, if only marginally, his own (CIS, 43).

This need might well be the product of our upbringing in societies which underwent the contingent conceptual genealogy that gave us a strong notion of individual subjectivity and agency in the first place, but that does not make the urge any less pressing. It is rupture that makes us "distinctive" (CIS, 24) and "different from all the other I's" (CIS, 23). The strong poet yields to create her own final vocabulary which distinguishes her as a node. "Thus I willed it!" This is what the strong poet, echoing Nietzsche and Bloom, wants to proclaim (CIS, 29ff).

For this maneuver to succeed, conscious choice, endorsement, and sometimes also closure - the finality of final vocabularies - are needed, which is exactly what Ramberg and Brandom criticize. For Ramberg:

> Final vocabularies […] are […] something we as thinking agents operate in and through. They are not objects of reflective awareness to be endorsed or rejected or explicitly compared one with another (Ramberg 2011, 34).

Similarly, for Brandom: "To use a vocabulary is to change it. This is what distinguishes vocabularies from other tools" (2000, 177). Novelty occurs in passing: "*Every* use of a vocabulary, every application of a concept in making a claim, *both* is answerable to norms implicit in communal practice […] *and* transforms those norms by its novelty" (179). As said above, this view is compatible with Rorty's view. No self without the group; no meaning without public norms. In this regard, Rorty's concession to Brandom to let go of the "genius self" is a cheap one because it adds nothing to how Rorty already described his own view in CIS. For instance, Rorty frames Bloom's and Freud's positions as "needed corrective to Nietzsche's attempt to divinize the poet" (CIS, 41), and insists, as I described above, that rupture needs to find its way back into continuity.

And still, Rorty wanted to shift emphasis and narrate change as starting with the *radically* novel intuition of a

[19] E.g., Appadurai is trying to forge conceptual tools which allow for a new management of financial flows that distributes risks beyond the individual level; here the dividual seems apt. In contrast, Rorty is trying to raise democratic engagement and here the individual in a rather strong sense is better suited to do the job.

[20] For further brilliant investigations of the existential dimension of our vocabularies see, e.g. Penelas 2022 and Santelli 2020.

single individual, openly embracing incommensurability, which then, *if* it is taken up, engenders change. Ramberg and Brandom underline the second part, while Rorty emphasizes the first.

When played in the political register, the vocabulary of rupture offers us agency; it offers us the possibility to leave a trace, and this is appealing! Ramberg's fear in accounts of epistemology and semantics is the fear of irrational, "arbitrary individualism" (2011, 45). Rorty's fear in the political context of the 1980s is the fear of lethargy and disinterest. The insistence on the first-person-stance and final vocabularies allow for a narration of *genuine* novelty and a strong concept of *individual* agency. In Rorty's version every single individual has the power to change the world *if* she manages to forge an alliance. Otherwise, her noise will be canceled out of history. However, the focus is on the single, individual reader of CIS and on what she can do.

To forestall a potential criticism: this is not to say that Rorty was a cynic selling fictions, i.e. that he insisted on individual agency for instrumental reasons, even though there is not any. This is not the case: first, because once we embrace antirepresentationalism of the Rortyan sort the real/fictional-distinction becomes secondary;[21] and second, because Rorty's move is not only of instrumental nature. As Brandom rightly states, for Rorty "vocabularies can do more than just help us get what we already want. They also make it possible to frame and formulate new ends" (Brandom 2000, 170). But how should we understand the adjective "new" here? If we stress continuity, then "new" can never mean more than "variations on old themes" (Rorty 2000, 188). Is this what the word expresses, or what we want it to express? If "new" only means "old in new cloth", then a whole set of notions would drop out of our vocabulary including one of Rorty's favorites: "revolution".

To allow for a more radical meaning of "novelty", *rupture* with the normative realm in question is needed. Chris Voparil has stressed that Rorty was enthusiastic about the literary genre of the novel not only due to its role in sentimental education but also because the genre has the potential to put us in touch with *genuine* novelty (Voparil 2012). This is what, for Voparil, differentiates Rorty's and Nussbaum's take on literature: in Nussbaum, literature helps us to get in tune with the rational moral laws in place; in Rorty, literature can exceed the realm of the rational insofar as it can exceed what we have already made sense of. It is open to voices from beyond the current rational realm – this is the novel's ethical power (Voparil 2012). However, there is more to this than ethics: as seen above (2.3), for genuine novelty to emerge in semantics, the causal friction of metaphor – of something which is *not* already part of some given normative realm – is needed.[22] This is the difference between revolution and reform, and to account for this difference – if we want there to be a difference (and Rorty wanted this) – we need to allow for the possibility of rupture and incommensurability, otherwise the revolutionary maneuver cannot be performed.

2.5 Philosophy's interest in the distinctiveness of vocabularies and their anomalous supervenience

Let me now make my point again from a slightly different perspective which also allows to describe how the vocabulary of rupture and the vocabulary of continuity are connected and illustrates why we need both. Take this as a different entry to the same rationale.

In 2000, in a different debate published in Brandom's aforementioned work, *Rorty and His Critics*, Ramberg convinced Rorty to embrace a distinction which he had previously negated by showing Rorty that he was not Rortyan enough (Ramberg 2000, Rorty 2000b). The distinction Rorty embraced after his debate with Ramberg was the distinctiveness of the intentional vocabulary as spelled out

[21] On how this is not in conflict with causal constraint and, therewith, not in conflict with the notion to "get things right" see Huetter-Almerigi 2020 and Huetter-Almerigi 2022. Further, Rorty as a person deeply cared about these issues, as people who knew him relate (e.g. Richard Bernstein in a personal conversation with me in Munich in 2017).

[22] For a proposal for rational conceptual change compatible with Rorty see Shields 2021.

by Davidson in his concept of anomalous monism (Davidson 1970) and as reinterpreted by Ramberg in 2000. The reason why Rorty finally overcame his fierce resistance and agreed was that Ramberg showed Rorty, among other things, that in Davidson the physical and the intentional vocabulary serve different needs, and that to insist on the distinctiveness (instead of mere difference) of the intentional vocabulary means "to preserve our sense of ourselves as creatures with purposes that are not exhausted by prediction and control" (Ramberg 2000: 368). In parallel, I want to state that Rorty's "final-vocabulary"-vocabulary – which I, enlarging the topic, have called the "vocabulary of rupture" – preserves *our sense of ourselves as creatures capable of shaping our own destiny*.

To briefly recap the background of the discussion in 2000, Rorty never accepted Quine's distinction between the underdetermination of theories and the (irreducible) indeterminacy of meaning because for him this meant that Quine took a step back from *Two Dogmas*.[23] Ramberg in 2000 makes a point in Davidson-exegesis when showing Rorty that Davidson's appropriation of Quine does not trade on Quine's ontological gap between the facts of the matter and the rest – the reason why Rorty always rejected Quine's distinction. The interpretation Ramberg gives of Davidson's version is "post-ontological" in this respect. Therefore, Ramberg mitigated Rorty's theoretical reservations. Further, Ramberg showed Rorty that Rorty's own conception of "the interest of philosophy" was too narrow because it induced in "him a general skepticism toward the very idea of philosophically interesting differences between vocabularies" (Ramberg 2000, 353). Ramberg insists that "it must be possible to criticize the idea that exploration of the possibility of conceptual or nomological reduction is a metaphysical tool, without having to claim that reductive efforts *cannot* be of philosophical interest. […] [T]he right thing to say about this question, it seems to me, is 'that just depends – show me the context and the stakes'" (Ramberg 2000, 365).

For Ramberg there is a better version of the conception of "philosophical interest" available: Rorty's "vocabulary-vocabulary is itself a tool, a tool of philosophy, whereby we precisely reflect on the nature of our tools and the purpose they serve." (Ramberg 2000, 365) In certain contexts the screwdriver is better, in others the hammer. The same is true for vocabularies. If we want to predict the behavior of certain objects in nature, the physical vocabulary of scientific explanation, where strict laws apply, is apt. In contrast, the vocabulary of agency is distinct "not simply because we want to predict certain things (people as opposed to electrons), but also by virtue of features that are not merely predictive" (Ramberg 2000, 366).

Therefore, Ramberg insists that switching between explanatory vocabularies and the vocabulary of intentional attitude-ascription equals a "change of subject" (Ramberg 2000, 359). The vocabulary of agency has "unique features" (359) that allow us to speak about ourselves without presuming to ever find strict laws. Strict laws just are not the topic we address in intentional vocabulary. Therefore, the "unique features" of the vocabulary of agency have no correspondence in the physical vocabulary, nor can they be reduced to it. However, the vocabulary of agency supervenes on the physical vocabulary in this famous anomalous way where monism[24] does not equal reducibility of descriptions. This makes the vocabulary of agency distinct and not just different, and in this sense of irreducibility we need "to distinguish the interests that intentional-language vocabulary serves from those interests

[23] "[C]riticizing Quine's claim that the indeterminacy of translation was different from the ordinary underdetermination of empirical theories, I argued that Quine had never given a satisfactory sense to the term 'fact of the matter', and that the contrast he invoked between the factual and the non-factual seemed to be the same contrast that he had been concerned to blur in the concluding paragraphs of 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism'" (Rorty 1998a, 52).

[24] The "ontology" this monism entails is nothing more than the realm of strict law in the Davidsonian sense: all mental states are physical states and physical states are what we determine to fall under strict law without presuming to ever find these strict laws once and for all (the physical supervenience base is non-reductive in this sense).

that vocabularies of scientific explanation serve" (Ramberg 2000, 366).

The same move can be made when it comes to Rorty's notions of the "final vocabulary" and the "strong poet": while acknowledging the primacy of the third-person-stance in contexts of theoretic semantics, the first-person-stance in its final-vocabulary-version has unique features that account for its distinctiveness. When Rorty switches from the vocabulary of continuity to the vocabulary of rupture we see a change of subject of the sort described, and the unique features the vocabulary of rupture allows us to account for - when spelled out in terms of selves and meaning - are the importance of every single, *individual* voice *in its difference*. This might seem a minor point but, in my opinion, this is still a feature of major importance both for our self-understanding and the functioning of our current western, democratic societies.

Conclusion

In this article I have made a case for what I have called Rorty's *vocabulary of rupture*. I argued that Rorty thought that insisting on rupture, revolution, distinct selves and radical novelty furthered his cause of getting people involved in political practices and creative efforts more largely. Drawing on our conceptual history and speaking from within and at the same time transforming our vocabulary in the West, he gave space to our urges to leave a trace and our need to believe that radical change is possible.

To sustain this claim, the temporal perspective is paramount: the attribute "novel" instead of "nonsensical" - words bearing this latter attribute at the moment of emergence are equally not part of the current normative realm - can be given only ex post, once rupture has managed to enter continuity. This is why we need to forge an alliance with others and why the advocates of the continuity-view are *also* right. Temporal scaling provides a limit to the "subjectivist spin" in Rorty because if we want our utterances to persist, we cannot state whatever we please and we cannot use whatever words we want. We need to follow at least *some* of the norms in place[25] and be open to the responses of our fellow human beings. Nevertheless, as the integration into a continuum is not necessary for the moment of emergence – though it *is necessary in time* – one can always ask the Rorty-question: "'Why do you talk that way?'" (CIS, 51) What does it achieve for you? And does it really further your cause? Should we really always insist on continuity or is there not also something about rupture that is worth saving?

As said above, Brandom rightly states that for Rorty "vocabularies can do more than just help us get what we already want. They also make it possible to frame and formulate new ends" (Brandom 2000: 170). But the question remains: *who* is doing this and *how new* are these ends, or how new do we want them to be? Rorty's answer would be *radically* new and *every single one of us*. To narrate radical change, final vocabularies are needed to perform the revolutionary maneuver. There is no revolution in continuity but only reform. Therefore, the possibility of rupture and novelty is what accounts for the distinctiveness of the final-vocabulary-vocabulary and this is why philosophy should continue to have an interest in it.[26] [27]

[25] *How many* rules or conventions are needed is an interesting question: If one follows Davidson's take on Mrs. Malaprop, not too many (Davidson 2005).

[26] The continental tradition – e.g., Heidegger, Foucault, or Derrida – does not need to be convinced of the importance of rupture (see. e.g., Iyer 2014), though they use rupture for other purposes and (but this would need further investigation) are less flexible with respect to switching between continuity and rupture-talk. For a first assessment of the difference between Rorty and Derrida, see e.g., Staten, and for a response to Staten my 2015, 127–8.

[27] Previous versions of this paper have benefited of detailed comments by Bjørn Ramberg, Federico Penelas, Matteo Santarelli, Francesco Frisari, Chris Voparil, Bruno Muntaabski, Mauro Santelli, Anahí Grenikoff Merli, Claudio Cormick, Jonathan Erenfryd, Joey Pollock, Mirela Fus, Francesca Secco, Sebastian Watzl, and two anonymous reviewers. I am very lucky to have such brilliant friends and to be part of such inspiring, intellectual environments like the pragmatism research group in Bologna, the Oslo Mind Group, and the research groups on pragmatism and semantic normativity at CONICET- SADAF in Buenos Aires. I further talked the topic through with Matthew Shields. Previous versions of this paper were presented at the conferences "Rorty's Challenge for Political Philosophy – 30 Years of *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*" at the Academy for Political Education, Tutzing, organized by Martin Müller, and "Philosophy, Poetry, and Uto-

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Book review

BOOK REVIEW: RECONSIDERING THE NOTION OF ART

Larisa Sekulic

Shusterman, R. (2021). *Ars Erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love*. Cambridge University Press.

In our contemporary society and culture that is constantly and rapidly developing, reevaluating itself by broadening its horizon of thinking, the different practices of lovemaking, however, have not been regarded as essentially artistic. By reviving and purposefully analyzing the varying and sometimes radically contrasting history of ars erotica, Richard Shusterman masterfully forms a solid basis for reconsidering the aesthetic dimensions of the erotical theory. Moreover, he offers a thorough insight into the ruling philosophical and socio-political conditions of influential premodern cultures that had shaped our sexual thinking. Still, he manages to highlight the almost exclusively ever-present and problematic context of male dominance. Hence connecting the ancient theoretical and practical knowledge with the current issue of mere sexual or misogynistic attitudes, his true melioristic pragmatist motivation becomes obvious; widening our understanding leads us to a richer, more professional, and sensitive education to make our society better.

The book's fundamental question is whether the different forms of lovemaking are artistic and if they are, in what ways do they cooperate with ethics of self-cultivation, aesthetics, and – as the Greeks viewed it–the art of living. As the text structure is basically comparative, Shusterman offers a critical examination of different cultures' traditions. Therefore to understand and reconcile diverse approaches, he primarily explains the use of the Greek-Latin hybrid *ars erotica*, which is also connected to Michel Foucault's *History of sexuality.* Although it is clear that Shusterman's *Ars erotica* owes him, and his ideas a deep dept, we must not forget that the latter is a much broader project since Foucault focused only on the Greco-Roman approach, which Shusterman recurringly criticizes the direction of his for being incorrect, superficial or simply one-sided[1]Since Foucault initially missed to explain the reasons for the use of the two-languaged, mixed word, Shusterman points out the importance of the Latin *ars*, instead of its greek equivalent *techné* (τέχνη), that would initially suggest that making love is not an *art*, but rather a *craft*. As it would be inaccurate to use, the further explanation leads to the Greek God *Eros's* (Ἔρως) ambiguous interpretation, that later in the chapter of *Dialectics of Desire and Virtue: Aesthetics, Power, and Self-Cultivation in Greco-Roman Erotic Theory* will find its broader context of interpretation highlighting the sometimes controversial mythological features the greek culture owns for centuries.

For maintaining the essential aim and direction of analysis, regarding such a complex text that collects related yet conflicting theories on an undoubtedly wide historical and cultural scale, Shusterman concretizes the focus of *ars erotica* in six main key aesthetic features that are to be presented and built upon in every particular chapter. The first focus point is the unification or incorporation of fine arts and aesthetic activities into the practice of the arts of lovemaking, whether it is music, poetry, or simply a fragrance enhancing the erotic mood. The second feature of ars erotica is the lack of utility, but the significant emphasis on pleasure and beauty, or in other words, lovemaking for its own sake. The following point, he remarks, is the importance of attention to structural and formal qualities of ars erotica that differentiates it from mere sexual performance-centered thinking. Therefore, the third point is connected to the fourth, which tells the performance's style and mode, besides knowing which actions to perform. Introducing the fifth aesthetic feature with an analogy to Andy Warhol's *Brillo Boxes*, he emphasizes the richness of symbols used in the art of lovemaking. As the sixth and last point, he underlines ars erotica's concerns for evaluative dimensions, including the concern with beauty, superior taste,

[1] By recurring topic, see Shusterman, Richard. *Body Consciousness. A philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*. Cambridge University Press. 2008. and *Thinking through the Body. Essays in Somaesthetics*. Cambridge University Press. 2012.

or competitions, which features constitute the perspectives through which the erotical theories are examined.

Logically structured, the Greco-Roman approach is introduced primarily for two main reasons; first, the notion of *erotica* originates from Eros (the Greek God of sexual desire and lovemaking) and Aphrodite (the Goddess of beauty and love), and second because of the Greek model's philosophical and traditional influence on the Roman Empire and Christianity, that is examined through this tradition in the subsequent chapters. Complex as it may be, Shusterman perfectly points out the fundamental contrasts in the Greek mythology that are not only present considering Eros's age –as it is debated in Plato's *Symposium* whether he was the youngest of all Gods or the most ancient one – his birth or Aphrodite's similar controversial mythological features of many divergent personae and meaning but are elementarily connected to the polysemic culture they are embedded in. This remarkable divergence the ancient Greek civilization has through their polytheistic and their polysemic comprehension flow into their perception of love and erotic theories or as Shusterman states: "this polysemic plurality of love gods nourishes a richly polymorphic eroticism: homosexual and heterosexual; marital and extramarital; for procreation and purely for pleasure; deploying genital, anal and oral modes; between same-aged lovers and partners from different generations. Transcending the boundaries of nations, cultures, and races, erotic love also transgresses taboos of incest and bestiality, and even the division between mortals and gods."[2] Shusterman highlights the rich complexity of pluralism and the solid relation between religion and erotic theories. However, the impact of pluralist, religious beliefs, he notes troubling misogyny that formed the ancient thinking and can be understood through the Hesiodian myth of the invention of women, so through the medical theory of Hippocrates who initiated the superiority of the male body. Albeit, Shusterman's analysis goes far beyond the problem of female subjugation, as different gender identities and sexual roles are presented in Greek erotic thinking, giving us a well-formed impression of a culture which, with its diversity, was way ahead of its own time. It is clear that neither are the female and male dichotomies present in a traditional way, nor the distinction between ethics and aesthetics when it comes to Eros. As women could be a virgin, a wife, a widow, a concubine, a slave girl, a prostitute, or a courtesan of high level, the distinction of procreation and pleasure is evidently made, that stands true for various erotic identities among men as well (slave boys, male prostitutes, kinaidos, effeminate men and the well-known erastes and eromenos). Shusterman's reason for the distinctive narration emphasizes the reflection of ideologies of fundamental female and male sexuality on general erotic expectations. Therefore he makes the enormous influence of the religious and social background on a culture unquestionable and unavoidable, on which solid ground the various practices of lovemaking can be studied as a conscious concern for our individual and social self-cultivation, hence heightened sensitivity for others. Shusterman's essential pragmatist attitude is enormously intensified by his dedication to his unique project, somaesthetics, that combines the individual's detailed knowledge concerning the sensitive, living body (soma) and mind with its social context and reflection. The aesthetic part of his discipline is emphasized even more; Eros, therefore *erotica* inspires art and is served by artistic fashioning. Since Kant, the notion of aesthetics ought to be defined in contrast to instrumentality or functionality, as its value lies in the mere pleasure of experiencing it. However, the distance in time, Shusterman correctly points out the similarity found in the Greek tradition of erotic arts that prefers pleasure of experience over functionality or simple duty. Needless to say, Greek men were fundamentally aware of the importance of their products as it was their primary duty, but indulging in sexual relations with courtesans meant something even more valuable; *aesthetic pleasure*. Among them,

[2]Shusterman, Richard. *Ars erotica, Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love*. Cambridge University Press. 2021. pp.32.

Shusterman underlines the significance of the high-class *hetaerae* and youthful boys, whose graces were the hardest to earn, implying the joy of competing for them. The most valuable reward had a beautiful body and virtues in personality, bringing forth the notion of *Kalos-kai-agathos,* or the notion of good and beautiful, invoking the strong relation between ethics and aesthetics in the art of erotica. Diversely thinking himself, Shusterman makes further examinations from another perspective; philosophy regards the art of lovemaking, which manages to turn variety into contrasts. There were different philosophical attitudes and practices towards sexual desire and love. Still, even Plato contradicts himself in the case of homosexuality as Shusterman perfectly highlights it based on *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and the *Laws*. However, it seems that there is no consensus to be found. The detailed analysis of such philosophers' approaches like Plato and Aristotle makes the general description more normative and precise regarding the philosophical-aesthetical ground ars erotica is to be embedded in.

Using the motif of the ambiguity of the Greek Eros, Shusterman manages to create an elegant transition not only to the Roman Empire's approach to sexual thinking but to the ancient biblical tradition, which absorbed the main idea of it. His intention with the transition is subtly clear to today's readers, emphasizing the importance of the impact of religious thinking on our secular society by showing how Christianity shaped our culture's sexual attitude. However, the difficulty lies in the details since the Bible is not the richest source for analyzing erotic art. Though the scale varies from same-sex relations to incest, there is no concern for aesthetics of lovemaking to be found. Therefore Shusterman inventively examines the roots of such neglect. As an authentic philosophical thinker, he marks an exciting yet paradoxical starting point for the possible avoidance of erotic intercourse. The riddle concerning the Hebrew God includes the question of his body; if he has one, what is its nature, and with who could God procreate? The answer, however, seems simple since divine images were strictly forbidden. Hence the uncomfortability and anxiety about God's body can partly be explained. But what about the problem with the partner whose presence – in any form – could solve the issue of probable coupling – let it be spiritual or physical? The leading cause Shusterman perfectly highlights lies in the essence of monotheism, as the mere thought of any other God or Goddess would be incompatible with the concept of the Omnipotent One.

Furthermore, the issue evokes the problem of male emphasis through the myth of creation. Since Adam was the first created animal to accompany him, Eve falls into a derivative place; she was never an original intention, but only an afterthought derived from Adam's rib. How could this solid religious thought not influence the general approach towards women and their sexual meaning? Moreover, eating from the tree of knowledge, and becoming aware of nakedness as a shameful state, makes the presence of Eve even more devalued. Parallelly though, as Shusterman adds, the moment women are punished for this sinful deed with the pain of childbirth gives Eros and achieved meaning through conceiving. Thus, the Judeo-Christian approach towards erotics between male and female is to be looked for in the concept of reproduction, just like in the socio-political and historical motivation of a small nation, the Hebrews. Shusterman genially marks this as an initial point for abolishing the possibility of God being without gender or sexual identity, as his original Hebrew name could have suggested female fertility, too. In addition, the interconnects the strong emphasis on procreation with the duty of circumcision, since removing the male genital's most sensitive part deprives the individual of a pleasure-seeking, erotic desire to dedicate the sexual act to God's original will. Interestingly enough, compared to the Greek tradition – with some exceptions – the importance of the Hebrew progeny leaves no room for homosexuality or bestiality, which stands true for levirate marriages, polygyny, marrying outside of the religion, or the exclusion of the sex-

ually incapable. Whereas Shusterman successfully contrasts the general approach of the Judeo-Christian with the *Song of Songs'* which is exceptionally fruitful in erotic massages.

Nevertheless, thinking between the contrasting lines, the New Testament's examination presents a radically different view on eroticism. Not only did celibacy's relevance occur, but it has brought a logical consequence; almost wholly abandoning the arts of erotica in exchange for the love of God. Through the description of St. Paul's, Augustine's, and Aquinas' essentially Christian views, Shusterman wishes to show both sides of the coin. Paul's approach tells of a more conservative attitude towards sex since he confines it to marriage with strict chastity. However, the primary position of love is still aimed at God himself. At the same time, Augustine and Aquinas both seemingly concede letting their thoughts swirl around the possible, sinful, yet rational pleasures that can emerge during physical encounters between a man and his lawful wife. Thus, Shusterman sharply and consistently appoints his argument mentioned at the beginning of the chapter considering the significant influence the Greco-Roman culture and philosophy has made; the Judeo-Christian religion adapted an assertive male superiority, Christianity ennobled the idea of self-discipline and self-cultivation, rather than mere procreation.

As the book is logically, not chronologically structured, the oldest surviving texts and studies about the arts of sex appear only in the fourth chapter, which deals with ancient China's broad and complex theories about erotics, or so-called *Qi Erotics*. Nevertheless, the sheer thrill of this text lies in its complexity. On the one hand, the diversity Shusterman had presented through the analysis of the Greek sexual tradition returns, only in a different form; since the founding texts of the Chinese thought, sexual thinking was present in various, broad fields and topics as religious and medical aspects were affected, too. But, on the other hand, by analyzing the Chinese theories, Shusterman parallelly revises Foucault's previous misinterpretations and explains the possible aesthetic motivations behind his views.

First and foremost, as his critique towards Foucault is noticeably recurring, it is precisely and consequently elaborated. Shusterman lays down the first faulty principle of Foucault's. In the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault based his primary approach on his own experiences and the Greek-Roman style, rather than the Asian ars erotica. Second, Shusterman states that Foucault basing on his work on Robert van Gulik's *Sexual life in Ancient China*, not only misreads the cited texts but tends to misinterpret Gulik's main account, too. Therefore, by presenting different coitus theories that emphasize youth, immortality, and an individual's health, Shusterman simultaneously manages to accurately point out Foucault's wrong characterization regarding classical Chinese texts: they should not be the same defined in contrast to sexual science.

Furthermore, with the examination of coitus reservatus, Shusterman proves that the French philosopher was mistaken when he stated that pleasure in itself is the goal in sexual relations according to Chinese thought. Shusterman contrasts his idea by introducing the *yin* and *yang* essence, which' harmony is only present if one avoids pleasure centeredness, warning about its unhealthy aspects for the individual. Shusterman's developed contradiction to Foucault gives the impression of Foucault being inattentive to the social, cultural, and even *philosophical* background of China's erotic thinking.

However, Shusterman does not seem satisfied with the undoubtedly exciting highlights he adds to Foucault's approach. Nevertheless, he manages to present an even more detailed knowledge about the Asian ars erotica than previously elaborated in *Thinking Through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics*. Apparent his authentic interest be, he divides classical Chinese thinking into three main genres based on China's oldest book, the *Book of Changes* and *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of International Medicine*: the medical approach, guides for the householder, and the Daoist aims of paranormal longevity, or the

earthly immortality for a person. Regarding this additive, he incorporates an ontological and metaphysical aspect and the concept of Chinese pluralist thinking. Firstly, he introduces the basic principle in Chinese metaphysics that is *chang*ing, which sharply contradicts the Greek, more precisely Plato's metaphysical thinking, emphasizing the *unchangeable* reality. Secondly, he derives the critical concept of contrast between China and Greece in genuinely different desires regarding ars erotica. As he states: "Chinese erotic theory could more easily see desire as a dynamic potency rather than a lack-related weakness because its underlying philosophy (in contrast to the Greek's) is less preoccupied with the idea of individual autonomy and self-sufficiency but instead insists on how one's energies and powers are borrowed from larger natural forces."[3] His ascertainment builds a bridge to understanding the third contrast to Western thinking. The function of a fruitful and prosperous spiritual and cosmic union of opposites does not preclude aesthetic values since Chinese thought makes no opposition between the aesthetic and the practical. Ars erotica's everpresent aim is to reach self-mastery and self-cultivation.

In the complexity and diversity of opposites, Shusterman primarily and elegantly brings the similarities between *Qi Erotics* and Indian ars erotica in chapter five, *Lovemaking as Aesthetic Education.* As Indian texts tend to provide knowledge about empirical matters based primarily on observation, they define themselves essentially scientific, just as Chinese medical texts do. Moreover, they view erotics as ethical self-cultivation based on the contrastive personality of Šiva's mythical image, reconciling passion and self-restraint. The mythological, philosophical and religious impact seems inevitable regarding sexual attitudes. However, Shusterman opens up the seemingly endless book of aesthetic features Indian erotic approaches include. Since their texts emphasize the significance of fine arts and aesthetic pleasures, it is notable that they do not disregard poetry, dance, music, and the art of drama as a part of sexual behavior. Moreover, the characters described in *Kamasutra*, *Koka Shastra*, or *Ananga Ranga* are borrowed from Indian art dramas, strengthening the connection between aesthetics, art, and sex. One of the reasons for this, as Shusterman suggests, is the almost simultaneous creation of India's two undoubtedly significant texts, *Kamasutra* and *Natyaśastra.* Widely known *Kamasutra* as the founding text of ars erotica interiorized some crucial features from *Natyaśastra*'s aesthetic and dramatic theories seem artistic, thus the traditional approach towards sex. However, Shusterman's detailed examination presents another perspective of the aesthetically unique erotic theory; the endeavor of psychological analysis. The emphasis lies in the enhanced knowledge, self-control, mastery of the senses, and excellent understanding of a person's character, moods, needs, and feelings to master perception at its finest. He states the similarities between Greek and Chinese erotical theories appear slightly, as from one aspect, the Indian ars erotica, if mastered correctly, is, in fact, the art of living. From the other element, the position of self-cultivation is always superior to mere sexual pleasure. Despite the developed and complex theories regarding erotics, Shusterman consequently addresses the issue of male dominance embedded in the Indian sexual culture. The situation, however, seems to be conflicting since a radical and extreme subordination of women can be found as females should strictly be guarded by men, whose task is also to make their [women's] independence impossible. On the contrary, men are urged to honor and respect their wives, not only with their behavior but with presents and gifts, too. Shusterman regards this as compensation for the radical dependence and strict rules women are faced with. Yet, it also points out the importance of the harmony of the family since unhappy women are equal to unhappy homes, including the possibility of the lack of offspring.

[3] Shusterman, Richard. *Ars erotica, Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love.* Cambridge University Press. 2021. pp. 182.

Considering the combined, multi-layered nature of the Indian sexual theory that involves cognitive, practical, and aesthetic aspects through the importance of self-mastery, Shusterman highlights its' traditional educational role that could be aimed at the contemporary approach towards ars erotica.

Seemingly distant theories in the art of lovemaking are connected by the description of their historical roots, such as the Islamic culture's origins. Highlighting its rare known background, Shusterman draws attention to the Indian and Greco-Roman thought about sex that had made a notable impact on the Muslim erotic theory, with the difference of monotheism. Implying the distinction between the religious aspects, he provides further insight into the enormous influence of cultural and ideological frameworks on the matters of sexual art. However, in the case of Islam, this sexual art is profoundly contrasted with the culture itself. The opposition comes to light when Shusterman introduces the notion of temporary marriage, *Nika mut'ah*, that had been permitted when soldiers left their homes, then Prophet Mohammed forbade it forever. However, the presence of Mohammed itself brings forth the issue of sexual thinking, as he, in contrast to Jesus or Jeremiah, enjoyed a whole, polygynous sexual life. Therefore as an example to be followed, the erotic tradition parallelly attributes robust and powerful energy to sexual desire while regards it as a raised spiritual and ethical path through which perfection and self-cultivation can be attained. Nevertheless, Shusterman does not stop at the close examination of the *Quran*. He draws attention to three main Islamic books regarding sexual thinking; *The Ring of the Dove, The perfumed Garden of Sensual Delight,* and *The Encyclopedia Pleasure*.

Interestingly enough, reading these texts – which are considered essential parts of the Muslim culture – results in further contrasts. As he compares *The Encyclopedia of Pleasure* with *Quran*, the question of pederastry arises, proving that while the former text openly speaks of its presence, the latter does not agree with homosexual behavior but hints at its possibility. Moreover, since the topic of the sexually incapable was previously analyzed by Shusterman, the question of eunuchs resurfaces, acknowledging their importance in the Muslim culture. However, castration was forbidden since sexual activity constitutes a cardinal Islamic duty. Therefore, the intriguing part of the erotic life was the multi-layered relationship between a husband and many wives and concubines and the detailed knowledge of aesthetic features used to attain perfect intercourse. Among these, Shusterman specifies the importance of the five senses, since the vision of beauty, the hearing of the well-formed language, the odor of a perfume, the taste, and the touch of another form an acceptable expectation for ars erotica. Opposed to the slightly elegant elements that constitute the intercourses' complex joy, Shusterman recurringly reaches back to his initial argument, which aims to analyze the possibility of male dominance in different cultures. Aside from some examples, he points out men's general superiority, which in some cases leads to the notion of violence regarding sexual intercourses. However, the texts seem to convey that women agree to this. Emphasizing that men should be forceful or using the metaphor for penetration as a "knife-like stabbing" implies that aggression seems to be the natural part of some aspects of Islamic lovemaking. The most significant part of supporting Shusterman's argument is presenting one of Mohammed's favorite wives ' opinions about marriage: "For women, marriage is a sort of slavery," and instead of choosing the right husband, it is about choosing "the right master."[4] One of the reasons for this, as Shusterman adduces, is to keep in hands the infinite lust of women, which is considered to be a threat to male sexuality, thus to their dominance just like he presented it in the Greek theory. However, similarly to Plato, Íbn Szína's or so-called Avicenna's approach towards lovemaking implicates a deeper phil-

[4] Shusterman, Richard. *Ars erotica, Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love*. Cambridge University Press. 2021. pp. 262.

osophical meaning to love, indicating the variable attitudes regarding the Islamic ars erotica.

Consciously structuring, in the seventh chapter, Shusterman appoints the roots of Japanese sexual thinking, which seems to be a mixture of the local Japanese myths and political factors, Chinese Buddhism's and Confucianism's aesthetics, with the presence of a violent aspect that reminds of the Islamic regard. By examining the Heian culture's courtly love, the culture of male love practiced by Buddhist monks and samurai warriors, just like the high-class Yoshiwara prostitution, he emphasizes both the presence of tenderness, feelings, and controlled desire and the ugly side of commercialism, distrust and violent behaviors.

Through the proper analysis of the original Japanese myths, he concludes two main points regarding sexual thinking; firstly, one should make love ritually the appropriate way, that mainly includes male priority, since female initiation never results in any good, and secondly, but even more interestingly there is to be found something laughably awkward about sexual body parts. Shusterman manages to carry on this remark into the Heian culture's attitude since there were no mentionings nor anything sexual or vulgarities that would have violated the excellent taste. Instead, as he appoints, aesthetics could win someone's heart since a poem meant great intimacy. Moreover, what reminds us of the Indian or Islamic culture is that music, dance, and sophisticated hermeneutics were the primary elements of erotic thinking. His perfect comparison of male love among monks and warriors to Greek pederastry heightens the powerful message of finding the common in the contrasted. In addition to this, through the detailed examination of the Edo society's high-class prostitution, he manages to trace another essential Greco-Roman likeness. As the courtesans in the Yoshiwara district were masters of ars erotica to emphasize fine arts, chic and graceful manners, they were even harder to win by a man, which inevitably shows similarities with the hetaeras introduced in the second chapter. The precision of the author, however, is not letting any matter floating on the surface; Shusterman makes a clear distinction that enables us to see that while hetaeras served as the high purpose of aesthetic pleasure, high-class Japanese courtesans carried the dark side of the same goal; deceit, violence and the commodification of women.

Albeit the last chapter serves as a new analysis, it includes some of the previously examined issues, making the text even more comprehensive, consequential, and well-formed. Shusterman implicates the Greco-Roman, Islamic and Christian theories in studying the medieval and Renaissance approach towards ars erotica. By the explanation of his, it resulted in a mix of erotic perspectives. The commingling of sexual science, as he states, came through Islamic scholars. They transmitted the theories of the Greek and Roman origins, as well as conveying different features of the Arabian sexual thinking, which, however, drew on the Indian erotic arts.

Nevertheless, he highlights Christianity's strict influence on the Medieval ages, which resulted in the prohibitions of adultery, fornication, and nonprocreative sexual interactions. By presenting the story of Heloise and Abelard, Shusterman aims to bring forth the problem of the reoccurring, residual sexism and the basic infringe of Christian ethics. Ficino's and Bruno's Neoplatonistic views share the welcoming of the thought of God being the only source of love, goodness, and perfection. At the same time, they differ in the idea of actual and practical lovemaking. Shusterman presents the exciting views of Montaigne, who distinguished between marriage and sexual desire, as he recommended erotics only outside of the lawful union with keeping the reputation of both men and women.

Although the most thrilling and masterfully placed analysis of Shusterman's is left towards the end of the chapter, thus the whole book, unfolding the philosophical *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*. [5] written by Tullia

[5] D'Aragona, Tullia. *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*. Trans. Ri-

d'Aragona, a professional italian courtesan. Tullia tells of a rational appreciation for a lover's virtues and spiritual union with him while admitting the relevant place of the body's desire for physical intercourse. Moreover, as Shusterman states, she recognizes the possible development of love starting from the vulgar to the spiritual form. However, what gives Tullia's analysis another dimension that slightly rises above her admittedly rational and proper philosophical dialogue is her multi-layered and diverse approach – just like the book itself. With the study of her text, experience comes forth, an essential concept in ars erotica and Shusterman's somaesthetics. Furthermore, as the broad examination of the general theory of ars erotica emphasizes the question of male dominance, presenting a woman's detailed philosophical and practical approach towards sexual theory gives a further, even more, realistic dimension to the explanatory aspiration. Finally, Tullia is unwilling to give out the details, information, and more precisely, the *secrets* of the art of lovemaking provide the needed yet always missing part of ars erotica; *mystery*.

Since art appeared in our minds, in the outer world, it has never been covered or explained with one definition, nor a comprehensive, unchangeable theory. The situation, however, stands true for aesthetics itself. As Alexander Baumgarten's approach has been reconsidered, opposed, and even appraised, there is no consensus in an everpresent, infinitely irrefutable theory. The probable reason for not having something unchangeable or permanent regarding art, aesthetics, or even erotical thinking lies in their nature; they must be secretive and mysterious to have an intention to explore them. Shusterman's *Ars erotica* perfectly sums up the opposing. Yet, cohesive theories regarding the history and the true essence of sexual thinking manages to mediate it in a properly structured and aptly formulated style that undoubtedly arouses curiosity and initiates the reconsideration of our notion of art. Thus, he seems to create something new, innovative, that has always been present. Controversial, isn't it?

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MORAL RELATIONS BETWEEN HUMANS AND ANIMALS

Abdi Kitesa Keno

Kremer, A. (2018). "The Moral Relationship of the Human and Non-Human Animals in Light of Ethology," *Applied Ethics: From Bioethics to Environmental Ethics.* Trivent Publishing.

The Hungarian philosopher Alexander Kremer attempted to break down this subject in his (2018) manuscript *"The Moral Relations of Humans and Non-Human Animals in Light of Ethology,"* and offered a pragmatist solution. The central debate about moral relationships between humans and non-human animals has been going on for over half a century. The authors argue that animals need more specific defenses than humans because they cannot protest and give informed consent. Peter Singer and Tom Regan have done their best as animal liberators, but their ideas are philosophically unfounded. We must return to Immanuel Kant's point of view, which is compelling and defensible.

According to Singer and Regan, animals must have moral rights. They used the ability to feel pleasure and pain and the themes of life as criteria for moral standing, respectively. Moreover, they also argued that rationality could not serve as the basis for morals and morality. In contrast to this work by two eminent environmental ethicists, the author was adamant that rationality is the foundation of morals and morality. His two main arguments run into this claim: (1) logical and experiential; (2) historical and ethological.

According to the first argument, moral agents and choices must be rational; otherwise, it is impossible to speak of morals and morality. Therefore, animals cannot be moral agents because rationality is an essential element of morals and morality, without which morals and morality cannot be discussed. Similarly, animals cannot be moral agents because they cannot know what is good and bad in a moral sense. In the same way, morals and morality are not identical to their biological basis in animals.

Morals and morality, as the second argument states, are exclusively the product of social history and the result of human rationality. Moreover, Singer's idea that replaces rationality with the ability to suffer rather than how people become moral agents through their ability to suffer is futile.

The dynamism of the article has propelled a broader view of philosophy to include multidisciplinary fields such as biology, sociology, socio-biology, neurology, evolutionary psychology, ethology, human ethology, and more. However, for the purposes of the study, the author has emphasized only ethology and human ethology.

In the view of ethology, discovering the evolutionary history of species helps to understand and explain various forms. Kremer used the Hungarian human ethologist Vilmos Csanyi to identify traits that distinguish humans from primates. The first features are community, reduced hostility to sharing food and sex, new forms of division of work, group mental expression, and group loyalty. The second characteristic is compassion (emotional synchronization), imitation (behavioral pattern synchronization that allows teaching), discipline, and the ability to follow the rules. The synchronization of these activities, emotions, and behavioral patterns is learned not only through language but also through music, singing, dancing, rituals, and image-making. A third characteristic is the use of language, the creation of tools, and abstract thinking. Most importantly, the implications of these facts have shown some consequences. Humans are culture inventors, also determined by biological and cultural evolution.

According to Kant, man has no immediate duty to animals. However, cruelty to animals is wrong. Because in doing so, we share their pain and undermine and destroy the natural tendencies that underpin our moral relationships with other people. Kremer also believed that humans have no direct moral obligations to animals because they are not rational beings. Our duty to animals is indirect, in the sense that we are obliged and have a moral duty to animals to protect them.

As an article written by an environmental ethicist, the moral relationships between humans and non-human animals in the light of ethology are fascinating and thought-provoking. Likewise, it has both practical

and theoretical agendas and should be evaluated from both perspectives. The author presents a poignant relationship between humans and animals since the 1960s. Attempts have been made mainly by philosophers to solve this problem. However, Kremer argues that while a philosophical and ethical approach to the topic under discussion is necessary, this alone is insufficient. So, we also need scientific arguments.

In sum, it is an interesting addition to the literature on the discussion of human beings and non-human animals' relationships and an essential contribution to the broader field of environmental ethics. Likewise, he has made significant contributions to the field by extending the scope of philosophy into a positive science and deepening the debate about environmental ethics.

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