Searching for History: A Review of “Wherefrom Does History Emerge? Inquiries in Political Cosmology”

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Tilo Schabert and John von Heyking, eds., *Wherefrom Does History Emerge? Inquiries in Political Cosmology.* Berlin: De Gruyter Press, 2020.

Introduction

In this edited volume, Tilo Schabert and John von Heyking offer a series of answers to a question about the provenance of history. On the face of it, such a question seems like one that could only exceed the capacity of any book to answer. The materials of history are, after all, limitless. However, the question raised is certainly not about the scope of materials. It is a more penetrating one, an intrinsically philosophical one. It is a question that probes beyond all materials to the very intelligibility of history itself. Moreover, there is surely something transformative that occurs in the questioner who allows the profundity of the question to touch their soul. If there is an identity between the intellect in act and the intelligible object in act, as Thomas and others hold, then this relatively slim volume punches much beyond its weight.

For readers of Voegelin View, it might be worth prefacing this reviewer's comments on the chapters of *Wherefrom Does History Emerge?* with some brief allusions to one of Eric Voegelin's many writings on the matter. In his *Drama of Humanity*, Voegelin writes that "Humanity means man in a mode of understanding himself in his relation to God, world and society, and these modes change. And history would be the drama (if a meaning in it can be discovered) of humanity, of the self-understanding of man."[1] The drama of humanity is the self-understanding of man who is always relation to the cosmos. For Voegelin, it is to man—individually, socio-politically, and already belonging within a cosmos that constitutes him and her—that we must look for the intelligibility of history, "if a meaning in it can be discovered." Indeed, what intelligibility of history there is emerges from the very structure of human existence. We may say that historiography is the writing and recording of materials from the past, but what makes those materials historical—rather than merely historiographical—is their expression of the structure of human consciousness that always transcends those materials.[2]

For Voegelin, the differentiation of the structure of consciousness is the gradual process in which the compact truth of myth is superseded by the truth of *theoria* and revelation; and the central event that underpins such a process is the one that, having found the intracosmic divinities insufficient to the task of grounding the existence of all things, came to recognize the world-transcendent reality of the divine. As a result, "There is only one divinity, the one world-transcendent divinity, to be found nowhere within the world. Thus, you have an idea of universal divinity corresponding to universality of man."[3] So, along with universal *humanity* and universal *divinity*, there arises a universal *world*. "You get the three as a unit or you get nothing at all. If you surrender one or the other, that whole system, or this whole apparatus of ideas which is inherent in the exegesis of such an experience, will collapse."[4] Together, this three-fold emergence is the discovery of history as a differentiated development of the meaning of human existence. The emergence of humanity, divinity, and world as universal categories is played out as the ongoing and heuristic drama of history.

Chapters

Let us now think about the offerings in each chapter of *Wherefrom Does History Emerge?* It has to be said that a difficulty the reader is first likely to encounter is the absence of any biographies. It means that one can only guess at the authority by which each contributor writes, and must rely upon the judgment of the editors in including each of them. Indeed, a little sleuthing on the part of this reviewer discovered that the contributors are established scholars in their respective fields, but the lack of any biography is surely an oversight.

That said, Schabert and von Heyking open the book by presenting in their introduction one of the abiding themes that runs through most of the book: the tension between cosmos as order and chaos as disorder. Beginning with Hesiod's *Theogony*, they write that chaos is "not a nothing… . Rather, it is an *Ur-raum* to be imagined strictly for the emergence of a possibility of space giving room for a 'cosmos'" (1). With chaos lingering just outside the walls of the little world of cosmos, all things remain subject to the tension that endures as a perpetual characteristic of their own being. "Divine powers of chaos always accompany the cosmos, being the darkness towards which it is set" (1). From here, Schabert and von Heyking introduce us to further, ancillary themes as well as situate the content of the upcoming chapters. Ranging from the insights of the ancient Greek world, the medievals and Western moderns, to those of Chinese Taoists and Japanese Buddhists, not to mention the responses of indigenous Americans to the early modern Spanish, there is a vast range of material to be explored that is organized well by the overarching question.

Dieter Fuchs, *"Making History in Washington Irving's 'Rip van Winkle' and James Joyce's* Ulysses*"*

Fuchs's chapter is the longest in the book and competently ties together quite a few well-researched threads of meaning. He begins his chapter by noting that "As history does not exist *per se* and as events from the past only become meaningful by way of interpretation—or cultural representation—the writing of history bears structural affinities to storytelling" (7). Fuchs, while setting out history as story, is suspicious of the storyteller, or at least, the ability of any storyteller to tell the truth in their story. He raises the problem of the foundational myths which "serve a deeply political purpose. A foundational myth thus explains the emergence of the *cosmos* of a cultural community from a pre-existing *chaos* as a political ordering device" (9). In what turns out to be a feminist and Jungian argument about masculine blind-spots and closures, coercively imposed upon feminine openness, Fuchs builds a case for two corresponding models of history: the linear model with a determinate beginning that runs through the present; and the cyclical model of history repeating itself without a discernible beginning or end. The former we learn is a logocentric symbolism (and thus phallogocentric, if you join with Fuchs in his Jungian trajectory) of Homeric warriors and Old Testament patriarchy from ancient Greece and Jerusalem respectively. The latter expresses the vitality and creativity of the womb in its cyclic regularity. Both the Rip van Winkle tale and *Ulysses* narrate in story form the transfer of power from one ecumene to another in a westward direction. This is an adaptation of the medieval category, *translatio imperii.* Fuchs joins other scholars in attributing to St. Jerome an interpretation of the "book of Daniel as an account of Westbound imperial power-flux from Babylon to Persia, Greece, and Rome" (12), and thus a linear account of a westward history of power dynamics. We see the same pattern from the destruction of Troy to ancient Greece, the Roman empire, the Holy Roman Empire, the British Empire, and the United States of America (and within America, the westward expansion over the continent).

Fuchs digs into the genetic development of many key symbols to provide evidence for the westward *translatio.* Irving's "Rip van Winkle," for example, is a composite symbol of the early American nation from colonies to independence, but Fuchs excavates even this with impressive results. Due to van Winkle's excessively long beard, he may function as something of an avatar of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, illuminating a connection with King Arthur since Barbarossa famously slept next to a round table; but then, "King Arthur is a successor of the legendary first British king Brutus of Troy" (14). According to Fuchs, Rip van Winkle serves as a foundational myth of the Americans in a line of symbolism that can be traced from the USA to Troy. Furthermore, the character of

Rip van Winkle seems to bear some comic allusions to Odysseus and to Socrates. Fuchs presents a multivalent dimensionality of meaning both in Irving's tale and in Joyce's *Ulysses*, which makes for a very interesting and illuminating reading experience.

As the chapter proceeds, it appears that the struggle for cosmos and chaos is being handled in a familiar postmodern vein: "[P]atriarchal tales of the origin of history attempt to inflict linear order and control on the uncontrollable cyclicality of the gaping Ur-Raum of the female womb in terms of masculine gender politics" (21). Also, "[T]he concept of the origin of history deconstructs itself and thus turns out to be a patriarchal myth in its own right—a universal story told by men to contain the cyclicality of time as the uncanny chaotic 'other' represented by the female principle" (35). This seems to be a departure from the Jungian exploration of the cosmological primordiality of the masculine and the feminine, but rather the adoption of a contemporary, critical theory perspective. The story-telling of history is being unmasked by Fuchs as little more than a self-empowering male enterprise to suppress the alterity of the female. As many of the chapters in this book discuss, historiography is beset with oppressive power dynamics, but one is tempted to think that if there is really nothing more to the telling of history than oppression and postmodernist deconstruction, then why would anybody bother with it? If history amounts to the coercive filtering out of the female, or other social groupings for that matter, for the sake of a dominating narrative, then surely we have no more need of historians and their complicity in oppression. Instead, would we not be better to look primarily to the social and psychological analyses of the critical theorists?

In spite of these comments, there is an unmistakable grandeur to Fuchs's chapter. Historical story-telling may indeed be fraught with the biases of the storyteller, but one ought not to overlook that history also points towards a nobility of soul. What is the connection between history and the nobility of soul? Voegelin captures it nicely. "The millenniums in which the mystery of history has reached the level of consciousness have not diminished the distance from its eternity."[5] Historical story-telling, for all its shortcomings, is a telling of existence in immediacy under God, and its pragmatic power-plays are enacted within an abiding order of being that can only be lived or violated. Fuchs's critical conclusion about oppressive story-telling, male or otherwise, is not necessarily wrong but it filters out the transcendent dimensions of meaning by which existence acquires its historical character.

Manuel Knoll, *The Political Struggle for a Well-Ordered City and Soul as a Historical Striving for Peace.*

Knoll's chapter is the first of three consecutive chapters that turn to ancient Greek philosophy, historiography, and myth respectively. Here, Knoll plumbs selected philosophical writings of Plato and Aristotle for insights into the perennial struggle for order that characterizes history. For example, in the *Laws*, Plato has Clinias talk about the condition of war as a permanent feature of every polis (40). It means that peace is always the exception. Interestingly, Irene is the goddess of peace, but compared to the obviously more war-like gods, she is a minor deity. Knoll, by way of discussing the Greek sense of historical order and disorder, raises the issue of slavery. Slavery itself was not an abomination for the Greeks, but the enslavement of Greeks was. In Book V of the

Republic and Book V of Aristotle's *Politics*, Knoll presents the key sections of text that express why the enslavement of defeated non-Greeks belongs within a right order (whether by nature or convention) since relations with barbarians is perpetually characterized by war. However, since Greeks are friends by nature, intra-Greek relations are never warlike, but can become sick and factitious. This is a value-distinction in relations whose import necessarily extends to the prohibition of the Greek enslavement of fellow Greeks. (Knoll tells us that when Plato wrote, he likely had Thucydides's report of the Athenian enslavement of the Melians in mind.)

Knoll ranges widely and expertly over the material, invoking the authority of myth and tragedy to burnish the philosophical claims in various texts. Both Plato and Aristotle agree that war is for the sake of peace, and while both concur that peace and goodwill are great goods, the good of peace is itself a means to *eudaimonia* which ranks higher still. Here is where Knoll fills out his account of the Greeks by switching focus to the historical permanence of the search for happiness and flourishing. The Spartans—whose military virtues function as the foil for the Athenian emphasis on the need to live out the fuller set of cardinal virtues in order to attain *eudaimonia*—linked pragmatic dominance and happiness, and their defeat at Leuktra meant nothing less than an irretrievable loss of happiness (47). The origin of war and the possibility of happiness are both rooted in the soul and its constitution. The disintegration of happiness is occasioned by the soul's forgetfulness of itself and consequent enslavement to the desires and hungers of the body. Thus, the war-like temperament (*pleonexia*) is grasping and acquisitive of wealth and luxury. It is a sickness that disdains moderation. Since *pleonexia* remains as a permanent feature of human existence, it cannot be banished, but only managed; a recognition that sits at the center of both Plato's *Politeia* and Madison's *Federalist 10*. To this reviewer's mind, Knoll's signal contribution is that he points out that when regimes ignore human nature in favor of power, prowess, apolitical bureaucratic technocracy, ideological laws of progress or nature, etc., they are doomed; and in the meantime, they contribute to the "slaughter-bench of history." This insight was originally won and explored in great detail by the Greeks of the ancient world. It is our own folly to forget this, and to dismiss the potential for suffering and mischief on a grand scale that follows the abandonment of Plato's notion of the state as *macroanthropos*.

Jonathan Wensveen, *Confronting History: On the Wisdom and Example of Diodotus in Thucydides'* History of the Peloponnesian War.

Quoting Thucydides, "War is a violent teacher," Wensveen asks the question, war is a teacher of what? This chapter looks to Thucydides in order "to make sense of the perennial relationship between cosmos and chaos, order and disorder…" (57). Wensveen discusses the civil war at Corcyra as the context for impressive statesmanship whose importance, we will learn, is that only such statesmanship can begin to reverse the process of cosmos dissolving into chaos. War is the teacher that reveals horror and disintegration, and the protagonists who become both its agents and victims. Language is one of the first agents and victims of disintegration when its symbols become perverse and destructive of law, human and divine. When words become corrupt, trust collapses and, the result is a "descent from 'Greekness' into 'barbarism'" (60). Rather than politics, civil war champions a primitive condition of piracy where cunning and revenge supplant political prudence. Although Greek, the Corcyreans have debouched into Thracians, "'the most murderous' of 'the barbarians' according to Thucydides" (61). Thus it is that war teaches that there is propensity to chaos embedded in the nature of every human, no matter how civilized (63).

Thucydides assumes the role of mediator of war's teaching, and he is not without some optimism because he holds that we can genuinely learn from war. He tells the tale of the Mytilenaens and their revolt against Athenian hegemony in spite of formally being allies. This was taken as treachery by Athenians who voted for extreme punishment: the razing of the entire city, the killing of all adult makes and the enslavement of women and children. However, immediately afterward, these same Athenians experienced remorse at their bloodlust. In a second assembly, Kleon publicly debates Diodotus about the propriety of the punishment, holding that vengeance is just and expedient. Diodotus argues that it is right to hold the Mytileneans accountable, but vengeance would be counterproductive. Expedience would be met by having a care for the future: The death penalty for vast numbers would not deter future revolts, but only stoke enmity and incite further resistance. It would be better for Athens to punish the smallest number, those "especially responsible for the revolt" which would save resources and keep the common people of Mytilene—already friendly to Athens—onside. Diodotus wins the debate and for Thucydides, this shows that statesmanship can persuade human beings "to abide by rule of prudence over and against the rule of revenge" (70). Thomas Hobbes took Thucydides's mediation of the teaching of war as a great example of what a proper understanding of history itself teaches (71). The episode of the Plataeans in the *History of the Peloponnesian War* inspires Hobbes to claim that, where philosophy and reason can only provide norms, history has the capacity to teach men to pay attention to those norms. Wensveen quotes Hobbes's expectation of "immortal peace", but it is Thucydides who is more sober. While we can learn from war, especially about the impact of prudent statesmanship, the *History* shows how cosmos can always lead to chaos, rest to motion: "just as war or chaos bring about boldness through compulsion" so peace or cosmos can bring about "ambition through insolence and pride" (75). History teaches that war is a propensity rooted in human nature, and "will recur in similar or comparable ways" (75).

John von Heyking, *History Brought into a Form: Political Storytelling*

Von Heyking brings the reader back to the earlier claim by Fuchs that history is a particular kind of storytelling. What von Heyking emphasizes is not only that "history emerges when human beings perform actions together," and then reflect together upon those actions" (77), but that such reflections are forged in friendship. Indeed, they are themselves the occasion for the deepening of friendship. What the reader draws from this particular chapter is a strong sense of political friendship as constitutive of both politics and history. Von Heyking concentrates on the story of Odysseus's sojourn in Scheria in Homer's *Odyssey*. The exchanges between King Alcinous, Queen Arete, and Odysseus become mutually illuminative of the truth of existence, where each relates to the other what they have experienced in the action of life, which falls outside the experiences and actions of the other, so that each can offer to the other what they have understood and affirmed to be truth. Mutually uplifted and edified, the visit ends with Odysseus carrying the paradigm of the Phaeacian city with him in his soul as he returns home to Ithaca at last.

When Odysseus first weeps at the three songs of the blind singer, Demodocus, Alcinous notices, and understands that Odysseus has a story to tell. Von Heyking quotes Voegelin who has written that "*Historia* is not recitation of events and facts, but is 'inquiry'—a search for order in time" (78). Alcinous recognizes that there is a pathos operative in the soul of Odysseus as he weeps. Voegelin writes, "Are the gods who inspire, or the men who obey, responsible for human action?" (81) and Odysseus's tears suggest that he experiences himself as an in-between reality, his actions somehow binding together the realms of Zeus, Hades, and perhaps eventually even Poseidon. Von Heyking is keyed into this implicit symbolism, and brings this into the open for the reader. Moreover, the journey across the "vast abyss of the sea" is more than spatial, but passes from the timelessness of Ogygia to the time of Ithaca, with Scheria as a midway point in-between time and timelessness (82). Scheria is marked by hospitality and communion, and it is friendly conversation that actualizes the substance of the city. As von Heyking puts it, "The paradigmatic city is constituted in friendly speech at the beginning of history, which Odysseus takes with him for his homecoming" (84). *Homophrosynē* is what Odysseus learns in Scheria among the Phaeacians. It is the friendship that binds together not only persons and cities and gods, but the harmony and communion of the entire cosmos. For all their comfort and wisdom, the Phaeacians lack something that Alcinous recognizes in Odysseus whose suffering seems to witness to what is missing in their lives: a "battle worth fighting" (87). So it is that Odysseus and the Phaeacians are enchanted by what the other tells of; it is in *homophrosynē* that each lets the other grow their soul in the telling of a tale or the singing of a song. "Suffering is redeemed in song" (90), and Odysseus's suffering exceeds the experience of the Phaeacians; his songs are therefore more powerful even than the inspired songs of Demodocus. In a Homeric sense, Odysseus becomes the suffering servant whose suffering can be sung into a form that can potentially harmonize all. Alcinous, recognizing the signs, knows Odysseus to be the herald of the Phaeacians' self-sacrifice, and he accepts the fate that must befall the city.

Von Heyking concludes that the *Odyssey* exemplifies the storytelling dimension of politics and of the "good life" that politics aims at. "[A]ll actions are directed by some measure of reason … [and] are somehow completed by reflecting on them" (95). Political philosophy then is the highest type of reflection upon actions, and the *Odyssey* represents the highest possibilities of political philosophy: although harboring the experiences of vastly lives and insights, their mutual storytelling renders them equals in the conversation. "From opposing yet equal directions, they meet at that borderline where history is brought to form" (95). That borderline is the in-between region where divine and the human meet, a *homophrosynē* is effected, and history acquires a character that is simultaneously in time and beyond time. It occurs to this reviewer that von Heyking's chapter, placed in the middle of the book, provides a most fitting thematic center.

Antonio Panaino, *Human History, Its Aims and Its End, According to the Zoroastrian Doctrine of Late Antiquity*

With Panaino, we veer away from the ancient Greek world and look toward the east. Panaino's chapter is a welcome perspective, and right from the start, the reader is led through many of the distinctions, myths, and core teachings of Zoroastrian religion, and learns that Ahura Mazdā, the god of cosmos, is the god of life while Ahreman, the god of disorder, is the deity who lacks "life" and exists only "mentally" as some kind of shadow, and whose only contribution is a nihilistic undoing of the vitality of life. "'Mental' and 'living' are two aspects of the (positive, creative and seminal) existence, while the evil dimension is devoid of a proper living reality, demons being only 'mental'" (100). Zoroastrian liturgy looks to the final resurrection of the dead, a final triumph over evil. Liturgy, Panaino tells us, "anticipates the sublime transfiguration of the good Mazdeans because it can interrupt the present state of mixture … produced by the invasion of the evil forces in the good creation" (101).

Importantly for the theme of the book, Panaino expends some effort in giving an account of time in Zoroastrianism. On the one hand, there is absolute, eternal time, coeternal with God; and on the other, there are limited units of time. Each unit of time is a cycle, and each is a stage demarcated by acts within the cosmic drama that bring the Mazdean to an understanding of the meaning of life. Zoroastrianism "defines 'history' as a central moment in the battle against Ahreman and the evil forces" (104). Human history is the unit of time which begins with the invasion of Ahreman into the positive creation, and this is the stage in which the most significant cosmic battle must take place. Panaino also takes some time to point out possible contacts between the early Christian world and Zoroastrianism. As well as the Magi in the Gospels, he mentions Origen's view that hell may be temporary (which seems to resonate with Zoroastrianism's development of a critique against a God who would eternally condemn a human being for a temporally limited sin). There are also some striking similarities such as the virgin birth of the savior who comes among us at the end of world history (107-8). The chapter ends with an account of the Achaemenid and Sasanian periods of kingship and an explanation of the connection between pragmatic politics and the undertow of cosmological meaning. Clearly, Panaino's chapter is a rich one that aims to traverse an extensive cultural and religious landscape. It is written by a scholar who is enthusiastically imparting his knowledge and love of Zoroastrianism, who is filling out the picture of Persia and the ancient Middle East prior to Islam, and bringing the reader to more comprehensive appreciation of this mostly unknown or misunderstood civilization.

Davíd Carrasco, *The Making of a New History Called Mexico.*

As Fuchs's suspicion of historical storytellers indicates, one has to be careful with one's words when engaging in historical analyses. There are at least three reasons for this. Firstly, we have a tendency to employ our own contemporary symbols, laden with contemporary meanings, to assess the past. By doing so, we easily commit the fallacy of anachronism by rendering judgments on historical events and people whose own performative meanings were not consistent with ours today. Secondly, we must be careful because some events that began in the past are still playing out their consequences in our own day. Many young nations, particularly those of the Americas in our own day, are still working through the immensely fraught implications of their own founding. Older nations have long histories that encompass the seismic events of millennia such that the line between history and prehistory becomes somewhat arbitrary. Such long histories demonstrate that it is possible for nations to make peace with some of the most troubling and most appalling events that involved ancestors (including adopted ancestors) in unimaginable brutality and suffering. For the historian whose perspective extends to centuries rather than to millennia, and whose historiography is being written within social and political developments that are nonetheless continuous with the founding, there may result a myopia that communicates little more than nihilism in the storytelling. Thirdly and relatedly, as Edmund Burke points out at the end of his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, unless we have a care, we may end up weaponizing history and "in the perversion, [history] may serve for a magazine, furnishing offensive and defensive weapons for parties in church and state, and supplying the means of keeping alive, or reviving, dissensions and animosities, and adding fuel to civil fury." Clearly much is at stake in the telling of Mexico's story, and there are many fine lines to walk. This is the task that Carrasco takes on, navigating the pitfalls, and giving the reader access to an understanding of Mexico's history that evokes both horror, wonder, and admiration.

According to Carrasco, the making of Mexico is a historical tale that, no matter how one tells it, is replete with "borders, identity, walls, nations, and terrorism" (125). He begins with key events of the early 1500s, and his approach is three-fold: He informs the reader of the "racially mixed family" (125) that is Mexico; he raises issues that stem from the philosophical and anthropological question about the humanity of non-Europeans that the Spanish were required to answer as a matter of urgency; and he discusses the symbolism of building Mexico City as a world-crossroads on the site of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan. As with all the chapters in this volume, the reader will be served a wealth of information that likely falls outside one's present orbit of knowledge. It's clear that Carrasco is appalled at the savagery that characterized the *encomiendas* (plantations) "where scores, hundreds, and many thousands of natives and Africans were enslaved, raped, worked to death, murdered, and declared unfit for civilization in the New World" (134). He details not only the violent refusal to recognize the personhood of non-Europeans, but also the sophist justifications of such refusal, which he names as theological. And certainly theological language was readily employed to provide the authoritative underpinnings of abuse. Carrasco rather immoderately writes about "Catholic scare tactics" (127) and that "Catholic symbolism was never far from [the Spaniards'] minds" (135) as they forced "Catholic teachings down [the natives'] throats" (139). The reader may be left with the impression that the source of evil is the Catholic faith of the Spanish. However, Carrasco does offer an account of Las Casas and of the Dominican, Antonio de Montesinos who lambasted his congregation of colonists in Hispaniola, telling them "that *their* souls were in mortal danger" (136) for failing to love the natives as themselves.

It is worth noting that the Spanish conquest is a rather late episode in the long civilizational denouement of imperial Christianity where the relation between spiritual and political reality had been endlessly confused by the supererogatory claims of both popes and emperors. The precise question of the humanity of non-Europeans and non-Christians arises in the midst of the civilizational turbulence. As Bernard Lonergan emphasizes, insights have dates, and this includes insights into the universality of humanity and its dignity. According to Brian Tierney, English commentators on canon law first glossed on *ius* (right) inherent in the individual human being beginning around the 1180s. About 150 years after this, it was William of Ockham who claimed the authority to assert a sphere of natural rights against the overreach of papal and political authority. By the 1400s, the bishop, Nicholas of Cusa, explicitly claimed in his *De pace fidei* that Christ is the head of all humanity for the reason that all humanity shares the same *natura rationabilis* in concord with Christ. The point is that the Christian faith was not the problem; the derailment of Christianity by the likes of Sepulveda and his likes is the problem. As Carrasco discusses, Spanish Catholics like Las Casas and de Montesinos (not to mention Francisco de Vitoria) can invoke Christianity and a differentiated Christian philosophical anthropology against the *encomenderos* and their culpable refusal to recognize the humanity of non-Christians.

Eiko Hanaoka, *The Way of Thinking on "History" in Buddhism.*

The first thing to catch the eye in Hanaoka's title is that "history" is placed in inverted commas. If one wonders what the significance of this is, one might also wonder what the meaning of history can be in Buddhism. That is, if the historical dimension of existence is nested within, and is communicated by, the overall Buddhist understanding of reality, the reader can expect to find some intriguing insights that are not readily available in the development of Western symbolism.

Hanaoka considers Zen Buddhism in particular as the philosophy of absolute emptiness. It is in such emptiness that one can say that there is an alternative history to the one marked by the struggle to acquire "power, riches, longevity, health, economic and technological development, etc." In some ways, this puts a reader acquainted with Voegelin in mind of the discussion in *The Ecumenic Age* about pragmatic history (History I) and parousial history (History II), the former as a synchronous "cross-cut" of meanings internal to the history of any society, and the latter as "the history in which [the society] comes into and goes out of existence."[6] According to Hanaoka, "For Buddhism the history of the world and the history of Nirvana are the same" (154), and she goes on to back this up with stories from various sutras. Along the way, she quotes Dogen Kigen, "All sentient beings have the Buddha-nature" (154), but voices some doubt: Since the desires that give rise to pragmatic history cannot be crushed, the panpsychic actualization of the Buddha-nature remains no more than a vision. However, it is in principle achievable through various Buddhist practices that lead the way to the abolition of egoistic desires, and to the attainment of the "history of Nirvana." She writes, "An identity of holiness and secularity is possible only in the self-awareness of emptiness in each person" (156), and it is by this self-awareness of emptiness that "true self-nature as non-self-nature – Buddha's non-self-nature" is attained. There are parallels that Western and Islamic minds can draw with apophatic traditions in their own development. The pseudo-Dionysius, drawing from works such as Plato's *Timaeus* and the *Enneads* of Plotinus, referred to the "darkness beyond the intellect" as the nothingness of God. Duns Scotus Eriugena meditated upon God as the *hypertheos*: "He is called God, but He is not strictly speaking God; … He is *hypertheos*, that is, more-than-God."[7] Similarly, Ibn Tufail wrote about

God as the absolute reality that is both not-Truth, but not different from Truth. Hanaoka's language points to the difficulty that all writers in the apophatic mode must contend with: the transcendental border problem of symbolically communicating what transcends communicability. Yet, as she lays out the Five Stages that lead to self-awareness of "circuminsessional interpenetration" (a perfect blend of absolute truth and worldly truth), the ultimate and absolute truth must be communicated somehow. "Buddha did not remain in the absolute truth that he had attained, but stepped out into the world, to tell all sentient beings that they have the Buddha-Nature and thus to save them" (160). Like Plato's returning prisoner in the Allegory of the Cave, the prospects of persuasion are not good. Platonic *anamnesis* or remembrance that recovers the truth of existence is here characterized as forgetfulness: only in forgetfulness of self can the true self become truly aware as a formlessness beyond the barriers that demarcate the worldly self from all other sentient beings. So for Hanaoka, history is an "uncontinuous continuity" (161) of events—an awareness of the simultaneous interpenetration of world-fullness and Nirvanic-emptiness induced by the Buddha-Nature—that strains toward a fulfillment that cannot be fulfilled.

As noted, there are parallels between Eastern traditions and broadly Western experiences and symbolizations, but without being an expert, this reviewer suspects that the use of key terms in the paper—such as "self," "redemption," "salvation," "transcendence," "truth," and "history"—is subtly problematic. The terms themselves certainly give the non-Buddhist reader access to Buddhist thought, but the meanings of the terms do not fit entirely squarely with the historicity of the terms as semantically operative in the West. For example, apart from the incongruence of the meaning of "history" itself, the Buddhist notion of redemption—lacking the context of both the transcendent-divine God and the outpouring of grace—means what Christian notions of redemption do not. Hanaoka's short chapter then raises many interesting questions that invite further thought, and readers will find themselves pivoting between familiar and unfamiliar traditions in a way that only enriches their own interiority.

Tilo Schabert, *A Continuing Strife Toward Cosmogony: History:* What is original and inviting in Schabert's chapter is his framing: "A fictional panel of experts is set up for receiving responses to the question posed by this book. They expressed their views at different times and different places. And, yet, they appear to be much in agreement with each other" (163). The panel may be fictional, but the panelists are very much real historical characters and include the likes of Herodotus, Thucydides, Virgil, Flavius Josephus, Augustine, Erasmus, Kant, and Hegel. What we read here is the work of an experienced scholar at his finest, navigating vast historical material with ease and finesse, and bringing the reader effortlessly to the conclusion that the "slaughterhouse" of history is mitigated only by the soul of the judicious person. This will remind the reader of Jonathan Wensveen's emphasis upon the practical expediency of statesmanship, and von Heyking's example of Churchill.

As opposed to Marx and others who tell us that the solution to the riddle of history is to be found at the social level, Schabert penetrates to the level of the human soul. History, he writes, emerges from its roots in the soul, and it is here that conflict between reason and passion rages, as does the conflict between the passions. Therefore, the amelioration of historical existence begins in the human soul. This suggests that the individual person, even more so than the social system that distributes goods, for example, is the true locus of history. For all of its woes, history is not simply a remorseless litany of “War, quarrel: quarrel, war” (165).

Schabert’s analysis works at “three argumentative levels,” distinguished from one another by statements from the panel experts: the empirical, analytical, and hermeneutic are interwoven levels, but there is, he tells us, a logical hierarchy from empirical to hermeneutic. At the empirical stage, Schabert provides us with descriptions of the grimness of history that range from Herodotus’s simplicity (“abduction,” “destruction,” and “hostility”) to the figurative language of the moderns, such as Kant’s “hell of ills.” Why is history so? According to Virgil, “fury” is the reason; according to Flavius Josephus, it is “envy” and “wrath” etc.; for Erasmus, what fuels history is “anger” and “ambition”; while for Kant, “folly,” “vanity,” and “malice” are the drivers. From Augustine’s *dominandi libido* to Erasmus’s “mental distemper,” there is a unanimous catalog of horror on display from the panelists.

At the analytical level, Schabert focuses upon the moderns and their emphasis on progress. Arcadia, for Kant, is the primordial condition, “the empty place of creation.” However, the human being was never likely to remain there since “every human talent would lie eternally dormant” (167). Also with Hegel, the void is filled with work which brings about the passions. Without the passions, there would be no historical horrors and warlike temperament, but nor would there be something to be overcome in a higher synthesis, such as a league of nations might provide. We are caught, Kant tells us, in a predicament of “unsociable sociability” where we can neither suffer others nor can we be without them, and so we manage the inherent tension through the acquisition of possessions and the struggle for honor and domination. The idiotic misery that ensues in turn becomes the driver of reason by which it is overcome and we may at last attain peace (168-69). What then is history, with its horrors and its progress? Hegel provides a hermeneutic: Reason is the true author of history, even if the spectacle of history is comprised of the passions. So too does Kant who “discerns in the ‘history of mankind Nature’s secret plan’” (171). History is a revelation of Nature’s “highest intention” that is achieved in “that universal cosmopolitan condition that is brought about by the princes of this world. Indeed, for Erasmus, the great “catharsis of the soul” takes place pre-eminently in the souls of princes, who—as von Heyking discusses at length—can become genuinely political by setting aside conflict in favor of friendship. For Schabert, historical hope is hope that is placed in the judiciousness of the prince’s soul.

To the Greek mind, there could be no greater symbolism of horror than that depicted by Kronos who lustily devours his own children who would supplant him in time. If history can be a series of horrors, the absolute horror that alone can surmount it is the abortion of history itself. The survival of Zeus against the odds testifies to the need for politics and history because Zeus, as with politics, symbolizes the limitation of the chaotic overspilling of the soul’s lusts beyond their proper measure. Zeus and politics together are figures of order in the cosmos. Schabert concludes with Thucydides on the Corinthian speech ahead of war with Athens. “A judicious person does not seek conflict for the sake of conflict. … their courage for war is a courage for peace” (174). Thus, the judicious person is the prudent person, the political person capable of friendship. Such a person is the very site, or is a hub of the entire cosmos, where conflict founders and where history both begins and is renewed.

Conclusion

Wherefrom Does History Emerge? is a slim volume that deserves to be widely read. It is an interesting, diverse, and immensely thought-provoking book. It will become a resource for many. Each chapter is saturated with excellent scholarship that is current and relevant, and as this review has hopefully made clear, will guide the reader through both familiar and unfamiliar historical materials, always with commentaries that are sure to enhance one’s understanding and appreciation of the historical dimension of existence.

[1] Voegelin, *Collected Works, Vol. 33: The Drama of Humanity and Other Miscellaneous Papers, 1939-1985* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 186**.**

[2] As David Walsh puts it, “Motives, incentives, interests may be the stuff of history, the warp and woof of its fabric, but they are not the cloth itself. That is visible only from outside of it.” Walsh reiterates the point that neither persons nor history are simply present, simply there to be read. For example, he writes that “History comes into view from the perspective of a viewpoint outside of it, but endures under the shadow of its own supersession.” David Walsh, *The Politics of the Person as the Politics of Being*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016), 210.

[3] Voegelin, *Collected Works 33*, 204.

[4] *Ibid*. 206.

[5] Voegelin, *Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Vol. 15: Order and History, Vol. 2: The World of the Polis, 71-72* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2000)*.*

[6] Voegelin, *Order and History 4* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), 173.

[7] Eriugena, *Periphyseon* I, 47 (459D). In *Basic Issues in Medieval Philosophy*, eds. Richard N. Boseley and Martin M. Tweedale (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2006), 559.

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