Meaning and International Relations

Edited by
Peter Mandaville and
Andrew Williams

Also available as a printed book
see title verso for ISBN details

Meaning and International Relations

- Are we, after the Cold War, living in a world 'without meaning'?
- How do we define ourselves in a world seemingly devoid of ideological struggle or clear foundations?

This innovative volume brings together specialists in international relations to tackle a set of difficult questions about what it means to live in a globalized world, where the purpose and direction of world politics are no longer clear-cut.

Taking a cue from hermeneutic philosophy, the contributors examine a diverse set of topics including the localization of meaning in a globalized world; expressions of the 'spirit of the age' in photography; ideology in a post-ideological age; nihilism and the European project; feminist precursors to the crisis of meaning in international relations; performances of ethnicity in the context of conflict; the shifting meanings of Islam in European migrant communities; the turn to religion as a source of meaning in world politics, and the debate over a 'clash of civilizations'.

A shared framework built on hermeneutics and the interpretation of experience provides this wide-ranging volume with a high degree of coherency.

What emerges from these essays is a very clear sense that while we may be living in an era that lacks a single, universal purpose, ours is still a world replete with meaning. The authors of this volume stress the need for a pluralistic conception of meaning in a globalized world, and demonstrate how increased communication and interaction in transnational space works to produce complex tapestries of culture and politics. *Meaning and International Relations* also makes an original and convincing case for the relevance of hermeneutic approaches to understanding contemporary international relations.

Peter Mandaville is Assistant Professor of Government and Politics at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia. He was previously a Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Kent, Canterbury. His recent publications include *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma* and *The Zen of International Relations: IR Theory from East to West*, a co-edited volume. **Andrew Williams** is Professor of International Relations at the University of Kent, Canterbury. His recent publications include *Failed Imagination? New World Orders of the Twentieth Century*. He is currently writing a book entitled *The Victors and the Vanquished: Liberal Dilemmas and the Ending of Wars*.

Routledge Advances in International Relations and Global Politics

Meaning and International Relations

Edited by
Peter Mandaville and
Andrew Williams

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Contents

Acknowledgements

Contributors

Stephen Chan is Professor of International Relations and Ethics at the Nottingham Trent University and Designate-Dean of Law and Social Sciences at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Among his recent publications are (with Moises Venancio) *War and Peace in Mozambique* (Macmillan, 1998), (edited with Jarrod Wiener) *Twentieth-Century International History* (I. B. Tauris, 1999), (with Roland Bleiker, Peter Mandaville *et al.*), *The Zen of International Relations* (Palgrave, 2001) and *Robert Mugabe: A Political Life* (I. B. Tauris, 2002).

Christopher Coker has a BA from Cambridge, and a PhD from Oxford. He is currently Reader in International Relations at the London School of Economics. Among his publications are *War in the Twentieth Century* (Brassey's, 1994), *The Triumph of the West* (Westview Press, 1998) and *War and the Illiberal Conscience* (Westview Press, 1998). He is a serving member of the Washington Strategy Seminar and the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis (Cambridge, MA) as well as being a former editor of *The Atlantic Quarterly*.

Andrea den Boer is a Teaching Assistant and is completing her PhD thesis at the University of Kent at Canterbury. Her research explores the relationship between identity, community, justice and violence as found in the philosophical and Judaic writings of Emmanuel Levinas. For the past several years she has participated in the British International Studies Association working group on Contemporary Research in International Political Theory (CRIPT), acting as a participant and co-convenor.

Gerard Delanty is Professor of Sociology at the University of Liverpool. He is the author of many articles and several books in social theory, including *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality* (Macmillan, 1995), *Social Science: Beyond Constructivism and Realism* (Open University Press, 1997), (with Patrick O'Mahony) *Rethinking Irish History* (Macmillan, 1998), *Social Theory in a Changing World* (Polity Press, 1999), *Modernity and Postmodernity: Knowledge, Power, the Self* (Sage, 2000), *Citizenship in a Global Era* (Open University Press, 2000) and *Challenging Knowledge: The University in the Knowledge Society* (Open University Press, 2001).

Stefan Elbe is Lecturer in International Relations in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick. Routledge will be publishing his doctoral thesis on *European Nihilism and the Idea of Europe* which he recently completed at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He has also published articles on Nietzsche's critique of nationalism in the *Journal of Political Ideologies*, and on genealogy and the European idea in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*.

Zaki Laïdi is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales. He is also a Professor at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris. He has taught at Johns Hopkins University and at the Université de Montreal. He is a columnist on the daily newspaper *Libération*. His publications include *A World without Meaning: The Crisis of Meaning in International Politics* (Routledge, 1998), *Malaise dans la mondialisation* (Textuel, 1998) and *Power and Purpose after the Cold War* (Berg, 1995).

Peter Mandaville is Assistant Professor of International Relations at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia. Among his publications are *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma* (Routledge, 2001), (co-edited with Stephen Chan) *The Zen of International Relations: IR Theory from East to West* (Palgrave, 2001), 'Reading the State from Elsewhere: Towards a Postnational Anthropology', in *Review of International Studies* and 'Territory and Translocality: Discrepant Idioms of Political Identity,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*. His current research focuses on post-western approaches to world politics.

Tarja Väyrynen is Research Director at Tampere Peace Research Institute, Finland. Her areas of interest include conflict theory, conflict resolution and gender. She is author of *Culture and International Conflict Resolution: A Critical Analysis of the Work of John Burton* (Manchester University Press, 2001).

Annick T. R. Wibben is a Visiting Fellow at the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University, where she is a researcher with the Information, Technology, War, and Peace Project (http://www.infopeace.org). She is also completing her doctoral dissertation on 'Subjects of Security: A Feminist Examination of Security in International Relations' at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. She is the author of *Narrating 'Experience': Raymond Aron and Feminist Scholars Revis(it)ed* (University of Tampere, 1998).

Andrew Williams was born in Birmingham, and educated at the University of Keele (BA, History and Politics) and at the University of Geneva (Dr. ès Sciences Politiques). He is Professor of International Relations at the University of Kent at Canterbury. His main research interests include Eastern Europe, international organisation, international conflict resolution and international history. He has written a number of books, including *Failed Imagination? New World Orders of the Twentieth Century* (Manchester University Press, 1998).

1   Introduction

Andrew Williams

This book is an attempt to come to terms with one of the most elusive of all concepts in philosophy, and indeed in life as it is lived by most people, that of 'meaning'. It is our contention that there is a great deal to be learned by the stimulation of a debate between those philosophers, especially those who are collectively referred to as being interested in the 'hermeneutic' and those within the discipline of international relations (IR) who have become inspired by the revival of interest in such philosophers. As I say in the introduction to my own chapter in this book:

> . . . the philosophical and political thinking that has informed much of this book draws on a huge and rich series of traditions of 'meaning', from the phenomenological and existential thinkers of twentieth-century Europe and the work of the linguistic scholars of the Oxford School (such as Wittgenstein) through to the often non-European thought and a 'world of multiple meanings' that should be celebrated not mourned.

In so attempting we could easily be accused of perpetrating yet another 'pomo joke' on our long-suffering students and indeed the wider community of international relations, including as it does a majority of those interested in 'real world' phenomena – wars, the environment, revolutions, globalisation etc. – and little concerned with yet another bunch of obscure thinkers being disinterred from their graves in the interests of furthering the careers of sensation-seeking academics. We would suggest that those involved in this book are on the contrary all very committed to the 'real' world, most of them have gone into print or onto the academic hustings on a number of occasions to denounce the ever more mystifying excesses of what we loosely call 'post-modernism'. If not searchers after 'truth', which probably all of us would agree is an elusive and possibly impossible dream, we are all searchers after understanding and meaning, or 'hermeneutics' as some of us would explicitly put it. This is therefore our attempt to put our collective thoughts on paper to say why we think that an exploration of hermeneutic approaches to IR might actually reconnect us to reality in a significant way, and not distance us further from it.

International relations in the 1980s, and of course significantly before the end of the Cold War led to the end of many seeming certainties, was a field with little

questioning of the basic elements that made up its main foci. There was some tilting at the windmills of 'positivism', the state was declared to be on dodgy ground as a category of analysis, we started to broach the idea that gender might have an impact on what we studied and how we studied it. The main elements of refocusing that we were then seeing was in the rediscovery of the notion that ethics might have a part to play in the study of IR, with seminal contributions from Mervyn Frost, then Chris Brown and groups like the Ethikon Institute based in the United States. There has clearly been a seismic shift, in Britain and to a lesser extent in the United States, from 'positivistic' approaches. Out of this has emerged a new quasi-orthodox elite that embraces 'critical' theory, 'post-modernism' and a host of other 'isms' and has taken many down the narrow tracks of contemporary continental philosophy and epistemology so that Barthes, Foucault and Kristeva have, in some settings, become as common on reading lists of IR theory courses as Kenneth Waltz or Hans Morgenthau used to be.

The problem is that much of this serves to confuse, not to elucidate, the contexts in which these thinkers and their philosophies emerged historically, even sociologically. Many of our students, indeed many of us, feel afloat on a sea of mutual incomprehension, an incomprehension which leads to a boycotting of IR conferences and a growing dissatisfaction all round.

This book has the lofty aim of suggesting that we have in places to go a step further than any of these very worthy new directions, to look at the very idea of 'meaning' itself in the study of IR. The central reason for this is that, on the one hand, the phenomenon that we call globalisation does not, by definition, stop at frontiers, and neither do the collective structures of meaning of which globalisation is the vehicle. Borders do not stop meanings becoming universalised, for better and for worse. Correspondingly we are now more aware than ever, due to such (arguably) diverse counter-phenomena as 'religious fundamentalism' and the assertion of cultural particularities of all kinds, that there is a reassertion of localised frameworks of meaning by individuals and peoples who feel threatened by globalisation's homo-genising and culturally deadening hand.

Why do we believe that it is necessary to refer to the hermeneutic philosophers in order to do this? The main reason is that the insights of hermeneutic philosophy – 'the branch of knowledge that deals with interpretation' in the words of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (COD) – have been left neglected in the study of IR. However we are aware that, as any biblical or other textual scholar will know, there are as many interpretations of 'meaning' in the COD sense as there are interpreters. We nonetheless think that there are significant nuggets of wisdom to be unearthed of a very useful kind in this kind of philosophical inquiry. And it is worthwhile pointing out that we are not alone in so thinking. One of the areas that Steve Smith picked out in his 1996 paper on the state of international theory as 'particularly promising' for future 'post-positivists international theory' was hermeneutics (Smith in Smith *et al.* 1996: 25).

This area he indicated was most influenced by Dilthey, Husserl, Weber, Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Gadamer, a roll call not immediately accessible to the average IR scholar. As Smith points out, hermeneutics is a complex field, and

encompasses more than one focus. But what all these writers sought to explore was the question of why the world is the way it is and why we believe the things we do in the way we do. It asks, in other words, the ultimate ontological questions about 'being' and not just about 'how do we know what we (think we) know', the domain of epistemology. To put it crudely, it asks what as teenagers we used to refer to as the 'mind-blowing questions'. But how can we in fact come to terms with such questions – is not awe the best reaction, followed by getting on with our lives? After all, the answer to Steve Smith's proposal in the book he edited was one of total silence – there is no chapter on hermeneutics, whereas there are chapters of all his other categories of 'promise'. Mainly such ideas are bundled in with other 'reflectivist' or 'reflexive' thinkers, in the words of Ole Waever and as such encountered great opposition within the American IR academy (Waever in Smith *et al*. 1996: 149–85).

It might be argued, as I think I would personally on some occasions, that to ask such questions is in itself both impossible and unproductive. An extreme version of this viewpoint could be asked both by those who strongly deny the existence of some absolute, even theological truth, such as the logical positivists (such as A. J. Ayer in Britain)[1] or equally by those who deny our ability to know the unknowable God, such as the mystical Christian theologians. This pragmatic approach has much appeal in Anglo-Saxon societies, and partly explains the difficulty that much 'continental' philosophy has had in making any inroads into British, or indeed American, social science. In social science it is difficult to entertain ideas that are by their very nature not verifiable or refutable, a position that a 'positivist' like Ayer would defend. Yet British IR has, as the late Michael Nicholson points out, also been somewhat sceptical of 'positivist' thinking, and Ayer's stance did not receive over-enthusiasm even at the height of its dominance of British philosophy. Karl Popper and other theories of scientific analysis have certainly been taught on IR courses in Britain, and it would be true to say that there was a translation of that kind of thinking into such concepts as the 'inter-paradigm debate' of the 1980s, but not a clear embracing of the extremes of mathematical modelling (still) popular in IR in the United States (see Nicholson in Smith *et al*. 1996: 128–45).

Since the end of the Cold War we have thus been left with a battlefield littered with the corpses of that war, which in theory terms has been the so-called 'realist' tradition, or rather its American 'neo-realist' counterpart, old-fashioned Marxism, largely discredited by the end of the Soviet Union, and a final skirmish by the survivors around the battleflags of post-structuralism and epistemology. It might be suggested that this ignores many of the really important questions that students of IR really care about. There is, in short a danger that IR will disappear up its own theoretical fundament.

It would be undeniable that all of those who have contributed to this book would either vehemently defend their religious belief (as would I for example) or have definite views about being through some other form of spiritual stance, or deny the possibility of belief itself. But what all of us could subscribe to, along with the various branches of hermeneutic philosophy, is the idea that we are embedded in our historical experience, and that we have as a preliminary duty to attempt, if not necessarily succeed, in interpreting that experience for ourselves and those around

us. In other words we all have acknowledged our unacknowledged belief in the need to try to explain the ultimate truths of existence. This naturally gets to the question of who are 'we'? 'We' are in this volume a disparate band, who have come together in the most unlikely way. Most of the contributors to this volume (I hope that they will not be offended by this) consider themselves to be on the fringes of some of the main theoretical debates in IR as those are epitomised by the new elites within the discipline. But all of us have a passion for interpreting what we see as the real 'truths' that the contemporary world has to offer.

'Meaning' in this book is therefore used as a key to unlock the differences that lie below Smith's categories and to explicitise the questions that we believe actually unite them. If we had to isolate what these questions are, the list might look as follows:

- Who are we?
- What are we becoming, individually and in our various groupings, under the influence of such overwhelming forces as those of globalisation?
- What tools can we use to unlock these newly apprehended realities (that are also in some senses old realities, as with the impact of technology on our lives, a great concern of Heidegger for example)?
- How might we fit the study of meaning into the wider concerns of IR theory and practice?

Chapter outlines

Andrew Williams asks some basic questions about how meaning might be useful to the student of IR using the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. As a first step, he traces the debate about whether we have, in Zaki Laïdi's (1994a) initial use of the term a 'world without meaning' or whether, after Nicholas Higgins, we have a world of 'multiple meanings' (Laïdi 1998a, 1998b; see also the review of Laïdi, by Higgins 1999: 656–7).

Williams attempts to show how the various schools of traditional IR might draw usefully on some of the broad insights that Heidegger contains by asking what we actually 'Mean by "Meaning"' and how Heidegger uses the term. He then suggests that Heidegger's ontology might have some important lessons for the world in which we now live and that one of the key ones among these, and not unique to Heidegger, is a return to an emphasis on historical method. We are, similarly to Heidegger, living in a moment of flux when established ideas are being replaced by something possibly much less agreeable. Williams makes some suggestions as to how this might be done, drawing on some writers, like Christopher Coker and Stefan Rossbach, who have used history in interesting and productive ways in their writings on IR, particularly through the exploration of the power of myth and the contexts of war.

Christopher Coker expands on his previous work on war and the fate of the 'West' in an analysis of the *Zeitgeist* in all its poetic and historical possibility. He looks in particular at the way that the term can be used to investigate the European historical reality and compare it with that of Asia over the last hundred years, through an analysis of the medium of philosophical thought. Coker shows how

Europe's self-conscious superiority started to crumble first in India and then in China. The main insight for IR theory is that a clearer understanding of these 'local' histories in Asia would have enabled Europeans to understand the errors of their own feelings of superiority and possibly to avoid some of the worst, and usually self-destructive, results of these feelings. He asserts that we in fact 'see' in these civilisations not what is true but what we want to see and that in the end we choose what we perceive to be the underlying frameworks of meaning in these societies not in their terms but by looking for what is meaningful for us. The implications of this for the study of IR are clearly immense (Coker 1994, 1998).

Zaki Laïdi (1994a, 1998b) also builds on his previous work on meaning and globalisation to suggest that the process of regionalisation gives more clues about how this is happening. These processes are changing what Charles Taylor (1985) calls our 'collective signifiers' (*significations communes*) in quite profound ways. Regionalisation in this reading of the term provides a way of giving populations a sense of collective meaning that falls between the changed idea of the state and the not yet accepted idea of globalisation. This is shown by changing views of economic identity and by changing perceptions of what 'frontiers' now represent. This is true not only of Europe, but also of the rest of the world and we have yet to fully perceive what these economic imperatives will have as result in terms of cultural conse-quences. We can already see that uniformity of 'styles of living' has not led to the 'uniformisation of life itself'. This might in turn lead to a rethinking of the meaning of globalisation. As with Coker, Laïdi asks what can be seen in terms of the Western view of the non-West. Laïdi also asks if in this new global dawn we need to pursue a different form of theorising in IR or if we must accept that there never has been, and never will be, a commonly understood framework of meaning, even if we can claim that there is an increasingly universal economic framework within which we are all forced to work.

In his chapter, Gerard Delanty resumes an old debate about the 'end of ideology' in the new context of the present period. He asks whether we can now, in a globalising world, definitively declare this process to be finished. In the context of our discussions on meaning, might we now say that ideologies no longer help us understand political reality, if ideology is to be defined as a 'system of communi-cation and meaning' and as providing 'a synthesis of the cultural dimensions of modernity, the cognitive, the aesthetic and the normative'? This unity, so central to the modernist project, gave us hope that we could at least attempt to grasp the world in its totality and supposed unity as ideology was or is convinced of its own centrality and aspires to create a 'homogenous social order'. Delanty gives us a number of elucidations of the various ways in which we ascribe meaning to, and derive it from, ideological constructs. He posits that 'identity' has replaced ideology as the central pillar of our frameworks of meaning, but that does not mean that ideology has entirely lost its force as a framework but rather that it has to be seen in a different light, given shifting patterns of intellectual, economic and political power in post-modernity. Ideology remains a powerful force in a more simultaneously individual-ised and globalised world system. It is this new relationship and its implications for ethics and politics with which we must now come to terms.

Stefan Elbe looks at the literature that has emerged throughout the twentieth century on the meaning of Europe. He reflects on the accusation that Europe has not provided the framework of meaning that many feel is essential for it to survive as a new entity in IR. His feeling is that in striving for 'spiritual vitality' Europe may achieve the opposite result, and that it would be better to follow Nietzsche and his judgement on the nature of European nihilism. In so doing Elbe also engages with some of the other writers in this volume, notably Coker and Laïdi.

Annick T. R. Wibben's chapter draws on both critical theory and feminism, now well known to theorists of IR, to give access to the hermeneutic tradition. She bases her insights on a reading of Gadamer and a study of feminist perspectives on meaning. In so doing she shows how the multiplicity of text can give us a deeper understanding of the silences of IR.

Tarja Väyrynen builds on her theoretical and practical work on conflict resolution and uses the works of philosophers like Ernesto Laclau who have explored the *problematique* of identity in the post-Cold War world. She examines the way in which we construct life-worlds for ourselves as individuals and intersubjectively in groups. Using hermeneutic analysis as a base she builds on and 'beyond' hermeneutics by bringing in Foucault's warnings about the power structures that underlie stated meanings. This is done by an analysis of how language functions (through 'speech acts' after Judith Butler) in ethnopolitical conflict situations. This is then extended to show how in the global conjuncture, made up of three essential elements – the nation-state, capitalism and the media – identity tries to control expressions of meaning.

Peter Mandaville offers something like a 'case study' of how meaning travels, transforms and adapts itself (or is adapted) by transnational and globalising processes in the context of Muslim communities in the West. His chapter explores how interpretations, understandings and the meanings associated with Islam and Muslim practice shift when they enter into new sociocultural circumstances. When Islam is 'transplanted' from a world in which 'Muslimness' (and, moreover, a very particular idiom of Islam) is a standard feature of the cultural landscape to an environment in which religious difference figures as a sign of marginality, then the role and function that individuals ascribe to their faith system often undergoes significant transformation. Mandaville demonstrates that within any given culture or community we find various and often competing conceptions of what that identity is and what it means. The politics of identity is therefore based not only on the presence of an external other (e.g. Western society/Christianity) against which communities and cultures may define themselves, but also on the process of negotiation and debate taking place *within* a given community. This is especially the case when we are dealing with a cultural form such as Islam whose global sociocultural jurisdiction is extremely wide. For example, in the archetype of what Mandaville terms 'translocal space', the global city (such as London), Islam is forced to contend not only with a vast array of non-Islamic others but also with an enormous diversity of Muslim opinion as to the nature and meaning of Islam. In such spaces Muslims will encounter and be forced to converse with interpretations of their religion which they have either been taught to regard as heretical, or with which they are wholly unfamiliar. This chapter demonstrates that such instances of 'travelling culture', to

invoke James Clifford's (1997) term, can be experienced – on the one hand – as loss, dislocation and disruption; however, they are equally representative of new opportunities and spaces for the creative reinterpretation of meaning. Mandaville argues, for example, that Muslim discourse in the West contains some of the most innovative and creative reformulations of Islamic thought available today.

Andrea den Boer ventures where in truth the rest of us have feared to tread, into the realm of religion as a key framework of meaning. Her focus is on the post-phenomenological philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. What she does for Levinas that has originality is to look at how his work can be seen as going beyond the state-centric discourse that still dominates much of IR and how Levinas also pushed back the frontiers of a wider 'Being'. In so doing den Boer suggests that we should attempt to see the 'other' as being our responsibility, that to talk of justice is hollow if we do not see that responsibility through in the applied pursuit of justice.

Finally, Stephen Chan reminds us that the West has always tried to impose its 'meaning' on the rest of the world in the name of enlightenment or 'civilisation'. He takes particular issue with the latest version of this trend with a swingeing attack on Samuel Huntington's (1996) *Clash of Civilizations*. He targets not only Huntington's lack of 'historical judgement' but also his 'sociological assumptions'. This leads Huntington into a claim to universality when in fact he aims to stigmatise much of the rest of the world as 'other' to civilised behaviour. In so doing he generalises and distorts the unity of both the West and the 'rest'. Chan makes an appeal for a truly multicultural approach to the study of IR. We hope, along with him, to make a small contribution to his wishes in this book.

Note

1 See for example a comment on Ayer that he had a life-long commitment to 'slaying metaphysics and cutting back on our ontological commitments', that we could only justify making any statement that could be empirically demonstrated, in Rogers (1999: 220). This of course ruled out any religious belief as well and Ayer sympathised with Camus's belief that life was essentially meaningless (Rogers 1999: 197), although there were glimmers of dissension from this extreme position towards the end of Ayer's life.

2 Meaning and international relations

Some thoughts

Andrew Williams

Introduction

This chapter emerges from three linked concerns. The first is that, when my students ask me the basic question: 'What is the meaning of . . .' (for example the massacres in Rwanda, or the manic depression of the vast majority of the population of the former Soviet Union), I have to fall back on unsatisfactory explanations based on common-sense reasoning or inadequate social science. The second is that although it has become a commonplace to say that we are at a crossroads in our understanding of what international relations are all about, we are still lacking any new road map about where we might be headed, although the process of reassessment is under way. A third is prompted by the debate that has emerged about what Zaki Laïdi (1994a, 1998b) calls a 'world without meaning'. Is it true that we now have a 'crisis of meaning in international relations', where 'power and purpose' are at such variance with each other that we now have a crisis not just for the West but also for the whole planet (Laïdi 1994b)?

One way of showing this might be to take on areas of current and historical concern and show how some key writers have already brought the idea of 'meaning' into their considerations of the twentieth century. There are certainly reasons for doing so – the philosophical and political thinking that has informed much of this book draws on a huge and rich series of traditions of 'meaning', from the phenomenological and existential thinkers of twentieth-century Europe and the work of the linguistic scholars of the Oxford School (such as Wittgenstein) through to the often non-European thought and a 'world of multiple meanings' that should be celebrated not mourned (Higgins 1999: 656–7). One such distinguished catalogue might start with Spengler and pass by Toynbee and Fukuyama to Hobsbawm. In a sense we could say that the whole of our century of musing about IR has been taken up in a search for 'meaning', especially given the horrors that have accompanied our collective or separate journey. However, that would be an entirely different chapter, indeed a much larger book. So my purpose is practical and pedagogical: what can be done to bring the problematic of 'meaning' into IR so that it might be made part of a teachable curriculum?

In 1998 I attended a workshop 'celebrating' the 350 years of the Peace of Westphalia of 1648. Westphalia is often seen as the crucible of the modern nation-state,

and thus of the basic problematic of IR, but it might also be seen as the beginning of the thinking that led to the world wars, the Holocaust and many other waking nightmares (Hobsbawm 1994; Mazower 1998). The twentieth century has seen the true horror of what humankind can do to itself and to the planet in ways that could only have been imagined in the seventeenth century, even after the Thirty Years War. The same period has seen the 'death of God', announced by Nietzsche, and the creativity and destruction wrought by capitalism and the rise of mass culture. In short it has seen what gives us our present parameters of mental and material 'meaning'.

The different main schools of international relations have been sensibly summed up by Michael Doyle (1997) as emerging from long traditions of political thought, which he groups together as 'realism', 'liberalism' and 'socialism.' All have their origins in the pre-modern period but '[e]ach begins with the modern predicament – masterless men in modern society – and tries to speak across history to all who share it' (Doyle 1997: 10). But it has often been argued that during the Cold War the dominance of a 'sanitised realism' tried to evacuate the philosophical, and normative, content from studies of IR so that the discipline often skirted round what the original founders of the modern discipline of IR wanted for it, especially after the First World War (Doyle 1997; Brown 1992). I take this to have been the creation of an alternative to war as well as the creation of frameworks to understand and therefore to ameliorate the human condition, not just for prosperous Europeans but also for all those who inhabit the planet. This is a propitious moment to so reflect, as we are now largely convinced at the end of the Cold War that the European (or more accurately the Anglo-Saxon) version of history has more or less triumphed (Williams 1998).

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to try to tease out a few areas where the discipline of IR might benefit from a consideration of the category of thinking that we can call the 'search for meaning', possibly as a way of showing the ultimate continuities which exist in all human thought about how we should conduct our political affairs on a global level. In so doing, it takes on the concept of 'meaning' on a number of levels that will no doubt shock the philosophical purist, but that can be identified without too much deformation as useful for IR.

The first part of the chapter will address what I mean by 'meaning' and the relationship that meaning and IR might conceivably have for each other. The second part will consider, necessarily rather briefly, a few categories of historically interesting thought that we might marshal to operationalise the idea of meaning for the study and teaching of IR. If I had the space and the time to do so I would in particular consider some of the literature on war, peace and suffering (which are the main concerns of most sentient humans), with a special emphasis on the use of memory, while touching on the notion of 'ending' and 'decadence'. Since I cannot I shall try to suggest some approaches in rather more broad terms, but the aim is ultimately more inclusive. This lack of modesty will no doubt raise a few hackles, but I should like this chapter to be understood as a mere think piece and far from being finished reflection.

What do we mean by 'meaning'?

On one level the main sense of the philosophical concept of 'meaning' is that which has always been used by philosophers; 'the sense, the purpose, the meaning of human life and nature: the question about the values and signposts of life: the question of the why and wherefore of the world and the universe' (Safranski 1998: 148). Thomas Dewey has suggested that all philosophy is about meaning, and this is whether, as he writes, we see philosophising as a 'record of the most profound dealings of the reason with ultimate being . . . [or] a scene of pretentious claims and ridiculous failures' (Dewey [1931] 1963: 4). If IR is to take on the really important questions, it has to ask questions of its material as philosophers might interrogate their own. So we need to ask what is the material that IR should address? But previous to that we need to ask what various kinds of philosophical thought that broadly speaking deal with problems of 'meaning' might suggest to us.

One way of looking at meaning that might be useful for IR has little to draw from the logical positivist school of linguistic meaning. It is not a study of language or of the study of the difference between meaning and 'truth' (Rogers 1999: 117–22; Wittgenstein 1961). It does however have something in common with Henri Bergson's idea that poetry is a form of language that comes a bit closer than ordinary language to state the complexity of human emotion and understanding, for example love or hate. Dewey had a healthy scepticism about whether meaning can ever be equated with truth, that 'truths are but one class of meanings' and that what we have to examine is the bases of civilisation which lies in the 'imagination of man'. This cannot be tested as the scientist tests 'facts', which in no way devalues the work of the scientist (Dewey 1963: 5). But to get at meaning, facts are clearly not enough.

As we have to approach IR through the study of concrete experience, so 'pragmatist' or 'phenomenological' approaches (loosely defined) to meaning would seem to be a better avenue for the student of IR than the ultimately fruitless search for 'truth'. Dewey and Heidegger, who were writing at the same time of huge change (*Sein und Zeit* was published in 1927) suggest that we have to try and unlock the dynamics of historical evolution in order to get at the cultural roots and progress of civilisations. The current resurgence of interest in the concept of 'civilisation' is very similar to that which has occurred after every major war of this century, and indeed after every major conflict since 1648. Contrary to the claim of some crude postmodernists, the foundations have been constantly re-evaluated, found wanting and redrawn.

Heideggerian phenomenology asks vital questions about how we become what we are as individuals and as societies. The associations that he then developed out of this process of becoming with the rise of the Nazis and Adolf Hitler to power in Germany do not need to be seen as a necessary corollary to asking such questions. Heidegger's biographer Rudiger Safranski points out that many people were perplexed as to why they could admire *Sein und Zeit* while not admiring Hitler. Briefly stated, this has to be because Heidegger saw that we realise our Being (*Sein*) only by coming to terms with the existence of our Time (*Zeit*). We have to feel the 'anxiety' of Being, the ultimate version of which is coming to contemplate our own

death. Life for Heidegger is 'Being to the end' and the process of life (in the words of Safranski) – 'Do whatever you like, but make your own decision and do not let anyone relieve you of the decision and hence the responsibility' (Safranski 1998: 147–66).

Why study meaning in the context of IR?

But how might this help in IR theorising? IR in its present form is a product of the concerns of, essentially, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These centuries, at least in Europe, have been characterised by many and varied discussions about what we might term 'meaning'. At its most obvious, this has manifested itself in the great 'isms' – nationalism, fascism, socialism, communism and so on. All of these have been raised by their practitioners to the level of a philosophy of Being, way beyond a system of mere practice, a replacement, usually explicitly, for the God who is said to be 'dead'. This has in turn led to a regular resurgence in philosophy and politics of attempts to explain what might have replaced God. Phenomenological thinking like that outlined above requires a philosophical and political *engagement*.

Particularly in the twentieth century we saw the blurring of barriers between categories of thought and practice. We are all encouraged to pick and choose in the supermarket of thought. Now at the start of the twenty-first century many of the voices of the recent past seem to be suddenly and curiously stilled. We are no longer concerned with the 'isms' of the great ideologies. Various kinds of 'post-modernism' are now said to have replaced the old certainties of Enlightenment 'foundations'. For example 'historicism' is now said to have been shown up as the emperor with no clothes. This in turn has led some to follow thinkers like Paul Ricoeur and reject any text that we might have used as a map to the past, such as a diplomatic document (Evans 1997). If the language of the text gives no indication of the intentions of the author and the author has no relevance to the text, there is certainly no way of understanding whatever meaning their might have been in that text. Indeed the only major suggestion is that we should rip up all the maps and accept the inevitability of our post-modern condition. Equally we are implicitly abjured from *engagement à la Heidegger*, of which a post-modernist would be logically incapable.

Various other ideas are currently in vogue, to a certain extent informed by post-modern thinking. The confusion that has attended the end of the Cold War has led many to argue that the reason we do not have any road maps in IR is because we were living under the false illusion that we ever had one, and to generalise greatly that the entire 'Enlightenment Project' is flawed. As Steve Smith put it, those who inspire themselves with post-modern writings 'attack the very notions of reality, truth, or structure or identity that are central to international theory as well as all other human sciences' (in Booth and Smith 1995: 25). Given the distinctly flawed ability of international theory to foresee virtually any of the major developments of the 1990s, I have to confess to certain sympathy for the post-modern protest, but not for its implications for those of us left in the real world.

So what is to be done? It is not enough to protest, and one gets the distinct feeling that most post-modernist thinkers have got themselves stuck in a 1968 protest time

warp of their own. They dream of the barricades, but they still step over the dispossessed on their way to their plush bourgeois academic offices. Not many of them could get off their backsides when modernity had a little replay in Yugoslavia for example, or in the Gulf. That merely 'did not take place'. But critics of post-modernism do not necessarily do IR any favours if they have only the (equally discredited) alternative of Marxism to suggest as a replacement to the national security debates of realism. Terry Eagleton (himself a Marxist) recognises that we need another *élan* for Western thought if we are to answer the central problematic of post-modernism, that *none* of the foundations are sound (Norris 1992).

So that we need to go back and look at the underpinnings is an insight that I welcome. One way of doing this, and I am clearly not alone in this feeling, is that we need to reinject some badly needed historical perspective, to get back to *la longue durée*. This was the perspective of early scholars of IR, rather than that of the limited scholarship of the post-1945 Anglo-American timescale. In order to do that we need to take history more seriously, which is not the case at present (Williams 1998). This is not without its risks. There is a widespread feeling that history and IR theory are uneasy bedfellows, as much the fault of historians as theorists. Partly this arises from an understandable feeling that history was often abused during the twentieth century by those who have used it to their own vile ends. Partly it arises from the problem of 'whose' history we are to privilege. Doyle sums this last point up as 'Who or what are we?' But as he also points out in the desire to cover the 'larger issues' there is the danger that an ahistorical theory of IR will surrender 'the particularities of the moment and the individual' (Doyle 1997: 22–4).

Some theorists of IR suggest that these failings have been filled by the increasingly serious role played by critical theory and social theory in IR (Jabri 1995; Patomäki 1992). However, I would particularly argue that we need to look further into our philosophical heritage for where it might help us unlock questions that are both timeless and contingent on our latest dilemmas. Hence my focus on 'meaning'. Heidegger has been one major inspiration in this, and particularly his conviction that Dilthey was right in his claim that 'meaning and significance only originate in man and in his history' and that, in the words of Heidegger's biographer, 'human life escapes us . . . if we try and capture it from a theoretical, objectivizing attitude' (Safranski 1998: 146).

Heidegger's view was at least partly based on his observation of the end of one world, in 1918, and the emergence of another. We are now at a similar moment in history. The certainties of the Cold War have given way to the uncertainties of the 'new world order' where many things seem to be in dangerous flux – the 'end of the state', globalisation and so on – and where many seem to be finding solace in atavistic exceptionalism ranging from extreme nationalism to cult behaviour, with their 'policy' analogues of 'ethnic cleansing' and millenarian suicide pacts. However, perhaps all epochs have that feeling of impending doom about them. The 1930s certainly did (and rightly so). But the words of Louis Wirth in the Preface to the 1936 edition of Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* ring just as true for many now as they did then:

> [W]e look in vain in the modern world for the serenity and calm that seemed to characterize the atmosphere in which some thinkers of ages past lived. The world no longer has a common faith and our professed 'community of interest' is scarcely more than a figure of speech. With the loss of a common purpose and common interests, we have also been deprived of common norms, modes of thought, and conceptions of the world.
>
> (Wirth in Mannheim [1936] 1960: xxv)

So should we worry that we feel the same way now, as Laïdi does? Have we rather to use the reasoning of Nicholas Higgins that we should rather glory in the 'plurality of meaning[s]'? For Higgins 'international politics has become the study and negotiation of contested and competing meanings, rather than a pursuit of their ultimate resolution' (Higgins 1999). A short answer might be to ask whether such a plurality will lead to liberation or merely to anomie as Wirth asserted? Heidegger would have agreed with Wirth in that what he feared was that the need for each to realise his Being by shrugging off God *à la* Nietzsche and 'straightening up' to become a kind of God oneself often meant in practice a modern nihilism, not a true liberation of self. To quote Safranski:

> Heidegger argues that this straightening up had turned into uprising, into a rebellion of technology and the masses, who, thanks to technological control, were now entirely becoming what Nietzsche had called the 'last humans', who, 'blinking their eyes', were settling back into their small happiness and defending themselves with extreme brutality against any impairment of their security or their possessions.
>
> (Safranski 1998: 303–4)

Although the reference was to Germans in the 1930s, this deeply conservative view of the world is at one with Hobbes, Burke or Kennan in its fear that 'straightening up' and seizing new forms of meaning for oneself will inevitably lead to the destruction of civilised values and of society itself.

One way round this dilemma, if dilemma it is, is to see IR 'theorising', in so far that it has been implicitly concerned with the identification of meaning, as having been elaborated through the exegesis of historical currents (or even 'genealogies') of thought. It should not therefore (on the whole) be seen as transcendent theory, but rather the extrapolation of currents of thinking, more a history of ideas. This is no problem, as philosophy is also culturally context-specific in its concerns. Maybe all the great ideas come from Plato, but without Ancient Greece we would not have had the same Plato. History (with a capital 'H') has had its adepts who perceived it in a linear fashion – 'Whig' and 'Tory' versions of British history for example, or crude Hegelian or Marxist versions of history (Eagleton 1996: 45–68).

Most good historians, and simple citizens, have always recognised the adage that 'what comes around goes around', in other words that linearity can be exceedingly flexible, and indeed that circular thinking has played a huge role in all historical

development. History is more like a sea than a river, with currents that rise and fall. It has thus more in common with history as described by the French school of *la longue durée* than with the linear history of the crude Marxist – although Marx himself never saw history in such terms. However, whether these currents come at the bidding of human need, or through divine intervention (why rule out the unknowable?) or because of the structures of capitalism, or for no good reason at all, we need to find some way of unlocking the potentialities of history for the study of the past, present and future in IR.

Lest I immediately be accused of '*nous*-ism' (whom do you mean by 'we'?) I perceive the main purpose of late-twentieth-century IR as being how we as global observers of IR create a more all-inclusive debate about the future of our discipline. We have lived in the world of European discourse with very little idea of the riches that exist 'out there' in the rest of the world. For example, 'philosophy' in the sense that most of us perceive it is a mainly European discipline. There is little, except in a rather specialised kind of anthropological philosophy that addresses this dilemma in IR. There is little that we might be able to hold up to the world and say, 'Look, this is Knowledge'. After all what have we brought the World but the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse – a central part of Western thought and practice, and an admirably unified branch of our civilisation. But equally we are not very clear about what is 'in here'. IR has been very narrowly focused on a small set of sacred texts, and (for example) whole swathes of literature and other forms of artistic creativity, as well as 'history', are usually effectively ruled out of court as inadmissible evidence. To that extent Higgins is right to point out that 'a world without one single global meaning does not a crisis make' (even if Laïdi never intended that to be said, the sentence is still a nice one – Higgins 1998: 657).

But can the potentially glorious promiscuity of the current study of IR help in this dilemma of how we might deal with meaning as a category of analysis, both to give us a real line of communication to the rest of the planet, to open up a real dialogue, and to heal the wounds that we have inflicted, for our own good as well as for what we persist in calling the 'Other'? Post-modernism, in so far as anyone can identify what it is, doesn't look very fruitful in that direction. It constantly urges us to recognise 'otherness' but mainly to trash our own culture as mere '*Kultur*', a tendency that I personally see as dangerous as evacuating organised religion from Western culture – what has filled its place is hardly more edifying. But we can take one lesson from the current version of *épater le bourgeois* that is post-modernism to open up our entrails to find where we in the 'West' are coming from in our own processes of internal collective logic. We should welcome such iconoclasm even if the French intellectual *milieu*, the main fountain of 'foundationalist post-modern' thinking, are themselves now back to an emphasis on the narrative (Nincovich 1998).

Where might IR theory go now? Lineages of meaning

Although we cannot in such a brief space go into any real detail about the historical origins of where there might be a clear and present interplay between philosophical and problem-solving modes in IR, we cannot ignore these origins entirely. Looking

for beginnings is always a dangerous business – many people have pointed to the repetitive nature of 'post-modernism' for example – and I would have no problem in accepting that nothing ever begins or ever ends. My colleague Stefan Rossbach has for example identified one clear (as he calls it) 'line of meaning' in the Gnostic thinkers of early Christianity, whose influence he has brilliantly traced through to the present day, a lineage that would need a chapter of its own to do it justice (Rossbach 2000).

There are many categories of the search for meaning to achieve the Being that Heidegger advocated in the very different context of the 1920s that might be explored in their historical and contemporary contexts in the 1990s. 'Very different' only in the sense that history has moved on since then, with many of the debates contingent on an epoch. But equally many of the categories that concerned Heidegger's contemporaries are still, perhaps universally, relevant. They might include (a random list this): the twinned ideas of meaning through myths of the 'Beginning' and of the 'End', reparation and restitution, war and peace, even through the creation and redistribution of wealth (or the market and economic equality). They are propagated by a series of mediatory vectors, the most important of which by far is myth.

Most of the writing on myth is extremely opaque, as opaque as its subject. As Ernst Cassirer wrote, '[o]f all the phenomena of human culture myth and religion are most refractory to a merely logical analysis' (Cassirer 1944: 72). But it still merits exploration. The importance of myth is demonstrated by the simple observation of the importance of weaving intangibles into our accounts of our own lives in ways that are historically grounded in our time and in Time more generally. We live and derive our sense of meaning through these intangibles, expressed in stories about which we all share some degree of understanding, not through the mere exercise and experience of political power. You cannot get a man or woman to die for politics, but you can for a myth. So even though myth defies the logic of reason it is a more accurate 'allegorical interpretation' of the world than any number of 'facts'. It is a commonplace statement to state that we are still very primitive beings, but a true one and not a great leap form that to add, as Cassirer does, that 'Myth is from its very beginning potential religion'(Cassirer 1944: 74, 87).

One way of approaching myth is to examine the 'rotation' of myths in the general consciousness. A simple example of this might be the rise, decline and second coming of the liberal myth of the market. In 1914 it reigned supreme, by 1939 Polanyi and many others had declared it dead, now it is supreme again, but for how long? Similarly, whatever Nietzsche may have said, God is clearly not 'dead' for many people, even if He has many different manifestations. For God children will clear minefields with their bare feet, and other 'people' (only allegedly human these, perhaps) will indulge in ethnic cleansing, mass murder and the like. The great myth of progress itself was partly built on the altar of the Vendée massacres and the guillotine.

Meaning and war

The most obvious key lineage for us that can use the phenomenon of the power of myth comes from war. There are lots of good classical works on war on which we

can draw, but rarely do. But there is a resurgence of interest among certain IR colleagues with Christopher Coker's *War in the Twentieth Century* (1994) as an excellent example of the genre. He places the major juncture for mythology in the twentieth century, as have many others in the realm of imaginary literature, in the agonies of the First World War. We might argue that other great junctures merit more attention, but it seems clear to me that he is right to choose as he did. The conjuncture of myth and meaning give him justification.

As we have seen, 'meaning' is a difficult concept to pin down and even more difficult to pass on to others who do not share the same *Weltanschauung* and experiences. War is one such experience that cannot be explained to non-participants. It is no coincidence that the rise of the phenomenological approach to philosophy occurred in the 1920s after the horrors of 1914–18, especially led by the influence of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*. There were many who found their true 'meaning' in the concrete experience of living and dying in the trenches. But they also found that they could see no meaning for what they had to do outside their comradeship. This led some philosophers like Husserl to put humans back to the centre of reality, to suggest that human agency had to change the world, as a series of universalisable personal experiences. Heidegger developed this into a belief that history gives us our meaning, we are both 'subject' and 'object' of our own destiny. 'Being' is all. Christopher Coker points out that this was a dangerous ideal to embrace and that it leads many of Heidegger's disciples to their unpleasant destiny on the Eastern Front, often with a copy of his book in their knapsack. Heidegger's disciples were trying to fight history, to turn it back. There was thus a philosophical underpinning developing to explain and to some extent anticipate the rise of the mass in twentieth-century life, a phenomenon that has had untold importance for the subject of IR – the 'apotheosis of public opinion' as Woodrow Wilson called it.

At least one other key philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, had anticipated where this might lead, not to the masses rejecting war, as the Second International had predicted, but to embracing it. With hindsight it appears that millions of people had come to believe that the world needed a 'good war' to sort out the ills of civilisation. In the enthusiasm, the crowd came into its own for the first time in a distinctly twentieth-century form, as Nietzsche, among others, had predicted it might, to find its meaning in a new sense of community, the community of those about to die (Coker 1994: 49–50, 109–19). It ended with many other than Oswald Spengler feeling that Western Civilisation had stared into an abyss into which it might now be toppling. 'Faustian Man' had made his compact with the 'Machine' and was now 'the slave of his creation' (Spengler 1918: 504). The First World War was thus a 'hideous embarrassment to the prevailing Meliorist myth which had dominated the public consciousness for more than a century' (Fussell 1975: 8).

The myth of progress was thus the greatest long-term casualty of the First World War and we have been living with the consequences of that ever since. The existentialist impulse that Heidegger took up in the 1920s is a long-term child of that death. Again philosophy anticipated the real world. Henri Bergson has been seen by some as the progenitor of the impulse that got such a boost from 1914–18 to define problems better and then to grasp the 'real', or as he put it, 'make explicit the implicit'

(Bergson in Alexander 1957: 16). To this he linked the idea of what Alexander calls 'real time or duration' or as Bergson put it, '[memory] which prolongs the before into the after and prevents them from being pure instantaneous presents' (Bergson in Alexander 1957: 22).

Many writers, especially of the 'science fiction' genre, had seen progress in mixed terms, dating from before the First World War, many elements of which were foreseen, by H. G. Wells for example. He of course also changed our view of time and space, and therefore of the certainty of it all, quite literally (Kern 1983: 89–108). Certainty, time and space had been made uncertain categories before they came under fire in the trenches. The experience there for millions of ordinary men was of lifetimes being compressed into minutes. For a number of writers composing just before or during the First World War, it seemed like the end of civilisation as they knew it. Kern points out that Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* (1924) and Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* (1918) are almost emblematic of this line of thought in the Western imagination. In the very dynamic of their works 'pre'- and 'post'-war get inextricably mixed up. Mann's hero even gets cured of tuberculosis in order to be properly choked to death in the war, whereas Spengler's tale is 'of a twilight of the Faustian soul' (Kern 1983: 106–7). Having done their deal with the Devil of progress, humans must succumb to their awful fate of self-obliteration.

It might be interesting to speculate whether Mann's book, and even more so Spengler's or Heidegger's, would have had the impact they did if the war had not happened. Would Bergson's ideal of a self-conscious 'creative evolution' for humankind, a chance to transcend its moral, political and personal dilemmas, have had a real impact? As it was, any chance of 'being in the world' having a positive connotation was swallowed up after 1918 in the rather more depressing existential-ism of Sartre and others who found such Being a less uplifting experience than Bergson had, at least before 1914. The 1920s and 1930s were to belong to the pessimists or even to those like Georges Sorel who were advocates of the violence as the ultimate 'philosophy of modern history'. He had looked forward to a 'great foreign war, which might renew lost energies, and which in any case would doubtless bring into power men with the will to govern' (Sorel [1915] 1941: 43, 83).

These were the men that Heidegger, initially at least, acclaimed in 1933. Progress, and even God, looks a rather more benevolent myth than the one that replaced it at the centre of the Western consciousness. We all know that embracing a myth is a very difficult and dangerous business. Some have argued that much of the French post-structuralist turn led to many of the aspects of current theorising that we now call 'post-modernism', in the same way as others have blamed Nietzsche for the rise of the Nazis and Karl Popper blamed Hegel and Marx for the Soviet Union (Popper [1945] 2002; La Capra 1994; Safranski 1998: Chapters 13 and 14). This is an argument that will run and run, but in a sense whether any of these relationships can be demonstrated as cause and effect is irrelevant. What matters is the identification by Nietzsche and Heidegger, through their life and thought, of the real void left by the 'death' of God and the continuing struggle to find some form of 'meaning' to fill that void.

Can post-modernism do that by ripping up the road map and saying that

ultimately there is no 'meaning'? After all, it could be argued that the merits of Western civilisation are only thinly spread and many more are excluded than included. But if we now say that all foundations are incorrect and even delusional, we of course run the same risks as those run by Heidegger and his generation of Germans. They felt humiliated and rejected. By resurrecting mythology in a new form suited to the aims of the Third Reich, Hitler was able to dictate the lives of not just Germans but ultimately most of Europe and beyond. There are now many peoples around the world, citizens of once proud countries, ripe for the appeal of such a creation of new mythologies. If we do not make the effort to understand this driving force, we will be as surprised as liberals were in Britain in the inter-war years to see the rise of the Fascist movements.

But is this any of our business? Should we not stay in our ivory towers? Why bother coming down when all the 'isms' have left piles of rotting corpses, including liberalism? Naturally I would not advocate a kind of Tolstoyan run into the countryside to convert the peasants and bring them succour, although I do find the rather glib cynicism towards those who attempt to do a little in this direction rather trying. I rather believe that we should re-enter the theoretical and practical lists in ways that our forebears of the inter-war period would have thought perfectly natural and to simultaneously tighten up our ideas about what IR is supposed to be for. Ultimately it must be to try to provide frameworks for understanding what has happened and is happening to ordinary people or they will also fall prey to 'irrational' fears and myths, as happened in the 1930s.

Therefore our response as IR scholars to, say, the turmoil in the former Soviet Union, should be to develop and then to advocate practical measures to ensure that there is not a repeat of the 1930s in the potentially much less God-fearing and anomie-ridden 1990s and 2000s. But we would be equally foolish to neglect the theoretical work that needs to be done to understand from whence such mythologies as came to haunt Europe in the 1930s erupt. We must also encourage far more of our graduate students to engage in better basic work on the nature of the historical process in its several facets. This necessitates that there must be a revamping of course offerings in IR to reintegrate 'theory' and 'practice', not to isolate them into different slots that touch but never meet.

Conclusion

This chapter has been an attempt to show how we might think differently about IR in the light of the very real critique levelled at it by the post-modernist thinkers and the breakdown of the theoretical certainties of the Cold War era. By accepting that we need to reintegrate historical and philosophical thinking of a particular kind, in order to place the notion of 'meaning' at the centre of our thinking it is hoped that we can avoid both the worst excesses of post-modernism without assuming that liberal triumphalism is the only viable alternative. This I suggest we might do by bringing 'myth' back to centre stage. This could then enable us to accept the non-linearity of history, and the need to reinvent ourselves constantly, in other words the need to attempt to re-engage with Being through Time.

This will not be easy, but it is necessary in order to bring the study of history and the methods of the historian back to where they belong in IR, to the centre of our concerns, not on the periphery. IR can then once again become a discipline that does not either merely reflect what is alleged to be 'obvious', but neither does it have to refuse to accept what is possible. What is lacking is the energy, the existential drive to understand what history might have to teach, and not merely to be the passive objects of history. At the moment we are just rejecting all that is foundational and not seeing the lineages of meaning that have been manifest in our own century and many before it, those that posed all the questions that are now and as ever important. As with those who asked why they admired Heidegger, but could not abide his politics, this will enable us to maintain the rich cultural traditions that we used to call 'left' and 'right' and to redefine radical thought as a real interchange of opinion and make our discipline relevant for our students and those we hope to include in the future. Otherwise it will be IR that is put into the dustbin of history.

3   Surfing the *Zeitgeist*

Christopher Coker

> Give me your intuition of the present and I'll give you the past and the future.
>
> (Emerson, in Geldard 1995: 27)

Introduction

'The spirit of the age', wrote John Stuart Mill in 1831, 'is in some measure a novel expression. The idea of comparing one's age with former ages or with our notion of those which are yet to come had occurred to philosophers but never before was itself the dominant idea of any age'. The idea that an age had a 'spirit' was an invention of the early nineteenth century. *Geist*, loosely translated, means 'spirit', though it refers to the mind as well as to the spirit – the intellectual and cultural aspects of collective experience. German philosophers gave the *Geist* a history. They claimed that each historical time had its own spirit or *Zeitgeist*. The idea was poetic and for that reason appealing. It permitted people to make broad generalisations about the sweep of history. The *Zeitgeist* was believed to account for the way in which historical periods determined human behaviour and thus history itself.

   The idea that each era had a spirit was one which belonged to an age of change. Before men began to think much and long on the peculiarities of their own time, Mill added, they must have begun to think that those times were, or were destined to be, distinguished in a remarkable way from the times which preceded them. The conviction was universal that the times were pregnant with change. And since, Mill concluded:

> Every age contains in itself the germ of all future ages as surely as the acorn contains the future forest, knowledge of our own age is the fountain of prophecy, the only key to the history of posterity. It is only in the present that we can know the future. It is only through the present that it is in our power to influence that which is to come.
>
> (Robson and Robson 1986: 229)

In time the *Zeitgeist* expanded into something even broader. The philosopher Alfred Whitehead in his book, *Science and the Modern World* (1926), added that general

climates of opinion persisted for up to 60–100 years, together with 'shorter waves of thought which play on the surface of the tidal movement' (Lewis 1993: 229). Malcolm Bradbury relates this to a style of the age, adding that every epoch has its own mannerisms. These, in turn are so pervasive that people are unconscious of them. To quote Whitehead again, they are 'so translucent . . . that only by extreme effort can we become aware of it' (Bradbury 1976: 24).

In other words writers began to talk of a change, not in material conditions, but in the mentality of an age. They tried to translate Hegel's *Geist* into psychological terms. They tried to find the heart of a culture in configurations of poetry, religion and philosophy. In the figure of Gustav Aschenbach, in his novella *Death in Venice*, Thomas Mann portrayed the spirit of his own age, in particular its 'small weariness' (as the Devil calls it in his last novel *Dr Faustus*). This fitted concentrically within the 'larger weariness' of the era and tempted both the individual and the age to extremes. Mann horrified his American friend and patroness Agnes E. Mayer by seeing in himself and Aschenbach 'the tendencies of the time in the air long before the word "fascist" existed, hardly recognisable in the political phenomenon of that name', but 'spiritually connected with it'. They served, he added, its moral preparation (Mann 1992: xv).

In short, the concept of the *Zeitgeist* as it developed after Mill's death was an attempt to see the 'sign of the times' and thus penetrate into the secrets of the historical process. In the history of art one of the early practitioners was Max Dvorak. The editor of his collected papers chose as a title 'Art History as a History of the Spirit'. Another was Irwin Panofsky who in his own book *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* explicitly defended notions of cultures having an essence. But it was above all Johan Huizinga in his seminal book *The Waning of the Middle Ages* who introduced the concept of the *Zeitgeist* into the history of art. Quite literally, writes Gombrich:

> The autumn of the Middle Ages is Hegelian even in its assumption . . . that medieval culture had come to its autumnal close, complex, sophisticated and ripe for the sickle.
>
> (Woodfield 1996: 383)

Gombrich called *Zeitgeist*-spotting an 'exigetic method' – the assumption that some essential similarity permits the interpreters to subsume the various aspects of a culture under one formula. And Huizinga's book *The Art of Van Eyck* not only is connected with the theology and literature of the time, but also is shown to share some of its fundamental characteristics. Put less poetically, we are distinguishing here between movements and periods. Historians all agree that there are periods in history apparent to historians; but they would not all agree that there are movements in history which are apparent to those who live through them.

It was not art, however, which the twentieth century considered offered the best insight into history's moving spirit, but photography. The artists themselves, of course, did not agree. The sculptor Rodin claimed that art told the truth, photography lied, 'for in reality time does not stand still'. The time in question was

chronological time, but Rodin missed the point. What the technology of photo sensitivity introduced is that the definition of photographic time was no longer time passing. It was time that 'gets exposed', that breaks to the surface – the time of the sudden 'take' (Virilio 1997: 28).[1]

For much of the twentieth century many writers believed that what distinguished photography from the other arts was that it could capture the *Zeitgeist*. Searching for a literary language that could encapsulate the reality of the Great Depression, James Agee referred to the camera in his seminal book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* as a metaphor for the truth:

> All of consciousness is shifted from the imagined . . . to the effort to perceive simply the cruel radiance of what it is . . . This is why the camera it seems to me, next to unassisted and weapon less consciousness, is the central instrument of our time.
>
> (Williams and Heron 1996: 79)

Indeed, throughout Europe in the 1920s camera-seeing was exalted as a special form of vision. As Moholy-Nagy, a refugee exile from Bela Kun's Budapest, wrote at the time, the human eye by comparison was defective. 'Helmholtz', Moholy-Nagy explained, 'used to tell his pupils that if an optician were to succeed in making a human eye and brought it to him for his approval he would be bound to say "this is a clumsy piece of work"'. The invention of the camera seemed to make up this deficiency. 'We may now say that we see the world with a different eye' (Williams and Heron 1996: 90).

For their part, the surrealists too took the view that the camera caught the real unadulterated by rationalisation. André Breton called it a 'savage eye' for that reason. But, of course, the camera merely highlighted the relationship between the photographer and subject. The photographer mediated the image or its meaning. There was no absolute truth, only an interpretation of it which was more or less compelling according to the photographer's technique. A photographer is often a participant in the drama, not merely a recorder of it, and this gives photography a conceptual intensity which also makes it art.

This marked a major change. For in the nineteenth century contemporaries were not inclined to question the apparently transparent visual images which were mechanically recorded. They took them on trust. They accepted the authority of what was recorded. By the 1920s they began to recognise that a photograph captures the photographer's understanding of reality, or in this case the *Zeitgeist*. No photograph is ever purely a document of what happened. What we see are images of what someone else saw, chosen and framed by the photographer who interprets history for us. We have no way of knowing what is not in the frame, or what else was happening just beyond the camera's vision. What we see is what the photographer chooses to show us. We are always looking at the relationship between the photograph and the photographer, even if a photograph is not signed. In the language of Heisenberg's famous uncertainty principle (of 1927), the subject observed changes in the act of observation.

Yet what made photography such a distinctive form of communication was that it shows us more than what the photographer may want us to see. It is both its strength and weakness that it retains an aspect of visual representation which art surrendered in the early years of the twentieth century. We still treat photographs as a documentary record. Painting tells us much more about the artist than the subject itself. We always ask first who painted a picture. We rarely ask who photographed even the iconic pictures of the age. Indeed, many of the twentieth century's greatest photographers are largely unknown even to those who know their work from what is lodged in the collective conscience. Whatever the photographer's intentions, the power of an image is its ability to tell us different tales, to be read differently by different generations.

We find this claim in an introduction by Alfred Döblin to some sixty of August Sandler's photographs which were published in 1929 under the title 'The Face of our Time'. Döblin, whose chief fame is as the author of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (the first novel ever written about Berlin as a city), wrote:

> Whole stories could be told about a lot of these pictures. They invite us to do so . . . They are material for authors . . . he who *knows how to look* will be enlightened more effectively than by lectures and theories. Through these clear and conclusive photographs he will discover something of himself and others.
>
> (Williams and Heron 1996: 457)

The photograph, in other words, offered a chance for both the photographer and the audience to spot the *Zeitgeist*. For the photographic record helped structure the way they both apprehended themselves and the world around them. And self-questioning was the keynote of the twentieth century. What was its meaning? Could it be read like a text? Could the spirit of the age be deciphered ? In that sense the century was more conscious of itself than any other. Other eras have asked questions about themselves, of course, but only the twentieth century interrogated itself so relentlessly. This was an era in history obsessed with not only the past and future but also the present. It was intensely self-critical as well as self-regarding.

Scanning the Asian century

One of the central beliefs of many people in the twentieth century was that its fate would be determined in Europe. Yet there were others who believed that its chief contours would be found in Asia. The Asian century of which we now hear so much was first debated and discussed almost a hundred years ago. Photographers went to Asia to spot the future in its many manifestations. And it is Asia that I shall use as an example of *Zeitgeist*-spotting by those who were intent on capturing a glimpse of the future.

Revolt against the West

No event was photographed more vividly, no photographs captured the apparent power and permanence of British rule than the Great Durbar of 1903. The Viceroy,

Lord Curzon, stage-managed a magnificent state procession which included 40,000 soldiers and a train of 150 elephants, decked and painted with cloth of gold. The writer Jan Morris sets the scene:

> A city of tents was erected on the plain north of Delhi and there a kind of gigantic morality play was enacted. The setting was symbolic in itself, for while the Durbar ground was very old and dusty and Indian, the Durbar camp was all new, progressive and British. It was laid out to a practical grid, it had well-paved roads and excellent water supplies everywhere among its white marquees around the drooping telegraph wires that were the threads of Empire . . .
>
> To this exhibition of progress . . . all the feudatories were summoned: the be-whiskered Maharajahs of Punjab, the bold soldier-princes of Rajasthan, royalty of Nepal in peculiar hats, sleek Bengalis and beautiful Tamils, Sikhs with golden scimitars, giant Baluchis with ceremonial camels, Burmese and Sikkimese and Madrasis and wandering rustic potentates from Gujurat or Kerala, all called to the tented city beyond the Lahore Gate. There they paraded dutifully in the great Durbar Square to swear fealty to the Crown of England.
>
> (Morris 1978: 61–2)

The camera caught the splendour of empire, the dialogue of imperialism: the British wish to be part of Indian history. At the same time it caught on film what made them definitively 'modern' – those comforting dichotomies that seemed to illustrate the reason for imperial success – the clash between a society based on tradition rather than modernity, continuity rather than change, status rather than contract, caste rather than class.

Even at the time, however, the Great Durbar struck a hollow note. In spite of the sumptuous details there was, even for a European at the time, an air of shabby theatricality, a kind of circus atmosphere about these stage-managed events. Once the tents were struck and the thousands of visitors dispersed, it appeared to be a very nineteenth-century affair. It did not appear to be, in retrospect, an event that heralded the twentieth century. Even the elephants struck an anachronistic note. The old vice-regal *hatikhana* (or elephant stud) had been given up in the 1860s. The elephants on which the Viceroy and his party made their triumphal march from the Red Fort to the Great Mosque were all borrowed from the princes.

The photographers were able to capture both aspects of the British imagery themselves, but they also highlighted the absence of the crowds: the silence of the imperial subjects. The British, who in their thousands had come to Delhi to take part in the Durbar, cheered loudly. But the Indians did not. The empire whose material achievements seemed so magnificent to the Raj had not stirred the hearts of the masses. Conversely what they narrated when showing the nationalist movements after 1920 was a mass-movement drawing upon the wellspring of public support, a movement in tune with the secret harmonies of the subcontinent in a way that the outsiders, the British, could never hope to be.

In his more reflective moments even Kipling, the chief bard of empire, recognised the reality behind the Raj clearly enough: that the British themselves were there

merely on sufferance. In the 1960s Noel Annan pointed out how Kipling's picture of a society was more like that of a twentieth-century sociologist than a Victorian writer, for he saw British India not as a society of different classes and national traditions, so much as a series of loosely linked inter-active groups and behaviour patterns. It was not the British, but the British and their collaborators who ruled India, and when the collaborators withdrew their support the British would have to go – as they eventually did.

In his official address at the Durbar, Curzon talked of building 'a golden bridge between East and West'. But the bridge was not built. The British had hoped to possess India by forging a true partnership of elites. Kipling made much of this theme in his writings: the belief that the values which united the British and Indians such as honour and duty were culturally transcendent. If they could not abolish differences of race or class they might at least be able to forge a 'freemasonry' of different races and cultures. He believed the exercise of imperial power made possible this bond or union. But even before he died in the mid-1930s the English had come to doubt if this could ever be the case. Two English writers were highly critical of what one of them, Evelyn Waugh, called Kipling's 'religion of empire', that unique blend of 'Judaism, Mithraism and mumbo-jumbo masonry'. In his novel *A Passage to India* E. M. Forster memorably described the failure of Aziz and Fielding to achieve any unity of feeling even when they are bound by a unity of purpose. The two races are fated to go their separate ways. There was nothing transcendent about the imperial mission (Boehmer 1995: 165).

When we look at the photographs of the Durbar today what we see is an English affair for an English audience. The total effect was of a people at play. As actors they knew their lines well enough; they knew what was expected of them or, more to the point, what they expected of each other. The talk was all of responsibility and duty. The British were conscious of their power, yet they were also conscious of the distance which separated them from the Indians. They constantly complained of being misunderstood and unappreciated by those whom they ruled. Kipling spoke for this class with eloquence and anger. But even the anger was play-acting for it meant very little (Rushdie 1991: 77). It may have fuelled the British imagination but it said nothing to the Indian subjects about the virtues of British rule. And when their rule was challenged, they left finding that the loss of empire meant very little to them; that they could survive it well enough.

One of the most dramatic snapshots of the nationalist challenge which spelled the end of British rule was Gandhi's march to the sea twenty years later. The salt tax was a survival from the time the East India Company had ruled India. It cost the Indians no more than three annas a year. What mattered to Gandhi was that it was a monopoly over one of the essentials of life. On 26 January 1930 he announced an 'independence day' to be based on a march to the sea where he intended to produce salt himself out of sea water and thus, symbolically, break the government monopoly. On 12 March he set out from his house at Ahmadabad for the 240-mile march to Dandi on the coast of Gujarat. Thousands followed him. As an allegorical mission of defiance it marked the moment the nationalist leadership committed itself to ending the Raj altogether. The talk was now of independence, no longer of home

rule. Gandhi wanted to do something that would be instantly understood by the masses whose grasp of the independence issue was weak to say the least. Probably the majority had never seen an Englishman in their lives.

Unlike the Long March by Mao four years later, Gandhi's march to the sea was filmed from the first. In reality, however, things were rather different from what its participants later remembered. When the Mahatma arrived he did not march into the Indian Ocean. The tide had ebbed. There was no salt to harvest. It had to be brought in from elsewhere later that night. The government also remained defiantly aloof. It allowed Gandhi to reach the coast and when the event had been filmed and the cameras had departed, it sent him to prison.

Gandhi was followed by journalists and newsreel camera operators (the march was an early example of the political manipulation of the media). The salt march made instant news and as a spectacle, magnificent drama. But independence was not won in this fashion. The reporters who covered the march were all Western (many American). Theirs was a distant eye, a foreign one. When they read the independence movement they did so through their own distorted lens, their own understanding of the Western revolutionary experience. What they showed, or what they thought they saw, was a twentieth-century movement in the making, a movement of mass protest.

They also saw what they thought was a progressive movement, a movement of social change. What they saw in Gandhi was a modern messiah cut from the same cloth as Stalin and Lenin, a crusader who wanted to revolutionise India (not merely free it from colonial rule). As Nehru and most of the leadership spoke the language of socialism this was an understandable mistake but the photographers skimmed the surface; they rarely went deep into the heart of India to see how distant the nationalists themselves were from their own supporters. Put in the language of their own trade, for much of the twentieth century their perspective on India was 'out of focus'. They misread both imperialism and the response it evoked.

Curzon himself had once conceded that the government of India was 'a mighty and miraculous machine for doing nothing' and the British in their less grandiloquent moments were among the first to acknowledge that they were merely nightwatchmen in the subcontinent. For all their land settlements and agrarian self-improvement schemes, the canals and railways they built and the cities whose growth they encouraged, the Indians ran the localities and their support made possible British provincial rule. In the course of the 1920s the nationalists discovered this for themselves. Gandhi too wanted to change India, as had the British in their own fashion. He wanted to restore some of the old Hindu certainties. What Gandhi wanted most was to arrest if not to reverse the movement under the British towards an industrial society. He was never more happy than when he was meditating, spinning cotton and meeting the masses.

'There were so many stories to tell', complains the narrator Saleem Sindi in Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children*, 'too many, such an excess of intertwined lives, events, miracles, places, rumours'. Rushdie's novel comprises a medley of stories drawn from Indian myth, legend and history, images which are made to correlate separately and together with the national self-perception. The novel has

no single theme – nor does the history of twentieth-century Asia. That is the chief problem with *Zeitgeist*-spotting. The story of decolonisation is too complicated to tell as a heroic struggle between colonialism and nationalism, between the imperial idea or reality and the spirit of national self-determination. The British never captured the reality of India, which is why their rule was so ephemeral. They left much behind them but, in the end, they fitted into the story of the country merely as one more caste.

Similarly, however, the nationalists who displaced the British at Rushdie's 'Midnight hour' – the first hour of 15 August 1947 – did not capture the reality either. They too could not imprison Indian history in a straitjacket of their own devising: in the story *they* wanted to tell. They themselves could no more refashion India in the image they wanted than could the British. For none of them, including Gandhi himself, was able to speak for the whole of the subcontinent. At the provincial and local roots Indians competed with Indians for power. Deals had to be struck and alignments made. The unity of the nationalist movement was as hollow as that of the imperial authority it challenged.

From a distance the nationalists appeared to be a modern movement that had broken with India's past. After all, they talked the language of secularism and embraced western political ideas. On closer inspection, however, behind the nationalists as behind the Raj stood the forces of old India – the power of the local notable, the prestige of the *pandit* and *pir*, the immemorial authority of the head man and *panchayat*. Most histories of nationalism, like most narratives of the Raj, tell us little about those men; but both were powerless without their support. Continuity was all important. That was the heritage of Nehru's children as much as it was the heritage passed on to them by the men who built the Raj (Seal 1973: 19).

Once we understand that, we will no longer see the struggle for independence in grand heroic terms, or, certainly not in the terms painted at the time. It was more pragmatic than that. The revolt, such as it was, did not go very far. The Raj had not challenged either religious beliefs or cultural values. In many parts of India it had barely touched people's lives. All the nationalists wanted, in fact, was to ensure that the old values and beliefs were defended by the Indians themselves and what the Raj had begun to undertake, the country's modernisation, would be continued by the Indian people.

The long nineteenth century: China and the Cultural Revolution

Photography offered an insight into two cultures which appeared to be out of step with the times. It helped to frame the discourse between East and West, for it was a medium that introduced Asia to a Western audience. It helped define Asia's place in the Western imagination in terms of an 'irreducible other', the systematic construction of an East that was different from, if not inferior to the West, in all important essentials. Photography helped create what is known as Orientalism: that singular reading of the East undertaken by Western writers at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It began with John Thomson's full volume *Illustrations of China and its People* (1873); Thomson photographed the East in much the same way as Maxime du

Camp had photographed the Middle East twenty years before him. Both saw the East in a light only the West could see it: in a light the East had never seen itself before. And they both chose to photograph those aspects of Asian life which offered scope for their own special interest in history, their very Western preoccupation with time.

When filming China in the twentieth century most Western photographers captured two features of its destiny: the fact that history was made for it by others; and with the rise of Mao the fact that it was determined to break with the past, to make history on its own terms. André Malraux was particularly dismissive of the Chinese even after the fall of the last imperial dynasty. Most of the action in his novel *The Human Condition* is set in Shanghai against the background of the 1927 Revolution. The novel ends in the suppression of the revolt and the triumph of the Quomintang. The main Chinese character in the novel, Che'n Ta Erh, is cursed by the fate of his own country, by its isolation, its 'ultimate solitude'. At the end of the book Che'n is fatally injured in an unauthorised attempt on the life of Chiang Kai Shek. He shoots himself inadvertently, and dies unaware to the end that Chiang has escaped. His absurd end is all too illustrative of the main theme of the book: China's destiny is exterior to itself. In the novel, just as it is 'Moscow' that controls the Chinese communist cells, so the Western capitalists dominate cities like Shanghai. The final collapse of the revolution is attributed in part to Moscow's failure to support its allies. The strongest image of China that emerges from the book is of a society that has lost control of its own destiny (Spence 1992: vii–xi).

By the 1950s the image had changed. China now appeared to be determined to forge a future conceived by Marx. If the past was to be challenged – the past that had made possible European rule – the people would have to be involved. 'If we wish to promote nationalism in China', wrote Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao, 'there's no other means of doing it except through the renovation of the people'. One of the decisive moments of renovation was captured on film in the Cultural Revolution.

Mao's dictum in these years was 'destroy first and construction will look after itself'. The Cultural Revolution presupposed the need for a wholesale trans-formation of the values and spirit of the people. Lenin too had demanded the transformation of consciousness as a precondition of a genuine revolution but he believed it could be achieved through political education. Mao, by contrast, attributed to human consciousness a decisive role in the making of revolution and the shaping of historical reality. Unlike Lenin he gave the main role to the masses in conflict with the state. He also recruited the only group he completely trusted – the young.

At the beginning of 1966 a few activists of a middle school attached to one of the country's most renowned universities, Quinghua in Beijing, got together to discuss their strategy for the battle which Mao wanted them to fight. They began calling themselves 'Red Guards' and adopted a quotation by Mao, 'Rebellion is justified', as their motto. Red Guards soon shot up in all the major cities, the shock troops of the Cultural Revolution. Mao unleashed them with slogans that were calculated to inspire young and naive minds – 'a revolution in education', 'destroying an old world so that a new can be born', 'creating new man'. At a great rally in Tiananmen

Square they were encouraged to 'smash the four idols' – defined as old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits. They did precisely that, destroying thousands of ancient monuments and museums, indeed everything old that stood as a reminder of a previous era. They would even have destroyed the walls of the Forbidden City itself had Zhou En Lai not sent out the army to protect it.

What the students did not recognise at the time, any more than the *Zeitgeist*-spotters in the West, was that they were not fighting for a new China at all; they were fighting for the old. The founders of the Communist Party were products of Qing China. Educated in its schools, they had imbibed its values. Politicians at the top played by the rules of palace struggles which owed less to Marx and more to political writers of the third century BC, like Han Fei. Mao himself can be seen as the last of the emperors. The Cultural Revolution, looking back, seems to have been not a heroic if misguided struggle between the old and the new but quite the reverse. It was clear that the old problem of what or whom should succeed the Qing dynasty had not been resolved. The transitional period that began in the decade after 1911 was still continuing. Under Mao, the Communist Party was capable only of offering a return to the past (Jenner 1992).

This insight was quickly grasped by an outsider who witnessed the cultural revolution at first hand. In *The Red Book and the Great Wall* Alberto Moravia observed that Mao's aim was not nihilistic: it was curiously enough conservative, for it was an attempt to maintain the continuity of the Chinese people. For centuries continuity had taken the form of Confucian harmony, and this harmony was achieved by the introduction or defence of any orthodoxy that could provide immobility and, in a sense, place China outside history. In the 1960s Mao was intent on destroying the visible signs of China's past in the hope of creating a new orthodoxy built entirely on Mao's principles. There was behind this supremely ambitious attempt something also that was quintessentially Chinese, their great belief in themselves. The past could be replaced by a future that would be equally rich, given that the wellsprings of China were inexhaustible (Updike 1984: 750).

The Cultural Revolution, however, failed. Mao did not change the Chinese way of thinking. It was relatively less difficult for Marxists to change many elements of the content of their thought by adopting various Western ideas than it was for them to change their patterns of thought and modes of thinking, many of which were still deeply rooted in the Chinese mentality. The Chinese, in a word, remained Chinese.

Indeed, when looking at the China of the 1960s, what impresses one most is its extraordinarily surreal character: its mixture of capitalism in cities like Shanghai and ancestor worship of Mao in the countryside. It still bears the surreal quality of Kafka's story 'The Great Wall of China'. There the Great Wall is built piecemeal with gaps rumoured to have been left within its ungraspable extent. A messenger from the bedside of the dying emperor, though he moves with great haste, never manages to reach the outermost gate of the imperial palace. 'Just so', Kafka's nameless narrator observes, 'As hopelessly and as hopefully do our people regard the emperor. They do not know what emperor is reigning and there exists doubt regarding even the name of the dynasty'.

The Asian civil war

There is no limit to the world of external reality that photographers record. Every subject is significant considered in its context and viewed historically. It is the spirit of the photographer's approach and technical mastery which determines the value of a photograph and its influence in shaping our view of the world. But it also follows that just because a photograph does not record an event or series of events in the twentieth century, the most photographed century in history, it does not mean that the event is without significance. Given that the optic, until the last quarter of the century, was almost entirely Western, there is a great deal of history that has to be reconstructed in the absence of the photographic record, as we look back.

Even as late as the 1930s, when writers visited China they found a culture mired in an immemorial past. When Auden and Isherwood visited the city of Sian in Shen-si Province during the Sino-Japanese war, they found a gigantic walled town whose 'penitentiary walls' reminded them of a gaol, and its guards gaolers. Behind the walls there was a broken line of savage bandit-infested mountains. Sian smelled of murder. In 1911 the Chinese population had fallen upon the Manchus and murdered 25,000 of them in a single night. In 1926 the city had endured a seven-month siege by a local warlord. Now in 1938 it was being bombed by the Japanese, an 'eruption' into the past which marked China's 'interface' with the twentieth century (Auden and Isherwood 1973: 124–6).

Yet Western photographers persistently misread that historic struggle; they largely ignored one of the central events of the twentieth century, the Asian civil war – 'that quicksand of a war', as the Japanese novelist Shusaku Endo called the war between Japan and China. What the photographers thought they glimpsed instead was something quite different, a race war between the United States and Japan. They were interested in the struggle that meant most to them – the Pacific war. What they were most interested in capturing on film was what they thought the Pacific war was about – a clash between civilisations, a race war, a struggle between Eastern and Western culture.

The mistake was understandable, of course, never more so than in the closing months of the Second World War. Facing certain defeat, Japanese fighter pilots took their own lives in suicide attacks on enemy warships. The kamikaze pilots committed themselves to what they considered a Samurai way of warfare.

> If only we might fall
> Like cherry blossoms in the Spring
> So pure and radiant.

So wrote one 22-year-old pilot. To the Americans there was nothing very poetic about the kamikazes' end. After the planes had crashed on American ships, the marines had to hose down the decks on which 'the pure cherry blossoms' had crashed in bloody flames. The poetry written by the pilots combined two traditions in Japanese history – Samurai heroism and the *gengi* poetry of the eighth century. Both issued from the same source: an awareness of the tragic transience of life which

leads both to poetry and sacrifice (Yourcenar 1992: 82). It is impossible to imagine Western First World War 'aces' comparing themselves to falling blossoms as they departed the world. To be sure these poems were in the Japanese tradition and thus in a way conventional, yet so lively a convention remains a historical force. That sense of identity with the universe perhaps explains in part the willingness of men to embrace death so readily.

The real race war, however, was between the Japanese and the Chinese and in that wider context the Pacific war was largely a sub-plot. Here was no territorial conflict, no political contest between two contiguous powers intent on displacing the other as the leading power in the region. Here was no mere struggle to subvert a regional balance of power. Instead this was an *existential* struggle between two societies which were divided more than just geographically. Here was one of the most titanic struggles of the century, one in which ideology played a vital role.

The Sino-Japanese war was one of the most terrible of the twentieth century precisely because the Japanese treated the Chinese as being beyond the civilisation they themselves most valued. In Auden's deservedly famous sonnet sequence *In Time of War*, which was written during and after his visit to China in 1938, there is a poignant line about a dead Japanese soldier: 'Far from the heart of culture he was used'. That line said it all: the Japanese were encouraged to see themselves fighting a war against barbarism, against an enemy that however emeritus, however older than Japan itself, was not considered to be 'civilised'.

In their war against China the Japanese locked themselves into their past, looking to define their uniqueness, to find their roots. They sought to re-mythologise their history to show how they were superior to China in the prestige of their imperial system, their continuous line of emperors and the importance of their own unique religious tradition. This was not so much a return to the past as a rediscovery of the past in the present – the timelessness of institutions such as *Shinto* and *Bushido* (a nineteenth-century word that was invented to describe a seventeenth-century military ethos).

Perhaps, the main reason for this was that the Japanese were challenged to define themselves against two parents: China and the West. They had to find themselves in Asia without being of Asia. They had to find themselves in the West without being Western. In the 1920s their historians described how China had become a stagnant culture, in part because of its Confucian tradition. Their readers were also told how the Japanese had surpassed the West, borrowing its ideas but transcending Western science and technology in the process. In short their claims to uniqueness incorporated many elements that the West had used to explain oriental inefficiency. They turned them in the process into positive characteristics which accounted for Japan's uniqueness.

In the late 1920s the Japanese began to treat China as a country that had to be exploited, or brought into the Japanese sphere of influence. What gave their view particular emphasis was their borrowing of another Western concept: that of race. The Chinese were deemed to be inferior to the Japanese not, as they had been during the first Sino-Japanese war in 1894–5, because they were technologically or politically backward, but because they were racially inferior. Racism created its own

logic. The Japanese word for the Chinese in this period, *chan koro*, was the equivalent of the British term 'chink'. It was used with the same contemptuous overtones. But whereas the West turned to pseudo-science to validate its superiority – to the work of the Social Darwinists – the Japanese turned to myth. They found the origins of their superiority and their racial homogeneity, in obedience to the emperor and a continuous imperial line, plus the fact that they had never been successfully invaded, especially by China (Tanaka 1993: 277).

At a crucial moment in its history Japan's alienation from modern life incapacitated it from what Lionel Trilling once called 'the common routine' of life – that feeling for the ordinary, the elemental, the enduring in life. Japanese Orientalism was tested in the Second World War and found wanting. That is our own ironic insight looking back, but it was unavailable to Western observers at the time who were incapable of evaluating the significance of the experience. The experience, in turn, has no iconic photographs in the Western imagination. The absence of defining photographs attests to something quite important, the self-regarding nature of the Western photographic enterprise, the importance of the Western optic. The camera may have been all-important in helping the West understand itself. It may also have played a part in helping it understand how it differed from the non-Western world. It also helped to break down those barriers imposed by the discourse of 'otherness' while contributing to it at the same time. But at a crucial moment in the twentieth century, when Asians were trying to understand themselves, it failed to register that phenomenon. Few Western photographers were on that front line. Few were there at what Cartier-Bresson called a 'decisive moment' in history.

The Pacific century

The concept of the *Zeitgeist* itself encouraged people to divide history into phases, eras or themes, and stories which are self-contained. It is possible to tell the story of Asia as a tale of contending historical forces and clashing first principles which all had their centre of gravity in the Pacific, on its Western rim. By the end of the twentieth century, of course, the United States' mood had changed once again. With the Japanese economy apparently in permanent recession the Americans exited the century more confident than they had been for some time – inspired in part by the dynamism of California. Marx correctly predicted that California would be the centre of American life in the twentieth century and so it has proved. It gave the world its first supermarket (1912); its first motel (1925); its first fast food outlet (1948); its first laser (1960); and its first microprocessor (1971). It produced the world's most popular films. It gave the world its first popular movements: the beat generation of the 1950s; the hippies of the 1960s; the gay movement of the 1970s. And it coined a term for them: the counter-culture, while simultaneously translating them into the mainstream simply through the force of popular music and films, both of which have made the Eastern rim of the Pacific – not the Western – the centre of world culture .

California appears to have overtaken everyone else, including the Japanese. It is

the epitome of tomorrow's knowledge-intensive industries with an enviable record of deregulation and falling transaction costs. It dominates the world development in computing, electronics, biotechnology and entertainment, all likely areas of high growth in the twenty-first century. If *Blade Runner* showed a Japanised America, Japan today shows the influence of a Californian future. It is all, of course, a trick of the light. Whether in focus or out, it all depends on the angle of the photographer both literally and metaphorically – the position of the camera and the 'angle' or story he wants to tell.

Of course, the idea of a Pacific (or Asian) century is a very Western theme. So is the idea that every century has a theme or spirit; that at certain moments in history a society's values are the motor engine of change. What makes the idea of an impending 'Pacific century' so plausible is that it is consistent with an idea first popularised by Hegel, that the spirit of civilisation moves from east to west. In the sixteenth century it had moved from the Mediterranean littoral to the Atlantic seaboard. In the late twentieth century it had moved further west, to the Pacific rim. As the only two-ocean great power in history, the Americans are able to console themselves with the thought that they had been given a second chance, one rarely afforded by history. As a Pacific, as well as an Atlantic, power, not only do they have a future, but also they will be the future even of the new Asian states that, the Asian crisis notwithstanding, are beginning to overtake Europe.

It is a picture which has been promulgated more by American writers than by their Asian counterparts. But it is one that has its adherents in the East, such as *Sokagakkai*, the powerful *Nichiren* Buddhist lay society in Japan which benefited from the spiritual boom that followed the Second World War. *Sokagakkai* reveres the memory of historians like Arnold Toynbee (as other Asians revere the memory of Oswald Spengler). Both have used their writings to justify a vision of a new civilisation rising in the east. Similarly in Korea the Pentecostalists embrace a version in which the Holy Spirit moves westwards in a sort of 'Great Year' which will culminate in an end of time revival in Asia. The combined effect of these two factors – the belief that the West is faltering while the East is rising – has also fostered the belief that the twenty-first century will be Asia's.

Surfing the *Zeitgeist*

The *Zeitgeist* in nature as we have seen was spotted by different people at different times. To some it represented the revolt against the West; for others the onset of an Asian century; it is interesting that what historians identify as an Asian civil war was hardly seen by anyone at the time. And it is this ambiguity which leads contemporary theorists to the conclusion that the *Zeitgeist* either does not exist or that if it does it cannot be spotted at the time.

> There is a sort of sorrow in the *Zeitgeist* [the spirit of the age]. This can express itself by reactive or reactionary attitudes or by utopias, but never by a positive orientation offering a new perspective.
>
> (Lyotard 1998: 296)

So writes Jean-François Lyotard. This is profoundly pessimistic and derives from the belief that there is an absolute gulf between our knowledge of the world and the world itself. Any attempt to act as if such knowledge actually enabled us to transform the world is an error that can lead to disaster and has so often in the twentieth century.

In reality, we need not be quite so pessimistic. Historians will always have the last word as to when one epoch begins and another ends. 'I have always suspected', wrote the writer Jorge Borges, 'that history, real history, is more modest and that its essential dates may be, for a long time, secret' (Borges 1964: 167). Our age, of course, has not been characterised by modesty. Far from it. It has demanded that we live in interesting times or, at least, times that the future will find of interest.

Historians will continue to argue – quite rightly – that history demands a perspective only they can claim. The reason for this is less to do with the context than with humankind itself. People make history but not in the way they suppose. History is made by what the philosopher Arthur Danto (1965) calls social individuals: classes or national groups or social movements which include individual human beings but which do so in the aggregate not individually. Danto takes a specific example to illustrate this claim, a change in which the mass of human beings were involved but of which individuals were unaware. The example he cites is C. V. Wedgwood's account of the Thirty Years War and the specific claim that in the course of it religious sensibility gave way to an incipient nationalist one. This is what Wedgwood writes:

> While increasing preoccupation with national science had opened up a new philosophy to the educated world, the tragic results of applied religion had discredited the churches as the directions of the state. It was not that faith had grown less among the masses, but it had grown more personal; had become essentially a matter between the individual and the creator . . . A new emotional urge had to be found to fill the place of spiritual convictions; national feeling welled up to fill the gap . . . The absolutist and representative principles were losing the support of religion; they gained that of nationalism. That is the key to the development of the war in the latter period. The terms Protestant and Catholic gradually lose their vigour. The terms German, Frenchman and Swede assume a gathering menace. The struggle of the Hapsburg dynasty and its opponents cease to be the conflict of two religions and became the struggle of nations for a balance of power.

Wedgwood's description is broad-brushed, of course, but she finds time in her narrative of the war to illustrate the proposition by reference to specific individuals who, she claims, illustrate the general proposition.

> The ageing Emperor, the Electors of Saxony, Brandenburg and Bavaria, the Swedish chancellor, Richelieu . . . still held their course. But all around them had grown up a new generation of soldiers and statesmen. War-bred, they carried the mark of their training in a caution, a cynicism and a contempt for spiritual ideals foreign to their fathers.
>
> (Wedgwood in Danto 1965: 261–4)

But as Wedgwood is the first to admit, none of them would have necessarily recognised the distinction because its significance was historical. It could be seen only by historians looking back. That was as true for those in the ranks as it was for the officers. Consider for example the battle cry shouted by the soldiers at White Mountain (the first battle of the war) in 1620: 'Sancta Maria'; and that 'Viva España' shouted seventeen years later at the Battle of Nordlingen, when the Spanish won their last significant victory of the war. As Danto adds, those who might have witnessed the two battles would almost certainly not have seen the significance of the respective battle cries. For their significance lay in the contrast between them, a contrast only significant to a historian who knows (after the fact) that in Wedgwood's words 'the cross gave way to the flag' (Wedgwood in Danto 1965: 261–4).

One reason these developments were not seen at the time is that no one *intended* them. People were not alive to the significance of what they were doing because they were intent on doing other things – aggrandising themselves, fighting for their own regions, or in many cases fighting for the faith. Change took place in society not in people. It took place in social individuals, not individual men and women. As Danto concludes, members of social systems adjust to situations created by others in a way which contributes to the equilibrium of the system. The point is that changes involving people made by people separated in space and largely ignorant of the existence of the other cannot be observed. They can only be theoretically reconstructed after the event by historians and sometimes social scientists. All that can be observed at the time is the behaviour of individual human beings.

In fact, the Thirty Years War did not usher in an age of nationalism. What the Thirty Years War saw instead was a change in the power of the state. For the war encouraged the rise of standing armies. To meet the new demands of war, states were forced to organise themselves differently. War saw the ending of a system in which rulers had relied upon great interests and subcontractors such as the Fuggers or Wallenstein for capital and personnel and came to rely more fully on their own governments. The war marked not the end of an age of religion but the end of a system of waging war which had been sustained since the great Franco-Hapsburg conflict of the sixteenth century. What it witnessed was the beginning of a new system of state-controlled armies which sustained the wars of Louis XIV (Bush 1967: 228).

The problem with people who identify great changes of spirit or the important dates as turning points or watersheds in history is that for every date they choose they ignore another. The problem with prophets and historians is that they feed off each other. They are both determinists. They are both heirs to nineteenth-century historicism. Prophets see an event and assume it will be played out. Looking back from their own perspective historians see the same event or date as symbolic. Both assume it was 'inevitable' too – and that is the real problem of the *Zeitgeist*, and much historical writing.

In fact, most events in history are not inevitable. 'It is axiomatic', remarks the Professor of Latent History in Don DeLillo's novel *Great Jones Street* (1973), that history is the record of events. 'But what of Latent History? We all think we know what happened. But did it really happen? Or did something else happen? Or did

nothing happen?' (DeLillo [1973] 1998: 74–5). His subject, the professor continues, deals with events that almost took place, events that definitely took place but remained unseen and unreported, and events that probably took place but were not chronicled at the time. Like many of DeLillo's characters, the Morehouse Professor of Latent History is a marvellous creation of the post-modern mind, and our fascination for counterfactual history.[2] For we are no longer as obsessed as we were at seizing the moment when history begins anew, when the old goes out of fashion and the new appears in our midst – though we use the phrase still, we are no longer preoccupied with spotting the *Zeitgeist* which is one reason, of course, why we lack 'meaning' in our lives.

Many contemporary historians now admit that there are a number of possible, subsequent turns of fortune, none of which were inexplicable. Inevitability is only in retrospect. And the inevitability of the determinist is explanatory not predictive. Hence the freedom of choice we have as to the future is not inconsistent with the belief that every event is determined, that every event has a cause, that men are social individuals. 'We would have to . . . abandon history', writes Michael Scriven, 'if we sought to eliminate all surprise' (cited Ferguson 1996: 71).

This is where one of Karl Popper's most important ideas comes in as developed in his book *A World of Propensities* (1990). We should remember that it was Popper who said 'we learn by trial and error, that is, retroactively'. In his essay he presents 'the propensity interpretation of probability as a generalised dynamism':

> The tendency of statistical averages to remain stable if the conditions remain stable is one of the most remarkable characteristics of our universe. It can be explained, I hold, only by propensity theory; by the theory that there exist weighted possibilities that are more than mere possibilities, but tendencies or propensities to become real: tendencies or propensities to realise themselves that are inherent in all possibilities in varying degrees and which are something like forces that keep the statistics stable.

So *Zeitgeist*-spotting is really only trying to discover those 'weighted possibilities' – those propensities or trends that may or may not work through to a conclusion. It is not future-gazing. In the past, the world, writes Popper, is no longer a 'causal machine'. It is a world of unfolding propensities. But it doesn't lead to the future either. We don't know where the possibilities or propensities are leading. The future is open and still unresolved. We can only work, Popper insists, with 'an objective theory of probability':

> Quite apart from the fact that we don't know the future, the future is objectively not fixed. The future is open, objectively open.

(Popper 1990: 148)

And any author who claims otherwise or who writes in such force about his own interpretation of the times ahead in a way that discourages rebuttal is in danger of ignoring Popper's warning. In the end we choose meaning because it is meaningful

for ourselves, not for others. We cannot help trying to forecast the future by reading the present, we have to. The ordinary processes of human life, not to mention public policy, require it. As the historian Eric Hobsbawm remarks, structures of human societies and their mechanisms and processes of reproduction, change and transformation, are such as to restrict the number of things that can happen, determine some of the things that will happen, and make it possible to assign greater or lesser probabilities to the rest (Hobsbawm 1997). It is in that limited but still vital respect that we can still discover 'meaning' in our lives.

Notes

1 See also the revolutionary Soviet film director Dziga Vertov, who wrote in 1932:

> I'm an eye. A mechanical eye. I, the machine, show you the world the way only I can see it . . . Freed from the boundaries of time and space I coordinate any and all points of the universe wherever I want them to be. My way leads towards the creation of a fresh perception of the world. Thus I explain in a new way the world unknown to you.

2 One illustration of one of the first *Zeitgeist*-spotters who missed a crucial historical development was Goethe. At Valmy (1792) he claimed to have glimpsed the coming of the age of mass politics, the revolutionary spirits shown by the French army that defeated the Prussians, the best trained army in Europe. In *The Decline of the West* Spengler paid Goethe this compliment about his intuitive grasp of history: 'No General, no diplomat, let alone the philosophers ever so directly felt history "becoming". It is the deepest judgement that any man ever uttered about a great historical act in the moment of its accomplishment' (Spengler 1991: 20–1). Almost fifteen years later Goethe attended the meeting which wound up the Holy Roman Empire, an act that contributed to the growth of nationalist sentiment in Germany. He almost totally missed the significance of the act, confessing in his diaries that he was more disturbed by a quarrel between his attendant and his coachman than by the importance of this vague and distant event.

4 The delocalisation of meaning

Zaki Laïdi

Introduction

Since the ending of the Cold War from the late 1980s onwards, what has been called the progressive regionalisation of the world has incredibly increased in speed. By holding on to partial and reductive statistics, we can for instance note that in the period from 1990 to 1995, thirty-three agreements pertaining to regional integration had been notified at the international level, while from 1980 to 1989, such agreements did not exceed a dozen (World Trade Organisation (WTO) 1995: 29) This cause–effect relation is particularly clear in the case of Eastern Europe that is, to our knowledge, the most stunning case of a reorientation of trade which has ever happened in a very short period of time, to cite but one aspect of the changes that have happened there. For the majority of cases in Eastern Europe, this reorientation of trade has been made to the detriment of the present Russia and has operated in favour of the European Union.

The purpose of citing these examples was not to enter into the technical aspects of the debate over the issue of regional integration in the world. Neither was it to establish a cause–effect relationship between the end of the Cold War and regionalisation. This is a relationship which will be returned to later on in this chapter. The purpose was essentially to demonstrate the fact that the regionalisation of the globe may bring us back to a reorganisation of the world in terms of structures and meanings. In so doing regionalisation constitutes both a new layer in the reorganisation of the world system, and as a source for the study and analysis of international relations, but equally a source of production of meaning for political societies, nation-states and the world system. Regionalisation inaugurates a process of a delocalisation of meaning which needs to be understood as a part of a world process of the decentralisation of those spaces concerned with the production of meaning. This process is reinforced by means of a dialectical method, the development of mechanisms of uniformisation and centralisation of meaning, that is furthermore observable. The delocalisation of meaning is therefore an expression of globalisation and at the same time a mediation of this phenomenon.

It is to the production of meaning that this chapter is going to attempt to bring some elements of analysis, and this in two ways: on the one hand, by trying to identify those factors which, on the world scale, favour the process of regionalisation

of meaning. On the other hand, there will be an attempt to formalise the conditions necessary for the emergence of these areas of meaning.

Before that, however, we will assign a specific definition to these spaces. They are considered to be *regional spaces where the frontiers are not always well defined, but which wish to be seen as being based on a collective ideal with the ultimate aim of a differentiated identity, political weight, economic rationale or internal political legitimisation.* The spaces of meaning are consequently social constructions which attempt to find what Charles Taylor called 'common meanings' (Taylor 1985). Common meanings not only refer to the ideas and values of identifiable actors, but also relate to the actors' efforts to agree among themselves and to avoid steps of confrontation. Creating such common meanings therefore implies a certain voluntarism, even if this often bases itself on pre-existing and informal constructions.

If the term 'post-modernity' had not been so overused, it might have been possible to argue without hesitation that these spaces of meaning could be placed within a post-modern dynamic. This dynamic is clearly marked by a confusion of meanings and of rationalities. It would be absurd, for example, to see within the world process of regionalism a linear process of supranational construction which will lead to the dismantling of the state.

More often, the process of regionalisation appears as a resource of meaning between a functionally inescapable globalisation, but one that is unsatisfactory as a form of popular identification, and a functionally inadequate national confinement which is nonetheless equally irreplaceable as an identity structure. The spaces of meaning are those symbolic spaces which transcend national spaces without being similar themselves to public transnational spaces. They are spaces that are *sui generis* that have to be studied as such rather than through a mere transposition of the exhausted model of national construction. This is, for example, the whole meaning of the discourse of the majority of European actors who are in favour of the political construction of Europe. These actors advance the belief that only Europe could stand up to an overwhelming globalisation, one that could never be countered by single and isolated states.

This confusion of meanings is accompanied by a confusion of rationalities. Most commonly, it is an economic rationality which is proposed in the process of the construction of spaces of meaning. But we well know that this essential dimension can never be separated from other rationalities that are more difficult to either express, recognise or share. We know for example that divisions of economic sovereignty are easier to get accepted than are divisions of sovereignty which are strictly political or military, and this independently of the concrete consequences deriving from the choice.

These same spaces of meaning, marked by the confusion of rationalities and meanings, are equally dominated by the same fuzzy logic. Among the numerous examples that demonstrate the prevalence of this fuzzy logic, it is essential to cite the example of frontiers. In all the regional construction, the demarcation of frontiers is the most problematic. This is found to be in Asia where one of the principal attempts at regionalisation in APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) brings together the states of the Pacific but not those that we can term 'Asiatic'. This was done precisely

so as to counterbalance more strictly Asiatic regional constructions. This problem is also found in Latin America where the construction of a Latin American space could be telescoped into the emergence of an American space. The fact that Argentina, one of the pillar states of the MERCOSUR (Mercado Comun del Cono Sur) economic organisational structure, tried to advocate a formal 'dollarisation' of the national currency, is to highlight again the ambivalence of the ongoing processes. Finally, this fuzziness is very marked in Europe where the demarcation of frontiers has evidently considerable implications for identities and politics. Therein lies the problem of how to admit a Turkish Muslim state into a European society that does not necessarily share its values. Methodologically, this taking into account of fuzzy logic is important. For this fuzziness is henceforth one of the forms of production of meanings within regionalisation rather than a sign of an insufficient 'maturity' (on fuzziness as a mode of production of meanings, see Delmas-Marty 1999).

After these introductory and general reflections we have to pose the problem of the process of the 'regionalism of meaning' in two ways. On the one hand, regionalisation should be seen as the expression of a world's plurality that is revealed through globalisation. On the other, it should be seen as a construction capable of addressing three conditions: as a deliberation, as a statement and as a performance.

The pluralisation of meaning

It is not the intention of this chapter to dwell on the debates relative to the standardisation and the fragmentation of the international system. It will rather demonstrate that the emergence of spaces for meanings is part of a pluralisation of the world. This plurality is produced by three essential factors: the globalisation of the economy, the rise of cultural and ethical relativism and the dismantling of the blocs which were created during the Cold War. By this token, we have an intermingling of factors which are economic, philosophical and strategic. These factors facilitate, therefore, a decentring of the world which coexists with the processes of uniformisation of hegemonic centralisation.

Economic internationalisation and the process of regionalism

In the first place, it is essential to stress that even though there is in existence a global economic structure, there are also more and more regional particularities. It is even possible to note that there is a growing desynchronisation between the different regions of the world. European growth, for example, is very much less reliant on the American one than it was in the 1960s. This simple fact reinforces the pertinence of concerted European activity. This is the origin of appeals for a revival of a Keynesian European policy, one that has been proposed by French Keynesians or by Oskar Lafontaine in Germany. It would be better to talk about American, European and Asiatic growth even if a more accurate analysis would show the existence of an Anglo-Saxon economic system that is out of joint from other regional systems. What is presented as a 'world constraint' is in reality nothing more than a socio-political form of conformism (Fayolle 1998: 91).

Second, the evolution of the conditions of production in the world is not necessarily unfavourable to the emergence of regional spaces. Certainly, businesses can be seen as tending to delocalise their production and services that need lower levels of skill towards low-income states, while others seem to overcome time zones by 'tipping' their production from one zone to another through the use of computers. But this evolution is not unequivocal. Globalisation is also marked by the progressive abandonment of the Fordist model in favour of a more flexible model. For other reasons that it is not possible to develop here, the generalisation of a flexible long-term production is not that much in favour of a generalised delocalisation, but is rather more prone to a regionalisation of global networks of production. Two essential factors are incorporated in this evolution: flexible systems are smaller consumers of labour than are Fordist systems. This means that the proportion of labour costs within the structure of overall costs is proportionally much weaker. Tendentiously it follows that delocalisation is not a process destined to become generalised because, conversely to some widely accepted beliefs, salaries as a proportion of the cost of products are constantly decreasing. From 25 per cent during the 1970s, salaries have today fallen down to almost 10 per cent as a proportion of production costs. Furthermore, flexible production imposes the criteria of proximity among producers, clients and retailers. As Charles Oman (1994) has stressed, the most probable schema is one leading to a delocalisation within the same region that has some not inconsiderable fiscal or wage disparities. This difference is essential because these disparities become respectively a source for the harmonisation, and thus for the construction, of a space of meaning as the current example of Europe can be said to demonstrate (Oman 1994: 101). *Therefore it can be argued that within the process of regionalism there exists an economic rationality.*

The development of flexible production has another consequence for the relationship between internationalisation and regionalism. Because technology allows the development of a production adapted to the tastes of consumers (hence it is often called 'customerised production'), every effort towards globalisation is accompanied by a parallel effort to adapt global products to the local context. Such examples range from the case of McDonald's hamburger chain who, after having had to come to terms with the ban on the consumption of beef in India, has been led to promote the Maharajah Burger, made from mutton, to the case of the giant Western record labels who are constantly thinking about ways to better adapt to the tastes of their Asiatic customers. Even Hollywood film studios are starting to think about ways of adapting their products to local tastes. Television programmes do not escape from this localisation of globalisation that is called 'glocalisation'. Hence it can be easily noticed that on French television channels the proportion of purely American products is diminishing in favour of the Americanisation of French products. The biggest satellite television companies consider the local indigenisation of their programmes to be the essential condition for their successful implantation. It has also been observed that Star TV, located in Hong Kong without any precise national identity, has in India tried to recruit local talent in order to Indianise its programmes either by means of dubbing or by the launching of programmes in Hindi. It is equally the case that, through globalisation, Arab societies now possess the first TV chain

that is independent of state political control, al-Jazeera, whose impact on public opinions has grown exponentially.[1]

It is thus necessary to understand that the emergence of 'homogeneous products' does not lead to a homogeneous consumption of the same products. Two events in the 1990s illustrate this: the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, and the film *Titanic*. These cases present us with two world events which have been of huge interest to the media. It is naturally too early to measure their impact. But it is already known that if Diana's death revealed the existence of a 'world community of emotion' as well as a sort of 'globalisation of feelings', it would be impossible to believe that the same emotion was felt and experienced in the same manner in Britain, where the tributes to Diana expressed a reaction of defiance *vis-à-vis* the monarchy; or in Egypt – Dodi al-Fayed's birthplace – where the accident was seen as a conspiracy of the British establishment against a princess on the verge of marrying a Muslim; or in Angola, where Princess Diana had been involved in a crusade against anti-personnel mines.

The film *Titanic* has also been subject to a number of very contrasting interpretations. The wreck of the ship could be seen as the expression of the strong social segregation among the passengers. Indeed the first-class passengers were evacuated to lifeboats before the second-class passengers, and third-class passengers were restrained behind metal gates during the evacuation of the more privileged. But this interpretation is not the only one. The shipwreck is equally the metaphor of an organised society coming apart in a violent desocialising shock as well as of the various individuals who compose it. Everyone is trying to find his or her own escape from the crisis. It is possible to see in this ultra-modern ship hitting an iceberg a metaphor of a power that is too sure of itself and swollen with pride to the point of forgetting and underestimating the constraints of nature. So we could see in this one event multiple explanations. The anthropology of the media has always focused upon this phenomenon by arguing that the *standardisation of lifestyles* does not lead to the *standardisation of lives*. This point has been developed in an effective manner by the Iranian sociologist Hamid Naficy (in Laïdi 1997).

Finally, there is a fourth element, which could easily be neglected with a too general abstract vision of globalisation, and one that is to do with the exceptional resistance of geographical proximity in all the dynamics of globalisation. Studies have demonstrated that the Canadian provinces trade among themselves twenty times more than with American states, even though the latter were of comparable economic importance and geographical proximity.

This compatibility between regional and global dynamics should still not lead us to forget the existence of exchanges between them. Numerous economists, and especially neo-liberals such as Jagdish Bhagwati, believe for example that the proliferation of regional free trade agreements and liberalisation of exchanges cannot be considered as the precursors of a generalised liberalisation of the world's markets. Taking his cue from the celebrated theses of Jacob Viner, Bhagwati estimates that such preferential agreements are not only discriminatory for third parties, but also equally prejudicial to the beneficiaries of the preferential agreement. He estimates, basing his assumption on some recent studies, that the preferential clauses agreed by Mexico towards the USA within the framework of NAFTA (the

North American Free Trade Agreement) entails for Mexico a drop in its earnings of $3 billion. In other words, privileged relations with a state or with a group of states deprive a member of other opportunities within the world market. In his view, preferential agreements such as NAFTA are by their very nature likely to reinforce protectionism under the guise of social, environmental or political conditionalities, ones that can hardly be imposed within a multilateral framework. Studies by the World Bank of MERCOSUR also end up coming to the same conclusions, and in so doing elict strong reactions from those states concerned.

Whatever the importance of these debates and the problems that they target, it is still the case that the dynamic of the spaces of meaning cannot be reduced merely to the advantages that are derived or that are obtained to the negative effects on trade patterns. Moreover it is here that the problematic of the spaces of meanings appears to be on more fertile ground than the classical analysis made in terms of regionalisation. Even if MERCOSUR presented, from a strictly economic point of view, some effects of trade diversion, its logic would already stretch way beyond the economic. The spectacular growth of exchanges between Brazil and Argentina has undeniably created a dynamic of political co-operation and perhaps has also done so at the cultural level, as the symbolic quality of MERCOSUR's first biennial event can be said to demonstrate. The spaces of meaning try hard to provide themselves with a 'regional imaginary'. This artistic dimension, too often neglected by political analysis, is nonetheless essential in order to understand this delocalisation of meaning. Until the beginning of the 1980s, the majority of world artists preached the idea of a universal art, in which local creations were considered to be mere vestiges of the past. Things have now changed. The expulsion of local art into a dark hinterland is no longer accepted. It is possible to observe, therefore, the emergence of a globalised art that seeks less to create a shared the meaning than to involve a wide public made up essentially of tourists. The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao is the perfect example of this. It is able to attract tourists from all over the world who have the chance to admire modern creations coming from all the regions of the world – except perhaps those that are Basque or Spanish! For the local authorities, this is a secondary problem, since the main purpose is not to show Basque art but rather to modify the image of the Basque region as one of terrorism. World art is therefore a kind of art that 'is made to be seen' in a momentary and instantaneous manner. The Dokumenta of Kassel is a perfect illustration of this. It fits more into a logic of consumption than to a logic of contemplation. It rests on the sharing of emotions but not necessarily on the sharing of meaning.

However, parallel to the commercialisation of art on a world scale, we are now seeing a re-evaluation of local and regional arts which suggests that there is simultaneously a reaction against this globalised art and at the same time a need being felt to re-evaluate a local heritage that has been for too long underestimated. This re-evaluation can take different forms and multiple itineraries so that, contrary to certain received ideas, the teaching of art remains strongly a nationally specific phenomenon. The academies of fine art, which train the lecturers of the future, still follow strongly national trajectories, which explains the reason for the easy co-existence in the same country of both national and globalised art. Any re-evaluation

of local art can take the form of a willingness to be admitted to the circuit of cultural globalisation. It is the local that aspires to be a part of the global and then mainly for essentially mercenary ends. Hence the tendency to 'folklorise' the local arts. Chinese, African or Cuban artists thus become an integral part of the global art circuit. But, beside this, we can also see the beginning of a communication between different creative sources on the basis of relative equality and mutual influence.

One example of this can be seen in the 1989 exhibition of "The Magicians of the Earth" at the Pompidou Centre, an attempt to gather artists from different countries to deny the idea of the supremacy of 'Western white man's art'. In so doing there was clearly opposition expressed to the 'formalist' exhibition organised a year earlier by the Museum of Modern Art in New York where African and Oceanic arts were appreciated for their conformity to the canons of Western arts. There was thus a kind of universal communication, based on a respect of difference, that can be seen as anticipating the construction of a decentralised artistic universe.

The relativism of values

If we accept all the above hypotheses, we will naturally be led to question the consequences that these dynamics have and will have on what we could call the redistribution of truths across the world. In fact, as soon as we talk about the emergence of a more balanced world, we will naturally be led to ask ourselves if, from this balance, we do not risk sliding into a relativism of truth and also if, from this relativism, we do not risk falling into the trap of incommunicability or into what philosophers call the 'incommensurability of truths'. What is certain is the fact that we are already living in an era of profound renegotiation of what we mean by the universal and that this is happening under the impact of three powerful but equivocal processes:

- the rise of relativism within those Western societies who have themselves raised high the banner of universalism
- the development of a planetary diversity either in the form of competing universalisms or in the form of 'differential strategies' (as in the claim that Asiatic values are not compatible with Western ones)
- finally, an intensification of globalisation that brings out defensive strategies as the crossbreeding of cultures becomes intensified.

It is the interaction between these three processes that needs to be taken into account in order to go beyond the static cleavages between abstract universalism and radical relativism.

The debate over relativism is naturally very old. But it has re-emerged in the West by way of a misunderstanding: through the publication of Kuhn's book, at the very beginning of the 1960s, on the *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Against the then dominant epistemology, Kuhn argued that scientific theories could not be just universal but also incommensurable. What he meant by this was that each theory expresses itself in its own language and that consequently theories could be hardly

compared point by point. Only paradigms could naturally lend themselves to dialogue or comparison. But no paradigm could ever impose itself over the other in the name of a positive truth (Bernstein 1991: 87–8). This hypothesis is fundamental because it permits the justification of the idea by which languages, experiences, expectations or theories are 'imprisoned' in a corset which makes them incapable of universalisation. Given the number of fields called into question by Kuhn's analysis, linguistics is particularly noteworthy, with the 'linguistic turn' developing in a very Wittgensteinian direction towards the idea that there is no unity of language but rather islands of language, with each governed by different rules and untranslatable into the others. Step by step, this philosophical relativism, under the influence of pragmatism, came to oppose itself to the prevailing Western epistemology defined by Descartes, Locke and Kant, a hermeneutics that challenged the idea of commensurability among discourses, values and references. As Rorty argued, 'the terms used in relation to a particular culture are considered as equivalent in their meanings or in their references' (Rorty 1979: 316). The consequence of this hypothesis is thus the rejection of the idea of the existence of the 'ahistorical conditions of possibility' posited by Kant, and a strong challenge to what Putnam had defined as 'the universal trans-cultural rationality'.[2] If we consider Rorty's position, and he is without doubt the emblematic figure within this relativist tendency, we can clearly see how such a position can easily be transcribed into indications within the problematic that concerns us here, that of *spaces of meaning*.

The first such indication is to say that there exists no common basis for human-kind, because the idea of a basis refers to a metaphysical vision of the world. It follows that there can be no common human nature, but rather a 'gigantic collage' among contingent special-temporal affiliations. Therefore it would be above all as 'Westerners', 'Asiatics', 'Muslims', 'Africans', etc., that we would express ourselves. In this way of reasoning, the affirmation of a universal and transcendent 'We' is no longer tenable. This general hypothesis is largely compatible with the idea of spaces of meaning in the sense that the disappearance of a definite meaning, decreed from on high by 'the few' is no longer acceptable in today's world.

The end of the Cold War

The end of the Cold War is the third variable leading us to an understanding of the dynamics of regional meaning. In fact, by its very nature, the Cold War privileged international affiliations far more than regional ones. It might even be said that the Cold War had been the effect of dividing regions much more on the ideological and political level than on that of identity. There was a liberal democratic Europe on one side and a communist Europe on the other, a pro-American Asia and a pro-Soviet Asia. The division of Germany and Korea symbolised the extremities of this ablation, one that established political and ideological primacy over geography, history and culture. Moreover, the existence of a bipolar system reinforced the process of anti-regionalism because of the decisive role played by the superpowers and their ability to guarantee security to their allies. The security of Germany, of Korea and of Japan was guaranteed by the United States, as was the security of

Angola, Cuba and Vietnam by the former Soviet Union. The sponsorship of the superpowers thus impeded the process of regionalism of security by regional actors themselves. We can therefore see in the end of the Cold War the beginning of the rediscovery of the region by the states and societies who make them up, either because their sponsorship has now disappeared (as was the case of the satellites of the former Soviet Union) or because they assumed a far less crucial character. The most spectacular example is certainly that of an Eastern Europe that was subjected to a forced process of regionalism by the Soviet Union for more than forty years. The end of communism has meant for Eastern Europe, therefore, a return to Europe, now seen not only as a geographical space but also in a spatial-temporal dimension from which they felt excluded. There has been a kind of reinsertion into a history and temporality from which they had been artificially excluded.

This historical normalisation is equally present in Asia, where two phenomena had reinforced each other to slow the process of regionalisation. The first phenomenon is related to the communist issue that divided the Asian states until the beginning of the 1980s, even though hostility towards communism was the original rationale for the creation of ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations). The second phenomenon follows on from the trajectory of Japan which, in spite of the long-established regionalisation of its economic power, had difficulty considering itself an Asian power for three reasons at least: its modernisation had been experienced by looking to the West and at the same time by turning its back on the rest of Asia; its insertion in the society of Western democratic nations had been predicated as a break with its former aspirations to regional hegemony; and, finally, its fear of the Soviet Union that had led Japan to see its alliance with the United States as the alpha and the omega of its international strategy. The Cold War did not radically change the dilemma, but equally this event served to deny a pure and simple maintenance of the status quo. The reduction of the Russian threat, perhaps in favour of a potential Chinese menace, has forced Japan to reconsider itself in its own terms within the regional context. Although Japan does not exclude privileged relations with the United States, these relations can no longer be based upon a pure and simple subcontracting of their security *vis-à-vis* China. What is more, the emergence of multiple poles of wealth in Asia has forced Japan to negotiate its place in the Asian space much more precisely.

At the same time as the Cold War has unlocked geostrategic constraints, the end of the Cold War has allowed the decentralisation of the geostrategic stakes, as well as ideological ones, towards trade and culture. In fact, although the end of the Cold War has not put an end to rivalries among nations, it has probably reduced the symbolic and instrumental value not so much of war itself, but of inter-state war. The 'discovery' of the fact that war among nations is more and more unthinkable in the classic mode of massive military confrontations between regular armies, is probably fundamental in defining new spaces of meanings. This is very much marked in Latin America where Brazil and Argentina have both symbolically renounced nuclear weapons. This evolutionary tendency naturally does not merely mean the disappearance of localised armed conflicts. They exclude even less the risk of social deregulation in a military-mafia mode. But even if these processes are

prejudicial for the cohesion of societies, it does not follows that they will contradict the emergence of regional spaces of meaning. For, if an inter-state conflict renders impossible the creation of a public regional space of debate, social deregulation can nonetheless facilitate the emergence of those spaces through the experiencing of common or similar problems at a particular time.

Spaces of meaning: public space

If the public space is meant to be a symbolic sphere of representation and debate founded on citizenship and conveying the idea of a transnationally constituted civil society, spaces of meaning do not, for all that, signify regional public spaces. Even in the context of the European Union, where this issue has been very much debated, and where the surpassing of the national framework is the most institutionally advanced, those who agree on the existence of a public European space are rare. In reality, discussions of the transposition of the public sphere to a regional or a supra-national scale end up irremediably with the issue of citizenship. Certainly, it could be argued that a European citizenship exists at the juridical level and that it has been consecrated by the Treaty of Maastricht. But this existence remains largely symbolic because it lacks links to duties and rights. Rather than thinking to what degree the notion of public space could be compatible or transposed to the international level, it might be better to understand the novel forms of meaning that are being created at a regional scale. In this perspective, a space of meaning will be defined as the place where the three following dynamics become entangled:

- The establishment of a deliberative space where public and private actors – states, NGOs (nongovernmental organisations) and corporations – intervene in order to solve problems demanding common solutions relative to this space. Such issues abound today, from the reduction of tariff barriers, to the equivalence of educational diplomas, to respect for human rights and the harmonisation of international policies. This deliberative space will certainly grow more significant as it involves a growing number of stakes and actors.
- The production of common meanings is relative to this space within the global game (the defence of the European social model or of 'Asian values').
- The capacity to convert these preferences and debates into political perform-ances. This is what we can call the 'evaluation of results'.

The space of meaning is, therefore, deliberative, annunciative and performative.

Spaces of meaning: deliberative space

It can be repeated that deliberative space is disconnected from any idea of a regional or transnational citizenship. It is above all a space of debate which nevertheless supposes the existence of institutions capable of refereeing the internal collective debate. Very often, in the majority of spaces of meaning, the starting point for debate is in the intergovernmental field. But almost everywhere it is possible to observe the

development of forums of debate or of expression that depart from the domain of a solely intergovernmental logic.

Of course, the autonomy or the power of these forums is extremely variable. But the most important thing is the existence of such institutions. The origin of a deliberative space derives not merely from an a priori agreement on any particular matter among the actors of this space, but agreement on the fact that the regional dimension might be the most appropriate cadre for sorting out those problems that arise at a particular time. Generally, the access to a deliberative space comes from the impossibility of setting problems in a context that would be purely national and even more so to pose them in a supra-national dimension. It could be argued, for instance, that the issue of a social Europe perfectly relates to this picture. In the first place, social concerns are excluded from the debate in a way that leads some actors to condemn and fight Europe on the basis that it allows such exclusion. These same actors then demand the inclusion of the social issue in the European debate. This inclusion is then taken seriously, even if the different state and social actors diverge fundamentally on what meaning to give to a social Europe or to the solutions to be promoted. The social issue has now become a part of the European field of action and deliberation. That was recently recognised by a representative of the Confédération Générale du Travail (a French trade union) who argued that the issue is not merely one of being in favour, or indeed against, Europe, but rather with the consideration of the social dimension as the most necessary for the creation of Europe.[3]

In all spaces of meaning, the presence of this deliberative space is essential because the debate over one subject matter is always followed by debate over other issues. MERCOSUR, for instance, has ceased to debate exclusively about purely commercial matters by moving towards the discussion of the politics of culture. In Asia, ASEAN is no longer a purely geopolitical forum in favour of trying to tackle the ensemble of problems affecting Southeast Asia. With the exception of this region, where the starting point has been exclusively geopolitical, it is for the most part the logic of the market, in other spaces, that is a useful point of departure in the setting up a deliberative space.

This space of debate is disconnected, as has been argued, from the idea of citizenship. On the other hand, it has seemed difficult to imagine its form without the existence of a positive pluralism. In other words, the deliberative space cannot actually exist without minimal democratic guarantees, unless it is limited to an intergovernmental debate. MERCOSUR might not have ever existed if democracy had not returned to Latin America (Dabène, in Laïdi 1998a). Conversely, it could be legitimate to argue that the lack of democratic guarantees represents a fundamental obstacle for the emergence of an Islamic space of meaning. This is, moreover, the reason why public debate in the Muslim world lacks virtually any mention of Islamic issues. That said, it must be understood that the identity of these spaces is not synonymous with the territory of these same spaces. We are seeing the emergence of forms of a *delocalisation of meaning* that are but one aspect of the production of spatial meaning that can emerge outside these spaces, and this is notably due to the growing role played by diasporas or immigrant communities.

The creation of common meanings

The creation of preferences represents the second condition for the emergence of a space of meaning. By a 'creation of preferences' is meant that particular capacity to produce the concept of 'Us' or 'We' as opposed to the rest of the world: "We, the Asians", "We, the Muslims", "We, the Europeans", etc. The creation of preferences thus entails the search for an identical discourse that is more or less formalised and internalised. At this point, the definition of space becomes very tricky as it encounters many difficulties. Among these, there is the realm of legitimacy by those who express the 'We' (societies, states and enterprises). There are also the rhetorical or non-rhetorical features of this discourse and finally the difficulty, at a time of globalisation, of defining those identities on a no longer purely defensive basis. Furthermore, as Eric Fassin has put it, it can now be accepted that beyond all of these difficulties and contradictions, in each space of meaning there potentially exists some terms of debate which are its very own (Fassin in Laïdi 1998a:123).[4] Hence it could be argued that the matter of 'social cohesion' is typically European, even though European views differ on its content and even though other spaces position this issue differently.

In the different regional debates about globalisation, it is therefore possible to find translations of regional preferences. So we could say that, contrary to some generally accepted ideas, the notion of 'social cohesion' is not purely declamatory. A comparative study of European and American systems demonstrates that European social systems as a whole are more redistributive than the American system (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 1995). Moreover, a more in-depth analysis of the reforms of social security systems in Europe highlights how the ideological dilemma between 'strong social protection and high unemployment rates' is rendered simplistic by the very variety of the social situations experienced and the solutions envisaged to deal with these situations. In Europe, the Scandinavian regions are the ones which bear the closest resemblance to US employment and productivity levels. However, this result has derived from conditions diametrically opposed to those found in the United States, and where there are high levels of taxation and massive state interference in society.

The most exhaustive studies by the European Commission envision the possibility of preserving a 'middle way' European model between social flexibility and the status quo. This middle way will emerge through a reduction of employment protectionism and the maintenance of high levels of social protection for those who lose their employment (European Commission 1998).

Spaces of meaning: performative space

The third condition for the existence of a space of meaning depends on its capacity to achieve a certain number of objectives. This can be seen when (as with the creation of the euro or common views on the Kosovo crisis) Europe feels like it 'exists', and when a contrary feeling is encouraged whenever there is a division or a failure of intentions (as in the case of the Balkans).

For the time being, it seems that it is the creation of market spaces on a world scale that constitutes the principal achievement of spaces of meaning and that this is due to at least three reasons: the first relates to the pre-eminence of the market in world politics; the second relates to the visibility of the concrete and measurable effects that are so generated (it is easier to measure the creation of economic spaces than cultural ones); the third, finally, relates to the fact that the political and symbolic costs in the construction of market spaces are generally less difficult to assume for societies organised as nation-states.

But the European example tends to demonstrate that the virtuous link between a logic of the market and a logic of politics not only is assured but also is likely to become more and more difficult. This is due to the persistence of divergent interests but more fundamentally because the concept of the 'common good' is today still a concept in suspended animation.

Notes

1 *International Herald Tribune*, 6 July 1999.
2 In order to sum up the philosophical debates where the understanding of phenomena of regionalism seems to be essential it is worth looking at Jean-Marc Ferry (1999) *Philosophie de la communication*, Paris: CERF.
3 *Echoes*, 5 July 1999.
4 Fassin insists on the ambivalence of the term 'division'. Division is what separates and what is shared in common.

5   Meaning and social transformations

Ideology in a post-ideological age

Gerard Delanty

Introduction: modernity, ethics and politics

One of the central questions of our time concerns the relationship between politics and morality. How can politics preserve a relationship to a moral vision of society? This is one of the most pressing concerns of the present and, yet, it is an apparently impossible demand. The ethical imperative, of course, has always been central to the self-understanding of the modern project which sought to find a connection between the essentially political domain of action, which is by its nature contingent, and the quest for a principle of universality and certainty which could be the basis of an ethically grounded social order. The reconciliation of contingency and certainty – of politics and morality – define the modern predicament. To put this in yet more general terms, modernity is based on the belief that politics can provide a bridge between the normative ideal of an ethical project with universalistic relevance and the social reality of modern society which is one of alienation and incompleteness. This ethical idea of the political is deeply embedded in the cultural self-understanding of modern Western society, forming the basis of its cultural model. The divergence between norm (culture) and reality (society) is to be overcome by politics. The web of relationships between politics, culture and society define the field of ideology in modern society. It was the task of ideology to express a culturally mediated vision of totality in which ethics and politics would be linked and in which a conception of an alternative order could be expressed.[1]

We have broken from the project of modernity in one crucial respect: there is no direct link between politics and morality. The tension between contingency and certainty has collapsed, having been replaced by a culturally more diffuse worldview which is not based on a vision of totality – the ultimate unity of politics and ethics – or the utopia of an alternative society. Not only has this link, the foundation of the European Enlightenment, disappeared but also the two universes of discourse – the political and the ethical – have fragmented. Today neither politics nor morality exist as autonomous discourses linked by a principle of unity to a worldview. In fact, it would appear the very possibility for the formation of a worldview has collapsed. It is possible to examine this transformation by means of a reflection on the fate of ideology.

No concept more than ideology encapsulates the essence of modernity in what is widely held to be a post-modern age, an age which has brought about the end of

totality and conceptions of politics and culture based on fixed principles. It is the peculiar feature of ideology, in the most general sense, that it entails a link between the domain of political action and the, essentially ethical, vision of a concrete form of social life. Ideology was born of the experience of an emptiness between ethics and society. To overcome the divergence between cultural norm and social reality was the task of ideology which provided the framework for politics. Ideology seeks to reconcile modernity with itself. To bring about a new relationship between the domains of culture, politics and society was the task of ideology. This was how modern revolutionaries understood themselves and it was the basis of the self-understanding of the Enlightenment and was also central to the ideology of liberal democracy. This conception of ideology continued to define modern politics in the twentieth century. Ideology in the two hundred years that followed the French Revolution defined the political field providing a framework of meaning for politics: it was part of the same cultural self-understanding that made possible modern science; and expressed what Stephen Toulmin (1992) has called the 'hidden agenda' of modernity – the quest for a principle of certainty, universality and homogeneity which would link the human order of the polis with the immutable order of the cosmos. In a peculiar sense, our age is post-ideological in that it is no longer based on ideology. Yet, ideology has not disappeared from the imagination of the present. What has happened is that ideology has ceased to be able to define the *Zeitgeist* which is consequently unable to articulate a vision of totality, a worldview. With the decline in ideology as a vision of totality, post-modern politics loses any cognitive ability to be able to define the ethical self-understanding of the present situation. In this chapter I attempt to explore the fate of ideology in a post-ideological age. My central question is whether something like a post-ideological worldview is possible today in a world seemingly dominated by a sense of an ending – the end of modernity, even the end of post-modernity, the end of the millennium, and will suggest that the end of ideology points to a new opening beyond ideology in which different kinds of meanings are possible.[2]

Ideology and totality

To begin, we need a fuller definition of ideology. By ideology I understand a fairly comprehensive system of meaning which is, in general, codified by elites and serves as a means of mobilizing the masses behind a political programme. Ideologies allow people to make sense of the world, and at the same time they regulate and discipline social practices. They are cognitive frameworks for the production and organization of meaning on the macro-level. Stuart Hall defines ideology as follows:

> By ideology I mean the mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, figure out and render intelligible the way society works.
>
> (Hall 1996: 26; cited in Van Dijk 1998: 9)

This suggests that ideology is a kind of a cognitive order for the interpretation of social reality. Van Dijk (1998) thus sees ideologies as discursive systems in which social representations are constructed. In general, ideology entails an essentially political programme about the fundamental nature of society and economy. Ideologies are comprehensive belief systems and are expressed in the form of doctrines – systems of political communication and meaning – about the economic, political and social organization of society. In this sense, ideology was based on the modern view that politics could occupy a domain above the social, which it could reconstruct. As Karl Mannheim (1936) argued, ideology entails a relationship to utopia – an idea that transcends social reality but seeks to realize itself in reality. Ideology, unlike utopia, however, is more rooted in its historical milieu and frequently serves as a legitimation of the status quo, but of course oppositional ideologies are also possible. Ideologies can be seen as both normative systems of meaning and cognitive systems of knowledge. They order knowledge into world-views which define both a moral vision of the world and historical meaning. Mannheim greatly stressed the cognitive status of ideology as a medium of cultural experience. For Mannheim, ideologies take the generic forms of those having a 'special formulation' or a 'general formulation', a distinction which is, arguably, more important that the relationship between ideology and utopia. The former conception of ideology was one more rooted in a specific historical context while the latter was one that aspired to a worldview, an interpretation of the age. The general formulation of ideology included the sociological analysis of ideology – the sociology of knowledge – and was the highest and most objective form of knowledge.

The principle of totality that lies at the heart of ideology refers to the ability of ideology to provide a synthesis of the cultural dimensions of modernity, the cognitive, the aesthetic and the normative. The aesthetic must not be neglected as a component of ideology which is more than a normative and a cognitive system but also includes the expressive–evaluative dimension of symbolic representation, a dimension which is also capable of expressing the deeper irrational forces of the emotions. In this sense, ideology always entails a certain recalcitrance with the status quo.

Modernity has made totality – in the sense of the articulation of a worldview – something both impossible and yet central to its project. The differentiation of cultural spheres into separate and irreconcilable domains was central to modernity, according to Max Weber, and therefore totality, in the sense of a unified worldview such as that of religion, is impossible under the culturally disenchanted conditions of modernity in which instrumentalism predominates. The normative, the aesthetic and the cognitive are ruled by separate orders of discourse making impossible a return to pre-modern conceptions of harmony and unity. Yet modernity seeks to preserve a connection with meaningfully constituted action and a belief that the world can be meaningfully constituted despite its disenchanted and instrumentalized condition. According to Weber, the only kind of meaning possible in modernity is one that is subjectively formed by the remnants of cultural humanity. The concept of totality in modern social and political thought – for instance in the writings of Weber, Simmel, Mannheim, Lukács, Heidegger – thus sought to understand totality

as a subjectively ordered principle by which the world is seen as being capable of being meaningfully constituted by human action.[3] Ideology can be described as a system of meaning which integrates into a vision of totality the divergent orders of the aesthetic, the normative and the cognitive, on the one side, and on the other gives political expression to precisely this vision of totality. Thus ideology infuses the political with the disparate dimensions of the cultural, giving it an aesthetic, a moral-practical and cognitive impetus. This injection of a principle of totality, which has been shed at the cultural level *per se*, into the political expresses the essence ideology, which can be understood to be what Castoriadis (1986) called the 'social imaginary' of modernity. Once ideology loses this ability to express cultural totality it ceases to be able to express a *Weltanschauung* (worldview). It is the thesis of this chapter that this is exactly what has happened to ideology today – it has lost its connection with totality and consequently the possibility for a worldview is diminished.

It is important to recognize that ideology is more than a cultural impulse, it is also a pre-eminently political force which brings politics and culture together to transform the social world. Ideology entails the fusion of the political and the cultural. As the word suggests, ideologies are essentially ideas or ideals and are not the same as identities and interests, which are the properties of social actors. Of course, an idea can become the basis of a collective identity if it becomes sufficiently powerful and penetrates the cultural system. However, ideology as such is an idea which is not an identity though it may be the aim of all ideologies to become an identity. Thus, the ideology of nationalism has succeeded in transforming itself into an identity in the form of national identity. In fact, once ideology – as a system of meaning – leaves the world of ideas and becomes an identity it ceases to be ideology as such and becomes a system of action. An ideology also differs from identity in that it is usually based on a principle of justification. As doctrines, ideologies seek to legitimize themselves against their rivals in order to have a resonance in the public. In short, it is the aim of ideology to become, ultimately, an identity.

Ideology also entails a tension with interests. In order for an ideology to gain support in the wider public it must not merely appeal to identity but it must also be able to resonate with interests. The ability of ideology to express interests will greatly influence its diffusion in society. Thus, the ideologies of nationalism and liberalism, for instance, have enjoyed such widespread success because of their ability to give substance to the interests of large groups in society. Liberalism coincided with the interests of the bourgeois class and later the professional middle class while nationalism has variously been supported by large groups in society who saw in it the means to the acquisition of political power or access to economic resources. Ideology cannot be seen as a representation of society, or a reflection of class interests simply because it is also a projection of an ideal reality and can therefore never be reduced to being a legitimation of the status quo.

I have stressed the relationship between identity and interests in the genesis of ideology. Reducible to neither identity nor interests, the power of ideology ultimately resides in the resonance of its doctrine or idea with both interests and identities. Ideology generally exists in the context of rival systems of meaning which seek to define the political field. It is a counter-factually shaped discourse. Thus the

three main ideologies – liberalism, conservatism and socialism – were shaped in opposition to each other and cannot be understood separately, except in so far as they all constitute rival claims to be the worldview of modernity (Wallerstein 1996). What is constitutive of ideology as a cognitive and normative system? Ideology offers a holistic framework of meaning which is characterized by universality, certainty and homogeneity; it is a product of the Enlightenment and reflects that movement's penchant for universality and intellectual mastery; and it refers to ideas which have a wide applicability. Liberalism, anarchism, socialism and other classic ideologies were not specific to some groups but were to be frameworks of meaning which would transform the world in their image.

Ideology, as a universalistic ideology, was also based on a secular principle of certainty. Modernity came into existence with the experience that the world is contingent but responded with a post-theological principle of certainty: reason thus came to occupy the place previously filled by God. In this way ideology is the product of the same worldview that produced modern science. This was how Destutt de Tracy, who coined the term in 1796, understood ideology – a science of ideas. Ideology, like science, is convinced of its own certainty.[4] Ideologies contain truth claims which are held to be self-legislating. It may be suggested that ideology as a cognitive system is a form of knowledge, in the deeper cultural sense of knowledge.[5] Ideology allows people to make sense of their society; they provide interpretative schemata which generate meaning. In this way, then, ideologies are worldviews which locate society in the broader context of human history; they are products of the age of historicism.

Finally, ideology has the characteristic of aspiring to create a homogenous social order. As an idea, ideology seeks to realize itself in practice and thereby extinguish its utopian element. But the vision of reality in ideology is a homogenizing one; social reality is seen as something that must be transformed in the image of an idea. This essentializing logic to ideology is not surprising because ideology was a product of an age – the age of industrialism, urbanization, mass education, democracy, nation-states – which was precisely one of homogenization. Thus we find the principal ideologies of modernity entailing a relationship to the state. Lying at the centre of such ideologies as conservatism, liberalism, nationalism, socialism and fascism was a particular doctrine concerning the relationship between society and the state.[6] Ideology presupposes the unity of both state and society – a presupposition which is highly questionable today. Of course there were ideologies, such as racism, which were not specifically defined in terms of a relation to the state. Yet, even in these cases, the classic features of ideology were present and underpinned by the modern state: the codification of reality by references to normative, cognitive and aesthetic discourses.

This latter point concerning ideology and the polity leads onto the question of the spatial location of ideology. Ideology was a product of an age which privileged time over space. Ideologies were temporal trajectories which sought to realize modern culture's aspirations in a social order. While having a universalistic applicability, ideology was spatially contextualized in national societies. The spatial world of ideology was the nation-state and national society.

The final dimension to ideology I wish to mention relates to the question of agency, the subject of ideology. Ideologies, I have argued, emanate from elites and are addressed to the masses who are mobilized by political programmes aimed at the reconstruction of society. Of particular importance is the role of intellectuals in the construction of ideologies. Virtually all the classic ideologies were doctrines which derived from intellectuals. Ideologies were systems of meaning codified by intellectuals. They were products of an age when literacy and knowledge were relatively restricted and yet when the need for public communication was particularly great. Intellectuals gained great influence in modern society by being able to preside over the flow of political communication. The expansion in public communication – made possible by the rise of literacy, the weakening of censorship, the commercialization of the press, and the creation of national educational systems – placed intellectuals in positions of influence. My point is that ideology entails a relatively passive view of the masses who are the recipients of the messages of elites and who act only when ideology resonates with identity formation and the social interests. But this must be qualified. Ideology speaks to the masses as political subjects, as citizens. The individual interprets ideology and acts on the basis of its meaningfulness. In order for it to become effective in political practice, ideology must be interpreted and translated into action. The subject of ideology – contra Althusser – is thus an interpreting agent who acts on the basis of received messages which are disseminated in public communication.

The fragmentation of ideology

In what sense, then, has ideology come to an end today? For some time sociology has announced the 'end of ideology' (Bell 1960), a thesis which has found a more recent voice in the (premature) declaration of the 'end of history' (Fukuyama 1992). The end of ideology was supposed to have arrived with the end of conflict over the central direction of society. According to Daniel Bell, the kind of American society that was emerging in the post-Second World War era was one that had moved from a politics of conflict to one of consensus.[7] There was no longer any basic conflict over the fundamental values of the society: ideology was at an end. The Frankfurt School authors, in particular Adorno, but also Herbert Marcuse (1964) in *One-Dimensional Man*, accepted this diagnosis but attributed the end of conflict less to the arrival of a normative consensus than to the power of an even more powerful kind of ideology which had eliminated the very distinction between idea and reality: reality, Marcuse argued, had become its own ideology. If this ideology was a 'false consciousness' it was not because it could be contradicted by reality but because it had betrayed utopia.

Ideology may have ceased to be a source of conflict in the Western world, though the extreme views of Bell and Marcuse must be regarded with a certain scepticism, not least because the rival ideologies of liberalism, conservatism and social democracy continued to be main contenders in national politics. What was more significant with respect to ideology is that it survived as an oppositional force within the Cold War system of meaning: ideology defined the broader political context of

modern political culture as a conflict between two forces, liberal capitalist democracy and Soviet communism. It is important to see that these frameworks were also cognitive frameworks which defined the most fundamental assumptions of society. In short, they were systems of meaning which had a transcendental function with respect to action.

The decline of ideology can be summarized under four categories: first generation bourgeois ideology, second generation post-bourgeois ideology, the Cold War ideological systems and, finally, the decline of ideology in a post-ideological age.[8] Historically ideology can be divided into two types. First, the classic bourgeois emancipation ideology of liberalism and later liberal democracy with its emphasis on the individual as citizen and the bearer of civic and political rights. The second generation of ideology emerged as a heterogeneous reaction to bourgeois ideology, ranging from syndicalism, radical democracy, communism, fascism and nationalism. These ideologies sought in different ways to integrate into a holistic worldview the aesthetic, normative and cognitive dimensions of modern culture and to use this to transform society. The ideologies of the first phase in the emergence of modern society eventually came to be seen as only partially fulfilling the project of modernity and eventually became a legitimation of capitalism. As Wallerstein (1996) has also remarked, no ideology has succeeded in establishing its ascendancy over the others; there has been no crystallization of ideology into a dominant or hegemonic worldview. With the possible exception of liberal democracy, every ideology has generated an opposing one and every generic type has internally fragmented in divergent forms. This brings me to the third category of ideology, the Cold War ideological system. While the older ideologies of the Enlightenment and nineteenth century failed to achieve total dominance, something like a hegemonic worldview did emerge with the Cold War which stabilized two systems of meaning, each being defined counter-factually in opposition to the other. It is possible that within each of these systems ideology had indeed come to an end.

However, we need not explore any further the debate between the liberal and the Marxist versions of the end of ideology argument since these were in any case rendered obsolete by developments from the late 1960s when a whole series of so-called 'New Social Movements' transformed the political face of Western society and in the developing world new nationalisms of liberation appeared. Ideology clearly was not at an end, whether 'false' or otherwise. However, the picture that began to emerge by the beginning of the 1990s was one that called into question some of the central presuppositions of ideology in the discourses of modernity. My thesis is that ideology has not disappeared but it no longer defines political culture today – our age is in every sense a post-ideological age. This is because the core components of ideology are no longer contained by discourses which can be cogently called ideological. The cognitive framework of ideology has collapsed and so too has its normative and aesthetic dimensions. Ideology, in short, has fragmented into its constituent parts which are becoming embodied in other discourses, such as the resurgent voices of community and identity and a new politics of risk and fear. Let me clarify in more detail what I mean by this.

Ideology derived its strength from its ability to define a cognitive system which

was also a fairly holistic system of meaning. As such ideology tied politics to morality and could also be the basis of a programme of mass mobilization, linking itself with identity and interests. In the changed circumstances of the present, ideology has lost this ability to define a system of meaning; it has become emptied of its normative and cognitive content which has been taken over by other discourses. As Jürgen Habermas has correctly argued, the present situation is characterized by a 'new obscurity' rather than ideological self-confidence: 'What is at stake is Western culture's confidence in itself' (Habermas 1989: 51). He argues that the new obscurity is not connected with the decline of a historical consciousness associated with post-modernity and the loss of utopia but is related to the decline of one particular utopia – the potential of a society organized on social labour:

> The new obscurity is part of a situation in which a welfare state program that continues to be nourished by a utopia of social labor is losing its power to project future possibilities for a collectively better and less endangered way of life.
>
> (Habermas 1989: 54)

In his view the concrete manifestation of this is the crisis of the welfare state: social democracy has ceased to be a utopia.[9]

Ideology expressed modernity's great self-confidence in its cognitive and normative systems which provided interpretative means with which the world could be rendered meaningful and at the same time reconstructed in the image of modernity and its political programmes. The enduring power of ideology derives from precisely that faith in the essentially meaningful nature of the world and the conviction that ideas can be realized in reality. Politics today is no longer based on this belief: meaning has ceased to be something that can be codified in an ideologically coherent framework. However, that does not mean that ideology has disappeared but that it has been overtaken by other forces, such as the power of identity.

With the end of the Cold War, ideology in its most comprehensive and binary form has ceased to exist. Left and Right, class and labour, East and West, no longer define the field of politics (Giddens 1994; Bobbio 1996). These ideological systems have imploded and new cultural forces have emerged in the vacuum created by the fall of ideology. Gone is the ability of ideology to define a universalistic vision of the social order, a *Weltanschauung*. In our post-modern age the penchant for certainty has given way to a cultural relativism and the homogenizing logic of modernity has been replaced by the increasing recognition of heterogeneity and difference. The Cold War era, which effectively goes back to the October Revolution, as far as ideology and meaning was concerned, was a more globalized order than what is presently the case in the so-called global age. The world revolution of globalization differs from the world revolution of modernization in that it paradoxically has brought about more and more fragmentation and different orders of meaning. Western modernity as defined by the Enlightenment, unlike the period which defined modernization, no longer dominates what is in fact now a post-colonial world.

Under these circumstances the chances for ideology to define cognitive and normative systems of meaning is limited and it consequently ceases to be a collective

representation. It may be the case, however, that the aesthetic component of ideology has survived to provide an enduring basis for the survival of ideology in a world which seems to be dispensing with the need for ideology as an integrated system of meaning. This is apparent in the case of the new nationalism which does not derive its force from the ideological doctrine which inspired much of modern nationalism in the past (Delanty 1997a). Nationalism today gains its ideological strength largely from its ability to provide an aesthetic vision of society – it has ceased to be a vision of totality. This is also the case as far as racism is concerned. Racism today no longer takes the form of an ideological doctrine about the biological superiority of the white race but a more diffuse cultural form (which may indeed derive its impetus from the consequences of ideology).[10] Other ideologies of modernity such as liberalism, conservatism and social democracy have ceased to be able to provide any ideological vision whatsoever. Fascism and communism have ceased to be able to express coherent ideological conceptions of society, appealing only to marginal strata. In short, their ability to be able to define a system of meaning is insignificant.

One of the ideologies specific to the late twentieth century, terrorism, is also losing its power as an ideology. This is exemplified in the formal disbanding of the Red Army Faction (RAF) in 1998.[11] There is also evidence to suggest that ideologically charged terrorism in Northern Ireland may be coming to an end, given the support the Irish Republican Army (IRA) has given to the so-called Belfast Agreement in April 1998 and the formal disbanding of the organization the following year.[12] The celebrations of the thirtieth anniversary of May 1968 also reflected, in their self-reproach, the exhaustion of ideology. Terrorism, today, has survived only as an extreme politics of identity, as is illustrated by certain kinds of religious terrorist organizations.

Ideology, I have argued, rested on the ability of elites, with the aid of intellectuals, to define a worldview which was also a programme of political action aimed at the reconstruction of society. Today we have witnessed the retreat of the elites and the declining power of intellectuals to define the cognitive, aesthetic and the normative horizons of society. In the age of the 'risk society' all forms of established authority, in particular the culture of science, is being rendered transparent (Beck 1992; Nowotny *et al*. 2001). Expert systems are being challenged by a public increasingly critical of the rationality of science. The politics of the new social movements has called into question the settled assumptions of ideology which was challenged by a new politics of identity. One of the far-reaching changes in our time is that identity cannot be seen merely as incidental to politics but is itself a key ingredient. The new politics of such social movements ranging from feminism, to environmentalism to nationalism begins from the power of identity, not from ideology.

However, it is important not to misunderstand this apparent reversal. The crucial point is not so much the disappearance of ideology but its refraction through a new politics of identity. In this reconfiguration, identity, ideology and interests form a new kind of political synthesis which is more one of post-modern bricolage than one of modernist unity of function and meaning. The ascendancy of identity – and new constellations of interests – over ideology is not to be explained merely as a result of

the decline of totalizing systems of meaning under the condition of post-modernization (Castells 1997). An explanation must also refer to changing structures of power in contemporary society. With respect to the fate of ideology, of particular importance is the declining power of the old elites – the capitalist class, political class, and intellectuals – to define the cultural model of society (Lasch 1995). Ideology has not so much declined as shifted onto new forms of agency. In other words, ideology is no longer codified by the old elites for it has become a free-floating discourse. Freed from the old power structures, ideology is open to new definitions. There is no longer an ideological master discourse today. Some dramatic examples of this decline in the 'meta-narratives' are the blending of communism and nationalism in the former-communist countries in Eastern Europe to oppose the neo-liberalism of the new elites; the exchange in the discourses of 'Right' and 'Left' in the post-Soviet state where by the term 'Left' has now come to designate what was once the 'Right', a term which now refers to the communist opponents of capitalist democracy; the embracing of conservative values – law and order, tradition, nation – by the British Labour party which was successfully able to take over an ideological discourse previously dominated by the Conservative Party.

I would now like to systematize some of the presuppositions of the analysis. The demise of the rule of ideology in contemporary society can be summarized under the following headings. First, we have the fragmentation of modernity. As already argued the domains of culture, society and politics have become irreparably dis-jointed.[13] Under the aegis of modernity the utopian impulse of politics was to bring about a reconciliation of culture – the ethical vision of a form of life – and society, the social reality of everyday life. This utopia had vanished having been supplanted by a new politics which has collapsed the social and the cultural into each other (Lash and Urry, 1994). In other words, we no longer have a cultural, normative discourse existing outside the social as in the age of modernity. Consequently politics has lost its direction. Politics, it is frequently argued, is becoming more and more cultural, and as a result is losing its transformative role.

Following from the above, a further distinctive feature of the current situation is the separation of the domain of politics from the social and economic. Ideology entailed a political vision of society, a fusion of the political with the social and the economic. Ideologies were total visions of society. One of the most striking features of our time is the decline of the social as a coherent reality. According to Alain Touraine (1995) society as a coherent entity is being replaced by a conflict between the instrumental orders of economic life and the search for a principle of subjectivity. Reason and subjectivity confront each other in a hopeless battle, each trying to establish its rule over the other. Today we are living in a world in which the unity and integrity of a form of life promised by modernity is no longer possible. Modernity's celebration of certainty has given way to scepticism and its belief in universality has been supplanted by difference and relativism.

Our post-ideological age is characterized, furthermore, by the separation of nation, state and society. In other words, the space of ideology no longer exists for sovereignty and is increasingly being shared on many levels, ranging from the sub-national to the national to the supranational. Ideology, I have argued, was shaped in

a particular spatial context in which state, society and nation formed a unity. This unity can no longer be presupposed, having been undermined by the forces of globalization. Nation has been decoupled from the state and the social, as I have already suggested, has fragmented. In this vacuum new political voices are emerging.

With respect to the question of agency, we can observe that today new social actors are emerging in a political environment radically different from that of modernity. Intellectuals are less important in defining political agendas and the relationship between elites and masses is no longer one based on the need for leadership. We have moved beyond mass society to a new kind of tribalized individualism, the principal argument of Michel Maffesoli (1996). Mass society, which defined the politics and culture of modernity in its final stage, has given way to a less homogenous view of the 'masses', allowing us to see society as something that generates meaning from within its own structures without recourse to a separate level of politics. The unity and coherence of the social is being challenged by the resurgent voices of community (Delanty 2000b).

Conclusion: ethics and politics beyond ideology

In light of the foregoing observations we can conclude that ideology has lost its integrative impulse. It has lost its utopian function to give form to a moral vision of a social order. This function has disintegrated for utopia is no longer something that can be given form in a worldview. The disenchantment which Weber believed was central to the modernity has not exhausted politics of its utopian impulse – it has converted into its opposite: politics is becoming more and more a matter of giving expression to a desire for enchantment. Political utopia, once located within the trajectory of the modern project, has now become transformed into social utopias. One of the profound dimensions to this concerns the changed nature of the politics of certainty. Certainty was central to the ideologies of modernity which defined fixed positions, in the form of binary opposites, such as class versus labour, left and right, national and international politics, and science versus other forms of knowledge (Delanty 2000a). Certainty has left the sphere of ideology as a political system of meaning to enter the social world.

The vacuum left by the disappearance of the politics of certainty has been filled by the post-modern politics of desire, risk and fear, to follow Zygmunt Bauman's formulation (Bauman 1992a, 1992b).[14] What this means is that identity is becoming more salient in defining politics. This is evident in the increasing importance of the politics of life style, a culturally specific form of life associated with ethnicity or even gender. It is also evident in the field of international relations (Laïdi 1998b; Lapid and Kratochwil 1996). It might be suggested that the dimension of emotional attachment is being released from ideology and given a cultural form. The question of the affective dimension has not been given sufficient attention since it has traditionally been subordinated to instrumental rationality. However, within the dissolution of the older bonds of solidarity associated with modernity – the bonds of solidarity of class and nation in particular – the emotional or affective is open to new

definitions. This means a certain de-secularization of ideology. In the past ideology emerged as part of the secularized, intellectualized and rationalized worldview of modernity. Religion was the antithesis of ideology whose quest for certainty was closer to the worldview of science. Today, however, science has lost its mantle of certainty and religion has been able to continue to provide an enduring system of values. What has changed, however, is that the survival of religion is due not to the power of tradition but to the quest for individual achievement, an existential politics of desire. Fear of the forces of nature once provided the existential basis of religious belief which was also strengthed by the existence of traditional forms of community which left little room for the autonomy of the individual. Today religion gains its impetus less from tradition than from the modern spirit of individualism which releases both desire and fear – desire to attain fullness of expression and fear of the potential destruction of the consequences of unfettered individualism and radical plurality.

My conclusion, then, is that ideology has indeed retreated from the forefront of politics today in the sense that it no longer defines the political field and the central questions of society. Ideology presupposed the stable world of modernity, the certainty of science, the modern geopolitical order of the nation-state and the international system. In the post-modern, global age, this structure has been rendered unstable and as a new mood of uncertainty enters science and all the discourses of modernity, consequently ideology has lost its conditions of existence. Yet, ideology is still a powerful force in the contemporary world having fragmented into its components. What has been lost is the possibility of making sense of society as a totality. The increasing power of identity over ideology has not replaced the capacity of the latter to provide an interpretation of the contemporary world's place in history and direction for the future. Certainty has been replaced by uncertainty, universality by relativism, totality by fragmentation. Without an ideological impetus to sustain it and give it meaning, politics is retreating to the poles of identity and interests. Today either a communitarian politics of identity or the instrumentalism of naked interests is the driving force in the new politics of postmodernity.

We cannot return to the age of ideology since the social and cultural structures underlying it have ceased to exist. Yet, the fundamental question of the relationship of ethics to politics still remains the central challenge for our time. As argued at the beginning of this chapter, this connection was central to the self-understanding of modernity. Politics, in the discourses of modernity, was supposed to bridge the separation of norm and reality, the divorce of the cultural principles of modernity from the reality of modern society. To realize the cultural potentials of modernity in everyday life was the goal of politics. Ideology as a system of communication was the means by which politics could give expression to the cultural discourses of modernity, linking the normative, the cognitive and the aesthetic. If ideology was a closed system of political communication constructed around a totalizing vision of society, it may be suggested that the distinctive feature of political communication today is its openness. In this chapter I argued that ideology no longer defines the cultural model of society. Ideologies have lost their ability to make sense of society as a totality and consequently they have receded to the margins of society.

What, then, is replacing ideology? To draw from recent social theory, it may be suggested that the growing reflexivity in public discourse may constitute the functional equivalent of ideology under the conditions of post-modernity. The concept of reflexivity – variously developed by such theorists as Bauman, Beck, Bourdieu, Giddens, Habermas, Melucci and Touraine among others (see Delanty 1997b, 1999, 2000a) – points to a major transformation in contemporary cultures of meaning by which a whole range of new discourses provide socially situated forms of meaning. Reflexive forms of cognition, not ideology, suggest a possible linkage between ethics and politics today. The distinctive feature of this new relationship is the openness of communication as a medium of public discourse (Strydom 1999). People no longer make sense of the world by recourse to ideologies, with their tacit relation to utopia and the discourses of modernity. Meaning has become more local and cultural, on the one side, and on the other new kinds of global meanings have emerged. Between these poles there is little room for something like ideology to emerge and gain influence. The main components of ideology have been taken up by other discourses of meaning. Finally, it may be speculated whether this reflexive turn will be capable of articulating a worldview based on a political ethics. If this is possible, it is likely to be expressed in terms of entirely new cultural constructs, such as the ideas of sustainable development, the alleviation of suffering, biorights, ecological risk and human rights.

Notes

1 This chapter was written in 1996. In addition to the workshop upon which this volume is based, it was also presented as an invited lecture to the conference of the Social Theory and Social Transformation Section of the Italian Sociological Association, Amalfi, 28–31 May 1998. An earlier version appeared in the proceedings of that conference, *Le Condizioni ideologische del nostro tempo*, edited by Carlo Mongardini (Rome: Bulzoni, 2000). I am grateful to Professor Mongardini for permission to reproduce the paper, which has been revised for the present volume.
2 The question of the possibility of a 'worldview' in the context of the conditions of late modernity was the subject of a major work conceived by Jürgen Habermas in 1979 (Habermas 1984a). As a critical dialogue with Jaspers's notion of a diagnosis of the age which would give expression to the contemporary worldview, Habermas argued that a worldview is possible today only in the limited sense of a critical reflection on the age.
3 For a history of the concept of totality, see Jay (1984).
4 For a survey of the concept of ideology, see Thompson (1990).
5 Mannheim also saw ideology as a system of knowledge which is constitutive of modern culture's self-understanding.
6 This is a thesis, which is in its Marxist form, is associated with Althusser (1971).
7 In a later work Bell (1979) argued that the conflict of ideologies had been overtaken by a deeper conflict deriving from the cultural contradictions of capitalism which had generated a conflict between the work ethic, the traditional value system of capitalism, and the hedonistic ethic of mass society.
8 The terms first and second generation ideology are borrowed from Habermas (see Habermas 1987: 353–4).
9 It may also be noted that theorists such as Habermas (1984b: 354–5) and Mann (1970) argue that late capitalism is dependent less on ideology for its cohesion than on the fragmentation of consciousness.

10 On the new racism, see Balibar (1991) and Balibar and Wallerstein (1991).
11 The release of an eight-page document (*Guardian*, 21 April 1998) outlining the reasons for the dissoution of the RAF marks the end of extreme left-wing ideology based on violence. The document announces that the armed struggle against the constitutional order on the German Federal Government, 'monopoly capitalism' and 'imperalism' may have been an error without also forming a political front organization.
12 Although splinter organizations remain, they do not appear to be based on ideology as such.
13 See Touraine (1995) for a systematic analysis of modernity in these terms. See also Delanty (1999).
14 For a useful interpretation, see Rengger (1997).

6 Eurosomnia

Europe's 'spiritual vitality' and the debate on the European idea

Stefan Elbe

Is not night continuously closing in on us?

(Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 1974)

Introduction

Why has it proved so difficult to articulate a meaningful idea of Europe in the post-Cold War era? It is this question which has recently begun to preoccupy a growing number of scholars reflecting on the contemporary state of European affairs. As more and more time flows into the gap between the historic events of 1989 and the present, the more frequently and urgently we can hear scholars raise the question of why Europe still lacks a meaningful representation of itself commensurate with its elevated status in the freer seas of post-Cold War international relations. Even in 1990, it will be recalled, there was still widespread optimism about the prospects for achieving a renaissance in European affairs. The NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) Declaration of 1990 boldly announced that Europe had entered a 'new' and 'promising' era, that its divisive 'walls and ideas' were disappearing, rendering it 'whole and free' and with a renewed opportunity to determine its own 'destiny' (North Atlantic Council, 1990). Many scholars, too, joined in this celebratory chorus, claiming that for the first time the idea of a united Europe was more than just a dream (Roberts and Nelson 1992: 5). From the European perspective, then, it seemed that history was not so much ending in 1989 as it was, in the words of the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, 'accelerating', even 'overheating' (Habermas 1992: 1). Within the overall context of world history, Habermas even concluded, the events of 1989 signalled something unprecedented, namely that 'Europe as a whole is being given a second chance' (Habermas 1992: 12–13). In 1989 the canvas of history had seemed to afford Europeans with a new vista.

That time, however, is now past and remains only as a memory. Today the initial sense of optimism has once again given way to the far more familiar and pessimistic appraisal of a Europe which seems unable to capitalise on its 'second chance'. A decade after the breaching of the Berlin Wall, the articulation of a meaningful and purposeful idea of Europe still seems as distant a prospect as ever. 'Europe today', Stanley Hoffmann representatively observed in the mid-1990s, 'has no sense of direction and purpose' (Hoffmann 1994: 1, 22). Moreover, it lacks 'elites and leaders

with a daring vision' (Hoffmann 1994: 21). Hoffmann's response to this absence of a meaningful idea of Europe is one of concern. Indeed, he questions whether contemporary Europe still possesses the requisite 'spiritual vitality' for articulating such a vision (Hoffmann 1994: 22). While Hoffmann himself does not specify in greater detail what he means by this concept of 'spiritual vitality', he does variously associate it with such related notions as the ability to delineate a clear 'purpose', with having a 'sense of direction', a 'clear identity', a 'higher purpose', a sense of '*projet*', and a 'common enterprise' (Hoffmann 1994: 1, 15, 18). A lack of these attributes, in Hoffmann's account, signals a lack of 'spiritual vitality'. Nor is Hoffmann alone in exhibiting such concern. Rather, the inability to articulate a meaningful idea of Europe has, over the course of the 1990s, led to a proliferation of pessimistic accounts of contemporary European culture which lament the inability to produce a meaningful idea of Europe and which take this 'failure' to be indicative of a damaged and fading 'spiritual vitality'.

   This chapter, however, questions whether such expressions of concern really constitute the most appropriate response to the current inability to articulate a meaningful idea of Europe. It seeks, in other words, to cast doubt on the quest to identify a meaningful idea of Europe in the post-Cold War era and, by way of extension, to challenge the conclusion that Europe's current inability to articulate a compelling vision of its destiny implies a lack of spiritual vitality. This chapter wishes to suggest instead that it might be precisely in forfeiting the need for a meaningful idea of Europe that contemporary Europeans could demonstrate great spiritual vitality. The traditional relationship between Europe's spiritual vitality and the ability to articulate a meaningful idea of Europe would then be reversed. In order to substantiate this argument, it will be necessary to arrive at an understanding of why the articulation of a meaningful idea of Europe remains so difficult in the post-Cold War era. Such an understanding, the chapter argues, can be derived from Nietzsche's discussion of European nihilism which still constitutes one of the most compelling accounts of the difficulties inherent in endowing European existence with meaning within the cultural configuration of European modernity. The chapter subsequently draws on Nietzsche's own and differentiated assessment of the advent of European nihilism in order to point towards the premature nature of the pessimistic, yet flourishing, accounts of contemporary European culture. It may well turn out, then, that contemporary Europe does not at all require a meaningful idea of Europe in order to assert its spiritual vitality.

Awakenings

Over the course of the 1990s writers on European affairs have engaged in a sustained effort to reawaken the European imagination from what has been a prolonged slumber. Scholars once again began to explicitly turn their gaze beyond legal, political and economic considerations, seeking instead to emphasise a more cultural understanding of the European idea (Delanty 1998: 28).[1] In their volume on the *Anthropology of Europe*, three editors rightly single out this expanding discourse on the 'idea of Europe' as one of the most notable features of contemporary European

affairs (Goddard *et al.* 1994). Indeed, the 'idea of Europe' has now become a reference point around which a multitude of diverse normative positions have clustered in elucidating both their respective responses to the events of the 1990s and their aspirations for the future. That this should be so is not altogether surprising. Reflections on the meaning of the European idea have, ever since their proliferation in the eighteenth century, usually exceeded the merely declaratory and definitional, advancing into the normative realm in the sense of elaborating unfulfilled promises (Burgess 1997: 23). Europe, in other words, has traditionally stood for that space, that theatre of activity, where Europeans could dream of a better future (Coker 1998: 79; Heller 1988). The contemporary debate about the 'idea of Europe' marks no exception in this regard; it similarly derives from the confluence of at least four different normative trajectories.

Contemporary interest in articulating a meaningful vision of Europe derives, first and foremost, from the instrumental considerations of scholars and policy-makers wishing to promote the institutions of the European Union.[2] Following the turbulent response to the Maastricht Treaty, the identification of such an idea has increasingly come to form an important part of their strategy for European governance. One of the principal lessons that European policy-makers have drawn from recent years is that the institutions of the European Union can sustain themselves, and indeed advance any further, only if these institutions enhance their public legitimacy. In this vein, the European Commission itself has repeatedly argued that 'political union must not be seen simply as a legalistic exercise but rather as a humanistic enterprise; a "union among peoples" rather than just formal treaties between states' (European Commission 1983: 109, 113; Fontaine 1991: 6). In the hope of eventually turning the European Union from a mere *Gesellschaft* into a genuine *Gemeinschaft*, to use Tönnies's distinction, promoters of further European integration have sought to liberate the European project from its technical and functional confines and to drive it into the sphere of European culture (Delanty 1998: 28).[3] Supporters of the European cause do not go to great lengths to conceal this motivation behind their interest in the meaning of the European idea. François Mitterand, for example, argued quite candidly in a press conference in May 1989, that

> the Europe of the Community will not work, in the short-term, if it doesn't have a vision, a perspective. Those who don't want a political Europe . . . you'll see them grumble, put the brakes on, and pull up in front of any obstacle, however, small.
>
> (Clark, 1992: 56)

Long-term vision, in this account, is needed for short-term policy success and for maintaining the thrust and legitimacy of European integration. (Schmidtke 1998: 45).[4]

Promoting the institutions of the European Union, however, is not the only source accounting for the recent revival of interest in the idea of Europe. A second group of scholars and policy-makers has entered this debate not primarily in order to legitimise the institutions of the European Union, but in order to insist that these institutions, as they expand, must reflect the 'profound' nature of the European idea

– something they are currently accused of not doing. For these, largely central and eastern European writers, the notion of 'Europe' often embodies a deep spiritual ideal and a philosophical idea immanent in history. In this vein the Czech philosopher Jan Patocka, for example, referred to an exemplary European tradition which revolves around what he called the 'care for the soul' and which, he argued, could be traced through the majority of post-Platonic, European thought (Patocka 1996: 83). During the Cold War, adherence to this spiritual ideal of Europe was often proclaimed by central and eastern European writers wishing to emphasise their dissent from the Yalta order. In his widely read article 'The Tragedy of Central Europe', published in *The New York Review of Books* in 1984, Milan Kundera reminded his readers that to a Hungarian, a Czech or a Pole, and unlike a Russian, the word 'Europe' is not a geographical expression but a 'spiritual notion synonymous with the word "West"'. The tragedy for central Europe, in Kundera's view, was not only that the Cold War division of Europe failed to reflect this cultural difference, but also that in western Europe itself 'Europe was no longer experienced as a value' (Kundera 1984: 33–8). Kundera's voice, moreover, finds a contemporary echo in the speeches of Vaclav Havel, who would welcome it, for example, 'if the European Union were to establish a charter of its own that would clearly define the ideas on which it is founded, its meaning and the values it tends to embody' (Havel 1994). Europe, in Havel's view, 'has to rediscover, consciously embrace, and in some way articulate its soul or its spirit' (Havel 1997: 247). For this second group of scholars, then, the point is not so much to provide an ideational legitimacy for the European institutions, as it is an insistence that these institutions begin to embody the alleged profundity of their underlying idea.

A third impetus behind the recent reawakening of interest in the idea of Europe derives from scholars who are averse to providing an ideational gloss for the benefit of the European institutions, but who nevertheless wish to explore the conceptual grounds for delineating a post-national, European identity. Such an identity, it is hoped, will mitigate against the risk of returning to Europe's past experience of nationalist and racist violence. Gerard Delanty, for example, remains prudently suspicious of any attempt to articulate a European idea which would run the risk of further legitimising European practices of 'macro-political and economic engineering' to which he objects (Delanty 1995: 9). Indeed in his view the idea of Europe has been allowed to go unchallenged for too long, and laments that 'nothing has been written to dispel the myth of Europe as a unifying and universalising project' (Delanty 1995: vii). Yet Delanty's reservations about the institutional project of Europe do not lead him to abandon the European idea altogether because he also acknowledges the potential contribution that such an idea could make to the gradual evolution of a European identity. Against the background of a rising tide of xenophobic nationalism and racism, Delanty expresses the 'need for a collective identity based on autonomy and responsibility rather than the chimera of super-statehood' (Delanty: viii). In seeking to avert any further development in the direction of Europe's violent past, Delanty insists that '[w]e need it [a European identity] in order to protect us from the secularised remnants of Christendom: the dark and atavistic forces of nationalism and racism which threaten to engulf us'

(Delanty 1998: 33). In this account, then, there are important reasons beyond the welfare of the European institutions which merit reflections on an idea of Europe which would not so much legitimise the institutions of the European Union as it would provide the basis for a post-national, European identity which might redeem Europe from its violent legacy.

Finally, interest in the meaning of the European idea has also been exhibited by those scholars wishing to cast a critical and reflective light on a discourse which could potentially lead to the articulation of unreflective and essentialising accounts of the European idea. In his contribution to the European debate, *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe*, Jacques Derrida argues that the question of Europe's identity now has 'the venerable air of an old, exhausted theme' (Derrida 1992: 5). Yet, Derrida, too, does not wish to entirely abandon the European enlightenment tradition; he, too, emphasises the importance of democratic values and respect for human rights in his contribution, albeit in a reflective as opposed to a regulative manner (Brandt 1997: 144). An unreflective idea of Europe would, in Derrida's view, simply replicate the danger of nationalist and racist thinking on the European level.[5] In this vein, he advocates an idea of Europe that is open both to difference and to the Other: 'it is necessary', Derrida argues, 'to make ourselves the guardians of an idea of Europe', but not of a conceptually closed notion of Europe,

> *but* of a Europe that consists precisely in not closing itself off in its own identity and in advancing itself in an exemplary way toward what it is not, toward the other heading or the heading of the other, indeed – and this is perhaps something else altogether – toward the other of the heading, which would be beyond this modern tradition, another border structure, another shore.
>
> (Derrida 1992: 29)

It is against the background of these new possibilities for conceptualising a European idea that Derrida can argue that 'this "subject" [of Europe] retains a virgin body' (Derrida 1992: 5) and that '[w]e are younger than ever, we Europeans, since a certain Europe does not yet exist' (Derrida 1992: 7). Derrida engages in the contemporary European discourse, then, not in order to perpetuate it unquestioningly, but in order to open it up to the experience of difference and the Other.

What these diverse writers share in common is their effort to reawaken the 'idea of Europe' as the intellectual space within which to articulate their responses to the hopes and fears triggered by the events surrounding the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Together, they help to account for the notable resurgence of the discourse on the meaning of the European idea over the course of the 1990s. Indeed, '[n]ot since the end of the last "World" War', one scholar rightly observes, 'has the notion of Europe *in its totality* been so incessantly interrogated' (Burgess 1997: 19). In his influential study on the European idea, the Swiss writer Denis de Rougemont had concluded that it was precisely in this search for the meaning of the European idea that Europe is made; it was the cultivation of a European imagination that was so definingly European (de Rougemont 1965: 19, 1966). This does not mean, however, that a compelling formulation of the European idea has, in fact, been found in the

post-Cold War era. Rather, as two editors of *The Question of Europe* have observed, attempts to articulate a meaningful idea of Europe have tended to emulate Polonius' attempt to make sense of the shape of his cloud (Gowan and Anderson 1997: ix). The new Europe, Christopher Coker echoes, still 'awaits its moment of awakening' (Coker 1998: 116). Nor, moreover, does this mean that scholars have actually contented themselves with understanding this search as being meaningful in and of itself. Rather, the prevailing mood in relation to the quest of articulating a meaningful idea of Europe is one of frustration and disappointment. All too often, as the next section elaborates, the inability to articulate a meaningful vision of Europe in the post-Cold War is taken as an indicator of a damaged 'spiritual vitality' and is consequently treated, though perhaps erroneously, as a matter of grave concern.

Feeling blue

Ever since the European Union deployed its dark blue flag in the hope of instilling a common feeling of Europeanness, it is the colour blue which has become most closely identified with the European project. Contrary to this intention, however, it now seems that many scholars on both sides of the Atlantic are genuinely feeling blue about the European cause, sharing Stanley Hoffmann's concern about the contemporary state of Europe's 'spiritual vitality' and his concomitant scepticism about its ability to articulate some kind of European consensus (Hoffmann 1994: 13). Scholars observing European affairs in the post-Cold War era are virtually unanimous in pointing to the prevailing mood of frustration, melancholy and resignation. Representative of those observing contemporary European affairs from a north American perspective is Robert Pippin who, in his book *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem* (1999), emphasises the pervasive dissatisfaction of European high culture with itself and its ideas. In the 1990s, Pippin observes, a 'culture of melancholy, profound skepticism and intense self-criticism had become official high culture and the dominant academic one in the European West' (Pippin 1999: xi). Such an assessment, of course, stands in sharp contrast to the initial optimism displayed at the beginning of the 1990s. Yet, Pippin's is not an isolated assessment.

   In Agnés Heller's view, Europe has been similarly engaged, over the past decades, in 'a crash course in relativising its own culture, so much so that it arrived at a stage of advanced cultural masochism' (Heller 1988: 154). The image that Heller associates with contemporary European culture is that of 'a corpse whose hair and nails, wealth, and cumulative knowledge are still growing, but the rest is dead.' Europe, she observes, lacks any 'future-oriented social fantasy' apart from its technological forms of governance. It has, in other words, become a theatre without performers, a place where '[g]rand narratives of another, better future in politics, social questions, or anything else, are no longer forged' and where, moreover, '[r]edemption is deemed undesirable, and sociopolitical progress [is] ridiculed' (Heller 1988: 154). Heller does not wish to deny that Europe still retains a prominent position in the realm of philosophy and that Europe still produces interesting artworks, but she also wishes to draw attention to the fact that increasingly most of the attractive contributions tend to originate in the periphery rather than in Europe.

Furthermore, the focus of that which is produced in Europe tends to revolve around the past, on preserving the past, on cultivating past traditions: 'The quest for meaning', she correctly observes, 'now has recourse to the past because it is in the past that a meaningful way of life can be fathomed; the present does not provide one'. 'This', in her view, 'is undoubtedly an admission of defeat'. Europe, in this account, has lost, either temporarily or for good, its trend to orient itself towards a meaningful future, to articulate a meaningful idea towards which to work and to discuss its future at great length. 'European culture', Heller starkly concludes, 'can legitimately be considered the cadaver of its own self-image' (Heller 1988: 155).

In Britain, in turn, Leszek Kolakowski has lamented the 'undesirable' fact 'that today's life of the mind is anti-utopian' (Kolakowski 1990: 136) while Christopher Coker observes that '[i]nstead of producing new ideas the Europeans seem much happier deconstructing old ones.' In further reflecting on contemporary European culture Coker also notes:

> Where once the Europeans were renowned for addressing the great questions in an attempt to solve them, they are now *dissolving* them. They are proud of showing how terms such as 'truth', 'spirit', and 'meaning' are in reality flawed.

In this account 'Europe already displays some of the hallmarks of a declining power – defensiveness, lack of confidence and mediocrity . . . History is being made elsewhere'. Coker eloquently concludes, therefore, with the observation that 'Europe is beginning to resemble one of the minor prophets to be found at the end of the Old Testament – an Obdiah or Habakkuk, a Nahum or Haggai, who uttered their testimony while the business of history went on in other hands' (Coker 1998: 126, 95).

Finally, a predominance of sceptical assessments about Europe's ability to articulate a meaningful vision of itself can also be found in France where Paul Ricoeur, for example, has described the risk of cultural dissolution within the context of Europe's confrontation with its 'Others'. '[W]e are threatened', Ricoeur argues in his book *History and Truth*, 'with the destruction of our own discovery [of Others]'. For, it now becomes possible that 'there are just *others*, that we are ourselves an "other" among others. All meaning and every goal having disappeared' (Ricoeur in Burgess 1997: 19). It is precisely this theme of disappearing meaning which has also received a book-length treatment by the French professor of international relations, Zaki Laïdi. In his recently translated book *A World without Meaning: The Crisis of Meaning in International Politics* (1998b), this absence of 'meaning' is taken to be the defining characteristic of post-Cold War international relations. If, Laïdi argues, we understand 'meaning' to consist of three interrelated notions – a foundation, a sense of unity and a final goal – then international relations in general, and European relations in particular, can properly be described as 'meaningless' in the post-Cold War era (Laïdi 1998b: 1).[6]

With specific reference to contemporary European affairs, Laïdi insists that

> the need to project ourselves into the future has never been so strong, while we have never been so poorly armed on the conceptual front to conceive this

future, which leaves a wide gap between the historic rupture that confronts us and our difficulty in interpreting it.

<div align="right">(Laïdi 1998: 1)</div>

Laïdi, too, emphasises that contemporary cultural developments in Europe seem to prohibit the articulation of a meaningful idea of Europe along which both policy-makers and citizens could unite, claiming that Europe 'risks becoming a heritage site rather than a project thereby sliding gently from an exercise of will to passivity. Meaning would no longer be a projection towards the future, but a nostalgic allegory of the past'. 'The European idea', Laïdi further notes, 'has suffered as a result of the teleological deconstruction at work today.' Europe, in this account, is suffering from an acute crisis or loss of meaning. It is, moreover, an observation which, as he rightly points out, we all make today. There is, therefore, in Laïdi's view, 'no task more urgent than the reconstitution of a symbolic separation between the sphere of daily experience and the tracing of a new horizon of expectation' (Laïdi 1998: 75, 80, 178).

Without great difficulty this list of scholars pointing towards Europe's inability to articulate a meaningful vision of itself could be greatly extended. The underlying theme, however, would largely remain the same, namely that Europe has become, in the words of the sociologist Göran Therborn, the 'sceptical continent' (Therborn 1995: 262). A decade after the end of the Cold War, most scholars agree, there remains a pervasive feeling that, despite the multifarious interest in the articulation of a meaningful idea of Europe in the post-Cold War era, this task verges on the improbable and impossible. Derrida's observations, in this regard, remain as true today as they did in 1992 when he claimed that 'we no longer know very well *what* or *who* goes by this name. Indeed, to what concept, to what real individual, to what singular entity would this name be assigned today? Who will draw up its borders?' (Derrida 1992: 5). Contemporary Europeans desiring the articulation of such an idea are thus left to confront a difficult impasse, for it is precisely this task which is seen to be precluded by a prevailing sense of scepticism and relativism which have marred Europe's spiritual vitality. They are left to fear that the idea of Europe seems to be acquiescing in its own oblivion. Indeed, even many of those who do not explicitly crave for the articulation of a meaningful idea of Europe share this unease about contemporary European culture. Yet, is this inability to articulate a meaningful idea of Europe – an idea that contains a foundation, a sense of unity and a final – really a reason for concern about contemporary Europe's spiritual vitality? In order to delineate why such a response, despite its pervasive nature, might be premature, it is necessary to develop an account as well as an assessment of the factors rendering the task of articulating a meaningful idea of Europe so difficult. It is to this task that the next section turns.

Darkness at noon

In examining in greater detail the origins of the allegedly fragile state of Europe's spiritual vitality, it is necessary to leave behind the confines of contemporary European affairs in favour of a broader historical perspective. Warnings about Europe's

spiritual vitality are, after all, not novel but were abundant through the course of the twentieth century. Writers such as Gottfried Benn, Ernst Jünger, Oswald Spengler, Edmund Husserl, Karl Löwith and Martin Heidegger, to name but a few, all saw Europe as hovering over an abyss, perhaps irretrievably. It is both reasonable and necessary, therefore, to see the present inability to articulate a meaningful idea of Europe as the most recent manifestation of a more fundamental problem of endowing existence with meaning under the cultural conditions of European modernity. While the question of Europe's meaning has undoubtedly moved back into the scholarly limelight in recent years, especially in light of the freer seas of post-Cold War international relations, the problem of endowing European existence with meaning can itself be traced as far back as the late nineteenth century.

Already towards the end of the nineteenth century Nietzsche had postulated that Europe was confronting its 'great noon', that Europeans may soon lose their European voice. In the twentieth century, Nietzsche had feared, Europeans would lack the means with which to cultivate a common European spirit.[7] Nietzsche can thus be seen as one of the early writers to have perceived the impeding 'afterglow of European civilisation' and to have placed this development at the centre of his thinking (Pippin 1996: 252–78). Indeed, his observations about European culture still blend well with the contemporary assessments reviewed in the previous section. In describing late nineteenth-century European culture, Nietzsche already noted that Europeans had begun to reveal an 'unspeakable poverty and exhaustion' in whose inner self 'grey impotence, gnawing dissatisfaction, busiest boredom, and dishonest misery' prevailed (Jaspers 1997: 240). In Europe, he argued, the overall aim was lacking and the question 'Why?' no longer found an answer (Nietzsche 1968a: 9). This widespread condition of not being able to experience a meaningful existence Nietzsche referred to as European nihilism and understood it as 'the really tragic problem of our modern world' (Nietzsche 1980: 291). In seeking to uncover the origins of this experience, he developed an account which still remains compelling today.

The death of God

Nietzsche's analysis of modern European culture, and its inability to render existence meaningful, begins with the recognition that Christianity in general, and the belief in God in particular, had become increasingly untenable in the European imagination. 'God', Nietzsche has Zarathustra famously and prophetically proclaim, 'is dead' (Nietzsche 1961: 167). It is this event of the 'death of God' which Nietzsche takes to be decisive and defining in relation to modern European existence. The 'death of God' constituted a cataclysmic event for European culture, Nietzsche predicted, because so much of it had previously been based on the Christian faith. It was Christianity which had endowed European existence with meaning. Consequently, the question that confronted modern Europeans in the absence of this faith, was what, if anything, could still endow European existence with meaning. In a classic passage from *The Gay Science* Nietzsche (1974) anticipated the experience of meaninglessness that would be provoked by the 'death of God' over the course of the twentieth (and perhaps even the twenty-first) century. Europe, he argued, would

lose its 'horizon', would lose all sense of orientation and direction, leaving it to feel only 'coldness' and the 'breath of empty space'. Europe, he concluded, would become unchained from its sun, indeed from all suns, leaving it to be engulfed only by night. Soon it might be necessary to light lanterns at noon.

In Nietzsche's account 'Christianity is a system, a whole view of things thought out together. By breaking one main concept out of it, the faith in God, one breaks the whole' (Nietzsche 1968b: 5). It is this recognition which allowed him to inquire into 'how much must collapse now that this faith has been undermined because it was built upon this faith, propped up by it, grown into it; for example the whole of our European morality' (Nietzsche 1974: 279). Nietzsche already detected the first signs of this process of dissolution towards the end of the nineteenth century, observing that '[d]isintegration characterises this time, and thus uncertainty: nothing stands firmly on its feet or on hard faith in itself; one lives for tomorrow, as the day after tomorrow is dubious.' What is more, already

> everything on our way is slippery and dangerous, and the ice that still supports us has become thin: all of us feel the warm, uncanny breath of the thawing wind, where we still walk, soon no one will be able to walk.
>
> (Nietzsche 1968a: 40)

It is his combined recognition of the formative influence of Christianity on European culture, as well as the increasing awareness of the untenability of this faith in the European imagination, that led Nietzsche to the conclusion that '[n]ihilism stands at the door'.

What, though, does nihilism mean? It means, Nietzsche argued, '*[t]hat the highest values devalue themselves*'. It means, moreover, that in Europe the overall 'aim is lacking' and the question 'Why?' no longer finds an answer' (Nietzsche 1968a: 40). Nietzsche, in other words, used the word nihilism to denote that state in which it is no longer possible for a society or culture to experience a meaningful existence because its 'highest values' have become incredible. In the case of Europe, it signified that stage of its historical development, commencing towards the end of the nineteenth century, during which the discoveries of modern science finally began to displace the belief in God from the European imagination. The most immediate meaning, then, of Nietzsche's declaration that 'God is dead' is 'that the belief in the Christian God has become unbelievable' (Detwiler 1990: 68) and this would not only entail the eventual disenchantment of vast spheres of European life, but also call into question many of the moral and ethical precepts which had been derived from it. Not surprisingly, therefore, Nietzsche understood the 'death of God' to be the decisive, even defining, event of modern times in the sense that modernity is characterised by a lack of the unperturbed confidence in the reality of God and Christian morality which characterised much of pre-modern Europe.

The meaninglessness of modern science

The 'death of God' might not have led to the onset of European nihilism if modern science, which had been largely responsible for challenging the Christian interpre-

tation of existence, had successfully accommodated the needs formerly addressed by Christianity. Nietzsche's reflections on the nature of modern science, however, led him to conclude that the scientific account of existence could not easily endow European existence with meaning as it lacked a clear goal. In this vein, he referred to the 'nihilistic consequences of contemporary science . . . Since Copernicus man has been rolling from the centre toward X' (Nietzsche 1968a: 8). As Glen Martin (1989) explains, prior to Copernicus Europeans perceived themselves to be centred in the universe spiritually. Europeans, in other words, occupied centre stage in the cosmic drama of revelation and redemption, understanding themselves to be God's most important creatures and blessed with the prospect of a redeeming afterlife. At the same time, however, Europeans had also perceived themselves to be centred physically in the universe, with the heavenly bodies rotating in perfect circles around their privileged position. As modern science advanced, it increasingly called into question this elevated status, both physically and spiritually, and perpetuated a displacement from this unique position towards a unknown 'X' (Martin 1989: 12).

With the advent of modern science, then, 'the faith in the dignity and uniqueness of man, in his irreplaceability in the great chain of being, is a thing of the past – he has become an *animal*, literally and without reservation or qualification, he who was, according to his old faith, almost God' (Nietzsche 1967: 155). The discoveries of modern science and technology, Nietzsche thus argued, were carrying the modern European away from his traditional position in the 'great chain of being' and pushing him into an unknown region, without a clear goal or direction. All science, he consequently concluded, 'has at present the object of dissuading man from his former respect for himself, as if this had been nothing but a piece of bizarre conceit' (Nietzsche 1967: 156). Rather than providing the metaphysical comfort demanded by a European culture which had been accustomed to the balm of faith, modern science served to exacerbate the problem of meaninglessness, delivering Europeans into a '*penetrating* sense of nothingness' from which it could not redeem them, because science 'never creates values' (Nietzsche 1967: 153). It is in this vein that Nietzsche concluded that 'the most universal sign of the modern age' is that 'man has *lost* dignity in his own eyes to an incredible extent' (Nietzsche 1968a: 16).

Yet, even if, contrary to Nietzsche's argument, the principles and methods of modern science could serve as a unifying and meaningful source of European identity, it would still have to contend with the problem, following the 'death of God', of grounding its activities without recourse to the very language of traditional Christianity which it increasingly displaced. After all, Nietzsche insisted, there is 'no such thing as science "without any presuppositions"' (Nietzsche 1967: 151). Modern science too, in other words, presupposed the existence of certain values: '[science] requires in every respect an ideal of value, a value-creating power, in the *service* of which it could *believe* in itself' (Nietzsche 1967: 153). In Nietzsche's account, the value underlying the endeavour of modern science is, quite simply, that of 'truth'.

> We men of knowledge today, we godless men and anti-metaphysicians, we too still derive our flame from the fire ignited by a faith millennia old, the Christian faith, which was also Plato's, that God is truth, that truth is *divine*.
>
> (Nietzsche 1967: 152)

The entire enterprise of modern science relies on the underlying value of 'truth' and the assumption that the knowledge which modern science yields is actually worth being known.

Yet, Nietzsche also asked, from where does this belief in the unconditional value of truth derive? As the previous quotation demonstrates, in Nietzsche's account, the pursuit of truth, under the banner of which modern science conducts its activities, was deeply entrenched in Europe's Christian-Platonic heritage. Virtually the entire post-Platonic tradition of European thought, and the Christian faith, he argued, had been centred around what he called the 'will-to-truth'. In this sense the advent of modern science is only the most recent manifestation of a much longer tradition based on a profound cultivation of Truth. Moreover, the fact that the truth-imperative of science still derives from Europe's Christian heritage also allowed Nietzsche to draw attention to the rich irony inherent in the challenge posed by modern science to Christianity (Carr 1992: 39). For it turns out that it was precisely Christianity's commitment to truth 'at any price' that ultimately led scholars to conclude that its concept of God was a lie; it was, in his account, precisely the Christian piety which demanded that Europeans give up their Christianity. 'You see,' Nietzsche urged his readers to understand

> what it was that really triumphed over the Christian God: Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness that was understood ever more rigorously, the father confessor's refinement of the Christian conscience, translated and subli-mated into a scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price.
>
> (Nietzsche 1974: 307)

The moral hierarchy of Christianity, with its emphasis on the unconditional importance of telling the truth, gave rise, over time, to a naturalistic account of events which called into question the very metaphysical framework out of which it emerged. It is in this vein that Nietzsche concluded with some irony that 'it is the awe-inspiring *catastrophe* of two thousand years of training in truthfulness that finally forbids itself the *lie involved in belief in God*' (Nietzsche 1967: 160).

What makes Nietzsche's account of European nihilism so unique, then, is its implicit recognition that the experience of European nihilism derives from the sincere and consistent application of Christian values rather than a deliberate turning one's back on them (Carr 1992). 'We outgrew Christianity,' Nietzsche maintained, 'not because we lived too far from it, rather because we lived too close, even more because we grew out of it. It is our strict and over-indulged piety itself that today forbids us still to be Christians' (Nietzsche 1980: 165). It is also for this very reason that Nietzsche detected a kind of logic behind the coming of modern nihilism making it virtually inevitable, and why he asserted that nihilism is the *necessary* consequence of our valuations so far. At the same time, however, it also means that scholars must concede that '[i]t is still a *metaphysical faith* that underlies our faith in science' (Nietzsche 1967: 152) and that, as a consequence, it is necessary to raise the question of how modern science proposes to justify its reliance on this metaphysical value after destroying the metaphysical framework from which it had emerged. For

too long, Nietzsche insisted, scientists and philosophers have been too 'oblivious of how much the will-to-truth itself first requires justification', and pointed to the peculiar circumstance that 'truth was not *permitted* to be a problem at all' (Nietzsche 1967: 152). In Nietzsche's account, then, the consistent application of the pursuit of truth demands that the pursuit of truth itself be subject to vigorous investigation. '[T]he value of truth', he famously insisted, 'must for once be experimentally *called into question*' (Nietzsche 1967: 153).

The end of metaphysics

The recognition that modern science still rests, at bottom, on a metaphysical value leaves scientists confronting a crucial juncture. On the one hand scientists might refuse, as they have done in the past, to subject the value of truth to critical investigation. To the extent that they pursue this course, however, they violate the very principles of intellectual honesty on which they pride themselves and which they have taken as legitimising their endeavour. Alternatively, however, scientists can begin to problematise the 'will-to-truth' itself and to subject it to critical examination. In this case, however, they risk opening the floodgates to the undermining of their own ground. For, once the will-to-truth becomes conscious of itself as a problem, the entire will-to-truth of Europe's Christian-Platonic heritage finally commences to prey on itself and the experience of nihilism reaches its highest stage. Once modern science strictly applies its truth imperative, and permits the will-to-truth itself to be a problem worthy of investigation, it is not only Christianity which collapses, but also the whole metaphysical legacy of Christian-Platonic culture. Modern science thus runs the risk of losing the ground on which it based its entire enterprise. Not surprisingly, Nietzsche consequently insisted that '[s]cience itself henceforth *requires* justification (which is not to say that there is any such justification)' (Nietzsche 1967: 152).

The full implications of Nietzsche's discussion of the 'death of God' for European culture, then, are not only that belief in the Christian God has become untenable, but ultimately, that 'all gods are dead', as he had Zarathustra put it (Nietzsche 1961: 104). In Nietzsche's account, the relentless pursuit of 'truth' over the course of two millennia of western history, had, by the end of the nineteenth century, begun to put 'itself in question'. By problematising the 'will to truth,' Nietzsche argued, 'we discover in ourselves needs implanted by centuries of moral interpretation – needs that now appear to us as needs for untruth.' And yet, 'the value for which we endure life seems to hinge upon these needs' (Nietzsche 1968a: 10). Modern Europeans thus expose themselves to the terrible suspicion of an opposition. On the one hand, their cultural heritage dictated the assumption of the existence of a 'true' world which endows European existence with meaning. On the other hand, once they have become conscious of the 'will-to-truth' as a problem, they can no longer readily believe in this heritage. It is for this reason that Nietzsche described the experience of nihilism as being antagonistic, i.e. 'not to esteem what we know, not to be allowed any longer to esteem the lies we should like to tell ourselves.' It is this antagonism, moreover, which ultimately 'results in a process of dissolution' (Nietzsche 1968a: 10). As Nietzsche himself summarised: 'A nihilist is a man who judges, of the world

as it is, that it ought *not* to be, and of the world as it ought to be, that it does not exist' (Nietzsche 1968a: 318). Following the 'death of God' and the advent of European nihilism, European existence would not readily conform to the traditional standards of interpreting existence and would all too easily take on the appearance of being meaningless. Nor, however, would modern Europeans be in a position to simply tell themselves the Christian 'lies' that they would still like to believe in. This was no longer a world in which Europeans, accustomed to the balm of metaphysics, could be easily at home. In this vein, the contemporary British philosopher Simon Critchley (1997) has aptly described the advent of European nihilism in terms of the 'breakdown of the order of meaning, where all that was posited as a transcendent source of value becomes null and void, where there are no skyhooks upon which to hang a meaning for life' (Critchley 1997: 7). With the advent of Europe nihilism there seemed little left to endow European existence with meaning.

It is here, then, that Nietzsche anticipates the pervasive experience of European meaninglessness which is still noted so frequently today. Nietzsche's discussion of European nihilism, in other words, can be seen as providing contemporary scholars of European affairs with a compelling account of how the problem of endowing European existence with meaning initially unfolded and arose in modern Europe. Revisiting Nietzsche's account, moreover, serves as an important reminder that the problematic experience of meaninglessness, which contemporary scholars frequently note, had already arisen towards the end of the nineteenth century, and that, as a consequence, the contemporary inability to articulate a meaningful idea of Europe is best seen as the most recent manifestation of a much larger problem of endowing existence with meaning under the cultural conditions of European modernity. Nor did Nietzsche himself think that this entire process of European nihilism would unfold instantaneously. Rather, he wrote in 1888, '[w]hat I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: *the advent of nihilism*' (Nietzsche 1968a: 3). Nietzsche, in other words, thought that he was going to be born 'posthumously', that the importance of his message would become recognised only after the implications of the 'death of God' had begun to spill out of the salons and into the streets of European culture.

A European dawn

Nietzsche's account of European nihilism does indeed resonate, over a century after he first penned it. In this vein, several contemporary scholars have detected a pertinent resemblance between Nietzsche's discussion and the contemporary European predicament. 'Today,' Keith Ansell-Pearson observes, 'it remains as necessary as ever to think through the problem of nihilism'. For,

> if God is dead, and if we have lost the traditional metaphysical-moral structure which enabled us to make sense of existence, to give it a meaning and a purpose, how is it possible for us now to interpret the world and to give meaning to our lives?

> (Ansell-Pearson 1994: 7–8)

David Owen has similarly insisted that 'Nietzsche's diagnosis of modernity as nihilism and decadence finds considerable resonance in our contemporary cultural experience and understanding' (Owen 1995: ix). Finally, it is the Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo (1988) who has insisted that our current predicament is best summarised in terms of the figure of the 'perfect nihilist' who appears in Nietzsche's work. Only now, Vattimo rightly argues, has the full account of Nietzsche's description of European nihilism unfolded in Europe (Vattimo 1988). Nietzsche's discussion of European nihilism, then, can be seen to resonate within the context of a Europe which has been unable to articulate a meaningful representation of itself in the post-Cold War era.

The analogy between Nietzsche's description of European nihilism and Europe's contemporary predicament can be further corroborated by considering two of the many magnificent passages which Nietzsche himself used to describe the experience of European nihilism. Nietzsche noted, for example, that in Europe,

> together with the fear of man we have also lost our love of him, our reverence for him, our hopes for him, even the will to him. The sight of man now makes us weary – what is nihilism if it is not *that*? – We are weary of *man*.
>
> (Nietzsche 1967: 44)

In another passage he further insisted that

> we Europeans confront a world of tremendous ruins. A few things are still towering, much looks decayed and uncanny, while most things already lie on the ground. It is all very picturesque – where has one ever seen more beautiful ruins? – and overgrown by large and small weeds.
>
> (Nietzsche 1974: 310)

Based on the analyses of contemporary European culture reviewed at the outset of this chapter, there is little to hinder us from recognising the similarities between the contemporary predicament and the one described by Nietzsche. Indeed, what emerges is that the contemporary question of how to articulate a meaningful idea of Europe is, at bottom, still Nietzsche's question of how to engage with the advent of European nihilism. Europe is still facing true difficulties in identifying a meaningful identity for itself, in finding its new 'Why?' This inability to identify an overall aim, it will be recalled, is precisely the way in which Nietzsche defined the advent of European nihilism.

Finally, the pertinence of Nietzsche's discussion of European nihilism to the debate on the idea of Europe is exemplified by the fact that much of this debate has actually paralleled Nietzsche's account. The question of Europe's meaning began to emerge as Europe ceased to be the 'Christian continent'. The inability to identify an underlying meaning for European existence following the 'death of God' served to fuel two world wars during which the idea of Europe as the Christian continent could no longer be readily discerned. Among the rubble left by two world wars, the founding fathers of the institutional project of Europe opted for an idea of Europe

that was closer to the altered configuration of European societies where science had increasingly begun to replace Christianity as the formative cultural structure. 'The functional way', David Mitrany wrote, 'may seem a spiritless solution – and so it is, in the sense that it detaches from the spirit the things which are of the body' (Mitrany in Nelsen and Stubb 1998: 113). Yet, nearly half a century later and as the straitjacket of Cold War politics was removed, it emerged that a 'spiritless' and 'scientific' Europe was not sufficient in order to evoke a meaningful response to the European project. In this vein, scholars sought, during the 1990s, to retrieve the cultural space they abandoned earlier and to recover a more meaningful understanding of the European idea. Yet another decade later, many have been disappointed in their quest, seeing only the remnants of a Europe whose 'spiritual vitality' is, in their view, too badly shattered to give birth to a new horizon.

Importantly, however, the fact that the contemporary inability to articulate a meaningful idea of Europe is still, at bottom, Nietzsche's question of how to confront the advent of European nihilism also allows for a more probing consideration of why the experience of nihilism usually provokes a pessimistic and distressing response and why this reaction may be premature. With Nietzsche's account of European nihilism in mind, it is, in other words, possible to return to the question of whether the contemporary experience of meaninglessness is necessarily an indicator of a weakened 'spiritual vitality' in European culture? In Nietzsche's account, as we have seen, the advent of European nihilism is prone to be experienced as distressing precisely because of Europe's Christian-Platonic heritage which had accustomed European culture toward positing an underlying meaning to all events. Implicit in Nietzsche's account, then, is the crucial recognition that a pessimistic assessment of modern European culture is intricately connected with Europe's Christian-Platonic heritage itself. It is only by judging existence on the basis of the Christian-Platonic standard which Europeans have inherited, that modern European culture is largely interpreted as being meaningless. This is why Nietzsche insisted that the origins of the European experience of meaninglessness are *not* to be found primarily in the organisation of society, or the economic and political structures which govern it, but in its self-understanding. Indeed, it would be 'an error to consider "social distress" or "physiological degeneration" or, worse, corruption as the *cause* of nihilism'. For, Nietzsche maintained, this would be to mistake the symptoms of nihilism for its causes. Rather, he argued, 'it is in one particular interpretation, the Christian-moral one, that nihilism is rooted' (Nietzsche 1968a: 7). The cause of the experience of nihilism, Nietzsche insisted, is the result of a particular interpretation of the world, and of human existence, which has governed the cultural horizon of occidental humanity for virtually two thousand years: the Christian-moral interpretation of the world.

Once this heritage had become increasingly untenable in the European imagination, modern Europeans would habitually yearn for the lost form of meaning previously posited by Christianity, but would no longer be able to readily partake in it. The categories '"aim," "unity," "being" which we used to project some value into the world – we *pull out* again; so the world looks *valueless*' (Nietzsche 1968a: 13). The experience of nihilism, in other words, results from seeking 'a "meaning" in all events that is not there'. 'One interpretation', Nietzsche concluded, 'has collapsed;

but because it was considered *the* interpretation, it now seems as if there were no meaning in existence at all' (Nietzsche 1968a: 35). Nietzsche explained, in other words, how as modern Europeans 'we can no longer *believe* those dogmas of religion and metaphysics, once we have the rigorous method of truth in our hearts and heads', and yet how

> the development of mankind has made us so delicate, sensitive and ailing that we need the most potent kinds of cures and comforts – hence arises the need that man might bleed to death from the truth he has recognised.
>
> (Nietzsche 1984: 78)

After having sought a 'meaning' in all events, and after having come to believe that some goal is to be achieved through the process, modern Europeans would find the revelation that there is no such meaning or goal as distressing and dissolving. In modern Europe, Nietzsche therefore concluded, one 'forbids oneself every kind of clandestine access to afterworlds and false divinities – but *cannot endure this world though one does not want to deny it*' (Nietzsche 1968a: 13). This, in Nietzsche's view, would be Europe's likely pathos following the 'death of God' and the contemporary discourse on the European idea is indeed riddled with echoes of this nature. Today, many scholars of European affairs, spurned by the historic events of the 1990s, have set out again in the quest of seeking to distil an 'aim' or 'unity' to the European idea and, in their inability to identify a 'higher purpose', a 'clear identity' or a 'common enterprise', to use Hoffmann's criteria, have arrived at largely frustrated and pessimistic accounts of contemporary European culture.

Importantly, however, Nietzsche argued that this is not the only, nor even the preferable response to the onset of European nihilism. Indeed, he insisted that the experience of nihilism is essentially '*ambiguous*' (Nietzsche 1968a: 17). The advent of European nihilism can be a sign of both a weakened as well as a strengthened spirit. It is precisely this distinction which has great contemporary relevance for the debate on the idea of Europe. In Nietzsche's view, those who arrive at a pessimistic assessment of European culture are still, either deliberately or subconsciously, judging European existence by the underlying standards of Europe's longstanding Christian-Platonic heritage. It is precisely the application of these standards which, under modern conditions, will lead to a 'decline and recession of the power of the spirit'. This is what Nietzsche referred to as *passive* nihilism (Nietzsche 1968a: 17). Passive nihilism, in his account, merely succumbs to the nothingness that surrounds it. Nietzsche explains that '[t]he strength of the spirit may be worn out, exhausted so that the previous goals and values have become incommensurate and no longer are believed' (Nietzsche 1968a: 18). This is the type of nihilism which is particularly susceptible to the serpents which dwell among God's ruins; it is the nihilism of despair. 'At bottom,' Nietzsche explains, 'the nihilist thinks that the sight of such a bleak, useless existence makes a philosopher feel *dissatisfied*, bleak, desperate' (Nietzsche 1968a: 23). Passive nihilists admit the inability to ground their highest values in a transcendent standard, but this admission leads them to devalue this world, to despise the world because it has deserted their ideals. They become

passive, withdrawn, pessimistic. It is the nihilism of a spirit or culture too exhausted to do more than passively succumb to the emptiness that threatens to engulf it (Nietzsche 1968a: 17–18). Those who wish to judge modern European culture against the yardstick of a heritage are likely to arrive at a pessimistic judgement.

The very fact, however, that the desire to identify a meaning underlying all events still derives from Europe's Christian-Platonic heritage means that this pessimistic conclusion is not the only one that can be drawn and might well be premature. 'The philosophical nihilist', Nietzsche observed, 'is convinced that all that happens is meaningless and in vain; and that there ought not to be anything meaningless and in vain.' 'But,' Nietzsche rightly intervened 'whence this: there ought not to be? From where does one get *this* "meaning," *this* "standard"?' (Nietzsche 1968a: 23). While the former attitude towards nihilism has predominated in the course of the twentieth century, and arguably still constitutes the most frequent response to the inability to articulate a meaningful idea of Europe, it is neither the only possible response, nor necessarily the preferable one. Indeed, Nietzsche himself was quite critical of this reaction to the advent of European nihilism. Instead, he insisted, the advent of European nihilism could also take an *active* form, in which case it could be 'a sign of increased power of the spirit.' This response recognises the untenable character of the Christian-Platonic heritage itself and its understanding of existence. There is, in this response, no prima facie reason why there should be a meaning underlying all events and consequently also no a priori reason why the inability to articulate a meaning underlying European existence should necessarily lead to a pessimistic account of European culture. Conversely, there is no initial reason why the inability to articulate an idea of Europe that delineates a 'higher purpose', a 'clear identity' or a 'common enterprise' should be a cause for concern.

It is in this vein, then, that Nietzsche invited his readers to also recognise the enormous creative potential inherent in the advent of European nihilism. Indeed, he insisted,

> from such abysses, from such severe sickness, also from the sickness of severe suspicion, one returns *newborn* . . . with merrier senses, with a second dangerous innocence in joy, more childlike and yet a hundred times subtler than one has ever been before.
>
> (Nietzsche 1974: 37)

Such an attitude and position would constitute the opposite of the passive nihilism of weakness, i.e. a more active nihilism of intellectual strength and creativity. In this vein, he repeatedly referred to the positive aspects of the experience of nihilism, and emphasised the recovery it provides from previous constraints. A philosopher like himself, Nietzsche explained,

> heals himself differently; he heals himself, for example, through nihilism. The belief that there is no truth, the nihilist belief, is a great stretching of the limbs for one who, as a warrior of knowledge, incessantly lies in battle with hateful truths.
>
> (Nietzsche 1980: 51)

One of his most important insights, then, about the nature of European nihilism was that, despite the fact that it is often experienced as disquieting and disorienting, it also entailed a vastly creative and liberating potential, both intellectually and spiritually. Once the creative potential of the experience of nihilism is recognised, Europe's Christian-Platonic heritage could be increasingly left behind, enabling new opportunities to eventually open themselves up for European culture.

Nietzsche's own response to the onset of European nihilism is, therefore, quite different from the attitude displayed by many of the contemporary scholars drawn attention to at the outset of this chapter. In fact, Nietzsche argued,

> we philosophers and 'free spirits' feel, when we hear the news that 'the old god is dead,' as if a new dawn shone on us; our heart overflows with gratitude, amazement, premonition, expectation. At long last the horizon appears free to us again.
>
> (Nietzsche 1974: 280)

It is for this reason that he ultimately concluded that 'I praise, I do not reproach, its arrival' (Nietzsche 1980: 56). Nietzsche's response, then, is clearly not the pessimistic one we frequently encounter today. As he put it in *The Gay Science* (1974), his response to the experience of nihilism is 'not at all sad and gloomy, but rather like a new, difficult to describe kind of light, happiness, relief, amusement, encouragement, dawn'. The task for modern Europeans, Nietzsche consequently argued, is to cultivate an attitude towards nihilism as a creative strength and appropriate it as a tool assisting in a comprehensive revaluation and rejuvenation of European culture.

It is, moreover, precisely this attitude of openness, and of the desire to explore the new seas now opened by the advent of nihilism, which Nietzsche also singled out as one of the defining characteristics of the 'good Europeans' which he hoped would emerge at some point in the future.

> We are, in one word – and let this be our word of honour – *good Europeans*, the heirs of Europe, the rich, oversupplied, but also overly obligated heirs of thousands of years of European spirit.
>
> (Nietzsche 1974: 340)

These 'good Europeans', moreover, might

> redeem us not only from the hitherto reigning ideal but also from that which was bound to grow out of it, the great nausea, the will to nothingness, nihilism; this bell-stroke of noon and of the great decision that liberates the will again and restores its goal to the earth and his hope to man; this antichrist and antinihilist; this victor over God and nothingness – *he must come one day*.
>
> (Nietzsche 1967: 96)

The point, then, is neither to seek intellectual comfort by positing teleological forms of meaning ultimately derived from Europe's Christian-Platonic heritage, nor to let one's 'spirit' be paralysed by the inability to articulate a meaningful interpretation of

European existence that corresponds to this traditional standard. Spiritual vitality, in this account, consists precisely in avoiding this dichotomy of teleology and pessimism and contemplating new avenues for recasting the question of 'meaning'. It is also precisely this *ethos* of Nietzsche's 'good Europeans' which can be said to constitute a potent alternative to the predominantly pessimistic assessments of contemporary European culture which still predominate. In this case, however, the current failure to articulate a meaningful idea of Europe would not so much be a sign of a weakened 'spiritual vitality' as it would potentially be the sign of a strengthened and 'free' spirit.

Conclusion

In conclusion, then, Nietzsche's discussion of European nihilism has important implications for the question of whether the articulation of a meaningful idea of Europe is still possible in the post-Cold War era. What emerges from an analysis of Nietzsche's discussion of European nihilism is that the contemporary crisis of meaning in the European project is actually part of a deeper and more profound problem of finding meaning within the confines of the cultural configuration of European modernity. His account of European nihilism, in this sense, marks a compelling milestone in comprehending the contemporary European inability to find a meaningful representation of its future. As a consequence, one of the valuable contributions that Nietzsche can make to contemporary scholars of European and international affairs is that, through his discussion of the onset of European nihilism, he permits a profound and sophisticated analysis of the difficulties inherent in any attempt to create a meaningful idea of Europe.

At the same time, however, Nietzsche's confrontation with the experience of nihilism also offers an important corrective towards accounts which emphasise the pessimistic nature of contemporary European culture. Nietzsche found the frequent 'inference that there is no meaning at all' to be a 'tremendous generalisation' that was 'pathological' in being so extreme (Nietzsche 1968a: 14). While he acknowledged that 'the world is not worth what we believed', he also suggested that, far from having no meaning, 'the world could be worth much more than we believed' (Nietzsche 1968a: 13). In Nietzsche's view, in other words, it is precisely the attempt to fix a meaningful idea of Europe that signals a declining spirit. Conversely, the inability, indeed the unwillingness, to articulate a meaningful idea of Europe can just as well be seen as a sign of the strength and vitality of certain strands of contemporary European culture. For, Nietzsche argued,

> at long last our ships may venture out again, venture out to face any danger; all the daring of the lover of knowledge is permitted again; the sea, *our* sea, lies open again; perhaps there has never yet been such an 'open sea'.
>
> (Nietzsche 1974: 280)

It might not be at all necessary, then, to possess a meaningful idea of Europe in order to demonstrate one's spiritual vitality as a 'good European'.

Notes

1 Much debate on the contemporary meaning of Europe, two editors of a volume on *The Question of Europe* also observe, recalls 'Palmerston's *boutade* about the issue of Schleswig-Holstein – which only three people understood: one was dead, the other mad and the third had forgotten' (Gowan and Anderson 1997: ix).

2 'The issue of Europe's identity has come to the fore in recent years because it is being seen as a parallel development to the construction of the European Union – a development, moreover, which could give the European project the internal and external legitimation that it so sorely needs' (Garcia 1993: 2).

3 In a similar vein, the Finnish scholar Heikki Mikkeli has representatively argued that '[u]nless the Union halts at some point to devote some serious thinking to the essence of the "Europe" it is creating, it will inevitably stop short at the level of a single economic market devoid of any deeper unity' (Mikkeli 1998: 244).

4 The task of articulating such a vision has, in past years, also been taken up by Jacques Delors, who repeatedly urged scholars to identify a meaningful idea of Europe – a task which has subsequently been facilitated through the financing of several research programmes (Belot and Smith, 1998: 84–5).

5 'Hope, fear, and trembling are commensurate with the signs that are coming to us from everywhere in Europe, where, precisely in the name of identity, be it cultural or not, the worst violences, those that we recognise all too well without yet having thought them through, the crimes of xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, religious or nationalist fanaticism, are being unleashed, mixed up, mixed up with each other, but also, and there is nothing fortuitous about this, mixed in with the breath, with the respiration, with the very "spirit" of the promise' (Derrida 1992: 6).

6 Laïdi further defines his terms in the following manner: 'foundation' is meant as the basic principle on which a collective project depends; by unity is meant that 'world images' are collected into a coherent plan of the whole; end or final goal is meant to denote a projection towards an elsewhere that is deemed better.

7 'Nietzsche sagt sehr deutlich, die grösste Gefahr für Europa sei, "die Stimme für die Seele Europas zu verlieren"' (Nolte 1991: 207).

7 Whose meaning(s)?!

A feminist perspective on the crisis of meaning in international relations

Annick T. R. Wibben

> If we do our work well, 'reality' will appear even more unstable, complex and disorderly than it does now. In this sense perhaps Freud was right when he declared that women are the enemies of civilization.
>
> (Flax 1987: 643)

Whose meaning(s)?! Or, how a feminist might account for its production

There is a crisis of meaning in the discipline of international relations – and in Europe.[1] The malaise is nihilism, the 'condition of not being able to experience a meaningful existence' (or so Elbe identifies it in Chapter 6 of this volume). It is often seen as the defining characteristic of the post-Cold War era. In this, or so it might seem to some, increasingly globalized and technologized world what remains is the murkiness of virtuality with 'its ability to collapse distance between here and there, near and far, fact and fiction' (Der Derian 2000: 776, 2001). Yet, whose news is this?

Meaning, on these accounts, tends to be associated with grand, overarching designs, visions of a future to strive towards, or a history in the making. The presupposition of this kind of design is that one would be able to refer to some singular identity, that boundaries could be drawn, that one meaning could be agreed upon. It seems that there is more at stake, however, since

> besides witnessing the dissolution of one regime of truth and another struggling towards articulation, besides witnessing the reformulation of political order and identity, always contingent upon regimes of truth, we are also witnessing the renewed politics of political subjectivity and political space on the problematic site of 'Europe,' the politics of political discourse itself.
>
> (Dillon 1990: 117)

Furthermore, as Stefan Elbe notes when discussing how we might arrive at a meaningful idea of Europe, it might be more useful to consider 'why the experience of nihilism usually provokes a pessimistic and distressing response' which, in his opinion, 'results from seeking a meaning in all events that is not there' a feature of 'Europe's Christian-Platonic heritage which had accustomed European culture

toward positing an underlying meaning to all events' (Elbe, this volume, p. 80). Still, this might only be part of the story and of a particular one at that.

Indeed, and this is the claim this chapter will advance, stories and their implications are generally dependent on where one stands (or sits?). The experience of a meaningful existence has always been subject to one's relation to those who produced this meaning; or who 'made history'. In other words, if one is a woma/en and meaning is defined by ma/en there is good reason to suspect incongruities.[2] If one is colonized and supposed to find a meaningful existence along the lines of the colonizer's version thereof, ruptures are painfully obvious. (For elaborations of both themes – especially as they come together – see Anzaldúa (1987), Spivak (1996) or Trinh (1989) to begin with.) More to the point, if one happens to be in the hegemonic position, this question rarely arises (for an elaboration of this theme with regard to patriarchy, see Irigaray 1993).

At least as here defined, meaning can no longer be seen as an innocent, benign description of some underlying design but rather has always been an imposition of a particular vision on many. This is what Michael Shapiro has called the politics of representation; 'It does not merely reflect a world. It constitutes that world and brings its subjects, objects, interests, facts and problems into play' (Dillon 1990: 116).

Thus, for one, I would agree with Elbe that the search for an underlying meaning is shaped by a particular religious/philosophical tradition and, quite possibly, more than one. In addition, I would note that the assumption of the possibility to (authoritatively) articulate this meaning is furthermore intricately connected, if not essential, to a particular social/symbolic/political order. This order, through a variety of channels has, and continues to, spread around the globe more or less successfully. In the mean time, however, this perception of a singular meaning, of one order to fit all, which is also at the basis of the discipline of IR, has not been uncontested as we are now becoming more aware. As Michael Dillon notes, 'there have been few comparable occasions . . . which have provided us with a better example of the extent to which contest over meaning is an intrinsic part of the politics of political order' (Dillon 1990: 116).

As I will outline by drawing mainly on writings from feminism and philosophical hermeneutics, there have always been alternative voices in the midst of those who are only now experiencing their crisis of meaning. As such,

> what is a stake is not only the hegemony of Western cultures, but also their identities as unified cultures. Third World dwells on diversity; so does First World. This is our strength and our misery. The West is painfully made to realize the existence of a Third World in the First World and vice versa. The Master is bound to recognize that His Culture is not as homogeneous, as monolithic as He believed it to be. He discovers, with much reluctance, He is just an other among others.
>
> (Trinh 1989: 98–9)[3]

I want to suggest that it no longer is, if it ever was, useful to posit a singular meaning, but that it might be more useful to elaborate on multiple, interconnected, and

simultaneously existing meanings.[4] To do so it is necessary to inquire into the production of meaning itself. This would not only substantiate the above claims, but quite possibly provide a basis for thinking about meaning differently than we have so far done (especially within IR).[5]

What I propose is to proceed via an account of the understanding of meaning provided by philosophical hermeneutics, complemented with feminist writings. To continue, I thus turn to philosophical hermeneutics to provide an alternative to the dominant approach to meaning in science (concerned with the collection of 'facts') and outline its conceptualization of meaning(s). Thereafter, I shall outline what I consider to be the necessary elements of a feminist approach. On the basis of these, I shall highlight their contributions towards meaning(s) as something to be encountered, not captured, and the implications thereof for IR.

Meaning(s) on the basis of philosophical hermeneutics

To begin with a discussion of hermeneutics might strike those vaguely familiar with it as odd since the aim of the chapter is to contest the search for ultimate meaning. After all, hermeneutics, the science or art of interpretation of meaning, was until the end of the nineteenth century seen as a method to access underlying meaning. This earlier hermeneutics, especially in its classic and romanticist versions, was concerned mostly with the normative and technical aspects of interpretation and was considered a 'helping discipline' for the more established sciences.[6] Its main idea was to provide methodical guidelines to prevent arbitrariness in the interpretational sciences; a method that would assure, once and for all, that truth could be discovered by certain ways of approaching the text.

Hermeneuticians developed '*Verstehen* (understanding) as the method appropriate to re-experiencing or re-thinking of what an author had originally felt or thought' (Bleicher 1980: 1). This was exaggerated to form the belief that with sufficient information the interpreter could understand the author better than s/he did her/himself.[7] The high point of this conception of hermeneutics as primarily a method can be detected in the works of Wilhelm Dilthey who was concerned with providing equal standing of the *Geisteswissenschaften* (human sciences) with the natural sciences. For the human sciences to be useful in social and political terms, Dilthey thought their results needed to 'aspire to the degree of certainty and generality normally attributed to the natural sciences' (Bleicher 1980: 23) and this, he maintained, could be achieved by way of a rigorous method provided by hermeneutics.

This seems an unlikely candidate to provide an alternative account of the production of meaning as it aspires to provide the ultimate meaning sought by the traditional sciences. Instead, I am concerned with so-called philosophical hermeneutics developed mainly by Hans-Georg Gadamer. He objected to the above-described version of hermeneutics and maintained that a hermeneutic consciousness 'will re-affirm the fact that method cannot guarantee truth, but only secure degrees of certainty about controllable processes' (Bleicher 1980: 120). He redefines hermeneutics as a general concern of philosophy and maintains that the hermeneutic problem is universal.

Jean Grondin, who queried Gadamer wherein the universality of the hermeneutic problem lies, makes reference to a discussion during which Gadamer provided the short reply 'in the *verbum interius*' (Grondin 1991: ix).[8] He continued by explaining that it lies in the impossibility of saying everything because 'the *actus signatus* never coincides with the *actus exercitus*' (Grondin 1991: ix); what we say always lags behind the inner language, behind what we wish to express.[9] It is in this way also that Gadamer's famous saying 'being which can be understood is language' has to be received.[10]

So, how does he conceive of the production of meaning then? As he describes it, meaning is to be encountered in the interplay between pre-understandings with which the interpreter approaches the text and the conversation within it.[11] Following Martin Heidegger in maintaining the finitude of Being (*Dasein*), for Gadamer a final form of truth is unachievable as any insight gained will always be part of our tradition and thus bound by our Being. 'There is no such thing, in fact, as a point outside history from which the identity of a problem can be conceived within the various vicissitudes of the various attempts to solve it' (Gadamer, quoted in Fairlamb 1994: 113). This is echoed also in feminist writing, such as Jane Flax's assertion that a feminist standpoint will necessary be partial as 'there is no force of reality "outside" our social relations that will rescue us from partiality and difference' (Flax 1987: 391), a point I return to below.

Philosophical hermeneutics maintains that meaning is to be encountered in a process of question and answer. The questions a reader may ask of a text (an interpreter may ask of the world) are always embedded in the tradition out of which they arise.[12] More specifically, it is the tradition within which our pre-under-standings evolve that makes any question and thus any answer possible; in other words, pre-understandings are a precondition for an encounter of meaning.[13] When engaging in the process of understanding meaning we adapt it, through a dialogical process, to ourselves so as to find answers to our concerns.[14] The text will only 'speak to us' according to the questions with which we approach it which in turn are shaped (and restricted) by the pre-understandings derived from a certain tradition. Therefore 'to understand . . . means to translate . . . into our situation' (Grondin 1991: 150).[15]

The encounter of meaning, as conceptualized in philosophical hermeneutics, involves a fusion of horizons. Both the interpreter and the text are seen to have a horizon. Rather than being determined by any definite situation and therefore possessing a truly closed horizon, 'a horizon is something into which we wander and which moves with us' (Gadamer, quoted in Bleicher 1980: 112). This horizon of our understanding as perceived in philosophical hermeneutics, is reflected in Ferguson's notion of 'mobile subjectivities' which

> ride on ready-made conversations/contestations among linguistic, praxis, and cosmic feminisms, on the struggles of interpretative and genealogical meta-theories, but with an ironic twist – they trouble fixed boundaries, antagonize true believers, create new possibilities for themselves. Mobile subjectivities are temporal, moving across and along axes of power (which are themselves in

motion) without fully residing in them. They are relational, produced through shifting yet enduring encounters and connections, never fully captured by them. They are ambiguous: messy and multiple, unstable but preserving. They are ironic, attentive to the manyness of things. They respect the local, tend toward the specific, but without eliminating the cosmopolitan.

(Ferguson 1993: 154)[16]

Whenever understanding occurs a fusion of horizons takes place by widening each horizon to the extent that they can mingle. Starting from a more or less large distance between horizons, during the process of understanding a new (in the sense of altered or enlarged) horizon emerges – a moment of meaning takes place. This fusion of horizons is referred to as 'hermeneutic experience' and illustrates how 'our horizon is a process of continued formation' (Bleicher 1980: 112). To acknowledge that this process takes place continuously is key to an acceptance of meaning(s) as always relating to a tradition. As Zygmunt Bauman formulates it in his discussion of Heidegger's contribution to hermeneutics, 'understanding derives its actuality from the historical totality within which it is immersed. The meaning is produced by countless relations inside this totality' (Bauman 1978: 170–1).

Understanding, the encounter of meaning, can then be seen as 'participation in the meaning, the tradition, and eventually the conversation' (Grondin 1991: 153).[17] Meaning is thus ever unstable and always multiple which is expressed by noting our participation in an ongoing conversation (which has begun long before our engagement in it and which will continue afterwards) where, at any one time, a range of conversations are taking place, emerging out of particular traditions while at the same time constituting them.

The circularity just described is Gadamer's reformulation of the hermeneutic circle, alleging that tradition makes any understanding (meanings) possible while at the same time being the very product of these acts of understanding. This revision of the hermeneutic circle draws on Heidegger's early thoughts on a *Hermeneutik der Faktizität* (hermeneutics of factuality) which provides 'insights regarding the ontological circularity and the fore-structure of understanding' (Grondin, 1991: 8) and was the basis for a decisive change in the development of hermeneutics. This ontological structure of the hermeneutic circle consequently also explains how 'all understanding . . . is preconditioned by a motivation or a [pre-understanding]' (Grondin 1991: 144). Pre-understandings are the crucial link in the hermeneutic circle by virtue of being at once a precondition for meaning and a provision for continuity of the tradition.

By accepting the hermeneutic insight and acknowledging the necessity of pre-understandings for an encounter of meaning, we will 'become aware of the involvement inherent in all understanding' (Gadamer 1965: xiv). It, furthermore, allows us to grasp that 'understanding is never a subjective behavior towards a given "object" but part of the history of effect and this means: part of the being of what is understood' (Gadamer 1965: xvii).[18] The here-described situatedness of each encounter of meaning, which is not perceived as a limitation of understanding but as the principle thereof, is precisely the attraction of Gadamer's work from a feminist

perspective. As he sees it, the attempt to arrive at objectivity via secure methods which would suspend the subjectivity of situated understanding can ultimately only lead to less rather than more objectivity if the fore-structure (i.e. the role of pre-understandings) for the process of understanding is denied and thus remains unexamined. This, of course, is a criticism many feminists raise with regard to modern scientific practices and it might thus be time to turn to their contribution.

This brief introduction to philosophical hermeneutics should suffice to sustain the claim that to expect anything but a multitude of intersecting, unstable meanings would be an abstraction, the motivation for which would need to be questioned. Indeed, any reduction of complexity towards the production of a singular meaning would require an enormous amount of power not only once, but continuously. As Cynthia Enloe (1989) notes with regard to IR:

> Investigations of how international politics rely on manipulations of masculinity and femininity suggest that the conventional approaches to making sense of interstate relations are superficial. Conventional analyses stop short of investigating an entire area of international relations . . . it has taken power to deprive women of land titles and leave them little choice but to sexually serve soldiers and banana workers. It has taken power to keep women out of their countries' diplomatic corps and out of the upper reaches of the World Bank. It has taken power to keep questions of inequity between local men and women off the agendas of many national movements in industrialized as well as agrarian societies. It has taken power to construct popular culture, films, advertisements, books, fairs, fashion – which reinforces, not subverts, global hierarchies.
>
> (Enloe 1989: 197–8)

While this topic in itself warrants a discussion, it will have to be elsewhere, as I have yet to introduce the feminist debates and their specific contribution to the question of meaning(s) which is the topic of this book. I believe the following will provide some insight as to why the current crisis of meaning might not be news for everyone.

The coordinates of a feminist approach

In this section I outline the coordinates of a feminist approach, as it can be applied to IR as well as to other disciplines. As a glance at the heaps of feminist literature suggests to even the most casual observer, there is more than one kind of feminism.[19] For some, like Carmen Vasquez, this is a cause for concern:

> We can't even agree on what a 'Feminist' is, never mind what she would believe in and how she defines the principles that constitute honor among us. In key with the American capitalist obsession for individualism and anything goes as long as it gets you what you want, feminism in American has come to mean anything you like, honey. There are as many definitions of Feminism as there are feminists, some of my sisters say with a chuckle. I don't think it's funny.
>
> (quoted in hooks 1984: 17)

While I agree that there are certain limits to how far the label can be stretched, I think it is still possible for a number of feminisms to exist alongside each other, sharing the goal of creating a better world for woma/en (without necessarily having the same opinion regarding what a better world would look like and/or agreeing what woma/en might refer to). However, I would concur with bell hooks, who declares: 'the foundation of future feminist struggles must be solidly based on a recognition of the need to eradicate the underlying cultural basis and causes of sexism and other forms of group oppression' (hooks 1984: 31).[20] This implies that:

> As women we must root out internalized patterns of oppression within our-
> selves if we are to move beyond the most superficial aspects of change. Now we
> must recognize differences among women who are our equals, neither inferior
> nor superior, and devise ways to use each others' differences to enrich our
> visions and our joint struggles.
>
> (Lorde 1980: 122)

The critiques I want to outline for the task of this paper concern mainly the produc-tion of knowledge (i.e. 'scientific meaning'), commonly defined in ways that from the outset exclude woma/en.[21] One fundamental concern of feminists is to develop a critique of frameworks, methods, criteria of validity, notions of truth and other unquestioned conceptions forming the basis of traditional scientific inquiry. The aim of such critiques being to 'work through them, understand them, displace them in order to create space of [our] own, a space designed and inhabited by women, capable of expressing their interests and values' (Gross 1990: 60).

These traditional ways of producing meaning (or, as it is referred to in this context, knowledge) tend to exclude gender as a category of analysis and assume gender neutrality.[22] Yet, they by no means are neutral because 'gender is a socially imposed and internalized lens through which individuals perceive and respond to the world. The persuasiveness of gender shapes concepts, practices and institutions in identifiably gendered ways' (Peterson 1992: 194). Feminist challenges are powerful because they

> incorporate key insights of other movements while challenging . . . the division
> of labor by gender . . ., our perceptions of what is 'natural' and what is social [as
> well as], perhaps most disturbingly, . . . our sense of personal identity at its most
> pre-rational level, at the core.
>
> (Harding 1986: 16–17)

In other words, they examine how the concepts, ideas and practices we take for granted are deeply influenced by our perceptions of gender and to do so, they have to have an idea of what gender refers to.

While the concept gender has been variously interrogated in feminist theory, as with the term feminism no agreement has been reached. The following account is thus neither the only possible one, nor are the authors I refer to exhaustive of the large amount of theorizing on gender. It is a specific representation chosen to

provide a rough guide to the reader. Finally, I am concerned here only with so-called critical gender thinking which 'moves in a conceptual space in which the relation between humanity or personhood, on the one hand, and gender equalities, on the other, is contingent and alterable' (Smith 1992: 5).

The following two accounts of gender can be used to describe the developments once the move to critical gender thinking was made.[23] For one,

> gender was developed and is still often used as a contrasting term to sex, to depict that which is constructed as opposed to that which is biologically given. On this usage, gender is typically thought to refer to personality traits and behavior in distinction from the body.
>
> (Nicholson 1994: 79)

Increasingly however, gender came to refer to any social construction having to do with the fe/male distinction, including those constructions that separate fe/male bodies.[24]

> This usage emerged when many came to realize that society not only shapes personality and behavior, it also shapes the ways in which the body appears. [Under such circumstances sex is no longer] separate from gender, but is, rather, that which is subsumable under it.
>
> (Nicholson 1994: 79)

With these kinds of developments in mind, one arrives at something like Judith Lorber's (1994) proposal of

> gender as a social structure that has its origins in the development of human culture, not in biology or procreation. Like any social institution, gender exhibits both universal features and chronological and cross-cultural variations that affect individual lives and social interaction in major ways. As is true of other institutions, gender's history can be traced, its structure examined and its changing effects researched.
>
> (Lorber 1994: 1)

To provide an example, anthropological studies have illustrated that categorizations of gender need not be confined to the binary organization of wo/ma/en central to the European/Western (philosophical) tradition. Instead, in certain societies third or fourth genders are an integral part of the social/symbolic/political order.[25] Sabine Lang notes that it was only after the recognition within feminist theorizing that gender need not be limited by reference to sex and consequently its construction has to be analysed in a different way, that a perception of multiple genders became possible. Following this 'discovery' it was possible to reconsider gender constructions and realize that the relationship between sex, gender, and sexuality might be otherwise constituted across cultures.[26] As a result an anthropological definition of gender might look like this:

> For the purposes of cross-cultural analysis I define gender as a multidimensional category of personhood, encompassing a distinct pattern of social and cultural differences. Gender categories often draw on perceptions of anatomical and physiological differences between bodies, but theses perceptions are always mediated by cultural categories and meanings.
>
> (Roscoe 1993: 341)

This brief excursion indicates how easily we export those categorizations we are accustomed to into greatly divergent contexts and to define other ways of doing things as deviant. Further, we can even cause trouble by tolerating them as different *per se* while denying possibilities for change. As regards the latter, T. Minh-Ha Trinh identifies 'planned authenticity' as a strategy designed

> to persuade you that your past and cultural heritage are doomed to eventual extinction and inauthenticity is condemned as a loss of origins and a whitening (or faking) of non-Western values.
>
> (Trinh 1989: 89)

Or, to phrase it more graphically, 'not even Indians can relate themselves to this type of creature who, to anthropologists, is the "real" Indian' (Deloria quoted in Trinh 1989: 94).

To return to the question of gender more specifically, how can one talk of wo/ma/en to produce a (feminist) analysis then? Feminists can easily be accused of an essentializing universalism often levied against 'any constitution of a unified set of categories around the terms *woman* and *man*' (Ferguson 1993: 82) because to produce an argument requires starting somewhere. The charge of 'ethnocentric universalism' which 'discursively colonize[s] the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world, thereby producing/representing a composite, singular "third-world woman"' (Mohanty quoted in Ferguson 1993: 85–6) is a good example of the need to contextualize claims, yet Ferguson faults it for making it too simple to reject the merits of an argument.

Christine Sylvester furthermore advises that many woma/en do not want to reject the notion of woma/en since it empowers them. Instead, it would be important to remember diversity even when using a singular notion. She proposes to 'think of women as stick figures . . . while also realizing that we cannot talk to stick figures' (Sylvester 1994a: 13) which resonates with Ferguson's idea to post a genealogical

> reminder that the unity was imposed rather than discovered [in] an effort to be alert to the limitations of strategies of analysis that one must nonetheless use in some form. Living with the tension between these two impulses takes ironic humor and persistence.
>
> (Ferguson 1993: 88)

An uneasiness remains, since I am inclined to wonder whether

> the experience of being a woman can create an illusionary unity for it is not the experience of being, but the meanings attached to gender, race, class and age at various historical moments that is of strategic significance
>
> (Mohanty 1992: 86)

As hooks notes in her introduction to feminist theory: 'Feminism in the United States has never emerged from the women who are most victimized by sexist oppression; women who are daily beaten down, mentally, physically, and spiritually' (hooks 1984: 1). Instead, many important feminist writings, such as Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, are notable for their limits.

> She did not speak of the needs of women without men, without children, without homes. She ignored the existence of all non-white women and poor white women . . . She made her plight and the plight of white women like herself synonymous with a condition affecting all American women . . . the one-dimensional perspective on women's reality presented in her book became a feature of the contemporary feminist movement. Like Friedan before them, white women who dominate feminist discourse today rarely question whether or not their perspective on women's reality is true to the lived experiences of women as a collective group. Nor are they aware of the extent to which their perspectives reflect class and race biases, although there has been a greater awareness in recent years.
>
> (hooks 1984: 1–3)[27]

Why dwell on this topic? In a chapter in a book on varieties of meaning in IR and, furthermore, a chapter proposing that we need to discontinue thinking about meaning as something unitary and transferable, it seems important to point out that feminists have struggled with this question for decades. This provides for some perspective, not only on the question of whether the current crisis of meaning is news for feminism(s), but also on where one might be looking for inspiration on how to conceptualize, subvert, and reappraise it. For feminists, comfortable to continue the conversation, have come to terms with multiplicity and inconsistency by developing ways of knowing which do not rely on homogeneity.

As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak phrased it, 'the question of woman in general . . . is *their* question, not *ours*' (quoted in Ferguson 1993: 22). Or, as Trinh sees it, 'the search and the claim for an essential female/ethnic identity-difference today can never be anything more than a move within the male-is-norm-divide-and-conquer trap' (Trinh 1989: 101). Feminisms see 'identity as points of re-departure of the critical processes by which [they] have come to understand how the personal – the ethnic me, the female me – is political' (Trinh 1989: 104). Categorizations of wo/ma/en can henceforth be seen as hermeneutic anchors, 'temporary resting points rather

than fixed foundations; . . . points of ongoing negotiation and contestation' (Ferguson 1993: 32) where 'the first throws out a hermeneutic anchor in the name of the classed, colored, gendered, or some other identity [and] the second questions the stability of that resting place from within' (Ferguson 1993: 160).

Overall, Judith Butler's way of thinking gender might be best suited to accommodate the ideas presented here.[28] For her

> *gender* is not a noun, but neither is it a set of freefloating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be.
>
> (Butler 1990b: 24–5)

Her claims gain additional weight since

> in its local perspective, the gender divide is always crystal clear, even though this clarity does not result from any consistent rule that scientific reasoning may invent to salvage it and is better conveyed through myths, stories or sayings than through analyses whose necessity for order calls forth the parades of police rationalities.
>
> (Trinh 1989: 106)

We might say that 'there is no gender behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" which are said to be its results' (Butler 1990b: 25). So then, what?

Alternative encounters of meaning

Having reached some form of appreciation of the workings of gender, feminists set out to discover and draw attention to them as they were shaping the world. As Sandra Harding (1986), who is probably the best guide on this terrain, high-lights:

> Once we begin to theorize gender – to define gender as an analytic category within which humans think about and organize their social activity rather than as a natural consequence of sex difference, or even merely as a social variable assigned to individual people in different ways from culture to culture – we can begin to appreciate the extent to which gender meanings have suffused our belief systems, institutions, and even such apparently gender-free phenomena as our architecture and urban planning.
>
> (Harding 1986: 17)

Claiming gender as a category of analysis, feminists began to reassess the traditional explanatory frameworks of various disciplines. To achieve this, several overlapping strategies –

the deconstruction of error (eliminating falsehood generated by sex-biased inquiry); the reconstruction of fact (incorporating women's activities and perspectives into the study of humankind); and the reconstruction of theory (rethinking fundamental relationships of knowledge, power, and community)

(Peterson 1992: 192)

– continue to be used.

Early on, feminists engaged in this task found that one underlying condition has been that woma/en 'are eliminated from the central focus of the theory and invisible in as much as they don't appear as subjects in their own right' (Thiele 1986: 31). This is most often achieved through manoeuvres such as exclusion, where woma/en are completely ignored or marginalized because the theories exclusively focus on ma/en; pseudo-inclusion, where woma/en become marginalized by being marked as a special case, an exception to the rule; and alienation, where woma/en's experiences are interpreted through male categories and thus assigned biased meanings.[29]

Such manoeuvres are possible only when moves such as universalizing (projecting limited findings on the universe); naturalizing (dismissing something from requiring explanation by positing it as 'natural'); dividing events into dualisms (oppositional, hierarchical, mutually exclusive categories, where higher value is assigned to the one identified with masculinity); appropriation of concepts with gendered connotation (thus denigrating or trivializing them); and decontextualization of experiences and events (abstracting excessively to make general, grand statements about unchanging laws) are deemed not only acceptable, but also good practice. Feminists reject these ways of doing science because they 'contribute to the myth of objectivity by facilitating the subtle intervention of value systems, ideology and consciousness into the process of theory construction' (Thiele 1986: 35).[30]

The notion of human becomes infused with the ideas of the (male) theorist and 'male becomes the basis of the Abstract, the Essential, the Universal, while female becomes accidental, different, other' (Thiele 1986: 35). Feminists engaging philosophy go as far as to argue that the female is the Other of philosophy, the discourse that it seeks to repress and exclude to impose order. As Catriona Mackenzie writes, 'the female can act as a metaphor signifying the undefined because at a conceptual level philosophy fails to engage with the life experiences of women' (Mackenzie 1986: 145). This type of exclusion works also in IR where 'no children are ever born, and nobody ever dies, in this constructed world. There are states and they are what is' (Elshtain 1987: 91).

The important question however, might be: 'Is it possible to use for emancipatory ends sciences that are apparently so intimately involved in Western, bourgeois, and masculine projects?' (Harding 1986: 9). To provide an answer, feminists have engaged in

a series of epistemological inquiries [that] have laid the basis for an alternative understanding of how beliefs are grounded in social experiences, and of what kind of experience should ground the beliefs we honor as knowledge.

(Harding 1986: 24)

As Gross formulates it, 'instead of [patriarchal] discourses and their methods and assumptions providing uncriticized tools and frameworks by which women could be analyzed as objects, now these discourses become the objects of critical feminist scrutiny' (Gross 1986: 193).

These types of interrogations have pointed to 'relation[s] between knowing and being, between epistemology and metaphysics' (Harding 1986: 24), which I believe to be of utmost importance for thinking about meaning(s) not just in IR.[31] More generally, there is a claim to be made that

> there is another world hidden from the consciousness of science – the world of emotions, feelings, political values; of the individual and the collective unconscious; of social and historical particularity explored by novels, drama, poetry, music, and art – within which we all live most of our waking and dreaming hours under constant threat of its increasing infusion of scientific rationality.
>
> (Harding 1986: 245)

Some feminists in IR have begun to investigate these other worlds. Jean Elshtain's *Women and War* (1987), which draws heavily on literary imaginations to investigate wo/ma/en's relations to war, is an early example. She asks how wo/ma/en figure in these tales; which roles they are assigned compared with which roles they fulfil; how do woma/en's and ma/en's roles differ or coincide? Elshtain expressly centres on the role of myths in the construction of war as her interest is in 'what we continue to make of war' (Elshtain 1987: x). Her work is an attempt to 'understand the constitutive role of symbols, myths, metaphors, and rhetorical strategies' (Elshtain 1987: xi). Through her strategy of marking multiple contradictions and contrasting accounts and structures, she manages to deconstruct certain images and establish links between others which heretofore seemed incompatible.

The best-known example thereof might be her discussion of similarities between a soldier's and a mother's tasks and intentions. She points to Broyles' assertions that war 'is, for men, at some terrible level the closest thing to what childbirth is for women: the initiation into the power of life and death' (quoted in Elshtain 1987: 200). She further notes that similarities in the structure of their experiences are apparent on another level: as 'the soldier and the mother do their duty, and are both racked by guilt at not having done it right or having done it wrong as they did what they thought was right' (Elshtain 1987: 222), both think that a different action might have spared someone.

A second bundle of parallels can be noted, that is 'a slippage toward forgetting, on one end, and toward remembering in nostalgic and sentimental ways on the other' (Elshtain 1987: 223). In Elshtain's view this stems from both being 'boundary experiences, in that they forever alter the identities of those to whom they happen, or through whom they take place' (Elshtain 1987: 223). And finally, both are bodily experiences involving the loss of control, vulnerability, the absence of privacy, as well as the dirtiness and immediacy of all kinds of fluids.[32] These are, of course, very specific examples, but they convey not only the message that a wider array of means

to produce knowledge is needed, but also that we might encounter meanings in rather unexpected places and with links that become obvious only when non-traditional methods are used.

It is here that the earlier discussion of philosophical hermeneutics can be brought to bear, as hermeneutics has been concerned for a large part with this world hidden by the focus on science, narrowly defined. Hermeneutics presents a serious challenge as 'it question[s] the very possibility that we could cleanse our knowledge of the social by taking away the consideration of purpose' (Bauman 1978: 11). Similarly, Gadamer cautions that attempting to detach oneself to assess something objectively, 'the noble and slowly perfected art of holding ourselves at critical distance' (Gadamer 1980: 129), is problematic if it leads to ignoring the role of pre-understandings. Gloria Anzaldúa pushes the argument slightly further, when she writes:

> In trying to become 'objective,' Western culture made 'objects' out of things and people when it distanced itself from them, thereby losing 'touch' with them. The dichotomy [of subject and object] is the root of all violence.
>
> (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 59)

Within large parts of IR these arguments are likely to encounter the charge of relativism and along with it a supposed impossibility of critique, yet 'it does not follow that [Gadamer] is asserting that any interpretation is as good as any other' (Hekman 1990: 15). Instead, relativism is embraced because meanings always relate to the context from which they emerge. To see relativism as a problem rather than as characteristic of the world we live in, we need to believe that we have access to some universal, absolute and timeless meaning which is not already bound by our finitude of Being. The charge of relativism thus acquires force only within a framework based on a possibility of fixed truth/stable foundations.

Heidegger and Gadamer break with this tradition and note its problem which lies in 'the search for the possibility of a binding truth and thus a conclusive philosophy within the horizon of a historically knowing world' (Grondin 1991: 14). As Bauman (1978) outlines in his summary of the contribution of hermeneutics:

> There is no understanding outside history; understanding is tradition engaged in an endless conversation with itself and its own recapitulation. Understanding is the modality of existence, always incomplete and open-ended as the existence itself. The end of history, instead of revealing the true meaning of the past, would mean the end of understanding; understanding is possible only as an unfinished, future-oriented activity. Far from being unfortunate constraints imposed upon true understanding, prejudgements shaped by tradition are the only tools with which understanding can be attained. Existence is its own disclosure; the act of understanding, like existence itself, spans the past and the future.
>
> (Bauman 1978: 170)[33]

The suspicion of hermeneutics, thus, is that the search for ultimate truth at the heart of modern science (or, for underlying meaning in the Platonic-Christian tradition, as

Elbe formulates it) is the expression of a denial of the finitude of Being. This negation of our own finitude can be traced also in the definition of truth which hinges on negations – the non-finite, the non-particular, and as feminists would add, the non-female. As Mackenzie (1986) writes:

> Philosophy is a discourse which defines and produces itself through the fact that it represses, excludes and dissolves (or claims to dissolve) another discourse, another form of knowledge. This Other in philosophy, its undefined, is expressed metaphorically and the metaphor created for this purpose is the female, understood in the philosophical imaginary as a power of disorder . . . sphinx of dissolution, the depths of the unintelligible, mouthpiece of the underworld gods, an internal enemy who corrupts and perverts without any sign of combat.
> (Mackenzie 1986: 144)

So while the charge of relativism might not be a concern, there is still the question of where the motivation for critique would stem from? From the perspective of philosophical hermeneutics, challenges could emerge out of the so-called 'hermeneutic consciousness', for example. An awareness of the role of pre-understandings also entails the possibility to engage them. By pointing to the role of pre-understandings, Gadamer invites debate since 'bringing something to awareness *always dissolves what one has previously accepted*' (Fairlamb 1994: 121). This then serves as a reminder that any interpretation (meaning) is temporarily bound by our Being and part of an ongoing process of question and answer. 'We live in and out of a conversation, which is never-ending, because no words can grasp what we are and how we are to understand ourselves' (Grondin 1991: 159).[34] Grondin summarizes the outlined thoughts on the possibility of critique as follows:

> The misapprehension lies in the metaphysic-historicist expectation that credible criticism can only be derived from a timeless authority or norm. The opposite is the case. Humans are inherently critical *because* they are subjects of their time and are only able to proceed against evil in the name of their interests and aspirations, which can only be thought of as temporal themselves.
> (Grondin 1991: 15–16)

Indeed, critique is generally voiced in the name of anticipated or actual suffering and as such is powerful without the reliance on universal principles. Maria Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman discuss this question in greater detail in regard to the demand for 'the woman's voice'. They are concerned that theorizing can be not so much true or false, but more importantly 'helpful, illuminating, empowering, respectful' (Lugones and Spelman 1983: 578). In regard to providing visions of what would be better, they note:

> A theory that is respectful about those about whom it is a theory will not assume that changes that are perceived as making life better for some women are changes that will make, and will be perceived as making life better for other

women. This is NOT to say that if some women do not find a situation oppressive, other women ought never to suggest to the contrary that there might be very good reasons to think that it *is* oppressive. But it is to say that, e.g. the prescription that life for women will be better when we're in the workforce rather than at home, when we are completely free of religious beliefs with patriarchal origins, when we live in complete separation from men, etc., are seen as slaps in the face of women whose life would be better if they could spend more time at home, whose identity is inseparable from their religious beliefs and cultural practices (which is not to say that those beliefs and practices are to remain completely uncriticized and unchallenged), who have ties to men – whether erotic or not – such that to have them severed in the name of some vision of what is 'better' is, at that time and for those women, absurd.

(Lugones and Spelman 1983: 579)

In short, they point to the necessity to contextualize, to relativize, our claims about a better world as 'our visions of what is better are always informed by our perception of what is bad about our present situation' (Lugones and Spelman 1983: 579). In fact, 'how we think and what we think about does depend in large part on who is there – not to mention who is expected or encouraged to speak' (Lugones and Spelman 1983: 579). These considerations are outside the realm of much of IR since the ideal of value-neutrality and the associated division of labour (between science and politics) prevents the articulation of political impulses. Within IR this is one of the main grounds on which feminist approaches have been dismissed because they, by definition, have a political project and consistently articulate this dilemma.

Harding picks up this question when she urges feminists to learn from the failures of the New Science Movement in the seventeenth century about the deradicalization of feminist projects and the compromises made.[35] As feminists are part of social/symbolic/political orders deeply infused with structures of gender, race, class, and cultural hierarchies, they need to provide 'practical everyday and long-range efforts to eliminate *all* these forms of domination' (Harding 1986: 242). And, she continues, they are facing a struggle yet, as

many individuals and groups have a great deal to lose by the advancement of this radical project, and a great deal to gain by transforming the feminist impulse into just one more element of the nonthreatening pluralistic universe of theoretical discourse, where power relationships remain fundamentally unchallenged.

(Harding 1986: 242)

Terminations

One does not simply add the idea that the world is round to the idea that the world is flat.

(McIntosh and Minnich, quoted in Sheridan 1990: 49)

As far as the above outlined claims are concerned, my intent was to illustrate that meaning(s) should not be perceived as unitary, coherent and closed. Meanings are to be encountered rather than be seen as something to be captured once and for all. The assumption of coherence and the possibility of clear and lasting distinctions (i.e. that everything is not already interconnected and shifting) being the legacy of a particular social/symbolic/political order.

In contrast, the notion of tradition as conceptualized in philosophical hermeneutics is by definition engaged in constant re/negotiation and reflection. The goal of this approach is not to eliminate all historic elements and it does not imply a desire to know everything but stresses the bonds between question(s) and answer(s). As such then, meanings emerging from within a tradition as they are encountered at the interstices of reader and text are not singularly oriented toward one goal, but multiple, inconsistent and antagonistic.

Adopting a strategy of mobile subjectivities, one is able to move from one point of investigation to another wearing different lenses while looking at a particular issue, noting in the process its changing nature. What is more, such an approach can provide the basis for not only noting, but also seeking, an engagement in the research process. Sylvester (1994b) describes this process of empathetic cooperation as follows. It is:

> The process of positional slippage that occurs when one listens seriously to the concerns, fears and agendas of those one is unaccustomed to heeding when building social theory, taking on board, rather than dismissing, finding in the concerns of others borderlands of one's own concerns and fears.
>
> (Sylvester 1994b: 317)

Philosophical hermeneutics, which attempts to come to grips with these various involvements of the researcher as well as to provide an account of the processes of understanding, thus seems to be a good partner for feminists at this point in time. Especially as feminisms offer the possibility of tailoring 'methods and categories to the specific task at hand, using multiple categories when appropriate and forswearing the metaphysical comfort of a single feminist epistemology' (Fraser and Nicholson 1988: 391), provided they offer a possibility of including gender as a category of analysis.[36] To engage in a gender-sensitive analysis at all times is a deeply subversive move, because to do so means that traditional ways of producing meaning become fundamentally challenged and subverted.

It is important to stress this commitment, as feminisms are above all politically motivated and aim to work toward a better world for wo/ma/en. This, at least if we accept the existence of a power/knowledge system as identified by Michel Foucault, requires the production of some form of knowledge about wo/ma/en's current situation as well as the articulation of visions of a better world. As Foucault phrased it, 'we are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth' (Foucault 1980: 93). This, then, is one of the ways in which we can engage in a 're-interpretation of the political as a process of meaning production that is never given and never final, but always in formation and always in play, always, more or less, at stake' (Dillon 1990: 114).[37]

So, where does this leave one with regard to the supposed crisis of meaning in IR? It seems that the current crisis, and the experience of nihilism, has been less universal than often assumed in discussions thereof. As Elbe rightly notes, it is the crisis of one particular system of meaning. Those never comfortable in it, 'forced to live in the interface between [realities], forced to become adept in switching modes' (Anzaldúa 1999: 59), have long had to develop means to help negotiate the divides.

> Those who are pushed out of the tribe for being different are likely to become more sensitized (when not brutalized into insensitivity). Those who do not feel psychologically or physically safe in the world are more adept to develop this sense. Those who are pounced on the most have it the strongest – the females, the homosexuals of all races, the darkskinned, the outcast, the persecuted, the marginalized, the foreign . . . It's a kind of survival tactic that people caught between the worlds unknowingly cultivate. It is latent in all of us.
>
> (Anzaldúa 1999: 60–1)

Anzaldúa calls it *la facultad* and argues that it 'deepens the way we see concrete objects and people' (Anzaldúa 1999: 61), but also that 'we lose something in this mode of initiation, something is taken from us: our innocence, our knowing ways, our safe and easy ignorance' (Anzaldúa, 1999: 61). It makes us acutely aware of the personal and political nature of any articulation of meaning.[38] Within the horizon of a historically knowing world, bound by our finitude of Being, we cannot but accept responsibility for supporting a certain interpretation/action as well as considering its possible effects. As such, we should be sceptical of current invocations of 'meaning-lessness' and increasing 'complexity' and resist those who utilize them

> to deliver us from the responsibility to act . . . that is, to avoid the bitter truth that, far from presenting the case of an eccentric ethnic conflict, the Bosnian War, is a direct result of the West's failure to grasp the political dynamic of the disintegration of Yugoslavia.
>
> (Žižek, quoted in Der Derian 2001: 50)

This implies taking 'the complexity of our questions and the varieties of the approaches [not] as signs of weakness or failure to meet the strictures of pre-existing theories' (Flax 1987: 638), but to recognize the potential located therein. Besides, 'what's so terrible about living with a paradox?' (Ferguson 1993: 56).

Notes

1 This chapter evolved out of a presentation at the Third Pan European International Relations conference and Joint Meeting with the International Studies Association in Vienna, Austria in September 1998. My thanks to all those who discussed the here addressed themes with me on various occasions and especially to Susan L. Ferguson, who commented on the final manuscript (the responsibility for the final product of course being solely my own).

2 Note that wo/ma/en is my way of disrupting the categories woman/women and man/men.

Or, as Ferguson might call it, wo/ma/en is my signpost, to act as a reminder to ward off the easy slippage towards essentializing universalism(s). She asks, 'What signposts do you build into your accounts to serve as reminders? What posture do you take toward that which does not or will not fit into even the most liberation-bound of categories?' (Ferguson 1993: 88)

3 In Dillon's words 'the market for the meaning of "Europe" is now more confused, competitive and uncertain than it has been for over a generation, the meaning producing institutions of the past, nodes within many interlinked discursive networks, are having to adapt to quite extraordinary discursive challenges' (Dillon 1990: 117).

4 Which, to some extent is the conclusion Elbe hints at in his Chapter 6 in this volume when he writes 'Nietzsche found the inference that there is no meaning at all to be a tremendous generalization that was pathological in being so extreme' (p. 84). See also Mandaville's discussion of meaning as it travels in Chapter 12 in this volume.

5 There are a number of notable exceptions to the general trend in IR. These are to be found mostly in the work of writers influenced by poststructuralist theory. See especially the work of Shapiro (e.g. 1989, 1992, 1997) as well as the collection of essays edited by Der Derian and Shapiro (1989). For a feminist contribution see work by Sylvester (e.g. 1994a). Further, consult the journals *Alternatives* and *Millennium*, as well as the Borderline series of the University of Minnesota Press.

6 Note that I am concerned only with describing the move to philosophical hermeneutics and not with providing a history of the development of hermeneutics (for a useful account of that kind, as it relates to social science, see Bauman 1978).

7 This is maintained by Schleiermacher and rests with the hermeneutics school until the rejection by Heidegger and Gadamer who theorize about the finitude of Being (*Dasein*) and connected to that the impossibility of completely understanding the intention of the author. Additionally, Gadamer writes that with its completion the text acquires additional meaning the author may not have been aware of.

8 Translations by myself unless otherwise indicated.

9 Grondin (1991) notes later that words cannot exhaust what we have 'in spirit' – the conversation we are.

10 Hermeneutics then deals with the limits of language or rather of statements. According to Gadamer, this does not mean, and this is a point where he is often misunderstood, that all experience takes place *only* as (or in) speaking. As Grondin writes: 'The basic linguistic-ality of understanding (*Sprachlichkeit des Verstehens*) expresses itself less in our statements than in our search for language to express what we have in our soul and want to articulate' (Grondin 1991: 155).

11 Here it is of interest to note that Gadamer, in German, uses the term *Sinn*, which can have a multiplicity of translations: sense; senses, consciousness; mind; inclination; feeling; spirit; point; meaning. Yet in the translations of Gadamer's work *Sinn* is generally translated as 'meaning' which might not so accurately reflect the affinity that exists in German between the terms *Sinn* and *Sein* (being/essence/existence). Note how this coincides with feminist findings about the affinity between knowing and being, described on p. 98.

12 Tradition is the notion coined in philosophical hermeneutics to refer to the 'history' and/ or 'social relations' mentioned in the previous paragraph.

13 Gadamer uses the notion of 'prejudice', in the sense of a judgement or knowledge arrived at before attempting to find a meaning in an engagement with a text (the world). This is part of the process of understanding since the interpreters' thoughts have already merged with the subject matter of the text. Since 'prejudice' has a negative connotation, I prefer to use the Heideggerian 'pre-understandings' instead.

14 Gadamer again follows Heidegger who maintained that understanding is always connected to a quest for understanding of the self or, phrased differently, an encounter with our self.

15 Again, compare with Mandaville's Chapter 12 in this volume.

16 The attraction of Ferguson's 'mobile subjectivities' is not simply epistemological, but

political, since 'they are politically difficult in their refusal to stick consistently to one stable identity claim; yet they are politically advantageous because they are less pressed to police their own boundaries, more able to negotiate respectfully with contentious others' (Ferguson 1993:154).

17 A note on translation: what I translate as conversation – *Gespräch* – is often translated as dialogue instead. I prefer the notion of a conversation as it seems to imply a wider group of participants and possibly a less structured format. The notion of conversation is also used by Rorty, who argues 'that the task of philosophy is not to discover absolutes but to continue the "conversation of mankind"' (Hekman 1990: 9).

18 History of effect (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) is a term used in literary criticism where it refers to the study of interpretations or the historical reception of a work under examination (see Grondin 1991: 146ff).

19 Various authors have attempted to categorize them along a variety of concerns. For what I still consider to be one of the best introductions see Tong (1989); for a more recent one see Whelehan (1995).

20 A worrying development in this regard is the emergence of feminisms based on exclusivity, such as white supremacist ones. See e.g. the report by the Anti-Defamation League (1998).

21 How traditional epistemologies are gender biased can easily be tested by asking the following set of questions: 'who can be a "knower" (can women)?; what tests beliefs must pass in order to be legitimated as knowledge (only tests against men's experiences and observations?); what kinds of things can be known (can "subjective truths" count as knowledge?); and so forth' (Harding 1987: 3).

22 See Harding (e.g. 1986, 1991, 1998).

23 Note that any neat trajectory of progress implied is a feature of the presentation only.

24 I use fe/male in an analogous manner to wo/ma/en.

25 See Herdt (1993), Roscoe (1991, 1993) and Schrein and Strasser (1997).

26 See Lang (1997: 74–5).

27 Again, 'the work of decolonialization will have to continue within the women's movements' (Trinh 1989: 104).

28 See Butler (e.g. 1990b, 1993, 1997).

29 These three manoeuvres can be found in Thiele (1986). For further discussion thereof in connection with IR see Wibben (1998: 28–31).

30 See Harding (e.g. 1986, 1991, 1998) for an in-depth account of feminist critiques of science and its exclusionary manoeuvres.

31 Compare with the earlier argument about *Sinn/Sein* in hermeneutics.

32 See Elshtain (1987: 223–4).

33 Note: prejudgements, here, refer to what I have called pre-understandings.

34 This conceptualization, as noted previously, is Gadamer's debt to Heidegger's arguments about the finitude of Being and the quest for understanding as an encounter with our self, a search for meaningful existence.

35 See Harding (1986: 219ff, 240ff)

36 Note, if this has not become obvious at this point, that hermeneutics here are not seen as a method but as an alternative conception of the social world.

37 This also implies that one assumes the responsibility of writing from a feminist perspective, noting that it too, is one perspective among others.

38 The political, of course, is personal for feminists.

8 The search for meaning in global conjunctions

From ethnographic truth to ethnopolitical agency

Tarja Väyrynen

Introduction

> The multiplication of new – and not so new – identities as a result of the collapse of the places from which the universal subject spoke – explosion of ethnic and national identities in Eastern Europe and in the territories of the former USSR, struggles of immigrant groups in Western Europe, new forms of multicultural protest and self-assertion in the US, to which we have to add the gamut of forms of contestation associated with the new social movements.
>
> <div align="right">(Laclau 1996: 46)</div>

In this quote, Ernesto Laclau characterises the terrain into which post-Cold War history has thrown us. He emphasises the dissolving of the universal subject into the diversity of new identities. The increase in the number of ethnic conflicts after the breakdown of the bi-polar international system seems to support Laclau's observation – a search for ethnic and nationalistic identities and meaning has lead to unexpected political violence in many parts of the world. The dissolving of the Soviet system has lead to political violence in, for example, the Transcaucasus region. Similarly, the Yugoslav state in the Balkans has gone through a violent transformation.

The shift from inter-state violence to intra-state violence can be interpreted to represent a shift in terms of meaning. During the Cold War the meaning of international relations and political violence was located in the struggle between the liberal practices of the West and the communist practices of the East. The explosion of ethnic and nationalistic identities in the early 1990s, however, challenged the construction of *the* meaning in international relations. New configurations of global practices did not point towards any comprehensive meaning in global politics. The question of the construction of a global meaning was joined with the quest for understanding the processes of the production of (trans)local, parochial, meanings of ethnic, religious and nationalistic communities. The 'global' came to be understood in conjunction with the 'local'.

The quest for understanding local practices has been further supplemented with the search for new regimes of knowledge and truth. Anthropological and ethnographic

notions of knowledge have been called for in the study of new inter- and intra-national realities. Some authors suggest that communities' own understandings of their realities should form the foundation for theorising of, for example, ethnopolitical conflicts (see for example Avruch and Black 1993; Ross 1993; Väyrynen 2001). In other words, ethnographic theories of conflict and 'ethnopractices' of conflict resolution are seen to be the best way to examine the meanings embedded in ethnic, religious and nationalistic communities as well as to solve the conflictual relationships between the communities.

Hermeneutic philosophy – which coincides with the above-mentioned approaches – assumes that human beings participate in the production and interpretation of meaning in their life-worlds, in their everyday practices. Interpretation of meaning is the ontological condition of the 'being-in-the-world' of humans. Construction and interpretation of meaning in the social world is not a subjective activity. Rather, it is an intersubjective attempt essential for the existence and coherence of any social collective (see for example Gadamer 1979; Ricoeur 1981). This can be also seen to be the case with ethnopolitical groups which produce 'ethnic meaning' and struggle for the creation and maintenance of meaningful political collectives in the globalised world. Their meaning-creating practices derive from the politics of soil instead of the politics of the globe. The politics of soil pays attention to the experience of community, feeling of communality, and rejects concerns for world order (see Hassner 1993: 49–50).

Despite their attempts to offer an alternative, namely 'culturalist', perspective to the post-Cold War world, hermeneutically oriented understandings of post-Cold War ethnopolitical violence are limited in some respects. The theorising on identity is narrow and misses the global practices of power which shape the construction of ethnopolitical identities. The global conjunctions where ethnopolitical agency emerges and violence erupts are seldom taken into account in these approaches. Furthermore, their focus is often on pre-existing actors whose meaning is the subject of the study, and form a basis for theorising. They miss the constant performances of ethnopolitical identities from which (trans)local meaning arises. The politics of soil is not the politics of primordial ethnic subjects, but, rather, ethnopolitical agency is continuously produced in the process of politicising and securitising issues thought to be vital for the existence of the community.

The aim of the chapter is threefold. It starts with the Foucauldian criticism of the hermeneutics of everyday practices, and intends to demonstrate the production of ethnopolitical meaning in language, i.e. in performative speech acts. In addition to the importance of speech acts in producing identity, the chapter argues that ethnic identity is performed through corporeal signs. Second, the chapter discusses the role of the Other both in bringing into existence ethnic subjectivity and in creating a coherent collective. Third, it seeks to examine the global context, or rather the conjunctions of global practices which create space for the production of ethnopolitical existence and meaning. The intimate link between meaning and agency – the link which is missing from the hermeneutics of everydayness – is at the core of the exploration. It is argued that there is no ethnopolitical or nationalistic agency prior to language and performative acts. In general, the Foucauldian insights into

body and power introduced in the first part of the chapter form the underlying assumptions concerning ethnopolitical agency. These insights are expanded by using Judith Butler's theory of performative identities and Arjun Appadurai's notions of global 'landscapes'.

Beyond everyday meaning

Given that the meaning of international relations has dissolved and a focus of the study of international politics is in the (trans)local variations of ethnic, religious and nationalistic meanings, the question of the nature of meaning arises. In other words, are we after ethnographic interpretation, and thus interested in penetrating other people's modes of thought, as for example Clifford Geertz (1987: 146) suggests? Or is meaning always 'mediated' by something else to an extent that an attempt to capture someone else's meaning is useless? Geertz insists in seeing things 'from the native's point of view', and sees the analysis of culture to be an interpretative search for meaning (Geertz 1993: 5). For him, meaning is not mediated by, for example, practices of power and, thereby, it is not the task of the anthropologist to suspect the accounts of reality, the meanings of reality, offered by the 'natives'.

Martin Heidegger rejects this kind of narrow understanding of hermeneutics, namely the hermeneutics of everydayness. For the later Heidegger, the history of our understanding of being becomes the main theme of the study. In interpreting historical practices, he demonstrates how our understanding of being allows things to appear to us in certain ways. Heidegger claims that the technological understanding of our being in our current practices frames the world to us in a technological manner, and guides our being-in-the-world as well as our interpretation of the world (Dreyfus 1987: 214; Campbell and Dillon 1993: 1–47). In short, the hermeneutics and ethnography of everydayness takes the accounts of people of their reality as a natural fact, whereas the Heideggerian historical hermeneutics examines the ways technological practices give the world to us. There are no 'unmediated' meanings to be discovered by the researcher, because, according to Heidegger's thought, meaning is mediated by technology which sets the world to us in a certain manner. The hermeneutics of everydayness misplaces emphasis on the meaning which social practices have for the practitioners, although the practitioners do not know the effects of what they are doing or may have mistaken these effects.

The idea of the historicity of understanding unites Heidegger's project with that of Michel Foucault. Foucault emphasises the need to read the effects of our social practices. He is interested in assembling evidence that our current social practices manifest a general tendency or strategy whose effect is to turn nature and human beings into resources to be even more efficiently organised and used. By emphasising the need to read the effects of social practices, Foucault rejects the actors' own interpretation of the significance of their actions as a source of theorising. This does not lead him to the 'hermeneutics of suspicion', because, according to Foucault, there is neither a cover-up nor repressed meaning to be discovered. There is no cover-up under which the deepest meaning can be found (Dreyfus 1987: 203–22). As Hubert Dreyfus summarises the Foucauldian reading of meaning:

The result is a pragmatically guided reading of the effect of present social practices which does not claim to correspond either to the everyday understanding of being in those practices nor to a deeper depressed understanding.

(Dreyfus 1987: 216)

Following Foucault's suggestion would mean rejecting the attempt to interpret the meaning ethnopolitical actors intersubjectively create in their life-worlds. Foucault warns us about research which aims at capturing the 'primordial understanding' or 'hidden deep meaning and truth' in the everyday practices and discourses of the actors. There is no hidden meaning the actors may know, and which can also be known by the researcher by examining actors' own understandings. Rather, the focus should be on the practices of power and their effects on the body as a surface where the play of power takes place. The effects of power practices where the body is moulded and certain meanings incorporated needs, thus, to be taken into account when examining new post-Cold War identity politics in violent political conflicts.

For Foucault, the 'body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated Self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume of perpetual disintegration' (Foucault 1987: 227). The body is moulded by distinct regimes; the rhythms of work and rest, eating habits, sexual behaviour and moral laws. The law and norms are not just internalised, but also incorporated in a way that the law does not appear as external to the body. Foucault's historical (genealogical) studies on body regimes (e.g. prisons, schools, psychoanalytical confessional practices) demonstrate how different micro-practices affect the people whose bodies and minds they form. In terms of meaning, it is incorporated. Meaning is neither an internal nor a psychological entity whose mapping informs theorising in social sciences. Foucault's views have inspired many recent theories on agency, and from the point of view of this chapter, Butler's work on performativity needs to be located in the context of Foucault's theorising.

In sum, a move beyond the hermeneutics of everydayness where the meanings and interpretations of the actors themselves are taken for granted is needed in order to examine the construction of ethnopolitical meaning in global conjunctions. The shift is not merely a methodological one. It leads to a different ontology, and therewith, to a different type of questioning. The questions concerning the ethnopolitical agency become the main focus of the study, because the move from the 'meaning for the social actors' to the study of social and political practices implies the move from the taken-for-granted subject whose meaning we are interested in to the process of the production of subjectivities in and through language.

Performative identities and ethnopolitical agency

The study of the production of subjectivity and agency has to begin with the understanding of the importance of language, because we do things with language. By issuing utterances we perform actions and produce effects. The distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts elaborates the performative function of language. The illocutionary speech act is itself the deed that it affects. The

perlocutionary speech act, on the other hand, leads to certain effects that are not the same as the speech act itself. Performing a speech act is not itself enough for certain effects. Perlocutionary effects arise from the fact that illocutionary acts are embedded in the contexts of interaction. In addition to speech acts being embedded in interaction, conventions are invoked at the moment of utterance; the circumstances of the invocation need to be right and the person who invokes them needs to be authorised in order for certain effects to arise (Austin 1975; Searle 1986).

The speech act theory as Austin and Searle present it evokes a question of the speaking subject who utters sentences. Butler's work on speech act theory challenges the Austinian assumption that there is a prior subject who speaks. Butler argues that there is not a sovereign agent with a purely instrumental relation to language and with an existence prior to language as the traditional theory seems to suggest. For Butler, the speech act brings the subject into linguistic existence. She argues that 'the one who speaks is not the originator of such speech, for that subject is produced in language through a prior performative exercise of speech: interpellation' (Butler 1997: 39). It follows that agency cannot be derived from the sovereignty of the speaker, but from the language through which 'subjecthood' is constructed and regulated.

The subject does not appear into linguistic existence in a vacuum: the Other is needed in order for the subject to exist. The Other is needed because being addressed by the Other constitutes a being within the possible circuit of recognition. In other words, the subject constituted through the address of the Other becomes a subject capable of addressing others. The act of recognition becomes an act of constitution, and the address brings the subject into existence. One becomes to exist by virtue of fundamental dependency on the address of the Other, because the interpellative or constitutive address of the Other hails the subject into linguistics existence (Butler 1997: 5–6, 25–6).

In order to become a speaking subject certain norms – or in the Austinian terms 'conventions' – need to be embodied. Becoming a subject is entering into the normativity of language. For Butler, censorship produces a kind of foreclosure that restricts the possibility of agency in speech. Censorship seeks to produce subjects according to explicit and implicit norms. It is vital, because it regulates the social domain of speakable discourse, and thereby, for Butler, censorship is a productive form of power. To become a subject means to be subjected to a set of implicit and explicit norms that govern the kind of speech that will be legible as the speech of subject. Speaking according to the norms that govern speakability is not necessarily following a rule in a conscious way, rules may be followed in an unconscious way. Speech acts take place, thus, in space which is governed by norms, and these norms set the domain of speakability and intelligibility. Neither these norms nor the subjectivity are final. Their production is never conclusive in the sense that norms would be fixated and subjectivity stabilised. The norms continue to structure the subject through his or her life (Butler 1997: 133–6).

The subject who is brought into being in language is already gendered, as Butler argues. The subject is also ethnicised (or racialised). The social performance which gives rise to the subject is not only a crucial part of subject formation, but of the

ongoing political contestation and reformulation of the subject as well. In short, subjects are gendered and ethnicised through the regulation of speech (Butler 1990a: 336, 1997: 49; Feldman 1994). The subject, after having being brought into gendered and ethnicised existence, continues to perform through speech, acts, bodily gestures and enactments the essence of her identity. This 'performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration', writes Butler, in alignment with Foucault (Butler 1999: xv). The body continues the naturalised performance in order to maintain a certain habitus. To argue that something is performative is to argue that what we take to be internal essence, e.g. gender and ethnicity, is 'manufactured through a sustained set of acts', and 'what we take be an "internal" feature of ourselves is one that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts' (Butler 1999: xv).

Ethnicity is, thus, constantly performed through 'ethnic speech acts' which bring ethnicised subjectivity into being. 'Ethnic performance' continues in speech and through bodily significations. Bodily acts, gestures and enactments through the play of presence and absence in the body's surface construct ethnicised bodies. The performance may take a violent form as in ethnopolitical conflicts. Violence can have its own instrumental rationale, i.e. it is a means to an end, but it often becomes more (on the instrumental nature of violence see Arendt 1970). It is also transformative practice that constructs poles of enactment and reception. Furthermore, violence can detach itself from initial contexts and become the condition of its own reproduction. It may become an institution possessing its own symbolic and performative autonomy as happened, for example, in Northern Ireland and Bosnia (Feldman 1991: 20–1).

Violent performances construe and construct novel subject positions. Violent performances do not arise from fixed subject positions or from prior identities which exist before performance, as the mainstream theorising on ethnopolitical conflicts assumes. 'Tamil Tigers' performing a violent act are not fixed historical agents behaving violently. They have, rather, a subject position in violent practices; a position of enactment and reception which is continuously created and transformed, and which continuously produces their identity and agency as 'Tamil Tigers'. Neither do they produce unmediated meanings whose study offers insights into post-Cold War identity politics. There is no ethnopolitical subjectivity which has an instrumental relation to meaning, which exists prior to language, prior to ethno-political speech. There is no 'frozen' meaning outside the performance of identity, no 'actor's own point of view', which could form the basis for universal theorising.

Ethnopolitical collectives and ethnopolitical meaning are constantly constructed through repetition and citation. Certain discourses on 'race', 'colour', 'shared history' and 'religion' are continuously drawn from and cited in performative speech acts in the constitution of an ethnic collective (Pulkkinen 1998). In general, the language the subject speaks is conventional, and to that degree, citational. As Butler argues, 'the speaker renews the linguistic tokens of a community', and gains the force of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior authorative set of practices (Butler 1993: 39, 51). In the name of a discourse on race, colour, shared

history and religion internal incoherences are harmonised, borders made self-evident and collectives invested with ethnopolitical meaning. For example, the 'ethnic talk' during the conflict in former Yugoslavia cited 'historical sources' and relied on discourses on 'blood-ties' (see for example Campbell 1998: 44–9). These ethnopolitical speech acts participated in the construction of 'ethnic groups' as a form of meaningful political communities – they brought the groups into ethnicised being. They also offered for individuals meaningful domains to identify with and from which to derive the normative context of one's own identity performance.

Global conjunctions and the production of meaning

Coming into 'being' through a dependency on the recognition of the Other must be understood in the context of the social rituals of regulation, allocation and refutation of recognition, as Butler (1997: 26) argues. Ethnicised being is regulated, allocated and refused in the (late) modern world through global social and political practices, among which modern territorial nation-state, capitalism and media are of a particular importance for bringing into existence ethnopolitical groups.

The modern territorial nation-state is the Other whose recognition brings ethnic groups into being. It represents the totalising and universalising tendencies embedded in any clearly marked cultural, social and political space, and it attempts to exclude the parochial concerns of ethnopolical groups. Ethnopolitical speech acts and performances are in a 'dialogic' relationship with nation-state practices. The ethnic group attempts to mark its own borders and inscribe dangers through performative acts in relation to the state, and – paradoxically – its existence is dependent on the hegemonic and totalising identity of the state. (On the role of danger in constructing the collective see Ashley 1989; Shapiro 1997.) A complex set of mutual performative moves exists between these collective identities. The state and its censorship do not merely morally instruct its citizens. More importantly, censorship operates, by allocating and refusing recognition, to make certain kinds of citizens, agency and politics possible and others impossible (Butler 1997: 132). Speech acts bring certain kinds of citizens into existence and exclude others. They bring into existence the citizens of the nation-state and their politics of state and exclude the 'citizens of ethnie' and their politics of soil. Censorship establishes, thus, the hierarchy between 'citizens' and 'aliens' as well as between the types of citizen. This is a necessary part of the process of Westphalian nation-building. Censorship is exercised in order to achieve cultural control over the representation of 'nationhood' and 'statehood' and over their narrativisation. However, not only states practise this type of censorship over marginalised groups. These groups also codify certain memories of shared history, blood and experience as well as control the narrativisation of imagined heritage.

The modern sovereign state intends to offer the instrumental solution for the challenge set forth by different forms of identity claims. The state aims at providing a shared domain of meaning for groups located within its sovereign control and territory. The state, as a social and political practice and as a system of inclusion and exclusion par excellence, attempts to solve the problem of conflicting identifications

and identity claims, as argued, by producing precise distinctions and differences between citizens and aliens, by domesticating particular identities and by creating a coherent sovereign identity and meaning. The modern territorial nation-state dominates the modern imaginary on meaningful political communities. It relies on territorial images of governance as well as fixed and territorially based identities as the foundation of order. (For the sovereign state see for example Ashley 1989; Bauman 1992; Campbell 1993b; Linklater 1990, 1994; Walker 1993; for constructing India see Krishna 1996).

Despite its normalising and ordering practices, the state has become a more and more contested space. As Arjun Appadurai notes, the 'nation-state' is a battle of imagination with state and nation seeking to 'cannibalise each other' (Appadurai 1990: 304). Groups with ideas about nationhood seek to capture or co-opt state power, and states simultaneously seek to capture and monopolise ideas about nationhood. Here is, according to Appadurai, a platform for separatism and micro-identities to become political projects within nation-states. States, on the other hand, seek to establish the monopoly of the production of distinctions, differences and meaning, a task in which they are never fully successful. From the perspective of the nation-state, ethnic, nationalistic or religious groups claiming a right to produce difference, to make distinctions and to construct and interpret meaning which transcends the official state ideology are 'enemies within'. They challenge the normalising order of the state as well as the dominant forms of modern agency and politics.

Modern nation-state imaginary derives largely from territoriality. However, transnational, and often interconnected, flows of finance, images and people challenge the territorially based politics of states and, furthermore, the very modern imaginary itself which allows territorial states to gain such a privileged position in terms of the formation of meaningful political communities. Transnational flows inevitably question and 'pluralise the modern territorial imagination' as well as 'construe the territorial state to be one among several sites of political action and identification in the late-modern times' (Connolly 1995: xxiii). These flows de-territorialise the world assumed to be divided along territorially organised spaces by undermining directly the border-maintaining state practices or indirectly by producing new forms of de-territorialised and de-territorialising agencies. As Nevzat Soguk (1997) puts the dominant modern state imaginary and the forces that challenge it:

> contemporary happenings put in question not merely this or that aspect of the modern state as a form of governance, but the state as a whole – as a distinctive coherence, a mentality, a system of governance in and around which everything else is (imagined to be) positioned and by reference to which all things are (supposed to be) rendered meaningful.
>
> (Soguk 1997: 320)

The growth of global institutions and increased transnational flows are products of global capitalism and of the development of a globalised world-economy. They are in contradiction with the maintenance of territorially based state sovereignty. From

the point of view of ethnopolitical agency, global divisions of labour accompanying the globalised world-economy and growing globalisation of production and finance are particularly important. Global divisions of labour have their local counterparts, namely, the segmenting of labour forces along 'race' and ethnic lines. 'The increasingly global economy shapes the new international division of labour along state, national, racialised, ethnicised, and gender divides', as Jindy Pettman points out (Pettman 1996: 264). The segmenting of labour forces along old and new divides is often a source of a feeling of injustice and, therefore, a source of further segmentation and fragmentation of societies, and even conflict. In short, the old and new societal divisions are constantly re-imagined and re-created in the conjunctions of global economy and the segmentation of labour accompanying it.

Seeking feelings of belonging and meaning as well as the performance of identities do not cease in de-territorialised and segmented spaces. Rather, performing identities become de-territorialised and assume an increasingly symbolic meaning in the nomadic world. Performances continue, and often intensify, in refugee camps, zones of migrant workers and among asylum-seekers (for an example see Malkki 1995). According to some authors, performance of identity and search for meaning is at its most intense when identity is located in a not-yet-accomplished future. The West Bank, Jaffna and Kurdistan are global/local stages where bloody scenes between existing nation-state and de-territorialised groupings are acted, and where performative politics takes violent forms. It is argued that de-territorialisation, whether of Hindus, Kurds, Hutus or Palestinians, is now at the core of a variety of global fundamentalisms. Invented homelands become fantastic and one-sided to an extent that they provide material for new 'ideoscapes' (concentrations of images which have often to do with ideologies of states and their counter-ideologies) in which violent ethnic conflict can begin to erupt (Appadurai 1990, 1991; Bauman 1992). In short, the 'dialogic' relationship between exclusionary state practices and ethnic identification in global conjunctions intensifies the change of violent performances in de-territorialised and segmented spaces. Territorial states recognise and narrate the movement of bodies and feelings of injustice of the segmented and displaced populations as a 'danger', for (violent) ethnic identification and construction of meaning do not respect political boundaries and borders.

How, then, are experiences of community possible in late modern capitalism, one which consists of globalising and localising forces? Transnational flows of people, images and finance compress space and time. The time and space compression characteristic of late modernity implodes perceptual simultaneity – it joins together persons, things, events from a plurality of locales, chronologies and levels of experience once discrete and separate. The development of print capitalism contributed to the process of compression, but it has been intensified by the 'transmission revolution', and by the control of the environment in real time (Feldman 1994: 407; Virilio 1997: 12; on print capitalism see Anderson 1983: 22–36). The consequences of the transmission revolution and the acceleration of the compression of time and space are multiple. Politics is shifting within exclusively present time. The division between the global versus the local or the transnational and the national is less applicable and the inside and the outside are disappearing. Paul Virilio (1997: 18)

summarises the simultaneity and virtuality that prevail in global politics by stating that 'all that remains is a real instant over which, in the end, no one has any control'.

Aesthetic experiences of community which allow experiences of unity and meaning become more and more important in the world of de-territorialised spaces in an age of transmission revolution. The consumption of the mass media throughout the world often provokes resistance, irony, selectivity and, in general, agency, notes Appadurai (1996). Appadurai challenges the views which argue that global mass media produces inertia. Rather, the circulation of images and meaning through media allows scripts for possible lives to be fabricated and aesthetic experiences of community to be felt, and thereby allows agency to erupt. In the world of mass migrations, images meet de-territorialised viewers and create 'diasporic public spheres' overlapping with the public spheres created by the territorial nation-state. In diasporic spaces, the collective imagination can become the fuel for agency and action: imagination creates ideas, for example, of neighbourhood and nationhood, of moral economies and unjust rule, of higher wages and foreign labour prospects (Appadurai 1996: 6–7).

De-territorialisation and the dislocation of people do not, thus, remove the need for overcoming separation and constructing meaning. Experiences of community and unity are vital, when 'the self seeks to overcome its separation and the extreme differentiation of modern societies by mirroring itself in signs that facilitate the illusion that the very difference that establishes the sign is overcome in the experience of the sign' (Schulte-Sasse and Schulte-Sasse 1991: 78). For example, a flag is a sign which stems from a collective establishing differences between those inside and those outside. Differences are constitutive of the sign. However, experiences of the sign give an illusory experience of unity and even community of people, be that nation or ethnic group, which overcomes obvious internal differences. Media works towards the utopia of community by producing networks of signs and images representing 'Oneness' and 'Otherness'. 'Mediascapes', to use again Appadurai's term, provide large and complex repertoires of images, signs, narratives and 'ethnoscapes' to viewers throughout the world. They help to constitute narratives of the Other and proto-narratives of possible lives which can produce a platform for the desire for acquisition and movement as well as to form the normative context of ethnic performances. As argued earlier, media helps groups spread over vast and irregular spaces stay linked together and create political sentiments and meaning based on intimacy and (trans)locality (for more detailed accounts of the processes see Appadurai 1996; Schulte-Sasse and Schulte-Sasse 1991).

Concluding remarks

After the breakdown of the Cold War ideological meaning, the search for (trans)local meaning has intensified. This has led to violent political conflicts in many locations of the world. The 'culturalist' attempts to interpret the parochial meaning are limited in many respects, because they assume a prior subject whose relation to language is instrumental and whose 'point of view' is thought to be able to inform the theorising on ethnopolitical conflicts and their resolution. These views

dismiss the performative nature of identities as well as the role of language in bringing subjects into existence and creating agency. Furthermore, the global conjunctions which create space for the eruption of ethnopolitical agency are largely neglected by the 'culturalist' approaches to ethnopolitical relations. These are important because through them ethnicised being is regulated, allocated and refused, as has been argued in this chapter.

In order to examine ethnopolitical meaning there is a need to move beyond the hermeneutics of everydayness which emphasises the ethnopolitical actors' own interpretation of meaning. There is no deep truth (meaning) which is somehow possessed by the actors. Rather, there are plays of power and significations which take place at the surface of ethnicised bodies. Ethnic identities are constructed in language through performative speech acts which bring ethnic subjectivity into being. Bringing ethnic subject into being requires being addressed and recognised by the Other. In modernity, territorial nation-state is the Other which brings ethno-political groups into existence. And, in turn, ethnopolitical groups are the 'enemy within' which contribute to the imagining of the nation-state as a coherent political collective.

Modern nation-state imaginary relies on territoriality, although de-territorialising flows challenge the normalising order maintained by the Westphalian imaginary. Ethnopolitical agency erupts often in de-territorial spaces which are characterised by segmentation and differentiation of people along 'racial' and 'ethnic' lines. The seeking of the feeling of identity and community does not cease in these spaces. On the contrary, it often intensifies, and the seeking of an aesthetic experience of community through images and signs replaces the seeking of more 'mundane' feelings of unity. Global media provide material for this search by circulating images of community and by evoking sentiments of unitary collective. The images guide the performances of ethnopolitical identity from which ethnopolitical meaning arises in the post-Cold War world.

9 When meaning travels

Muslim translocality and the politics of 'authenticity'

Peter Mandaville

> Theory is no longer naturally 'at home' in the West – a powerful place of
> Knowledge, History, or Science, a place to collect, sift translate and generalize.
> Or, more cautiously, this privileged place is now increasingly contested, cut
> across, by other locations, claims, trajectories of knowledge articulating racial,
> gender, and cultural differences. But how is theory appropriated and resisted,
> located and displaced? How do theories travel among the unequal spaces of
> postcolonial confusion and contestation? What are their predicaments? How
> does theory travel and how do theorists travel? Complex, unresolved questions.
> (James Clifford, 'Notes on Travel and Theory', 1989)

Introduction

On three occasions between 1649 and 1661 the Moroccan traveller, scholar and
(undoubtedly) theorist Abu Salim 'Abdullah al-'Ayyashi plied the deserts between
North Africa and the Hijaz region of western Arabia. His routes led him through
Islam's holiest cities and several of its most renowned places of learning. All his
itineraries – citing extended stays in both Cairo and Jerusalem – and a full gamut of
impressions from joy to disillusion were faithfully recorded in his two volume *Ma' al-
Mawa'id* (al-'Ayyashi 1984; El Moudden 1990). In it, Abu Salim never hesitates to
mention (and critique) local variations of Islamic practice at the many junctures of
his journey, or to omit accounts of his many debates with scholars of diverse Islamic
religio-juridical traditions. From the somatics of prayer to contesting genealogies of
religious authority, each new idiosyncrasy is digested and reflected upon. All the
while, of course, Abu Salim's own 'strange' idiom of Islam was carefully entered into
the catalogues of his various hosts. The observer becomes the observed, the curator
is himself curated . . .

   . . . or consider the young Ali Shariati, future ideologue of Iran's Islamic
Revolution, as a student in the Paris of the early 1960s (Rahnema 1994). Repulsed
by the urban hedonism of the French capital yet at the same time captured by the
vigour of its intellectual life, Shariati's transformation during these years was
considerable. In Paris his Islam becomes eclectic. The Shi'ism of his homeland loses
its monopoly over his religious imagination; soon non-Shi'ite and even Western
interpretations of Islam begin to find their way into his thought and writing. Religion

is now a sociopolitical imperative rather than a source of dogmatism: Shariati's journey becomes Islam's journey.

And so theory travels. That which 'is' in one place elsewhere becomes undone, translated, reinscribed; this is the nature of translocality: a cultural politics of *becoming*. But what does it mean for theory to travel? I want to argue that it is becoming increasingly difficult to think of peoples and their politics in terms of bounded localities since globalising and distanciating processes construct hybrid identities which need to be mapped across multiple (trans)localities. These processes are an important aspect of international relations, but traditional IR theory with its state-centric worldview and limited conception of the political is unable to account for much of this translocal activity. I am not arguing, as it may seem, that we need to write more about culture in IR; if anything I am suggesting that we need to write *against* culture. Culture is not a given object 'out there', freely available for us to comprehend, study and then redeploy as an explanatory variable. Just like theories, cultures are also always travelling. The anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) has noted that culture often serves the discursive function of 'making other'. However, she warns of the dangers inherent in taking the particular situatedness of a few individuals as representative of an entire culture:

> When one generalizes from experiences and conversations with a number of specific people in a community, one tends to flatten out differences among them and to homogenize them. The appearance of an absence of internal differentiation makes it easier to conceive of a group of people as a discrete, bounded entity who do this or that and believe such-and-such . . . The erasure of time and conflict make what is inside the boundary set up by homogenization something essential and fixed.
>
> (Abu-Lughod 1991: 152–3)

Instead, Abu-Lughod suggests that we might more usefully write what she terms 'ethnographies of the particular'. By this she means that we need to pay close attention not only to people's situatedness in particular sociocultural contexts, but also to their situatedness *within* these contexts. What power relationships obtain in any given community, and where are individuals positioned *vis-à-vis* these structures? What individual meanings do subjectivities derive from the signifying practices of a culture?

> In writing 'against' culture (or ethnicity) we thus seek to discover more hidden forms of identification and to highlight the arguments of identity *within* ethnic collectivities about who 'they' are and thus who may legitimately represent 'them' and 'their' interests or loyalties in the public arena.
>
> (Caglar 1997: 176)

Incoherence therefore needs to be stressed as much as, if not over, coherence. We need to understand the ways in which people 'are confronted with choices, struggle with others, make conflicting statements, argue about points of view on the same

events . . . and fail to predict what will happen to them or those around them' (Caglar 1997: 154). A great strength of Abu-Lughod's argument is that she does not see her concentration on 'particularity' as simply a privileging of micro over macro processes. For her, the particular is by no means synonymous with the local:

> [A] concern with the particulars of individuals' lives [need not] imply disregard forces and dynamics that are not locally based. On the contrary, the effects of extralocal and long-term processes are only manifested locally and specifically, produced in the actions of individuals living their particular lives, inscribed in their bodies and their words. What I am arguing for is a form of writing that might better convey that.
>
> (Caglar, 1997: 151)

In this she reflects the insight that the 'field' or 'village' no longer exist (if indeed they ever did) as closed, bounded spaces. An emphasis on translocality hence emerges as an effective route away from essentialist conceptions of culture.

The key point which arises from this – and one which will figure heavily in my later treatment of Muslim political community – is the fact that within any given culture or community we find various and often competing conceptions of what that identity is and what it means. The politics of identity is therefore based not only on the presence of an external other against which communities and cultures may define themselves, but also on the processes of negotiation and debate taking place *within* a given community. In this regard we might want to speak about the presence of an 'internal other'. We should also note that it becomes all the more difficult here to speak of any such thing as a 'given' culture or community since culture is actually the product of a dialogue involving both internal and external others. Within what I have termed *translocal space* this dialogue is all the more complex. The sheer multiplicity of subject positions and its concomitant cultural politics ensure that the production and representation of identity in these spaces will be intricate. This is especially the case when we are dealing with a cultural form such as Islam whose global sociocultural jurisdiction is extremely wide. For example, in the archetype of translocal space, the global city (such as London), Islam is forced to contend not only with a vast array of non-Islamic others but also with an enormous diversity of Muslim opinion as to the nature and meaning of Islam. In such spaces Muslims will encounter and be forced to converse with interpretations of their religion which they have either been taught to regard as heretical, or which they did not even know existed in the first place. What is most interesting here is the interplay between dominant and demotic discourse in the construction of Muslim political community.

In order to understand how culture and politics work in translocal space, however, it will be necessary to move into another body of theory. These spaces, I have argued, are particularly salient here in so far as they represent sites through which a great many cultures travel. Not only do peoples and their 'theories' pass through translocalities, but also they travel *within* these spaces. I mean by this that the cultural complexity of translocal space is such that it often becomes easy for meaning

to move, shift or slip. How can we conceptualise such a thing as travelling theory? What happens to ideas when they become portable? In the next section I discuss travelling cultures and shall be seeking to demonstrate the ways in which the movement of theory can often lead to movement within theory.

Transplanted meanings

'Travelling Theory' is the title of an essay by Edward Said that first appeared in his 1984 collection *The World, the Text and the Critic*. Said takes as his point of departure the fact that like peoples and institutions, ideas and theories also *travel*: 'from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another' (Said 1984: 226). For him, cultural and intellectual life are dependent on this circulation of ideas. In this sense the movement of theory is often a precondition for intellectual creativity. Said's main concern is with the ways in which theories change when they become translocal. He is keenly aware that ideas have to negotiate borders in much the same way that people do:

> Such movement into a new environment is never unimpeded. It necessarily involves processes of representation and institutionalization different from those at the point of origin. This complicates any account of the transplantation, transference, circulation, and commerce of theories and ideas.
>
> (Said 1984: 226)

Said identifies four stages which he believes are common to how most theories travel. The first of these he calls a point of origin ('or what seems like one') where a set of ideas are first elaborated or enter discourse. Second comes a 'distance traversed' – the act of travelling itself – in which a theory or set of ideas moves from the point or origin into a different time and space. The medium through which this occurs can be almost anything, but we might usefully think here of such 'vessels' as diasporic or exiled intellectuals, transnational publishing houses or electronic media. Third, our itinerant theory will necessarily encounter a set of conditions which mediates its acceptance, rejection or modification in a new time and place. What finally emerges in the fourth stage of this process is an idea which has been transformed by its new uses; in short, a new (albeit well-travelled) theory. It is this final stage of theory travelling which seems most to interest Said:

> What happens to it when, in different circumstances and for new reasons, it is used again and, in still more different circumstances, again? What can this tell us about theory itself – its limits, its possibilities, its inherent problems – and what can it suggest to us about the relationship between theory and criticism, on the one hand, and society and culture on the other?
>
> (Said 1984: 230)

James Clifford (1989), however, wonders whether this four-stage scheme is appropriate for those theories which travel in post-colonial contexts:

> [Said's four] stages read like an all-too-familiar story of immigration and acculturation. Such a linear path cannot do justice to the feedback loops, the ambivalent appropriations and resistances that characterize the travels of theories, and theorists, between places in the 'First' and 'Third' worlds. (I'm thinking about the journey of Gramscian Marxism to India through the work of the Subaltern Studies group, and its return as an altered, newly valuable commodity to places like Durham, North Carolina or Santa Cruz, California in the writings of Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakravorty, etc.)
>
> (Clifford 1989: 5)

Despite his apparent concern to redress the Eurocentrism of Said's formulation, Clifford seems to fall into a version of the same trap himself with this. The dialogue is still too one-way, from the West to the Rest and vice versa. It ignores theories and ideas that travel between and within regions of the so-called 'Third World'. The implicit 'us' (First World) and 'them' (Third World) logic here seems to exclude the possibility that 'we' are not necessarily involved in some of the conversations that 'they' have among themselves. This is a point I shall be returning to later.

In his essay Said traces the development of Lukácsian Marxism from Lukács himself in the Hungary of 1919, through the elaborations of his disciple Lucien Goldmann in post-Second World War Paris and on up to Raymond Williams's use of Goldmann in Cambridge during the 1970s. What emerges from this is a sense of ideas shifting, twisting and *learning* to fit new contexts. Said puts emphasis on the need for a critical capacity on the part of those who 'receive' travelling theories. For him there is no point in simply reiterating time and time again those aspects of a theory which were radical at the point of origin. To do so would be to risk turning a methodological breakthrough into a methodological trap. 'Once an idea gains currency because it is clearly effective and powerful,' he notes, 'there is every likelihood that during its peregrinations it will be reduced, codified, and institutionalized' (Said 1984: 239). The environment in which an idea was conceived becomes almost mythological and those who commit themselves to this 'originary' source become intransigent:

> [The] original provenance . . . dulls the critical consciousness, convincing it that a once insurgent theory is still insurgent, lively, responsive to history. Left to its own specialists and acolytes, so to speak, theory tends to have walls erected around itself, but this does not mean that critics should either ignore theory or look despairingly around for newer varieties.
>
> (Said 1984: 247)

In other words, there is every likelihood that through extensive travel a theory will lose its radical (i.e. transformative) edge. This does not mean, however, that all is lost. When a theory travels it can also sometimes take on a new critical consciousness – towards both itself and other theories. The intransigence of acolytes can be countered by theorist-reformers willing to take their theories on the road again.

What matters above all, according to Said, is the continual presence of a critical

discourse: 'the . . . recognition that there is no theory capable of covering, closing off, predicting all the situations in which it might be useful' (Said 1984: 241). Further-more, he wants to disallow the possibility of privileged, free-floating or 'objective' readers. 'No reading is neutral or innocent,' Said argues, 'and every reader is to some extent the product of a theoretical standpoint, however implicit or unconscious such a standpoint may be' (Said 1984: 241). I would want to make a strong connection between this last point of Said's and what was said in the previous section about the need to stress the particular situatedness of individuals within socio-cultural (or 'theoretical') contexts. When a theory travels it splits, multiplies and reproduces such that what we eventually end up with is many *theories*. Within any set of ideas, then, there will be multiple and often competing discourses on the nature of the 'true' (or originary) idea. Part of travelling theory's task is to capture this sense of fragmentation.

Towards the end of 'Travelling Theory' Said also deals with another way in which theory can travel. This is the sense in which the meaning(s) of a given concept can often be seen to cover great distances when charted through the oeuvre of its author(s). As an example of this, Said traces the development of Michel Foucault's idea about power and resistance. He finds that the early Foucault has very little engagement with the concept of power. By the middle of his career, however, the power/knowledge nexus has become very much foundation of his thinking. In his later career the possibility of engaging with power disappears once again since Foucault – at least on Said's reading – has become convinced that 'power is everywhere' and any attempt to resist hegemony would only be founded on a false consciousness serving to reproduce pre-existing power structures.

> The disturbing circularity of Foucault's theory of power is a form of theoretical overtotalization superficially more difficult to resist because, unlike many others, it is formulated, reformulated, and borrowed for use in what seem to be historic-ally documented situations. But note that Foucault's history is ultimately textual, or rather textualized; its mode is one for which Borges would have an affinity. Gramsci, on the other hand, would find it uncongenial. He would certainly appreciate the fineness of Foucault's archeologies, but would find it odd that they make not even a nominal allowance for emergent movements, and none for revolutions, counterhegemony, or historical blocks. In human history there is always something beyond the reach of dominating systems, no matter how deeply they saturate society, and this is obviously what makes change possible, limits power in Foucault's sense, and hobbles the theory of that power.
> (Said 1984: 246–7)

I would tend to agree with Said here. The very fact that Foucault was able to find a discursive space in which to undertake his genealogies of power – powerful forms of active critique in their own right – shows that hegemony is never complete. The fact that master narratives such as 'Islam', 'capitalism' or 'Liberalism' possess identity means that they are premised upon some form of difference – perhaps dialectical, perhaps dialogical. The presence of the theoretical other, which this identity

necessarily implies, means however that the discursive conditions for the erasure of theoretical identity are also present. Antagonism, if not immanent, is therefore at least possible. Furthermore, and reiterating a point that has been made above, the antagonists of any discursive field are not necessarily always to be found outside that field. The imagined boundaries of any such space are teeming with a politics from within; hence debate and negotiation must be seen as vital constitutive elements in the discourse.

An obvious weakness in Said's explication of travelling theory is his hesitation to more fully elaborate the mechanisms through which meanings shift as theory travels. A reader of Said's essay, argues Abdul JanMohamed,

> waits to see what specific modifications in the situation are responsible for this [shift in meaning], what kind of border has in fact been crossed, [and] what are the socio-political differences between the two locations that can bring about such changes. Perhaps because he senses the reader's expectations, Said insists several times that relocation *in itself* precipitates the transformation.
>
> (JanMohamed 1992: 100)

To be fair, it is doubtful whether Said ever intended to provide anything like a comprehensive study of the various technologies – discursive and otherwise – which enable theories to change through travel. Surely his intention was simply to offer a metaphor for reading certain aspects of intellectual life. JanMohamed does however draw our attention to questions which must be asked if anything like a thorough understanding of those theories which travel is ever to be achieved.

While most of what I have written above stresses the senses in which travel transforms theory, it should also be mentioned that there exists another politics of traveling theory, one which concerns itself primarily with the establishment and maintenance of hegemony. This relates to the fact that theories need to be made mobile if they are to have any pretense to universality. Propagation is imperative. If a theory aspires to the hearts and minds of all (wo)men then it must make itself appear to belong to all (wo)men. Its applicability must be seen to be universal and it must lodge itself in our imaginations as something like the natural state of affairs. In this sense a theory must do its utmost to avoid being associated too closely with what Said would term the 'point of origin', for the wearing of local colours can easily taint cosmopolitan credentials. As James Clifford puts it:

> Conventionally, theory has been associated with big pictures – trans-cultural and trans-historical. Localization undermines a discourse's claim to 'theoretical' status. For example, psychoanalysis loses something of its theoretical aura when it is found to be rooted in bourgeois Vienna of the turn of the century and in a certain male subjectivity for which woman is object and enigma.
>
> (Clifford 1989: 2)

This aspect of travelling theory has for obvious reasons been most prevalent in the post-colonial literature. It seeks to prohibit any theoretical hegemony, be it a

discourse on colonialism, capitalism or democracy, from articulating and representing itself as somehow 'natural' and/or rootless. It demands that any theory – and especially those wandering from the West – declare their origins. Any set of ideas must be located in the particular sociocultural context in which it was elaborated, with all structures of power/knowledge clearly displayed. This is as true for liberal democracy and Islam today as it was for the colonialisms and ideologies of yesteryear.

Travelling theory hence provides us with useful ways of thinking about the politics of translocal space. It does so mainly in two ways. First, travelling theory allows us to conceptualise distanciating processes as a source of cultural politics in which meanings are transplanted and rearticulated from one context to another. Second, in so far as this transition implies a *pluralisation* of theory, we can see that the notion of travelling theory also helps to explain how competing interpretations of a given culture come to exist – and how they seek hegemony by gaining a monopoly of the discursive field. I began this chapter by suggesting that it is vital in the context of translocality to see culture – or theory – as something which can alter as it moves from place to place. At this juncture it was only natural for the notion of travelling theory to intervene. What I have not yet offered, and plan to elaborate in the next section, is a more specific understanding of translocal/travelling cultures. How can we best comprehend their characteristics? More importantly, what are the qualities which mediate the production and articulation of meaning in these spaces? I propose to answer these questions through an exploration of the discourses of travelling Islam.

The metatheoretical parameters of Islam

I want to begin with some comments about a particular choice of terminology. In the context of this chapter, I shall assign a connotation to the term 'Muslim' which is somewhat different from the seemingly synonymous designation 'Islamic'. On my understanding, to speak of a *muslim* (in Arabic, 'one who submits') is simply to speak of a subject-consciousness which considers itself to possess or practise a form of identity which derives from something called Islam, regardless of what form one's consciousness of the latter takes. In this sense a *Muslim political community*

> relate[s] to widely shared, although not doctrinally defined, traditions of ideas and practice . . . [T]he forms of political contest and discourse as well as the meanings of traditions vary widely, but a constant across the Muslim world is the invocation of ideas and symbols, which Muslims in different contexts identify as 'Islamic,' in support of their organized claims and counterclaims.
>
> (Eickelman and Piscatori 1995: 4)

I choose to emphasise the 'Muslim', then, in order to orient this study towards exploring the self-descriptions of those who consider themselves to be practising something called Islam. That is not to say, however, that I am advocating a form of methodological individualism. Indeed, I fully realise that individuals exist as such

only through constitutive interaction with wider communities and normative systems. Rather, I am seeking to avoid the essentialism which can so easily be engendered by speaking about a single (absolute) system called Islam. In the same way, the term *Islamic* is problematic in that it would appear to suggest that there exists a body of thought or discursive practice which can be identified as 'authentic' or 'real' Islam. I wish the reader therefore to be aware that when I do use the term 'Islamic', I mean it to be seen within the context of a particular community's (or individual's) understanding of Islam. My aim is to emphasise the multiple, cross-cutting interpretations which produce and reproduce various understandings of this religion across an equally diverse range of sociocultural contexts. So I enter this discourse with caution and fully cognisant of the fact that

> for me, in my condition of *jahiliya* [pre- or non-Islamic ignorance], there is no Islam, in the sense of an abstract, unchangeable entity, existing independently of the men and women who profess it. There is only what I hear Muslims say, and see them do.
>
> (Mortimer 1982: 396)

It is therefore only possible to work within the confines of the various discursive fields which Muslim communities produce, and without recourse to any Archimedian perspective from which 'Islam' as a totality can be observed. At the same time, however, I do not want to suggest that those Muslims who claim that there is only one Islam are wrong in their convictions. Indeed, there is a very strong sense in which there is only one Islam. I see the signifier *Islam* in its singular, universal manifestation as playing a very particular (and vitally constitutive) role in Muslim political communities. Like Bobby Sayyid (1997), I would suggest that Islam can be most usefully viewed as a form of *master signifier*:

> The master signifier functions as the most abstract principle by which any discursive space is totalized. In other words, it is not that a discursive horizon is established by a coalition of nodal points [e.g. 'Islamic' practices], but rather by the use of a signifier that represents the totality of that structure. The more extensive a discourse is, the less specific each element within it will be: it will become simply another instance of a more general identity. The dissolution of the specificity and concreteness of the constituent elements clears the path for a master signifier becoming more and more abstract, until it reaches a limit at which it does not have any specific manifestations: it simply refers to the community as a whole and it becomes the principle of reading that community.
>
> (Sayyid 1997: 47)

I take this to mean that Islam does not refer to a specific set of beliefs or practices, but rather that it functions as a totalising abstraction through which meaning and discourse can be organised.

Some writers have tried to come to terms with the diversity of the Islamic world

by speaking of 'Islams' in the plural (El-Zein 1977; Al-Azmeh 1996). Their motivation is usually to escape the essentialising practices of Orientalism which on the one hand seek to impute some essence or immutable quality to Islam and on the other to avoid confirming the discourses of those contemporary Islamist ideologues who wish to portray their interpretation of the religion as the one and only 'true' Islam. By positing the existence of a multitude of 'Islams', however, these writers risk reproducing the very essentialism they wish to combat. This approach also flies in the face of the fact that the vast majority of Muslims, despite a clear cognisance of their religion's diversity, see themselves as adhering very firmly to a single Islam (Eickelman 1982: 1). To speak of 'Islams' is to be haunted by a sense of boundaries; it gives the impression that there is some point where one Islam leaves off and another picks up. I prefer to think of Islam as something far more fluid. This is why when speaking of Islam, I prefer to see different aspects of a single master signifier, with each aspect becoming 'another instance of a more general identity'. Islam can hence be seen as a single discursive field – a 'lifeworld' perhaps – yet one whose borders are constantly changing. In this sense there is only one Islam, but this does not necessarily have any direct correlation with the lived experience of being (or making oneself to be) a Muslim, nor does it have to impart any essence or teleology to the religion. Islam is narrated, yet the multiple forms of this narration do not destroy but rather build a greater whole. Talal Asad (1993) captures this well when he writes:

> While narrative history does not have to be teleological, it does presuppose an identity [e.g. 'Islam'] that is the subject of that narrative. Even when that identity is analyzed into its heterogeneous parts (class, gender, regional divisions, etc.), what is done, surely, is to reveal its constitution, not to dissolve its unity. The unity is maintained by those who speak in its name, and more generally by all who adjust their existence to its (sometimes shifting) requirements.
>
> (Asad 1993: 16–17)

The singularity of Islam does not, therefore, have to be seen as inimical to the social construction of Islam. It offers to its believers a set of meanings, but as Veena Das argues, these meanings are 'not to be interpreted once, and correctly, but continually reinterpreted, for meanings assigned to the word of God by human efforts can only be approximations' (Das 1984: 296).

Once we have recognised the plurality of meaning derived from Islam, we will want to go on to ask something about the nature of these meanings. What does Islam 'mean' to the Muslim? In what form does its significance manifest itself? As Aziz Al-Azmeh (1996) notes, 'Islam appears as an eminently protean category.' According to him, Islam refers variously to a religion, a history, a community, a culture, an 'exotic' object and a complete political programme (Al-Azmeh 1996: 65). So while Islam is a product of discourse and social construction, it is also usually seen to fall within one of several conceptual categories – most commonly perhaps, that of *religion*. The point I wish to make here is that when we observe Islam from within an epistemology which assigns it to a distinct sphere of activity then we have already to some extent

delineated the limits of what Islam can or cannot be. That is, in so far as we invest the concept of religion with a particular significance or set of meanings (which inevitably derive from our own experiences of it, e.g. seeing religion as primarily concerned with founding myths, the transcendental and questions of eschatology), we necessarily bring traces of that same template of meaning to any other phenomenon whose outward form leads us to give it the label 'religion'.

I am not seeking here to argue that we are somehow unjustified in treating Islam as a religion, nor am I advocating the point of view of those writers – usually Orientalists or extreme Islamists – who argue that Islam is far more than a religion and hence one cannot make any meaningful distinctions between categories such as religion and politics in Islam. Rather, I simply wish to point out that when we calibrate our discursive horizons with reference to totalising categories, we inevitably view our chosen object of observation through a particular lens. Talal Asad argues that there can be no universal definition of the category religion because 'not only [are] its constituent elements and relationships historically specific, but that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes' (Asad 1993: 29). I wish, therefore, in the present context to treat Islam not merely as one example of the more general category religion, but rather as a discursive construct which operates as an important bearer of social meaning within particular communities. What we must be careful of, however, is the tendency in much writing to allow the appellation 'Islamic' to overdetermine the meanings we assign to objects, ideas and people – as if something is suddenly wholly transformed when it becomes associated with Islam. Again it is usually those standing to gain the most from emphasising the exceptionalism of Islam (neo-Orientalists and Islamic absolutists) who engage in this sort of descriptive practice:

> [For them] there are 'Islamic cities' unlike all other cities, 'Islamic economies' to which economic reason in inapplicable, 'Islamic politics' impenetrable to social sciences and political sense, 'Islamic history' to which the normal equipment of historical research is not applied. Facts are disassociated from their historical, social, cultural and other contexts, and reduced to this substantive Islamism of the European [and Absolutist] imagination.
>
> (Sayyid 1997: 177–8)

Likewise the ease with which Islam becomes *the* explanatory variable of any given sociocultural condition. For example, when women are discriminated against in predominantly Christian societies (e.g. the United States or the United Kingdom) the culprit is usually seen to be something called 'patriarchy' (e.g. an historical-structural explanation is given); however, similar discrimination in predominantly Muslim societies is usually immediately ascribed to Islam. In this sense, Islam often offers the easy way out, both for analysts seeking a quick explanation and for the policy-makers of the societies in question who want to sidestep the structural causes of gender inequality and the mistreatment of women by referring to 'cultural' causes which are conveniently 'out of their hands'. I do not want to go too far with this, however. I do not want to suggest that an object is wholly untouched by its

association with Islam, nor do I wish to claim that Islam has nothing to do with the ways in which Muslim women are treated. Any object is at least partially constituted through conjunction with a discursive field such as Islam. Islam cannot therefore be dismissed as nothing more than a 'secondary element'. We also need to ask why the language of Islam is used for the articulation of various socio-political projects:

> Enumerating the variety of functions of Islam does not answer the question of why it is that its name is evoked. For anti-orientalists its importance is due to merely to its use as a source of symbolic authority and validation – in other words its instrumentality. They, for the most part, do not enquire why it is that Islam is being used in this way. Islam matters. Therefore, it needs to be theorized.
>
> (Sayyid 1997: 40)

Hence while 'Islamic economies' or 'Islamic histories' do not possess uniquely 'Islamic' ontologies, the coupling of history and Islam does have an important discursive function related to the production of authority and authenticity. This will be made more clear when I go on to discuss 'travelling Islam' in the next section.

Travelling Islam

Islam, by its very nature, travels well. It can be, and often is, elaborated in many different ways in an equally diverse range of settings (Bowen 1989; Lambek 1990; Hefner and Horvatich 1997; Westerlund and Rosander 1997). What happens, though, when Islam moves beyond contexts in which Muslims are a majority? What tools does Islam possess to communicate and negotiate across cultures? Jan Pieterse argues that there is a tension within Islam, 'a global project organized in local structures' that becomes particularly pronounced in diaspora (Pieterse 1997: 197). Surveying the textual sources of Islam, Omar Khalidi remarks that 'what is baffling is the serious deficiency in the Islamic ideology of a theoretical framework that would be the guiding principle for Muslims in minority situations' (Khalidi 1989: 425). This theoretical gap becomes a chasm once we realise that up to 40 per cent of today's Muslims live in a minority situation (Khalidi 1989: 425). This status, as we shall see, involves a number of advantages and disadvantages. It means coming to terms with an unfamiliar set of circumstances, a requirement to engage with new cultures and an ability to adjust to inevitable changes in one's own tradition. 'We cannot assume', argues Barbara Metcalf however, 'that the old and new cultures are fixed, and that change results from pieces being added and subtracted. Instead, new cultural and institutional expressions are being created using the symbols and institutions of the received tradition' (Metcalf 1996: 7). We are therefore not talking about cases of loss and gain, or of aspects of Islam simply 'disappearing' in diaspora. What we see is a far more complex condition, one in which Islamic meanings shift, change and transmutate, where things *become something else*. Likewise Islam becomes represented in new forms and via new media. Television, the Internet and 'secular' literature now suddenly all become sources of Islamic knowledge. Muslim

subjectivity also often becomes more aware of its religion in minority situations. In the 'homeland' Islam was an instrinsic aspect of that context's lifeworld, one which was taken for granted. In diaspora, however, Islam becomes yet another stigma of foreignness, a sign of the other. This causes Muslims to objectify their religion and to engage in a self-examination or critique of Islam and its meanings (Metcalf 1996: 7). Migration is hence a rupture, an important break which can lead to changes in the significance of Islam and of being Muslim (Sunier 1992: 145).

As regards the changing significance of Islam in diaspora we again find a diversity of experience. On the one hand there is a sense in which the difficulties involved in practising Islam in a predominantly non-Muslim (and usually secular) society means that the religion becomes a new source of merit. A reconciliation of the five daily prayers with the typical European working day and the effort required to seek out *halal* meat (slaughtered in accordance with Islamic regulation) provide a particular sense of satisfaction when achieved in a non-Muslim context. On the other hand, there are also ways the diasporic condition offers religious opportunities which might not have been available in one's home society. For example, because migration often brings greater economic prosperity, diasporic Muslims are often able to undertake religious duties such as the *hajj* (the pilgrimage to Mecca) which were previously beyond their means (Metcalf 1996: 9). Another example of how diaspora can provide Muslims with new freedoms relates to those 'sects' which are minorities – and often persecuted – even within predominantly Muslim settings. Some of these groups are even banned in their home countries, or subject to considerable pressure from state institutions. Alevi and Ahmadi Muslims, often branded as heretical in Turkey and Pakistan respectively, often find that their religion loses much of its negative connotation in diaspora.

A related phenomenon is to be found in the ability of many Muslims – and especially the younger generation – to relate to one other across sectarian divides. There are a great many movements, tendencies and schools of thought within diasporic Islam, even within what might broadly be termed Sunni orthodoxy. The adherents of various *madhahib* (schools of jurisprudence, sing. *madhhab*) often find it much easier to reconcile with each other in diaspora. This is because their minority status has the salutary effect of emphasising the similarities rather than the differences between them. In their societies of origin such mutual understanding is often far more difficult to achieve. Those in the homeland, those who have remained behind, are hence often shocked when they 'find that their culture, transported to new settings, is being defined and practised in novel and sometimes disturbing ways' (Ahmed and Donnan 1994: 6). Because there is considerable transnational traffic between diasporas and their home societies, attempts are often made to maintain a dialogue between Islam at home and Islam in diaspora. One important aspect of this exchange is the now increasingly common phenomenon of what we might call 'transnational ulama'. These are usually imams or scholars associated with a particular sectarian group who spend several months a year with followers of the same school in diaspora. Many examples of this new breed of itinerant clergy can be found in the literature. Pnina Werbner (1995) points to the transnational quality of Sufi leadership in the UK, Nico Landman (1992) notes the regular visits of

high-ranking Barelwi representatives to The Netherlands, and Tayfun Atay (1997) discusses the politics of the Naqshbandi Sheikh Nazim and his annual stay in London.

Despite the contact a Muslim community may maintain with its home society, it soon becomes clear, however, that Islam cannot simply be 'transplanted' into diaspora. Muslims will naturally (and necessarily) experience both continuity and discontinuity, most of which will stem from their minority status and from their relations with the majority society (Landman 1992: 26). Much of this discontinuity is the result of a dual effect produced by the diasporic minority condition. It relates to how many Muslims are made to feel (or told by analysts) that they will fit into the majority society only if they are willing to break with Muslim 'tradition' – as if Islam is something from the past, something that should be left behind. At the same time, there is a discourse within the majority society which 'presumes . . . a direct relation between the extent to which a certain ethnic or religious group clings to its cultural background and the attitude towards the host society' (Sunier 1992: 146). This simply reinforces the first mentality by representing those who bring their Muslim-ness into the public sphere as 'others', strangers who do not belong. This gives rise to conflict between the diaspora and the majority society and also within the Muslim community. In the former case this is usually portrayed as an 'inter-cultural' issue concerning 'Muslim migrants, unwilling to assimilate to the dominant culture, [who] try to establish religious institutions which resemble those at home as much as possible' (Landman 1992: 26).[1] In the Muslim community this conflict is experi-enced as a generational divide between parents who want to reproduce the Islam and religious institutions of the homeland in diaspora – in effect, trying to live *as if they are still in the majority* – and a younger generation seeking to make Islam more compatible with the new setting, to which they are naturally more attuned (Siddiqui 1998).

This brings us quite firmly into the realm of a set of problems which pertain to how the majority society 'reads' Islam. As Barbara Metcalf points out:

> [R]eligious life [in diaspora] is shaped by the nature of the majority society, above all, by its assumptions about the relationship of state and religion. In each national context, Muslims may try to or be encouraged to produce institutional and symbolic equivalences to non-Muslim forms; they may also strain at being thus constrained. Further, as Muslims make claims on public space, they encounter resistance to Islam.
>
> (Metcalf 1996: 12)

In other words, problems arise because Islam does not conform to the expectations the majority society as to what a religion should look like. It hence has difficulty recognising Muslims because Islam does seem to fit their conception of who, what and where religion is constituted. For example, in 1980 the Islamic Federation of Berlin applied to the city's education authorities for permission to offer Islamic education in accordance with those provisions of the Berlin school law which devolve responsibility for religious instruction to churches and other religious associations. The Federation offered to pay for this teaching out of its own resources and also to

supply its own qualified teachers. The application was rejected, however, because the Federation was deemed not to have met the necessary criteria for recognition as a proper religious association – despite the fact that it represented nearly all of Berlin's largest mosques, and was the only such Muslim organisation in the city (Thomä-Venske 1988). The problem seemed to stem from the fact that the Muslim community did not have the same formal hierarchy of clergy as is usually found in Christianity. Because Islam did not conform to this preconceived template of religious structure, its representative organisation was somehow invalid. Similar conflicts in which state authorities in Europe have found it difficult to approach Muslim communities for lack of any clear central authority have also arisen in The Netherlands over the ritual slaughtering of animals (Shadid and van Koningsveld 1992: 16) and in Belgium with regard to education (Dassetto and Nonneman 1996: 194).

These same preconceived notions of where one should look to find 'proper' religion also occasionally appear in the academic literature. Thus one analyst was led to observe that the expression of Islam among Moroccan migrants becomes more 'formal' in diaspora since the sites of local 'popular' Islam (the graves and shrines of various saints) are no longer accessible. This is why mosque attendance is higher in The Netherlands than it is in Morocco; in the absence of popular saints, people turn instead to the only identifiable (and the only available) Muslim institution, the orthodox mosque (van Ooijen 1992: 169). While there is undoubtedly some degree of truth in what is being hypothesised here, there is also the danger of appearing to suggest that it is only to the mosque that one should turn when searching for expressions of Islam. If we compare Landman's study of Sufi orders in The Netherlands – which includes large numbers of Moroccans – we find that the 'popular' or mystical aspect of their religion is indeed present, but is 'seen in the liturgical meetings they organize *in addition to the daily ritual prayers*' (Landman 1992: 37). This example serves as an effective warning of the dangers involved when we transport Eurocentric (or Christocentric) assumptions about the formal spaces of religion into the Muslim context.

This kind of analysis can be seen as symptomatic of a wider epistemological error relating to how many analysts still insist on taking Islam as a cultural given and ascribing to it very particular functions and qualities. This mode of knowing Islam prevents us from appreciating its dynamic character and from recognising what is different about Islam from one context to the next. As one writer puts it, '[too much] attention is being paid to the continuative aspects Islamic tradition. As such Islam is treated as an explanatory phenomenon rather than a phenomenon which has to be "explained"' (Sunier 1992: 144). Too often, it would seem, observers of Muslims in diaspora – and Islam in general – operate with preconceived notions of what Islam is and what it means to Muslims. This is ironic considering much of our discussion above. Where some fail, as we have seen, to recognise Islam as an important component of their own societies, others seem to feel quite legitimate in characterising Islam as part of a 'global threat' to the West. This is contradictory in so far as Muslim diasporas are part of Western society. It makes no sense to speak of an Islamic threat 'out there' when Islam is already 'in here'. The notion of 'Islam' often tells us very

little about Muslims; rather, we should be asking Muslims to tell us about their Islam. Felice Dassetto and Gerd Nonneman summarise the point well:

> Often, Muslims who strengthen their connections with Islam find themselves and their actions endowed by others with a significance which far exceeds their intentions. In fact, they generally simply want to incorporate Islam (often a popular and conservative version) into their daily lives and to convey it to their children. Instead, they find themselves caught up in a geopolitical game which has little to do with their own reality.
>
> (Dassetto and Nonneman, 1996: 193)

This is not to say that Islam 'doesn't really count' for Muslims, or that there are not serious intentions behind Muslims' commitment to their religion. I only want to argue that those intentions are often other than what popular (mis)conceptions of Islam take them to be. Hence the difficulty and ambivalence which surrounds the readings which Islam and its diasporas receive in those societies constructed as their 'others'. Many young Muslims feel themselves to be under a state of siege. As one of my interviewees put it, 'you have to understand the tension in the Muslim mind living in the West; there is always this fear of being misrepresented or painted as extremists who don't understand the West and are on some other planet' (Hussain 1998).

So how do we move beyond this apparent impasse? How can we refigure the Muslim diaspora – and how can it refigure itself – such that Islam is allowed to function 'not only as an instrument and symbol of isolation, but also of emancipation?' (van Ooijen 1992: 178). My argument is that we need to focus on the dynamic qualities of travelling Islam, to draw greater attention to the ways in which things change when they migrate. It must be understood that Islam's passage into diaspora constitutes but a single stage of its journey; this transition in turn enacts a form of internal peregrination: travelling Islam becomes travel *in* Islam. In order to appreciate this dynamic we need to re-orient our analysis of Islam to focus on flux and disjunctions rather than on stabilities and continuities. The translocal spaces of diasporic Islam have provided fertile venues for the rethinking and reformulation of tradition, the construction of an Islam for generations to come. Diasporic Muslims have begun the task of reassessing the boundaries of their political communities and asking questions of their religion. We should respond by concentrating more on how Muslims read books and less on how they burn them.

Towards a critical Islam

A new breed of Islamic intellectual, often schooled and living in the West, is staking strong claims to the Muslim's right to reflect upon tradition, and to make moral choices based on responsible and rational readings of Islam's textual sources. Shabbir Akhtar (1989), for example, quotes Qur'anic verses forbidding compulsion in religion and enjoining confessional tolerance. For him these suggest 'a specifically Islamic manifesto on freedom of conscience and conviction' (Akhtar 1989: 76–7). For such thinkers, one's life in the West is therefore not to be lamented but rather

embraced, offering as it does the opportunity to reread, reassess and reassert the validity of Qur'anic teaching in new contexts (Lewis 1994: 192). In this regard we might recall al-Faruqi's celebration of *hijra* 'to the West' or the Meccan *'alim* who pointed to the obligation that Muslims have to seek knowledge and religion wherever it might take them. Indeed there are those, such as Zaki Badawi, who firmly believe that it is from Muslim contexts in the West that the most radical and innovative Islamic thought will emerge. He sees France as potentially very fertile in this regard because it is there that Muslims face the greatest difficulties. These challenges, he hypothesises, will produce the most creative solutions (Metcalf 1996: 19).

Another phenomenon closely related to life in diaspora is the way in which the traditional ulama are increasingly finding themselves bypassed in favour of, for instance, Muslim youth workers, in the search for religious knowledge. We see this in the case of Dilwar Hussain (1998), who explained that by asking questions in the mosque he only seemed to inflame the tempers of impatient, doctrinally rigid imams. In the Young Muslims UK, however, he found a leadership willing to devote the time and effort necessary to answering questions and showing young Muslims how their religion is relevant to contemporary life in the West (Hussain 1998). Some writers have depicted the traditional religious scholars as purveyors of an internal hegemony, an ahistorical reading of the sources which seeks to posit an essential, immutable Islam. 'They all profess to be upholding the essence of Islam,' argues James Piscatori, 'yet in fact all are reinterpreting doctrine. They establish new, supposedly fixed points while denying that shifts of emphasis, nuance or meaning also occur' (Piscatori 1990: 778). Thus we find Shabbir Akhtar arguing for an explicit 'critical Qur'anic scholarship' and also for 'a new theology, responsive to the intellectual pressures and assumptions of a sceptical age' (Akhtar 1990: 66–7).

Many contemporary thinkers urge Muslims to go back to the sources and read them for themselves, exercising good judgement and trusting in their own personal opinions as to what the texts mean for Islam today. Fazlur Rahman (1982) argues that Muslims should read the Qur'an and the Hadith without relying on bulky, medieval commentaries. His claim is that these sources 'were misconstrued by Muslim scholars in medieval times, made into rigid and inflexible guides – for all time, as it were – and not recognised as the products of their own times and circumstances' (Denny 1991: 104; Rahman 1982). Another prominent religious scholar urges young Muslims in the West to undertake

> a fresh study of the Qur'an . . . not with the aid of commentaries but with the depths of your hearts and minds . . . You should read it as if it were not an old scripture but one sent down for the present age, or, rather, *one that is being revealed to you directly*.
>
> (Nadwi 1983: 190)

Young Muslims are hence told to imagine themselves as Muhammad (a controversial proposition in itself), and to recognise that just as the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet in a particular setting in space and time, so must its message be made to speak to the particular circumstances of diasporic life.

There are indications that this call is being heeded. Young Muslims in the West often meet informally to discuss the Qur'an and other textual sources, attempting to read them anew and 'without the intervention of centuries of Islamic scholarship'. Schooled in a tradition that teaches them not just to blindly accept but also to ask questions, young Muslims are deploying this inquisitiveness on the early texts in order to find in them the contours of an Islam for the here and now (Nielsen 1995: 115). There is hence no reluctance to delve into the *usul al-fiqh*, but there has been a shift as to what Muslims are hoping to find there. Gone is the obsession with the somatics of prayer and correct bodily practice. The emphasis now is on wider questions concerning Muslim identity and relations between Muslims and non-Muslims (Hussain 1998). Also less frequent now are intersectarian debates on points of *fiqh*. Some organisations, such as Young Muslims UK, have decided that one's choice of *madhhab* or school of legal thought should be a personal choice. Where the organisation needs to take a public position on some issue, however, this is decided by a process of *shura* (consultation) in which the views of various *madhahib* are considered. Again, this ethos reflects the style of education which many young diasporic Muslims have received. Reflection and comparison allows them to develop their own responses to the situations and challenges of life in the West; through this activity they are able to develop an emancipatory theology that 'allow[s] them to be European without breaking with Islam' (Nielsen 1995: 115). This amounts to a strong reassertion of the principle and practice of *ijtihad* ('free thinking')[2] as a competence possessed by all Muslims and not simply an elite (albeit socially detached) group of ulama. For many young Muslims today, a legitimate promulgator of *ijtihad* is anyone who speaks to a particular question or cause with morality, perspicacity and insight. The status of *'alim* is hence no longer a pre-requisite for being recognised as a valid source of Islam. One interviewee, for example, told me that he regarded someone like the Tunisian Islamist Rashid Ghannoushi – who has written extensively on the compatibility of Islam with Western doctrines of democracy and civil society – as far more qualified to practise *ijtihad* on the topic of politics than, say, an Azhar-trained *'alim* (Hussain 1998). Pnina Werbner (1996) notes how:

> For a younger generation of [Muslims] growing up in Britain the definition of what is Islam is and means may well come to be increasingly constituted not by the Qur'an and Hadith, but by dissenting political ideologies . . . [Their] texts increasingly fuse a multicultural rhetoric of antiracism and equal opportunity with the ethical edicts of the Qur'an and Hadith.
>
> (Werbner 1996: 115)

Fischer and Abedi's conversation with an American Muslim confirms this point in a more lucid vernacular:

> I don't go out and say, 'Everybody come to the mosque.' I don't do that anymore, because the mosque is not what people need. People need to know

how to feed themselves. People need to know how to survive. People need to know their class interests. And the application of Islam as something that comes out of the mouths of the imams is not doing that.

(Fischer and Abedi 1990: 323)

Young Muslims today are hence seeking to create an Islam that addresses the social predicaments and daily experience of life in the modern West. They have neither the time nor the patience for South Asian idioms of Islam from the nineteenth century. These traditions, as Phillip Lewis notes, were 'honed in conflict with British hegemony, ranging from accommodation to isolation and defiance. The need now is for a critical and constructive exchange both within these traditions and with the majority society' (Lewis 1994: 208).

It is in the cosmopolitan, translocal spaces of cities such as London that this kind of exchange is taking place. The myriad range of cultures, ideas and people that flow through these spaces produce rich sites of intellectual activity. The syncretisms and interminglings which inhabit these cities also constitute the cutting edge of critical Islam – and also, occasionally, the edge that cuts too deep. It is no coincidence that Salman Rushdie's now infamous novel of translocal hybridity, *The Satanic Verses*, is set in the British capital. London's status today as a global city – in many ways even a gateway to the world or nodal point for cross-cultural transit – ensures constant cultural intercourse on an unprecedented scale. It is also an environment in which such conversations can be openly expressed, assessed and reformulated. In this sense, Western translocal space stands in stark contrast to the situation in many Muslim majority states where the capacity to stray publicly from officially prescribed doctrine is heavily circumscribed. Western translocalities, on the other hand, offer the aspiring Muslim intellectual the opportunity both to *express and encounter* alternative readings of Islam. It is no wonder, therefore, that so many exiled and diasporic Muslim activist-intellectuals choose to make their homes in the global city (Lebor 1997: 101–2). This fact stands in stark opposition to a statement by Dominique Schnapper to the effect that 'Muslim intellectuals in Europe are faced with the task of setting the terms of necessary compromise between faith and participation in communal life' (Schnapper 1994: 149). On the contrary, it is much more likely that a Muslim would have to live with such a compromise in Saudi Arabia than in London. Schnapper also invokes the concept of *darura* ('imperative need') to explain how medieval scholars used to find it possible 'by learned and subtle argument' to legitimise transgressing the boundaries of doctrinal prescription under circumstances of absolute need, and often these were associated with a Muslim's presence in a non-Muslim state (Schnapper 1994: 148). Her implication seems to be that Muslims in Western Europe may need to resurrect that principle today. (Perhaps she is even suggesting that such drastic measures constitute the *only* means by which the Qur'an can 'travel'?) I would want to argue, however, that the evocation of *darura* by many of today's diasporic Muslims took place well before their '*hijra* to the West'. Indeed, I would suggest that for them, the departure from their societies of origin was itself seen as an act of *darura* because in many cases the

West provides them with the best possibility of fulfilling the Qur'anic injunction against compulsion in religion. Not only are they able to speak their religion more freely in diaspora, but also it is here that they come to know the Muslim 'other'. Dialogue, self-reflection and, gradually, *critique* all flow from this process. As a collective exercise, we are witnessing the deconstruction of Islam by Muslims themselves:

> The old way has to be analyzed into discrete parts so that Islam can be identified . . . one [then] proceeds to 'reassemble' these Islamic components together with the components arising out of the migration and settlement experience into a new complex whole which functions more successfully in European, urban, industrial life.
>
> (Nielsen 1995: 116–17)

It is therefore not simply a case of bringing one's Islam into translocality, for the very act of doing so necessarily involves a relativisation of Islam. A new perspective emerges in which Muslims are able to see their religion in relation to both the norms and structures of the majority society *and* in relation to other idioms and interpretations of Islam. It is as a result of this wider breadth of vision that a critical renewal of Islam is now beginning to emerge.

Conclusion: modalities of travel

Theory has done its fair share of travelling in this chapter. I began by asking how meanings change through movement from one context to another. Here I examined a set of ideas surrounding the notion of 'travelling theory'. This trope showed itself to be useful in understanding the transformation of ideas and cultures in translocal spaces, and also in helping to explain the existence of competing interpretations and idioms *within* a culture. An encounter with the translocal can often throw up alternative interpretations of cultural authority and authenticity which suddenly bring the hybridity of 'local traditions' into sharp relief as they are brought face to face with their own contingency. Travel, migrancy and hybridity, I went on to argue, should not be celebrated as part of a postmodern carnival, or as an ontological fad. Neither is diaspora our new 'natural state'. Mike Featherstone (1995) puts it well:

> To be aware of the construction of local communities, societies and nation-states as sedentary homelands does not mean that we should switch to the opposite assumption that the normal condition of being is, or should be, one in which everyone is a 'nomad' or a 'traveller' . . . The challenge to theorizing today is how to construct theories of communal living in localities which do not merely represent sedentariness as the norm, but seek to consider its various modalities, including displacements into images of imaginary homes/homelands. Such theories also need to take into account the ways in which those

inhabitants who engage in various modes of travel manage to construct and live out their various affiliations and identities.

(Featherstone 1995: 144–5)

Within the *ummah* we see translocality producing two seemingly contrary effects. On the one hand a heavily dispersed community of believers is brought closer together, communication between them enabled, and dwelling within what might be imagined as a single space – a notion captured by the term 'globality' – becomes realisable. Yet at the same time the same forces which bring Muslims together are also working to separate them: fission within fusion. Translocality makes Islam more aware of its own internal difference; it highlights the Muslim other by making him or her visible, forcing confrontation. This in its turn is giving rise to a new breed of diasporic Muslim, a 'people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur, unprecedented unions between what they were and where they find themselves' (Rushdie 1991: 124–5). The *ummah* is affirmed and realised in diaspora while simultaneously fragmented, broken down into subunits which generate novel combinations (Nederveen Pieterse 1997: 186, 198).

Within the spaces of diasporic Islam there is also emerging a new form of interstitial identity – a 'third space' to use Homi Bhabha's terminology – in which the politics of the majority society is not embraced, but neither is that of the 'homeland', especially among the younger generation. This creates forms of political identity which are somehow 'in between.' When viewed in the context of translocality, or when these identities travel, there is also enacted a new mode of 'relating internationally' – one in which the boundaries of political community are constantly open to negotiation and renegotiation. Thus we must agree with Eickelman and Piscatori when they argue that traditional dichotomisations of 'inside/outside' and 'internal/external' are unhelpful in understanding the dynamics of these Muslim politics (Eickelman and Piscatori 1995: 153). Many see in this Islam the seeds of a new idiom of political community as 'authentic' as it is modern, one that perhaps even moves beyond modernity. 'Viewed in this perspective,' suggests James Clifford, 'the diaspora discourse and history currently in the air would be about recovering non-Western, or *not-only-Western*, models for cosmopolitan life, non-aligned transnationalities struggling within and against nation-states, global technologies, and market – resources for a fraught co-existence' (Clifford 1997: 277). In this connection it should be noted that what primarily interests me in the case of Islam are the ways in which translocal encounters modify how 'authoritative' and 'authentic' *meanings* are found in transnational religion – that is, the ways in which a system of symbols and laws are made relevant or acculturated to groups of people in particular places and times. Many recent accounts of Islam (and political Islam in particular) have stressed Islam's inertia, its unchangedness, its *fixity*. In other words, people have sought to explain Muslims according to some eternal, unchanging entity called Islam. In this chapter, on the other hand, my intention has been to reveal the myriad transformations which Islam undergoes as it moves from one sociocultural context to the next, to highlight its movements and transmutations; I have been most

interested in *how Islam travels*. By focusing on its more dynamic aspects, I believe we are able to gain a richer understanding of how Muslims seek and construct meanings in the time of translocality.

Notes

1 I should point out that this is not Landman's own position, but rather his characterisation of the dominant discourse on Muslim immigrants within 'host' societies.
2 There are those who would claim that *ijtihad* is not simply 'free thinking' but actually refers to a form of jurisprudential practice with very specific methodologies and boundaries. It is a testament, however, to the development of what Barbara Metcalf has called a diasporic 'Islamic English' that this term is usually translated as, and associated with, notions of free, independent thinking.

10   Messianic moments and the religious (re)turn in international relations

Andrea den Boer

> At no moment did the Western philosophical tradition in my eyes lose its right to the last word; everything must, indeed, be expressed in its tongue; but perhaps it is not the place of the first meaning of beings, the place where meaning begins.
>
> (Levinas)

Introduction

An examination of recent literature in the field of international relations reveals a renewed interest in religion and its relationship to international politics and political theory.[1] Like the return of culture and nationalism at the end of the twentieth century, there are suggestions of a return of religion.[2] Yet there is little reflection on the meaning of such a return. Despite these references to a 'return', IR has not always been silent on issues of religion. Religious perspectives on nuclear weapons, ethics, and peace studies have, at times, occupied the pages of journals and textbooks. One could argue that religious ideas and concepts have been seamlessly incorporated into IR's supposedly secular discourse – traditions of democracy, justice and even methods of interpretation (particularly hermeneutics) are reminiscent of biblical texts and exegeses. From the ancient past to the present, religious wars are the most obvious example of the cross-over between religion and politics, with religion playing a role in many parts of the world, including Latin American struggles, African wars, and conflicts in former Communist countries. Even the Cold War can be interpreted as a religious war in which the 'God-fearing West' was pitted against the 'Godless Communist East'.

So why refer to a return of religion? The fall of communism in the former Soviet bloc has coincided with an increased interest in religion and politics at the same time that poststructural perspectives appeared to be reasserting the modern distrust of religious authority; poststructuralism's distrust of meta-narratives seemed to close off discussions of the meaning of a return to religion in both the East and much of the West. At the same time, however, the critique of modernity's separation of reason from faith opened up a space for reconsidering questions framed in terms of religion, faith and spirituality.

The role of religious discourse in constructing an ethic of responsibility has also

returned to the forefront of recent discussions among scholars.[3] This chapter was inspired by the ethic of responsibility found in the writings of the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas's philosophy is unique in the way in which it combines philosophical language with the language of the Bible. Levinas's ideas were first introduced to IR through the writings of David Campbell, and I was struck by the unusual use of biblical language in an IR journal. While Levinas's ideas have become familiar to IR theorists, it is of interest that no one has yet reflected on the role of religious texts or meanings in his philosophy, nor on the meaning of religion in ethical theories of international politics. How are we to interpret references to religious concepts in political discourse? Is this a return to a pre-modern understanding of existence and being? The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on possible interpretations of the return of religion in politics, particularly within international political theory.

Religion as (re)turn

But first, what is religion? We generally think of religion as the worship of God or a supernatural being through a set of personal or institutional beliefs and practices (we might even refer only to the God of the Book, in fact, since to speak of religion already implies a Western understanding of faith and the holy, not simply because the word 'religion' itself is Latin in origin, but because the very concept of religion as a distinct sphere – as institution – is Western). The etymology of the word 'religion' leads us to the Latin *religio* (connoting conscientious exactness, moral scruples, sanctity and worship), whose roots may be found in *religare*, which is to restrain, to bind again or tie fast. Hence religion can suggest constraints to freedom, as well as the binding of oneself to another (God or man), even a return to something formerly bound.

   It seems fitting to think of religion itself as return, since we are speaking of a return to religion in contemporary life as well as in philosophical reflection. But why return? And what does it mean to speak of a return? Some suggest that a return to religion is a response to apocalyptic fears of the twentieth and now twenty-first centuries, to threats to identity through processes we call 'globalisation', or in response to the void created by an existence in which meaning is determined by patterns of consumption. Whether they provide a sense of identity, community, or purpose to existence, religions play a role in contemporary life. What can they contribute to our understanding of responsibility and ethics? A return to religion within philosophy aims to find whether one can continue to speak of religion within philosophical language: what does it mean to speak of religion after the death of God and the critique of foundation and meta-narratives? How can international relations, which draws on political theory and philosophy for its inspiration, interpret discussions once again grounded in faith, God, redemption and other religious discourses?

   Problems of contemporary politics can lead us to question whether modernity has delivered on its promises of autonomy, rights and reciprocity for all on the basis of rationality. Reflecting on secularism, religion and ethics, William E. Connolly remarks that 'secular models of thinking, discourse, and ethics are too constipated to

sustain the diversity they seek to admire, while several theocratic models that do engage the density of culture do so in ways that are too highly centered' (Connolly 1999: 6). Connolly is searching for something between secularism and a return to the theological state. The ethical approaches suggested by the writings of Levinas can perhaps be seen as this state of in-between. His ideas do not constitute a return to religion and God but a turn toward an ethico-religious discourse which proceeds from the anarchical encounter with the 'wholly other'.

As Michael Dillon notes, the continental thought of Levinas, Derrida and others offers 'a comprehensive reappraisal of metaphysics that provided both a fundamental critique of epistemology and a new point of departure for political and philosophical reflection' (Dillon 1999: 92–3). Dillon explains that a defining feature of this point of departure is the presence of a difference (or *différance*) which creates a rupture or instability in identity and meaning and therefore in all thought and practice. The operation of difference captured the interest of IR scholars during the 1990s, for as Dillon notes, 'Such a point of departure problematizes the very foundations of traditional philosophical and political thought' (Dillon 1999: 93).

The departure effected by Levinas's writings, in addition to revealing a rupture in identity and subjectivity, ruptures the separation between philosophy and religion, between faith and reason, and turns us toward something beyond politics as conceived at the present. Levinas's ideas were introduced to the IR audience by David Campbell (1993a, 1994) but have subsequently been found in the writings of Jim George (1995), Daniel Warner (1996), Iver Neumann (1996), Patricia Molloy (1997), James Der Derian and Michael Shapiro (1989).[4] Despite the interest in Levinas's ideas, IR has not yet reflected on the meaning or role of religion in his texts. Campbell notes that he is attracted to the notion in Levinas's texts that the interhuman has an interface or 'a double axis where what is "of the world" qua *phenomenological intelligibility* is juxtaposed with what is "not of the world" qua *ethical responsibility*' (Campbell 1996: 131). Responsibility in Levinas, in many ways, is not of the world. What does this mean? It is not Campbell's project to find the answer to this question, but can we attempt to employ Levinas's concept of responsibility without this reflection? John Caputo notes, 'Religion is one "other" that these thinkers, who are otherwise deeply persuaded about the power of the "other", do not want to hear about' (Wyschogrod and Caputo: 1998). An examination of the interplay between philosophy and religion in Levinas's texts allows us to address the idea of a turning towards religious ideas in the interplay between philosophical thought and international theory/politics.

Levinas, politics and religion

The ideas of Levinas in many ways seem appropriate to the politics of today. Locating the ethical in the encounter with the other allows for a critical approach to ethics in IR because it enables a move beyond typical narratives framed within a statecentric discourse. In order to move outside of the state sovereignty orientation, Shapiro, Campbell, and others are attempting to articulate an ethical orientation that challenges traditional moral thinking and that provides guidance for confronting

'collisions of difference – difference that includes incommensurate practices of space and conflicting narratives of identity' which constitute many of the acts of violence in contemporary international politics (Shapiro 1997: 177).

Levinas's concept of ethics redefined in terms of responsibility for the other appeared to offer a concept of ethics which was radically different from an ethics based on appeals to established norms and codes of behaviour. It is Levinas's refiguring of subjectivity which is most appealing to IR scholars. Subjectivity, identity and responsibility are located in a non-site, which is conceived as a place, or space, for speaking about ethics without returning to a fixed ground or universal principles on which ethics must be based. For Levinas, the encounter with alterity, with that which is wholly other, is an awakening: the encounter awakens my subjectivity and my responsibility to the other (to the point even of substitution and being for the other).

Those who are familiar with Levinas's philosophy, even its use within IR, will be familiar with the concepts of other, self, the ethical encounter which takes place in 'proximity' to the other, to the command issued forth in the face of the other, being-for-the-other, and being responsible for the other. Yet we may not recognise the biblical or Judaic roots of these concepts.[5] A brief examination of these key terms will reveal that Levinas has indeed mixed the Hebrew with the Greek in his writings,[6] but we shall also see that just as Levinas uses philosophical terms in new ways, the same applies to the Jewish concepts he employs.

Levinas tells us:

> Philosophy can be at once both Greek and non-Greek in its inspiration. These two different sources of inspiration coexist as two different tendencies in modern philosophy, and it is my own personal task to identify this dual origin of meaning – *der Ursprung der Sinnhaften* – in the interhuman relationship.
>
> (Levinas and Kearney 1986: 21)

Levinas's philosophical writings focus on this relationship between the self and other as the site of meaning, language and ethics by bringing together the writings and traditions of Judaism with those of Western philosophy. Levinas does not use religious texts as proofs within his philosophy, but as sources of inspiration. He does not read Talmud (Judaism's oral tradition of rabbinic commentaries) as a set of mythological stories or commentaries on a particular historical period, instead, he reads them in such a way that the philosophy contained within is revealed. Levinas explains:

> Our first task is therefore to read it in a way that respects its givens and its conventions, without mixing in the questions arising for a philologist or historian to the meaning that derives from its juxtapositions . . . It is only after this initial task of reading the text within its own conventions that we will try to translate the meaning suggested by its particulars into a modern language, that is, into the problems preoccupying a person schooled in spiritual sources other than those of Judaism and whose confluence constitutes our civilization. The chief goal of our exegesis is to extricate the universal intentions from the apparent particularism within which facts tied to the national history of Israel,

improperly so called, enclose us . . . Our approach assumes that the different periods of history can communicate around thinkable meanings whatever the variations in the signifying material which suggests them.

(Levinas 1990b: 5)

Levinas's specific goal is to translate the text in such a way that he is able to move from the particular circumstances surrounding the text and reveal the philosophical (what he refers to as universal) content. Levinas maintains not only that the Greek and Hebrew traditions benefit from this 'translation' of the one into the other, but also that they even require it. What can philosophy, and in particular ethics, gain from the writings of ancient and medieval rabbis? And, conversely, what can the Hebrew traditions gain from philosophy? Levinas writes that 'Our great task is to express in Greek those principles about which Greece knew nothing. Jewish peculiarity awaits its philosophy' (Levinas 1994a: 200). Whereas the Hebrew texts require a movement from the particular circumstances they are discussing to more universal principles (this is the role of the Greek within the Hebrew for Levinas), Greek texts require the challenges provided by the Hebrew, particularly challenges to Western philosophy's elevation of politics over ethics, and of self over the other. Levinas's use of the Hebrew in the Greek is not original – religious concepts have always been present within the Greek. Philosophy cannot in fact be read without a knowledge of Christianity and the Bible, and Christianity and Judaism have become intertwined with philosophical principles such as reason.

   Thus Levinas's philosophy is replete with concepts that have a corollary within Jewish texts, most notably within the Talmud. The Jewish sources or references are not always noticeable to the reader, however, unless one is already familiar with the writings of Judaism. The links become more obvious upon reading Levinas's 'Hebrew' texts, his philosophical commentaries on the Talmud. Yet there are often surprising statements in his philosophy. For example, Levinas refers to the ethical encounter between the self and other as an encounter in which God is found.[7] He further refers to the ethical relation as a religious relation. What can this mean? The encounter with the other is an exceptional encounter. It is one in which I am brought out of my comfort zone of living for myself, of reducing all that I see and do to myself and my experience of the world. The alterity of the other awakens my subjectivity and calls my being into question. I am subjected to the other, and become responsible. It is through this passivity toward the other that the ethical encounter will 'announce the Divine' (Levinas 1990b: 32). In *Difficult Freedom* Levinas explains:

   The fact that the relationship with the Divine crosses the relationship with men and coincides with social justice is therefore what epitomizes the entire spirit of the Jewish Bible. Moses and the prophets preoccupied themselves not with the immorality of the soul but with the poor, the widow, the orphan and the stranger. The relationship with man in which contact with the Divine is established is not a kind of *spiritual friendship* but the sort that is manifested, tested and accomplished in a just economy and for which each man is fully responsible.

(Levinas 1990b: 19–20)

Levinas's focus is not on the immorality or immortality of the soul, but on the poor, the widow, the orphan and the stranger, who operate as tropes for the other for whom we are responsible in his philosophy.

According to Levinas, in the encounter with the other, the self is issued a command. This command which issues forth from the face of the other – 'Thou shalt not kill' – is well known as one of the commandments given to Moses at Mount Sinai. To the Jew, the significance of this expression goes far beyond that of being one of the commandments. In one of his religious commentaries Levinas tells us:

> The entire Torah, in its minute descriptions, is concentrated in the 'Thou shalt not kill' that the face of the other signifies, and awaits its proclamation therein. The life of others, the *being* of others, falls to me as a duty. In the *thou* of this commandment, the *me* is only begun: it is for the other in its innermost nucleus. Rupture of being *qua* being. At the heart of the ultimate intimacy of the identi-fication of the *me* with the *oneself*, there is the rupture of immanence: the Other passes before the Same.
>
> (Levinas 1994b: 111)

The concept of the 'Thou shalt not kill' has similar significance and weight in Levinas's philosophy. What awakens me to my responsibility for the other is the significance of the word of God through the command issuing forth through the face of others. It is revelation. God comes to mind.

Proximity, that ambiguous term which is an approach to the other, equated also with responsibility, has roots in biblical verse. Scriptures pertaining to God – who executes justice and provides food for the widow and the stranger (Deuteronomy 10:18), and who 'dwells in holy places' but also with those 'of a contrite heart and humble spirit' (Isaiah 57:15) – reveal the paradox of the 'proximity of God to human suffering' (Levinas 1994b: 115). Thus proximity as the relationship with that which cannot be resolved into images nor exposed, as something that is not being, takes on increased meaning when related to God. In order for us to be in proximity to God, for us to approach God (Isaiah 58:2), we must devote ourselves (in this case, through fasting) to others (Levinas 1994b: 171). Proximity is, as Levinas notes in 'The Trace of the Other', humbleness joined with height (Levinas 1986: 352).

Being-for-the-other, which is the self's response in the ethical encounter, also has its roots in Judaism. In a long essay on 'Judaism and Kenosis', Levinas describes how the human individual sustains and gives life to the cosmos, how humankind is responsible for the universe. As such, the world is because it can be justified through human enterprise and 'the human is the possibility of a being-for-the-other' (Levinas 1994b: 126). True prayer, in the Jewish tradition, is not prayer for oneself, but prayer that is offered for the other, or an offering of oneself. It is never an entreaty on behalf of oneself. The responsibility for the other, this obligation of responding, is the response to a call issued forth from the face of the other and is not intentional. Levinas explains that it 'could never mean altruistic will, instinct of "natural benevolence" or love'.[8] It does not stem from my will, but rather has begun before I become aware of my own being, before my subjectivity arises. I am not guilty of

anything and yet I am guilty, I am responsible, I am under condemnation, accused and persecuted. 'The word *I* means *here I am*,[9] answering for everything and for everyone' (Levinas 1981: 114). It is a substitution of me for others; it is human fraternity. The responsibility comes from the Good. I am susceptible; this is my passivity. 'The Good assigns the subject, according to a susception that cannot be assumed, to approach the other, the neighbor' (Levinas, 1981: 122–3). The Good, or the Infinite, orders me to the neighbour as a face, which order I find in my response and not prior to it.

   We cannot understand the call of the other and the movement toward the ethical encounter, nor responsibility, if we do not understand the Good, the Infinite, or God, in Levinas's philosophy. In a passage cited earlier from Campbell's text, Campbell quoted several lines in which Levinas discusses the interhuman or encounter with the other. It is interesting to note that immediately following these lines in which the interhuman is addressed, Levinas adds a discussion regarding God. The entire text reads as follows:

> The interhuman relationship emerges with our history, with our being-in-the-world as intelligibility and presence. The interhuman realm can thus be construed as a part of the disclosure of the world as presence. But it can also be considered from another perspective – the ethical or biblical perspective which transcends the Greek language of intelligibility – as a theme of justice and concern for the other as other, as a theme of love and desire which carries us beyond the finite Being of the world as presence. The interhuman is thus an interface: a double axis where what is 'of the world' qua *phenomenological intelligibility* is juxtaposed with what is 'not of the world' qua *ethical responsibility*. It is in this ethical perspective that God must be thought and not in the ontological perspective of our being-there or of some Supreme Being and Creator correlative to the world, as traditional metaphysics often held. God, as the God of alterity and transcendence, can only be understood in terms of that interhuman dimension which, to be sure, emerges in the phenomenological-ontological perspective of the intelligible world, but which cuts through and perforates the totality of presence and points towards the absolutely Other. In this sense one could say that biblical thought has, to some extent, influenced my ethical reading of the interhuman, whereas Greek thought has largely determined its philosophical expression in language.
>
> (in Kearney 1984: 56–7)

Campbell's use of the text ended prior to Levinas's statement that 'God must be thought' within this ethical perspective. Such a statement appears scandalous in the age of reason when we have ceased to speak of God, thus we must examine his words closely to determine their meaning. What does Levinas mean by the use of the word, 'God', which he has already stated is a philosophically obscure concept? Within Levinas's ethical framework, something otherwise than being is encountered in the ethical. Something other than being cuts through and perforates the present and points toward the absolutely other. Levinas sometimes refers to this otherwise

than being as God. He is not arguing the existence of a supreme being or creator and then creating an ethical system which evolves from that being's existence. Instead, Levinas argues that in the encounter with alterity – with that which is totally other – there is something beyond being, otherwise than being, which creates a response and responsibility in us. He calls this 'otherwise than being' God. Levinas adds, 'The ethical situation is a human situation . . . in which the idea of God comes to mind (*Gott fällt mir ein*).' In this encounter with alterity in which I find myself responsible for another human being, in which 'God comes to mind', my ontological will-to-be is called into question. This ethical encounter is not something confined to the Judeo-Christian systems of religion, but remains, Levinas argues, 'an essentially religious vocation' (in Kearney 1984: 60–1).

God is 'other than Being', Levinas tells us. It has become commonplace to speak of the 'other', but God is the 'other' of whom we seldom speak. In Levinas's texts, God is nonpresent, nonontological, and cannot be known. This is not a form of negative theology, however, since negative theology is caught up in the ontological. Levinas is attempting to 'perceive a God who has not become spoiled by Being' (Levinas 1981: xlii). Nor is Levinas's thought a form of theology. As Adrian Peperzak (1993) writes:

> It is of the utmost importance to make a sharp distinction between Levinas's speaking about the infinite and the theology of the Western tradition. As a thematizing within the frame of ontology, this theology localizes God as a (highest) Object in the eternal order of a 'world behind the scenes'. His representation through dogmas and formulas of belief destroys the religious situation. Theological language rings untrue or becomes mystical. As ontological language, it belongs to the fabric of interests that dominate the state and its religious parallel, the church. Being incapable of disinterestedness, theology impedes transcendence . . . This God is the seducer who apes the infinite; he is an enemy of morality and a principle of hate.
>
> (Peperzak 1993: 224)

Like Peperzak, Levinas also implicates theology in much of the violence of world politics. It is not to theology's understanding of God which Levinas turns in his philosophy. Nor does this understanding of God come directly from Judaism. The infinite, or God, is defined by its absolute alterity, transcendence and height.

> The idea of infinity, the infinitely more contained in the less, is concretely produced in the form of a relation with the face. And the idea of infinity alone maintains the exteriority of the other with respect to the same, despite this relation.
>
> (Levinas 1969: 196)

The infinite neither contains the I, nor does the consciousness of the I contain the infinite. We cannot thematize nor grasp the infinite, for it is 'the radically, absolutely, other' (in Peperzak 1993: 107). Nor can the infinite be experienced in any union of the self and the infinite, because the infinite can be experienced only through the encounter with the other. This understanding of the infinite echoes the Jewish

understanding of the unknowable God who cannot be experienced through any mystical union. A relationship with God is best approximated through substitution of myself for the other. In responsibility, the self opens to the other, becomes for-the-other. As Levinas notes:

> This responsibility for others therefore comes to be for man the meaning of his own self-identity. His self *(son moi)* is not originally *for itself (pour soi)*; 'through the will of God' it is 'for others'.
>
> (in Hand 1989: 230)

When asked how the God of ethics differs from the God of ontology (or the God of the philosophers), Levinas replied:

> For ethics, it is only in the infinite relation with the other that God passes (*se passe*), that traces of God are to be found. God thus reveals himself as a trace, not as an ontological presence which Aristotle defined as a Self-Thinking-Thought and scholastic metaphysics defined as an *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* or *Ens Causa Sui*.
>
> (in Kearney 1984: 67)

Medieval philosophers attempted to think of God as different from humans by using superlatives of wisdom and power, but these are inadequate to the otherness of God, according to Levinas. 'It is not by superlatives that we can think of God, but by trying to identify the particular interhuman events which open towards transcendence and reveal the traces where God has passed.' The other referred to as God in Levinas's philosophy is a God

> who is always in relations with man, and whose difference from man is never indifference. This is why I have tried to think of God in terms of desire, a desire that cannot be fulfilled or satisfied – in the etymological sense of *satis*, measure.
>
> (in Kearney 1984: 66–7)

God, as well as the other, is often described as a 'trace' by Levinas. It is the concept of trace which enables the other to be spoken of without a loss of alterity. The coming of the other from a past and place that cannot be (re)presented, disturbs signifyingness such that the face (of the other) cannot be represented. God, himself, is described as a trace, but to go toward him is not to follow the trace, but to go toward others who stand in the trace (Levinas 1986: 359). The word 'trace' comes from the theological vocabulary of late ancient and early medieval philosophy, particularly from the work of Plotinus. It began to be used to signify that which does not appear in the language I use to describe God, but which, nevertheless, is 'in' that language as if it left a trail, or a trace.[10] The God in Levinas's philosophy, then, can be best understood as trace, even a textual trace. As Jill Robbins suggests, 'perhaps we can begin to think God, in Levinas's work, as the *name* – unpronounceable if you like – for the difficult way in which we are responsible *to* traces' (Robbins 1995: 181–2). In going toward the trace of the other, in the denuded face of the other, the ethical is

announced. The approach to God is an encounter with the other in which the I finds a trace of a God who has already passed by, yet was never present. Levinas clearly states: 'No relation with God is direct or immediate. The Divine can be manifested only through my neighbour' (Levinas 1990a: 159).

As previously stated, the relationship with the Divine is important because it crosses the relationship with humans and coincides with social justice. Justice, as spoken of by Levinas, goes beyond the philosophical conception of a universal justice. The jewgreek conception of justice focuses on the least among us, on the widow and orphan, and involves mercy and compassion as well as justice. In Levinas, justice originates in my infinite responsibility toward the other; but since there is more than one other, justice is required. Caputo (1993) notes:

> In the jewgreek paradigm, the power of justice is the power of powerlessness, and the rule of justice is the rule that holds sway just on behalf of those who have no power, who are overpowered by the powers of this world. It is that atypical and anomic law of justice, as opposed to the philosophical conception of justice as universality, that inspires the works of Derrida and Lyotard; and this jewgreek justice is the trace that has been left in their work by Levinas.
>
> (Caputo 1993: 206)

Justice, for Levinas, is one of the key concepts taught by the Hebrew that is required in the Greek; this is a justice which attaches infinite worth to the singular, to the individual forgotten or effaced by politics.

Messianic moments

Justice is one of the more elusive concepts in Levinas's texts. In one of his texts, Levinas tells us that justice is messianism (Levinas 1990a: 21).[11] He explains that the messianic is best interpreted according to the Talmudic maxim that 'the doctors of the law will never have peace, neither in this world nor in the next; they go from meeting to meeting discussing always – for there is always more to be discussed'. He adds that he 'could not accept a form of messianism which would terminate the need for discussion, which would end our watchfulness' (in Kearney 1984: 66–7). There is always a need to be more just, more ethical.

For Levinas, the messianic is linked with my ethical relation with the other. This is why he rejects the mystical, which is an encounter with God that is removed from the ethical relation of the self with the other. Just as God is that which is encountered in my approach to the other, the Messiah is found among the beggars, the widows, the strangers. Thus the messianic moment is not a moment in a distant future, for the Messiah is encountered every day. In the context of a Talmudic interpretation of Jeremiah 30:21, which reads, 'His chieftain shall be one of his own, his ruler shall come from his midst', Levinas argues that the 'Messiah is the King who no longer commands from outside . . . The Messiah is myself; to be Myself [*moi*] is to be the Messiah' (Levinas 1990a: 89–90). The Messiah is someone who takes upon himself the suffering of others, someone who is oriented towards the other.

Levinas looks at the instant to determine meaning for beings, not to history, nor to the future. Messianic eschatology is not a doctrine of the last things, so it is not to be confused with what often passes as eschatology in the Christian tradition. 'It is not the last judgment that is decisive, but the judgment of all the instants in time, when the living are judged' (Levinas 1969: 23). Levinas often refers to a beyond history, which is that which interrupts history. Eschatology in Levinas is also not a question of the future, but a disturbance or interruption of the present reminiscent of the way in which he insists that the ethical must rupture the political. The political for Levinas is the space in which we find the state, institutions, and laws, which are the source of universality. 'But politics left to itself', he writes, 'bears a tyranny within itself; it deforms the I and the other who have given rise to it, for it judges them according to universal rules, and thus as in absentia' (Levinas 1969: 300). The ethical relation, in which I become responsible for the other, is a moment of the messianic and Levinas is waiting for a time when the 'eschatology of messianic peace will have come to superpose itself upon the ontology of war' (Levinas 1969: 22).

Messianic moments – moments in which I take upon myself the suffering of others and become responsible – are important because these moments break with politics, with totality, with ontology. As Theo de Boer (1995) writes, Levinas began with Husserl in order to find the openings in his thinking through which to escape. 'He takes the evidence of philosophy as his starting point but then tries to break out, so that the evidence loses its totalitarian grasp. There are situations in which ontology "breaks"' (de Boer 1995: 163). This break with ontology also corresponds with a break in theology and theology's grasp over our understanding of God. In an important statement, de Boer concludes by adding:

> If there is a return to or a trend toward speaking of 'God' – if there are situations in which that word comes to our mind – it happens by way of a completely different course, beyond every ontology.
>
> (de Boer 1995: 164)

There is no return to the God of the philosophers in Levinas's texts. While his use of religious concepts, particularly Jewish concepts, in his philosophy may at first appear to constitute a return to theology, to the God of philosophy, or to a specific religion, Levinas is not suggesting such a return.

The Bible often speaks of the Jews as a chosen or elect people. For Levinas,

> this election is made up not of privileges but of responsibilities. It is a nobility based not on royalties [*droit d'auteur*] or a birthright [*droit d'aînesse*] conferred by a divine caprice, but on the position of each human I [*moi*]. Each one, as an 'I', is separate from all the others to whom the moral duty is due.
>
> (Levinas 1990a: 21)

This is the meaning of being chosen, of being a chosen people, for Levinas. Those who demand more of themselves, who demand justice for the other, and 'feel responsibilities on which the fate of humanity hangs' which Levinas describes as

posing 'themselves problems outside humanity' find themselves, according to the Pentateuch, in a 'position outside nations' (Levinas 1990a: 22).

What is important within Judaic texts as interpreted by Levinas is the unicity of each individual, the importance of the singular. Levinas writes:

> The Torah is no longer in Heaven but in the discussions that men have; to persist obstately in seeking its original meaning (the celestial meaning) is, paradoxically, as if one were to uproot trees or reverse the flow of rivers. When exegesis goes beyond the letter, it is also going beyond the psychological intention of the writer. A pluralism is thus accepted for the interpretation of the same verse, the same biblical character, the same 'history-making event', in the acknowledgement of the various levels, or various depths of meaning. In this polysemy of meaning the word is like 'the hammer striking the rock and causing countless sparks to fly'. The various epochs and the various personalities of the exegetes are the very modality in which this polysemy exists. Something would remain unrevealed in the Revelation if a single soul in its singularity were to be missing from the exegesis.
>
> (Levinas 1994a: 171)

Causing sparks to fly

Comparing Levinas to the prophets of old who told stories of the im/possible, John Caputo remarked that one of the purposes of such stories is to interrupt the self-assured voices of the powerful and call them to account for themselves (Caputo 1991: 13). In speaking of the messianic, in calling us to watch and wait and respond to the other, Levinas is calling us to do the im/possible. But there are reasons for the stories they tell, there are reasons for turning (but not returning) to religion in ethical discourse. Because alterity in Levinas's texts is also the alterity of an unknowable, unthematizable God, Levinas's ethics, Derrida notes, 'is already a religious one. In the two cases the border between the ethical and the religious becomes more than problematic, as do all attendant discourses' (Derrida 1995: 85). Responsibility could never rest easily between either discourse, according to Derrida. Is this a problem? If it returned us to a dogmatic theology, then it would be problematic. But, Derrida adds,

> that has never stopped it from 'functioning', as one says. On the contrary, it operates so much better, to the extent that it serves to obscure the abyss or fill in its absence of foundation, stabilizing a chaotic process of change in what are called conventions.
>
> (Derrida 1995: 85)

The conventions of philosophy and of international politics need challenging, need to be interrupted. 'The jewgreek experience of the other, the passionate intensity of a jewgreek poetics or quasi-ethics of mercy and *kardia*, irrupts in the center of philosophy and disrupts its project of comprehension' (Caputo 1993: 212–13). The

jewgreek other as stranger, widow, orphan cuts across conceptions of ethical systems. John Caputo argues:

> I will not call this jewgreek economy an economy of dialogue, which is a paradigm that has dominated philosophy from Plato to Buber and Gadamer. The jewgreek 'other' is not quite up to being a dialogue partner, if only because she may have been silenced and rendered unable to register a complaint or state her cause . . . The other in this jewgreek economy comes toward us not as a conversational counterpart but as a claim (*Anspruch*). She does not appear across the plane of a conversation, on a more or less level surface, in a more or less homogenous space. She comes to us from on high, and this just because she has been laid low, in a space that is curved against her, unequal, unfair, where her voice is excluded, distorted, silenced.
>
> (Caputo 1993: 211–12)

This jewgreek economy draws our attention to the need for interruption, for deconstruction, for justice, and for greater attention to the way in which the political effaces the other. The interruption occurs through the messianic moment, by responding to the other, and through the faith present in deconstruction. We cannot get away from faith, the holy, or religion because they are always already present. God comes to mind in the encounter with the other, but through a course beyond ontology. There are numerous levels and depths of meaning in interpreting existents and existence, and turning to a concept of the ethical inspired by religious concepts, narratives and discourses offers an alternative to modernity's failed promise of autonomy, rights and reciprocity for all on the basis of rationality. Twentieth-century politics suggest that these promises have not been delivered; despite claims of increased interdependence among people, alternate processes of alienation and practices of exclusivity have created a situation in which the rights and claims of the self are pitted against those of others. As Levinas suggests, 'it is of the highest importance to know whether we are not duped by morality' when that morality is founded on a modern separation of ethics, religion and politics.

Notes

1 A version of this chapter was presented at the London School of Economics and Political Science *Millennium* Conference on 'Religions and International Relations', 27 May 2000.

2 The resurgence of religion has occurred in many parts of the world, as the following publications suggest: Berger (1999), Westerlund (1996), Lewis (2000), Haynes (1994) and Sahliyeh (1990). Throughout the 1990s, numerous texts examining the role of religion, nationalism and conflict were published. Some of these texts include Appleby (1999), Hastings (1998), Selles (1996), Kakar (1996) and Haught (1995).

3 Religion and ethics have long been a topic of interest for scholars of world religions. Various religions have, at times, attempted to find solutions to the problems of peace, intervention, and responsibility. In 1919 (the year the first department of international politics was created to address problems of peace and war), members of the Bahai religion published the book *The Peace of the World: A Brief Treatise upon the Spiritual Teaching of the Bahai Religion with Particular Regard to its Application to the Great Problem* (Bahai Religion

1919). In 1967, the Council on Religion and International Affairs in the United States published Robert Gordis's book, *Religion and International Responsibility*. More recently, in 1994, a conference was held at Columbia University to discuss religions and responsibility, the proceedings of which were published as *The United Nations and the World's Religions: Prospects for a Global Ethic* (Hodes and Hayes 1995).

4 In addition to these articles, papers concerned with Derrida and Levinas have become commonplace at IR conferences.

5 Given that this is a chapter exploring the meaning of religion, it is important to reflect on the meaning of Judaism. We often refer to Jews, by which term we may be implying a nationality, a religion or a civilisation. Reflecting on the meaning of the word today, Levinas notes the following:

> The word 'Judaism' covers several quite distinct concepts. Above all it designates a religion, the system of beliefs, rituals and moral prescriptions founded on the Bible, the Talmud and rabbinic literature, and often combined with the mysticism or theosophy of the Kabbalah. The principal forms of this religion have scarcely varied for two thousand years and attest to a spirit that is fully conscious of itself and is reflected in a religion and moral literature, while still being open to new developments. 'Judaism' thus comes to signify a culture that is either the result or the foundation of the religion, but at all events has its own sense of evolution. Throughout the world, and even in the state of Israel, there are people who identify with Judaism but do not believe in God and are not practising Jews. For millions of Israelites who have been assimilated into the civilization around them, Judaism cannot even be called a culture: it is a vague sensibility made up of various ideas, memories, customs and emotions, together with a feeling of solidarity towards those Jews who were persecuted for being Jews.

Above all, Levinas was aware of the constantly changing meanings of Judaism for those who call themselves Jews (see Levinas 1990a: 22).

6 'Hebrew' refers to the traditions and experiences of Judaism, which, for Levinas, have universal import. Part of his project is to 'translate' the wisdom of the Hebrew into 'Greek', referring not to the language, but to the tradition of philosophy founded in Greek.

7 Levinas does not often actually use the word 'God' in his writings, however. In one of his earliest 'Hebrew' texts, Levinas explains that the word 'God' will appear seldom in his writings because it expresses a philosophically obscure idea. He adds, however, that 'this notion could become clearer for philosophers on the basis of the human ethical situations the Talmudic texts describe' (see Levinas 1990b: 32).

8 To be without intentionality means that responsibility does not have an intentional structure, that is, it cannot be understood as something moving from the subject out toward an object. Responsibility does not move from me to the Other, it originates with the other (see Levinas 1981: 111–12).

9 Levinas often refers to the expression, 'here I am', to designate the offering of the self, in passivity, to the other. The expression originates in the writings of the prophets of the Old Testament, particularly in Genesis and 1 Samuel. 'Here I am' denotes an attitude of humility and readiness to serve.

10 God shows himself only by his trace in Exodus 33: 21–3 in which Moses recounts the following:

> And the LORD said, Behold, [there is] a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

11 Levinas often remarks that there is no justice yet, or that justice is always a justice which desires a better justice.

11 Reliving the Boxer uprising; or, the restricted meaning of civilisation

Stephen Chan

> The survival of the West depends on Americans reaffirming their Western identity and Westerners accepting their civilisation as unique, but not universal, and uniting to renew and preserve it against the challenges from non-Western societies, most notably Islam and China. The West should attempt to align with itself the core states of the 'swing' civilisations, that is Russia, India, and Japan.
>
> (Huntington 1997: 141)

Introduction

Really, the most striking thing about Samuel Huntington's (1996) work on 'civilisations' is the ineptness of its history. It is about the 'West's' latest fashion in trying to swing others. Of course, where there are swings there are roundabouts, so that Henry Kissinger once tried to swing China against the Soviet Union, and tried to bifurcate Islam itself; Iran was long courted when under the Shah; China fought with the Allies of the Second World War against Japan; in that war, what exactly – with Germany and Italy on one side – was the West anyway? Nothing 'civilisational' united the West in the Second World War; civilisation seemed to be an absent consideration in bringing Turkey into NATO; and, at the 'end of history', the very triumph of the West in the Gulf war, how many Islamic states fought alongside the West for the wherewithals of Kuwait? It seems that opportunisms, ideologies and hegemonies in capital flow have meant more than whatever a civilisation is meant to mean.

Meanwhile, what does the Russian President Vladimir Putin think about his status as head of a 'swing' civilisation? What does India, with civilisation considerably older than the West's, think of swinging? And Japan: there are people in Japan who view world politics as swinging the West behind Japan. And of what, anyway, is Japan the core? Another East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere? Surely, in today's world of electronic interpenetration, no one moves lines across a map any more and imagines they represent absolute gains, losses and meanings. The world has grown more subtle than that.

More subtle than the Boxer uprising at the beginning of the twentieth century, and its Western (plus Japanese and Indian) response. The Chinese may have been asserting the independence of their nation and used the (abbreviated and

reconstructed) badges of their martial and magical civilisation, but the Western forces (plus Japanese, plus British inclusion of Indian troops) were fighting only for territorial and strategic commercial advantages. Oh, Russian mercenaries were involved as well. What Huntington proposes is merely a rerun, exactly one hundred years later, of an episode in history that, for the West anyway, became a very bad film starring Charlton Heston (and David Niven, two stereotypes of American and English to represent the West).

This chapter is an enlarged version of a review essay commenting on Huntington's book. Although distinguished critics such as Edward Said have lambasted the book in much more influential outlets, Huntington chose to reply, not to Said, but to my own criticisms. He did this by summarising, in his view more accurately than I, the contents of his book; so the quotations here are drawn from his own summary of himself.

In closing this introduction, however, I should briefly question not just Huntington's historical judgement, but his sociological assumptions. Cuban communities in Miami, Ukrainian suburbs in Chicago, black cultures and sub-cultures, Chinatowns in San Francisco and Seattle: who are these Americans 'reaffirming their Western identity'? And it is Americans leading the Western civilisation; Europe doesn't get much of a leading role in it all, especially a Europe of Celtic devolutions in the United Kingdom, of Lombards in Italy, Catalans and Basques in Spain, a barely reunited Germany, curiously blending both West and what was so recently East, and of entirely new cultures, composed only within the twentieth century – Finland, for example – and now finding themselves reaffirming all that is confusedly but 'historically' Western. If cultures are the bedrock of Huntington's civilisations, the West gets off to almost as divided a start as its opposing 'Islamic' civilisation. And if Huntington means, instead, a civilisation that is Western because of the values of its Enlightenment, then, well, it is a short history of civilisation indeed. Greece does not fully make it into Huntington's map of the West, so democracy and Aristotle cannot be the font. The curious thing is that, even at the height of the Iranian revolution, you could still study Hegel and Kant at the University of Tehran. What, really then, did Huntington mean?

Reasons

There were, perhaps among others, three reasons why Huntington wrote this book. The first was to seek to substantiate the argument – provocative and highly generalised – of his summer 1993 article in *Foreign Affairs*, 'The Clash of Civilizations?' The second was to provide, in the wake of the Cold War, the sort of epochal preview that George Kennan managed in the 1940s, announcing its beginning. The third was simply to lodge another entry in the list of grand scholarly works that have become major sellers in the United States. Of these, two out of three – Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (1988) and Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) – were to do, even if loosely, with international relations; and all three sought to survey vast panoramas while displaying formidable learning. Kennedy's footnotes were longer than some books. The problem with even lengthy

and grand books is that, if international relations are concerned, they can only generalise a panorama. Global histories, including intellectual histories, do not fit into even three to five hundred pages.

I feel that Huntington has failed in all three of the efforts suggested above. First, the *Foreign Affairs* article was essentially a polemic and it cannot be disguised by expansion and the patina of a scholarly apparatus. I shall return to my view of his apparatus. Second, in following the footsteps of Kennan, Huntington has assumed that one struggle follows another, and that the struggle is to secure domination of the world order. He makes no real effort to view the coming to notice of different approaches to international relations as efforts to impose terms upon modernity and what may, quite reasonably if not convincingly, be called its excesses and its encroachments. In short, new approaches, disguised perhaps as civilisations and taken at face value by Huntington, may be modes of resistance, not efforts at conquest.

In his reply, Huntington does go half way to conceding this:

> As non-Western societies modernise, they increasingly resist Westernisation and, instead, affirm the value of their indigenous cultures, manifested, among other things, in their tremendous resurgence in many parts of the world.

Including a resurgence of fundamental Christianity. The point is that there are two difficulties here. China, for instance, is not resisting Westernisation by affirming indigenous culture. China stamps upon the *Fulan Gong* and other sects not within the government's control. China resists democratisation, not all aspects of the full range of Westernisation, and does so for reasons of power and public administration. And who, in fact, within Islam, resists and affirms? It is only in a handful of instances that governments do this: Iran and Sudan are the two primary examples. Elsewhere, as in Algeria, affirmation and resurgence are as much to do with establishing an opposition to authoritarian government as any literal fundamentalism. This is not to deny literal fundamentalism. It is to say that it is one ingredient in plural recipes which Western political science serves poorly.

Third, the other 'big books' I have mentioned sought to contextualise a moment in history. Huntington has written a warning, meant to defend a particular view of history. It is a work of partisanship, not of scholarship, and if a partial contrast with Kennedy were sought, it would be in the sparseness and 'Westernness' of Huntington's notes: no grand tours of the self-composed intellectual sources of other civilizations here; his confessed readings are, in Said's term, largely Orientalisms.

Determined non-empathies

The point about the defence of particular views of history is important here, for Huntington's is not the only such book. Huntington seeks to explain a moment when what seemed universal, or effortlessly making a claim to universality, is challenged. The point, and irony, is that – in Huntington's generalised world – each civilisation constructs an Other and defends itself against this Other. In so far as the

technology of modernity is used for the practical purposes of defence, each may construct an Other, but is permeated by that Other in the very technology of construction. 'Islam' cannot do without the electronic communications invented and developed by its Other. The 'West' cannot do without the oil located within the geology of its Other. The technology of modernity permits a mutual permeation, and each resents what filters through from the Other: Huntington as much as a 'Mullah' might be what Huntington represents.

As it is, the clash represented by the Gulf war was over regional and mineral hegemonies, not over Islam as such, not over a monolithic Islam against the West as a fundamentalist's monolith. When the final showdown came at last between the United States and Iran, it was at the Soccer World Cup; and the Iranian victory was conspicuous by its muted triumphalism, just as its pre-match courtesy was marked by gifts from the Iranian players to the Americans. I do not recall that the Americans reciprocated.

Here is not so much a clash as limits to Huntington's empathy. However, since there is some sort of two-way traffic in the world, we need to understand the Other's point of origin – in civilisations, in state-construction, in debates and struggles for forms of government and governance – and their modes of arrival upon 'our' shores. We need to disentangle all this: we do not need to invent a new *Chinoiserie* as a substitute for China.

Generalisations and distortions

But, in so far as Huntington generalised, does he get it right? Here it must be said that he has not only assumed much, but also been selective in his assumptions. The very word 'civilisations', although used at Huntington's face value in this chapter, is never satisfactorily defined. It is, at best, a generalised description. However, even as a descriptive term, it works only if grand exclusions are made. In a polyglot world in which plural societies predominate, particularly in the West, what exactly is the 'West' that Huntington seeks to defend? Is it a London with mosques and ashrams? More balefully, is it a sectarian Belfast with both major confessional factions claiming the Western legacy? How Huntington fails to understand the Yugoslav conflict as involving, at least in significant part, Christian/Western legacies, is a matter for conjecture. He seeks to accommodate this by assigning the label Orthodoxy to a large part of Christendom – with the result that Greece, something of a founder of Western values, is no longer part of the West. His world maps near the book's beginning omit the years 1939–45, when the 'West' was at war with itself. Then, of course, something identifiably, even if problematically, Greek and Yugoslav rallied to the non-fascist part of the Western cause with its Enlightenment values.

If Huntington is able to exclude all that he must, then he rests finally on a collective mythos for foundation. Like the French proto-fascist, Maurice Barrès, there is the foundation implication of a political unconscious, in which whole races and nations – expanded by Huntington to include whole civilisations – carry ideas and tendencies collectively.

Huntington writes:

> Countries that are culturally similar are coming together, because it is easier for them to understand and trust each other.

I really see little actual evidence of this. What African unity is there? Even with their common interest in oil, how much unity was there within OAPEC? At the present day, what exact Islamic world organisation, or significant military pact, actually threatens the West? Frankly, the African Francophone countries have a closer affinity by way of public administrative culture, and their leaders by way of culturally nuanced personal style, to France than to anywhere else.

If the idea of political unconsciousness is not true of Western civilisation and/or Christendom, it is even less so of Islam – the perceived rise of which lies somewhere near the animus of his *Foreign Affairs* article. But what have we in Islam, apart from the commonly ascribed branches of Sunni, Shi'a and Sufi (and a host of sectarianisms in addition)? We have at least three major languages (Arabic, Iranian and Turkish), not to mention Asian, African and South Asian languages; and something like a billion people; with a vigorously intellectual debate easily lost sight of in generalised and superficial observations and conclusions of fundamentalism.

The spectacular transcendentalism and eroticism of Sufi Islam is something very different from Huntington's image; just as Bosnian Muslims are as 'Western' as their Croat and Serbian antagonists. Huntington writes:

> At the local level, fault line wars, largely between Muslim and non-Muslim groups, generate, as in Yugoslavia, 'in-country rallying'.

The point is that Iranian fighters, who went to help the Bosnians, were confused that they could not recognise them, from their own experience, as Muslims, except as a species foreign to them. As for Yugoslavia, it was not, in the macro-games of the political conspirators in the Balkan governments, a case of Muslim against non-Muslim. It was a case of territorial expansionism in which, the tragedy of Bosnia notwithstanding, the prime antagonists were the Christian states of Croatia and Serbia. (Huntington locates this region, in his maps, as 'orthodox' and outside Westernness, but Croatia is, of course, somewhat Catholic.)

Huntington concludes his book proscriptively. The West must look after itself. How might it actually do this, if needs must by drawbridge or civilisational curtain strategies, is not explained by Huntington. This is the inheritor of Kennan now replacing one Cold War with another and imagining, at millennium's close, that the political economy of international relations can be compartmentalised into 'civilisations', and the Western compartment survive. Perhaps this is to predate Kennan, and it is a form of (conditional, to be fair) splendid isolation.

Kinships

Let me not be unkind, although I have implied I would. For those who noted the neatness of Huntington's earlier work, such as his thoughts on civil–military relations, ending with a plangent paean to the orderly campus of West Point, this is

precisely where the idea of tree-lined grids and distinct separable and separated functions becomes ridiculous. If the army and the society it serves can be rendered into two categories, the world cannot. More to the point, army and society are *not* two categories – as if one could be compared equally with the other. The army is one institution among many that make a state and its society work organically. Similarly, the world is a much more complex organism than the separated, generalised, finally exclusionary and reductionist 'civilisations' that appear neatly in Huntington's book.

Now the unkindness: this book is a construct of a sort of fundamentalism that has an analogue in exactly that type of Iranian or Sudanese fundamentalism that is seen as a bogey. Beneath the political rhetoric of state leaders, the intellectual apologia that elaborates and justifies a 'civilisation curtain' between, say, Sudan and that generalised Other, the 'West', is every bit as sophisticated seeming and rationally couched as Huntington's.

Iran even had its equivalent (ahead of time) to Fukuyama, but, instead of the rhetorical device of the last person, what was proposed was the advent of the era of the just people, and, at least, the philosophical apparatus used was every bit as sophisticated as Fukuyama's (Rich 1999).

The thing is, for an enlightened (not an Enlightenment) international relations, what is required is not the business of sketching the Other so generally it seems abnormal, except as an appositional force – or power we do not know quite yet how to balance – but the business of trying to understand the nature and ingredients of global plurality, of other cultures and their fears and resistances within the periphery of modernity; and of their wish to appropriate a place at the centre of modernity on their own terms. In the words of Aimé Césaire, why should not others have a place at the rendezvous of victory? A multicultural international relations, a truly non-fictive cosmopolitan and normative one, will find there are universal values drawn from different approaches to victory, when none has been excluded from the moment of victory. None also excluded from the meaning, in its truest sense, of civilisation. Huntington never properly defines this term, except as a gathering-in device of what he also loosely calls cultures:

> Ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs and institutions.

But, what does this mean? A world of differences does not, anyway, mean a world of exclusivities, let alone antagonisms, let alone confrontations, let alone a global cold war of civilisations. Islamic medieval thinkers dealt with Aristotle as fully as those in Europe. Persian texts from the period of our Renaissance talked still of that moment when Alexander's influence pervaded Persia and established, by way of debate and discourse, the differences and sympathies between Aristotle and a Sufi Islam (Attar 1998).

What this means is that a division of the world into civilisations is mentally lazy – not just in its formulation, but especially so in its permission *not* to explore meanings that, with different methodologies surely, may well render the world whole. Huntington's failure is, therefore, a failure of thought and thought's empathy. It is a

failure to ascribe meaningfulness to Others in the sense of a discursive ascription. It is a face value settlement on rhetoric. That rhetoric may (or may not) be fundamentalist. Accepting it at face value would make the acceptor at least a literalist. There is a wry togetherness forged here: the Mullah Huntington. The meaning of a civilisation is expressed in its discourse. This finally is all that is missing in Huntington's book. It does not mean a reprise of the gunning down of Chinese anti-colonists, one hundred years ago, by the armies of Western and 'swing' civilisations at the gates of Peking.

12 On the danger of premature conclusion(s)

Peter Mandaville

We seem to have a compulsion to name time. From the maelstrom of histories we conjure periods, epochs and eras. We endow them with connotation, invest them with meaning. We assert what 'then' was about, struggle to define 'now' and speculate about where contemporary trajectories might lead. The sequence of living before modernity, being modern and then transcending modernity reveals the linear logic that underlies the flow of meaning through history: one set of meanings – a *Zeitgeist*, a spirit of the age, a 'here and now' – gives way (perhaps, *à la* Hegel, dialectically) to a successor. A new age is supposedly defined, one that follows clearly from that which preceded it. In international relations, for example, the Cold War has given way to a somewhat more ambiguous present, yet one whose inhabitants want to define in relation to previous configurations of geopolitics as a 'post-Cold War era' (of which more later).

Some visions, and Hegel's was one of them, posit a trajectory to history – a final Meaning towards which Being is compulsively driven. In this teleology, History has an End. Western epistemologists and social theorists have engaged in a spate of history-ending in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Where Hegel identified its termination in the Prussian state, Fukuyama later found its expression in the apparent universalisation of the liberal-democratic mode. These visions are, in other words, tied to particular 'ways in the world', inherently normative projects that express a desired configuration of knowledge, culture and morality – from which, supposedly, ste(a)ms the engine of history. There is a destination in mind here, an institutional form, perhaps, that will embody the Spirit and mark its culmination. Hegel, his follower Fukuyama and the dominant theorists of IR – particularly those working in a neo-realist mode – all find that Good manifests in our time; for them it speaks to us through the trappings of the liberal nation-state, the *sine qua non* of modern IR. The seemingly inexorable global drift towards this institution – defined by its proponents as *progress*, that is as 'forward movement' in History – provides further evidence of its messianic properties.

Less clearly articulated, however, is the extent to which this process relies on *retrospectres*; that is, hauntings from previously defined eras whose terms of reference define and constrain the possibilities of what might come after (or what might never have actually been in the first place). Songwriter and performance artist Laurie Anderson usefully paraphrases Walter Benjamin's depiction of the Angel of History for us:

What is History? History is an angel being blown backwards into the future. History is a pile of debris; and the angel wants to go back and fix things, to repair the things that have been broken. But there is a storm blowing from paradise; and the storm keeps blowing the angel backwards, into the future. And this storm is called progress.

(Anderson 1989)

What emerges from this image, then, is a sense of how meaning is necessarily a relational concept, one whose contours are inextricably linked to conceptions of the past, the ambiguities of the present, and the interaction of these two in an unsure future. Meaning is thus inherently *discursive* and *hermeneutic*. The first of these teaches us that in understanding how it comes about, and the myriad forms it assumes, we must pay careful attention to the conditions of its emergence and articulation. How do power and knowledge interact to make certain meanings possible, even desirable, and to render others 'nonsensical' or dangerous? In this sense, there is a parallel between meaning and theory, and Robert Cox's (1981) famous dictum regarding IR theory can be usefully recast as a reminder that every meaning is for someone and for some purpose. The relational quality of meaning hence requires us to read the social world (societies, communities, identities) not as the bearer of any given meaning, but rather as a crucible in which competing conceptions of meaning – stories and accounts about the world and what it means – mingle together and contest each other. The hermeneutic dimension of meaning, on the other hand, requires us to delve more deeply into the interplay of subjectivity, interpretation and phenomenology. It asks us to pay attention to the locatedness of subjects in discursive fields and how meaning derives from *experience(s)*. The essential contingency of meaning, as it emerges from the approach outlined above, signals the need for caution when it comes to the idea of a conclusion. Closure, as the attempt to fix meaning, must be seen not as a decisive resolution as to a final and correct rendering of 'what it is all about', but rather as a practice that seeks to privilege a particular account of the world to the exclusion of others.

Given the above, it is perhaps understandable that the prospect of writing a Conclusion to this volume produced more than just a little trepidation in its prospective author! Indeed, for a book intended to open up the question of meaning in international relations and reveal the many different ways in which meanings circulate in IR, to 'conclude' anything would seem to defeat the very spirit of our goals. My aim in this brief set of closing comments, then, will be to recap the essential insights provided by the various authors in this volume, to offer some further reflection on my opening comments in the context of IR and, finally, to outline some possible contours for future consideration of meaning in world politics. While all of the preceding ten chapters share a common concern with meaning in international relations, they depart from different assumptions, and wander over, at times, very different terrains. All, however, share a broad interest in hermeneutics and/or phenomenology and the study of experience. What emerges from mixture is a diverse range of stories about meaning and IR, but a remarkable consistency in terms of how these stories are told. Subject matter may vary greatly, but our authors

all agree that the appreciation of meaning leads inexorably towards an engagement with *hermeneutics.*

In his opening chapter, Andrew Williams considers some of the foundational questions related to meaning and IR. How, he asks, might the study of meaning be made a teachable component of contemporary IR? Spurred on by Zaki Laïdi's argument about 'a world without meaning' (indeed, this volume is in many ways an effort to engage with and problematise Laïdi's worldview), Williams turns to the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger as a source of inspiration. With the human condition envisaged as one of reconciling Being with Time, how – he asks – can we achieve an approach to international relations that appreciates the complexity and multiplicity of meaning without fully buying into post-modern arguments about the death of meaning? For Williams, this becomes possible by, on the one hand, re-engaging with history. He advocates a return to *la longue durée* as a primary space in which the making and circulation of meaning occurs. But how to comprehend the ebbs and flows of meaning that resist being defined as a single, flowing story? 'This I suggest we might do', he writes, 'by bringing "myth" back to centre stage.' For Williams, an emphasis on myth would 'enable us to accept the non-linearity of history, and the need to reinvent ourselves constantly, in other words the need to attempt to re-engage with Being through Time.' He illustrates this method through a reflection on war and meaning, focusing on war as a phenomenon at historical junctures figured as the passage from one world (order) to another. For Williams, then, a focus on meaning in IR leads to renewed consideration of history and the ways in which IR reveals our efforts to imbue existence (Being) under particular historical circumstances with a sense of meaning that will help to suture the gaps between where we find ourselves (historically) and the worlds we imagine.

Sharing some similar concerns, but exploring them in rather different directions, Christopher Coker – another contemporary reference point for Williams – takes up the notion of *Zeitgeist* ('spirit of the age'). More specifically, Coker is interested in the geopolitics of meaning and the discursive technologies through which *Zeitgeist* might be determined. Where Williams looks to history, Coker turns to photography. In so far as the photograph represents a distillation of time, the expression of a moment, Coker looks at how in this medium we might identity the contours of an epoch. Turning away from Europe as the maker of history (and meaning), Coker's lens is focused on Asia. How, he asks, might the photography of late colonialism reveal anticipation of an 'Asian century'? Moving from India to China and then on to Japan, Coker demonstrates how 'it is possible to tell the story of Asia as a tale of contending historical forces and clashing first principles which all had their centre of gravity in the Pacific, on its western rim.' He argues that by the late twentieth century, talk of the 'Pacific century' had, with the rise of California as a dominant technocultural force, shifted to its eastern rim. Ending with a 'theory of propensities' derived from Popper, Coker confirms that the pursuit of meaning through history occurs retroactively, such that determinism does not simply unfold, but rather is actively pursued by the makers of world meaning in disparate cultures and geographical settings.

Zaki Laïdi engages with the interplay of regionalisation, globalisation and

meaning and finds that the spaces in which meanings are formed have become increasingly disembedded from purely localised contexts. Indeed, the very notion of the 'local' as a space divorced from wider transnational processes is near extinction. He demonstrates how conceptions of purpose and action in developmental settings linked to regional organisations such as MERCOSUR are increasingly tied to the rise of regional organisations and developmental imperatives of externally set economic agendas. The rise of relativism in Western epistemology and the end of the Cold War are producing, according to Laïdi, a 'redistribution of truths'. There is hence created a sort of global market of meaning, and transnational institutions and issue areas (NGOs, human rights, etc.) emerge as important new public spaces for the articulation of meaning. Although regional projects, such as Europe, aspire to a new social cohesion, there exist any number of social forces which cause the common good to remain in 'suspended animation'.

Which of course begs the question, as Gerard Delanty recognises, of what it means to speak of ideology in a post-ideological age. In the face of the decoupling of politics and morality, as Delanty sees it, what are the prospects for social transformation when ideology – as a totalising concept – seems to have fallen from favour? Ideology on Delanty's reading is a clear manifestation of modernity, of the possibility of an all-embracing utopia. What we see in today's post-modern condition are the fragmented components of ideology, the totality fractured into its contingent particles. 'If ideology was a closed system of political communication constructed around a totalizing vision of society', writes Delanty, 'it may be suggested that the distinctive feature of political communication today is its openness.' There is, then, an ensuing fragmentation of meaning and the rise of, for example, reflexivity as a defining feature of social discourse on ethics and politics.

Elbe's chapter on 'Eurosomnia' serves as an effective crucible in which to mix and transmute the insight of the previous four authors. Elbe starts with some of the same concerns as Williams (including an interest in phenomenology) and then passes through the ideas of Coker, Laïdi and Delanty on his way to a re-engagement with the project of Europe. Elbe traces the re-emergence of interest in Europe as discursive history, revealing the numerous meanings and yearnings that various conceptions of Europeanness or the 'European idea' fulfil (e.g. Europe as a modern cultural bloc, Europe as a post-national entity, etc.). But what then is the purpose of Europe in the face of a world without meaning? To understand the origins of the contemporary crisis in Europe's 'spiritual vitality', Elbe turns to Nietzsche's account of the tragedy of 'European nihilism'. The 'death of God', the end of metaphysics, and scepticism about modern science and rationality are all seen as harbingers of this crisis. How, without these hallmark characteristics of European spirit, asks Nietzsche, is the project of Europe able to sustain itself into the twentieth century? Elbe argues that these arguments of a hundred years ago essentially mirror the key features of the contemporary debate over Europe's future. His argument, like Nietzsche's, is that European nihilism does not necessarily mark the end of Europe, but rather the opening up of new possibilities. The possibility, for example, of a Europe freed from the assumption of certain essential foundations and open to alternative sources of vitality. Indeed, it is 'precisely this attitude of openness, and of

the desire to explore the new seas now opened by the advent of nihilism, which Nietzsche also singled out as one of the defining characteristics of the "good Europeans" . . . he hoped would emerge at some point in the future', writes Elbe.

The need to pay attention to the discursive conditions in which meaning emerges is clearly brought home to us by Annick Wibben's chapter in which she quite rightly asks just whose meanings we are talking about. She points out that the makers of meaning have tended to be men, particularly those in positions of hegemony that allow them to articulate, in supposedly universal terms, the spirit of the age. Wibben asks what meaning in IR would look like if we were to listen to it from other sites of articulation. Her insights are drawn from a combination of philosophical hermeneutics and feminist writings. According to Wibben, 'it is the tradition within which our pre-understandings evolve that makes any question and thus any answer possible; in other words, pre-understandings are a precondition for an encounter of meaning'. She emphasises the dialogue of horizons which ensues between an interpreter and a text and reveals how hermeneutic experience – and hence meaning – arises from this conversation. Wibben argues that feminism is particularly well placed to undertake an interrogation of meaning since it is a question with which feminism – with regard to the issue of what it means to be woman and/or a feminist – has already been engaged for some time. Having experienced the displacements and exclusions associated with particular forms of feminist theories, those working in the field today are particularly attuned to the consequences of hermeneutic reductionism – and especially with regard to the efficacy of various political projects. This leads Wibben to conclude that what we are facing today is not a general crisis of meaning, but rather the crisis of a particular order (European/Platonic-Christian/ Masculo-centric), of which feminist writers have been well aware for some time now.

In her chapter, Tarja Väyrynen shifts the focus onto yet another potential bearer of meaning in contemporary world politics, that of ethnic identity. Her starting point is the apparent rise in violence and conflict stemming from ethnic cleavages. Väyrynen argues that hermeneutic philosophy provides a much richer and more sophisticated understanding of ethnicity than those theories founded on the presumption of certain 'primordial' roots to ethnic identity. The hermeneutic approach focuses instead on the ways in which such identities are constantly performed – in other words, how the meanings associated with being in the world as a Serb, Chechen or Hutu are in a constant process of recreation, reproduction and renewal. These meanings take on, at various times, quite different content and characteristics. Ethnic identity is, to invoke Gadamer, constantly in a state of *becoming*. Drawing on Foucault and Heidegger, she demonstrates the role played by technologies of articulation in mediating the meanings that become associated with identity. In the theory of performativity associated with Judith Butler she finds a convincing depiction of the relationship between the enactment ("performance") of violence and the (re)constitution of identity. '"Tamil Tigers" performing a violent act are not fixed historical agents behaving violently,' writes Väyrynen. 'They have, rather, a subject position in violent practices; a position of enactment and reception which is continuously created and transformed, and which continuously produces their identity and agency as "Tamil Tigers"'. In order to understand ethnopolitical

conflict today, it is argued, we need to get away from the assumption of given, 'everyday' meanings that unproblematically accompany the agency of 'ethnicised' actors. Rather, it is the performance of ethnic identity as filtered through the mediating technology of the territorial nation-state that produces the strongly dichotomised sense of Otherness that frames contemporary ethnic conflict. The process of ethnic identification is hence aestheticised through an emphasis on the images and signs that constitute the performance of political identity.

My own chapter seeks to provide something like a case study of the very phenomenon that Väyrynen points to. I show that the meanings ascribed to Islam by Muslims living in contemporary Europe are not simply the product of an eternal and static religious tradition, but rather that they stem from recent processes of migration and transnational displacement. What Islam means politically, I suggest, depends much more on the ways in which individuals are disciplined into (or refused entry by) particular bordered territories and the resulting experiences of alienation and dislocation. In the same way that Elbe signals the crisis of meaning in Europe as an opportunity, likewise I try to suggest that the dearticulation of Islam from particular localised settings sets in motion various processes of reformulation. In addition to the loss and disjuncture associated with migration, then, is the emergence of new critical discourses that produce creative and innovative interpretations of what Islam might mean in new circumstances. A major feature here is debate and contestation within Muslim communities about what the religion means, particularly its political variant, to a minority community in twenty-first-century Europe. Some of the same processes of identity performance alluded to by Väyrynen occur here, with particular groups working to define 'internal Others' within the Muslim community as a means by which to secure the unity of their own political agendas.

Andrea den Boer's chapter turns to religious discourse, a primary source of meaning for a wide range of societies, yet one largely unfamiliar until very recently to international relations scholars. Den Boer focuses on the post-phenomenological philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, finding in his critique of conventional (Western) philosophy the seeds of a new approach to understanding ethics. His refiguring of subjectivity is particularly crucial here, and allows – on den Boer's reading (along with certain other scholars who use him in IR) – for a move beyond the constraining framework of statecentric discourse. 'Subjectivity, identity and responsibility', she writes, 'are located in a non-site, which is conceived as a place, or space, for speaking about ethics without returning to a fixed ground or universal principles on which ethics must be based.' Where the proponents of a Heideggerian ontology emphasise Being as the crucial condition for a philosophy of the Good, Levinas represents a move beyond Being. The religious turn so crucial to Levinasian discourse rests on his figuration of God as that which is 'otherwise than being' – as that which resists an immanent ontology founded upon sameness. Alterity and the concomitant responsibility towards the Other that it engenders are the foundations of a rather different conception of ethics than tends to circulate in IR circles. Responsibility towards the Other is not founded here on a premise of presence, or of what the Other 'is' (e.g. human and hence deserving of human rights; a citizen and hence deserving of the protection of a political community), but rather on the basis of one's

Otherness alone. Den Boer engages in a textual exegesis that tours through the Talmudic and biblical sources of Levinasian subjectivity and reads these sources into contemporary debates about the meaning of concepts such as justice. She finds that the Modern requirement of a separation between ethics, politics and justice may, in fact, be one of the greatest obstacles to the achievement of these virtues.

Finally, Stephen Chan takes aim at Samuel Huntington's much-vaunted 'Clash of Civilizations' thesis. Huntington's vision of a world animated by civilisational competition and conflict is advanced by many as the closest thing we have today in geopolitics to a model explaining 'what it's all about'. Rather than an objective analysis of how political cultures are configured globally, Chan reveals Huntington's theory to be a historically inept attempt to secure slippages within the hegemony of his own (Western) culture. 'Huntington seeks to explain a moment when what seemed universal, or effortlessly making a claim to universality, is challenged.' writes Chan. 'The point, and irony, is that – in Huntington's generalised world – each civilisation constructs an Other and defends itself against this Other'. Chan's preference is for a 'cosmopolitan international relations' – a paradigm in which 'victory' is not premised upon the categorical fallacy of revived civilisational discourse (another retrospectre?), but rather on the recognition that a coexistence based on cultural pluralism (and not the requirement to conform with Western, 'universal' values) – tense sometimes as this may be – is the necessary premise for a truly multicultural IR. As Chan notes, a 'world of differences does not, anyway, mean a world of exclusivities, let alone antagonisms, let alone confrontations, let alone a global cold war of civilisations'.

As can be seen from these summaries, this volume has wandered across a wide and diverse landscape. Its cohesiveness and coherence, however, stem from the authors' shared concern with the meaning of 'meaning' in contemporary IR and the utility of variants of hermeneutic and phenomenological (or, in the case of den Boer, even post-phenomenological) philosophy in getting to grips with the complexity and multiplicity of meaning in the world today. As the final batsman in the line-up, the presenter of our 'conclusions', I am, I think, understandably wary of drawing any! To do so would, in a sense, run against the grain of the very points that most of our authors have been trying to make in their respective contributions. Instead, let me finish by returning briefly – as I said I would – to the question of this ambiguous time that we rather unsatisfactorily call the 'post-Cold War era'. My comments here will, I hope, help to elucidate something of the spirit that this volume hopes to impart to the study of meaning in IR.

Ten years on, the textbooks of IR are still full of references to this time that we live in – and the characteristics of its world order – as the 'post-Cold War area'. It is yet another example of the kind of retrospectre I alluded to earlier. It is the expression, on the one hand, of the idea that we have moved beyond a particular configuration of world order. In so far as it names a time defined by uncertainty, it is also an expression of nostalgia for that same geopolitics. The Western world supposedly celebrates some sort of victory, while simultaneously tip-toeing into (or being blown backwards) into a very unsure future. No wonder IR discourse still hosts stories about the inherent stability of bipolar systems.

Cold War hermeneutics, similarly, enjoyed stable pro- and an-tagonists. The

story from the American worldview imagined a struggle of light and dark between freedom-loving democrats and an 'evil empire' of communists. The latter's demise marked a breakdown in the integrity of the narrative. A new Other was needed, and several were flirted with during the last decade of the twentieth century (Muslims, Chinese, 'other civilisations', etc.). The crisis of meaning in IR to which Zaki Laïdi famously referred in *A World without Meaning* was precisely this failure of the story – one seemingly exacerbated by the inexorable progress of homogenous, sanitising globalisation. Scholars of IR became increasingly frustrated with the 'post-Cold War' label. It seemed to suggest that we knew how to name the previous era, but had not yet figured out what was going on in our own – except to claim that it came after the Cold War. But just who – as a number of our authors ask (e.g. Wibben and Williams) – are 'we'?!

There are those working from a particularly American *Weltanschauung* who saw in the attacks of 11 September 2001 a resolution to the dangling question of how to define the age. On this telling, the story resumes with the emergence, finally, of a clear enemy: global terrorism and, by extension, any who support it by refusing to come into the fold. Lightness and darkness make a dramatic re-entrance in the form of a newly identified 'Axis of Evil'. Power and purpose, seemingly disjunct since the demise of the Soviet Union, reunite in pursuit of a common foe. Leaders and pundits of all kinds identify this date as 'the day the world changed' (*The Economist* 15–21 September 2001: cover). But we have to ask: did the world change on this day, or did, perhaps, the United States finally enter a (fierce, violent) maelstrom of meaning that much of the world had already been living with for decades? In Palestine, Algeria, Sri Lanka and Central Africa (among other settings), horrendous acts of political violence have been daily fare for some time now. This is not, of course, to belittle the tragedy of 11 September but only to suggest that, viewed from the rest of the world, it does not necessarily represent a watershed event in defining a new world order.

But what it does represent is an opportunity. As Elbe suggests in his chapter, the identification of a crisis offers as much latitude to think about the world in new ways as it gives rise to a need to 'fix things'. If we recognise the United States as a powerful producer of meaning in IR (and our authors would strongly suggest the need to pay attention to sites of discursive hegemony), then 11 September should offer the chance to rethink the boundaries of meaning in world politics. Where political violence is condemned, for example, it should not have its sources identified as equivalent with particular cultures and peoples, but rather as the conditions which give rise to such violence. A condemnation of violence in the Middle East, therefore, must recognise its agents not only in Palestinian 'terrorists', but also in Israeli 'occupiers'. To persist, in other words, in the alignment of meaning with one particular civilisational or national entity and its allies is to miss one of the most important points made by several of our contributors: that contemporary configurations of geopolitics, particularly the framework of the territorial nation-state (or, writ large as a 'civilisation'), serve not as bedrock reference points for the articulation of meaning and identity, but rather as mediating (and often distorting) technologies and spaces through which identities are performed – often to violent effect.

To conclude then (but without concluding), we find that meaning has travelled a great distance in the conversations that populate this book. The treatments of meaning offered by our various authors take different trajectories and have different endpoints in mind. Some, like Williams, although aware of the complexity and indeterminacy (in any absolute sense) of meaning in the world today, seeks a return to history in order to recover lost trajectories and grand normative narratives that short-term interests (and trendy forms of academic discourse) have forgotten. Others, and I count myself among them, prefer to dwell in the inherent multiplicity and indeterminacy of meaning that seems to populate world politics at this time. Difference and ambiguity are, in this account, to be favoured in face of the threat of values that masquerade as universal. Wherever one stands on this issue, however, this much is perhaps clear: far from inhabiting a world devoid of *sens*, ours is an era teeming, boiling over – absolutely *replete* – with meanings.

Bibliography

Abu-Lughod, L. (1991) 'Writing against Culture', in R. G. Fox (ed.) *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research.

Ahmed, A. S. and Donnan, H. (1994) 'Islam in the Age of Postmodernity', in A. S. Ahmed and H. Donnan (eds) *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity*, London: Routledge.

Akhtar, S. (1989) *Be Careful with Muhammad!*, London: Bellew.

—— (1990) *A Faith for All Seasons, Islam and Western Modernity*, London: Bellew.

Alexander, Ian (1957) *Bergson*, London: Bowes and Bowes.

Althusser, Louis (1971) 'Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatus', in L. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, London: New Left Books.

Anderson, Benedict (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.

Anderson, Laurie (1989) CD sleeve notes for 'Dream Before', *Strange Angels* album, Warner Brothers.

Ansell-Pearson, K. (1994) *An Introduction to Nietzsche as a Political Thinker: The Perfect Nihilist*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Anti-Defamation League (1998) 'Feminism Perverted: Extremist women on the world wide web' (http://www.adl.org/special_reports/extremist_women_on_web/feminism_intro.htm, accessed 9/10/01).

Anzaldúa, Gloria ([1987] 1999) *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 2nd edn, San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books.

Appadurai, Arjun (1990) 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', *Theory, Culture & Society* 7(2–3): 295–310.

—— (1991) 'Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology', in Richard Fox (ed.) *Recapturing Anthropology*, Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

—— (1996) *Modernity at Large*: *Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Appleby, R. S. (1999) *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Arendt, Hannah (1970) *On Violence*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

Asad, T. (1993) *Genealogies of Religion*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ashley, Richard (1989) 'Living on Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War', in James Der Derian and Michael Shapiro (eds) *International/Intertextual Relations*, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Atay, T. (1997) 'The Significance of the *Internal Other* in Islam: "Wahhabism" in a Naqshbandi Discourse', Paper presented at the British Society for Middle East Studies Conference on 'Re-thinking Islam', Oxford.

Attar, Farid ud-Din (1998) *The Speech of the Birds*, trans. Peter Avery, Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society.

Auden, W. H. and Isherwood, Christopher (1973) *Journey to War*, London: Faber and Faber.

Austin, J. L. (1975) *How to Do Things with Words*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Avruch, Kevin and Black, Peter (1993) "Conflict resolution in intercultural settings: Problems and prospects", in Dennis Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe (eds) *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice, Integration and Application*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

al-'Ayyashi, A. S. (1984) *Ma' al-Mawa'id*, Riyadh: Dar al-Rifai.

Al-Azmeh, A. (1996) *Islams and Modernities*, 2nd edn, London: Verso.

Bahai Religion (1919) *The Peace of the World: A Brief Treatise upon the Spiritual Teaching of the Bahai Religion with Particular Regard to its Application to the Great Problem*, Chicago: Bahai Publishing Society.

Balibar, E. (1991) '*Es gibt Keinen Staat in Europa*: Racism and Politics in Europe', *New Left Review* 186: 5–19.

Balibar, E. and Wallerstein, I. (1991) *Race, Nation, Class: Ambigious Identities*, London: Verso.

Bauman, Zygmunt (1978) *Hermeneutics and Social Science*, London: Hutchinson.

—— (1992a) *Postmodern Ethics*, Oxford: Blackwell.

—— (1992b) *Intimations of Postmodernity*, Oxford: Blackwell.

—— (1992c) 'Soil, Blood and Identity', *The Sociological Review* 40(4): 675–701.

Beck, Ulrich (1992) *The Risk Society*, London: Sage.

Bell, Daniel (1960) *The End of Ideology*, New York: Free Press.

—— (1979) *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, London: Heinemann.

Belot, C. and Smith, A. (1998) 'Europe and Identity: A Challenge for the Social Sciences', in U. Hedetoft (ed.) *Political Symbols, Symbolic Politics*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

Berger, P. L. (ed.) (1999) *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans.

Bernstein, R. (1991) 'Incommensurability and Otherness Revisited', in E. Deutsch (ed.) *Culture and Modernity: East-West Philosophical Perspectives*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Bleicher, Josef (1980) *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as Method, Philosophy and Critique*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Bobbio, N. (1996) *Left and Right*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Boehmer, Elleke (1995) *Colonial and Post-Colonial Literature*, London: Opus.

Boer, T. de (1995) 'Theology and the Philosophy of Religion According to Levinas', in A. T. Peperzak (ed.) *Ethics as First Philosophy: The Significance of Emmanuel Levinas for Philosophy, Literature and Religion*, London: Routledge.

Booth, Ken and Smith, Steve (eds) (1995) *International Relations Theory Today*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Borges, Jorge Luis (1964) *Other Inquisitions 1937–52*, Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Bowen, J. R. (1989) '*Salat* in Indonesia: The Social Meanings of an Islamic Ritual', *Man* 24: 600–19.

Bradbury, Malcolm (1976) *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Brandt, J. (1997) *Geopoetics: The Politics of Mimesis in Poststructuralist French Poetry and Theory*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Brown, Chris (1992) *International Relations: New Normative Approaches*, Brighton: Wheatsheaf.

Burgess, J. P. (1997) 'On the Necessity and Impossibility of a European Cultural Identity', in J. P. Burgess (ed.) *Cultural Politics and Political Culture in Postmodern Europe*, Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Bush, M. L. (1967) *Renaissance, Reformation and the Outer World*, London: Blandford.

Butler, Judith (1990a) "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse", in Linda Nicholson (ed.) *Feminism/Postmodernism*, New York and London: Routledge.

—— (1990b) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York: Routledge.

—— (1993) *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, New York: Routledge.

—— (1997) *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, New York and London: Routledge.

—— (1999) 'Preface (1999)', in J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York and London: Routledge.

Caglar, A. S. (1997) 'Hyphenated Identities and the Limits of "Culture"', in T. Modood and P. Werbner (eds) *The Politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe*, London: Zed Books.

Campbell, David (1993a) *Writing Security*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

—— (1993b) *Politics without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

—— (1994) 'The Deterritorialization of Responsibility', *Alternatives* 19(4): 455–84.

—— (1996) 'The Politics of Radical Interdependence: A Rejoinder to Daniel Warner', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 25(1): 129–41.

—— (1998) *National Deconstruction, Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Campbell, David and Dillon, Michael (1993) "The End of Philosophy and the End of International Relations", in David Campbell and Michael Dillon (eds) *The Political Subject of Violence*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

Caputo, J. D. (1991) 'Hyperbolic Justice: Deconstruction, Myth, and Politics', *Research in Phenomenology* 21: 3–20.

—— (1993) *Demythologizing Heidegger*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Carr, K. L. (1992) *The Banalization of Nihilism: Twentieth Century Responses to Meaninglessness*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Cassirer, Ernst (1944) *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Human Culture*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Castells, M. (1997) *The Power of Identity*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Castoriadis, C. (1986) *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Chan, Stephen (1997) 'Too Neat and Under-Thought a World Order: Huntington and Civilizations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 26(1): 137–40.

Clark, A. (1992) 'François Mitterand and the Idea of Europe', in B. Nelson, D. Roberts and W. Veit (eds) *The Idea of Europe: Problems of National and Transnational Identity*, Oxford: Berg.

Clifford, J. (1989) 'Notes on Travel and Theory', *Inscriptions* 5: 177–86.

—— (1997) *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Coker, Christopher (1994) *War in the Twentieth Century: The Impact of War on the Human Consciousness*, London: Brassey's.

—— (1998) *Twilight of the West*, Oxford: Westview Press.

Commission of the European Communities (1983) *Treaties Establishing the European Communities* (abridged edn), Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Connolly, William E. (1995) *The Ethos of Pluralization*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

—— (1999) *Why I am not a Secularist*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Cox, Robert (1981) 'Social Forces, States and World Orders', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10: 126–55.

Critchley, S. (1997) *Very Little . . . Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy, Literature*, London: Routledge.

Danto, Arthur (1965) *The Analytical Philosophy of History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Das, V. (1984) 'For a Folk-Theology and Theological Anthropology of Islam', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 18: 2.

Dassetto, F. and Nonneman, G. (1996) 'Islam in Belgium and The Netherlands: Towards a Typology of "Transplanted" Islam', in G. Nonneman, T. Niblock and B. Szajkowski (eds) *Muslim Communities in the New Europe*, Reading: Ithaca Press.

Delanty, G. (1995) *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality*, London: Macmillan.

—— (1997a) 'Social Exclusion and the New Nationalism', *Innovation* 10(2), 127–43.

—— (1997b) *Social Science: Beyond Constructivism and Realism*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

—— (1998) 'Redefining Political Culture in Europe Today: From Ideology to the Politics of Identity and Beyond', in U. Hedetoft (ed.) *Political Symbols, Symbolic Politics*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

—— (1999) *Social Theory in a Changing World*: *Conceptions of Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

—— (2000a) *Modernity and Postmodernity: Knowledge, Power, Self*, London: Sage.

—— (2000b) *Citizenship in the Global Age: Culture, Society and Politics*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

DeLillo, Don ([1973] 1998) *Great Jones Street*, London: Picador.

Delmas-Marty, Mirelle (1999) *Trois défis pour un droit mondial*, Paris: Seuil.

Denny, F. M. (1991) 'The Legacy of Fazlur Rahman', in Y. Haddad (ed.) *The Muslims of America*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Der Derian, James (2000) 'Virtuous War/Virtual Theory', *International Affairs* 76(4): 771–88.

—— (2001) *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Der Derian, James and Shapiro, Michael J. (eds) (1989) *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Derrida, J. (1992) *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

—— (1995) *The Gift of Death*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Detwiler, B. (1990) *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dewey, Thomas ([1931] 1963) 'Philosophy and Civilisation', in T. Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilisation*, New York: Capricorn Books.

Dillon, Michael (1990) 'The Alliance of Security and Subjectivity', *Current Research on Peace and Violence*, *'Beyond the Blocs'*, ed. Pertti Joenniemi, Tampere Peace Research Institute, 13(3): 101–24.

—— (1999) 'The Scandal of the Refugee: Some Reflections on the "Inter" of International Relations and Continental Thought', in D. Campbell and M. J. Shapiro (eds) *Moral Spaces: Rethinking Ethics and World Politics*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Doyle, Michael (1997) *Ways of War and Peace*, New York: W. W. Norton.

Dreyfus, Hubert (1987) 'Beyond Hermeneutics', in Michael Gibbons (ed.) *Interpreting Politics*, London and New York: Basil Blackwell.

Drury, Shadia (1994) *Alexandre Kojeve: The Roots of Post-Modern Politics*, London: Macmillan.

Eagleton, Terry (1996) *The Illusions of Post Modernism*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Eickelman, D. F. (1982) 'The Study of Islam in Local Contexts', *Contributions to Asian Studies* 17: 1–18.

Eickelman, D. F. and Piscatori, J. (1995) *Muslim Politics*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

El Moudden, A. (1990) 'The ambivalence of *rihla*: community integration and self-definition in Moroccan travel accounts: 1300–1800', in D. F. Eickelman and J. Piscatori (eds) *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Elshtain, Jean B. (1987) *Women and War*, New York: Basic Books.

El-Zein, A. H. M. (1977) 'Beyond Ideology and Theology: The Search for the Anthropology of Islam', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 6: 227–54.

Enloe, Cynthia (1989) *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

European Commission (1998) 'Reconciling the Welfare State with Public Finance and Full Employment', *European Economy Report* (1), Brussels: European Commission.

Evans, Richard (1997) *In Defence of History*, London: Granta.

Fairlamb, Horace L. (1994) *Critical Conditions: Postmodernity and the Question of Foundations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fayolle, J. (1998) 'Les Incohérences de la politique économique européenne', *Esprit* February.

Featherstone, M. (1995) *Undoing Culture*, London: Sage.

Feldman, Allen (1991) *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

——(1994) 'On Cultural Anaesthesia: From Desert Storm to Rodney King', *American Ethnologist* 21(2): 401–18.

Ferguson, Kathy (1993) *The Man Question: Visions of Subjectivity in Feminist Theory*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Ferguson, Niall (1996) *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals*, London: Picador.

Fischer, M. M. J. and Abedi, M. (1990) *Debating Muslims: Cultural Dialogues in Postmodernity and Tradition*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Flax, Jane (1987) 'Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 12(4): 621–43.

Fontaine, P. (1991) *A Citizen's Europe*, Luxembourg: Office of Official Publications of the European Communities.

Foucault, Michel (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972–1977*, New York: Pantheon Books.

——(1987) 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in Michael Gibbons (ed.) *Interpreting Politics*, London and New York: Basil Blackwell.

Fraser, Nancy and Nicholson, Linda (1988) 'Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism', *Theory, Culture and Society* 5(2–3): 373–94.

Fukuyama, F. (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Fussell, Robert (1975) *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1965) *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).

——(1979) *Truth and Method*, London: Sheed and Ward.

——(1980) 'The Universality of the Hermeneutic Problem', trans. David Linge, in J. Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Garcia, S. (1993) 'Europe's Fragmented Identities and the Frontiers of Citizenship', in S. Garcia (ed.) *European Identity and the Search for Legitimacy*, London: Pinter.

Geertz, Clifford (1987) '"From the Natives' Point of View": On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding', in Michael Gibbons (ed.) *Interpreting Politics*, London and New York: Basil Blackwell.

——(1993) *The Interpretation of Cultures*, London: Fontana Press.

Geldard, Richard (ed.) (1995) *The Vision of Emerson*, Rockport, MA: Element.

George, J. (1995) 'Realist "Ethics", International Relations, and Postmodernism – Thinking Beyond the Egoism-Anarchy Thematic', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 24(2): 195–223.

Giddens, A. (1994) *Beyond Left and Right*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Goddard, V. A., Llobera, J. R. and Shore, C. (1994) 'Introduction: The Anthropology of Europe', in V. A. Goddard, J. R. Llobera and C. Shore (eds) *The Anthropology of Europe: Identity and Boundaries in Conflict*, Oxford: Berg.

Gordis, R. (1967) *Religion and International Responsibility*, New York: Council on Religion and International Affairs.

Gowan, Peter and Anderson, Perry (eds.) (1997) *The Question of Europe*, London: Verso.

Grondin, Jean (1991) *Einführung in die philosophische Hermeneutik*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Gross, Elizabeth (1986) 'Conclusion: What is Feminist Theory?', in E. Gross and C. Pateman (eds) *Feminist Challenges*, Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.

—— (1990) 'Contemporary Theories of Power and Subjectivity', in S. Gunew (ed.) *Feminist Knowledge: Critique and Construct*, London: Routledge.

Gross, Elizabeth and Pateman, Carole (eds) (1986) *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory*, Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.

Habermas, J. (ed.) (1984a) *Observations on 'The Spiritual Situation of the Age'*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

—— (1984b) *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1: *Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

—— (1987) *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2: *Lifeworld and System, A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

—— (1989) 'The New Obscurity: The Crisis of the Welfare State and the Exhaustion of Utopian Energies', in *The New Conservatism*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

—— (1992) 'Citizenship and National Identity: Some Reflections on the Future of Europe', *Praxis International* 12(1): 1–19.

Hall, Stuart (1996) 'The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees', in D. Morely and K. H. Chen (eds) *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge.

Hand, S. (ed.) (1989) *The Levinas Reader*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Harding, Sandra (1986) *The Science Question in Feminism*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

—— (ed.) (1987) *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

—— (1991) *Whose Science, Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

—— (1998) *Is Science Multicultural? Postcolonialisms, Feminisms and Epistemologies*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Hassner, Pierre (1993) "Beyond Nationalism and Internationalism: Ethnicity and World Order", *Survival* 35(2): 49–65.

Hastings, A. (1998) *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haught, J. A. (1995) *Holy Hatred: Religious Conflicts of the '90s*, Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

Havel, V. (1994) Speech to the European Parliament, Strasbourg: 8 March.

—— (1997) *The Art of the Impossible: Politics and Morality in Practice: Speeches and Writings 1990– 1996*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Haynes, J. (1994) *Religion in Third World Politics*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Hefner, R. W. and Horvatich, P. (eds) (1997) *Islam in an Era of Nation-States: Politics and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Hekman, Susan (1990) *Gender and Knowledge: Elements of a Postmodern Feminism*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Heller, Agnés (1988) 'Europe – An Epilogue?', in A. Heller, *The Postmodern Political Condition*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Herdt, Gilbert (ed.) (1993) *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*, New York: Zone Books.

Higgins, Nicholas (1999) 'Review of Laïdi's *World without Meaning*', *International Affairs* 75(3): 656–7.

Hobsbawm, Eric (1994) *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991*, London: Michael Joseph.

—— (1997) *On History*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Hodes, N. and Hayes, M. (eds) (1995) *The United Nations and the World's Religions: Prospects for a Global Ethic*, Cambridge, MA: Boston Research Center for the 21st Century.

Hoffmann, Stanley (1994) 'Europe's Identity Crisis Revisited', *Daedalus* 123(2): 1–23.

hooks, bell (1984) *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Huntington, Samuel P. (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

—— (1997) '"The Clash of Civilizations" – A Response', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 26(1): 141–2.

Hussain, D. (1998) Personal e-mail communication, 7 August.

Irigaray, Luce (1993) *Je, tous, nous: Towards a Culture of Difference*, New York: Sage.

Jabri, Viv (1995) *Discourses on Violence*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

JanMohamed, Abdul R. 'Worldliness-without-World, Homelessness-as-Home: Toward a Definition of the Specular Border Intellectual', in Michael Sprinker (ed.) *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Jaspers, K. (1997) *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of his Philosophical Activity*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Jay, M. (1984) *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Jenner, W. J. F. (1992) *The Tyranny of History: The Roots of China's Crisis*, London: Allen Lane.

Kakar, S. (1996) *The Colors of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion, and Conflict*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kearney, R. (1984) *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers: The Phenomenological Heritage*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Kennedy, Paul (1988) *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Intelligence from 1500 to 2000*, London: Unwin Hyman.

Kern, Stephen (1983) *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Khalidi, O. (1989) 'Muslim Minorities: Theory and Experience of Muslim Interaction in Non-Muslim Societies', *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 10(2): 425–37.

Kolakowski, Leszek (1990) *Modernity on Endless Trial*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Krishna, Sankaran (1996) 'Cartographic Anxiety: Mapping the Body Politic in India', in Michael Shapiro and Hayward Alker (eds) *Challenging Boundaries: Global Flows, Territorial Identities*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Kundera, M. (1984) 'The Tragedy of Central Europe', *The New York Review of Books*, 26 April.

La Capra, Dominic (1994) *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Laclau, Ernesto (1996) 'Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity', in Edwin Wilmsen and Patrick McAllister (eds) *The Politics of Difference*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Laïdi, Zaki (1994a) *Un monde privé de sens*, Paris: Fayard.

—— (ed.) (1994b) *Power and Purpose after the Cold War*, Oxford: Berg.

—— (1997) *Le Temps mondial*, Paris: Complexe.

—— (1998a) *La Géopolitique du sens*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer.

—— (1998b) *A World without Meaning: The Crisis of Meaning in International Politics*, London: Routledge.

Lambek, M. (1990) 'Certain Knowledge, Contestable Authority: Power and Practice on the Islamic Periphery', *American Ethnologist* 17(1): 23–40.

Landman, N. (1992) 'Sufi Orders in The Netherlands: Their Role in the Institutionalization of Islam', in W. A. R. Shadid and P. S. van Koningsveld (eds) *Islam in Dutch Society*, Kampen: Kok Pharos.

Lang, Sabine (1997) 'Wer oder was ist eigentlich homosexuell? Reflexionen über Gender Variance, Homosexualität und Feldforschung in indigenen Gesellschaften Nordamerikas', in G. Schrein and S. Strasser (eds) *Intersexions*, Vienna: Milena Verlag.

Lapid, Y. and Kratochwil, F. (1996) *The Return to Culture and Identity in International Relations Theory*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Lasch, Christopher (1995) *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy*, New York: Norton.

Lash, S. and Urry, S. (1984) *Economies of Signs and Space*, London: Sage.

Lebor, A. (1997) *A Heart Turned East*, London: Little, Brown.

Levinas, Emmanuel (1969) *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.

—— (1981) *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

—— (1986) 'The Trace of the Other', in M. C. Taylor (ed.) *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

—— (1990a) *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

—— (1990b) *Nine Talmudic Readings*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

—— (1994a) *Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures*, London: Athlone Press.

—— (1994b) *In the Time of the Nations*, London: Athlone Press.

Levinas, Emmanuel and Kearney, R. (1986) 'Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas', in R. A. Cohen (ed.) *Face to Face with Levinas*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Lewis, D. C. (2000) *After Atheism: Religion and Ethnicity in Russia and Central Asia*, New York: St Martins.

Lewis, P. (1994) *Islamic Britain: Religion, Politics and Identity among British Muslims*, London: I. B. Tauris.

Lewis, Wyndham (1993) *Time and Western Man*, Santa Rosa, CA: Black Sparrow Press.

Linklater, Andrew (1990) *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations*. London: Macmillan.

—— (1994) 'Dialogue, Dialectic and Emancipation in International Relations at the End of the Post-War Age', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 23(1): 119–31.

Lorber, Judith (1994) *Paradoxes of Gender*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Lorde, Audre (1980) 'Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference', in A. Lorde (1984) *Sister Outsider*, Freedom, CA: Crossing Press.

—— (1984) *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde*, Freedom, CA: Crossing Press.

Lugones, Maria and Spelman, Elizabeth (1983) 'Have We Got a Theory for You! Feminist

Theory, Cultural Imperialism, and the Demand for "the Woman's Voice"', *Women's Studies International Forum* 6(6): 573–81.

Lyotard, Jean-François (1998) 'Defining the Post-Modern' in John Rees, *The Algebra of Revolution: The Dialectic of the Classical Marxist Tradition*, London: Routledge.

Mackenzie, Catriona (1986) 'Simone de Beauvoir: Philosophy and/or the Female Body', in E. Gross and C. Pateman (eds) *Feminist Challenges*, Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.

Maffesoli, S. (1996) *Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, London: Sage.

Malkki, Lisa (1995) *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Mann, Michael (1970) 'The Social Cohesion of Liberal Democracy', *American Sociological Review* 35(3): 423–39.

Mann, Thomas ([1924] 1969) *The Magic Mountain*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter, New York: Vintage.

—— (1992) *Dr Faustus*, London: Everyman.

Mannheim, Karl ([1936] 1960) *Ideology and Utopia*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Marcuse, Herbert (1964) *One-Dimensional Man*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Martin, G. T. (1989) *From Nietzsche to Wittgenstein: The Problem of Truth and Nihilism in the Modern World*, New York: Peter Lang.

Mazower, Mark (1998) *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Metcalf, B. D. (1996) 'Introduction: Sacred Words, Sanctioned Practice, New Communities', in B. D. Metcalf (ed.) *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Mikkeli, H. (1998) *Europe as an Idea and an Identity*, London: Macmillan.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (1992) 'Feminist Encounters: Locating the Politics of Experience', in M. Barrett and A. Philips (eds) *Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Molloy, P. (1997) 'Face to Face with the Dead Man: Ethical Responsibility, State-Sanctioned Killing, and Empathetic Impossibility', *Alternatives* 22(4): 211–37.

Morris, Jan (1978) *Farewell the Trumpet*, London: Faber and Faber.

Mortimer, Edward (1982) *Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam*, London: Faber and Faber.

Nadwi, S. A. H. A. (1983) *Muslims in the West: The Message and Mission*, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation.

Nederveen Pieterse, J. (1997) 'Travelling Islam: Mosques without Minarets', in A. Öncü and P. Wayland (eds) *Space, Culture and Power: New Identities in Globalizing Cities*, London: Zed Books.

Nelsen, B. F. and Stubb, A. C.-G. (eds) (1998) *The European Union: Readings on the Theory and Practice of European Integration*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Neumann, Iver B. (1996) 'Self and Other in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations* 2(2): 139–74.

Nicholson, Linda (1994) 'Interpreting Gender', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29(1): 79–105.

Nielsen, J. (1995) *Muslims in Western Europe*, 2nd edn, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Nietzsche, Friedrich (1961) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

—— (1967) *On the Genealogy of Morals*, New York: Vintage.

—— (1968a) *The Will to Power*, New York: Vintage.

—— (1968b) *Twilight of the Idols*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

—— (1974) *The Gay Science*, New York: Random House.

—— (1980) *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1885–1887*, in G. Colli and M. Montinari (eds) *Kritische Studienausgabe*, Berlin: de Gruyter.

—— (1984) *Human, All Too Human*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Nincovich, F. (1998) 'No Post-Mortems for Postmodernism, Please', *Diplomatic History* 22(3): 451–66.

Nolte, J. (1991) *Wir guten Europäer: Historisch-politische Versuche über uns selbst*, Tübingen: Narr.

Norris, C. (1992) *Uncritical Theory: Postmodernism, Intellectuals and the Gulf War*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

North Atlantic Council (1990) *London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance*. Online: available http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49–95/c900706a.htm

Nowotny, H., Scott, P. and Gibbons, M. (2001) *Re-thinking Science: Knowledge and the Public in an Age of Uncertainty*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Oman, Charles (1994) *Globalisation and Regionalism: What Stakes for Developing Countries?*, Paris: OECD.

Ooijen, H. van (1992) 'Religion and Emancipation: A Study of the Development of Moroccan Islamic Organizations in a Dutch Town', in W. A. R. Shadid and P. S. van Koningsveld (eds) *Islam in Dutch Society*, Kampen: Kok Pharos.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (1995) *Social Transfer. Patterns, Institutional Arrangements and Policy Reform*, Paris: OECD.

Owen, D. (1995) *Nietzsche, Politics and Modernity: A Critique of Liberal Reason*, London: Sage.

Patocka, J. (1996) 'Europe and the European Heritage until the End of the Nineteenth Century', in J. Patocka, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, Chicago: Open Court.

Patomäki, Heikki (1992) *Critical Realism and World Politics*, Turku, Finland: University of Turku.

Peperzak, A. (1993) *To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*, West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.

Peterson, V. Spike (1992) 'Transgressing Boundaries: Theories of Knowledge, Gender and International Relations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 21(2): 183–206.

Pettman, Jan Jindy (1996) "Border Crossing/Shifting Identities: Minorities, Gender, and the State in International Perspective", in Michael Shapiro and Hayward Alker (eds) *Challenging Boundaries: Global Flows, Territorial Identities*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Pippin, R. B. (1996) 'Nietzsche's Alleged Farewell: The Premodern, Modern and Postmodern Nietzsche', in B. Magnus and K. M. Higgins (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—— (1999) *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem: On the Dissatisfaction of European High Culture*, 2nd edn, Oxford: Blackwell.

Piscatori, James (1990) 'The Rushdie Affair and the Politics of Ambiguity', *International Affairs* 66(4): 767–90.

—— (ed.) (1991) *Islamic Fundamentalisms and the Gulf Crisis*, Chicago: American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Popper, Karl ([1945] 2002) *The Open Society and its Enemies*, 2 vols, 5th edn, London: Routledge.

—— (1990) *A World of Propensities*, Bristol: Thoemnes.

Pulkkinen, Tuija (1998) "Gender and Nation", a plenary speech presented at the Crossroads in Cultural Studies conference, 28 June–1 July, Tampere, Finland.

Rahman, F. (1982) *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Rahnema, A. (1994) 'Ali Shariati: Teacher, Preacher, Rebel', in A. Rahnema (ed.) *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, London: Zed Books.

Rengger, N. (1997) 'Beyond Liberal Politics? European Modernity and the Nation-State', in M. Rhodes, P. Heywood and V. Wright (eds) *Developments in West European Politics*, London: Macmillan.

Rich, Paul B. (1999), 'The Construction of Ideologies in the Twentieth Century', in Stephen Chan and Jarrod Wiener (eds) *Twentieth-Century International History*, London: I. B. Tauris.

Ricoeur, Paul (1981) *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. J. Thompson, Cambridge, London and New York: Cambridge University Press; Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme.

Rieff, David (1992) *Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World*, London: Jonathan Cape.

Riesterer, Berthold (1969) *Karl Lowith's View of History: A Critical Appraisal of Historicism*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Roberts, D. and Nelson, B. (1992) 'Introduction', in B. Nelson, D. Roberts and W. Veit (eds) *The Idea of Europe: Problems of National and Transnational Identity*, Oxford: Berg.

Robbins, J. (1995) 'Tracing Responsibility in Levinas's Ethical Thought', in A. T. Peperzak (ed.) *Ethics as First Philosophy: The Significance of Emmanuel Levinas for Philosophy, Literature and Religion*, London: Routledge.

Robson, Ann and Robson, John (eds) (1986) *Newspaper Writings of John Stuart Mill December 1821–July 1823*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Rogers, Ben (1999) *A. J. Ayer: A Life*, London: Chatto and Windus.

Rorty, Richard (1979) *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Roscoe, Will (1991) *The Zuni Man-Woman*, Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

—— (1993) 'How to Become a Berdache: Toward a Unified Analysis of Gender Diversity', in G. Herdt (ed.) *Third Sex, Third Gender*, New York: Zone Books.

Ross, Marc (1993) *The Culture of Conflict: Interpretations and Interests in Comparative Perspective*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Rossbach, Stefan (2000) *Gnostic Wars: The Cold War in the Context of a History of Western Spirituality*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Rougemont, D. de (1965) *The Meaning of Europe*, London: Sidgwick and Jackson.

—— (1966) *The Idea of Europe*, New York: Macmillan.

Rushdie, Salman (1991) *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–1991*, London: Granta.

Safranski, Rudiger (1998) *Martin Heidegger: Beyond Good and Evil*, Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press.

Sahliyeh, E. (ed.) (1990) *Religious Resurgence and Politics in the Contemporary World*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Said, Edward (1984) *The World, the Text and the Critic*, London: Faber and Faber.

—— (1993) *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Chatto and Windus.

Sayyid, B. S. (1997) *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*, London: Zed Books.

Schmidtke, O. (1998) 'Obstacles and Prospects for a European Collective Identity', in U. Hedetoft (ed.) *Political Symbols, Symbolic Politics*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

Schnapper, D. (1994) 'Muslim Communities, Ethnic Minorities and Citizens', in B. Lewis and D. Schnapper (eds) *Muslims in Europe*, London: Pinter.

Schrein, Gerlinde and Strasser, Sabine (eds) (1997) *Intersexions: Feministische Anthropologie zu Geschlecht, Kultur und Sexualität*, Vienna: Milena Verlag.

Schulte-Sasse, Jochen and Schulte-Sasse, Linda (1991) "War, Otherness, and Illusionary Identifications with the State", *Cultural Critique* 9: 67–95.

Seal, A. (1973) 'Imperialism and Nationalism in India', in John Gallagher (ed.) *Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics 1870–1940*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Searle, John (1986) *Expression and Meaning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sells, M. A. (1996) *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Shadid, W. A. R. and van Koningsveld, P. S. (1992) 'Legal Adjustments for Religious Minorities', in W. A. R. Shadid and P. S. van Koningsveld (eds) *Islam in Dutch Society*, Kampen: Kok Pharos.

Shapiro, Michael (1989) *The Politics of Representation: Writing Practices in Biography, Photography, and Policy Analysis*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

—— (1992) *Reading the Postmodern Polity: Political Theory as Textual Practice*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

—— (1997) *Violent Cartographies, Mapping Cultures of War*, Minneapolis and London: Minnesota University Press.

Sheridan, Susan (1990) 'Feminist Knowledge, Women's Liberation, and Women's Studies', in S. M. Gunew (ed.) *Feminist Knowledge: Critique and Construct*, London and New York: Routledge.

Shore, C. and Black, A. (1994) 'Citizens' Europe and the Construction of European Identity', in V. A. Goddard, J. R. Llobera and C. Shore (eds.) *The Anthropology of Europe: Identities and Boundaries in Conflict*, Oxford: Berg.

Siddiqui, A. (1998) Personal interview, Leicester, 29 July.

Smith, Steven G. (1992) *Gender Thinking*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Smith, S., Booth, K. and Zalewski, M. (eds) (1996) *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Soguk, Nevzat (1997) "Predicaments of Territorial Democracy and Statecraft in Europe: How European Democracies Regiment Migration Movements", *Alternatives* 22(3): 313–52.

Sorel, Georges ([1915] 1941) *Reflections on Violence*, New York: Peter Smith.

Spence, Jonathan (1992) Introduction to André Malraux, *The Temptation of the West*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Spengler, Oswald ([1918] 1991) *The Decline of the West*, trans. Charles Atkinson, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1996) *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, eds Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean, New York: Routledge.

Strydom, P. (1999) 'Triple Contingency – The Theoretical Problem of the Public in Communication Societies', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 25(2): 1–25.

Sunier, T. (1992) 'Islam and Ethnicity among Turks', in W. A. R. Shadid and P. S. van Koningsveld (eds) *Islam in Dutch Society*, Kampen: Kok Pharos.

Sylvester, Christine (1994a) *Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—— (1994b) 'Empathetic Cooperation: A Feminist Method for International Relations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 23(2): 315–34.

Tanaka, Stefan (1993) *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Taylor, Charles (1985) *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Therborn, G. (1995) *European Modernity and Beyond: The Trajectory of European Societies 1945–2000*, London: Sage.

Thiele, Beverly (1986) 'Vanishing Acts in Social and Political Thought: Tricks of the Trade', in E. Gross and C. Pateman (eds) *Feminist Challenges*, Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.

Thomä-Venske, H. (1988) 'The Religious Life of Muslims in Berlin', in Tomas Gerholm and Yngve Georg Lithman (eds.) *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe*, London: Mansell.

Thompson, J. (1990) *Ideology and Modern Culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Tong, Rosemarie (1989) *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Toulmin, S. (1992) *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Touraine, A. (1995) *Critique of Modernity*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Trinh, T. Minh-Ha (1989) *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Updike, John (1984) *Hugging the Shore: Essays and Criticism*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Van Dijk, T. (1998) *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, London: Sage.

Vattimo, G. (1988) *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and the Hermeneutics in Post-Modern Culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Väyrynen, Tarja (2001) *Culture and International Conflict Resolution: A Critical Analysis of the Work of John Burton*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

Vertov, Dziga (1984) *Kino-eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. A. Michelson, trans. K. O'Brien, London: Pluto.

Virilio, Paul (1997) *Open Sky*, trans. Julie Rose, London and New York: Verso.

Walker, R. B. J. (1993) *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wallerstein, Immanuel (1996) 'Three Ideologies in One? The Pseudo-battle of Modernity', in S. P. Turner (ed.) *Social Theory and Sociology*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Warner, D. (1996) 'Levinas, Buber, and the Concept of Otherness in International Relations: A Reply to David Campbell', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 25(1): 111–28.

Werbner, P. (1995) 'Powerful Knowledge in a Global Sufi Cult: Reflections on the Poetics of Travelling Theories', in W. James (ed.) *The Pursuit of Certainty: Religious and Cultural Formulations*, London: Routledge.

—— (1996) 'The Making of Muslim Dissent: Hybridized Discourses, Lay Preachers, and Radical Rhetoric among British Pakistanis', *American Ethnologist* 23(1): 102–22.

Westerlund, D. (ed.) (1996) *Questioning the Secular State: The Worldwide Resurgence of Religion in Politics*, New York: St Martins.

Westerlund, D. and Rosander, E. E. (eds.) (1997) *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*, London: Hurst.

Whelehan, Imelda (1995) *Modern Feminist Thought: From the Second Wave to 'Post Feminism'*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Whitehead, Alfred ([1926] 1985) *Science and the Modern World*, London: Free Association.

Wibben, Annick T. R. (1998) *Narrating 'Experience': Raymond Aron and Feminist Scholars Revis(it)ed – A Subversive Conversation*, Research Reports 7/1998, Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Tampere, Finland.

Williams, Andrew (1998) *Failed Imagination? New World Orders of the Twentieth Century*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Williams, Val and Heron, Liz (eds) (1996) *Illuminations: Women Writing on Photography from the 1850s to the Present,* London: Tauris.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1961) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London: Routledge.

Woodfield, Richard (ed.) (1996) *The Essential Gombrich: Selected Writings on Art and Culture*, London: Phaidon.

World Trade Organisation (WTO) (1995) *Regionalism and the World Trading System*, Geneva, WTO.

Wyschogrod, E. and Caputo, J. D. (1998) 'Postmodernism and the Desire for God: An E-mail Exchange', *Cross Currents* 48(3): 293–310.

Yourcenar, Marguerite (1992) *That Mighty Sculpture, Time*, New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux.

Index of names