

## FOREWORD: THE RICH TAPESTRY OF IDENTITY

Identity – and difference. These lie at the ground of philosophy, but not as a binary pair simply opposed to one another. Identity and difference certainly are each other's determinate negation, but they play a deeper, much more implicated role *within* each other. For, identity contains its own difference, and difference contains its own identity. Simply put: Since we understand a discrete term like difference, it has its own identity. And since everything has its own identity, each identity has its own difference. This well-known metaphysical interplay becomes concretised in ethics, wherein my identity, and thus difference, gains its meaning only in your identity, and thus difference; for, only in the community does the interplay of identity and difference have any *normative* import. Hence, as great a role as these two may play in metaphysics, their standing in ethics is perhaps even more meaningful, since the *ethos* is that meeting ground of the same and the different – of I and thou in Levinas's stark terms – where both need to be not only preserved but also cultivated.

Each of our authors below addresses some aspect of this rich tapestry, and each does so from a particular postmodern vantage point explicitly embracing the lack of a univocal either / or, this lack of pure identity or pure difference. Whether entertaining notions of the biological identity posited by DNA testing, Nietzschean cosmopolitanism as the competitive appropriation of difference, the cultural identity presumed in a Habermasian project of Europe, or the 'fiction' of sovereign identity, this issue contributes to this age-old problem which has dogged us since the debate between Parmenides and Heraclitus.

Great strides have been made in attempts to secure our states. After 9/11 – but even previous to it – great technological advances have encouraged the expansion of criminological and anti-terror procedures. Leaving aside the issue of whether technology can bring security, Van Camp and Dierickx instead address a very specific issue: the use and storage of DNS samples in criminological databases. Perhaps playing heavily

to the public's scientific knowledge gained from criminological successes on such television programmes as *Law and Order* and *24*, proponents of DNA testing hold that databases of DNA are important tools in the crime-fighting arsenal. Van Camp and Dierickx do not dispute this, but approach the ethics of such databases with scepticism. Looking at such issues as database inclusion and retention policies, they argue that the massive post-9/11 expansion of such databases in our risk-society threatens the genetic privacy that is at the heart of biological identity – and not only of those on the database, but also – in certain cases – of their relatives. At stake is not simply the solving of crimes and prevention of terrorism, but rather the sacrifice of the most intimate biological privacy for belief in the notion of (state) security. The progression of this dialectic – and its acceptability in an open society – is far from self evident.

Martine Prange contributes her thoughts on Nietzsche's concept of cosmopolitanism as the 'good European.' A noted naysayer concerning nationalism, Prange's Nietzsche advocates travel and alterity as a way of appropriating one's own identity. Of particular interest in Prange's exploration is her insistence on an oft-ignored aspect of Nietzsche's ethics: the imperative to make oneself bearable for others, which thus introduces a moment of alterity usually ignored in Nietzsche's *Herrenmoral*. Yet, the core of this morality – the striving and competition that marks the master – is retained. Contrary to Kant's cosmopolitanism, which would lead – so thought Nietzsche – to an homogenized slave morality seeking nothing higher than peace, the good European would learn how to embrace the will in a project of appropriative self-creation. Competition and the like are essential for Nietzschean self-growth; for, the master seeks to master the masters: that is, the master seeks to form his identity by appropriating difference, and to live this difference superiorly. Competition and other lustful aspects of life are thus necessary in this project of Nietzschean self-creation, and to smooth them over in the name of Kantian perpetual peace would be to condemn the good European to an unchanging, universal identity. A slave, in other words.

After working along with Nietzsche to investigate the creation of a de-Germanized *self* identity along European lines, we are now confronted with Jürgen Habermas's project of creating a *European* self identity. Vivienne Boon investigates Habermas's recent political writings, all of which explicitly bear the mark 9/11 has impressed upon them. According to Boon, Habermas has basically proposed two models of European identity: a thin model, and a thick model. The thin model is essentially constitution patriotism, in which a constitutional framework of justice provides the background upon which diverse opinions and identities can be tolerated and otherness can be respected. The thick model, however, introduces positive content, and is formed from the German post-war experience: the thick model essentially enshrines a statist view of Europe to overcome Europe's painful experiences with nations throughout the twentieth century. The problem for Boon is, however, that many central and eastern European states are adopting a more national tone in their self-identity, which would seem to exclude them from Habermas's inclusivist vision. And moreover: at what point does the drive to create a European 'state' step over into enshrining these values as those of a European 'nation,' in all but name, especially if they indeed stem from the context of one nation, Germany? Against Nietzsche's de-Germanization, Habermas ironically enough seems to be moving towards a re-Germanization, albeit a completely different Germany than the one Nietzsche knew, and loathed.

Adam Rosen closes off our number with a very postmodern approach to the concept of sovereignty. His playful language and exploratory syntax provide the perfect setting for what is in fact an irreducibly complex concept. For, we speak self-evidently of sovereignty and take it for granted, but when we seek to find its limits here in the twenty-first century, and hence its true identity, we are met with a nebula of competing jurisdictions and concepts. Sovereign states compete with international bodies, NGOs, ethnic nations, diasporas, free-trade areas, and any number of international actors. Rosen thus characterizes our contemporary cartography as beset with an indefinite multiplicity of borders, which

themselves recombine maddeningly. How to arrive then at a simple notion of state identity, and hence sovereignty? For Rosen, only one method is excluded: the sovereign-state-centric concept. Identity is ultimately formed only in working out our responsibility for the other within this overwhelming cartography, because, in excluding this, the state-centric model truncates the ground of contemporary identity formation.

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