



**JOURNAL**  
*of*  
**DIALOGUE**  
**STUDIES**

**Autumn  
2018**

Volume 6



**INSTITUTE**  
*for*  
**DIALOGUE**  
**STUDIES**

## Editorial Team

Academic Editor: Prof Paul Weller - Executive Editor: Ozcan Keles  
Assistant Editors: Dr Mustafa Cakmak, Dr Mustafa Demir, Dr Omer Sener, Frances Sleaf

## Editorial Board

Prof Ronald Arnett <i>Duquesne University</i>	Prof Eddie Halpin <i>Leeds Beckett University</i>	Prof Ali Paya <i>The Islamic College</i>
Prof Michael Barnes <i>University of Roehampton London</i>	Dr Carool Kersten <i>Kings College London</i>	Dr Fabio Petito <i>University of Sussex</i>
Prof Joseph Camilleri <i>La Trobe University</i>	Prof Simon Keyes <i>University of Winchester</i>	Prof Simon Robinson <i>Leeds Beckett University</i>
Prof Donal Carbaugh <i>University of Massachusetts Amherst</i>	Prof Ian Linden <i>St. Mary's University Twickenham London</i>	Dr Erkan Toguslu <i>University of KU Leuven</i>
Prof Tony Evans <i>Winchester University</i>	Dr Johnston McMaster <i>Trinity College Dublin</i>	Prof Pnina Werbner <i>Keele University</i>
Dr Cem Erbil <i>Dialogue Society</i>	Prof Karim Murji <i>University of West London</i>	Dr Nicholas Wood <i>University of Oxford</i>
Prof Max Farrar <i>Leeds Beckett University</i>	Prof Alpaslan Ozerdem <i>Coventry University</i>	

-----  
The Editors appreciate comments and feedback from readers. They also value any help in increasing circulation in order to fulfil the Journal's objective, which is to bring together a body of original scholarship on the theory and practice of dialogue that can be critically appraised and discussed.

### Aim and Scope

The Journal of Dialogue Studies is a multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed academic journal published once a year. Its aim is to study the theory and practice of dialogue, understood provisionally as: meaningful interaction and exchange between people (often of different social, cultural, political, religious or professional groups) who come together through various kinds of conversations or activities with a view to increased understanding. The Journal is published by the Institute for Dialogue Studies, the academic platform of the Dialogue Society.

### Submission and Editorial Correspondence

Manuscripts submitted to the Journal for publication must be original, meet the standards and conventions of scholarly publication, and must not be simultaneously under consideration by another journal. Manuscripts should be presented in the form and style set out in the Journal's Style Guide. For further information and Style Guide please visit [www.dialoguestudies.org](http://www.dialoguestudies.org). To get in touch please email [journal@dialoguesociety.org](mailto:journal@dialoguesociety.org).

### Subscription

The Journal of Dialogue Studies is published once a year. Annual subscription – Institutions: £15 + p&p; Individuals: £10 + p&p; Students/Concessions: £7.5 + p&p. For further information or to subscribe please email [journal@dialoguesociety.org](mailto:journal@dialoguesociety.org). Except where otherwise noted, the authors of papers and reviews alone are responsible for the opinions expressed therein.

# Journal of Dialogue Studies

Volume 6  
Autumn 2018



**INSTITUTE  
for  
DIALOGUE  
STUDIES**



**CENTRE  
for  
COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT**



**CENTRE  
for  
POLICY  
OUTREACH**

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

EMPOWERING ENGAGEMENT

INSPIRING IDEAS



**DIALOGUE  
SOCIETY**

LONDON 1999

Registered Charity  
No: 1117039

[www.DialogueSociety.org](http://www.DialogueSociety.org)

The Journal of Dialogue Studies is a multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed academic journal published twice a year by the Institute of Dialogue Studies, a subsidiary body of the Dialogue Society, which undertakes the Society's academic work including research, codelivery of the MA in Dialogue Studies, academic workshops and publications.

The Dialogue Society is a registered charity, established in London in 1999, with the aim of advancing social cohesion by connecting communities, empowering people to engage and contributing to the development of ideas on dialogue. It operates nation-wide with regional branches across the UK. Through discussion forums, courses, capacity building publications and outreach it enables people to venture across boundaries of religion, culture and social class. It provides a platform where people can meet to share narratives and perspectives, discover the values they have in common and be at ease with their differences.

## **Journal of Dialogue Studies**

Autumn 2018  
Volume 6

First published in Great Britain 2018

© Dialogue Society 2018

All rights reserved. Except for downloading and storing this publication from the Dialogue Society website for personal use. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means or stored or made available on any information storage and retrieval system without prior written permission from the publisher.

ISSN 2054-3123

# Contents

## ARTICLES

Desecuritisation through Hermeneutic Dialogue: the Gülen Movement in Turkey <i>Mustafa Demir</i> .....	5
--	---

How Does the Act of 'Speaking in Tongues' Contribute to a Theology of Place? <i>Preston Evangelou</i> .....	27
---	----

Bakhtin and Wittgenstein on Dialogue as a Methodological Concept and Theme <i>Dorit Lemberger</i> .....	37
---	----

Bakhtinian Dialogue, Polyphony and the Trickster Countertype <i>Oemer S. Shen</i> .....	55
--	----

REFLECTION: Promoting and Advancing Multicultural Dialogues in Education <i>Richard Race</i> .....	65
--	----

## BOOK REVIEW

The Misty Land of Ideas and the Light of Dialogue: An Anthology of Contemporary Philosophy: Western & Islamic Ali Paya <i>Reviewed by Oemer S. Shen</i> .....	73
--	----



# Desecuritisation through Hermeneutic Dialogue: the Gülen Movement in Turkey

Mustafa Demir

---

This paper examines the dialogue activities of the Hizmet or Gülen Movement (GM)<sup>1</sup> through the lenses of securitisation theory and Gadamer's 'hermeneutic dialogue'. As the theoretical framework of the study, we have adopted the concepts of 'hermeneutic dialogue' and 'desecuritisation' in tandem with one another as non-violent means of conflict resolution.

---

Keywords: Desecuritisation, Hermeneutic dialogue, Resecuritisation, Minorities, Gülen Movement.

---

Mustafa Demir holds a PhD in International Relations. His research interests include the MENA region, and policies of MENA countries towards minorities.

- 1 The Hizmet or Gülen Movement, which began in Turkey as early as the 1970s, is an international civic movement with educational, charitable, and dialogue initiatives across the globe (Çetin 2010). Yavuz regards the Hizmet Movement as the biggest and most far-reaching civic movement in Turkey (Yavuz 2003:132). In parallel with this understanding, regarding its role in social issues in Turkey, Koç states that due to its size and influence, the Hizmet Movement had become an actor not only in the Kurdish conflict, but in social and political matters in contemporary Turkey until 2016. It had engaged in every level of social life in Turkish society (Koç 2013:181). Sociologist Helen R. Ebaugh, (2010) in one of her interviews, states that 'it is one of the largest and most influential social movements not only in Turkey, but probably in Muslim countries in general' (cited in Koç 2013:132). In discussing the objective of Hizmet and Gülen's works, Wanda Krause argues that 'the movement have aimed to mend the tensions and fissures specifically along racial and ideological lines on both practical and theoretical levels that are emerging in the globalizing world' (Krause 2007).

There are various other opinions on the movement, ranging from the objective to the biased. Some read the Movement as a missionary movement with an 'hidden Islamist' agenda and with the aim of disseminating Islam to the globe (Balcı 2003) or ultimately aiming to create an Islamic state in Turkey (Sharon-Krespin 2009; Turam 2006). Contrary to this view, for some Islamists the movement is 'too liberal,' 'too soft' (Akyol 2011: 216). While for yet others Hizmet is a Sufi sect which has modernised its methods to fit the contemporary context, without the master-disciple relationship and centralisation (Mandaville 2007).

Among this diversity of views on Hizmet, Pew research rightly argues that Hizmet does not easily fit into any given category and classification of current movements, particularly

The paper argues that dialogue activities as exhibited by the followers of the Hizmet Movement have created an environment for '*hermeneutic dialogue*' and facilitated the desecuritisation of securitised identities and of the cultures of minorities in Turkey. This discussion will help to examine the limits of the ability of a civic body to remain civic and hopes to contribute to the normalisation of minority identities in countries like Turkey, where there is an on-going struggle between democracy and autocracy.

This is a belated article. Its research materials were collected in the summer of 2013<sup>2</sup> and the paper itself was written in 2014. However, unexpected developments and the securitisation of the movement by the state (Demir 2014) required this research to be put on hold. Then in the summer of 2016 a coup attempt was staged by some rogue elements within the Turkish army and thwarted. However, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused the Movement of masterminding the coup attempt, confiscated all its assets and operations in Turkey and arrested anyone explicitly or allegedly affiliated with the movement. According to many observers, this has been an excuse for the Erdogan regime to cleanse the state and bureaucracy of any opposition and establish its own cadres within the state and economic sphere (Jacinto 2017; BBC 2017).

This article sees a need to separate bureaucratic extension, which refers to members of Hizmet within the bureaucracy and state machinery – nowadays dubbed 'the parallel state' by those who detest the movement – from the *civilian Hizmet*. As for the former, it is hard to monitor its activities and collect empirical data. In relation to this bureaucratic aspect, the movement has been criticised even by its own sympathisers for being nationalist and statist (Gurbuz 2015; Istanbul Enstitüsü 2014; Dönmez 2018). Civil or *civilian Hizmet* has been the subject of many studies (Ebaugh 2009; Ergene 2011; Yavuz 2013; Tittensor 2014 and Lacey 2014). Its bureaucratic extension has also become the subject of a number of studies that have scrutinised it from a critical angle. However, the major difference between the two is that the latter has always lacked empirical data (Dalay 2014). This is especially evident in those works that came out after the July 2016 coup attempt (Aydintasbas 2016; Yavuz 2016).

This separation is important and meaningful especially since the 2016 failed coup attempt in Turkey. Some argue that the dialogue activities of the movement in Turkey

---

in the Muslim world (Pew Forum on Religion). All in all, the aspect of the Movement we observed is a societal movement, a network of educational and dialogue institutions spread across the world and inspired by the Islamic Sufi tradition which embraces all humanity.

- 2 We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Rev. Father David Wiseman who made the trip possible.



have been a cover for its 'infiltration' into the state and 'illegal' activities 'within' the state (Aydintasbas 2016; Yavuz 2016). This paper is not about examining the credibility of these arguments. We refer this discussion to relevant works carried out by those experts on the 'exclusive' political context of Turkish politics and the state structure (Park 2016; Phillips 2017; Jenkins 2016). However, we argue that even though some 'within' the movement might have used the credit of Hizmet to cover such 'wrongdoing', it would be unfair to accuse millions of Hizmet followers in many countries and their 'good practices' of being a cover for such activities. This feels especially true after observing the case of this article, located in the dialogue activities of the movement in southeast Turkey (2013).

It can also be argued that through this bureaucratic extension the nationalist mindset of the Turkish state might have infiltrated the strategic mindset of the movement and might have led to some actions that contradict the movement's teachings and its empirically observable *raison d'être*. Some even argue that it was not the movement but the 'state [that] infiltrated into the movement' (cited in Dönmez and Ahval 2018). This point of Erol Mutercimler, ex-naval officer and currently columnist, is worth highlighting.

As an answer to the question of why the state has not kept its operations against the movement limited to its bureaucratic aspect but extended them to civil activities, our insight is that the 'normalisation' of minorities and recognising and celebrating 'pluralism' has never been seen as something desirable by the Republic of Turkey but they are seen as a threat to the 'unity' of the state and homogeneity of the nation. After a short period of desecuritisation of Turkish politics in the first decade of the twenty-first century, now we witness, as Caman (2019) puts it, the 're-securitization of Turkish politics'. Since the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century we have observed a return to the 'factory settings' of the Republic. Within this context, dialogue spaces have been targeted and not only minorities but also any effort to normalise minorities have again been seen as a 'threat' to the 'national' unity of and the sanctity of the state. Therefore, any movement contributing to the normalisation of minorities or enhancing freedoms, if acting out of the control of the Turkish state machinery, could be seen as a threat and, by all relevant channels of the state, would be dragged into the realm of security.<sup>3</sup> In other words, they would

3 In this period of ressecuritisation many human rights activists/philanthropists protesting for freedoms and against state oppression such as Idil Eser and Taner Kilinc of Amnesty, and Osman Kavala have been jailed (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/02/turkey-outlandish-charges-against-osman-kavala-and-15-others-must-be-dropped/>). NGOs like Open Society are forced to cease their operations in Turkey <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/nov/26/george-soross-open-society-foundation-to-pull-out-of-turkey>.

be *securitised*. This shows that in Turkey the 'success' of any civic movement in terms of its contribution to social harmony depends on its [hierarchical] relations with the state apparatus.

## Securitisation and Desecuritisation

In the theory of securitisation, 'security' is seen not as an objective condition but as a 'fruit' of a social process (William 2003). In other words, from a constructivist perspective, it is a 'created reality' within the 'right' context, as it is 'context specific'. Therefore, threats to security are socially constructed as well. Security is a kind of negotiation between the ruling elite and people, the audience. In some cases, it might be seen as a fruit of 'social engineering'. This means that some elements, personalities, or developments might be deliberately constructed or labelled as a threat by the power holders, or, as in our case, generally by the state elite to claim the right to implement unusual extraordinary measures. In the words of Waver, 'a state representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it' (Waver 1995:55). To put it differently, these groups can construct fear towards particular issues or groups for several reasons: for example, in order to enforce some emergency measures on migrants, relevant actors might indicate that immigration is a threat to some important object that needs to be secured (the referent object) such as the economy (Huysman 1995; 2000).

According to Buzan (Buzan et al. 1998:33), securitisation is framing/labelling something as a threat and then utilising a 'speech act' to prioritise the issue over other matters. Generally, the object that is securitised poses a threat to the 'survival' of the referent object, mainly the state. Thus, the threat has been regarded as 'existential.' Therefore, all measures are to ensure 'survival.'

In some other cases, the identity of certain groups (Williams & Michael 2003), environmental issues, some religious matters might be 'securitised' as well. Interestingly, as an act of securitisation, 'speech' is pointed out, with reference to the 'speech act', borrowing from the language theory of Austin (Buzan et al. 1998:25). The speech itself is seen as an 'act'. Related to this, Matt McDonald points out that here 'speech acts are conceived as a form of representation that don't simply depict a preference or view of an external reality. A parallel illustration here would be that of a marriage, in which saying 'I do' at a particular moment and context creates the marriage itself, bringing it into being.' In parallel with this interesting analogy, according to the Abrahamic religions, God/Allah/Jehovah created the world with the power of a 'speech act', by uttering the expression 'let there be light' (Genesis, OT) or 'let it be!' (Qur'an). However, some level their criticism at Austin for seeing security as merely a 'speech act' and aside from speech act suggest observing televisual images and other materials as well (Williams & Michael 2003).

The concept of *desecuritisation* is the reversed process of securitisation, which is to remove the perceived threat of an already securitised issue. It means the normalisation of materials that are perceived as a threat. The freedom of speech and televisual images are seen as a means of *desecuritisation* as well. For some, visuals have even more influence than words to shape the perception of the audience. For example, John Berger (1972: 1) argues that 'seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognises before it can speak'. In line with Berger, Fyfe and Law (1988: 2) suggest that 'human beings come to know the world as it really is for them' via 'depiction, picturing and seeing'. When we look at the application and aims of 'dialogue activities', their aim is either to prevent unfair securitisation of certain groups or to desecuritize already unfairly securitised groups in the eyes of the relevant audience. We accept that the term 'unfair' is problematic, however instead of attempting to define it, we will look at particular cases.

The term dialogue, which is used within the Hizmet or Gülen Movement, corresponds to the phrase 'desecuritisation' in terms of its results. Dialogue is defined as a process of different social parties coming together and the term is distinguished from debate and discussion as it does not have the aim to promise or offer any solution to a problem. Instead, it dignifies and puts stress on the efforts of both sides of the conflict/problem to 'listen with empathy' in an atmosphere where each side has equal status (Yankelovich 1999: 41). According to Yankelovich, there are a number of prerequisites for constructive dialogue, namely listening with empathy, including those who disagree in the dialogic process, and equality among the participants (Sleep and Sener 2013). In a process of dialogue there are no hierarchical relations between the sides, as the function of the organiser is only to be a platform, which brings the different sides together in a 'space for dialogue', in which power should be ideally diffused for each side to be able to speak about important sensitive issues held as matter of security.

Dialogue and 'desecuritisation' are tools of non-violent conflict resolution: a non-violent approach to conflict resolution in the Gülen movement is embodied in [hermeneutic] dialogue and desecuritisation. Gülen and the Movement utilise speech acts and visual images to non-violently solve social problems which could result in violent conflict, or, as in the case of recent developments, has already resulted in violent conflict in the Turkish state's dealing with the Kurdish question. To put it differently, the movement instrumentalises *desecuritisation* as a means to conflict resolution. 'Dialogue' is one of the words most associated with the Gülen Movement as an international civic movement. The term has specific meanings within particular contexts and usages. However, when we look at the dialogue practices of the movement, particularly in Turkey, we see the platforms or environments created by the movement are well suited to 'hermeneutic' dialogic engagement and they also

facilitate desecuritisation. This is especially evident in issues related to minorities in deeply divided societies. The events organised by the movement help those securitised (meaning labelled as a threat) groups, particularly minority groups to be normalised in the eyes of the hosting or dominant groups. In the words of a Christian priest: 'being in the same photo with them [Hizmet's dialogue volunteers] is changing our image in the mind of millions in Turkey' (Mersin Interview).

### ***Hermeneutic Dialogue as a Tool of Desecuritisation***

The roots of many conflicts lie in history and tradition, which are constructed by the 'texts' that inform the understanding of their participants and construct deep rooted animosities.

Oliver Ramsbotham, a well-known name in the literature of conflict resolution, views 'dialogue' as a key means of conflict resolution and peace building. Ramsbotham looks at Gadamer's thoughts and philosophy and attempts to convert his ideas and concepts into tools for conflict management and resolution.

We are already part of a history that shapes us (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), and all our interpretations take place in language within which – however 'forgetful' we may usually be about this – our own socially conditioned being is already constituted. Understanding is relational. We don't discover truth from outside as individual investigators. It reveals itself from within as we encounter each other in dialogue (Ramsbotham 2015:141)

Ramsbotham particularly focuses on the concept of 'hermeneutic dialogue'. He underlines that in Gadamer's work 'hermeneutics' means 'conversation between interpreter and text'. By text we mean any written, spoken or symbiotic discourses dominating and shaping the meaning of our fore-understandings. He underlines three key points of Gadamer's work to understand 'hermeneutic dialogue'. These are 'prejudice', 'horizon', and 'question'.

'Prejudice' is 'the fore-understanding that we already bring with us as interpreters [...]' as 'we are immersed in history and tradition'. 'Horizon' is about the perception or interpretation informed by the 'prejudice', which is in many cases limited and 'beyond which it is impossible to see'. When it comes to 'question', it appears when 'we are pulled up short by a text, or another that stands against us and asserts its own rights against our proto-assumptions and interests'. Gadamer puts this as 'the first condition of hermeneutics' (Gadamer 2003: 299). Going beyond this horizon enlightened by our 'prejudices', requires participating in the process of 'questioning', which is 'dialectic'. In Gadamer's words 'dialectic' is 'the art of conducting real conversation' (Gadamer 2003: 366).

It is hoped that this hermeneutic dialogue will lead to *understanding* through a 'fusion of horizons' that will first put its participants in an atmosphere 'between strangeness and familiarity' and then elevate the sides of the conflict to see beyond and come up with a new narrative which challenges the texts or official narratives feeding conflicts to hand down from generation to generation to resolve the conflict. This shows that, if provided, the environment allows participants from different sides to 'question' and a dialogic encounter opens the doors for 'hermeneutic dialogue'. In this article, we argue that the environment provided by these dialogue organisations was opening the doors of 'hermeneutic dialogue' for those taking part. However, one of the other conditions of this is that all participants need to accept that their understandings are 'dominated'/informed by 'prejudices' as Gadamer underlines: 'a person who does not admit that he is dominated by prejudices will fail to see what manifests itself by their light' (Gadamer 2003: 360).

And even in the long run we see the potential for allowing a fusion of horizons, which may be seen in future generations to come. This is because as Ramsbotham highlighted, 'human understanding in its deepest workings is best seen as a fusion of horizons mediated in and through language'. A good example of this is the European Union (EU) project and conflicts between Germans and French people. The dialogue attempts gave birth to the EU project, which allowed Germans and French people to 'question' their 'prejudices' and fuse their horizons and come up with a new narrative, a new European identity.

## **Background of the Securitised Context: Turkey**

In the case of Turkey, the existence of ethnic minorities has been denied and they have been forced to assimilate their differences into the Turkish culture by agents of the state. To ensure this, images of difference were constructed as a threat to the unity of the state in the eyes of the people. When it comes to the religious minorities, they have always been approached with suspicion and seen as 'collaborators' of exogenous powers. The first decade of the twenty-first century saw the emergence of a new narrative about minorities under the reformist AKP government from 2002 to 2013. However, this trend has changed and the following years have witnessed a return to the old policy of securitisation of minority identities.

In 1920, the Ottoman Empire was defeated and forced to sign the Treaty of Sevres, marking the end of the First World War. The treaty envisioned a dismembered and smaller state for the Ottomans. It presumed an independent state on the basis of ethnicity and identity on the multi-ethnic and multi-faith land of the Empire. Thus, in the minds of the elites, the treaty contained the hidden agenda of the West to dismember the 'Turkish land' (Sevres Syndrome).

After the War of Independence under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, the Republic of Turkey was founded on the principle of a modern, secular nation state from the ashes of a multinational polity, the Ottoman Empire. The treaty of Lausanne was signed in July 1923, replacing the Treaty of Sevres. This treaty, unlike Sevres, did not envisage any Kurdish state and recognised the National Pact Borders of Turkey (Misak-i Milliye Sınırları), excepting Mosul. It settled the borders of Turkey, except in areas of some minor uncertainties, such as Mosul and Antioch/Hatay (Oran 2004; Zurcher 2004; 2011; Lausanne, Section I: 2-11).

In all its strategic state-mind, traditionally Turkey has a very sceptical political culture. As Robins points out, Turks are distrustful of their adjacent countries (Robins 2003). It was easy to find reflections of this scepticism and lack of trust in daily life. There are common sayings in Turkish, such as 'Turkey is a country surrounded by the sea on three sides and by enemies on four sides'; 'There are no friends of Turks except Turks'. These expressions are the remnants of the 'Sevres Syndrome', which was used to explain the fear of being invaded by the neighbouring 'enemies' [external and internal] and being broken into pieces as predicted in the Treaty of Sevres, which never came into force (Kirişçi 2006; Park 2005). This metaphor reflects the state's traditional perspective on international relations and security culture. Turkey's 'neighbourhood policy' and its approach to its religious and ethnic minorities have been formed under the influence of this historical context.

The founding fathers of the Republic adopted the state structure, institutions and ideology of France as an 'ideal' model and embarked upon a homogenous nation-building process within the national borders. These founding fathers and their followers, called Kemalists, have seen socio-political pluralism as an existential threat to the state they have been building. They wanted to create a nation state which is reflected in the well-known state motto, 'Happy are those who say "I am a Turk."' Being a Turk was not enough for those who wanted to be happy: alongside being a Turk, one also had to be a Sunni Muslim, and a secular, non-practising one. Yilmaz has dubbed this typology 'Homo LASTus' and discussed the reason the secularising state also tried to socially engineer this religious (good) citizen identity in addition to the best citizen (see Yilmaz 2018). Those staying outside of this typology have been seen and constructed as a threat through different channels of official communication such as history text books.

From a critical perspective, the period witnessing the spread of the dialogue activities of the Hizmet Movement widely and visibly across to Anatolia corresponds with the reformist years of the governing AKP, from 2002 to 2013. In those years, the party passed many reformist policies to fulfil the Copenhagen Criteria of the EU, which strengthened democracy in Turkey. The government was also reforming the state and opening space for civil society in compliance with Turkey's EU accession process



and regulations. Some argue that these reforms were instrumentalised by the AKP to survive and stay in power. They presented a democratic image that also helped them to side-line the Kemalist military (Karaveli 2016; Hale and Ozbudun 2009; Dagi 2008).

However, Turkey's collapse into authoritarianism in recent years inevitably has also had direct bearing on domestic politics, which led to withdrawal from the EU accession process and reversal of the reformist approaches towards minorities. Since the Gezi Protest in 2013, and especially after the thwarted coup attempt of July 2016, religious minorities have been re-securitised and are being referred to as responsible for any malignancy and negative developments from the economy to security. In other words, the old narratives about religious minorities re being re-employed (Smith, Sage and Charter 2018). However, since 2011, with the changing internal power structure and regional and global developments, the AKP under Erdogan has established its own reign as the new sovereign – dubbed by Yilmaz and Bashirov (2018) 'Erdoganism'. Since any critical voice has been securitised, this was observable in the Gezi Park Protest in 2013. Minorities have been scapegoated again and pictured as 'collaborators', 'traitors' and any opposition or critic is accused of being affiliated with them. There have been many TV programmes on pro-government media outlets presenting influential opposition figures' family trees either as descending from an Armenian or any other ethnic or religious group. The names of these ethnicities and faith groups have been employed by the AKP government to demonise its political rivals and critics. The US State Department International Religious Freedom Report 2017 underlined that discrimination against religious minorities has intensified since the thwarted coup attempt in July 2016.

### ***Dialogue Between Faith Groups: Minorities in Turkey in Perspective***

Within this context, one of the most securitised issues has been the rights of minorities. Non-Muslims have been targeted as the collaborators and the Trojan horses of external enemies in official history (Anadol 1998; Baydar 2002; Biberyan 1966; Milas 1991; 1996; 2006). Muslims from ethnic minorities and their languages were perceived as a threat to the unity of the state and were also seen as a 'card' which can be used by external powers to manipulate and harm the Turkish state. They have been used as scapegoats in every negative issue. These depictions of minorities facilitated a negative image in the minds of the majority to normalise the use of extraordinary measures towards them.

In the early years of the Republic of Turkey, especially after 1925, some terms were securitised or constructed as existential threats for the sake of building a Western-style nation state. Ergil explains the ruling elite's mindset very well, as he argues that the elite assumed that being united entails being the same in terms of language, cultural

expressions, and religious conviction. Thus, the populace inherited from the Ottoman Empire were put through an assimilation process. The Ottoman State had a pluralist society of varying ethnicities, religions, sects, and languages. After the Turkish Republic was founded, minorities in Istanbul were given some cultural rights in the Lausanne Agreement, but some of them were subjected to the population exchange which was accepted in Lausanne; thus, they were excluded from the decision-making process. All the other fragments, which were left out of the definition of citizenship framed by the founding elite, their requests for recognition by the state, and their political demands were labelled as existential threats to the unity of the nation state. Furthermore, these claims were assessed in terms of national security.

Non-Muslim minorities in Turkey suffered greatly from the biased state approach and negative perceptions towards them. They were seen as traitors and co-conspirators of exogenous powers who want to 'weaken' Turkey. Because of this biased perception, they have suffered a lot in Republican history and even before, as a result of these sufferings, the majority of them had to leave for good. For instance, in Istanbul during the 1950s, they constructed stories about non-Muslims in general, and Greeks or the *Rum* in particular, which resulted in incidents of destruction and confiscation of shops and properties belonging to them in Istanbul. This was the case in the well-known 6-7 September incidents (6-7 Eylül Olayları) in 1955, when non-Muslims were deliberately chosen as scapegoats and their shops were ransacked in Taksim, Istanbul. Following this event, the majority of them had to leave (Benlisoy 2000).

Non-Muslim minorities have a centuries-long history in Asia Minor. The Ottoman State maintained its multicultural heritage by safeguarding the multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition of the peoples of Anatolia. The non-Muslim minorities were exempt from military service and were required to pay the poll tax. Although it could be argued that they were second-class citizens compared to the majority population, they were nonetheless free to maintain their distinct identities, maintaining their religious beliefs and practices, and living in autonomy (Oran 2004; Aktar 1997; 2006). However, when the Union and Progress Party came to power in 1908, this multicultural reality began to be ignored and a transformation from multiculturalism to a monocultural, 'monolithic' structure began. The Young Turks ('Les jeunes Turcs'/'Jön Türkler') were a nationalist movement which accommodated Armenian, Greek, Kurdish and Jewish intellectuals in its fold in the beginning. With the increasing impact of nationalism, the movement parted ways with the minorities. The Unity and Progress Party orchestrated the deportation of approximately 1.5 million Armenians in 1915, causing most to perish, and left many uprooted from their homelands (Aktar 1997; 2006). The nascent Turkish Republic, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, inherited the nationalist stance of the Young Turks as their central ideology (Zurcher 2011).



In 1923, the population exchange between Turkey and Greece took place, during which about 1.5 million Greeks were deported to Greece and large numbers of Muslim Turks living in Greece were deported to Turkey. After these steps, the state also 'expropriated' the properties of non-Muslims, forcing them to leave Turkey, then applying a wealth tax to extort their money and properties during World War II (Aktar 1997).

These actions of the state, first under the Young Turks, then under the new Turkish Republic, largely securitised the remaining non-Muslim population in southeast Turkey and in Istanbul. However, there was a great impact too on the Turkish majority population, who came to view non-Muslims as a threat, which widened the gap between the majority and minority populations. Therefore, desecuritising the relations between the Muslim and non-Muslim segments of the population has remained necessary to normalise the relations between different parts of the society and to prevent any further social tension and fractions.

It may reasonably be claimed that the Turkish language still exhibits many examples of securitisation. For example, when we were children, many of us [Turkish or Turkified people's children] did not know that the word *Ermeni*, 'Armenian', is the name of a people because people would use the word to swear at someone. The Armenian, Rum (of Greek origin or Turkish Greeks) or even Arab ethnicities have been used interchangeably with the word *hain* (traitor). Ninety years since the war, this legacy is still alive and people with Armenian, Greek, and other non-Muslim origins are seen through the lens of suspicion, even to the point of being seen as *hain* (treacherous) and therefore discriminated against by the state. Thus, the majority of them have left the country while the remaining ones prefer to disguise their identities in public because of this misperception (Milas 1991; Aktar 1997). During our research trip, we were told lots of stories of how these people were discriminated against or treated badly. It is as if they inherited this label of *hain* by birth.

We think the existing and prevailing stories of non-Muslims in Turkey have been the main reasons for their being perceived as scapegoats and as a threat. Therefore, the way to change this perception would be telling [inventing] a new story away from previously told negative narratives.

## **Attempts at Desecuritising Minorities in 'Tents' for Hermeneutic Dialogue**

The Gülen movement, especially since the 1990s, has organised many events, creating spaces for hermeneutic dialogue and by positive representation of the 'other'. In this case we argue that the events were facilitating *normalisation* of the 'other', in our case, religious minorities. The movement has been active since the 1990s with a civic

organisation under the name of the Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF or 'Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Vakfı' in Turkish).<sup>4</sup> The foundation organised many semi-academic conferences and workshops addressing the issues related to pluralism, freedoms and human rights issues. Later, these meetings paved the way for the establishment of the Abant Platform<sup>5</sup> under the JWF to discuss social, political and economic problems of Turkey.

Issues discussed at Abant meetings, the participants' backgrounds, and their horizons in relation to the issues discussed – all these came together to create suitable environments for *hermeneutic dialogue*. In Uğur's words, 'intellectuals with sharply different ideological affiliations' were being invited to an intellectual retreat and they were discussing the issues not only during the panels in an academic context but also during breakfast, lunch and tea breaks in a friendly environment. The 'meetings have helped to soften the ideological tension and polarisation in the society' (see Uğur 2013:47). The declaration document, presented at the end of these two- or three-day meetings, demonstrated a degree of *fusion of horizons* on the issues discussed. These meetings became the background for many friendships between intellectuals from different ideological, religious and political camps. From this point, one can argue that *friendship* as a safe institution itself became the most important and effective tent of a *hermeneutic dialogue* and that Abant was the place for establishing such friendships between intellectuals representing different camps of Turkey's society.

We argue that these activities helped build environments that removed the barriers between groups and challenged the existing perceptions of enmity towards one another through *fusion of horizons*.

Alongside the Abant Platform, the Intercultural Dialogue Platform (IDP), as one of the six platforms under the JWF, has particularly focused on dialogue between religious groups and organised events, bringing members and representatives of these groups together. In its lifetime, the IDP organised six big events (in Urfa, Istanbul, Tbilisi, and Moscow) from 2000 to 2006 and many other small events. The Platform also opened many branches in cities like Mersin, Antioch/Hatay, Urfa, Antep and others. These meetings included: April 2000 in Urfa and May 2004 in Mardin:

4 The JWF was founded in 1994 with Fethullah Gülen as its honorary president and together with all its platforms ceased its operations after the July 2016 coup attempt.

5 The name of the *Abant* Platform comes from the name of a lake by which the first meetings were held, a place which has been used as the venue for several of the platform's events. Since its first meeting in 1998, there have been more than 20 meetings on issues such as Islam, democracy and secularism; minorities; the Kurdish question, etc. After July 2016, like all other affiliated organisations in Turkey, Abant and JWF had to cease their operations in Turkey.

*Harran Meetings: In the footsteps of our father Abraham, I and II*; in January 2004 and 2005 in Istanbul: *Peace Prayer, I and II, Common values of three Abrahamic Religions*; and many other similar activities aiming at bringing together representatives and members of the three Abrahamic religions dominating Anatolia. Having scrutinised its activities we argue that the IDP provided those groups and people with a proper atmosphere for a hermeneutic dialogue. The platform and all its branches together with the JWF ceased all its operations in Turkey after the July 2016 coup attempt.

Considering its loyalty to the state, with this approach, the movement should have worked with the conviction that the outcomes of these constructive dialogues would increase the 'sense of belonging' of ethnic and religious minorities to the country, in contrast with the traditional assimilationist policy of the state. However, there are critical works underlining that there were and are competing views within the movement, explained in the beginning of this article as *bureaucratic* versus *civil* (Dönmez 2018; Bacik 2018). While some see these activities as a cover or public relations work and subscribe to the state's mindset in relation to minority rights of some others, we believe the majority in the movement are strong believers in the pluralism, liberal ideas and minority rights that are in compliance with the religious interpretation of the Movement (Kurucan and Erol 2012).

## Historical Background to Dialogue Initiatives

The movement's activities in Turkey illustrate clear examples of its functioning as a *desecuritisier* or as a medium of *desecuritising* actors. In other words, the empirically observable activities of the movement facilitated restoring a positive image of minority groups that had been constructed as a threat to the 'unity of the state' within the historical context. The way to change this perception would be to tell a new story, away from the previously told negative narratives. Therefore, Hizmet's dialogue activities became salient in the 1990s for the purpose of reconciliation.

Firstly, Gülen engaged with the representatives of the Christian and Jewish communities in Turkey and visited Pope Jean Paul II in 1998. He met the Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew in 1996, and met with the highest representative of the Sephardic community in Turkey in 1999. After these efforts, 'tolerance dinners' were organised and representatives of minorities were invited to these gatherings. Therefore, Gülen inspired the dialogue initiatives with the minorities and he was the first practitioner of these initiatives himself. Thus, it can be said that he started the community's process of normalisation of the non-Muslim minorities by his own example and practice.

The first foundation that openly promoted dialogue between different faiths and cultures in Turkey was the JWF. Founded in 1994, it has two main principles:

respecting differences and coming together. In addition to respecting differences and promoting dialogue, the foundation also works to enhance the culture of living together. It is also interested in the issues that concern journalists.

In 2013 in Mersin, *MEKADIM* (the dialogue organisation in Mersin) welcomed us and we had the opportunity to observe their dialogue activities.<sup>6</sup> We visited the Syriac Orthodox Church and the Latin Catholic Church of Mersin. They mentioned their previous dialogue events as well. For instance, during Ramadan, with Mekadim's leadership, the churches hosted a Sahur and Iftar dinners and invited the neighbourhood and the leading figures of the city such as the city Mayor.

During the Sahur meal, for instance, people from all walks of life come together and they mix with the Christian members of the society to partake of the same food. On another occasion, they cooked Ashura (a dessert known as 'Noah's pudding') and delivered it to people at the city centre, among other similar events.

Being in the same picture with these people normalises them. After seeing, hearing about and observing these events, David Wiseman remarked: 'the work of MEKADIM is central to establishing the trust and confidence for minority communities to engage together.' There were similar emerging narratives in Hatay, Urfa, Mardin and Maras, between Muslims and non-Muslims, Kurds and non-Kurds, Alevis<sup>7</sup> and Sunnis.

---

6 During our visit, we observed that these dialogue activities are creating new stories based not on animosity but friendship. Our trip was facilitated by Hizmet volunteers and dialogue organisations affiliated with Hizmet in the region. We visited Marash, Antep, Mardin, Urfa, Hatay and Mersin.

7 The Alevis are a broad minority ethno-religious group in Turkey who bear similarities with the majority Sunni Muslim population, with some significant differences. There are Alevis of Turkish and Kurdish ethnic origin and they have a strong folkloric tradition. Alevis retain their distinct beliefs that resemble aspects of the Shia sect (such as the special position of Ali, the Prophet's nephew), while most of them view these differences in cultural rather than religious terms. Some Alevi groups are completely secular, not viewing Alevism as a religious identity. Alevis were also suppressed during the early years of the Turkish Republic, along with other minority ethnic groups. The majority of the Kurdish groups who were quelled during the Dersim Massacre were Alevis. While the majority Sunni population was later allowed to have religious education and instruction by state-appointed religious instructors through the Diyanet, Alevis had no such means. Since Alevis have historically conveyed their teachings through oral transmission, the fact that the state disregarded religious education in Alevi beliefs has further weakened the bond of Alevis with their own traditions, teachings and beliefs. For the securitization of Alevis, de-securitization and re-securitization in the Kemalist and Erdoganist eras, see Yilmaz and Barry 2019.

### **Creating Dialogue Spaces or Tent of Hermeneutic Dialogue**

The Hizmet Movement contributed to a project in recent years for *Alevi-Sunni* dialogue. *Cemevis*, the places of worship and religious gatherings for *Alevis*, have still not been recognised by the state as places of worship. However, there were joint initiatives with the support of the Gülen community to open a compound, which was going to include a *cemevi*, a mosque and a dining hall that would serve free food to people in need. Plans were being drawn up to build the compound in the Mamak district of Ankara. Creating such 'dialogue spaces' is very important in order to reconcile hostile or biased groups. Ironically, the foundation stone of the project was laid by AKP ministers in September 2013 and announced by the state-run news agency Anadolu Ajansı as very good news, quoting the Minister attending the ceremony as follows '*Inshallah* [God willing] once the project has been completed, all tongues and hearts will supplicate to the Divine' (AA 2013). These places can be a kind of natural reconciliation centre. Unfortunately, the Turkish government halted this project and attempted to demonise it by naming it a 'FETÖ project' (the label being used by the government to demonise the movement). Later, in April 2017, the government converted the building into a health centre because it did not fit in with the state agenda (Sozcu 2017). However, it still remains as a good illustration of a space for 'hermeneutic dialogue' and the de-securitisating dialogue method of the Gülen Movement.

This project can alternatively be seen as an image produced by Hizmet as a *desecuritisation* means. The fact that the project was being funded through Hizmet by the businessmen supporting the movement, the majority of whom are Sunni Muslims, normalises the image of this compound in the eyes of the Sunni followers of Hizmet. Also, building such a sanctuary would provide a dialogue space, a tent between Sunni and Alevi Muslims in the long term. Also, it should be noted that such places could play a crucial role in the deconstruction process of existing stories regarding the Alevis or vice versa and reconstructing as friends and neighbours the Alevis in the eyes of Sunnis, and the Sunnis in the eyes of Alevis.

Such places might be examples of Habermas' 'communicative space,' spaces free from power relations. Of 'communicative spaces' Tamara de Souza argues that:

A communicative space is more inclusive [...] allows for inclusion of members from the dominant public [...] it is an arena where actors from the margins and actors from the dominant public can interact with each other in meaningful ways, including discussion, confrontation, and disclosure (de Souza :293).

I witnessed that Alevis are hesitant to engage with Sunni communities because of their potential assimilationist agendas. For instance, in the Maras' Pazarcık district, the director of the *cemevi* expressed these feelings in the following words: 'Our main

reservation is being [forced to] converted to the Sunni creed. That is why we have problems engaging with the Sunnis. If we engage in dialogue with Hizmet, we fear that they might expect something from us.' However, Hizmet's unique accommodationist approach was made discernible in a short time. For example, during my visit to the region where the Alevis live, I heard in some places that Hizmet is actively assisting the construction of *cemevis* in Alevi villages with moral and material support.

*The Dede* of the *cemevi* stated that '*Hocaefendi* [referring to Fethullah Gülen] is someone who tries to explain [sic] us to the larger society, tells them that we, Sunnis and Alevis, are brothers [...]. *Hocaefendi* is a great scholar, we have a peaceful relationship, love and respect for Sunnis and Alevis [...]. He tries to deemphasise Sunni and Alevi concepts, and emphasises our brotherhood [...]. We ask him to tell the larger society about us, and to explain us to the Sunni society and to the world [...]. *Hocaefendi* removes prejudices about us, when he explains Alevism to others. He explains that we are of the same religion, and Alevism is part of Islam. We Alevis expect the Sunnis to recognise us and respect us.'

## Conclusion

This paper has attempted to examine the contribution of the Hizmet Movement to the normalisation of minorities in Turkey, which has been struggling between democracy and autocracy. After 2011, with the changing internal power structure and regional and global developments, the AKP under Erdogan established its own reign as the new sovereign. Since then any critical voice has been securitised and dealt with in the realm of security with the means of security. This was easily observable in the Gezi Park Protests in 2013, where participants were called 'terrorists' by the government. Any critical movement has been scapegoated again and again and pictured as 'collaborators' and 'traitors', and any opposition or critics alleged to be affiliated with minorities, mainly Armenians and other non-Muslim minorities.

This paper has also raised the issue that there are competing views within the movement about its civil aspect and bureaucratic extension. The activities and objectives of its civil Hizmet, which is empirically observable, could be, in some cases, on a collision course with its bureaucratic extension, although some argue that it is a cover for the bureaucratic extension. Some have depicted this bureaucratic extension as infiltration of the movement into the state, though it is not visible and they have not produced any empirical data. However, this article adopts the argument that this bureaucratic branch could have had channels that allowed for the introduction of the strategic statist mindset into the movement. This is well manifested in issues like minority rights, especially Kurdish political rights.

The more the movement approached the government, the more it made concessions in

its civility and the more it was securitised as a result. Because its bureaucratic extension facilitated rapprochement between the state and the movement, it also ironically led to the securitisation of the movement by the state. It appears that this rift within the movement will continue to deepen and widen. From a normative perspective, the future of the movement will rely heavily on its ability to marginalise its bureaucratic extension, as many of its insider critics underline.

This article has also argued that the events and meetings organised by Hizmet's dialogue organisations created an inclusive environment facilitating 'hermeneutic dialogue' between participants in Turkey.

It was observed in events organised by the movement and during a field visit in 2013 that the dialogue activities of Gülen or the Hizmet Movement in Turkey were attempts to facilitate the emergence of environments for *hermeneutic dialogue* that allowed their participants to deconstruct existing culturally and officially loaded stories about religious minorities and to *desecuritize*/normalise them by constructing new stories in a process of fusing the horizons to go beyond the official horizon, which was left limited on purpose, presented by the state. In these newly reconstructed stories, the minority groups and their members are regarded as 'friends,' 'neighbours' and 'fellow citizens' in contrast to the securitising images of the 'traitor,' and 'public enemy'.

When it comes to what this case study can tell us in relation to other cases, it is clear that operating as an NGO within an authoritarian regime, in the field of conflict resolution, is highly challenging if not impossible. In other words, the success of an NGO in desecuritisation depends on the free space it is allowed to act in by the authorities. If the NGO goes beyond its designated space, it can face securitisation itself or losing its civil aspect by resigning itself to the authority. This might be a good indicator of the common fate of civil societies in authoritarian regimes.



## Bibliography

- AA [Anatolian News Agency]. (2013) "Mamak Cami ve Cemevinin temeli atıldı." 08, September. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/mamak-cami-ve-cemevinin-temeli-atildi/220080> (last accessed on 25th of March 2019).
- Anadol, K. (1998) *Karşı Yaka Memleket, Bir Ayrılık Romani*, İstanbul: Milliyet.
- Akyol, M. (2011) *Islam without Extremes: A Muslim Case for Liberty*, New York: W.W. Norton.
- Aktar, A. (1997) "Cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarında uygulanan 'Türkleştirme' Politikaları." [Turkification] Policies in the Early Republican Era] *Toplum ve Tarih*, (No: 156, 1996, 4-18).
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2006) *Türk Milliyetçiliği, Gayrimüslimler ve Ekonomik Dönüşüm* [Turkish nationalism, non-Muslims and economic transformations], İletişim: İstanbul.
- Aras, B. and Caha, O. (2000) "Fethullah Gülen and his liberal "Turkish Islam" Movement," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 4(4): 30-42.
- Baydar, O. (2002) *Elveda Alyoşa, (Öyküler)*. İstanbul: Can.
- Balcı, B. (2003) "Fethullah Gülen's missionary schools in Central Asia and their role in the spreading of Turkism and Islam," *Religion, State and Society*, 31(2): 151-77.
- Balzacq, T. (2010) *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, PRIO: New Security Studies.
- Basaran E. (2011) "Dindarlar Kurtlerin Istirabini hissetmediler" *Radikal* 10 October. Available at: <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/ezgi-basaran/biz-dindarlar-kurtlerin-istirabini-hissetmedik-1065858/> (Last accessed 03 June 2019).
- Benlisoy, F. (2000) "6-7 Eylül oncesinde Basinda Rumlar" *Toplumsal Tarih*, 81:28-38.
- Bilgin, F. and Sarihan, A. (2013) *Understanding Turkey's Kurdish Question*, Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Berger, J. (2008) *Ways of Seeing*, Penguin: UK.
- Bruinssen, Martin van. (1992) *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, London: Zed Books.
- Buzan, B. et al. (1998) *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Çetin, M. (2009) *The Gülen Movement. Civic Service Without Borders*, New York: Blue Dome Press.
- Dagi, I. (2008) "Turkey's AKP in Power," *Journal of Democracy*, 19, no. 3 (2008): 25-30.
- De Souza, R.T. (2007) *NGOs and Empowerment: Creating Communicative Spaces in the Realm of HIV/AIDS in India*, PhD Thesis: Purdue University.
- Demir, M. (2014) "Securitisation of Hizmet/Gülen Movement," *Open Democracy*, February 03.
- Ebaugh, H. (2010) *The Gülen Movement: a Sociological Analysis of a Civic Movement*



- Rooted in Moderate Islam*, Dordrecht/London: Springer.
- Ergil, D. (2010) *Barisi Aramak* Istanbul: Timas Yayinlari
- Fyfe G. and Law J. (eds.) (1988) 'Picturing Power: Visual Depiction and Social Relations.' *Sociological Review Monograph*, 35, London: Routledge.
- Gurbuz, M. (2015) "Turkey's Kurdish Question and the Hizmet Movement." Available at: <https://www.turkeyinstitute.org.uk/assets/docs/Gurbuz-Turkeys-Kurdish-Question-and-Hizmet.pdf>
- Caman, Mehmet E. (2019) "What Ankara's Kurdish policy in Syria reveals about Turkey's regime." *Turkish Minute*, February 12. Available at: <https://www.turkishminute.com/2019/02/12/opinion-what-ankaras-kurdish-policy-in-syria-reveals-about-turkeys-regime/>
- Ceyhan, A. and Tsoukala, A. (2002) 'The Securitisation of Migration in Western Societies', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 27, 21-39.
- Hale, W., and Ozbudun, E. (2009) *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of the AKP*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Huysmans, J. (1995) "Migrants as a Security Problem: Dangers of 'Securitizing' Societal Issues", in R. Miles and D. Thranhardt (eds), *Migration and European Integration: Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion*, London: Pinter, 53-72.
- Huysmans, J. (2000) "The European Union and the securitization of migration", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 38(5): 751-77.
- Istanbul Enstitusu, (2014) *Hizmet Gonulluleri Perspektifinden Hizmet Medyasinda Kurt Sorununun Gorunumu*, Istanbul: Istanbul Enstitusu Yayinlari.
- Jenkins, Gareth H. (2016) "Post-Putsch Narratives and Turkey's Curious Coup," *The Turkey Analyst*, July 22. Available at: <http://www.turkeyanalyst.org/publications/turkey-analyst-articles/item/....> (Accessed on August 17, 2016).
- Jutila, M. (2000) "Desecuritizing Minority Rights: Against Determinism", *Security Dialogue*, 37(2): 167-185.
- Karaveli, H. (2016) "Erdogan's Journey: Conservatism and Authoritarianism in Turkey," *Foreign Affairs*, 95, 121-131.
- Kendal, N. (1980) *Kurdistan in Turkey*, London: Chaliand.
- Koc, D. (2013) "Te Hizmet Movement and the Kurdish Question," in F. Bilgin and A. Sarihan, (eds.), *Understanding Turkey's Kurdish Question*, Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Kurucan A., and Erol, M. (2012) *Dialogue in Islam*, London: Dialogue Society.
- Mandaville, P. (2007) "Globalization and the politics of religious knowledge: pluralizing authority in the Muslim world", *Theory, Culture and Society*, 24, 2.
- McDowall, D. (1991) *The Kurds*, Minority Rights Report.
- Millas, H. (1991) "History Textbooks in Greece and Turkey", *History Workshop* 31, 21-33.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1996) "The Image of Greeks in Turkish Literature: Fiction and Memoirs," in H. Walfgang (ed.), *Oil on Fire? Textbooks, Ethnic Stereotypes and Violence in*

- South Eastern Europe*, Hannover: Verlag Hahnsche Buchhandlung.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2006) "The image of the Greek minority of Istanbul in Turkish literature: past and recent tendencies," in M. Kappler (ed.), *Intercultural Aspects in and around Turkic Literatures*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Natali, D. (2005) *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey and Iran*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Oran, B. (2004) *Türkiye'de Azınlıklar: Kavramlar, Lozan, İç Mevzuat, İçtihat, Uygulama [Minorities in Turkey: Concepts, Lausanne, Domestic Legislation and Implementation]*, Istanbul: Tesev Yayinlari.
- Park, B. (2016) "Turkey and the Case of the Magical Vanishing Coup." War on the Rocks, July 17. Available at: <https://warontherocks.com/2016/07/turkey-and-the-case-of-the-magical-vanishing-coup/>
- Özbudun, E. (2015) "Turkey's Judiciary and the Drift toward Competitive Authoritarianism," *The International Spectator*, 50, no. 2, 42–55.
- Philiphs, D. (2017) *An Uncertain Ally*, Routledge.
- Roe, P. (2004) "Securitization of Minority Rights: Conditions of Desecuritization," *Security Dialogue* 35(3), 279–294.
- Sharon-Krespin, R. (2009) "Fethullah Gülen's grand ambitions: Turkey's Islamist danger," *Middle East Quarterly*, 55–66.
- Sleap F. and Sener O. (2013) *Dialogue Theories I*, London: Dialogue Society.
- Smith, Lucinda, H., Sage A. and Charter D. (2018) "Turkey blames 'Jewish lobby' for economic crisis," *The Times*, May 30. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/turkey-blames-jewish-lobby-for-economic-crisis-lqrk8t0b7>
- Sozcu, (2017) "*FETÖ Projesi Cami-Cemevi, sağlık merkezine dönüşüyor*," 4 April. Available at: <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2017/gundem/feto-projesi-cami-cemevi-saglik-merkezine-donusuyor-1773774/> (last accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2019).
- State Department International Religious Freedom Report 2017*. Available at: <https://https://www.state.gov/reports/2017-report-on-international-religious-freedom/> (last accessed on 25th of March 2019).
- Turam, B. (2006) *Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Wæver, O. (1995) "Securitization and Desecuritization", in Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed.), *On Security*, New York: Columbia University Press, 46–86.
- Wilkinson, C. (2007). "The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Useable Outside Europe?", *Security Dialogue*, 38(1), 5–25.
- Williams, Michael C. (2003) "Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics", *International Studies Quarterly*, 47(4), 511–531.
- Yavuz, H. (2003) *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yilmaz, I. (2003) "Ijtihad and Tajdid by conduct." In H. Yavuz and John L. Esposito,

- (eds.), *Turkish Islam and the Secular State. The Gülen Movement*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 208-237.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2007) *Muslim World in Transition: Contributions of the Gülen Movement*, London: Leeds Metropolitan University Press.
- Yilmaz, I., and Esposito, J. (2010) *Islam and Peace Building: Gülen Movement Initiatives*, New York: Blue Dome Press.
- Yilmaz, I. (2018) "Islamic Populism and Creating Desirable Citizens in Erdogan's New Turkey", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 29 (4), 52-76.
- Yilmaz I. and Bashirov G. (2018) "The AKP after 15 Years: Emergence of Erdoganism in Turkey", *Third World Quarterly*, 39:9, 1812-1830.
- Yilmaz, I and Barry J. (2019) "The AKP's De-securitization and Re-securitization of a Minority Community: The Alevi Opening, and Closing", *Turkish Studies* (forthcoming).
- Zurcher, Eric J. (2004) *Turkey: A modern history*. 3rd ed. London-New York: I.B. Tauris.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2011) *The Young Turks, The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey*, London: IB Tauris.



# How Does the Act of ‘Speaking in Tongues’ Contribute to a Theology of Place?

Preston Evangelou

---

This paper attempts to define how the practice of ‘speaking in tongues’ regulates a place to develop a framework that adheres to an act of free expression, a preliminary that requires space to exercise interplay upon the concept of the Spirit. This idea necessitates a place to construct identity, security and a sense of belonging.

---

Keywords: Sense of belonging, Speaking in tongues, Pentecostalism, The New Testament, Theology of place.

---

## Introduction

Pentecostals attempt to relate their interpretation of experience as closely as possible to the biblical scriptures (Parker 2015: 203). For example, as seen through the practice of speaking in tongues, or the more technical term ‘glossolalia,’ derived from the Greek words γλῶσσα (tongue) λαλέω (to speak) (Warrington 2008: 84). The act of speaking in tongues is first exhibited in the book of Acts in chapter two, during the feast of Pentecost. Again, it is presented in Saint Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthian church: ‘For he who speaks in tongues does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries’ (1 Corinthians 14:2).

Keith Warrington points out that speaking in tongues can be seen as an expression of worship or prayer leaving many Pentecostals with emotional and spiritual benefits (Warrington 2008: 88). Hence, the practice of speaking in tongues is all about intention, as the practice itself is a form of interplay. Although the individual may not fully comprehend the activity, the intention is key to the understanding of why one would engage in such a practice. For example, this activity provides a sign to those that do not believe, as it serves a purpose to confirm a deeper intimacy with God (Warrington 2008: 95). Speaking in tongues is essential in developing the preliminary requirements to establish a ‘place’ in the Spirit for Pentecostal worship.

---

Preston Evangelou is a UK-based academic whose research interests include the Winnicottian theory of transitional progression, Pentecostal theology, sense of belonging, and religious identity. He is a doctoral candidate at King’s College, whose research examines how the Winnicottian theory of transitional progression might be analogous to Johannine theology of spiritual development.

## Defining 'Place' from 'Space'

According to Walter Brueggemann, 'place is space which has historical meanings, where some things have happened which are now remembered and which provide continuity and identity across generations' (Brueggemann 1977: 5).

The significance of the transition from a space to a place lies within the construction of a practice that determines its own identity, security and a sense of belonging. Therefore, the formation of a group, such as a church structure, should include these three aspects and can be traced to the primal horde instinct (Freud 1921: 84), an innate need to congress and form an order in which to serve public interest by its specific focus on charity and self-sacrifice. Within this context, formation and order are the preliminaries that give the state of space a licence to transform to a distinguished place. This suggests that there is an instinct to fulfil a primal desire. Freud refers to McDougall's dynamic of 'the principle of direct induction of emotion by way of the primitive sympathetic response' (Freud 1921: 84) in order to demonstrate group formation. The greater the number of people that observe a simultaneous affect, the stronger the automatic compulsion grows.

The common identity allocated to the specific object construed through the paradigm of space is a collective event and requires further construction to validate a cause for the purpose of defining a place within that space. Place, then, is a modification and function of distance (Casey 1998: 164), more specifically, however, speaking in tongues creates a situation of variance by producing a place to express and develop through engagement with the Spirit. The renewing of the mind is taken further to include the dynamic of the collective group: 'Be of the same mind toward one another' (Romans 12:16). In this case, the principle of emotion by direct influence is paramount for the collective group to regulate a system of identity.

Within this provision, order yields to a practice and doing becomes confirmation of what 'I am' or what 'I belong to'. Clancier and Kalmanovitch suggest that it is through the process of integration that the individual is led to a state of unity (Clancier & Kalmanovitch 1987: 29). Hence, the meaning of a place can empower the individual. For example, Brueggemann states that order yields identity through the practice of the Sabbath. The book of Amos qualifies that the people of the land wait until Sabbath is over to continue in their wicked ways (Amos 8:4–6). The practice is kept, the identity is not lost, but the intention in how the practice is carried out is of particular value. Not what or where, but why and how the practice is considered seems to be the important factor. The emphasis is on intention, suggesting that practice alone is not worthy of the land, and its influence consequently reflects the condition of the land.

There now is a situation that respectively demonstrates intention as well as practice in

meeting the criteria in order to fulfil the pre-requisites of developing a place.

According to Bruggemann, God intends to restructure the land and people (Bruggemann 1977: 19). This may suggest that a definable act must first take place. Through interplay within space the Jewish community may find its place, the Promised Land. Thomas O'Meara conveys that this restructuring consigns itself to 'the Christian communities that comprised the Body of their risen Lord, and they saw themselves as their temple, replacing the holy spaces of physical temples', and in turn, 'sacred space is where the divine Spirit dwells – that lay in the community of the Lord' (O'Meara 1999: 56). There is clearly a re-defining moment that places a shift between the traditional localisation of land that the Jews were promised to the accomplishment of the promise within a metaphorical expression of God's reason, which many Christians believe to be the death of Jesus for the redemption of Mankind's sins.

For Pentecostal theology, the 'Christ event' is crucial, as 'place' takes on new meaning, a shift from locality to reality. Through assigning meaning to the symbolic, Israel finds her place through the identity of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The original reason for the search for the Promised Land is as a response to needing somewhere to call home. Inge refers to Brueggemann's exposition of the 'land' as addressing, 'the central human problem of homelessness' (Inge 2003: 35), and further suggests that Brueggemann's insight into the Old Testament includes a history of Israel summed up in terms of hope as a response to a promise (Inge 2003: 37), which requires faith in a journey where God is the guide. Therefore, meaningful action provides the criteria for discovering a distinctive place that reflects the current of the individual's imagination. Inge refers to the 'geography of our imagination' (Inge 2003: 130) to convey how a place can function not only to produce an identity but also an expression of the people that occupy it. The poet Jeremy Hooker illustrates place as 'particular identities belonging to a network, which continually extends with our perception, and beyond it' (Matthias 1992: 47). Therefore, place is unique and offers an insight to 'a space dense with images' (Inge 2003: 130). It is clear to see how a practice can contribute to developing a meaningful place.

## **Speaking in Tongues as a Form of Creative Play**

The place of Pentecostal worship sets the cue for a desire to express oneself, a continuation of the mood and emotion that is felt within the atmosphere it creates (Parker 2015: 78). The primary objective is to feel the spirit move and to act out its interpretation in a symbolic form. Therefore, the place of the Spirit is the interplay that is required to develop a 'self-world structure' (Parker 2015: 165) that qualifies the individual's place in proximity to other entities (Casey 1998: 164). In this way,

discovering a sense of belonging through the practice of speaking in tongues offers a place to express oneself in a safe way.

According to Sigmund Freud, the origin of religious attitude can be traced back to the feeling of infantile helplessness (Freud 1927: 72). Of that feeling of helplessness a sense of belonging is attributed to the behavioural patterns of the individual seeking a refuge, whereby a collective order can place value on the individual's psychological sense of wellbeing. Hence, this demonstrates purpose-directed behaviour, where free expression through interplay provides opportunity for creativity. In this case, speaking in tongues has value in developing a theological reflective account of imaginative thinking as it transcends language within symbolic interactive play.

Play is essential in the process of creating, and being creative is essential for the individual's discovery of the self (Winnicott 1971: 72). This is in line with what forms Christian identity: 'It is the script of Christian identity, and its patterns of movement and thought are the patterns that comprise the essence of our Christian practices' (Healy 2003: 288). This enables the individual to discover a sense of being in relation to a place of symbolic interaction. Speaking in tongues is the real product of creativity by interacting with the Spirit.

In line with what is viewed as the Pentecostal tradition, John Inge postulates that contact with the Spirit is important as 'space has been Christified by the incarnation' (Inge 2003: 57). This further suggests that the Spirit defines the 'real subject' of the Church's core practice, which is not governed by human agents. Furthermore, it is the Spirit's work that is constitutive (Healy 2003: 297). This brings meaning and value to the effort of the Church; practices may vary but the objective in service to God remains the same.

The significance of a practice that employs a method of free expression, such as speaking in tongues, serves as a mechanism which aligns displaced material within the psychical apparatus in an order that reinforces the individual's stance within his or her belief in the Spirit. This displays that speaking in tongues holds value in the act of qualifying a system of faith in a concept that requires full submission of intellect and language. A free-flowing system is designed to develop a practice of interplay whereby the ideology of the Spirit is in relation to the self and in proximity to the concept of God.

## **Developing an Identity and a Sense of Belonging**

Place, for Pentecostal theology, is identifying with the Spirit as well as observing the Spirit's involvement with the individual in a freely expressive way that manifests itself in the form of utterances of the tongue (Acts 2:4), in other words, speaking in tongues.



Accordingly, this practice offers little to nothing of a step-by-step logic but rather submits to an aesthetic practice (Parker 2015: 212). This further suggests that the place in which speaking in tongues is practised produces creativity mediated through the individual administering similar traits that are expressed through art and poetry.

A good example that demonstrates the value of free expression within a place that adheres to a framework of a step-by-step procedure is the sport of amateur boxing. All amateur boxing clubs in Great Britain are regulated and commissioned by a Governing Body. The Amateur Boxing Association of England (ABAE) is considered the largest and most established boxing association in the United Kingdom. It requires its clubs to work within a certain framework that follows guidelines that include health and safety as well as the rules and procedures of the sport, according to the *Rules of Boxing* (2012). The ABAE style is very distinctive and unique (Blower 2007: 21–23). However, although there is a step-by-step methodology, free expression of the art form of amateur boxing is equally important, otherwise all you have are set forms to a practice with no passion, and it is within the passion that the execution of action is at its best. It is up to the boxer to express his or her own personal style within the confines of a place where performance is executed, such as a regulated contest. Nevertheless, the space where the boxer develops his or her personal style is within training. Training provides the space essentially needed to develop an associative identity to the form of amateur boxing. Through this, the boxer can then confidently develop a distinctive style that represents the place where he or she trains, such as a club that holds its own identity and style.

This analogy corresponds well with how speaking in tongues might contribute to the construct of a theology of place as it defines its locality within the Spirit. In like manner, the place of ministry varies according to variables that determine culture, tradition, and belief. However, just as the discipline of boxing has its own Governing Bodies so too do established churches. Accordingly, there should be a constitution that verifies the position of any particular church. Saint Augustine of Hippo's understanding of the Christian faith is that the Church should resemble a Hospital (McGrath 2011: 381). In this respect the Church has a spiritual duty of care and its function is to serve according to a framework that is defined by Saint Paul in his Epistle to the Romans. Saint Paul distinguishes the Christian walk as adhering to an ethical framework that, upon close examination, yields to a framework based on human emotion and intellect: '[...] be transformed by the renewing of your mind' (Romans 12:2). This places an emphasis that something needs to happen before proceeding in the light of understanding the perfect will of God. A transvaluation of internalised material to assign meaning and value to the outside world is a crucial aspect of this process.

A primary goal within Pentecostal worship is found within emotional experience. This perspective can imply that emotionally led discernment and decision making

adheres directly to the Spirit and furthermore lays claim to a personal relationship with the Spirit, hence the term 'led by the Spirit', which is extensively used within Pentecostal theology.

An example of how literally the International Pentecostal Church of Holiness takes the practice of speaking in tongues is seen within their statement of Sanctification in Article Eleven (Kay & Dyer 2004: 139). An attempt is made to replicate the original practice of Spirit baptism as it is referred to in the book of Acts 2:3–4 and Corinthians I, 14:2. Spirit baptism is defined as the 'sudden receiving of entire sanctification' (Dunn 2010: 2), and this is commonly associated with speaking in tongues. Thus, speaking in tongues sculpts the place of Spirit baptism. The importance of developing a place from an act of free expression is similar to what was previously said about the significance training has within boxing regarding the execution of action. Speaking in tongues serves as a self-developing practice that allows room for the Spirit to manifest and lead. By the practice of speaking in tongues, the place of the Spirit can operate with a firm foundation, as it strengthens the faith and the collective identity of the congregational church.

The New Testament directly vindicates the position of the Spirit and how it directs the Church: 'However, when He, the spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come' (John 16:13). Henceforth, throughout Saint Paul's ministry he refers to the Spirit of God and how that should be the vehicle of the Church. Within this context, speaking in tongues is generally considered as an event that takes place under the direct instruction of the Spirit. It is within this phenomenon that the transition from the process of interplay contributes to constructing a theology of place.

## **The Function of Speaking in Tongues**

Speaking in tongues facilitates a place of free expression which offers engagement with the Spirit. This reinforces the notion of the 'relationship between expressions of the self' (Parker 2015: 166). However, identifying the functionality of an order for this place to serve this notion should include the intention of serving a purpose.

It can be suggested that the Christian faith, as seen through Spirit baptism, offers a set of values and principles that serves to contribute to the development of coming to know a reality of the self in proximity to the Spirit. Alister McGraph conveys that the 'Christian faith thus offers a way of seeing reality that brings about a transformation and a transvaluation of our understanding of the world, and our place within it' (Ward 2012: 108). It is with this understanding of the world that freedom of expression serves a purpose, whereby interplay upon the object of that belief system defines

meaning through reflection.

Laurie Green introduces a methodology that accounts for a reflective theology within a cyclical framework (Green 2009: 103). Green's dynamic adheres to the constraints of the psychical apparatus by asserting a model where exploring experience leads to reflection. This denotes that reflection of experience is a productive response to a new situation. However, there are limitations to Green's cyclical framework as it fails to consider the influence of unconscious material in the form of regression, which is, for the most part, felt rather than consciously perceived, hence, Freud's theory of neurosis (Hitschmann 2012: 7–14). Speaking in tongues offers an insight into unconscious material and places value on it as it manifests as the discharge of emotion. The defining characteristic of speaking in tongues is in the notion of impulsive-driven faith, which is led by creativity. Hence: 'Pentecostal discernment and decision making cannot be reduced entirely to a step-by-step logic' (Parker 2015: 212). However, theological reflection within Spirit baptism provides the space to exercise belief and expresses transformation of the self. This also offers a form of security as a defence mechanism through the process of familiarity, as the group learns to represent the original sign of what it represents in ways that resemble a language or code that the group uses to identify its members. The identity of this place is now reflected through the terminology and images that the group chooses to use. The social boundaries are defined as metaphors and the original sign as its nucleus. The symbolic interactions between the members act as interplay, which defines a place of significance for those members to express this interplay as meaningful behaviour.

Through this process we discern that a place can express character, which contributes to constructing an identity. Associations to place as repeated encounters develop into a story, an association-based identity (Inge 2003: 83–84). Identity is construed through common interaction and familiar circumstance. Interplay, by speaking in tongues, constructs the ideological formation of belonging.

Therefore, speaking in tongues creates transitional space, essentially assigning a cross-cultural value that expresses the celebration of the Spirit in order to allow the Spirit capacity to move and lead in accordance with its fruits: 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law' (Galatians 5:22–23). Saint Paul acknowledges that being set in the fruitful ways of God is being free by the virtues of the Spirit, speaking in tongues expresses this notion as it transcends culture, tradition and language.

Thomas O'Meara suggests that the Church is one united body of Christ and is ministerial through action (O'Meara 1999: 49): although there are many varieties of service, there is one God (O'Meara 1999: 54). Expression is subject to experience and

therefore those that share the Spirit should do so accordingly with one mind: 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 2:5). This places an emphasis on perceiving information and how one looks at the world in a new light: 'This is why it can be claimed that what is in a place expresses that place: it not only reflects the circumambient world from its point of view, but it reflects that point of view itself' (Casey 1998: 173). Healy strengthens this case as he conveys the Church as the working mechanical component that adheres to a set of instructions which God requires all participating attendees or members of the congregation to obey in order to adhere to the internal movement of the Spirit (Healy 2003: 306). It is based upon this assumption that the practice of speaking in tongues is essential in establishing a place where the individual can develop through the process of interplay. This concept places an emphasis on the unconscious processes that regulate internal symbolisation that is executed by verbal means. This provides evidence that the practice of free expression through speaking in tongues, within the context of Spirit baptism, is necessary to facilitate a sense of doing with a sense of being. The very nature of what this symbolises defines a place where speaking in tongues provides identity, security and a sense of belonging.

Stephen Parker claims that Pentecostal theology essentially develops as part of a reflective account of experience (Parker 2015: 2). Here the individual expresses an internalisation of what he or she might perceive as a manifestation of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues. Parker's understanding of this phenomenon, as too the general practice of Pentecostalism, is expressed within his work as a psychological function that serves as an escape from the negativity of life (Parker 2015: 10). However, this phenomenon does serve a noticeable function that scaffolds faith by a process that encourages reflection through experience. Expressive behavioural actions and utterances within the context of a theological belief system of 'encounter' provides the necessary space in order for 'place' to develop its collective identity.

The ideology of Pentecostalism provides the space for the Spirit to be actively involved with the individual in order to address the nature of epistemology and hermeneutics by an expressive attitude, which seeks to apply meaning and free expression through speaking in tongues. This would imply that speaking in tongues encourages interplay within the transitional sphere of what Pentecostalism offers as a methodological tool to explore the experience of reality. In this way, interplay is the fabric of a process of coming to know a place in the Spirit through the lens of a Pentecostal practice.

This type of interplay with the Spirit resembles practices that can be interpreted as meaningful behaviour. According to Nicholas Healy, practices are not mere behaviour patterns but intentional informed actions performed by human agents (Healy 2003: 292). This provides meaning to behaviour, as practice 'fixes the meaning of an utterance' (Healy 2003: 293). Therefore, practice is motive driven and the individual

in communion with the group determines its significance.

## Conclusion

This paper has attempted to put forward the idea that speaking in tongues develops a place to experience a theology based on emotion. Of particular interest, one may discover commonality where dialogue might form between two worlds of discourse. On the one hand, we have a practice that encourages verbal expression in the form of utterances and nonsensical words. On the other hand, we have a form of play that stems from the desire to be creative. Both of these themes provide an insight as to what the appeal of personal expression might be in the light of attaining a sense of self.

Furthermore, it might reasonably be claimed that the Pentecostal theology of place adheres to a practice that necessitates free expression to experience the Spirit. Through this, speaking in tongues serves a function of re-aligning displaced material from the psychical apparatus through the constructive procedure of interplay. This procedure requires the preliminaries that define a place in proximity to the self as expressive reflection wherein expression provides opportunity to develop identity, which reflects the place of the Church and through the belief system of the Spirit there is a sense of belonging. This therefore provides the security to grow and introspectively continue spiritual development.

In sum, the place of speaking in tongues is more than just a set of practices and unknown utterances, it is flexibility in action and opportunity to develop a place in the Spirit that is totally given over to creative play.

## Bibliography

- Berry, G. R. (2003) *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament with a Greek-English Lexicon and New Testament Synonyms*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- Blower, G. (2007) *Boxing: Training, Skills and Technique*, Wiltshire: The Crowood Press.
- Brueggemann, W. (1977) *The Land: Place as gift, promise, and challenge in biblical faith*, London: Fortress Press.
- Dunn, J. D. G. (2010) *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today*, London: SCM Press.
- Casey, E. S. (1998) *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Clancier, A. and Kalmanovitch, J. (1987) *Winnicott and Paradox: from birth to creation*, London: Tavistock publications.
- Freud, S. (1921) *Group Psychology*; The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Strachey, J. ed., in collaboration with Anna Freud. Re-printed in 2001, Volume 18, London: Vintage publications.
- Freud, S. (1927) *Civilization and its Discontents*, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, Strachey, J. ed., in collaboration with Anna Freud. Re-printed in 2001, Volume 21, London: Vintage publications.
- Green, L. (2009) *Let's Do Theology: Resources for Contextual Theology*, London: Mowbray publishers.
- Healy, N. M. (2003) 'Practices and the New Ecclesiology: Misplaced Concreteness?' *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 5: 287-308.
- Hitschmann, E. (2012) *Freud's Theories of the Neuroses*, London: Biblio Bazaar.
- Inge, J. (2003) *A Christian Theology of Place*, Oxford: Ashgate Publishing.
- Matthias, J. (1992) *Reading Old Friends: Essays, Reviews and Poems on Poetics 1975-1990*, New York: State University of New York Press.
- McGrath, A. (2011) *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing.
- O'Meara, T. F. (1999) *Theology of Ministry*, New Jersey: Paulist Press Publishers.
- Parker, S. E. (2015) *Led by the Spirit: Toward a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making*, Cleveland: CPT Press.
- Ward, P. (2012) *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Warrington, K. (2008) *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter*, London: T & T Clark Publishers.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1971) *Playing and Reality*, London: Routledge Classics.

# Bakhtin and Wittgenstein on Dialogue as a Methodological Concept and Theme

Dorit Lemberger

---

The concept of dialogue is a central element of Bakhtin's writings, whereas Wittgenstein's references to dialogue are generally in the negative vein. However, there does not seem to be another modern philosopher who has actually employed the dialogic method. But Wittgenstein's dialogic texts also include monologic aspects, such as sensation and private transition. Bakhtin, by contrast, sometimes blurs the boundaries between dialogue in language and dialogue as a criterion for literary value. The article shows how Wittgenstein helps clarify the role of the monological in Bakhtin's dialogic approach and how Bakhtin can facilitate a better understanding of the dialogicity in Wittgenstein.

---

Keywords: Dialogicity, Monologicity, Bakhtin, Wittgenstein, Individual, Ineffable

## Introduction

The increasing interest in Bakhtin's thought stems in part from the centrality of dialogue in his writings and from the ethical demand, explicit or implicit, associated with it. In the age of late postmodernism, whose main thinkers doubt the possibility of expressing an ethical demand, Bakhtin's thought is a refreshing and optimistic blast of fresh air, alongside Buber and Levinas.<sup>1</sup> Bakhtin is unique in his development of a linguistic and literary process that presents literature, and specifically the novel, as endowed with an ethical mission that can influence society and produce ideological and real change. But even though Bakhtin bases his theoretical discussions as a student of literature on the qualities of language, it is sometimes difficult to identify where he sees dialogue as stemming from an ethical choice and where he sees it as a function of the characteristics of language, which are neutral. In addition, there are also individual and monologic strands in Bakhtin, and they should be presented and studied vis-à-vis the dialogic characteristics.

---

Dorit Lemberger is a senior lecturer at the Hermeneutics and Cultural Studies Programme, Bar Ilan University. She does research in Semantics, Psychoanalysis, literature and Pragmatics. Her current project is on the relationship between psychoanalytic thinkers, language and literature.

- 1 For a fascinating comparison of Bakhtin, Buber, and Levinas, see Eskin, Michael. *Ethics and Dialogue in the Works of Levinas, Bakhtin, Mandel'shtam and Celan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000. This article continues Eskin's work and adds Wittgenstein's important contribution to the topic.



For this purpose, the present discussion will draw on the thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951), who addressed the characteristics and various uses of language in great depth and breadth. The literature on Wittgenstein commonly distinguishes between his first book, the *Tractatus*, written as a series of cut-and-dried propositions, and the *Philosophical Investigations*, considered to be ‘dialogic.’<sup>2</sup> Although the *Investigations* is organised in sections, its discursive manner has many dialogic characteristics.<sup>3</sup> Still, Wittgenstein’s works also include discussions of monologic processes in language, such as the writing of a diary in a secret or private code (we will take this up later). These discussions offer claims both pro and con; even though the prevalent trend in Wittgenstein scholarship emphasises the impossibility of private use, he made a critical contribution to our understanding of monologic usages in language.

In addition, Wittgenstein’s books address many questions whose answers may be of use in discerning Bakhtin’s distinction between ‘ethical dialogicity’ and neutral dialogicity: the former has a thematic and ontological character, whereas the latter is methodological and epistemological: it illuminates the mode in which language is used by clarifying the manner in which a person perceives the use of language in various contexts.

This article has two primary aims: The first is to use the works of Wittgenstein and Bakhtin to distinguish between the methodological and thematic characteristics of language, both monological and dialogical. The thematic characteristics belong to the essence of language, whereas the methodological characteristics pertain to the way in which language is performed and understood (that is, on the epistemological level). The second aim is thus to examine when the use of dialogicity represents an ethical choice and when it embodies the natural characteristics of language, with no causal link to the speaker’s intent and ethical decision.

The article has three sections. The first part addresses the differences between thematic and methodological dialogicity. The second and third parts look at two contexts in which a significant difference between dialogicity and monologicity in language can be observed: the discussion of the nature of a word and the nature of language; and the discussion of the individual and the ineffable.

- 
- 2 See, e.g., Heal, Jane, ‘Wittgenstein and Dialogue’, in Smiley, Timothy (ed.), *Philosophical Dialogues*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995; Savickey, Beth, *Wittgenstein’s Art of Investigation*. London: Routledge 1999.
  - 3 Wittgenstein addressed dialogue directly, primarily in a negative vein; his later writings are categorised throughout by dialogicity. For a broader discussion, see Lemberger, Dorit, ‘Dialogical Grammar: Variations of Dialogue in Wittgenstein’s Methodology’ in *Dialogic Pedagogy: An International Online Journal* 3 (2015): 158–174.



My assertion is that dialogicity alternates between the thematic and the methodological in the writings of both thinkers. Bakhtin contributes to the evaluation and critique of literary works, while Wittgenstein contributes to the evaluation and effective use of everyday language.<sup>4</sup> Hence a combined study of dialogicity in their writings can contribute to a broader understanding of the dialogic aspect of languages on its various levels.

## Thematic and Methodological Dialogicity

The original sense of the Greek word *dialogos* (*dia* = in and through; *logos* = language) already includes all that can be affected through language, both in monologue and in dialogue. Discourse in language can be performed by an individual alone, for example in the composition of a literary work, or in dialogue with another individual or group. Wittgenstein's and Bakhtin's common point of departure is that a dialogic process can be affected by an individual as well as by a group, because dialogicity means an encounter between points of view, states of consciousness, or separate consciousnesses. Such an encounter can occur inside one person's mind. On the other hand, people can speak to one another in a completely non-dialogical manner.

Monolocicity and dialogicity can be expressed in thought, communication, or action. On this point we need to distinguish between the monolocicity and dialogicity inherent to the language system itself and the monolocicity and dialogicity that reflect a choice between multiple alternatives, and express a certain meaning. I will refer to the characteristics of language itself, without reference to a particular use, as 'methodological characteristics.' These characteristics are neutral because they can express various and contradictory meanings and do not impose any ethical decision. But the thematic use of dialogue or monologue to justify a particular ethical decision is also possible. This is how Wittgenstein demonstrates a key characteristic of dialogicity in language itself: 'When the answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question be put into words. The riddle does not exist. If a question can be framed at all, it is also possible to answer it' (Wittgenstein 1961, para. 6.5).

---

4 In the literature on Wittgenstein, much space has been dedicated to aesthetic judgment about works of literature and aesthetic judgment in general. In practice, though, Wittgenstein devoted relatively little space to the topic. Moreover, he emphasised the need to focus on understanding everyday language in his two main books. For example: 'In fact, all the propositions of our everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order' (Wittgenstein 1961, para. 5.5563), and 'How is this sentence applied — that is, in our everyday language? For I got it from *there*, and nowhere else' (Wittgenstein 2009, para. 134. What was formerly called Part II of the book is now 'Philosophy of Psychology—a fragment' (PPF)). Thus, for our purposes, the distinction between dialogical and monological characteristics, the richest and most helpful discussions are located in his deliberations on everyday language.

The possibility of formulating a question also includes the possibility of formulating its answer. This fact does not depend on a particular context or some individual's choice, but rather belongs to the neutral methodological characteristics of language. It is worth noting that the subjects of a sentence are a question, a riddle, or an answer, and not a specific person or persons. So this dialogic characteristic of language is not dependent on a concrete performance but is inherent to language itself. Similarly, Bakhtin makes dialogicity a characteristic of a word and the formulation of discourse, independent of the person performing it or any context:

Every word is directed towards an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates. [...] Responsive understanding is a fundamental force, one that participates in the formulation of discourse, and it is moreover an *active* understanding, one that discourse senses as resistance or support enriching the discourse (Bakhtin 1981: 281; italics in original).

For Bakhtin, it is not a person who is the subject of the activity, but rather the word, understanding, or discourse that carries his propositions. Bakhtin, too, establishes a dependence between answer and question, even if his description is not neutral like Wittgenstein's but personified by adjectives like *responsive* and *active*. In another context, Bakhtin links the action of *answerability* with a person's self-constitution and makes the latter depend on the performance of the action: 'What guarantees the inner connection of the constituent elements of a person? Only the unity of answerability' (Bakhtin 1990:1).

Wittgenstein stated the interdependence between question and answer: if it is possible to ask a question, it is also possible to state its answer, and vice versa. Bakhtin continues this line of reasoning with his assertion that there is a dependent relationship among the component elements of the self, created by the unity of the response. This unity derives from the person's inner self and simultaneously asks and demands an answer. Bakhtin's shift from the dialogicity of language itself to the dialogicity that characterises a person's self-constitution led him to coin the term *dialogism* as part of his critique of the linguistics and literature of his time:

It is all the more remarkable that linguistics and the philosophy of discourse have been primarily oriented precisely toward this artificial, preconditioned status of the word, a word excised from dialogue and taken for the norm. [...] Dialogue is studied merely as a compositional form in the structuring of speech, but the internal dialogism of the word [...], the dialogism that penetrates its entire structure, all its semantic and expressive layers, is almost entirely ignored. But it is precisely this internal dialogism of the word, which does not assume any external compositional forms of dialogue, that cannot be isolated as an independent act, separate from the word's ability to form a concept of its object

[...], this internal dialogism that has such enormous power to shape style. The internal dialogism of the word finds expression in a series of peculiar features in semantics, syntax and stylistics that have remained up to the present time completely unstudied by linguistics and stylistics. (Bakhtin 1981: 279)

Bakhtin employs the term *dialogism* to critique the philological method and the study of discourse that examine a word in and of itself and ignore its innate dialogism. Dialogue, asserts Bakhtin, is inherent to a word and requires no external element to activate it. Bakhtin criticises the notion that dialogue is a mode of organisation rather than a feature of a word's essence. The fact that a word can generate a concept that refers to an object reflects that intrinsic dialogicity. Dialogicity permeates every element of the structure of the word and characterises its activity on all levels: semantics, grammar, and style. Bakhtin himself exemplifies thematic dialogicity: a word has a dialogic nature that is the source of its mode of use on the various levels of language.<sup>5</sup>

The problematic nature of Bakhtin's discussions of dialogicity is that dialogicity overpowers the point of view: language, literary criticism, and individual conduct are all examined in light of its functions. This is true even though we can find direct references in Bakhtin's writings to the monologic function of language and literature, (albeit only in the margins and sometimes even explicitly refuted). To sum up, Bakhtin's dialogicity rests on epistemological and thematic dialogicity, which is based on the assumption that meaning is constituted vis-à-vis some 'other,' whether abstract or concrete; but it also rests on a methodological dialogicity that includes the dialogical characteristics of language. To show where and how the monologic characteristics of language and thought merge, we will compare the nature of a word and language for Wittgenstein and Bakhtin.

---

5 Bakhtin's view of dialogue as a natural component of language was expertly summarised by Pam Morris in a glossary of Bakhtin's writings: 'Dialogism is the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood, as a part of a greater whole-there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others. Which will affect the other, how it will do so and in what degree is what is actually settled at the moment of utterance. This dialogic imperative, mandated by the pre-existence of the language world relative to any of its current inhabitants, ensures that there can be no actual monologue. One may, like a primitive tribe that knows only its own limits, be deluded into thinking there is one language, or one may, as grammarians, certain political figures and normative framers of "literary languages" do, seek in a sophisticated way to achieve a unitary language. In both cases the unitariness is relative to the overpower; using force of heteroglossia, and thus dialogism' (Morris, Pam, in Bakhtin, M. *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov*. London: Hodder Arnold. p. 426.

## Monologicity and Dialogicity in Language Itself: The Nature of a Word and the Nature of Language

Both Wittgenstein and Bakhtin wrote about words and about language, and both men also addressed their monological and dialogical functions. But whereas Wittgenstein describes both functions in neutral terms, Bakhtin incorporates judgemental positions into his descriptions of the two (positive about dialogue and negative about monologue). The comparison between the two thinkers is especially interesting given their similarities, including their common assertion that language accompanies all human activities and can be understood only if one is familiar with the form of life in which it operates.<sup>6</sup> For example, in the following paragraph, which has become a milestone in the 'linguistic turn,' Wittgenstein describes the connections between language and all human activities:

But how many kinds of sentence are there? [...] There are *countless* kinds [...] And this diversity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten [...] The word 'language-game' is used here to emphasise the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life. Consider the variety of language-games in the following examples, and in others: [...] Describing an object by its appearance [...] Reporting an event [...] Making up a story; and reading one [...] Acting in a play, Singing rounds [...] Requesting, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying. (Wittgenstein 2009, para. 23)

In this passage, Wittgenstein describes how language participates in all sorts of human activity and is therefore rich in modes of expression. Its nature is dialogical, since it permits the reflection and expression of an infinite variety of human needs: given the continuous interaction between language and action, it is impossible to distinguish between the linguistic aspects and those characteristics of the activity itself. The same manifest dialogicity is expressed in the following passage from Bakhtin:

The dialogic nature of consciousness, the dialogic nature of human life itself. The single adequate form for *verbally expressing* authentic human life is the *open-ended dialogue*. Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium. (Bakhtin 1984: 292–293)

6 Wittgenstein saw the 'form of life' in the world as a necessary condition for understanding language: 'To imagine a language means to imagine a form of life' (Wittgenstein 2009, para. 19).

Life by its very nature is dialogic. (Bakhtin 1981: 293)

Here Bakhtin, like Wittgenstein, emphasises the link between all human activities and linguistic performances, but there is a clear difference in their respective starting points. When Wittgenstein asks how many types of sentence there are, he begins from language itself, and his answer draws attention to the variety of human activities. Bakhtin's point of departure is essentialist: human consciousness is dialogical by nature, so dialogue is the linguistic mode best suited to it. In his list of human activities, Wittgenstein enumerates several that can be done and hence involve monologue, such as prayer or writing poetry (which may also involve the coining of new words). Bakhtin, though, emphasises that dialogue is the essence of life; it is only through dialogue that individuals can bring their lives to physical and practical fruition. In practice, Bakhtin leaves no room for activities that do not involve dialogue with some 'other,' and harshly criticises the use of 'pure' monologue in language, as seen in the following passage:

Monologism, at its extreme, denies the existence outside itself of another consciousness with equal rights and equal responsibilities. [...]. With a monologic approach [...] *another person* remains wholly and merely an *object* of consciousness, and not another consciousness. No response is expected from it that could change everything in the world of my consciousness. [...] Monologue manages without the other, and therefore to some degree materializes all reality. Monologue pretends to be the *ultimate word*. It closes down the represented world and represented person. (Bakhtin 1981: 292–293)

In this paragraph, Bakhtin enumerates several arguments against monologue in its pure form: (1) The ethical consideration: monologicity denies the existence of another consciousness with rights and responsibilities on a par with those of the monologic consciousness. (2) Radical monologicity prevents any change in consciousness because the other becomes an object and the entire world is reified. (3) Monologicity does not support a rich understanding of the representation of a person and world.

This contrast between the two thinkers allows me to illuminate the purpose of this article: Bakhtin combines the methodological and thematic aspects in his discussion of monologue, thereby avoiding the distinction between the dialogical aspects of language itself (which are neutral and methodological) and the dialogical aspects of human consciousness. It is important to stress that we cannot modify the characteristics of language but can choose whether to perform dialogue or monologue. Bakhtin's obscuring of the boundary between neutral aspects of language and human choice, which has an ethical significance because it is a choice between multiple alternatives, turns the ethical decision into an obligation instead of a choice. This blurring is evident again when Bakhtin describes the dialogic essence of the word:

The word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; The word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. A word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic way. (Bakhtin 1981: 279)

According to Bakhtin here, a word is formed and shaped in a dialogical process; hence it operates in a dialogical manner when it conceptualises an object. This is how a word behaves in any living dialogue acts.<sup>7</sup> Bakhtin intensifies this assertion when he describes the speech process and claims that, in a certain way, the meaning of a statement is determined by the response, because the meaning is created by the act of understanding (Bakhtin 1981: 279). Bakhtin also recognises the existence of the word itself, although he does not allow the possibility that a word can function independently, even when it is accompanied by an intuition that reflects a certain intent.<sup>8</sup> The comparison to Wittgenstein is very interesting, because Wittgenstein, too, asserts that language functions only when it is understood and unambiguously defines the interdependence between language and comprehension:

A sentence is in a sense dead until it is understood. Before it is understood it is ink on paper. One might say it has meaning only for an understanding being. If there were no one to understand the signs we could not call the signs language. (Wittgenstein 1982: 43)

There is an interdependence between understanding language and the constitution of its meaning. However, this interdependence also exists within an individual's own mind, where it is impossible to distinguish between thought and language: 'That pure *thought* is conveyed by words and is something different from the words is a *superstition*' (Wittgenstein 1982: 54).

Moreover, even when we examine intent, which appears to be a mode of consciousness separate from language, we see that it is impossible to separate the intention from the language: 'It is only in a language that I can mean something by something' (Wittgenstein 2009, para. 35).

7 'The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. Forming itself in an atmosphere of the already spoken, the word is at the same time determined by that which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering word. Such is the situation in any living dialogue' (Bakhtin 1981: 280).

8 'We select the word because of its meaning, which is not in itself expressive, but which can accommodate or not accommodate our expressive goals in combination with other words, that is, in combination with the whole of our utterance. The neutral meaning of the word applied to a particular actual reality under particular real conditions of speech communication creates a spark of expression' (Bakhtin 1986: 86).

Wittgenstein's and Bakhtin's ideas start to conflict when the former focuses on a person's individual choice of a particular use among several possible uses. He asserts that it is impossible to isolate and examine *the internal locus* of the transition from a person's inner world to verbal performance that can be understood with the help of some rule: 'I could not apply any rules to a *private* transition from what is seen to words' (Wittgenstein 2009, para. 35).

This statement illuminates once again Wittgenstein's remarks about the interdependence of thought, understanding, and language. Evidently Wittgenstein differentiates between the methodological impossibility of distinguishing language from mental consciousness, on the one hand, and the recognition that some internal processes that may be monologic, like the internal transition from a rule to a word, on the other hand. Moreover, even when rule is applied, interpretation does not determine meaning but hangs in the air, as it were, waiting for the speaker's possible, but not necessary, resolution thereof.<sup>9</sup> Thus meaning can be private or monologic, although it is usually public and dialogical, as Saul Kripke made so clear (Kripke 1982). Language also includes private and individual elements that cannot be formulated dialogically, as when someone proves unable to express his or her feelings: 'Sometimes there is an amorphous feeling which cannot be translated into a sentence.' (Wittgenstein 1982: 54)

An important question arises here: given that both Wittgenstein and Bakhtin described the correspondence between the various functions of language and the variety of human activities, what is it that sometimes obstructs the use of language? Wittgenstein's answer is that the connection between the rules of grammar, on the one hand, and the real world and use, on the other hand, is contingent and not causal, inasmuch as grammar is autonomous:

Grammar is not accountable to any reality. (Wittgenstein 1974: 184)

We cannot say of a grammatical rule that it conforms to or contradicts a fact.  
The rules of grammar are independent of the facts we describe in our language.  
(Wittgenstein 1982: 65)

The rules of grammar do not function in accordance with any particular reality, and thus cannot contradict it either. The independence of grammatical rules also releases them from values that turn into ethical criteria, such as dialogicity versus monologicity. Here Wittgenstein clearly distinguishes language itself, which does not depend on human resolution, from specific expressions in language, which we can

9 'Every interpretation hangs in the air together with what it interprets and cannot give it any support. Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning' (Wittgenstein 2009, para. 198).



evaluate as desirable or appropriate for performing a particular activity.

Another aspect of the independence of language, according to Wittgenstein, is found in his discussion of the meaning of a word *per se*. In contrast with Bakhtin's description of the word as born in a dialogic manner and necessarily functioning as such, Wittgenstein illuminates its unique characteristics, with the focus on its physicality, and coins the term *meaning-body*. This passage is ambiguous, because Wittgenstein holds that the meaning-body contains meaning as a fact, but also sees it as a problematic metaphor:

One would like to speak of the function of a word in this sentence. As if the sentence were a mechanism in which the word had a particular function. But what does this function consist in? How does it come to light? For there isn't anything hidden—don't we see the whole sentence? The function must come out in operating with the word. (Meaning-body.) (Wittgenstein 2009, para. 559)

Wittgenstein distinguishes the word itself from the ways of using it. A word is understood on the basis of the link between it and its meaning-body. Wittgenstein offers several modes of understanding, including understanding the use, simultaneous perception, or a picture of meaning that dictates a certain use. He emphasises that we are aware of the different options of use and that each mode of understanding reflects one of many possibilities. Perception of a rule or of a body-meaning cannot dictate a use; instead, there is a choice between different uses of a word. In addition, a particular picture can be incorrect. For example, Wittgenstein criticises the use of a concept that he himself coined: body-meaning. He compares the picture drawn in our minds when we employ the term to the picture that our thoughts occur in a particular place, like the head, because this is how we have been taught to think.<sup>10</sup>

What does Wittgenstein mean by the term *meaning-body*? He states that any word can have several meanings that appear to inhere in it, in the body of the word. For example, it is possible to distinguish immediately between different uses of the word *is*:

What does it mean to say that the 'is' in 'The rose is red' has a different meaning from the 'is' in 'twice two is four'? Here we have one word but as it were different meaning-bodies with a single end surface: different possibilities

---

10 'Isn't the inclination to think of a meaning-body like the inclination to think of a seat of thought? - Must everyone be inclined to say he thinks in his head? This expression is taught him as a child. [...] The inclination is then present. And so is the inclination to speak of a meaning-body (or the like) however it arose' (Wittgenstein 1980, vol. I, para. 349).



of constructing sentences. The comparison of the glass cubes. The rule for the arrangement of the red sides contains the possibilities, i.e. the geometry of the cube. The cube can also serve as a notation for the rule if it belongs to a system of propositions. (Wittgenstein 1974:7)

It is interesting to see that Bakhtin also focused on the physical and aural function of the word itself.<sup>11</sup> In the following passage, he describes this function as contrary to the general nature of the word, because it has an unambiguous element:

The whole of which is *yet-to-be* in respect of its meaning and justification – *like a word that seeks to become totally determined within a sentence we have not yet finished saying and thinking*. [...] So long as the word remained unsaid, it was possible to believe and to hope, for one could still look forward to the compelling fullness of meaning. But when the word *is* pronounced, it is completely *here* in all its ontically obstinate concreteness – *all* of it is here, and there is nothing else. The word that *has* been pronounced sounds hopeless in its already-pronouncedness; the uttered word is an embodiment of meaning in mortal flesh. (Bakhtin 1990: 133)

Bakhtin personifies the word and suggests that it is 'disappointed' when uttered, because the aural concreteness dictates that it have a particular meaning. The difference between Bakhtin's description and Wittgenstein's description is clear. Although both see the physical aspect of the word as dictating a particular meaning, Wittgenstein refers to this as a neutral aspect of the function of language, whereas for Bakhtin it is a disappointment. This difference is emphasised in Wittgenstein's description of the word as a face and of the sentence as a group picture:

While any word – one would like to say – may have a different character in different contexts, all the same there is one character – a face – that it always has. It looks at us. – For one might actually think that each word was a little face; the written sign might be a face. And one might also imagine that the whole proposition was a kind of group-picture, so that the gaze of the faces all together produced a relationship among them and so the whole made a significant group. (Wittgenstein 1980, para. 322)

Wittgenstein personifies the word differently than Bakhtin does. Before the word acts it has a face with a particular character; but this does not contradict the fact that the word can be interpreted in different ways in different contexts.<sup>12</sup> Here, Wittgenstein is extracting the essence: a word, *qua* language, has certain characteristics that precede

11 See the detailed list of physical images in Eskin 2000, p. 94 n. 49.

12 'Though one would like to say – every word can have a different character in different contexts, at the same time there is a single character it always has – a face. It looks at us, after all' (Wittgenstein 2009, para. 38).

its use. Wittgenstein mentions this characteristic of the word again in his discussion of ‘experiencing a meaning of a word.’<sup>13</sup> The face of the word participates in the constitution of the reader’s experience of meaning when the word observes him. The face has a fixed aspect as well as an aspect that changes depending on context. Ignoring the fixed aspect is what Wittgenstein calls ‘aspect blindness.’ In other words, it is a technical use of language that quite misses its richness.

We can take the ambiguity in Wittgenstein’s discussion of the word as an example of the monologic function versus the dialogic function: when it is the face of the word that dictates meaning, its function is monologic. But when the body of the word combines with its meaning in a particular context and is understood in that context, the function is dialogic. Monologicity and dialogicity stem from the characteristics of language: The faces of words exemplify the monologic function (we will examine additional monologic functions of language below); the ability of language to accompany activities in the form of life is the dialogic function. At this point, the question arises of the nature of the link between the monologic characteristics of language and its dialogic mode of functioning.

As a part of his critique of contemporary linguistics, Bakhtin homed in on the dual levels of the language act – both individual and public – but rejected the possibility of the monologic function on the public level:

All the diverse areas of human activities involve the use of language. Quite understandably, the nature and forms of this use are just as diverse as are the areas of human activity. This, of course, in no way disaffirms the national unity of language. Language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity. These utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each such area [...] through [...] thematic content, style and compositional structure [...] inseparably linked to the *whole* of the utterance and are equally determined by the specific nature of the particular sphere of communication. Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own *relatively stable types* of these utterances. These we may call *speech genres*. (Bakhtin 1986: 60)

Again, Bakhtin’s starting point is human activity, not language. However, he proposes a reform of the linguistics that focused on the differences between types of speech.

---

13 ‘Aspect-blindness will be *akin* to the lack of a “musical ear”. The importance of this concept lies in the connection between the concepts of seeing an aspect and of experiencing the meaning of a word. For we want to ask, “What would someone be missing if he did not *experience* the meaning of a word?”’ (Wittgenstein 2009, para. 260–261).

He instead proposes studying the shared linguistic basis of types of utterances. Bakhtin proposes an emphasis on the unitary nature of language, which is a common denominator of all speech, thereby becoming the main spokesperson of the linguistic turn that began with Frege and Wittgenstein. Bakhtin enumerates several features of the unitary nature of language: the individual character of each utterance; the organic connection between style and genre; and, finally, the nature of a genre as a reflection of the history of a society and language. Here it is important to point out that Bakhtin refers to the individual creator of the utterance but also emphasises that thematic content, style, and compositional structure cannot be created individually. Where and how, then, can individual elements be located?

## The Individual and the Ineffable

Bakhtin's view of individuality links with and even stems from the identification of the neutrality of a word and, later, with the dictionary meaning of words as well. This distinction is very important, because neutrality is not a characteristic of a dialogic process:

Neutral dictionary meanings of the words of a language ensure their common features and guarantee that all speakers of a given language will understand one another, but the use of words in live speech communication is always individual and contextual in nature. Therefore, one can say that any word exists for the speaker in three aspects: as a neutral word of a language, belonging to nobody; as an other's word, which belongs to another person and is filled with echoes of the other's utterance; and, finally, as my word. (Bakhtin 1986: 88)

According to Bakhtin, a word can indeed function in a neutral and individual (i.e., belonging to a particular speaker) manner, but also as some 'other's' word. There seems to be no way to escape the ambiguity here: on the one hand, Bakhtin is aware of individual characteristics, but insists that they can be identified only as part of a dialogue. This provokes three questions: Is it essential for every subject to express his or her individual characteristics only through dialogue? Is there content that cannot be expressed in words and thus remains trapped within the individual subject? How can we explain states of consciousness that prevent a particular speaker from using general language?

In the Classical Age, Bakhtin claims, every expression of internal life took place through an external utterance: this is the true nature of man (Bakhtin 1981: 134). He asserts unequivocally that 'there is no mute or invisible core to the individual himself: he is entirely visible and audible, all on the surface' (Bakhtin 1981: 135–136).

Bakhtin further asserts that it was only later that human beings began to feel a connection with the mute and unseen (mystical) spheres; their disengagement from

the real warped their character. According to Bakhtin, the imperative link between the individual and the real chronotope severely limits the possibility of tracing the course of monologic individuality. Is such a connection a theme that overpowers the methodological possibility of observing individual and monologic characteristics?

In these two areas Wittgenstein holds a position antithetical to Bakhtin's. At the end of the *Tractatus* he insists that the mystical and ineffable exists: 'There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest' (Wittgenstein 1961, para. 6.522). In addition, a person can speak to himself and even perform various linguistic acts in a monologic manner. What is more, sense impressions are personal, so there can sometimes be a contradiction between the conventional and public use of a word that identifies a sensation and a personal use thereof.<sup>14</sup> For example, the word 'red' may denote different sense impressions.<sup>15</sup>

Wittgenstein (2009, para. 305, 308) emphasises that language functions in many different ways; he even defines the paradox created by this multitude of possibilities. He sets no limit on the variety of language acts and proposes evading the paradox by accepting the fact that language functions in various and diverse ways (*ibid.*, para. 304) and proposes to hold this conscious knowledge, while at the same time choose a particular use in a concrete context, so that an utterance will have meaning (*ibid.*, para. 99). Sometimes, though, an individual may be prevented from making a particular use of language, and this inability demonstrates the need to distinguish individual characteristics:

Can there be a clash between picture and application? Well, they can clash in so far as the picture makes us expect a different use; because people in general apply *this* picture like *this*. (Wittgenstein 2009, para. 141)

Sometimes, a particular picture of consciousness establishes an inhibition that does not allow a person to use language. The concept of picture, for Wittgenstein,

14 Donald Davidson first formulated the term 'first person authority' in an organised way, based on Wittgenstein. See: Davidson, Donald. 'First person authority', in Donald Davidson, *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001: 3-13. Gareth Evans, based on Wittgenstein, formulated expressions such as 'immunity to error through misidentification.' See: Evans, Gareth. *The Varieties of Reference*, ed. John McDowell. New York: Oxford University Press 1982.

15 'The essential thing about private experience is really not that each person possesses his own specimen, but that nobody knows whether other people also have *this* or something else. The assumption would thus be possible – though unverifiable that one section of mankind had one visual impression of red, and another section another' (Wittgenstein 2009, para. 272).

is very rich.<sup>16</sup> I would propose that the concept of picture can also be applied to an unconscious picture that stems from organic characteristics (as in communication disorders), trauma, or transient emotional difficulties. These are three individual factors that may be linked to an external event but nevertheless occur internally, mute and invisible. If the speaker is unable to create a bridge between his inner experience and the use of language, there will be a clash, and he will not be able to express himself. However, if a bond between the inner experience and the use of language is created, what will emerge, as Bakhtin asserts, is a text: 'The event of the life of the text, that is, its true essence, always develops on the boundary between two consciousnesses, two subjects.' (Bakhtin 1986: 106)

Here Bakhtin is aware of the complexity of the use of language, which includes a conscious-individual and monologic aspect alongside the actual use, which is dialogic. Bakhtin employs the term *limit* in a very similar way to Wittgenstein: 'The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world.' (Wittgenstein 1961, para. 5.632)

If so, Bakhtin and Wittgenstein agree that the limit of the world is the location of the subject and where meaning is constituted. The distinction between subjects is maintained and not erased through the constitution of meaning, because if there is no individual subject there cannot be an encounter between two subjects. So the subject precedes the dialogue and is not only a function of social belligerence. Bakhtin even emphasises and amplifies the role of individuality in the first stage of the creation of a text:

Any truly creative text is always to some extent a free revelation of the personality, not predetermined by empirical necessity. Therefore, it [...] admits neither of causal explanation nor of scientific prediction.<sup>17</sup>

Textual creativity is thus an embodiment of individuality that cannot be empirically predicted or explained afterwards. It does not need dialogue in order to appear. Why, then, is Bakhtin (1986: 269) so fiercely critical of monologue, which would appear to

16 For an overarching discussion of the concept of 'picture' in Wittgenstein's writings, see Egan, David. Pictures in Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy, *Philosophical Investigations* 34, no. 1 (2011): 55–76.

17 As Michael Holquist (1990: 56) expertly summarised it: 'Bakhtin [...] conceives monologue as not only secondary in importance to dialogue, but as having a different ontological status. Dialogue is real, monologue is not; at worst, monologue is an illusion, as when it is uncritically taken for granted. Or at best, monologue is a logical construct necessary to understand the working of dialogue, [...] But the monologic utterance is, after all, already an abstraction....Any monologic utterance...is an inseparable element of verbal communication.'

be the actual expression of precisely that individual creativity?

In this article, 'Discourse in the Novel', Bakhtin criticises the philosophy of language, linguistics, and stylistics for their focus on a simple and unmediated relationship of the speaker 'to his unitary and singular 'own' language' (ibid.). The result of this focus is 'realization of this language in the monologic utterance of the individual' (ibid.). He criticises this focus because it activates forces that 'serve to unify and centralise the verbal-ideological world' (1986: 270).

His criticism is understandable if we examine it from an ethical point of view based on the importance of heteroglossia and dialogism as ethical values. As we have seen, Bakhtin in practice admits that the use of language has monologic characteristics; even if he believes that scholarship must not deal with them, they exist nevertheless. Nor does this negate the importance of understanding the function of the monologic characteristics, both in themselves (so as to understand an individual subject) and in order to enhance understanding of dialogism with the aid of the comparative method.

## Conclusion

This article has examined Bakhtin's and Wittgenstein's positions on the dialogic and monologic characteristics of language and has shown that it is possible to distinguish a methodology that examines these characteristics as ideas with a cultural-ethical basis from a neutral methodology. Bakhtin begins from a cultural and ethical critique, and later considers the dialogic characteristics of language. He is very much aware of the existence of the monologic aspects, but sometimes rejects their existence (as in the case of the ineffable), sometimes minimises their importance, and sometimes presents them as a contrast or point of departure for the ideal form of discourse. On the other hand, Wittgenstein presents the monologic aspects as options, sometimes neutral and sometimes indicative of a problem (as in a clash between states of consciousness); but he does not mix ethical judgement into his descriptions. Hence the comparison between the philosophers makes it possible to illuminate the Bakhtinian method in a way that supports a distinction between the thematic and the methodological in his important insights.

## Bibliography

- Bakhtin, M. (1981) 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics', in Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Ed. Michael Holquist, Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press 1981.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination*. Ed. M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1984) *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetic*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1986) 'The problem of speech genres', in *Speech Genres and other late essays*, trans. Vern McGee, eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press 1986.
- Bakhtin, M. (1990) *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, ed. Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, trans. Vadim Liapunov. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Davidson, D. (2001) 'First person authority', in Donald Davidson. *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001.
- Egan, D. (2011) Pictures in Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy, *Philosophical Investigations* 34, no. 1 (2011): 55–76.
- Eskin, M. (2000) *Ethics and Dialogue in the Works of Levinas, Bakhtin, Mandel'shtam and Celan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Evans, G. (1982) *The Varieties of Reference*, ed. John McDowell. New York: Oxford University Press,
- Heal, J. (1995) Wittgenstein and Dialogue, in Smiley, Timothy (ed.). *Philosophical Dialogues*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995.
- Holquist, M. (199-). *Dialogism*. London: Routledge.
- Kripke, S. (1982) *On Rules and Private Language*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Lemberger, D. (2015) Dialogical Grammar: Variations of Dialogue in Wittgenstein's Methodology. *Dialogic Pedagogy: An International Online Journal* 3 (2015): 158–174.
- Morris, P. (ed.) (1997) *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov*, London: Hodder Arnold.
- Savickey, B. (1999) *Wittgenstein's Art of Investigation*. London: Routledge.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1961) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1974) *Philosophical Grammar*, ed. Rush Rhees, trans. Anthony Kenny. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1980) *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, vol. I, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1982) *Wittgenstein's Lectures 1932–1935*. Ed. Alice Ambrose.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wittgenstein, L. (2009) *Philosophical Investigations*. 4th edition, ed. P. M. S. Hacker and J. Schulte, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and J. Schulte. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.



# Bakhtinian Dialogue, Polyphony and the Trickster Countertype

Oemer S. Shen

---

This article explores the concepts of dialogue, polyphony, and the carnival, while providing an in-depth analysis of the 'trickster countertype'<sup>1</sup> (based on the Chinese mythological figure of the Monkey King) as a concept and a character in Gish Jen's novel, within the context of creating a community without borders. It arrives at the conclusion that Gish Jen's novel has clear examples of polyphony and Mona in the novel is a unique exemplar of a trickster countertype.

---

Keywords: Bakhtinian dialogue, Polyphony, Countertype, Ethnicity, Stereotype, Liminality.

Gish Jen is a celebrated Chinese American writer, and in her first novel with a trickster protagonist, she explores the second-generation Mona and her sister Callie's experiences as Chinese Americans, tracing their story not as an 'ethnocentric return to roots' but by decentralising the ethnic experience of the Changs in America (Nelson 2005: 443). In *Mona in the Promised Land*, Jen revisits the Chang family, exploring the turn of events in the life of Mona Chang/Changowitz, the older daughter of Helen/Hailan and Ralph/Yifeng. One of Jen's major themes in *Mona in the Promised Land* is community: in *Mona in the Promised Land* Jen creates 'Camp Gugelstein' to show how different cultural and ethnic identities interact and transform into an ideal/utopic community where ethnic differences are not a reason for ideological clashes and unequal treatment.

---

Dr Shen is an academic researcher whose research interests include intertextuality, ethnic minority writing, world literature and hagiography.

- 1 A countertype is developed in the face of a stereotype perpetuated about a certain group or ethnicity. Countertypes are positive portrayals that display how wrong the stereotypes are concerning the targeted group, by reflecting positive traits of that group and/or showing the opposite of the stereotype. As such, a countertype is, according to Nachbar, a 'positive stereotype' (Nachbar and Lause 1992: 238). Building on the notion of the countertype, the trickster countertype functions in a similar way to the countertype, with a few significant differences. While the countertype directly aims to replace existing stereotypes, the trickster countertype does not necessarily aim to take the place of a stereotype. Rather, a trickster countertype, such as found in Jen's *Mona in the Promised Land*, functions to challenge and dispel the dominant ideologies, such as essentialism, inequalities and cultural reductionism, which create stereotypes.

Jen's conception of Camp Gugelstein is central to the narrative and operates as a Bakhtinian carnival in the narrative structure of the novel, turning everything upside down as a rebellious upheaval to the established order and racial hierarchies. The mood of the narrative is far from the oblique and gloomy unpredictability and frustration of the events that the newly migrated Changs go through in *Typical American*, Gish Jen's first novel. In *Mona in the Promised Land*, the focus is on the new search for community reflected in Mona and her friends' attempts at creating a utopian community. As settled immigrants from Shanghai, the Changs now enjoy the fulfilment of the American Dream that they had so fervently sought in the first novel, having nothing else to worry about than their daughter's Monkey King-like rebellious behaviour and transgressions against authority, making Mona's encounters and adventures the central narrative of the novel.

Although Jen does not explicitly say that she has based Mona on the Monkey King, there are signposts in the narrative that strongly point to the affinity of Mona to the Monkey trickster of Chinese literature and mythology. Apart from the linguistic word-play on Mona, Jen often invokes the image of monkeys when talking about Mona: Barbara, Mona's close friend, exclaims the phrase 'Monkey see, monkey do' (Jen 1996: 214), when observing Mona's relationship with her boyfriend Seth. It is notable that in the overall narrative, Mona is the one who receives such racist remarks as 'monkey' and is asked fervently about how the Chinese can eat the brains of a living monkey, but brushes them off with witty answers that expose the absurdity of such remarks (as in Mona's answer, 'scalpels', when asked what the Chinese use when eating a monkey's brains) (Jen 1996: 8).

Mona, in fact, invokes monkeys in her parody of ethnic stereotypes and racist remarks about the Chinese, talking about how 'eating monkey brains' readily attracts attention while peeling tomatoes 'isn't gross enough' (Jen 1996: 8). In another passage about Mona's previous love interest Sherman, the phrase 'mono' is used, to refer to Mona not having to worry about 'mono' (popularly known as the 'kissing disease'). Although the passage explicitly refers to the kissing disease, the phrase is used in relation to Mona's love interests, anticipating Barbara's envious exclamation 'Monkey see, monkey do' in reference to Mona's romance with Seth. 'Mono' (as in 'catching mono') here is an abbreviation for mononucleosis (the 'kissing disease'), but also signifies 'monkey' in Spanish, similar to Jen's choice of naming her protagonist 'Mona' (meaning 'female monkey', among other meanings), the feminine version of 'mono'. That the very first quotation at the beginning of the novel is from a Mexican American writer, Richard Rodriguez, who asserts that he is 'becoming Chinese' (Jen 1996: ii), also hints at the 'monkey' reading of Mona's name and to the Spanish connections of Mona's name in the novel's title. Furthermore, it is also notable that the name Gish Jen gives to Mona as her Chinese name, Meng-na, apart from being a transliteration for the English

name Mona, has other meanings as well: Meng-na's first character also means 'to trick, to pull one's leg' in Mandarin (蒙娜 'Meng-na' being the standard transliteration of Mona), foreshadowing Mona's trickster attributes. Given that Jen deliberately attaches multiple meanings in different languages to the names of her characters (as in Bailey Wong, the Chinese American baby of the Wong family, who is given the Chinese name Baili by his Chinese nanny Lanlan, whose meaning is given as 'White Power' (白力)<sup>2</sup> in the novel, referring to Bailey's mother being White Anglo-Saxon), Mona's name is no exception. There is another example in the plot where Mona gets called monkey in an unexpected encounter with a burglar, adding to the references that show Mona's affinity to the Monkey trickster. The burglar repeatedly calls out 'skinny monkey' when Mona catches him red-handed. Here, it is noteworthy that the authorial voice identifies skinny monkey with Mona's name, remarking, 'Did he really say her name?' without quotation marks (Jen 1996: 285). Mona then reminisces that Cedric, the Chinese cook at her parents' pancake restaurant, also used to call her 'skinny monkey': 'That's what Cedric used to call us' (Jen 1996: 285), at which moment the burglar repeats the phrase in confirmation, 'Skinny monkey' (Jen 1996: 286).

Apart from Mona's affinity with the Monkey King through her name, her relationship with Camp Gugelstein is also indicative of her connection to the Monkey trickster. Mona's Camp Gugelstein is a rebellion against the establishment. Her courage and willingness to disrupt the establishment and ingrained racial hierarchy, at least for a short while, by creating Camp Gugelstein is similar to Monkey King's rebellious behaviour at the Heavenly Peach Banquet. When Monkey King learns that he is given a lowly rank of being responsible for the horses at the stable in Heaven, he gets frustrated. Then he is given the duty of supervising the heavenly peach orchard. Instead of taking care of the orchard, the Monkey King eats as many peaches as he wants after catching the guards off-guard. And when he learns that he is not on the invitation list to the Heavenly Peach Banquet (the list including names of deities and heavenly bodies from the top to the bottom in a hierarchical manner), he becomes furious and decides to play a trick on the authorities and disrupt the banquet. Thus, he goes to the banquet area earlier, before anyone invited arrives, and puts the guards to sleep with a magic trick. Thereafter, he disrupts the banquet by consuming all the wine and food. Seeing what he has done, he then tries to escape the area quickly.

At the end of this short adventure, as he escapes, the Monkey King gets into the

2 There is a clear irony here, given that Baili/'White Power' (白力), the name given to Bailey by Lanlan, echoes the Black Power movement of African Americans, adding another layer to the multiple meanings that Jen attaches to her characters' names. Lanlan's giving the name to Bailey also has a further significance, given her negative view of White Americans as individualistic, dominant and selfish. In a trickster fashion, Lanlan adds sarcasm to the names she gives to the Wong children.

quarters where heavenly pills of immortality are held and steals the pills without thinking twice. When the Jade Emperor learns all of these rebellious actions of the Monkey King, he gets very angry and sends for an investigator to bring a full report of his actions. When Monkey King's mischief is confirmed, the Jade Emperor then sends armies after him to catch and punish him for his deeds. Unsurprisingly, Camp Gugelstein also begins with a wish to disturb racial and ethnic hierarchies and disrupt authority, when Mona and her friends of different ethnicities gather together in the basement of a house, without their parents' consent. Furthermore, Camp Gugelstein also ends abruptly with an incident of theft, when someone unrecognised steals a flask from the room where Camp Gugelstein was being held, and the whole group takes on the role of investigator to see where things went wrong.

## **Polyphony, Liminality and Creation of Community in Camp Gugelstein**

Polyphony signifies a fictional text's being open to different layers of interpretation and the trickster author's conscious use of it as a narrative strategy. This is particularly the case with narratives that employ tricksters. I infer my argument of a multi-voiced quality in Gish Jen's novel largely from Bakhtin's concept of polyphony and Gates' embellishments of the concept in his theory exploring the language and 'rhetorical strategies' of trickster narratives (1989: 75). I prefer to use the phrases 'multi-voiced' and polyphony, given that Gish Jen creates a multi-voiced discourse, particularly in the confines of Camp Gugelstein.

Through a multi-voiced narrative, the author in a trickster-like manoeuvre instils multiple functions and meanings in his/her text, allowing the text to be read on multiple levels. It is as though the author is all the while having a conversation with the character, creating an internal dialogue (Bakhtin 1998: 324–5) between the character and the narrator within the novel. This internal dialogue not only involves the author and the trickster character, but also the reader; therefore, the trickster cannot be analysed on its own, in isolation (Vizenor 1993: 189). One of the significant characteristics of polyphony is the use of 'comic, ironic and parodic discourse' (Bakhtin 1998: 324). This is very much in line with the attributes of the trickster, who uses irony and parody often for different purposes within the text. In line with Bakhtin's elaborate discussion of double-voiced discourse, Henry Louis Gates Jr. also includes storytelling, connotations and figurative language as signifiers of a double-voiced trickster discourse (1966: 74–75). I argue that through a trickster technique with an ethnic focus, the multi-voiced interaction between the author, trickster figure and reader extends to the invocation of various mythic trickster figures, who also display a multi-voiced discourse, invoking multiple trickster and cultural figures in a single trickster, which endows the character with a multi-voiced quality. This quality of the trickster allows the trickster writer to reinterpret a traditional mythical narrative that

includes the trickster (in this case, *The Journey to the West*) and allows her to voice her ethnic and cultural experiences on a new, Chinese American scale. A multi-voiced discourse is the key feature of a trickster countertype like Mona.

Camp Gugelstein becomes a space where Mona and her friends realise a community outside the boundaries of social, racial and ethnic inequalities and divisions. The people who start the idea of Camp Gugelstein, Mona's friends, Alfred and Evie, transgress the boundaries of ethnic mixing, talk about 'love of all humanity' (Jen 1996: 203), and do yoga to 'take charge of anxiety and fear' after a fiery discussion about racial tension and inequality (Jen 1996: 202). In Camp Gugelstein, when the Vietnam War is mentioned, the speeches of Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King are invoked with quotes by Mona's African American friends (people of colour like Mona), speaking of their desire for non-violence and inter-ethnic understanding (Jen 1996: 202). Furthermore, through Mona's African American friends, Jen extends the Monkey trickster tradition she uses in the novel to the Signifying Monkey of Afro-American trickster tradition, through the dialogues of various African American participants at Camp Gugelstein. Through the Signifying Monkey, Mona's African American friends speak of injustice, need for reform in ethnic relations, and of 'cutting bullshit' with their searing words and fiery remarks. Through the interruption of 'the Estimator' (echoing the investigator sent after the Monkey King), Luther or Dr. King (reminiscent of Dr. Martin Luther King), Benson, Ray and other Afro-Americans in the group, Jen also shows that racism and ethnic issues also have a wider resonance in the society that connects ethnic Chinese Americans to the other ethnic groups stigmatised by racism and discrimination.

Through Camp Gugelstein, each member of the multi-ethnic group is able to discuss issues related to racism and ethnicity: although the events lead to increasing tension, they do not amount to fighting. As Ray, one of the African Americans in the group, holds: 'I seen everything, man. [...] This ain't nothing compared to what went on in 'Nam [Vietnam]' (Jen 1996: 202). In the liminal space of the camp, Ray argues that the Empire, a metaphor for the establishment and institutionalised racism, 'is falling apart' (Jen 1996: 202). As the liminal space of the camp can give a glimpse of a world without racism, ethnic inequality and ingrained hierarchies, Evie argues: 'But here we are, integrated, [...] Is it unnatural?' (Jen 1996: 202). By using the signifiers of open criticism and disruption, Jen's characters make use of the Signifying Monkey as a rhetorical trope. As Henry Louis Gates Jr. argues, the practice of signifying represented metaphorically by the Signifying Monkey is a 'trope in which are subsumed several other rhetorical tropes', which include metaphor, irony, and hyperbole, and which transform the degraded position of the African slave by deriding and upturning the racist rhetoric by using the same racist image of black as monkey, only to revise and reverse it (Gates 2005: 178). The camp for ethnic harmony becomes a 'hellhole' in

the words of the Estimator, when a fiery argument follows after the flask goes missing. When the Estimator exclaims, '[l]et's get the hell out of this hellhole', Luther freely criticises the final developments at the camp that put the Blacks in a suspicious position, arguing that '[a] lot of racist bullshit [is] coming down here' (Jen 1996: 205). Then the Estimator affirms Luther, quoting Dr. Martin Luther King, 'We will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream' (Jen 1996: 205). The camp's liminal space in the fictional narrative allows for free exchange of ideas but represents only a temporary ideal of freedom from hierarchies.

Mona as the trickster countertype orchestrates the camp, and channels her trickster energy to her gang, to criticise the establishment that creates racism, racial stereotypes and inter-ethnic tension. The trickster countertype's presence allows the camp to happen and is felt throughout the sub-plot of Camp Gugelstein in the novel. Some of the group, including Alfred and Evie, who sneakily get together in the basement without anyone noticing them for a time, are considered to be 'trick[ing]' Mona and her group of friends (Jen 1996: 95). Mona's 'gang' (Jen 1996: 203) in fact share some of the trickster energy that Mona has, and act in parallel with the Monkey King and the Signifying Monkey, using the stinging language of the Signifying Monkey and transforming the bellicose characteristics of the Monkey King. The narrator's voice emphasises the fact that the liminal space of the camp is meant to be temporary, having a particular function in the plot, which is explained thus: 'Camp Gugelstein couldn't go on forever, and at least its breakup didn't involve the law. That's how they see it from afar. [...] [T]hey think their purpose was to help Alfred back to his own feet, and they did. They wanted him to be independent of them, and he is' (Jen 1996: 206). Alfred, one of the African Americans in the group, finds a new place with the help of his 'squad', finds a new car, and no more has to live 'with some white folk like a charity case' (Jen 1996: 205). The camp in a way accomplishes a concrete goal. As such, Alfred and the African Americans in the group make their points about ethnic inequalities and racism in the society and leave the camp triumphantly, with the Estimator exclaiming, '[f]ree at last' (Jen 1996: 205). Although this does not end inequalities in the society, it stands in the plot to show the potential of the trickster's liminal position.

While Seth, Mona's boyfriend, ultimately despairs about the results of the camp and thinks that it did not work, Mona as the trickster countertype holds that it was in fact 'an education' (Jen 1996: 207). Mona recounts the accomplishments of the camp, emphasising the role of the trickster and her positive action in the confines of the novel: '[...] Alfred is on his feet, [...] Seth got to play chess, and wasn't it great how they all held hands?' (Jen 1996: 207). In Mona, the trickster countertype's transgressions take on the form of a willingness to take up social action, even at the risk of being arrested:



‘even she’s got the social-action bug now, who knows but that she’ll be out getting arrested pretty soon?’ (Jen 1996: 207). Mona’s liminal position makes it possible for her to move, interact freely and empathise between/with different ethnic groups of colour such as Chinese Americans and blacks, and allows Jen to use the Signifying Monkey’s rhetorical tropes while bestowing Mona with some of the attributes and abilities of the Monkey trickster of Chinese tradition. As such, Mona’s attitudes towards racism and ethnic discrimination reflect Jen’s concerns about racism and inter-ethnic understanding. When Cedric, one of the Chinese cooks in the pancake restaurant of Mona’s parents, complains about Alfred, saying ‘[t]hose black people, [...] [o]ne day this way, one day that way’, Mona defends Alfred, remarking that ‘it’s not *those black people*. It’s Alfred’ (Jen 1996: 208, italics in the original).

Before the camp dissolves, the creation of a community in Camp Gugelstein is expressed by the authorial persona, empathising with Mona: ‘here too is a gang who loomed up like strangers not long ago. Now, though, they are friends, plain and simple – already! What are they, besides the most interesting people Mona has ever known? What are they but a bunch of hair-bedeveled buddies?’ (Jen 1996: 203) ‘[H]air-bedeveled buddies’ as a phrase is reminiscent of the Monkey King’s tricks, his pulling a hair from his body and turning it into a group of small-size monkeys to fight monsters and rivals alike. Mona, the trickster countertype appropriation of the ‘hair-bedeveled’ Monkey trickster, achieves her goal by helping to bring together a community out of complete strangers from different ethnic backgrounds, transforming and moving beyond societal restrictions through liminal action. Mona becomes a ‘buddy’ to her friends in this newly founded community, unlike the Monkey trickster who transforms the hair plucked from his body into an army of hairy apes and controls them as their ruler. Mona chooses to befriend ‘strangers’ in contrast to the Monkey King, who chooses to crush the strangers who offend him with his cudgel. In this way, the trickster countertype Mona’s peaceful resistance to authority is parallel to the other trickster countertype Wittman Ah Sing in the iconic novel *Tripmaster Monkey* of Maxine Hong Kingston.

Camp Gugelstein becomes a gathering where the concept of the ‘carnival’ (as understood by Bakhtin) as an ambivalent process can be observed. According to Bakhtin, the carnival is not meant as a concept to be understood as a spectacle, but as an occasion which its participants equally share and experience, ‘while [the] carnival lasts’: ‘Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people’ (1984: 8). As a ‘special condition’ and as ‘the people’s second life’, the carnival also can be exempt from some of the societal rules and restrictions (Bakhtin 1984: 7–8). Mona and her friends celebrate a free exchange of ideas in a set of celebratory gatherings at Barbara’s house, to which Chinese American Mona, Jewish American Seth and Barbara Gugelstein

invite Alfred, an African American youth, and other friends. Camp Gugelstein's carnival-like qualities are reflected in the group dancing together, playing various board games, and drinking (Jen 1996: 199). Further, the participants try things they have never tried before in a carnival fashion, which shows one of the functions of the carnival, as an escape from daily realities and restrictions: thus, the group tries mah-jongg, Checkers ('Chinese and regular'), and almost every kind of outdoor and indoor sports in a festival mood, as '[t]he squad tries tennis [and] Badminton', 'billiards' and 'Ping-Pong' (Jen 1996: 199). In all the activities from billiards to yoga, all the participants are allowed to take part equally. After the fun activities, a call goes out and a meeting takes place during which everyone expresses their opinions freely, without any central authority or hierarchical structure to restrict views and silence unwanted voices. In Camp Gugelstein, various identities (African American, Jewish American, and Chinese American) are represented, while at the same time there are no claims to an essentialist conception of identity as homogenous and unadulterated. Partridge describes Camp Gugelstein as 'an experiment in cross-ethnic integration and solidarity' (2007: 107). This almost universal extent of discussions and exchange of different worldviews is in accordance with Bakhtin's understanding of the nature of the carnival, which allows for a spirit of freeing individuals from society's restrictions to flourish, instilling in them such a spirit with universal proportions (1984: 7).

In conclusion, whereas in the beginning Camp Gugelstein had become 'a symbol of interracial communication and alliance' (Partridge 2007: 108), in the end it dissolves when a precious flask goes missing in the household, after which Alfred and his friends leave the house in fury when they are accused of theft (Jen 1996: 204–205). However, this incident only ends the Camp Gugelstein gathering, and the contact between these young people of differing backgrounds maintains its impact throughout the novel. Mona and Seth go to Alfred to apologise for the incident, and there develops a close friendship between the three (Jen 1996: 292). Mona defends Alfred when her parents fire him from his job at the pancake house. Given that historically in the United States, relations between White Anglo-Saxon Americans and Black Americans have been strained as a result of a history of slavery and racial inequalities (Fenton 2010: 28), that Gish Jen brings together a Chinese American protagonist, a Jewish American youth and African American Alfred is remarkable.

In *Mona in the Promised Land*, Gish Jen brings heterogeneous identities like Chinese American and African American together and 'puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; [...] that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable' (Lyotard 1991: 81). According to Partridge (2007: 111), the fact that Jen's novel does not represent Chinese American life as a 'clash of two monolithic cultures' [Chinese American versus White American/Anglo-Saxon] is what makes it markedly different



from previous depictions of Chinese American life as in *The Joy Luck Club* (1989). Both Gish Jen and Amy Tan in *The Hundred Secret Senses* address the 'third ear' (H. Roberts quoted in Gates 1988: 70) of the Chinese minority reader as much as the non-Chinese American readership, through allusions and references to the trickster and mythic figures from Chinese oral and written traditions. However, Jen specifically breaks the assumption of a dichotomic relationship between the Chinese and non-Chinese segments of American society. In the end, it could be said that through *Mona in the Promised Land*, Jen points towards a multiplicity of voices (among her novel characters in line with Bakhtinian polyphony) within the Chinese community and the American society at large, which clearly breaks from monolithic narratives in Chinese American fiction.

## References

- Nelson, E.S. (2005) *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature: A – C*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Roberts, H. E. quoted in Gates, H. L. Jr. (1989) *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lyotard, J. F. (1991) *The Postmodern Condition*, trans. Bennington G. and Massumi B. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Fenton, S. (2010) *Ethnicity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Jen, G. (1996) *Mona in the Promised Land*. London: Granta Books.
- Bakhtin, M. and Holquist, M. ed. (1984 1998) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1984) *Rabelais and His World*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Nachbar, J. and Lausé, K. (1992) *Popular culture*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.
- Gates, H. L. Jr. (2005) 'The Blackness of Blackness: A Critique on the Sign and the Signifying Monkey', in Hoffman, M.J. and Murphy, P. D. eds. *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction*. Duke University Press.
- Gates, H. L. Jr. (1989) *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Vizenor, G. R. ([1989] 1993) *Narrative Chance: Postmodern Discourse on Native American Indian Literatures*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

# Promoting and Advancing Multicultural Dialogues in Education

Richard Race

---

This article addresses debates around current multicultural dialogues in education. It also plots the journey of the promotion of an edited collection on this area which has been supported by The Dialogue Society (Race 2018). The article begins with contextual sections on the concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism in education. Contemporary and relevant events such as Brexit, Prevent and the Shamima Begum case are considered. Several academic events, one organised by The Dialogue Society, are examined to see how dialogues are promoted within the academy to underline the continued importance of multicultural dialogues in education.

---

Keywords: Interculturalism, Education, Multicultural dialogue, Deradicalisation policy, Racism, Multilingualism.

## Multiculturalism and Education

In 2019 it seems that it is becoming harder to see where multiculturalism resides in English education, despite the fact that society is becoming even more culturally diverse. The disconnect, as it has been called, between what is actually going on socially or educationally, and the unknown consequences of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union at the end of 2019 is a major issue (UN 2018). It is interesting to note that Alston, the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, visited a primary school on his visit to the UK and highlighted, ‘... Brexit will have serious consequences in this domain and the challenges need to be dealt with head on. A lack of clarity is preventing families at risk of poverty from planning for its impact. People feel their homes, jobs, and communities are at risk.’ It would be unproductive to speculate about Brexit at the time of writing but there is no doubt that the uncertainty or ‘lack of clarity’ about whatever happens will have consequences for both society, poverty and education.

---

Richard Race has taught Education Studies (Keele University; St. Mary's University; London Metropolitan University) and (Applied) Social Sciences (Keele University; Liverpool John Moores University; Roehampton University). He has also published a monograph and two edited collections on aspects of Multiculturalism. Dr Race is on the International Advisory Board for the *Ethnicities Journal* (2014-); and on the International Editorial Review Board of *Contemporary Issues in Education* (2011-).

What is clear is that Brexit is a monocultural movement towards a more nationalistic interpretation of culture and society. In an educational sense this should not be a surprise as England and Wales have had a national curriculum for over thirty years. Even though programmes of study exist within different core and foundation subjects that have culturally diverse curricula, the issue remains whether professional practitioners have been taught a more multicultural and anti-racist curricular focus. Have colleagues had relevant diversity training within a wider, coherent professional development plan, which gives them the pedagogy to teach in a culturally diverse classroom or lecture theatre? Advocates of multicultural education (Manning et al. 2017; Diangelo 2018) continue to underline what needs to be taught and how to teach to majority and minority cultures in educational settings. This literature on multicultural education, which is not exclusively from the United States and is in fact global (Montero-Sieburth 2018; Phuntsog 2019), needs to continue to highlight the reality of or a re-connection with what professional practitioners face in education. There is a need for more empirical research on aspects of not only Multiculturalism and Education but areas such as Anti-Racism and Education, as well as White Privilege and Fragility, and these need to be focused upon and taught within education practice (Gillborn et al 2017; Arday and Mirza 2018).

## **Interculturalism and Education**

If intercultural education focuses upon different people and cultures and includes how interculturalism is taught in all settings, including the diversity of all communities being the norm rather than exception, then we need, as we do within multicultural education practice, to question what is being delivered in classrooms and lecture theatres. That reorientation of focus is important when we examine majority or minority communities and cultures. 'Inter' is also defined as 'between' which should be seen as a positive opportunity to explore spaces and issues between cultures in society. Shamima Begum, who left London at the age of fifteen to join Islamic State and who reappeared in February 2019 requesting to return home raises many intercultural issues, including her citizenship and whether she can return home or be refused entry to the United Kingdom based on security risks. The complexity of this and other cases like it raises intercultural issues but needs to be considered in relation to how this case and these issues can be taught in education settings. This returns to the issue of how we prepare our professional practitioners for delivering content and the knowledge that can be objectively presented to students.

The Prevent policy is non-statutory in UK schools but the education workforce needs to have an understanding of the government's deradicalisation policy (HO 2015a; DfE 2015). The interesting connection between Prevent and the Begum case is the Channel Duty Guidance (HO: 2015b) which was published the same year Begum left the UK for Turkey and then Syria. Channel was created to protect young people

from radicalisation but what has been created to re-integrate or re-educate people, not only Begum, who want to come home from conflict zones? Within a culturally diverse environment, the notions of relevance and the contemporary nature of this case study raise the question of what is taught in education and, as significantly, what is not taught in classrooms and lecture theatres. This continues to be a systemic problem and the issue is not how teachers are trained and what they teach: the systemic problem remains a content one, that is, what is taught and not taught within the national curriculum and university programmes of study.

## **International Dialogues on Multicultural and Intercultural Education**

In relation to Dialogues, a Newton Fund/British Academy Research Workshop took place in Mahidol University, Thailand in June 2018. A key text for this event was its edited collection. This brought together early career researchers from England and Scotland and Thailand, alongside international mentors, who came together to talk about multicultural and intercultural education (Race 2015; Arphattananon 2018). Particularly interesting were the trips to schools in Thailand to see how majority and minority communities are schooled in both the public and private sectors. When you are informed about the history of Thailand alongside the development of its educational system, you begin to look at the similarities and differences of your own system of education.

Understandings of international influences on Thailand's education also underline the need for evolution and development, but, like the national curriculum in England and Wales, you can see how tradition shapes curricula – what is taught and how it is taught. When reflecting upon the research workshop, there is a strong requirement to reciprocate and bring colleagues from Thailand to the UK. An application for a British Academy Conference grant has been completed and the hope is to bring colleagues from Thailand to London to continue to develop research links and networks which are currently visible on social media. There is also a possibility that Thai colleagues will be attending the British Education Research Association conference in Manchester in September 2019. This brings other elements of the network back together and allows wider dissemination of research findings from British and Thai colleagues. The dialogues created in Thailand in June 2018 will grow and become even more international in Manchester in 2019, and if the conference grant application is successful, in London in 2020.

## **Race Equality and Anti-Racism Practice**

Marlon Moncrieffe, who also contributed to the edited text for the conference and was in the Thailand research workshop, organised a Race Equality Charter event

in Brighton in December 2018 (Moncrieffe and Moncrieffe 2019). Arday was the keynote speaker at this event and he talked eloquently about the issues Black colleagues face in higher education (Arday and Mirza 2018). It was interesting to listen to colleagues talking about issues of race and racism. It is now twenty years since the MacPherson Report into the death of Stephen Lawrence, which defined institutional racism in the Metropolitan Police in London. What is forgotten is that MacPherson also asked for the national curriculum to be amended to value cultural diversity and prevent racism. Local education authorities and school governors were requested to create implementation strategies to do this which were to be inspected by OFSTED (Race 2015: 30–32).

There are wider issues at play in relation to the police and their relationships with Black London youth. Knife murders were higher in London than they were in New York City in 2018. It is debatable whether racial profiling and stop and search, when considering a reduction in the number of police officers since 2010 in London, is working. There are wider social, cultural and educational issues here, and the Shamima Begum case touches on some of them. One of the biggest issues in education is student performance. The continued work of Feyisa Demie and colleagues on achievement and underachievement remains important when examining student performance and racial stereotypes. This work is crucial when teaching anti-racism within a more culturally diverse curriculum. This mixed methods approach needs to be used as part of diversity training within a wider system of continuing professional development for all practitioners (Demie 2019; Demie and McLean 2017; 2018).

## **Reflecting and Advancing Multicultural Dialogues in Education**

The issues above all connect with advancing multicultural dialogues in education. Dialogues are plural and diverse and aim to increase our understandings of educational issues. The edited text seems even more important now than when the initial idea for it was devised in April 2015. As mentioned above, we seem to be moving more towards a national and integrationist state, which is enshrined within the idea of Brexit, rather than a more globalised, international, plural society and culture. The two-way integrationist relationship is even more conditioned by state policy, and the perceived resistance that individuals and community agency offer is controlled even more by the state (Race 2015).

But was this always the case? The integrationist policy processes that the Coalition and Conservative governments have created in England and Wales have become a newer template of conditional control through policy. As already mentioned, integrationist policy shapes education, that is, the national curriculum, which is created by the state and has been implemented in more than 93% of state schools since 1988. Integration

is a more significant concept for policy making when examining state conditions for policy making. Multiculturalism is the more important concept for both policy making and practice in education because of its equity, equality and celebration, rather than an integrationist conditional recognition of cultural diversity. Hence, the aim of the edited book was to bring colleagues from all over the world to reflect upon multicultural dialogues in education. Shirley Steinberg and Leena Robertson have both talked about their research at both The Dialogue Society (March 2018) and Roehampton University (February 2019). They discussed White Supremacy and Patriarchy, as well as Early Childhood Policy and Practice respectively. Both of these papers are applicable to the Shamima Begum and Prevent/Channel cases mentioned earlier. They show how multicultural and anti-racist education can address some of those complex issues and provide a more contemporary pedagogical practice that is ultimately more relevant to children, young adults and mature students.

One of the first reviews of the edited collection was in German (Spieker 2018). Multilingualism is an important part of multicultural education and it is always interesting to reflect on the fact that individuals in culturally diverse communities in London and other urban centres, can speak up to or even more than three or four languages or dialects. All of the issues touched upon in this article highlight the need for reflection and simply more professional development on multicultural and anti-racist dialogues (Race and Lander 2016). It is important to continue to advocate in all education forms and settings for pedagogical practice that challenges practitioners and children to think about the cultural and social issues that affect them both inside and outside of classrooms and lecture theatres. The promotion of multicultural and anti-racist education continues. The next event/project with The Dialogue Society is to arrange another symposium, bringing colleagues together for all levels and settings to continue advancing multicultural dialogues in education.

## References

- Arphattananon, T. (2018) 'Multicultural education in Thailand', *Intercultural Education*, 2018 29:2, 149–162.
- Arday, J., Mirza, H. S. (Eds.) (2018) *Dismantling Race in Higher Education. Racism, Whiteness and Decolonising the Academy*, Houndsmills, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Demie, F. (2019) Raising achievement of black Caribbean pupils: good practice for developing leadership capacity and workforce diversity in schools, *School Leadership & Management*, 39:1, 5-2.
- Demie, F., McLean, C. (2017) *Black Caribbean Underachievement in Schools in England*, Lambeth Education and Learning, London.
- Demie, F., McLean, C. (2018) *The Achievement of Black Caribbean Pupils. Good Practice*, Lambeth Education and Learning, London.
- Department for Education (DfE) (2015) The Prevent duty Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf), last accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019.
- Diangelo, R. (2018) *White Fragility. Why it's so hard for White People to Talk about Racism*, London, Allen Lane / Penguin.
- Gillborn, D., Demack, S., Rollock, N., Warmington, P. (2017) 'Moving the goalposts: Education Policy and 25 years of the Black / White achievement gap', *British Educational Research Journal*, 43:5, 848-874.
- Home Office (HO) (2015a) Counter Terrorism and Security Act, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents/enacted>, last accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019.
- Home Office (2015b) Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/425189/Channel\\_Duty\\_Guidance\\_April\\_2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425189/Channel_Duty_Guidance_April_2015.pdf), last accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019.
- Manning, M.L., Baruth, L.G., and Lee, G. L. (6th Ed.) 2017 *Multicultural Education of Children and Adolescents*, New York: Routledge.
- Moncrieffe, M. and Moncrieffe, A. (2019) Examining the representation of fundamental British values: What are the most frequently used images on primary school display boards?, *London Review of Education*, 17:1, 51-62.
- Montero-Sieburth, M. (2018) Case studies of second-generation youth from the Global South, southern Europe, and northern Europe: valuing the policies, research, and practices of intercultural education, *Intercultural Education*, 29:4, 441-449.
- Phuntsog, N. (2019) China's minority preferential policies and the schooling of indigenous Tibetan children: the weakest link, *Intercultural Education*, 30:1, 68-82.
- Race, R. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) (2015) *Multiculturalism and Education*, London, Bloomsbury.



- Race, R. (Ed.) (2018) *Advancing Multicultural Dialogues in Education*, Houndsmills, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Race, R and Lander, L (2016) *Advancing Race and Ethnicity in Education*, Houndsmills, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Spieker, S. (2018) Rezension von: Race, Richard (Hg.): *Advancing Multicultural Dialogues in Education*. London: Palgrave Macmillan 2018. In: EWR 17 (2018), Nr. 6 (Veröffentlicht am 31.12.2018), URL: <http://klinkhardt.de/ewr/978331960557.html>, last accessed 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019.
- United Nations (UN) (2018) Statement on Visit to the United Kingdom, by Professor Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23881&LangID=E>, last accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019.



# BOOK REVIEW

Oemer S. Shen

**Book: The Misty Land of Ideas and the Light of Dialogue**

**An Anthology of Contemporary Philosophy: Western & Islamic,**

**London: ICAS Press 2014**

*The Misty Land of Ideas and the Light of Dialogue* is an edited collection of essays in comparative philosophy which presents the reader with an engaging dialogue between the famous philosophers of the Western and Islamic philosophical traditions. The philosophers discussed in the book are all pivotal figures of the Eastern and Western intellectual and spiritual heritage. They include great thinkers such as Al-Ghazzali, Thomas Aquinas, Averroes, Suhrawardi, Mulla Sadra, Avicenna, Leibniz, Meister Eckhart, Martin Heidegger, and Karl Popper. Both avid readers of philosophy and the general readership will find something here to enjoy and engage with. The variety of the topics in each section and the range of the philosophers whose views are discussed makes the book appealing to a wide range of readers with different philosophical tastes. The significance of *The Misty Land of Ideas and the Light of Dialogue* lies in the fact that it helps to broaden the intellectual horizons of the readers by inviting them to examine and explore issues whose importance is not merely historical but contemporary, as they deal with substantive problems which belong to the sphere of the human condition. The book, through its different chapters and by highlighting the views of thinkers from the East and from the West, shows the reader how interconnected the two philosophical traditions, the Islamic and the Western, are. It also helps to dispel many simplistic accounts of the status, calibre, potentials, and the historical evolution of Islamic philosophy. According to one such account, Al-Ghazzali was responsible for the 'closing of the gates of ijtihad' in Islam.

The book is divided into twelve chapters, each dealing with a series of important philosophical questions from the viewpoints of two or more philosophers from the Islamic and the Western traditions. The chapters in the book comprise (in the order they appear in the book): 'Aquinas and Mulla Sadra on the Primacy of Existing' (David B. Burrell), 'Ghazzali and the Philosophers: The Defence of Causality' (Lenn E. Goodman), 'Averroes' Aristotelian Soul' (Roy Jackson), 'Mulla Sadra and Martin Heidegger: a Philosophical Turn' (Muhammad Kamal), 'Parmenides and Mulla Sadra: the Mystical Journey to Being' (Muhammad Kamal), 'On the Very Idea of Comparative Philosophy: Some Preliminary Remarks for a Meta-Theory' (Mahmoud Khatami), 'Ibn Al-Haytham and the European Renaissance: a Question

of Influence' (Oliver Leaman), 'Necessity, Causation, and Determinism in Ibn Sina and His Critics' (Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen), 'The Possible Worlds of Avicenna and Leibniz' (Sari Nusseibeh), 'Scepticism and the Problem of Acquiring Genuine Knowledge: Ghazzali and Popper' (Ali Paya), 'Man the Image of God According to Meister Eckhart and Mulla Sadra' (Latimah-Parvin Peerwani), 'On Being "Useless" Yet "True": Plato, Farabi and Ibn Bajja on the Condition of Philosophers in the Context of the Corrupt State' (W. Craig Streetman).

The chapters compare and contrast the ideas and philosophy of the scholars and succeed in introducing the reader to the world of comparative philosophy. The book in this sense not only manages to cater to a readership which is well read in philosophy, but also the general reader who may not be as familiar with the names discussed in this book with its relative accessibility. The articles delve into the details of each philosophical tradition, which assists the reader who may not be readily knowledgeable about the intricacies of each philosophical thought. As an example, in his article 'Averroes' Aristotelian Soul', Roy Jackson explains in detail what Aristotle meant when he discussed the soul or psyche in his philosophy, so that we have a better understanding of how this was interpreted and expanded upon by Averroes in the two philosophers' textual dialogue. Similarly, in Muhammad Kamal's chapter discussing the philosophical aspects of being through the lens of ancient Greek philosopher Parmenides and Muslim philosopher Mulla Sadra, we get to learn the philosophical positions of both philosophers in detail within the context of the time and milieu they lived in. At the same time, the reader also gets to learn about each philosopher from a wide range of angles as some of the philosophers are introduced and discussed in more than one chapter, such as Mulla Sadra and Al-Ghazzali.

The book's strength lies in its ability to explore a wide range of thinkers from both the Eastern and the Western philosophical traditions and provide the reader with original comparisons and thought-provoking parallels. One relative weakness of the book is the lack of a list of terms used in the book, although an index of names that are found in the book is included. This somewhat restricts the relative accessibility of the book; this can, however, be understood in a book which delves into several philosophical discussions with a plethora of terms which would necessitate a complete lexicon of terminology as a separate companion volume. In the meantime, the index of names gives the reader an opportunity to have easier access to the important concepts and individuals discussed in the book. However, the pages each entry refers the reader to do not always give a definition for the entry in question but provide context, as is the nature of an index of names.

In summary, *The Misty Land of Ideas and the Light of Dialogue* is a prime example of an academic work that engages the reader with a dialogue between two philosophical traditions that have long been interconnected and introduces the general reader to the

world of comparative philosophy. As stated in the introduction of the book, comparative philosophy is a relatively new discipline, although it has arguably existed without a name since the beginning of philosophy, and this book is a perfect introduction to the long-running dialogue between the Western and Islamic philosophical traditions. By shedding light on this long neglected and often misunderstood dialogue between the Western and Islamic philosophical traditions, *The Misty Land of Ideas and the Light of Dialogue* fills an important gap in the literature.

