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TERROR, NATIONALISM AND EDUCATION IN A BOUNDARYLESS WORLD

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The market place has celebrated the age of the “boundaryless” world but what it has not come to terms with is the political affects of such a world: although such a world might be good for innovation of products and services and for the cataclysmic rise of global corporations, what existential security does such a world provide? Does it not create a greater insecurity and are we aware of the dynamics of this insecurity and do we have productive ways of working with this uncertainty? The dark side of a boundaryless world, as Bill Clinton\(^1\) notes is that it destabilizes the relationship between people of different cultures or ways of life. It throws strangers together, people whose cultures and conventions for doing things are qualitatively different not only in that they do not speak the same language but who eat differently, who smell different and who have a perspective on things that cannot always be assimilated to our own perspective.

The inability to assimilate the perspective of the stranger to our own perspective is both a frightening and potentially exciting experience. It is frightening because it disrupts our way of making sense of the world. We can no longer simply and unquestioningly rely on “our” way of doing things. And this is a source of existential insecurity. But for the same reason meetings with strangers is potentially an educational opportunity: the stranger exposes us to different ways of seeing things, to the blindness that we have regarding our own conventions for doing things and so opens up the possibility of new and different ways of seeing and doing things.

The architects of boundarylessness do not offer any guidelines or conventions for how people of difference can co-create a way of life in the face of the anxiety of difference. They do not show how the anxiety of difference can be an edifying opportunity. One of the characteristic responses to the strangeness of difference is a sense of being threatened. Throughout the twentieth century nationalism and fundamentalism were very typical ways of responding to the threat from the other. The way in which the threat from the other develops into a protective nationalism was exemplified in the case of apartheid in South Africa where the ruling Nationalist party defined its nationalism as a need to affirm and protect its own way of doing things in the face of the threat from what it saw as the

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\(^1\) Clinton B The Struggle for the Soul of the 21st Century The Dimblebey Lecture 2001
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/news_comment/dimbleby/clinton.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/news_comment/dimbleby/clinton.shtml)
“black peril.” We see it in the Second World War with Germany concerned with dominating Europe and annihilating the Jew, the Gypsy and the other in the name of affirming its own way of life. We see it in the state of Israel in its concern to protect the Jewish way of life. And we are beginning to see it emerge in Tony Blaire’s Britain in which he is espousing a need to advance and protect values because they are “our” values. This is reflected in his statements like fighting terrorism “means championing our values of freedom, tolerance and respect for others.” Wittingly or unwittingly we may be moving back to a nationalist kind of attunement in which the “British way of life” – or the “Western way of life” (whatever that may mean), or “our” way of life is to be protected at all costs.

One of the dangers of nationalism is an insular preoccupation with one’s own way of doing things. That a way of life is “one’s own” makes it a supreme value. The values loose their intrinsic appeal and are valued because they are one’s own values. Indeed Isaiah Berlin sees this as the essential characteristic of nationalism: Isaiah Berlin maintains that from the nationalist perspective "one of the most compelling reasons, perhaps the most compelling, for holding a particular belief, pursuing a particular policy, serving a particular end, living a particular life, is that these ends, beliefs, policies, lives are ours.”

In nationalism the threat to a way of life tends to lead to an idealization of “one’s own” way of life. This is exemplified in the case of white Afrikaner nationalism in South Africa where the Afrikaner nationalist was preoccupied with what it itself called a “love” of its own way of doing things. It spoke of itself as loving its language, its culture, its history and tradition. Yet in many cases these things that were described as being “ours’” were in fact not simply and unequivocally theirs – the language, the history and the culture emerged out of a shared history, a history that the nationalist wished to dissociate itself from. The narcissism of its nationalism lay in the fact of its obsession with itself and with the fact that it was a reflected or mirrored self that it was concerned with. Moreover, as many commentators have noted, it relied on the other, the enemy for its own sense of self. Its sense of self emerged for it through the way in which it was reflected through the gaze of the other.

The preoccupation with self characteristic of nationalism leads to an insensitivity to and paranoid sense of others in which the other is deprived of their humanness and is seen as nothing other than a machine that is there to annihilate “one’s own” way of life. But the most crucial problem with nationalism as a response to a threat from the other is that it just does not work. Rather than leading to self affirmation, to a sense of security or to a whittling away of the experienced threat, it intensifies the threat, feelings of insecurity and often producing paranoid responses to the to other. This is a theme that underlies the work of Michael Dillon. And again we see it in both Israeli and South African nationalism: the need to protect and affirm “one’s own” way of doing things did not lead to a state of security but reproduced insecurity for so many over such a long period of time. In both cases, from time to time, they may have won some of the wars (and in Israel

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continue to win wars) but do not always win the battles. For the might of military know-how and technology in both cases did not stop the sense of overwhelming threat. Indeed it perpetuated a generalized threat and an insular mentality – the very thing that is counter productive to a boundaryless world.

If we want to create a boundaryless mentality to go with the boundaryless world, we need to rethink our understanding of the experience of being threatened by the strangeness of the other. This is the theme that I would like to take up in this essay.

As is well documented in existential philosophical and psychoanalytic literature there are different logics to different kinds of experiences of being threatened and different ways of responding in the face of different kinds of threats. It is, for example, well documented that fight or flight is an appropriate response to the form of threat known as fear and that philosophical or psychotherapeutic reflection is an appropriate response to anxiety.

The aim of this paper is to bring the literature on experiences of being threatened to bear on what I shall call tensions of difference which include difference of race, gender, sexuality, culture, paradigm and perspective. For underlying such tension are experiences of being threatened. These threats take many forms. They include threats to one's personal well being, to ones self esteem, to one's identity and to one's way of life. I wish to show how conceiving of experiences of threatenedness which underlie tensions of difference in terms of what I shall call an "anxiety of strangers" rather than in terms of what I shall call a "fear of enemies" allows for the development of the possibility of an educative working through of tensions of difference. This does not mean that seeing such tensions in terms of the "anxiety of strangers" automatically frees us from such tension but it frees us to work in a productive way with these tensions. It allows the energy which underlies tension of difference to become the erotic basis for what I shall call an "existential education."

This paper shall be subdivided as follows: in section I, I shall outline the notions of the "fear of enemies" and the "anxiety of strangers." In section II I shall outline the logic of attempts to transform the "anxiety of strangers" into "fears of enemies." In section III I shall show how the anxiety of strangers is the basis of an existential withdrawal in which a reflexive awareness of self develops. The theme of section IV will be to show that existential education becomes possible when there is a "resolute" affirmation of rather than resistance to the reflexive awareness of self entailed in the existential withdrawal.

I

There is in the work of Zigmund Bauman a distinction between enemy and stranger which parallels the distinction between fear and anxiety that permeates existential and psychoanalytic literature. Bauman maintains that an enemy is someone whom accepts the same terms of reference as I do but who takes an oppositional stance to me. A stranger, on the other hand is someone who does not share the same horizon of intelligibility. Whereas "enemies are flawed friends," strangers are "undecidables" which quoting Derrida Bauman
maintains "can no longer be included within philosophical (binary) opposition, resisting and disorganising it, without ever constituting a third term...”

Enemies share common boundaries; although they oppose each other, they have a common appreciation of the rules in terms of which they meet each other. Strangers have no established boundaries in common -- not even the rules governing their meeting and interaction: "One meets friends at the other side of one's responsibility. One meets enemies (if at all) at the point of a sword. There is no clear rule about meeting the strangers." Strangers are, as Bauman maintains "a constant threat to world order" or to my way of ordering the world.

Enemies and friends function in the space of the existentially familiar. This opposition "sets apart truth from falsity" and "dispels doubt." Strangers give rise to the existentially unfamiliar, that is, that space in which "the very possibility of sociation" is threatened. Here there are no established and familiar forms of interactions, categories for interpreting myself and the experience of the other. For whose ways should prevail in the meeting of strangers? Mine or the others? Here there are no ways of reading a situation that can be taken for granted. The stranger deprives me of all security: "The way we have lived, the kind of life which gave us our security and makes us feel comfortable, is challenged ... It is not self-evident and thus does not seem secure." We cannot rely on ourselves or on our own ways of seeing things.

Whereas in the face of the enemy, I am in the space of the habitual, in the face of the stranger I feel strange -- I am estranged from myself. I experience and am overcome by a sense of what existentialists call the anxiety, uncanniness or absurdity of being. Putting this in terms of anxiety theory, in the face of an enemy I would experience fear but in the face of a stranger I would experience anxiety. What distinguishes fear from anxiety is that the former is characterised by a feeling of being threatened and an anticipation of physical injury in the context of a specific and recognisable external object whereas anxiety is the experience of being threatened but in the absence of a specific object of attack. The hallmark of fear is the ability to focus on a particular agent that is experienced as threatening. Anxiety is experienced when unable to focus on a particular threatening object. One feels threatened but there is "no-thing" that is producing this feeling. In anxiety there is either "no-thing"

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4 Ibid., p152
5 Ibid., p149
6 Ibid., p144
7 Ibid., p145
9 I will soon show that what is meant by no-thing is the notion of relationship, for, as will become clear relationship as that in which things are present to each other is not itself a thing.
upon which my focus can fix or I am in "two minds," simultaneously attracted and repelled, excited and fearing, desiring and resisting an object. To be in the uncertainty of anxiety is to be torn between possibilities, unable to affirm any of them. Kierkegaard referred to anxiety as dizziness. It is to be in a state of what Bauman calls "ambivalence."

In the face of an enemy there is a specific object on which to concentrate: one is sure of the attacker. One can see him approaching and thus one is able to take action in the face of an enemy. There is no indecisiveness concerning the nature of the object: "With enemies we fight, friends we like and help; but what about people who are neither? Or who can be both?" Furthermore, in the experience of fear -- in contrast to that of anxiety -- I am not absorbed in myself but in the threat which is approaching from a definite direction; from an attack launched by the enemy.

The experience of being threatened that would emerge in the face of the stranger does not emerge from any particular characteristic of the stranger. It is not that the stranger is doing anything to me or has any explicit desire to do anything to me: "Even if the newcomers stand mum, keep their mouths shut and respectfully refrain from asking awkward questions, the way they go about their daily business of life cannot but do the questioning for them with the same upsetting effect."

This suggests that it is the simple presence of the stranger that is experienced as threatening: "Even if we could be certain that the presence of strangers hides no threat of aggression ... we are aware of being constantly gazed at, watched, scrutinised, evaluated; the 'privacy' of our persons has been pierced, infiltrated, violated. ... As long as we stay within the field of their vision, we have to be on guard."

In principle, the stranger could be the most well disposed of people and yet still be seen as threatening. What is it, then, in the presence of the stranger that puts us on guard? For Bauman it is the ambiguity of the stranger that makes him a source of concern: "There is hardly an anomaly more anomalous that the stranger. He stands between friend and enemy, order and chaos, the inside and the outside. He stands for the treacherousness of friends, for the cunning of enemies, for fallibility of order, penetrability of the inside."

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10 It is interesting to note that the logic of anxiety in the case of Kierkegaard and Freud is very similar. For Kierkegaard anxiety is a sympathetic antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy which is characterized by wanting and resisting whereas as for Freud as evidenced in the oedipal phase anxiety arises in that ambiguous situation of simultaneously desiring the mother while fearing the consequence of expressing the desire.

Kierkegaard S. The Concept of Anxiety Princeton: PUP., 1980, p42

11 Kierkegaard S. op cit., p61

12 Ibid., p56

13 Ibid., p60

14 Ibid., p66

15 Bauman Z. "Modernity and Ambivalence op cit., p151
But ambiguity is not a characteristic of the stranger. It is not an object that can be focused upon. It is not a property of the stranger: it is not that the stranger is black, white, tall, well built and ambiguous. Ambiguity is not a quality added on but is the stranger as seen from my perspective. However, it is not in me either. It is not that I am projecting ambiguity from my unconsciousness onto the stranger, for it is only in the encounter with the stranger that I experience ambiguity and have this kind of perspective. Neither in him nor in me; it exists in the very relationship between us. It is only in our coming together, our relationship that such ambiguity arises. Similarly strangeness is not a quality within or of the stranger. It is the other as seen from my perspective. The use of this term thus presupposes a relationship between me and the other. Strangeness is a characteristic of neither the other nor me but of our relationship.

Here we see that the experience of being threatened that arises in the context of the stranger is, unlike the experience of fear, not brought about by a particular object. To appreciate the anxiety of the stranger we need to develop an appreciation of the logic of relationship or the logic of the between. For the anxiety of the stranger arises in the meeting between and not in the person of the stranger.

The stranger is he who does not allow us to see, read and interpret situations with confidence. The stranger confuses me. In the face of the stranger, I am caught between conflicting readings and I cannot rely on any. The experience of the stranger is a moment of perplexity or, in Kierkegaardian terms, "dizziness," being unable to decide whether he is an enemy or friend. Bauman in fact calls it paralysis. As Rollo May, amongst others have indicated the uneasiness experienced in the face of this perplexity can give rise to anxiety for anxiety exists where "the values and standards underlying modern cultures are themselves threatened." When the terms in which I make sense of the world cannot be trusted -- this gives rise to anxiety. I have no basis upon which to be sure of who how to act and behave in the face of the stranger. Indeed my very sense of identity is threatened.

Finally it can be said that in the experience of the anxiety of strangers, unlike the experience of the fear of enemies, I am not simply involved in warding off the threatening other but am constantly aware of my own presence as mediated by the presence of the stranger. I cannot simply do things without being aware of the way I do things. My awareness of the way in which I do things is heightened. I am dominated by a self consciousness: "If not our bodies, then at any rate our dignity, self-esteem or just our self definition are now hostages to faceless persons ... Whatever we do, we must worry about how our actions would affect the image of ourselves held by those who watch us." Sartre calls this experience the "look of the other." In looking at the other looking at us, we see our taken for granted ways of doing things or what Sartre calls our "pre-reflective consciousness."


Bauman Z *Thinking Sociologically* op cit., p66
The anxiety of strangeness is not experienced only in the face of the stranger but in the face of strange and unfamiliar situations -- in any situation in which we cannot assume our familiar ways of doing things. For example migrant labourers in a foreign country or city who do not automatically have the "know how" to get around or how to do things. These people cannot rely on their taken for granted ways of doing things in the context of the unfamiliarity of the city. For the migrant labourer the city is not only a different place but also a different way of doing things. The migrant labourer does not know how to read the signs of the situation in which they find themselves. He does not have the paradigm or "cultural capital" in terms of which everyday activities can be performed in a taken for granted way. Because of this even the most simple of activities from the perspective of the locals can be a source of confusion and uncertainty for the migrant. He does not know who he is in this new space. John Burger captures the anguish of the migrant: "His migration is like an event in a dream dreamt by another ... He learns twenty words of the new language. But to his amazement at first, their meaning changed as he spoke them. He asked for coffee. What the words signified to the barman was that he was asking for coffee where he should not be asking for coffee. He learnt girl. What the word meant when he used it, was that he was a randy dog. Is it possible to see through the opaqueness of the words."

In conclusion it can be said that the difference between the anxiety of strangers and the fear of enemies can be articulated in terms of a difference between that which threatens and that which is threatened. In the case of fear that which threatens is a particular worldly object and what is threatened is my physical being or some aspect thereof. In the case of the anxiety of strangers that which is threatened is the familiar terms in which I make sense of the world including my sense of identity and that which threatens is not a thing but the strangeness which arises in the encounter with something unfamiliar and new.

II
The experience of uncertainty and insecurity in the face of the stranger is unpleasant, something which we wish to avoid. As Bauman comments: "The loss of security is not something one would forgive lightly." What are the means through which we can regain our lost security? Or putting this in terms of anxiety and fear, what are the means for responding to anxiety and fear?

There are distinctive but overlapping responses to fear and anxiety. Because fear is object directed, fight or flight is possible with respect to fear. By removing the threatening object we remove the experience of being threatened. But because anxiety is objectless, fight or flight is powerless in the face of anxiety. As most theorists agree, whereas in the face of fear action is possible (but not always successful), in anxiety action is not even possible. Whereas in the face of fear we maybe helpless, we are paralysed in the face of anxiety. Because of this paralysis, as Tillich amongst others has noted, there is a tendency to attempt to translate anxieties into fears: "Anxiety strives to become fear, because fear can be met by

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18 Bauman Z. Thinking Sociologically op cit., pp59-60
courage. It is impossible for a finite being to stand naked anxiety for more than a flash of time.”

In the context of this paper, to translate anxiety into fear means to be able to blame the other rather than the strangeness of the other for one's experiences of feeling insecure and uncertain. It means to see the other as an enemy rather than as a stranger. This in turn means to translate the other into the binary oppositions that are constitutive of an assumed common language. For at least action is possible with regard to an enemy. This is precisely what occurred in the name of colonialism. The colonialist avoided the confrontation with the strangeness of the African by seeing the African as his binary opposite: where as the colonialist was civilised, the African was uncivilised; the colonialist saw himself as bringing education to an uneducated continent. The colonialist was developed; the African underdeveloped.

In this way colonialism interpolated the stranger into its own familiar framework of reference. This point is made by Montaigne who argues that instead of being able to grapple with the African as an unreadable stranger, Europeans tended to impose the familiar language of their own discourse onto the African: "I do not believe ... that there is anything barbarous or savage about them, except that we call barbarous anything that is contrary to our own habits. Indeed we seem to have no other criterion of truth and reason than the type and kind of opinion and customs current in the land we live. There we always see the perfect religion, the perfect political system, the perfect and most accomplished way of doing everything.”

Montaigne wrote in the 15th century and already then he could see the blindness of the European to its own prejudice: "I am not so anxious that we should note the horrible savagery of these acts as concerned that, whilst judging their faults so correctly, we should be blind to our own.”

However, the attempt to translate anxiety into fear fails because we do not remove the experience of being threatened underlying the encounter with the stranger by transforming the stranger into an enemy. This can be clearly seen in the case of the white nationalist South African who after years of treating the black African as an enemy is still -- and has always been -- overcome by experiences which indicate the uncertainty of being a stranger in Africa. Speaking about white rule under apartheid, Allister Sparks has observed: "The white South African, creating ghettos for the blacks, has turned South Africa itself into a ghetto, where he lives cut off from Africa and the world, unable even to identify properly with the country he loves. Denying the African within himself, he is himself denied, and isolated, and

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19 Tillich P. *The Courage To Be* Glasgow: Fount Paperbacks, 1979, p47

20 Bauman Z. op cit., 146


22 Ibid., p113
as his isolation increases and the international condemnation mounts, his self-obsession deepens into paranoia.”

What I am suggesting is that in translating anxiety into fear it is our sense of identity and connectedness to the world that fails. Speaking about white nationalism in South Africa Anthony Holiday says that "the national consciousness of the white colonialists exhibits a profound, even pathological, spacio-temporal disorientation. In plain language, this nationalism prevents those in its ideological grip from understanding where they are and when they are living. Consequently, there is also a sense in which it prevents them from knowing who they are.”

Another way of looking at this logic of displacement is in terms of the colonialisit idea of the "darkness of Africa." Africa has always been seen by the West as a "dark continent" -- as though darkness is a property of Africa. The more darkness could be seen as a property of Africa, the more Africa could be included within the binary oppositions constitutive of a European discourse -- that is, the colonialist is enlightened while the African is dark. And the more Africa could be seen in this way, the less the colonialist would need to question the terms in which it viewed Africa. On the contrary, the onus would be on the African to embrace the vision of "enlightenment" and "civilisation" offered by the white colonialist. The colonialist would not have to confront the limits of its own perspective but could, with justification, project its own confusion on to the African.

This would be functional if the darkness -- and the uncertainty which goes with the darkness -- were to be overcome but as the consequence of the insular nature of apartheid in South Africa indicates, whites still have not developed a sense of themselves as Africans. They (we) are still, in general, enveloped by darkness, by what de Villiers calls an "ideological vacuum," an "emptiness at the core" and a "Great Unknown." In general whites do not speak an African language, do not have a sense of African "know how" including forms of respect and authority and do not have an appreciation for the cultures and tradition which inform African experience.

Just as ambiguity and strangeness is not a property of the other, so darkness is not a characteristic or property of Africa or Africans but exists in the relationship of the stranger to Africa. It is not that Africa has vast planes, mountains, desserts and darkness. Darkness characterises the relationship of unfamiliarity between people and these characteristics. It is a characteristic of he or she who is unable to read Africa; one who does not have the "know how" of Africa.

III
Is there a less self destructive and more educative way of dealing with the anxiety of the stranger? Most theorists on anxiety agree that anxiety is the occasion for a turning away,

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bracketing or withdrawal from the everyday world to an examination of the self or the taken for granted terms which guide the self in its dealings in the everyday world. In fact Koestenbaum goes so far as to say that "Anxiety is ... the act of reflection itself. Anxiety is the act of looking at the empirical realm -- the body, the emotions, society and the world -- without being the empirical realm or being in that realm. ... Anxiety is thus the experience of bracketing."\(^\text{25}\)

As the above paragraph suggests anxiety theory implies a distinction between being involved in the world and an appreciation of ones involvements and ways of being involved in the world\(^\text{26}\) or being in the empirical realm and viewing the empirical realm. It is grounded in the belief that for the most part we are involved, absorbed or preoccupied with things in the world and not with ourselves as being involved in the world. Indeed, in order, for example, to get on with the demands of making a living and feeding a family, we need not to be preoccupied with ourselves but with the particular tasks that we perform. Instead of being preoccupied with thinking about our preoccupations, we need to be involved in fulfilling our tasks. The type of abstraction demanded by being preoccupied with our preoccupations would get in the way of the attunement demanded by our work. In order to complete our work we need to be existentially there.

The function played by anxiety is that it existentially detaches and alienates us from our everyday world such that we come to be concerned with ourselves, our preoccupations and our involvements in the everyday world. Instead of being absorbed in the world, we are attentive to our ways of being absorbed in the world. Anxiety wrenches us free of our involvements in the world not as an end in itself but as the basis upon which to catch sight of the involvements themselves.

Anxiety manifests itself in terms of a withdrawal from the everyday world but this withdrawal is not itself a sheer absence or nothingness. To be in the mode of attunement of withdrawal is not to be absent from being but in a particular state or attunement of being. For Heidegger withdrawnness is a mode of involvement. As he puts it: "Once we are drawn into the withdrawal, we are drawing toward what draws, attracts us by its withdrawal. And once we, being so attracted, are drawing toward what draws us, our essential nature already bears the stamp of `drawing toward.' As we are drawing toward what withdraws, we ourselves are pointers pointing toward it."\(^\text{27}\)

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\(^{26}\) As is well known, theories of anxiety are not homogenous. There are many different theories of anxiety. In what follows I shall be describing the relationship between different views of anxiety in Heideggerian terms. The notion of involvement used here is drawn from *Being and Time*. The commonality between different views of anxiety is that they all describe a similar form of involvement but in different terms. This is the involvement of withdrawnness. For Heidegger withdrawnness is not simply an absence but a form of involvement.

In the withdrawal of anxiety we come to see ourselves, our involvements in and our own being-in-the-world. This point is most powerfully made by Heidegger who maintains that in anxiety the human being comes “face to face with itself as Being-in-the-world.”

More and more theorists of anxiety are tending to argue that this experience is not only an abnormal or neurotic experience but involves the possibility of a healthy concern for the self, for it can prevent the self from taking its relationship to or way of being-in-the-world for granted. Instead of simply acting in terms of taken for granted values, aspirations and goals, it can, through this withdrawal, come to think about, correct and change the values which shape it. A famous example of this occurred in the case of Leo Tolstoy who in his autobiography My Confession writes of having acted in terms of taken for granted standards of pleasure and happiness. An experience of anxiety deprived him of the meaning of his pursuits of pleasure in such a way that he came to question the assumptions underlying his pursuit of pleasure.

Most theorists agree that the process of withdrawal experienced in anxiety is not just an absence but that it is the occasion and opportunity for an important process of existential reflection and learning. The process of withdrawal is described in different terms by different theorists: by psychoanalysts it involves a withdrawal into subjectivity and the dynamics of the unconsciousness, by psychotherapists, in general, it involves a withdrawal into the self, by phenomenologists withdrawal is called bracketing and involves the accessing of empirical and transcendental determinations of the self, by hermeneutic phenomenologists it is called deconstruction or simply destruction and involves the sighting of being-in-the-world and "average everyday" modes of being-in-the-world.

For each theoretical view the withdrawal is not an end in itself but becomes the occasion of the possibility of a re-evaluation of taken for granted patterns of involvement in the world. What unites the different views of withdrawnness is that they can all be characterised as forms of “reflexive thinking,” that are a thinking that is attuned to its own way of thinking. For in such anxiety we are not thinking about what is outside of or at a distance from us but of the terms in which we think and relate to what is outside or separate from us. We are thinking about the relationship between our thinking and the world in which we live.

How does this understanding of anxiety relate to the issue of the anxiety of the stranger? It is in the face of the stranger that we are wrenched free of our taken for granted patterns of "know how" in such a way that instead of simply living in terms of them, they become explicit issues in themselves. The stranger is an occasion for an existential withdrawal from

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30 For the sake of this essay I will assume that culture, tradition and average everyday being-in-the-world have the same referent. This identification is confirmed in some of the works of Hubert Dreyfus. See, for example: Being-in-theWorld Massachusetts: The MIT press, 1993
complacent involvement in the everyday world to a sighting of our forms of involvement in the everyday world. In the meeting of the stranger "Our unconscious customs and habits have been shown to us in a distorted mirror of sorts. We have been forced to look at them, ... to stand at a critical distance from our own lives."\(^{31}\)

Here we see how it is in the face of the stranger that our attunement has withdrawn from an attunement to things to an attunement to our ways of being attuned to things, that is we are now involved in our ways of being involved in things. Dreyfus provides an example of how in the experience of the stranger our own "know how" becomes explicit to us: "People in various cultures stand different distances from an intimate, a friend, a stranger. Furthermore, the distances vary when these people are chatting, doing business, or engaging in courtship. Each culture, including our own, embodies an incredible subtle shared pattern of social distancing. Yet no one explicitly taught this pattern to each of us. Our parents could not possibly have consciously instructed us in it since they do not know the pattern any more than we do. We do not even know we have such know-how until we go to another culture and find, for example, that in North Africa strangers seem to be oppressively close while in Scandinavia friends seem to stand too far away. This makes us uneasy, and we cannot help backing away or moving closer."\(^{32}\)

In the experience of the ways of the stranger, the issue of our own "know how" becomes explicit through the ways in which we are "paralysed" or feel uneasy in situation. It is in the face of the stranger that we see that we have a way of doing things and what that way is. I want to now formulate the above in explicitly Heideggerian language. What Dreyfus is calling "know-how" and what I have called ways of doing things can be called, in Heideggerian terms, "average everyday" involvements in the world. "Average everydayness" in Heideggerian terms refers to the unexplicit patterns of "know-how" that make everyday activity possible. Average everydayness is not universal but is always context bound. It is the "shared everyday skills, concerns and practices into which we are socialised" and it provides the "conditions necessary for people to make sense of the world and of their lives."\(^{33}\) It is the taken for granted models which guide our activities and experiences.

From an Heideggerian perspective, it can be argued that the withdrawal experienced in the encounter with the stranger is the occasion for the possibility of the sighting and evaluation of average everydayness. The withdrawal experienced in the face of the stranger is the occasion upon which the taken for granted "average everydayness" or "culture" becomes an explicit theme of concern. It is the condition in terms of which I come to think about the "cultural know how" which has guided my life but which I have not made an explicit theme of concern. Furthermore, in the face of the withdrawal I am called upon to take up an attitude to a culture or "average everyday" understanding of the world. It is only through

\(^{31}\) Bauman Z. Thinking Sociologically op cit., p60


\(^{33}\) Dreyfus H. Ibid.,293-4
catching sight of the ways in which I am absorbed in the world that I can either unconditionally affirm or question average everydayness; love or hate a culture for while I am involved in fulfilling everyday demands I do see the culture (average everydayness) of which I am a part. Indeed it is only as I am existentially detached from a culture that I can speak about "my" or, as the nationalist would have it "our culture" or "your culture."

Historically nationalism and fundamentalism are terms used to characterise an attitude of unconditional love for one's way of life. Here there is an attunement of positive regard for one's ways of being absorbed in the everyday world. There is a "love" of "one's own" average everydayness. In contrast to the nationalist stands, what Lyotard calls the non Jewish Jew, the non German German who stands in attunement of questioning to his attunement to the world: "In opposition to the return to this promised Germania: Freud, Benjamin, Adorno, Arendt, and Celan -- these great non-German Germans, non-Jewish Jews -- who not only question but betray the tradition, the mimesis, ... "

I shall call the latter form of response a deconstructive response, for it deconstructs the tradition of which it is a apart. Both nationalist and deconstruction are responses to the rupture of the experience of strangeness. From the Heideggerian perspective the nationalist who loves his own has experienced the rupture of strangeness, for to love one's own is possible only by standing at an existential distance from the own: Similarly it is in being existentially outside my own that the non Jewish Jew comes to see the tradition such that it can be questioned. They both occur in the state of existential withdrawal from the everyday and are contrasting ways of being attuned to the everyday: the one by holding on, the other by letting go.

IV
The question which I shall address in this section concerns the relationship between the nationalist and deconstructive response to the anxiety of the stranger: how does it come about that we engage in one rather than the other type of response or do we move between the two?

In Heideggerian terms the difference between the two responses maybe expressed in terms of the notion of "resoluteness." Resoluteness is the ability to affirm rather than resist the paralysis and powerlessness experienced in the face of anxiety. As Dreyfus puts it resoluteness "is the experience of transformation that comes from Dasein's accepting its powerlessness." Instead of struggling to find an identity, instead of holding onto meanings that have been lost, resoluteness manifests itself in the form of the non-Jewish Jew who lets go of searching for these things. Its archetype is the figure of Socrates who, according to Heidegger "All through his life and right into his death, Socrates did nothing else than place

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34 Lyotard J-F. Heidegger and "the jews" Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990, pp92-93

himself into this draft, this current, and maintain himself in it. This is why he is the purest thinker of the West. This is why he wrote nothing."\(^{36}\)

Victor Frankl developed the notion of "paradoxical intention" which outlines the process involved in being resolute. From the Frankelian perspective there is a certain group of phenomenon that are treated as though they were objects of will but are not in fact the object of will. He uses, amongst others, embarrassment and sleeplessness as examples. When experiencing embarrassment we may attempt to will ourselves to stop blushing or stop feeling embarrassed. Yet as Frankl notes, the more we attempt to do this, the more we feel embarrassed. The more we will its disappearance, the greater is its return. Similarly, in the experience of insomnia, the more we will ourselves to sleep, the more we frustrate our ability to sleep. From the Frankelian perspective it is only by accepting our embarrassment or our inability to sleep that we can overcome the frustration caused by willing their disappearance. The paradox is that the moment we accept the inability to will the overcoming of embarrassment or insomnia is the moment we free ourselves to examine ourselves in the light of these experiences. Instead of wrestling with them, their acceptance becomes the eros or motive for a self-education.\(^{37}\)

In the context of the experience of the anxiety of strangeness resoluteness is the ability to affirm rather than resist the uncertainty that is experienced in the encounter with the stranger. Instead of willing the overcoming of the uncertainty. Resoluteness expresses itself as an acceptance of the vulnerability of feeling insecure and uncertain. From the Frankelian perspective it is by accepting the inability of will to overcome the uncertainty of strangeness that we can begin to work with the uncertainty in productive ways. In fact as Deleuze and Guattari have noted this is the point of departure for philosophy: "Becoming stranger to oneself, to one's language and nation, is not this the peculiarity of the philosopher and philosophy...?"\(^{38}\)

Socrates is the archetype of the figure who affirms the questioning of self in the face of the perplexity of strangeness. In fact the perplexity experienced in the inability of binary opposites to cope with the stranger is the point of departure for Socratic thinking. Unlike, Meno who, in The Meno, resisted the paralysis of perplexity, Socrates harnessed this perplexity as the basis of his questioning. Instead of taking the terms in which he viewed the world for granted, the resolute acceptance of the experience of perplexity allowed him to examine the terms in which he viewed the world. In Heideggerian terms, the power of Socrates was the ability to accept his powerlessness or paralysis in the face of perplexity.

This suggests that the resolute acceptance of the uncertainty and feeling of being threatened in the face of the stranger can serve as the catalyst for self-knowledge. In this sense the encounter with the stranger is not only frightening but exciting and educating. This point is

\(^{36}\) Heidegger M. What Is Called Thinking op cit., p17


made by Richard Rorty: "For edifying discourse is supposed to be abnormal, to take us out of ourselves by the power of the strangeness, to aid us in becoming new beings." From this Rortian position hermeneutic education begins where we are excited by rather than frightened of the unfamiliarity of the strangeness experienced in the face of the otherness of the other or unfamiliar situations.

In Platonic terms the acceptance of the experience of the strangeness of the other is an invitation to see and leave the darkness of the cave which, prior to the experience of strangeness, has guided us without even knowing that we have been guided by it. The stranger thus allows me not only to see myself in an unfamiliar way but also allows me to situate myself in a broader context. The rupture of the lived familiar by the stranger allows me to see the familiar itself. It prevents me from confusing the familiar with the natural, and therefore opens up a gap between the familiar and the natural, the historically conditioned and the ontological, particular and universal.

Nationalism in refusing the anxiety of the stranger is preventing itself from developing an appreciation of that which it holds so dear to itself, that is, its own culture or average everydayness. For from a Platonic and Socratic perspective it is only as we "destroy" or deconstruct our own that we come to an appreciation of it. In Socratic terms it is not by holding onto our assumptions that we come to know ourselves but it is as we let go of our image of ourselves that we come to know ourselves.

The very means by which the nationalist believes himself to be protecting his identity is in fact the condition of the estrangement of himself. For we cannot know ourselves by defending or holding onto our image of ourselves. We must let go of this image. Often we will see things about ourselves that we do not want to see. Indeed Socrates saw in himself the possibility of being a criminal. But it was because he could see this possibility in himself that he could safeguard himself against being a criminal. Because he could acknowledge this possibility in himself could he work towards its overcoming. His acknowledgement and recognition of his desires allowed him to work through them. He did not take his image of himself for granted.

This is not the case with modern forms of nationalism, which tend to cling dogmatically to a virtuous image of themselves. It is always the other that is bad: the Jew, the black, the white, the Palestinian. Zizek has made this point in terms of the Jew and capitalism: "Is capitalism's hatred of the Jew not the hatred of its own innermost, essential feature? ... The hatred of the Other is the hatred of our own excess of enjoyment." Blinded by their image of themselves they perpetrate many hostilities and discover this only when it is too late.

In conclusion of this section it can be said that the resolute acceptance of strangeness allows us to inquire into our taken for granted "average everydayness" while refusal of the

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40 Zizek S "Eastern Europe's Republics Of Gilead." p57
strangeness gives rise to a displacement of feelings of being threatened onto an other and to a taken for granted appreciation of self.

Today we need to be careful not to turn strangers into enemies. In this paper I hope to have shown that the way we respond to strangers and the way we respond to enemies differ. In the face of an enemy we may follow a policy of fight or flight but in the experience of the stranger and the strangeness of being, it is an existential education that is needed, an education which allows for embracing strangeness. We need an education for embracing and seeking out the edifying possibilities in strangeness.