Cultures and Conflict: Attending to the Pathemata

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The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy 2014
Official Conference Proceedings 2014

0343

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The International Academic Forum
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Understanding the nature and causes of terrorism has occupied a very prominent position in both the practical and theoretical spheres with great urgency particularly since the tragic events of the 11th of September 2001. Nevertheless, terrorism is a very old phenomenon when defined from a position of power. Definitions abound. One could look for the examples provided in the US Code and Army Manuals of the early 1980s or the formulation of the British government which is substantially similar declaring as terrorism "…the use, or threat, of action which is violent, damaging or disrupting, and is intended to influence the government or intimidate the public and is for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, or ideological cause."[1] Noam Chomsky in a devastating, passionate and caustic critique of foreign and domestic policies of "enlightened" states, together with the intellectual orthodoxies which prevail in "enlightened" societies, has persuasively demonstrated that such definitions will not do. And the reason is simple because the definition applies both historically and contemporaneously to the policies not just of "them" – the terrorists, but also to the policies and activities of the governments of "enlightened" societies – "us". Chomsky highlights numerous examples, here I will mention just a few to bring home the force of the point.

The official definitions are unusable, because of their immediate consequences. One difficulty is that the definition of terrorism is virtually the same as the definition of the official policy of the US, and other states, called 'counter-terrorism' or 'low-intensity' warfare or some other euphemism…. Japanese imperialists in Manchuria and North China, for example, were not aggressors or terrorists, but were protecting the population and the legitimate governments from the terrorism of 'Chinese bandits'…. When the UN General Assembly, in response to Reaganite pressures, passed its strongest condemnation of terrorism in 1987, with a call on all states to destroy the plague of the modern age. The resolution passed 153 to 2, with only Honduras abstaining. The two states that opposed the resolution explained their reasons in the UN debate. They objected to a passage recognizing 'the right to self-determination, freedom, and independence, as derived from the Charter of the United Nations, of people forcibly deprived of that right …, particularly peoples under colonial and racist regimes and foreign occupation.' The term 'colonial and racist regimes' was understood to refer to South Africa, a US ally, resisting the attacks of Nelson Mandela's ANC, one of the world's 'more notorious terrorist groups,' as Washington determined at the same time. And 'foreign occupation' was understood to refer to Washington's Israeli client. So, not surprisingly, the US and Israel voted against the resolution, which was thereby effectively vetoed – in fact, subjected to the usual double veto: inapplicable, and vetoed from reporting and history as well, though it was the strongest and most important UN resolution on terrorism.[2]

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[1] Quoted in Noam Chomsky, "Simple Truths, Hard Problems: thoughts on terror, justice and self-defence", *Philosophy*, 80, 2005, p. 18. For further definitional issues see C.A.J. Coady, "Terrorism and Innocence", The Journal of Ethics, 8, 2004, pp. 37-58; Virginia Held, "Terrorism and War", The Journal of Ethics, 8, 2004, pp. 59-75; Stephen Lukes, "Liberal Democratic Torture", British Journal of Political Science, 36, 2005, pp. 1-16; Jeremy Waldron, "Terrorism and the Uses of Terror", The Journal of Ethics, 8, 2004, pp. 5-35.

[2] N. Chomsky, *op. cit*., pp. 18-19.

Chomsky catalogues a disturbing history of double standards in respect to terrorism in relation to Syria, Israel, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans and in several South American countries, all conceived of in terms of the definitions of terrorism being plastic enough only to apply to "them" and never "us". Opponents of the "might is right" political and moral thesis gaze back with horror at the island of Melos.

So what can a philosopher hope to contribute to a debate on terrorism? Definitions are especially difficult since "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." I suspect that issues such as terrorism need to be viewed in a broader context in philosophy and especially moral philosophy. If we can place in "brackets" for a moment an "us/them" mentality we can situate the debate within the context of deeply contested and incommensurable discourses over the very nature of rationality and moral dispute.

The range of fundamental disagreements in respect to issues of deeply held beliefs in both philosophy and everyday life is extraordinary. Clearly the domain of the religious is one central arena of deeply cherished but fundamental beliefs which radically diverge. Here we may think of the disputes that often violently divide the Muslim from the Jew, the Hindu from the Buddhist and all of the religious traditions from the atheist. This is true not just between religions but within religious traditions as is so painfully witnessed in the internecine conflict between various Christian denominations as too the tensions between the Sunni and Shia factions of Islam. Such religious disagreements are often enough supervened by political dimensions. In philosophy too whole departments in the academies have on deeply held beliefs fallen apart.[3] The sheer amount and intensity of contested beliefs surely forces us to ask whether there is a position or positions (beliefs) that are incontestably true. The battlefield of waring beliefs apparently suggests a negative response.

The late philosopher David Lewis wrote that:

Whether or not it would be nice to knock disagreeing philosophers down by sheer force of argument, it cannot be done …. Once the menu of well-worked out theories is before us, philosophy is a matter of opinion.[4]

As I have mentioned fundamental disagreement among philosophers is standard and often venomous as the disputes between "analytic" and "continental European" philosophy attests. But it is perhaps worthwhile to point out what may be likely sources of such disagreement and dispute among rational discussants as this may prove helpful in identifying underlying structures of disagreement and fundamental belief that can issue in terrorism.[5] First of all people have deeply embedded beliefs of a religious, moral, political or scientific dimension that are acquired independently of studying philosophy. Secondly, there are the crucial formative influences of the

[3] I have in mind here, by way of example, the splitting of the philosophy department at Sydney University into two separate departments divided on ideological (and no doubt personal) grounds, as well as the political disputes that effected the university of Louvain (Leuven).
[4] D. Lewis, *Philosophical Papers,* Vol. 1, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1983, pp. x and xi.
[5] In the following section I am deeply grateful to discussions held in June, 2005 with Alasdair MacIntyre at The Erasmus Institute Summer Faculty Seminar held at the University of Notre Dame du Lac, South Bend, Indiana.

student entering into philosophy, including the importance of teachers, fellow interlocutors, and the manner in which philosophy is first broached. Thirdly, there is the particular academic setting or context, the institutional allegiances and dominant forms of discourse and enquiry and the temperaments of the individuals involved. Finally, one can point to the underlying psychological or social causes that predispose individuals to adopt or favour certain viewpoints or attitudes.

Now the importance of this very brief analysis of the causes of fundamental disagreements in philosophical circles lies (not in the failure of reason *per se*) in the commitments that we fatefully "grow" into. Some, if not all, of our most deeply held positions are not at all the result of reasoned enquiry but belong to the realm of habituation and affect. It is my contention that this is the arena in which we must look for the causes and cures for terrorism. In the rest of this paper I would like to concentrate on the existential dimensions of such profound disagreement seeking out the dimensions of affect that enculturate our beliefs, in doing so I will appeal to the importance of narrative and story-telling as a strategy to overcome radical disagreement. At an existential level the problems appear quite clearly. The radical subjectivism and relativism of so many students is but one indication of the malaise. Contemporary society and more pointedly the contemporary university have elevated the virtue of tolerance to the centre stage. If we have no way to bring to closure the interminability of ethical debate, if we have agreed that there are no satisfactory rational resolutions to moral dilemmas and if we cannot agree on a substantive account of rationality that could settle debates, then, we ought to be subjectivists or relativists (or perhaps sceptics). Justice, once conceived of as the cornerstone of the virtues, with its ordering power of temperance, no doubt historically embedded, but nonetheless a fundamental power of the human soul, has given way to a pluralism which rejects any unity of the virtues, any objective account of the nature of human reason (and of the human person who exercises such reason). Incommensurabilty is ensconced at the very heart of debate and incommensurabilty names the contemporary zeitgeist.[6] Students and their teachers burdened with the deadening impact of the Zeitgeist or what Plato refers to as the Great Sophist[7] - the embodiment of the zeitgeist in pedagogy and politics- are ineluctably enmeshed in the system. The political and the pedagogical rehearse together the myopic pursuit of economic *tele*, reducing even the desire to understand and devaluing the pursuit of reflectiveness, and since tolerance above all must be respected, we will become politically correct.

It is quite clear that this rather dramatic and stark cameo of contemporary reality is deeply contestable but I think that enough of us can recognise our own parts in the tragedy to allow it to stand for the sake of my argument. Because I only need this to represent one aspect of the nature of our daily lives for the argument to proceed. I am interested in the "attitudes" that derive from the characteristics I have highlighted above and how they inform debate. At a strategic level, in debate, several phenomena attest to these "attitudes." No doubt the strategies I will soon adumbrate are old but nevertheless they have achieved a kind of apotheosis in the contemporary world.

The central strategy in debate I would like to highlight is often in colloquial terms referred to as "pigeon-holing." The phenomenon itself is ordinary and in itself not as

[6] Here I am concerned with "rational" incommensurability not "value" incommensurability.
[7] Plato, *Republic*, 492-493.

interesting as what it yields at the level of existential and intellectual communication. Pigeon-holing is a typical approach to intellectual understanding. One seeks to understand the other and his/her views by categorising the other in a wider context. Thus, one knows better what strategy of debate to adopt once an initial categorisation strategy has already been adopted, that is, once one knows whether one's interlocutor is, by way of examples, conservative or radical, Liberal or Labour, a feminist, an economic rationalist, a Marxist, a deconstructionist, an atheist, agnostic or Christian.

Indeed, there is nothing disingenuous about such strategies. They are central to debate and are ensconced in metaphysics and logic, not p is defined or grasped in contradistinction to p, non-being as the contrary of being. When we seek to understand the positions of a difficult philosopher it is often enough useful to see who that philosopher's intellectual opponents would be, and this will provide occasion for further reflection and understanding.[8]

Nevertheless, such a strategy has in existential terms important and unfortunate, but perhaps not necessary, consequences. Let us say, for example, I am considering in a dialectical interchange a topic of deep contention and moral relevance. One could choose among a great variety of morally contentious issues but let us focus on the issue of artificial contraception. Let us suppose further that one's interlocutor identifies one as a traditional catholic. As soon as this strategy is adopted a perceptible shift occurs at the level of existential communication. Because our catholic is emotionally and intellectually attached to the catholic tradition the debate quickly places him in an awkward position. Instead of reasonably dealing with the issue at hand he becomes a representative of a tradition and partly because he is seen as such by his interlocutor. Perhaps he feels constrained, for example, to defend the cogency of the Catholic Church's prohibition on artificial conception if one accepts their premises.

Existentially dialectical communication has moved away from the arena of genuine interchange between persons and the debate has entered the realm of ideology. Our catholic has become the representative of a tradition and a whole universe of thought and belief. Moreover, since his interlocutor is committed to a very different viewpoint, let us say she is a secular Feminist, he imposes his own form of pigeon-holing on her as well. Here we are confronted with all the intellectually hardened and encrusted views, reasons and arguments that embody the discourses from within which our interlocutors are identified. In a very important sense the catholic has lost sight of the other as person just as the secular feminist has done. Both are no doubt still communicating but at a different level and on a platform that will rarely yield understanding or advance debate. Such strategies as pigeon-holing can lead to the interminability of contemporary ethical debates.

There is a kind of tiresome inevitability to such strategies. Clearly however they are neither odd nor even deliberatively obstructive, we abandon ourselves to the strategies because they are so commonplace, so ordinary. Our identities are forged in very complex ways with overlapping and sometimes contradictory arenas of care and concern. It is partly because we are affectively bound up in communities of identity that we tend towards such strategies. The deeper one's affective commitments the

[8] Professor J. J. McEvoy used this methodology as one pedagogical tool, and I have found it invaluable.

more readily we rise to meet challenges to such affective commitment. These are not matters peripheral to us but rather they are partially constitutive of who we are. So on the one hand the phenomenon of pigeon-holing often lends to identification with intellectual positions beyond the scope of the dialogue, and on the other, the other and myself are no longer communicating in the real sense of participative dialogue.

Alasdair MacIntyre's philosophical analysis of the bankruptcy of contemporary moral debate provides an especially powerful analysis of the dynamics of incommensurable rationalisations.[9] The shrill clamour of assertion and counter assertion is deeply dependent on his provocative and somewhat depressing analysis of incommensurable rational discourses, and the practices, traditions and narrative histories within which they evolve and are played out. Concepts such as reason and ethics are diverse and diverge because, according to MacIntyre, they are tradition dependent. And even if some form of Thomistic Aristotelianism is adopted as a superior mode of rational inquiry because it in principle can deal with lacunae and epistemological crises in other modes of rationality, it too, falls prey to the spectre of having no epistemological foundational account, outside of that particular tradition, which secures once and for all, the truth claims within that tradition. Once again we are haunted by Lewis's dictum that "Once the menu of well-worked out theories is before us, philosophy is a matter of opinion."[10]

Existentially we are left with little more than the intellectually encrusted rationalisations that mark the contours and perspectives of our own traditions, and debate, aside from the epistemic crises that effect the internal coherence of particular traditions, is nothing but the ineffectual rattling of intellectual sabres.
It is in this context that the full force of existential narratives seems to cut through intellectual debates and opens the real possibility of dialectic. In Australia, despite the political polemics on broader questions of asylum seekers, the stories, once they are allowed to emerge, of suffering, can create new ways of approaching the issues. The life stories of those who have suffered the circumstances and conditions of injustice can create a community of affective concern. The same may be said of the narrative histories emerging from our fractured relationship with indigenous Australians. We are moved by the harrowing brutality (even if well-intentioned) meted out to the "stolen generations." While the average Australian may still be nervous about having an Aboriginal family or Afghan family as our next door neighbours, partly because we find it difficult to move beyond cultural stereotypes, and perhaps because we have certain viewpoints of an intellectually inchoate sort about the value of autonomy. Nevertheless, the stories embed themselves in the psyche and we find it increasingly difficult to accept the common forms of pigeon-holing, such as "queue-jumpers" or "dole bludgers."

Perhaps then the problem lies with our broader commitments (our *paideia*) as well as the manner in which we engage in debate. The hardened positions that are built up as rationalisations – political, social, economic, cultural, philosophical – amount to a failure, a failure that stories sometimes tear apart. Behind the intellectual positions, the rationalisations that foster both commitment and indifference, we are, from time to

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[9] See A. MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, Tradition*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1990; *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1988; *After Virtue*, London, Duckworth, 1981.
[10] D. Lewis, op.cit.

time brought into the domain of the fateful – "there but for the grace of God, go I." We affectively participate in the lives of others, and this intelligence of the heart cries and rails against injustice. It is this logic of the heart that identifies and affectively participates in the life of the other, that rekindles the bonds of broken humanity, and deepens our understanding of existential predicaments.

If I may be permitted I would like to recount a short personal story that I will call "The Day that Santa Claus Died." I tell this story to indicate just how deeply the problems of intellectual and affective identity shape the contours of a life, and how bigotry and myopia can be deeply engrained in a psyche, as a result of what befalls us and which only later take the shape of an intellectual position.
I grew up in a city – Belfast – and a country – the north of Ireland – that was from my earliest youth riven by factional dispute. My own movement towards philosophy is partially explained by the attempt to understand the conditions that framed my responses to this world.

First of all I grew up in an impoverished background. I lived in a small Catholic and Nationalist enclave of some 1,000 families completely surrounded by Protestant and Loyalist districts. Our family lived in a modest home with two rooms upstairs and two rooms with a scullery downstairs with an outside toilet in the back yard. We had no garden and the front door looked directly on the pavement of the tenement street. The old linen mills that had provided employment for my grandparent's generation were long closed by the time I was a lad, and the major source of employment in East Belfast was in ship-building. The great cranes of Harland and Wolff provided the daily backdrop towards the sea, while the Black Mountain loomed gloomily to the north. In Ballymacarrat, my area, there had been for sometime an effective rate of 80% unemployment among Catholics. Protestant families living only a stone throw away were employed for the most part in the docks and among the other attendant industries built on the back of sea trade.

My father is a large man of almost six feet two inches – a traditional catholic and family man – a man who under the most difficult circumstances lived out his religious beliefs with a very old fashioned morality. A man who learned to do house work, due to long periods of unemployment, when few men of his generation would have done so. A man who never went to the pub and although overtly emotionally restrained lived for his family.

One Christmas Eve, I must have been about 12 years old (and this may give you some idea of the naivety of the times or at least my own naivety) I told my Mum and Dad around 8.00 p.m. on a typically dark and wet Belfast winter night, that I was going for a walk to see if there were any signs of Santa Claus's imminent arrival. I even remember on returning home that I told my parents that I had thought I'd heard the tinkling of bells from Santa's sleigh. No doubt smiling to each other my Mum and Dad told me that Santa doesn't come to children unless they are asleep. So after laying out a glass of milk on the unlit hearth, I went up to bed where my sisters were already sleeping.

Nevertheless, I was far too excited to sleep and some time later I crept to the stairs and since the parlour door was open I peered in. It was the first time in my life that I had ever seen my father crying. He was very upset and I gathered from the tearful

conversation he was having with my mother that he had just been laid off from a job in a large bakery because they had found out he was a Catholic. As a result he was unable to buy us the Christmas presents he had hoped to. At the time this was deeply confusing and even frightening for me, not only had I seen a side of this normally emotionally restrained man I had not seen before, but I had also learnt that Santa Claus was not real.

As a young person the effect of this double revelation was traumatic. It marked the beginnings of an initiation into a sense of bigotry, of identifying with an economically, politically, educationally and socially deprived tribe. The intellectually hardened positions adopted as a young adult – anti-British, anti-Loyalist, pro-Republican – were to a large extent post facto rationalisations that occurred as a result of this incident and many others to follow. As years went by and one is struck by the monstrous inequities that plagued the political situation in the North of Ireland, it became all too easy to render the world into pigeon-hole us/them scenarios, and to excuse a culture of murder.

Perhaps the greatest irony in my story of living in such a milieu is that while I, like most Catholics would appeal to considerations of justice and injustice as ways of explicating our predicament, so too did Protestants. The fact that many Protestants lived in arguably only marginally better economic situations did not effect, until much later, my inability to identify with their identity and have concern for justice for them, and to an even greater extent, my antipathy towards, as I saw it, the source of the injustices in the historical duplicity of the British government.

My own experience bolstered by the violent deaths of family members, the bombings of our home, internment without trial and daily harassment from Loyalist gangs and the British forces are mere cameos in a situation that must be writ large. There are very few people in the North of Ireland, including the hundreds of British soldiers and those killed in the bombing campaigns in England who are untouched by events. Each has a story and a different set of evaluative criteria within which identity is forged. Each has their own conception of justice and injustice.

Philosophers, of course, have long ago identified these problems and some have attempted to provide strategies for overcoming them. Alasdair MacIntyre advocates Thomistic Aristotelianism on the basis that it has greater explanatory power than rival versions of moral inquiry such as Geneology or Encyclopaedia.[11] Habermas has taken a very different view embedded as he is in the values of the Enlightenment project and has proposed a communicative mode of moral deliberation.[12] In Jurisprudence the positivist tradition has sought to deal with irresolvable conflict in procedural ways.[13] Yet others have sought insight in the various methods of conflict resolution.[14] What these and other strategies have in common is the idea that that

[11] A. MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, op. cit.
[12] J. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Two Volumes, Beacon Press, 1984 & 1987.
[13] See H.J.M. Boukema, *Judging: Towards a Rational Judicial Process*, Zwolle, W.E.J. Tjeenk, 1980; H.L.A. Hart, *The Concept of Law*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1961; J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972, and *Political Liberalism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996.
[14] See K. Avruch, P.W. Black, J.A. Scimecca, (Eds.), *Conflict Resolution: Cross Cultural Perspectives*, New York, Greenwood Press, 1991; A. Tidwell, *Conflict Resolved? A Critical Assessment of Conflict Resolution*, New York, pinter, 1998; T. Attig, D. Callen, R.G. Frey, (Eds.), *Social Policy and Conflict Resolution*, Bowling Green, Bowling Green State University, 1984.

there must be some reasonable basis for accommodating radical difference, that radical difference need not ineluctably lead to conflict, that the conversation ought not to stop. And indeed, at least to this point I agree. Nevertheless, my suspicion is that we will not find the solution at the level of discussion about reasonableness. At this level everything remains contentious and a longer and harder road needs to be pursued.

So what if it turns out in the maelstrom of competing views about what is rational it turns out that it is something less susceptible to modern accounts of rationality that wins the day and keeps the conversation flowing. Feelings and emotions such as those we have when we affectively participate in stories and narratives I suspect are often enough more important than reason and indeed often enough reason follows in their wake. It is important to make it very clear here that I am not in any way advocating a wholesale rejection of rationality. I am making two interrelated points 1) that in situations of stark philosophical disagreement Lewis's idea that all is opinion closes off the possibility of discussion, and this need not occur, and 2) that in cases of stark philosophical disagreement appeals to considerations based upon conflicting accounts of rationality offer no way forward. Indeed, the argument I will presently put forward will have the conclusion that emotions and feelings are constitutive elements in what counts as reasonable and that without a thorough exploration of the existential grounds for beliefs, together with a *paideia* of desire, no possibility of agreement is achievable. However, while I will not pursue these latter points in detail I want to reiterate the key idea that this paper is offering a method to continue conversation.

This is the position, I believe, that Plato adopts at least in the *Gorgias*.[15] The theme of the *Gorgias* is that of existential and not merely intellectual communication and the theme is developed within the context of war and battle (*polemou kai maches*) presaged by the opening line of the dialogue. Socrates sets himself up against what he conceives of as the corrupt and decadent state of Athenian society – the battle to be waged is over the soul of the youth.[16] Gorgias, the Sophist and teacher of rhetoric will bring his formidable skills of oratory to the service of *Realpolitik*, while Socrates will point to the fundamental aspects of human connectedness which unite both individuals and communities. Gorgias will threaten violence, Socrates will seek to persuade by attempting to touch the existential core of his opponents and to keep conversation alive by opening up to the vista of the *pathemata*.

It is Socrates who introduces the fundamental question when he suggests to Chaerophon that he should ask of Gorgias 'Who he is?' (447d). As Voegelin so eloquently puts it this question cuts "…through the network of opinions, social ideas and ideologies. It is the question that appeals to the nobility of the soul." It is a question that ultimately reveals a more sympathetic picture of Gorgias because despite his clever words Gorgias clearly feels uncomfortable that the "unscrupulous and vulgar"[17] Polus is the direct product of his sophistical education.[18] The crucial

[15] In what follows I am deeply indebted to the reading of the *Gorgias* presented by E. Voegelin, *Order and History*, Vol. III, Louisianna State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1957.
[16] See Voegelin, op. cit., p. 24.
[17] Voegelin, op. cit., p. 25.

outcome of the dialectical sparring between Polus and Socrates occurs when Polus is forced to the conclusion that a person who does evil acts contrary to his own interests and will. On the basis of this admission Polus's espousal of the virtues of the tyrant is proven to indicate the powerlessness of the tyrant. At this point Socrates presents the Platonic version of the Sermon on the Mount – doing injustice is worse than suffering injustice and doing injustice without undergoing restorative punishment is worse again (*Gorgias* 479d-e). Polus however is deeply reluctant to accept the conclusions of the dialectical sparring, as Voegelin points out:

Polus is forced into admission, but the admission is sulky. He cannot deny that the conclusions follow from the premises, but the results are absurd (*atopa*) (480e).
He is embarrassed, like Gorgias, but with a difference. For Gorgias still has some sense of decency; he is aware of the existential conflict underlying the intellectual clash, and his conscience worries him. Polus is too hardened to be worried by a conscience; he is intellectually beaten, but his defeat cannot touch off a spark of decency in him…. The violent reaction comes from the activist, from Callicles, the enlightened politician.[19]

The key to understanding the depth of the problem adumbrated by Plato is that intellectual agreement does not bring in its wake existential understanding. The breaches in communication run far too deep. When Callicles threatens violence against Socrates (a threat that historically becomes realised since Callicles is one of the politicians who is involved in the prosecution of Socrates ultimately leading to the death penalty) the complete rupture of dialogue has been effected. The reasoned positions are upheld by commitments that go deeper than what can be understood to be rationally justifiable. Tragedy and violence are the consequences. It is at this point under the threat of violence that Socrates opens the possibility of moving beyond the intellectual positions and rebuilding the bonds of communication. Plato does this through Socrates's elaboration of the notion of the *pathemata.*[20]

Pathos is what men have in common, however variable it may be in its aspects and intensities. Pathos designates a passive experience, not an action; it is what happens to man, what he suffers, what befalls him fatefully and what touches him in his existential core – as for instance the experiences of *Eros* (481c-d). In their exposure to pathos all men are equal, though they may differ widely in the manner in which they come to grips with it and build the experience into their lives…. The community of pathos is the basis of communication. Behind the hardened, intellectually supported attitudes which separate men, lie the *pathemata* which bind them together. However false and grotesque the intellectual position may be, the pathos at the core has the truth of an immediate experience. If one can penetrate to this core and reawaken in a man the awareness of his *conditio humana*, communication in the existential sense becomes possible.[21]

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[18] In what follows I assume a familiarity with Plato's *Gorgias*. It is not my intention to provide here a reading of the *Gorgias* but to present the denouement of Plato's characterization of the problems of incommensurable beliefs and discourse in order to bring out his "solution" to the problems.
[19] Voegelin, op. cit., p. 28.
[20] *Pathemata* is the plural form of the singular *pathos*. I explore the meanings below.
[21] This is Voegelin's beautifully prosaic gloss on the Platonic appeal op. cit., p. 29-30.

There is, of course, no guarantee that the strategy of appealing to the pathemata will work. Indeed, Plato with the knowledge of Socrates's trial and death seeks a transcendental judgement of the dead in the *Gorgias*. Nevertheless, the vista of the *pathemata* leaves open further sources for communication and beyond the shrill clamour of rational assertion and counter assertion. In this paper I have attempted to show that there are grounds for deeply held and cherished positions that are not founded on reason, that our rationalisations are often enough reactive to experiences, and that these formative experiences can be so deeply embedded in our psyche and thus constitutive in fundamental ways to our identity that reason in the most fundamental sense is positively debarred from its appropriate role. I have argued that story-telling and appeals to the *pathemata* can rekindle existential communicative bonds and that some strategy of this sort is required if we are to deal seriously with moral and philosophical disagreements and thus to understand and effectively deal with terrorism.

Lying further behind this paper is the beginnings of a sketch of what needs to be taken into account in a theory of rationality. The affective bonds and experiences we undergo are crucial to a theory of rationality so to engage at the intellectual level we need a pedagogy of emotion and most particularly desire. Perhaps the last word should be left to Plato's rehearsal of the issues:

Only if the soul is well-ordered can it be called lawful (*nominos*) (504d); and only if it has the right order (*nomos*) is it capable of entering into communion (*koinonia*) (507e). The pathos is no more than a precondition for community; in order to actualise it, the *Eros* must be oriented towards the Good (*agathon*) and the disturbing passions must be restrained by *Sophrosyne*. If the lusts are unrestrained, man will live the life of a robber (*lestes*). Such a man cannot be the friend of God or other men, for he is incapable of communion, and who is incapable of communion is incapable of friendship (*philia*) (507e). *Philia* is the existential bond among men; and it is the bond between Heaven and Earth. Because *philia* and order pervade everything, the universe is called *kosmos* (order) and not disorder or licence (*akosmia, akolasia*) (508a).