

Otherness: the Most Essential Component of Intercultural Ethics: A Transdisciplinary Study of the Other

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ABSTRACT: This paper engages in a transdisciplinary approach to and an intercultural perspective on the phenomenon of 'otherness' at the intersection of Ethics, Esthetics, and Cultural Studies. One of the most important contributions to the understanding of otherness is the careful deconstruction of dichotomies and generalizations. It also gives an example of intercultural understanding of otherness by a transdisciplinary deconstruction of the racial-esthetic black-white dichotomy. Since a transdisciplinary approach will be exploited for an intercultural topic the paper has to explore *en passant* the concepts of multi-, inter- and transculturality and – disciplinarity. Besides its philosophical rootedness the paper additionally utilizes the first person singular accounts and personal intercultural experience.

KEY WORDS: Esthetics, Black and White Dichotomy, Culturality, Intercultural Ethics, Otherness, Transdisciplinarity.

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Introduction

With due regard to a globalized context, in which people move from one place to the other and in which goods, finances, but also services, information and values are exchanged around the globe, it is easy to sympathize with those who claim that identity is a notion which is hard to define; some even argue that the term should be abandoned (cf. Ylander, 2004,p.36). Sure, they still exist those 'classic' identities – a shepherd in the Maluti Mountains in Lesotho, a rice farmer in Chinese or Indian rice fields and a cashier in an Iranian supermarket. Some of those identities might still not be very complex, singular (e.g. having one profession or one single ethnic background), exposed to many different influencing incidences of otherness and thus more or less definable. But identities in the globalized context are constantly exposed to diverse phenomena of otherness; identities are 1) influenced by many different factors, 2) contingent to circumstances (cf. Mawondo, 2007,pp.12-13), 3) multiple (e.g. having different professions or diverse educational or ethnic backgrounds, or two nationalities), 4) changing and thus 5) complex and lastly 6) indefinable. Identities in the globalized context are not only confronted frequently with the phenomenon of otherness, but are quite often the 'other' themselves. So, how should one deal with otherness in the globalized context?

It must be noted that I will not proceed with the term 'otherness' in the Lacanian sense, as a psychoanalytical category where – in terms of the development of child - the first other is mother (cf. Žižek, 2006,pp.7-11; Homer, 2005,pp.70-79). 'Otherness' in this paper describes that

which is in one or the other aspect different to one's own identity (this should not be read as a definition, since I do assume that otherness is indefinable in a philosophical sense). Identity refers to that which is constituted by physical, psychic, or mental characteristics and is shaped by numerous diverse socio-cultural factors. Factors which contribute to shaping identity are such as family, history, peer group, education, profession, partner(s), religious belief(s), political orientation, ethnic group, 'race', culture, nationality, experience, social 'class', milieu, talents, (dis)abilities, sexual orientation, hobbies, and so forth. Since identities are contingent to specific circumstances and depended upon some or more of the above mentioned factors, they are changing, complex, multiple, and thus not definable.

Before giving my simple answer to the normative question of how to deal with otherness in the context of globalization in particular and multi-, inter- and transculturality in general, the paper touches some basics in ethics. Here I will try to clarify what ethical approach we will favor - namely none in particular, but a combination of the three standard approaches. After that it will clarify the notions of multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinarity and multi-, inter-, and transculturality. With the help of that I will go on to illustrate a transdisciplinary approach by exemplifying a pertinent issue in intercultural ethics – the South African black and white discourse. Thereafter I intend to show how stereotypes and narcissism can be discovered in any social and intercultural context. Finally a simple normative outlook will be given suggesting how to deal with otherness in an intercultural context.

1. Normative Ethical Considerations

In the area of applied ethics one or more normative theories are usually applied to a practical problem in question: 1) deontology or duty theory, most famously associated with Immanuel Kant's *categorical imperative*, but often expressed also in *The Golden Rule* argument (which is not the same as the categorical imperative), 2) virtue ethics, which can be traced back to its most prominent protagonist Aristotle in the western context and to the even much older virtue philosophies in the Asian context, and 3) consequentialism, elaborately established by the famous utilitarian philosopher, John Stuart Mill. Deontological theories have the metaphysical problem that they need to explain where the duty originates. Virtue ethicists usually discover that in different cultures virtues and values might be different as well; and consequentialists face the problem that evil means might have to be defined as 'quasi-' good, if and only if, the end is good or beneficial for a majority. I claim – without engaging myself into the metaphysical discussion, which I leave to metaethicists – that it is difficult to prove that duties come from somewhere beyond the human being and its existence. Of course if we bring a God into play the problem is solved more easily. But not all cultures and religions believe in such a kind of universal valid duties generating by God. And I hold it with Lessing's *Natan der Weise* (1779, III,p.7) who states that it is quite difficult to say which of those religions (or cultures) is the best, real, or the ideal one. In spite of the fact that there are commonalities which can be found in different cultures and religions, a certain degree of cultural relativism seems to be unavoidable. Virtue ethics opens the ground for cultural different virtues and thus for relativity of values (e.g. values pertaining to community issues, life and death in Asian African and Central-European cultures). As such, of course, values and virtues deriving from

different cultures can be in line or compatible with each other, but can also clash (e.g. the value and honor of elderly people in Central European, African, and Asian cultures). The greatest benefit, happiness, or good for the greatest number of people is a theoretical powerful tool and strong like 'dynamite', for getting the most out of a 'quarry', but the theory and its practical application notoriously neglects minorities and otherwise disadvantaged or less privileged groups, which is like sensitive material hidden or scattered within the 'mass'. However, consequentialism gives a good rough orientation but it needs to be supplemented with other ethical approaches if it comes to practical issues. Consequentialism in the form of Utilitarianism alone is a theory which works fine from a distant perspective because the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people seems to be obvious with a cursory glance. But it gives us an additional problem if we take the time line into consideration as well: what do we mean by the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people: The greatest benefit for the greatest number of people or sentient beings now, tomorrow, in one week, two months, three years, four decades or five centuries?

From an extremist holistic non-anthropocentric environmentalist viewpoint to kill all those humans who permanently act in a malevolent way against nature would be the greatest benefit for the greatest number of sentient beings on this planet, although no law on the earth would justify such a killing. The dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima, and Nagasaki had been justified on consequentialists grounds (cf. Walzer, 1977, pp.263-283) since – according to consequentialist reasoning – it could be argued that a greater evil (prolonging the war and thus even more casualties) had been avoided by dropping the bombs. Walzer himself notes that this line of argumentation is tricky.

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Since the USA war policy only wanted to accept an unconditional surrender of Japan it was expected “*that the Japanese would fight almost to the last man*”, to make US “*invasion so costly that the Americans would agree to a negotiated peace*” (*Ibid*,pp.266-267). However, what is to be illustrated here is that the supposedly greatest benefit for the greatest number of people is sometimes questionable as a general guideline, if not supplemented by additional elements, for example elements of virtue ethics.

Exaggeratedly and aggregately it is often argued that on the daily basis it appears that many Germans are duty driven, but also consider the consequences of their acts as highly important, while many Africans act according to specific African virtues, values, and duties. For instance the *Ubuntu* concepts hold that a person is constituted by the society in which it is embedded (cf. Ramose, 2003, pp.230-238). Asians influenced by Confucian ethics seem to be virtue and duty driven, while in many aspects of British and American culture utilitarianism mainly seems to rule the conduct of life. All these statements are made – of course – from a superficial standpoint. However, those statements might still be acceptable for a travel guide book, but their acceptability for a philosophical account is limited owing to the generalizing momentum; although the philosophical and ethical implications of the ‘culture’ sections in guidebooks usually helps a great deal to find the moral mainstream in a particular culture. In globalized multi-, inter-, and transcultural contexts, theoretical reasoning about practical moral issues is more complex than in ‘monocultural’ ones.

Be that as it may, but in every day conduct most humans are guided by many principles and their conduct cannot be pinpointed to one single motivational moral theory. If we calculate why one should help an elderly lady to go across the

street, the decision is usually driven by virtue, duty, and responsibility, but also by consequentialist considerations. I hold – and that might not even be provable through empirical sociological and psychological research, but elucidated by honest introspection – that we more or less take all three moral accounts into consideration. It is beneficial for all (except for those who don't like her), if she goes safely across the street, but despite that it is also virtuous to help in such circumstances, and it is according to duties we should perform. Now, the descriptive ethical consideration can be turned into a normative suggestion, or more precisely we should act according to good virtues, duties, and keep an eye on relevant consequences as well. A good person having sufficient time and not acting in an emergency situation usually thinks and acts according to such considerations. In emergency situations which high numbers of casualties are involved professional guidelines shift more into the direction of consequentialism (Kipnis, 2004, pp.98-100), although the same behavior and professional guideline could also be developed from virtue ethical and duty theoretical point of view, because one can always maintain that it is a virtue to act in such and such a way in such and such circumstances, the same applies to the duty theoretical explanation. In short, the three theories are different - analytically distinguished - explanations and recommendations for good moral conduct. In moral reality – if time in accordance to circumstances allows – all three accounts have to be taken into consideration to approach ethical dilemmas at hand.

2. Multi-, Inter-, Trans-, -Disciplinarity and –Culturality

Before giving an example in the field of investigation I should differentiate between often interchangeably used terms: Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary, and Transdisciplinary;

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Multicultural, Intercultural, and Transcultural. From the Latin origin we come to know that *multi* means 'many', *inter* 'between' in terms of time, space, and other phenomena, *trans* means 'beyond' or 'from - one time, space, phenomena, subject - (in)to the other'.

Let us consider some examples: *multilingual* are persons speaking - or media using - more than two languages (meaning at least trilingual, not bilingual); a *multinational* company operates and/or has branches in more than two countries. A *multidisciplinary* approach exploits other approaches and knowledge originating from different disciplines, and a *multicultural* society is one which is composed of several (distinct) cultures. An *interstate* highway is a wide road facilitating fast travel between states (in the USA or in Australia). Travel or transport between planets or stars is called *interstellar* (especially in science fiction literature and films). An *interlude* is a piece of music (or performance) connecting two bigger parts of a composition. *Interdisciplinary* studies or subjects handle phenomena or approaches situated between two or more disciplines, e.g. the issue of ethnic identity can be situated between cultural anthropology, cultural sociology and cultural studies. The interdisciplinary approachable phenomenon of consumerism is situated at the *intersection* of ethics, psychology, sociology, economics, and education. The word *intercultural* best describes phenomena influenced, or do take place in the context of two or more each other approaching, merging, or advancing cultures or subcultures; for example *interfaith* or *intercultural* dialogue (cf. Yusuf, 2007). A *transvestite* is a person who adopts the dress (vestimenta: Lat. clothes) of a 'different' gender. The usage of 'opposite' gender is less problematic than 'different' gender, because it can be argued that more than only two (opposing) genders exist (cf. Baudrillard, 1996). An example is the Thai

'ladyboy' Thai: *kathoey*), a male to female transgender (also referred to as 'shemale' or 'the third sex'). Transgender persons are of a particular gender but have an urge to belong to a different one. To *transcend* means to go beyond the limits of something, to *transport* is to bring something from *a* to *b* and to *translate* is to render content of language *a* into language *b*. *Transdisciplinary* refers to 1) an approach usually used in discipline *a* transferred to or applied in discipline *b*, e.g. using psychoanalytical theory in film studies or marketing, or to 2) an issue traditionally treated in a particular discipline *a* is transferred into discipline *b*, say the discussion of color theory usually discussed in art and esthetic context can also be utilized in discussing racial and ethical issues – this approach is exemplified in the section *The South African Black and White Discourse* further down. Music is mostly *transcultural*; the producers of Madonna's music, since the turn of the millennium, import Asian features in her dance-pop music. Many African musicians use typically Western (US-American and European) elements in 'traditional' African music (the question here is, if the term 'traditional' is still appropriate). And again, many types of "American" forms of music (e.g. Blues, Jazz, Rock'n'Roll) have been strongly influenced by traditional African elements. Multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinarity can of course be better distinguished analytically than in real life phenomena, the same applies to multi-, inter-, and transculturality. While in multidisciplinary and multicultural three approaches or cultures have at least to be involved, for inter- and transdisciplinarity and inter- and transculturality the involvement of two disciplines or cultures is respectively sufficient. So if a Pakistani uses typical Pakistani elements to make Indian food this style of cooking is a case of 'intercultural' or 'transcultural' not multicultural cuisine. If the Malaysian Muslims prepare Italian, Malaysian

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and Vietnamese dishes in a relatively distinct manner, their menu offers multicultural dishes.

In South African culture many elements of multi-, inter-, and transculturality can be discovered as well: If it comes to some cases of South African architecture or interior design diverse elements from different cultures are merged (very often the case in guest houses or B&Bs); for instance elements taken from Basotho, British, Dutch, Xhosa and Zulu culture; a concrete example is Dutch or British colonial style architecture of outer appearance of houses, especially walls, but a Basotho style thatched roof, and inside the typical South African mix of interior architecture might be found: western style furniture with African motifs and patterns.

If it comes to the living together of members of diverse cultures and subcultures, a very crucial aspect is the qualitative facet of their 'being-together'. The terms multi-, inter-, and transculturality do not usually qualify how members of different cultures live together – segregated, assimilated, or integrated. This issue is a very problematic one and not easily discussable in this single contribution, and needs thorough separate consideration and discussion (cf. Bohlken, 2002 ; 2003,pp.406-426).

3. Otherness

Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* analytically distinguishes between three kinds of friendship: friendship based on utility, pleasure, and virtue. According to Aristotle only friendship based on virtue is really realized as *telos* and the other two types are just called friendship but are not real friendship since for these two kinds of 'friendship' the friend is not another self but just a means to an end – for pleasure or for some kind of utility. It must be noted that Aristotle maintains that friendship based on virtue incorporates pleasure and utility as well, but they are

not the main features. Aristotle further elaborates on the question if friends are attracted to each other by otherness or similarity (1159b-1160a). He holds that it can be both similarity and otherness, but long lasting and intensive friendship seems to be more signified by similarity, “because what is common holds things together” (1162a-b). Having empirically treated, it seems that Aristotle is right here, since we can observe that long term friendships are also held together by common interest, characteristics, virtues, culture, and sub-culture, respectively, language, religion, profession (and leisure time activities, this applies especially in countries robustly driven by economic interests – economy driven countries, so called ‘developed’ countries)

The other side of the coin of vice versa attraction in human nature is ‘neophilia’, the ‘love of the new’. By nature humans are not fixed constantly and uninterruptedly to one object for a very long time. But every friendship begins also with the discovery of the other and the unknown (cf. Meinhold, 2005, pp.81-83). So it appears that humans are attracted by both otherness and familiar commonalities, but the commonalities are responsible for long run friendship. Our own observation of virtuous long term relationships (friends and life partners in an Aristotelian sense) suggests that in many cultures the combination of three factors play a crucial role for such relations 1) similar values, 2) compatible lifestyles, and 3) compatible future perspectives.

In cultural sciences the inquiry into otherness often results in the discovery of commonalities. One such example is the comparative religious scholarship by Mircea Eliade (1951; 1954; 1957; 1988). He discovered many common phenomena in different cultures and religions such as *imitatio dei* (the imitation of divine and quasi-divine figures by priests or other members of a society), transition rituals, and

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shamanism just to name a few. In comparative studies, Commonalities discovered in otherness do not only show cultural similarities but also point to fundamental roots of human nature – e.g. human's drive to imitate, the spiritual and intellectual ability to create myths and metaphysical endeavor. Saint-Exupéri in his *Little Prince* (1974) describes that the establishment of friendship takes time - otherness gradually becomes familiar.

I am now making an example of a transdisciplinary approach applied to an intercultural phenomenon of 'otherness'. We are transferring an esthetical approach into the political, ethical, and 'racial' black and white discourse¹. With this approach I attempt to portray that otherness is often dichotomized, politicized, and 'constructed' and has to be 'deconstructed' to reconstruct the relation between different cultural groups which regard their fellow human beings with different cultural backgrounds as 'the other' (e.g. 'the black man' and 'the white man'). Deconstructing 'otherness' reveals that the 'other' is less different than what has been claimed by mainstream opinions in every day discourse. This deconstructing process is a necessary (pre-) requisite for mutual understanding.

4. The South African Black and White Discourse

The so-called black and white people in the Republic of South Africa (RSA) are statistically and aggregately seen very clear economic opposites, the economic 'color divide' is obvious – that is without doubt.

'Blacks' and 'Whites' – these labels help to distinguish one from another. But they are wrong – at least, if seen from an *esthetic* point of view: This dichotomy applied to the description of the

1. For a more detailed account cf. Meinhold, 2007, pp.12-20

density of human skin pigment does not reflect the whole esthetic reality. Human beings are not simply black or white in skin color; this categorization is not precise, and the black and white scheme is a simplifying reductionism. Black and white 'colors' are *opposites* or *extremes*, while humans with contrasting skin pigmentations are by no means necessarily opposites or extremes. This esthetic opposition may lead to an anthropological extremism and thus to an ethical problem.

In esthetics – a diversity of African contrasting accounts are still desiderata – black and white 'colors' are considered as special or even 'unreal' colors. Black and white – but also grey and neutral – are often called 'achromatic' colors. The Greek word *chroma* [gen. *chromatos*] means color, the prefix 'a' – an *alpha privativum* – negates the following word: *chroma*; thus black and white are 'non-color-colors'. Black and white are so to speak 'off limits': they do not appear in the spectral wheel as well as all other color mixtures which need black or white pigments as elements, such as pink (red and white) or dark blue (blue and black). In light of that, a number of applications of color schemes to humans appear to be imprecise.

A symbolically valuable but imprecise application of a color schema to humans is the notion of the 'rainbow nation'. The notion was first used by Nelson Mandela in a symbolic and normative way: the different ethnic groups in South Africa should be brought together harmoniously in the same way as the color harmony in a rainbow could be observed. Between the colors of the rainbow there is no clear line of demarcation, rather a borderless flow from one color into the other. But when it comes to the application of the colors of the rainbow to humans themselves the symbol fails to be precise and correct: the rainbow has no black and white components but red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple

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ones. The so-called black and white people do not find their skin color represented in the colors of the rainbow. Even a slightly more adequate color description for black and white skin, like the colors brown and beige-rosé, do not describe colors which can be found in the rainbow. Neither the majority of South Africans are represented in that symbol nor minorities such as Indians and the so-called 'whites'.

As we can see from the approach taken above, the black and white schema is imprecise because so-called black or white people are not really and entirely black or white, but darker or lighter *brown* and white ones are not really white, but rather lighter or darker *beige-rosé*. Brown and beige-rosé are not esthetic *opposites* or *extremes* like black and white. Black and white '*colors*' are extremes and opposites. On the same basis tall and small people could be considered as extremes, people with blue and brown eyes, those with big and small noses or ears, lighter and darker hair and so forth... so we would not talk about blacks and whites, but about 'talls' and 'smalls', 'browns', 'blues', 'greens' and so on. Because if you can signify a man by his skin color *alone*, why should it be not possible to signify a person in the same way by body height or eye color?, despite that we do not really need to signify and categorize human beings by colors and measures.

The achromatic black and white opposition also entails symbolical implications. Black and white '*colors*' are opposing extremes – black and white *people* are not, but the usage of the terms black and white and its opposing implications suggest that everything that *is* black or white must somehow be one part of an opposing extreme. Additionally in many cases, black is the negative side of the two extremes, whereas white is seldom connoted negatively, usually black and white are also symbolical extremes (again additionally a specific African perspective is essential to complement the picture).

Examples are: black sheep, black market, the black man (somebody to be afraid of, dark, unknown, dangerous), black as symbol of death, (mourning clothes and black bands). From these examples we can see that *black* 'color' – not exclusively, but quite often – symbolizes the *negative* side of two extremes while white stands for the positive aspect. And – this is already included in the former argument – black and white always symbolize two *extremes* which normally *exclude* each other (day–night; life–death; male–female). Black and white playing figures and opposed squares of the chess board do not only display opposites but antagonists and enemies. The effect of these symbolical implications of the two colors is that we think about opposites, dichotomies, extremes, and antagonisms if we speak of black and white, and this engram of polarity cannot be erased easily.

It is essential to note that some research must be undertaken so as to realize what color analysis well suits a pre-colonial African esthetic perspective. Here it would be necessary to find out if black and white hues were as well seen as extremes and opposites and what symbolical meanings they had or still have.

From an esthetic point of view, 'brown' and 'beige-rosé' are more adequate color descriptions for the skin of so-called 'black' and 'white' people than the labels 'black' and 'white'. Beige-rosé and brown are neither esthetic extreme nor are they part of an esthetical polarization. Nevertheless individuals should not be named 'browns' or 'beige-rosés', because *skin* is only the 'wrapping' of the body. Individuals should not be signified by their skin color alone, even if the skin is the largest surface which can be seen of an individual. We do not signify individuals by eye color, but sometimes by hair color and use descriptions like she *is* blonde/fair or he *is* grey. But in both cases we would suggest not to signify an

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individual by a color *alone*, because this kind of reductionism omits too many elements of a person and her/his personality.

In light of the above-mentioned arguments, my normative suggestions are (1) to abandon the term 'white' for descriptions of individuals – because nobody's skin is really an entirely white – and apply the term 'black' only for those very few whose skin is really black, but not (dark) brown. I would also like to suggest (2) to abandon the signification of a human being by color *alone* – irrespectively if skin, hair or eye color – because that reductionism and oversimplification omits various other important innate or socio-cultural aspects more important in the context of daily life-centered solving problems. Thus one should *not* say "She is black or white", but "The color of her skin is (dark or light) brown or beige-rosé". In that way we would not talk about the *entire person*, but about her/his surface; our words describe something superficial with a "superficial" term. If we say "S/he is black" we use a term which is meant to describe a surface, but we signify the *whole* human being or maybe even the *essence* of the being.

5. Narcissism

The imprecise application of the black and white color schemes to humans shows how easily stereotypes and dichotomies are used in every day discourse. An additional problem arises with arrogance and narcissism. While arrogance is often based on fear, ignorance or narcissism, on a parochial discernment, can be seen as both, as a fundamental anthropological feature and/or as a psychopathological disorder; each human being's personality is probably situated somewhere between narcissism as human fundamental feature and psychopathology. A certain degree of self-love seems to be natural and even essential or vital in human beings.

But narcissism as an exaggerated self-love is also not unusual in everyday life. The DSM IV categorization mentions following features or symptoms of narcissism: strong feeling of own importance, exaggeration concerning one's own talents and achievements, strong fantasies regarding one's own power, success, beauty etc., expectation of strong admiration, taking advantage in social relations (philosophically seen: treating people as means, not as ends), low compassion, jealousy and arrogance. Interestingly such personal traits or features cannot only be discovered with individuals, but with social groups as well. So the categorization can be transferred to family, gender, religion, village, nationality, culture, 'race', ethnic group, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, social class or milieu and species (cf. Cohen, 2002,p.193). A few examples for illustration (I will use the words 'some' and 'many' to illustrate unqualified generalizations and stereotypizations based on narcissism in the wider sense): some feminists claim that masculine part of the society has a positive attitude towards themselves and a negative one towards women, so many men think that they are more powerful and successful in art, science and politics than women. Some men are proud of their house-external achievements, while women are not admired in the same way for achievements at home, related-to-family issues and child bearing. And again, the same narcissist features can be discovered in racism. Some African Philosophers claim, that (some) Europeans think they are more important than Africans and some Europeans hold that they contribute more to culture and technology, because some of them are more powerful or successful in art, science and politics. So quite often some Europeans are admired for their cultural achievements, while Africans are not. Especially during colonial but also during Apartheid era in South Africa, some of the colonizers treated the native Africans not as ends in

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themselves, but as means. And to date some Europeans feel little compassion for Africans suffering due to poverty, starvation, famine and HIV pandemic on the African continent. If we would apply the DSM IV category to this kind of Europeans the group had to be classified as narcissist. As mentioned before the same DSM IV categories can be applied to the other groups mentioned above and in the end to humanity as a whole as well, since humans usually think that they are more important than the rest of nature – a phenomenon which is called also speciesism, a term coined by the psychologist Richard D. Ryder and popularized by the philosopher Peter Singer (2009). A speciesist approach usually treats the rest of nature as means, but not as end.

Environmental ethicists, conservation biologists, animal rights activists, environmentalists, and sustainable development specialists have shown that this is not the strategy with the help of which humanity and the rest of nature will be able to survive in the long run and have therefore developed strategies which strive to minimize human narcissism, speciesism, and misbehavior towards nature. Of course here in the area of environmental ethics but also if it comes to nationalism, racism and patriarchy the first step is enlightenment and understanding with the help of deconstructing otherness as in the 'black & white' example above.

Conclusion and Recommendation

We are constantly confronted with the phenomena of otherness in today's world of increasing and accelerating globalization. Therefore it is even more essential than in the past to carefully deconstruct stereotypes, generalizations, and (over-)simplifications. History taught us sufficiently about the problematic consequences of parochial approaches and

worldviews. One viable method to overcome limited worldviews is to educate ourselves and critically question established dichotomies (as the black & white dualism) or simplifications such as “Muslims are terrorists” and the politically by the George W. Bush administration propagated ‘axis of good and evil’. Otherwise a stand-up comedy sketch of an US American Muslim comes true: “*My name is Ahmed Ahmed and I really can't fly anywhere*”.

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