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From Dia-logos to Dia-pathos?

Politics, Emotions, and Interreligious Dialogue

Introduction

So the value that the particular religious emotion-types have for adherents of any particular religious tradition is very great. They are a *sine qua non* for genuine adherence to the tradition, and the degree to which they are actual in the life of any adherent is an index of the depth with which that adherent represents his or her tradition and is a successful human specimen by its lights (Roberts 2011).

The significance of human emotion in politics as well as in religion is rightfully gaining renewed interest in various fields of research (see, e.g., Coakley 2012; Jones 2008; Moïsi 2009; Nussbaum 2013; Riis and Woodhead 2012; Weston 2008). In this article I will argue that the field of interreligious studies and the practice of engaging in such dialogue should benefit from a more thorough and explicit focus on emotion (cf. (Cornille 2008; Leirvik 2014). It should take into more critical and systematic consideration the ways in which emotion informs, shapes, and transforms religious faith and practice and the potential ways it influences the impact of religious belonging in politics. One important aim of interreligious dialogue is to strengthen community and understanding across differences, thus preventing, tempering, or resolving conflicts (Appleby 2000; Kim *et al*. 2008). To better understand the inner dynamics of human conflict and foster the motivational drive to extend the hand of friendship to nations, groups, or peoples perceived at times to be opponents or even enemies, the emotional dimension must be taken more explicitly into account.

What do we understand by 'emotion' in this particular context? Recent studies indicate that the late nineteenth-century invention of 'emotion,' seen as a secular psychological category, "swallowed up and encompassed all the earlier and subtler distinctions between passion, affect, feeling and sentiment which for the most part had originally had a religious focus" (Coakley 2012: 7).[1] However important these terminological distinctions may be historically, I will use these words interchangeably, given the multidimensional and complex character of the topic. In line with Ole Riis and Linda Woodhead in their *A Sociology of Religious Emotion* (Riis and Woodhead 2012), I adopt a relational understanding. Emotion should be seen not as a 'thing' "but [as] an embodied stance

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[1] In the introduction to her edited volume, referring in particular to Thomas Dixons' contribution "Revolting Passions" (pp.181-95) in the same volume.

within the world," that "relate(s) the self to society, to cultural symbols, and to the self itself—or some combination of these" (Riis and Woodhead 2012: 208).

There is good reason to see a particularly strong interconnection between this emotional level and the deeper existential and value-based life orientation that comes to expression as a religious belonging or life stance. Religion is politically potent not least because of this strong emotional component. Interreligious dialogue focusing on doctrinal content or the practices of differing religions should therefore be expanded to what I tentatively call a 'dia-pathos.' This could designate a systematic interreligious encounter in which the differing religious communities seek to explore and interpret the interconnection between faith and feeling, affection, and emotions in one's own religion as well as that of the other with the purpose of mutual understanding and growth. "Pathos" could here be taken in its twofold sense of referring to emotion in general and to suffering in particular. To avoid remembrance of one's own suffering being used as a shield against an acknowledgement or solidarity with the other, I propose focusing particularly on the shared, constitutive vulnerability of humans in interreligious dialogue. I will begin, however, with an analysis of the renewed interest in the role of emotion in politics.

Politics and Emotion

Since the end of the cold war (1989), religion has returned to politics with an increasing and yet contradictory force.[2] It is not, however, just religion that is undergoing a renaissance in political science and practice. If the political relevance of religion was suppressed or overlooked for a long time, so too was — strangely enough—the role of the emotions and affections. This negligence or active suppression of the role of feelings in politics is all the more surprising given its obvious and overwhelming presence in any electoral campaign or presidential speech, regardless of political system or cultural or geographical context. This neglect of the relevance of religion as well as emotions in politics may be seen as an indication of the particular interrelation between the two, as well as of a certain prejudice towards both in the realm of the Enlightenment preference for "rationality."[3] The systematic exclusion of both religion and e-motion has been an obvious weakness for political theory and practice. Hence,

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[2] See, e.g., Berger 1999; Beyer 1994; Johnston 2003; Johnston and Sampson 1994; Stålsett 2006, 2008; Stålsett and Leirvik, 2004.

[3] Note, however, Sarah Coakley's caution that "the assessment of the Enlightenment heritage … needs much more careful discernment, and perhaps especially in relation to its accounts of affectivity, will and feeling in the philosophers concerned" (Coakley 2012: 2).

the renewed attention to the role of the affective dimension in politics should be welcomed.

One who has put this firmly on the contemporary agenda is the French political scientist, Dominique Moïsi (Moïsi 2009).[4] Moïsi takes his cue from Samuel P. Huntington and his (in-)famous thesis of the 'clash of civilizations' (Huntington, 1997) when proposing a "geopolitics of emotion." What Moïsi examines however, is not clashes of civilizations but "clashes of emotions" on a global level. Like Huntington, he divides the world into distinct blocs—basically "the West" (Europe and the U.S.), "Asia," and the "Arab Islamic world." Moïsi then gives analytical prevalence to three principal emotions: fear, humiliation, and hope. In his proposal then, these emotions correspond to the three regions mentioned.

The West has become caught in a culture of fear, according to Moïsi: fear of the 'others': immigrants, the poor, Muslims, etc. It is also on the way to being paralyzed by fear of global threats such as terrorism or ecological disaster. In the 'Arab-Islamic world' the constitutive emotional mood is one of political and cultural humiliation, characterized by a feeling of impotence, powerlessness, and despair, which in turn give rise to radicalism. In "Asia," in contrast, i.e. principally in China and India, Moïsi finds a culture of hope, of self-confidence, and optimism.[5]

Historians will likely agree that emotion has always played an important role in politics, and yet the contemporary epoch of globalization leads to an increase in the political importance of affect, Moïsi argues. The "asymmetrical multipolarity" (2009: 10) and new configurations of the relationship between self and other in our time leads to the proliferation of uncertainty and concern with identity (2009:20). The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 can be read as an attempt to reduce the influence of emotion (and religion—again interconnected) in politics. It has led rather to the cover-up of realities that are crucial to any political analysis and strategy today. Since emotions clearly influence our in-terpretations, preferences, and actions, they must be taken seriously in the po-litical field, also at a global, geopolitical level. This does not lead to fatalism or mere subjectivism, however, since moods and affects are subject to change.

Moïsi's book suffers from grave oversimplifications and sweeping generaliz-ations. This must be said of his analysis of political developments as well as

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[4] Moïsi is co-founder and senior adviser of the French Institute of International Relations.

[5] These principal moods or emotions all relate to confidence, Moïsi remarks. Fear means absence of confidence; hope is an expression of strong confidence; and humili-ation originates from or results in a wounded confidence.

of the way he presents and makes use of different emotions as hermeneutical tools. The categories of "the West," "Arab-Islamic," and "Asia" are non-historical constructs that conceal too many internal contradictions to be useful. Although Moïsi addresses some of these exceptions and "hard cases" like Russia, Israel, and Japan, he does not see, or bother to see, that these and several other inconsistencies that he does not address actually go a long way in undermining his thesis completely. Likewise, Moïsi provides no rigorous analysis of the character and significance of 'emotion' in general nor 'hope,' 'humiliation,' or 'fear' in particular. Nor do we get to know who, which people in these different regions, Moïsi actually has in mind: Is he referring to political leaders, to citizens, or perhaps to "public opinion"?

And yet, the book *is* significant. Its basic message, i.e., that emotions should be given more attention in the analysis of (geo)politics, is pertinent—however obvious it may seem. What makes Moïsi's contribution particularly valuable is that he is able to bring this insight to a worldwide and influential audience.[6] Thus, it paves the way of a return of emotions to geopolitics.

But the analytic relevance of such a return clearly demands that its theoretical and empirical foundations be further—and more critically—developed. Such an alternative, more critical, and contextual proposal for an "emotional geopolitics" is put forward by Rachel Pain (Pain, 2009),[7] who addresses in particular the burgeoning literature on the "culture of fear" seen by many as a globalized phenomenon following the terrorist attacks in the U.S. in 2001 and its subsequent war on terror. She criticizes these analyses of "globalized fear"—"the powerful metanarrative that is currently popular in analyses of the relation of fear, terror and security" (2009: 468)—for their lack of concreteness, context, and focus on agency. Whose fear are we actually talking about, she asks, and what do the supposedly fearful think about or do with their fear?

One main problem with the prevailing discourses on the spread of a global culture of fear, according to Pain, is that they are overly hierarchical and disembodied. The experiences and agency of ordinary people, living in local places, are left out of the picture. Women and young people as well as dispossessed and marginalized people are systematically made invisible and insignificant. And yet it is particularly important, as Pain sees it, to explore the effect of *their* affects

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[6] Again like Huntington, the often rhetorically powerful and provocative way in which Moïsi poses his questions and presents his analysis, together with the perspective from which he speaks and the channels of communications to which he has access, makes him contribute to setting a new agenda. His analysis has made its way to editorials, televised talk shows, political speeches as well as prestigious academic settings.

[7] Rachel Pain is Professor of Geography at Durham University, England.

in order to reach a better understanding of political development and emotion: "The poor are routinely written out of fear. Yet it is the quietest fears, with little political capital but more immediate materiality, which have the sharpest impacts" (2009: 473).

Against this background, Pain outlines an "emotional geopolitics of fear" with three basic suggestions. First, the basic point is that we should "rework our understanding of geopolitics to take greater account of emotions" and "seek to understand and incorporate emotions in nuanced and grounded ways" (2009: 474). That means taking seriously the ways in which emotions are "embodied sensations with material implications" that are situated, contextual, dynamic, and "continuously challenged, resisted and reshaped" (2009: 475).

Second, feminist epistemological critique of binaries such as global/local should lead to an exploration of how emotions are experienced as being *both* global and local. There is clearly a need to embody and locate geopolitical analysis, not least in order to move beyond dominant Western discourses (2009: 476). In the case of globalized fear, for example, the underlying narrative is often about "us" fearing "them," where this distinction implicitly or explicitly corresponds to real or perceived ethnic, cultural, economic, or religious boundaries. Feminist and postcolonial perspectives need to inform our emotional geopolitics, in other words.

Third, we should focus on agency. Emotion is not simply an external power that the human person is passively subject to; emotion also includes degrees and varieties of response, agency. and choice. In what (differing) ways do different people in different situations react emotionally? How do they relate to their own feelings? What information do they obtain from their affects and what do they do about it?

As we have seen, Pain is particularly interested in the agency of marginalized people. Hence, she suggests that Paulo Freire's concept "conscientization" (*conscientização*) is still helpful (Freire 1972). This idea, originally rooted in Latin American thought in the late 1960s, goes beyond 'consciousness-raising', which would presuppose the transfer of knowledge from an 'expert' to an 'unlearned' person, to an actual co-production of knowledge. This approach is useful in Pain's view, enabling criticism of inherited patterns of thought that easily lead to political fatalism and passivity. Thus, it can empower people's resistance to emotional manipulation for political purposes, and stimulate "mobilizing emotions for action and social change" (2009: 481).

Pain's approach represents a decisive step forward compared to Moïsi's. Nonetheless, hers is admittedly also mainly a framework and proposal for further research. The study of the meaning and function of emotion in politics is still, arguably, in an initial phase in spite of its obvious historical and contemporary

relevance.[8] The critical potential of the "affect effect" (cf. Neuman 2007) in contemporary politics has also recently been explored by the American political philosopher Judith Butler (Butler 2006, 2010). In the context of war and violent conflict, Butler is advocating a "new bodily ontology" based on a rethinking of "precariousness, vulnerability, interdependency, exposure, bodily persistence, desire ..." (Butler 2010: 2). She holds that the body is a social phenomenon, vulnerable by definition (2010: 33).[9] This vulnerability or injurability is not just a passive receptivity, as if the body is a mere surface on which social meanings can be inscribed. Rather, it constitutes a responsiveness—which ultimately turns into responsibility—in the human person. This responsiveness may include a wide range of affects such as pleasure, rage, suffering, or hope. Such affects, Butler argues, "become not just the basis, but the very stuff of ideation and critique. In this way, a certain interpretive act implicitly takes hold at moments of primary affective responsiveness" (2010: 34).

It is no wonder then that people in power not seldom seek to limit or manipulate such affects that may lead to social and political critique. The critical question Butler raises is how affect is (sought to be) regulated in society. In particular, she focuses on grief and mourning as a case in point: "Grievability is a presupposition for the life that matters" (Butler 2010: 14). In contexts of violent conflict there is, as she sees it, a conscious regulation of grief, "a differential distribution of grievability across populations" (2010: 24), which shows itself when we "we mourn for some lives but respond with coldness to the loss of others" (2010: 36).

Ungrievable lives are those that cannot be lost, and cannot be destroyed, because they already inhabit a lost and destroyed zone; they are, ontologically, and from the start, already lost and destroyed, which means that when they are destroyed in war, nothing is destroyed. (2010: xix)

Thus, the origin, character, distribution, and context of a determined affect—grief—shows itself to have wide-ranging ethical and political implications. The

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[8] The wide array of theories, topics, and possibilities for the application of such research can be appreciated in *The Affect Effect: Dynamics of Emotion and Political Thinking and Behaviour,* a collection of essays by 30 prominent researchers in the field of political science (Neuman 2007). The authors "have come to conclude that there is indeed an *affect effect*, actually, numerous, diverse, and significant effects" (2007:1). But the complexities involved in obtaining a more coherent understanding is underlined by the existence of no less than 23 independently cited theories of affect effects that the researchers seek to reduce to 6 or 7 key concepts and models seeking to explain the interaction of "political passion and cognition" (2007: 9).

[9] In a similar vein, I have focused on the significance of vulnerability in ethics, politics, and theology in, among others Stålsett 2003b, 2007). See also Stålsett *et al*. 2002, and Rolfsen 2004.

sensibility, vulnerability, or precariousness of human bodies becomes a criterion for critique and judgement. But, at the same time, this very human condition is a platform for building a new community. In times of war, the senses are a primary target, which means that "only the senses can save us now" (Butler 2010: xvi). Vulnerability as an anthropological constituent shows itself in multiple, asymmetrical but yet inescapable webs of interdependency. In some sense, our lives are always in the hands of others (2010: 14), Butler reminds us, echoing the famous words of the Danish theologian K.E. Løgstrup (see Løgstrup 1997). At a minimum, this implies that our survival "depends on recognizing how we are bound up with others" (2010: 52).

Butler's interlinking of survivability, vulnerability, and affect in political philosophy implicitly addresses many of the issues on Pain's agenda for an "emotional geopolitics." And yet, religion does not play any noteworthy role in either of the works on the political significance of emotion that we have consulted so far. To this issue, i.e., religion, we must now turn.

Religion and Emotion

Religion involves human emotions at a deep level. One can think here of Rudolf Otto's (1869-1937) classic definition from *The Idea of the Holy* (1917) of the sacred or God as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, or of Friedrich Schleiermacher's (1768-1834) rendering of religious faith as "the feeling of absolute dependence" in *The Christian Faith* (1821-22). Another example is the seminal work of William James on *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) by many considered to be the founding work of psychology of religion. Any adequate approach to religion will have to take feelings such as awe, fear, joy, love, shame, pride, devotion, and trust seriously into account.

And yet, the "affect effect" was for a long time quite marginalized or toned down in the fields of religion, theology, and religious studies. One revealing example of this could be the relative theological disregard of the Pentecostal branch of Christianity since its beginnings in first decade of the 20th century up until quite recently. In spite of the extraordinary growth of this movement, which is now being largely studied from a sociological and political science point of view, Pentecostalism and other largely experiential spiritualities were long given little or mainly negative attention from the leading theological voices and milieus. The Pentecostal emphasis on emotion, even ecstasy, is no doubt one important explanation for this conscious denigration. It was often, overtly or subtly, linked to sexist or racist biases, as the binary rational/emotional so often is made to correlate with white/black and male/female. Emotional Pentecostalism was seen as a "religion for women and blacks" and hence regarded as uninteresting or even outright inferior.[10]

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[10] For a self-critical reading of this history, see e.g., (Cox 1994).

This has changed. There has been a renewed focus on the presence and significance of experience and affect in religion (see, among others Davies 2011; Paloutzian and Park 2005; Watts, 1996). Some of this has a positive angle: Pentecostal theology—as well as religious and sociological studies on the causes and consequences of its growth—is a burgeoning field.[11] On the opposite side of the spectrum of spiritualties and yet with an equal emphasis on personal experience and emotion, there has likewise been a renewed interest in mysticism in all religious traditions lately.[12]

But even so, the most prevalent cause for the awakened interest in the relation between religion and emotion is a negative one. It has to do with the perceived rise in religious terrorism since the end of the Cold War. James W. Jones, who combines clinical psychology and philosophy of religion (Jones 2002, 2008) in his work in this field, asks how it is possible for religion to be a source of both great evil and great good, of unspeakable atrocities against humanity as well as what he sees as some of humanity's most sublime teachings and experiences. Jones suggests that religion should be understood in relation to the psychological dynamic of idealization: "to be religious is, among other things, to idealize something or someone" (2002: 5). Such idealization, obviously, fully engages the emotional apparatus of human beings. Idealization is deeply relational and can be seen as analogous with romantic love.

In denoting something as sacred, the crucial thing is not the object, but our relationship to it. And a crucial part of that sacralising relationship is the idealization of the object.… (E)xperiencing something as sacred is in continuity with other idealizing experiences, like romantic love or the ecstasy evoked by artistic perfection. (Jones 2002: 61)

The ambiguity of religion is implicit in the ambiguous character of idealization, Jones holds. Religious idealization can be profoundly dangerous, both psychologically and socially (Jones 2002: 78). In insisting on purity and absolute truth, religious belief can lead to splitting the world into good and evil, friends and enemies, and give justification for combatting evil by all means available, even horrendous acts of violence.[13] It can keep persons in a "state of infantile dependence" and reduce their capacity for sound affirming and critical assessment of self and others. On the other hand, the idealizing religious experience

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[11] See, e.g., Boudewijnse 1991; Martin 1990, 2002; Stoll 1990; Villafañe 1993.

[12] See, e.g., Turner 1995. Of course, emphasis on emotions and personal devotion is found across confessions and faiths and is not something that is exclusive to Pentecostals or ecstatic African or Afro-Brazilian spiritualties. See, e.g., the outpouring of religious feeling caused by the death of head of the Coptic Christians, Pope Shenouda III, in March 2012: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/20/pope-shenouda-funeral-egypt-coptic-christians .

[13] See also the influential studies by Jessica Stern (2003) and Mark Juergensmeyer (2001)

can give rise to profoundly positive, transformative dynamics at both personal and societal levels.

Different emotions are clearly related to these opposite possibilities. On the negative side, Jones emphasizes in particular feelings of shame and humiliation (2008: 36-40). Forensic psychology confirms the interrelationship between shame, humiliation, and acts of violence (cf. Juergensmeyer 2001: 209ff.). Many observers (of whom Moïsi is one, as we saw) explain the terrorism coming out of the Middle East by referring to feelings of humiliation in the Arab populations. The religious side of this, according to Jones, is again related to idealization:

By holding out an absolute and perfect ideal—whether it's a divine being or a perfect guru or master—against which all mortals fall short … religions can easily exacerbate and play upon a natural human tendency toward feelings of shame and humiliation …. I would suggest the more any religion exalts its ideal, or portrays the divine as an overpowering presence and emphasizes the gulf between finite human beings and that ideal so that we must feel like "worms, not human" (in the words of the Psalms), the more it contributes to and reinforces experiences of shame and humiliation. (Jones 2008: 37)

Furthermore, in many cases there seems to be a connection between feelings of shame and disgust with the body and embodiment, which certain—indeed, quite common and dominant—variants of religiosity may strengthen. Jones quotes the will written by one of the perpetrators of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, in which this apparently devoted Muslim demands that no woman touch his body and that his genitalia be washed with gloved hands.[14] The Christian heritage is of course also ripe with expressions of contempt for the human body. Jones refers to St. Augustine's "revulsion with anything associated with his body," as can be seen in his *Confessions*. This point shows the relevance of Pain's call for an embodied analysis of the effects of emotions in geopolitics.

On the positive side, religion as idealization has the potential of engendering profoundly transformative and enriching processes. Feelings such as love and trust are at the core of these positive dynamics. On an individual level, experiencing a 'conversion' can be compared to falling in love in that it has a strong element of an other or Other being idealized. Such an experience can, in Jones' words,

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[14] Juergensmeyer (2001: 191-97) claims that the symbolic empowerment that can be gained through acts of religious violence is particularly important to marginalized men. He links unemployment, economic marginalization, and rigid sexual morality to the recruitment of suicide bombers in the Middle East. In general, radically patriarchal religious groups become violent. Homophobia is prevalent in such groups, and often coexists in tension with the strong and intimate fellowship between men that is developed in such groups (cf. p. 199).

release new energies, renew creative abilities, restructure the personality. Such events can facilitate the creation of new psychic structures and restart arrested self-development. In addition, the presence of and idealized teacher or community can evoke the experience of trust and surrender through which the true self may be liberated and lost dimensions of the self rediscovered. (Jones 2002: 105)

On a collective and political level such personal dynamics may also have wide-ranging positive implications and possibilities. One of these can be the openness to the other, even the distinctly different other, in dialogue. Hence, conscious attention to the emotional dimension is called for in interreligious dialogue, and this is my main and final point in this article.

'Dia-pathos': Taking Emotion into Account in Interreligious Dialogue.

Given the significant correlation between religion and emotion and the importance of the 'affect effect' in politics and religion alike, I suggest that interreligious dialogue focus on the diverse character, development, potential and consequences of human vulnerability, feelings, and emotions in the different religions in a more systematic and coherent way. This idea is not new. For instance, referring to examples from "quite demanding" Christian-Muslim dialogues in Norway on topics like conversion and domestic violence, Oddbjørn Leirvik points to how a common commitment to vulnerable individuals evolved (Leirvik 2014: 49). Drawing on Werner Jeanrond's concept of a " hermeneutics of love" (Leirvik, 2014: 51) and Enrique Dussel's contrast between intolerance and solidarity rather than tolerance (Leirvik 2014: 101), Leirvik focuses on the need for and potential of a renewed understanding of sympathy in interreligious dialogue. He suggests that "the ethics of vulnerability," together with human rights, could provide a common frame of reference in interreligious dialogue (Leirvik 2014: 45).

For another prominent scholar in the field of interreligious studies, Catherine Cornille, a key concept is "empathy" (Cornille 2008; cf. Cornille 2015). To Cornille, empathy represents "the most elusive, but no less essential" requirement in an effective interreligious dialogue (Cornille 2015: 221).

Along similar lines, then, I suggest that the practice and study of 'dia-logos,' i.e., the effort of clarifying differences, removing misconceptions, and gaining increased mutual understanding 'through' ('dia') 'word' or 'reasoning' ('logos')—should be complemented by what we might call a 'dia-pathos.' 'Dia-pathos' would mean the effort of growing in fellowship and mutual respect through learning to know the (religious) sentiments of the other.

Several questions should be dealt with in such an approach. What could be the "emotional map" in a particular religious tradition or confession? What would—typically—be the shades, degrees, and characters of the different moods and

affects in a certain religious community? According to the so-called "emotion focused therapy" proposed by L.S. Greenberg (Greenberg 2004), emotion is seen as both "involving a primary meaning system, that informs people of the significance of events to their well-being and a rapid adaptive action tendency" and a "primary signaling system that communicates intentions and regulates interaction" (2004: 3). By thus regulating self and other, Greenberg holds, emotion simply gives life much of its meaning.[15]

From a sociological point of view, Ole Riis and Linda Woodhead helpfully take into account not just self and other but also self's relation to society and cultural/religious symbols. Exploring this with attention to how such relations always are involved in power asymmetries, they suggest the concept of "emotional regimes" (Riis and Woodhead 2012: 10-12, 47-52). When socially constructed as religious, they can be labelled "religious emotional regimes" (Riis and Woodhead 2012: 69-73).

The authorities in a religious community focus attention on a certain set of coordinated feelings, whose status is confirmed through the social and ritual life of the group and through its symbols. Thereby the community establishes an emotional regime in terms of which its members learn to identify some emotions as legitimate and prescribed, and others as forbidden or distracting (Riis and Woodhead 2012: 209).

Could the intuitions and insights of these approaches contribute to the field of interreligious dialogue? In terms of internal theological or doctrinal self-understanding, this could mean investigating how and to what extent definite tenets of faith are coupled with or laden with determinate emotions. With respect to external historical or political self-understanding, one relevant question might be: What historical events or political ideas carry a particular emotional weight in a given religious community? Or, how are these events, memories, or topics emotionally linked to religious belonging; why, and with what possible consequences?

I will cite but a few examples: The so-called cartoon controversy, which began in Denmark and rapidly spread to the whole of Scandinavia and significant parts of the Muslim world in 2005-2006, clearly displayed the strong emotional component of Muslim devotion to the Prophet. The cartoons, in particular the two that depicted the Prophet as a warrior/terrorist, struck a very sensitive nerve in

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[15] Greenberg builds on the groundbreaking work of Silvan S. Tomkins, see http://www.tomkins.org/. For a recent assessment of a psychotherapeutic model for treating depression that partly builds on these theories of emotions and applies in a context of religious faith, see Stålsett, 2012.

the Muslim population indeed. Deciding if and to what degree this sensitivity was also manipulated with the purpose of aggravating the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in northern Europe is beyond the scope of this article, but the way in which the very potential for such manipulation becomes a political issue is in itself a case in point.[16] It would probably not be farfetched to suggest that the immediate Danish context, in which immigrants in general and Muslims in particular had come under suspicion and criticism by an increasingly self-confident and secular/liberal Christian majority, added significantly to the humiliating force of the cartoons. Not only did religious emotion show itself as having a strong political impact, but the political situation also contributed to shaping the character and degree of emotion of a particular tenet of faith.

Another controversy that illustrates the point is the issue of ritual slaughter—in particular Jewish *kosher* requirements. In many countries, animal welfare regulations pose limits to or downright forbid *kosher* slaughter. This is the case in Norway, for example, where the Jewish community has access to *kosher* food only through exemptions in import regulations. Recent processes of consultation on this regulation showed that the debate, although highly technical and specific in one sense (about different killing methods, the amount of time before death occurs, etc.), quickly becomes strongly emotional on both sides of the debate. There may be at least two important reasons for this. The most important is related to the Nazi ban on *kosher* food in the 1930s and its portrayal of ritual slaughter and hence the Jews as particularly "primitive" or "brutal." The other reason is contemporary and linked to the wide-ranging legal difference between slaughter and hunting. In Norway, hunting is seen as almost a constitutive national identity marker. The often very strongly emotional arguments used in favour of banning ritual slaughter for the sake of the animals' welfare are, consequently, seldom linked to a similar critique of the often much more prolonged suffering of wild animals during hunts. Jewish emotional sensitivity on this issue is thus heightened by the Jews' collective memory of suffering and a minority's sense of being discriminated against on unfair and inconsistent grounds.[17]

One should note here that negative emotions are not in themselves problematic. On the contrary, as we saw in Butler's thinking, grief and outrage, for instance, may have fundamental critical value. And, according to Greenberg, it is an important point in the psychology of emotion that unpleasant feelings draw people's attention to matters important to their well-being:

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[16] See, e.g., Austenå 2011. For a critical Danish account, see http://www.me forum.org/1437/after-the-danish-cartoon-controversy .

[17] See the discussion in *NOU 2013:1*: 281-89.

However, when unpleasant emotions endure even when the circumstances that evoked them have changed, or are so intense that they overwhelm, or evoke past loss or trauma they can become dysfunctional. Healthy adaptation thus necessitates learning to be aware of, to tolerate, and to regulate negative emotionality … as well as to enjoy positive emotionality for the benefits it endows …. Dysfunction in the ability to access and process emotional information, both positive and negative, thus disconnects people from one of their most adaptive orientation and meaning production systems. (Greenberg 2004 :4).

The strategy in emotion-focused therapy, then, is to help the person become aware of his or her feelings, interpret their possible meaning in order to accept them, make constructive use of them, or transform them. Here we can also think of Pain's focus on *conscientização* and agency. The point is to change "automatic emotional responding" (Greenberg 2004: 6). To this end, Greenberg proposes a process of emotion coaching in two phases, the first focusing on *awareness and acceptance* of emotion and the second on *emotion utilization or transformation.* This involves evaluating whether the emotion is a "healthy or unhealthy response" to the situation. If it represents a healthy response it should be used as a guide to action. If it represents an unhealthy response, it needs to be changed so that "alternate healthy emotional responses and needs" can be found and relied on (2004: 7).

The individual emotion-based therapy proposed by Greenberg would not be directly or totally transferable to the field of the self-understanding of religious communities. But I still contend that there are fruitful points of interconnection that should be explored further with the purpose of improving the scope and relevance of interreligious dialogue. Such dialogue could be not only an exchange of deeply held religious convictions or dogma but also a sharing of anger, fears, and hopes across faiths.

Would my argument for "dia-pathos" correspond to what Catherine Cornille describes as the need for "empathy" in interreligious dialogue (Cornille 2008)? Cornille clearly sees that it is necessary to go beyond the mere intellectual approach to religious teaching and practices so as to really understand the religious other. What is also needed is the "willingness and ability to penetrate into the religious mind-set of the other and understand him or her from within" (Cornille 2008: 138). This calls for seeing empathy, understood as a "process of transposing oneself into the feelings, the thoughts, and the experiences of another" (2008: 138-39) as one condition of possibility for any successful interreligious dialogue. The crucial question in this is whether it is at all possible to understand the other "from within," or to transpose "oneself into the feelings," without actually invading or imposing on the other.

Cornille is certainly aware of this danger. She notes how this objection has almost silenced discussions on empathy in scholarly debate on hermeneutics and understanding. And yet, she holds, there can be no doubt that one has to take

into account the affective dimension, and not merely the cognitive or intellectual one, in attempting to get to "know" the religious faith of the other in a more adequate way:

Even though religion is certainly more than a feeling, the affective dimension does play a crucial role in the religious life of any person, and a proper understanding of another religion would thus be seriously impoverished without access to the meaning of a particular belief or practice for the person involved. (Cornille 2008: 138)

It seems to me that Cornille's advocacy for adding a dimension of empathy in interreligious dialogue, however difficult and fragmentary, should be developed further and made more concrete in at least two respects. The Greek root meaning of *pathos* may refer to feeling in general and to the experience of suffering in particular, a double meaning well rendered in its English translation as 'passion.' Hence, beyond an increased understanding of the significance of 'empathy' for interreligious understanding as Cornille rightly calls for, extending the scope of dialogue towards including 'diapathos' could entail focusing the practice and thematic of interreligious encounters on (1) different emotions and feelings and the way they relate to a given religious faith or doctrine, and (2) the experience and conception of as well as responses to suffering in different religious traditions. The first point could then be a process of becoming aware of and interpreting, as well as utilizing and transforming, the emotions related to one's religious belonging, in analogy with the two steps in Greenberg's "emotion coaching" referred to above.

The second point relates to Pain's focus on the agency of the marginalized above, and to what I elsewhere have referred to as a "victimological turn" in theology (see Stålsett 2003a). Interreligious dialogue should be particularly aware of and seek to understand the sufferings of the other. But here there is an obvious problem. Remembering one's own experiences of suffering can lead to prolonging enmities and strengthening self-justification and even self-pity in persons as well as in religious communities. The role of remembering the 1389 "Battle of the field of Kosovo" as a reference to and justification of the war between Orthodox Serbs and Kosovo-Albanian Muslims is just one of many examples.[18] Al Qaeda's rhetorical reference to the crusades as a justification for their acts of terror is another. How can one overcome this destructive 'competition in suffering' without neglecting or levelling the historical remembrance of unjust suffering?

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[18] See Milosevic' speech on the 600th anniversary of this battle, June 28, 1989, http://emperors-clothes.com/milo/milosaid2.htm

In my view, interreligious dialogue on the mutual, shared human condition of vulnerability could signal a way forward. Judith Butler, self-identifying as an "anti-Zionist Jew," has reflected on this problem in the context of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis (Butler, 2011). There is no relevant comparison when it comes to suffering. "The suffering of one people is not exactly like the suffering of another, and this is the condition of the specificity of the suffering of both" (2011: 87). Hence, there is a need for being, paradoxically, both motivated and dispossessed by one's own suffering to be able to understand and even struggle for the alleviation of the suffering of others. Remembering one's own suffering through an awareness of the universality, the 'sharedness' of interdependence and vulnerability can lead to the acknowledgement, and even up to a certain point, participation in the suffering of others. Advocating the concept of cohabitation, which she defines as a "mode of living in which alterity is constitutive of who one is" (Butler 2011: 76-77), Butler sees a role for religion. Religion relativizes one's own experiences of suffering, by making it clear that remembrance does not restrict itself to one's own suffering or the suffering of one's own nation or religious community alone. Religion could help such a remembrance to break through into the public sphere, Butler believes.

If this is to happen, I believe each religious community and tradition must ask itself: What resources can we actually draw upon to understand human life as constitutively, inescapably, and universally vulnerable? Such a question can be sharpened and deepened in an interreligious dialogue that takes into account the full weight of human emotion and 'passion,' both as feeling and as suffering—a 'dia-pathos.'

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