

Towards an Ethnology Beyond *Self*, *Other* and *Third*: Toposophical Explorations

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Abstract. Ethnology has long been seen as concerned with, as one would nowadays say, ‘constructing the nation’, thus invariably lending support to the nationalist project. In the nineteenth century, this was a matter of consolidating the emerging nation states primarily, but not only in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. Whereas in the twentieth-century some Western European states have experienced regional nationalism (e.g. in Catalonia or Scotland) as a significant political force that draws on more or less spurious distinctions of Self and Other, in Central Europe – especially in Germany – there has been a greater reluctance to use any discourse of indigeneity, due to its past and present ideological abuse, making appropriate contextualisation of cultural heritage in terms of place and memory, necessary for any nationalist project, rather difficult.

Key words: European ethnology, ‘salvage ethnology’, Cultural anthropology, *Self*, *Other*, *Third*.

Anotacija. Etnologija jau kuris laikas įprastai siejama su „tautos (nacijų) konstravimo“ sampratomis, todėl nuolat linkstama remti tautinius projektus. XIX a. istoriniame bei socialiniame kontekste tai padėjo aiškiau apibrėžti vienių ar kitų tautinių valstybių susiformavimą, tačiau ne tik Centrinės, Rytų ir Pietų Europos šalių atvejais. Tačiau ir XX a. kai kurios Vakarų Europos tautos iškėlė regioninio nacionalizmo idėjas (Katalonija, Škotija), tapusias reikšmingais politiniais judėjimais. Kartu čia yra natūraliai operuojama bei diskutuojama sąvokomis *Aš* (*Pats*, *Savas*) ir *Kitas*. O Centrinėje Europoje (ypač Vokietijoje) dėl objektyvių istorinės ir ideologinės patirties priešasčių iki pat šiol vengiama kalbėti bet kokiomis vietinėmis regionalizmo ar nacionalizmo temomis. Čia bet koks tautinės kultūros paveldo kontekstualizavimas vietos ar atminties aspektais moksliniuose projektuose vis dar susiduria su rimbomis problemomis. Visa tai ir yra aptariama šiame straipsnyje.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: europinė etnologija, „greitosios pagalbos“ etnologija, kultūrinė antropologija, *Aš*, *Kitas*, *Trečias*.

The Predicament(s) of Ethnology

As a former President of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore, I am acutely aware of the widely held public – and indeed academic – stereotypes of what ethnology is, and is about. In the American tradition, the prevailing focus is on, as I have summarised it on occasion, ‘stones, bones and tones’, that

is, ethnology as primarily archaeology, biological anthropology and linguistics. In the European tradition, it has been that, too, but the term is more commonly used either as a synonym to what the British call 'social anthropology' or, in conjunction with 'European' or an appropriate national designation, to signal an ideological (if not always a practical) departure from old-fashioned folklore studies, nowadays often derided as 'salvage ethnology'. It is with the European incarnations that I am concerned here.

Ever since my conversion from the modern day religion of economics to the secular yet nonetheless spiritual ontology of ethnology, which occurred during my doctoral studies of 'informal' economic practices and structures in western Ireland, I have sought ways of overcoming the methodological nationalism and parochial introversion that ethnology and its antecedents have historically been (rightly or wrongly!) accused of. Research into the history of ideas and practices – we hear and read much about the former but far less about the latter – will throw up plentiful examples corroborating these charges, but it must be stressed that there is also ample evidence for the contrary viewpoint: that ethnology has always been, at least in some of its cultural expressions, international, comparative, and cosmopolitan in its outlook. This is not the place to delve into the depths of historical research on the matter, nor is it possible to review contemporary ideas and practices in great detail. Hence I want to concentrate on one particular aspect, and one that has been a most frequent source of contention.

Ethnology has long been seen as concerned with, as one would nowadays say, 'constructing the nation', thus invariably lending support to the nationalist project. In the nineteenth century, this was a matter of consolidating the emerging nation states primarily, but not only in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. Whereas in the twentieth-century some Western European states have experienced regional nationalism (e.g. in Catalonia or Scotland) as a significant political force that draws on more or less spurious distinctions of Self and Other, in Central Europe – especially in Germany – there has been a greater reluctance to use any discourse of indigeneity, due to its past and present ideological abuse, making appropriate contextualisation of cultural heritage in terms of place and memory, necessary for any nationalist project, rather difficult. The complex affinities of place are a matter of community engagement more than geographical determinism, and the social and moral force of a sense of place may even reach sacramental proportions, especially when fused with prominent elements of personal and ethnic identity (Basso 1996: 148). Remembering is therefore a challenge, particularly for groups that have to come to terms with a past of nationalism and colonialism, but importantly also where the national project involves groups that are not originally 'from here' (however 'here' may be defined). Using a human ecological perspective, this essay argues for a reappraisal of indigeneity in a European context, drawing on an ethnology based on topography, topology and, fundamentally, toposophy to transcend the binary and trinary analytical

confines of a world divided into Self, Other and, more recently also, Third.

The essay proceeds via two sets of triangulations. In the first, more extensive set, the ethnological significance of different contemporary approaches to the Self(s), (the) Other(s) and Third(s) is explored. The second, shorter set uses the Geddesian triad of Hand, Head, and Heart in order to outline briefly an approach that is at once topographical, topological and toposophical, drawing on the wisdom that 'sits in places' (Basso 1996). Such an approach, reconnecting ethnology firmly to the local *oikomene*, may seem counterintuitive for an attempt to release it from the shackles of parochialism and methodological nationalism. In the final section of the essay, I return to the mythological origins of all ethnology, pondering the relationships of hybrid beasts, silver threads, knots and swords, in an attempt to unpick some of the conundrums we find ourselves facing. I hope that by the end of the essay, the reader might concede that there may be other, valid ways of seeing the local ecological foundations of our being in time than the methodological contempt with which these foundations have been all too commonly regarded in recent decades.

Triangulating Ethnology 1: Self, Other, Third

Marek Kulisz (2004: 73) reminds us that 'we cannot speak about the Third without having first defined or described the Other in some way, and we can only speak of the Other, and the Third, after having established a perspective, as from another perspective the Other may turn into the Same (Self, I), the Third into the Other, etc.' While this – only slightly tongue-in-cheek – observation seems obvious enough if not entirely self-evident, it is worth noting the (perhaps unintentional but nonetheless significant) conflation of 'Self' and 'perspective' here. Indeed, however hard we may try to 'put ourselves in someone else's shoes' as counsellors and ethnographers, for example, have been habitually encouraged to do by their teachers, we cannot escape the epistemological datum that the perspective we apply remains ours: that of the Self, regardless of what we might like and choose to call it. Many years ago, a fellow PhD-student introduced his project to me with the preface that it would be a Marxist analysis; by implication, he was applying a perspective based on Marx, but this would not be Marx's perspective – it would invariably be the student's version of the latter. The Self is inseparable from the basis of whatever perspective we seek to take. Stepping outside of our Self to take an Other's perspective may appear desirable, but can at best only be achieved as a kind of approximation, aided by empathy and imagination; however Other it may seem, it remains our own perspective. But I am perhaps jumping ahead.

In a recent essay, Elka Tschernokoshewa (2012: 521) reviewed the debate on 'difference' in anthropological research on Germany since the 1990s, when Wer-

ner Schiffauer (1996) diagnosed a 'fear of difference' in cultural anthropology, and Dieter Kramer (1996) asked provocatively: 'May ethnic groups exist?' The problematic was also acknowledged in sociology and philosophy, by writers such as Beck (2006). Much interest was directed towards issues of cultural practice and politics with regard to minorities (see Rätzkel 1997). At the same time, postcolonial studies critically reframed the question of difference. One important trend in the literature was the attempt to release ethnicity, as a category of identity by self-ascription, from its common association with nationalism, imperialism and racism. Stuart Hall took up and further developed Derrida's distinction between a difference that radically and irreconcilably separates and a contingent and conjunctural difference, which Derrida himself termed *différance*. Either way, differences are about distinctions, the making of which has become regarded with suspicion. Yet it is not the ontological differences per se that are suspect, but the political use to which any resulting distinctions are put. The critical aspect here is the ethics that underpins differentiation and distinction; Lévinas repeatedly emphasised the ontological importance and, indeed, primacy of ethics.

Ethnologies of the Self(s)

The Age of Enlightenment is usually regarded as having initiated a radically new era, a new way of thinking about the world and ourselves within it. From the point of view of considering questions of Self, Other and Third, Kapuśiński (2008: 27) has characterised the Enlightenment trajectory in terms of 'three successive turning points: ... anthropologists ... Lévinas ... multiculturalism'. Psychologically, the Enlightenment may be compared (however fraught such comparisons inevitably are) to a person's becoming increasingly self-aware – Self-aware – and the growing intellectual self-consciousness that grew from this process gave rise to projections of desiderata, such as Goethe's 'world literature' or the Kantian concept of the 'cosmopolitan'. Interestingly, while much of the latter-day self-reflective historiography of anthropology emphasises the complicity of the discipline in the colonial project by way of 'othering' the Other, Kapuśiński (2008: 28) sees in the cultural change of the Enlightenment a 'passing from narrow Eurocentrism to more universal visions' that brings forth anthropology as 'a new branch of social science ... aimed towards the Other' in a much more benign sense. By making the Other its object of inquiry, anthropology (benignly or otherwise) created an image of its society of origin, however inadvertently, in terms of what this society was not. Thus despite protestations to the contrary, anthropology has always been about the Self, too, and any anthropology of the exotic Other has always included an ethnoanthropological vision of who and what the Self is or should be. It is an epistemological paradox that we cannot define 'them' without simultaneously defining 'us', at least to some extent. The pretence that it could be otherwise, together with other factors, such as the alienation, expropriation and disenfran-

chisement accompanied by an increasing individualisation fundamental to our growing consumer culture, has led to successive crises in Western civilisation, 'in particular the crisis and atrophy of interpersonal relations' (Kapuśiński 2008: 34), to which Lévinas's theory can be seen as a reaction. The rise of anonymous mass society has created a context in which relations of the Self and the Other are marked by indifference that results from a more general lack of social ties, the ties that support the cultural identity of the Self. Contrary to the vision of the self-interested individual as an unconnected island fortress – possibly inspired by the insularity of the imperial power that promoted this individualist ideology – there has been an awareness in other cultural settings of at least the fact that most islands do not float in the sea but are connected to the Earth. Likewise, the individual, however distinct and aloof in appearance, is acknowledged as first and foremost a relational being, a Self that is defined by its connectedness with other Selves with whom he or she identifies. That identification is a transitive action; it works both ways and depends for its validation on mutuality. This is an ethnology of Self that is far removed from the hegemonic neo-liberalist anthropology of the isolated, impregnable individual, Master of His Destiny. The latter thinks its *anthropos* can do without any *ethnos*, and has sponsored a discourse of transcending such ascriptions – a discourse that ultimately leads to the denial of responsibility for anyone other than oneself (or one's Self).

Coming from a different cultural background, Lévinas challenged this discourse, emphasising 'our duty to take responsibility' (Kapuśiński 2008: 35) for the Other. His vision is one that transcends selfishness, indifference and the neo-liberalist imperative of self-isolation and withdrawal. The Self in Lévinas's view is not simply a solitary individual, but needs the Other to become and be itself; thus 'a new kind of person or being is created' (Kapuśiński 2008: 37). However, that Other is always also another Self, an individual person, and, as Kapuśiński (2008: 36) points out, individuals on their own are usually more reasonable than groups may be, and '[b]ecoming part of a group can change the ... quiet, friendly individual into a devil' – history provides ample evidence. Moreover, it has frequently been noted that Lévinas's 'Other' is White and belongs to the Western cultural circle. Outsiders, other Others, may find the world differently.

Ethnologies of (the) Other(s)

As Madina Tlostanova (2004: 11; orig. emph.) observed, the discursive attention to 'the problem of *diaphora* (difference) and *diarexis* (division) ... [has highlighted] ... otherness as one of the pivotal categories in the culture, literature and philosophy of Modernity', a period dominated by a focus on the ego as 'foundational of the modern paradigm'. From the perspective of this paradigm, the Other has been customarily represented as a kind of dark alter ego, required by the hegemonic culture as a balance and to ensure successful self-reproduction.

That Other is 'not me'; it is exterior to, yet not necessarily separate from, this 'me'. In the paradigm of Western Modernity, that Other is usually another human being (although alternative Others exist in other worldviews; more of that later). Ontologically, the implication is inevitably that the Self is at the centre of the Other-world and the Other thus proceeds from the self into the world within the Self's horizon (see Kockel 2010: 191). It is through our encountering this Other face-to-face that, according to Lévinas, we exist as subjects, by our obligation to this Other. Based on this ethically grounded ontology, Lévinas argues that by reducing the Other's otherness to sameness we would deny the Other's existence, effectively 'killing' her or him as a subject. Conversely, we ought to engage with the Other by opening ourselves up to the encounter, which challenges our self-referential, insular individual identity and the (false) sense of security we derive from the same.

Although Lévinas's ethical ontology entails an element of constructedness – the Self comes into existence only by encountering the Other –, this is actually more a matter of ascription that can happen between Self-aware and Self-conscious beings whose being as such (rather than their status as subjects) is not in question. By contrast, 'the [nowadays] most often discussed and probably most conspicuous feature of the Other is the concept's constructedness – the Other exists predominantly, sometimes exclusively, in the mind of [their] creator' (Kulisz 2004: 73) – which, taken literally and to its ontological conclusion, raises the question of who or what the Other is constructed from or around. Kulisz (2004: 74) circumnavigates the constructivist cliffs by drawing on Edward Said's (1995: 67; emph. M. Kulisz) reminder that

all cultures impose corrections upon raw reality, changing it from free-floating objects into units of knowledge [within one's own culture]. The problem is not that conversion takes place. It is *perfectly natural* for the human mind to resist the assault on it of untreated strangeness; therefore cultures have *always* been inclined to impose *complete* transformations on other cultures, receiving these other cultures not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver, they ought to be.

Said does not enlighten the reader as to where, or what, the limitations of this alleged naturalness of intercultural transformations might be, nor does he say much about whether and to what extent the mental processes involved might be culture specific. Summarising Said's analysis, Kulisz (2004: 75) points out that 'to protect the Western mind against [perceived] Eastern excesses ... [t]he Other had to be familiarized, which ... meant what was new, foreign, and strange was explained in terms of, and related to, what was already known.' However, this familiarisation is paralleled in reverse by an estrangement between Self and Other: 'Through this paradoxical attitude the West has given the Other a very peculiar status: ... neither quite familiar nor quite alien – an in-betweenner' (Kulisz 2004:

76), living in the frontier that stretches between the Self and her or his horizon (Kockel 2010: 190f.).

Arising in parallel with the Enlightenment, and only superficially out of tune with its spirit, a paradigm emerged in Europe, culminating in the twentieth century, according to which the relations between the own and the foreign, the Self and the Other, were akin to the opposition of good versus evil – a mode of thought characterised by ‘its dualistic and excluding character’ (Tschernokoshewa 2012: 523). This particular offshoot of the Enlightenment emphasised notions of homogeneity and purity, with the inevitable consequence of demands for ‘the exclusion, or rather eradication, of differences.’ Responding to this paradigm, Lévinas postulated difference and otherness as something valuable and enriching that ought to be accepted without erasing the identification of the Self with the Other (Kapuśiński 2008: 35). He played with colloquial terms (such as the *il y a*) and coined his own (such as *illeity*) to support his analysis. In his early writing, the term ‘there is’ (*il y a*) is associated ‘with indeterminacy and inhumanity, with the pre-ethical or non-ethical sphere of “being in general ...”, a state of ‘existence devoid of existents’ that he calls the *il y a* (Rychter 2004: 33). Literally, *il y a* may be translated as ‘it-there-has’, which is indeed commonly rendered as ‘there is’ but could also be ‘that [which is] there’, which already implies an act of pointing outside the Self, towards the Other. Emphasising the concrete ethical over the abstract ontological, Lévinas argued that the ‘it’ (*il*) signifies its ‘itness’ (illeity) ‘from the face of the other person, with a significance not articulated as the relation of signifier to signified, but as order signified to me’ (Levinas 1994: 47; quoted in Rychter 2004: 31). This ‘it’, for Lévinas, is the Third in the relationship between Self and Other, a Third that is, however, somewhat anachronic, out-of-time, which he captures in the ambiguity of the French verb *signifier*, which ‘can be glossed either as “to mean” or as “to command...”’ (Rychter 2004: 31), thus incorporating both a derivation (of meaning) and a projection (of desire), something from the past and something for the future. Hence the Third, through its anachrony, locates both Self and Other in time, and counters the erasure of either.

The paradigm of homogeneity and purity has become most commonly associated with the political philosophy of Carl Schmitt, which has recently had something of a revival, driven particularly by the renaissance, or rather the contemporary invention, of a reductivist version of Enlightenment liberalism that thrives on the politically-motivated, highly selective reading of venerable authorities, such as the much mis-cited Adam Smith. Schmitt (1996) considers the cultural homogeneity of any society the state of normality and a fundamental principle of politics, a view that leads with a certain logical inevitability to policies that are repressive, whether in the form of ‘compulsory assimilation of foreign elements, or the maintenance of the purity of the people through apartheid and cleansing’ (Habermas 1997: 169). Critics of this paradigm have therefore argued

for an opposite course of action, the embracing of the Other. However, as Kulisz (2004: 79) observes with reference to Rainer Marie Rilke's novel *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, 'being loved, ... being psychologically embraced ... deprives the Other of his freedom, just like the mental operations described by Said do on the cross-cultural scale.' Here the erasure of the Other occurs in a different way, as 'traditional Western xenophobia has been succeeded by a postmodern xenophilia', which has also led in some instances to 'a more "objective" xenology' (Tlostanova 2004: 11; see also Duala-M'bedy 1977, Nakamura 2000). All these approaches have, however, failed to come to grips with 'the radical nature of otherness, reiterating absolute relativism, and accentuating the undecidability and ambivalence' (Tlostanova 2004: 12) that confirms and continuously reproduces difference. And in the eyes of (even post-)modernity, difference spells 'deficiency', regardless of whether the Other is cast as 'demonic' or 'exotic', and even if these two traditional stereotypes are nowadays 'often interpreted benignly' (Tlostanova 2004: 21f.). Elka Tschernokoshewa's hybridological approach attempts to transcend the dualistic paradigm. It replaces the 'either/or' distinction by a 'both ... and' perspective on difference, raising questions of how exclusion may be prevented through practical action, or how different cultural resources can best be used and developed in community life (Tschernokoshewa 2012: 524). Thus it presents a fresh perspective on the relationship between Self and Other. The 'both ... and' approach offers a synthesis that constitutes a Third, although this Third may be qualitatively different from that we encountered in Lévinas's 'it'.

Ethnologies of the Third

The turn of the century saw the concept of 'hybridity' gain currency in post-colonial identity debates associated especially with the works of Arjun Appadurai, Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall and Edward Said. Bhabha (1994) drew attention to the perspectives of displaced and diasporic peoples, historically marginalised by the hegemony, whose migration from the 'periphery' to the 'centre' has increasingly highlighted the heterogeneity of the 'national' cultural space. His use of 'hybridity' as an 'in-between' concept referring to what he describes as a 'third space' has inspired arguments and theory-building across the humanities and social sciences, inflected by analytical frameworks such as, in particular, poststructuralism and constructivism. Closely linked to a critical analysis of globalisation and the post-colonial re-mapping of the world, the use of 'hybridity' as a concept by scholars such as Hall (1991) reflects its origin in discourses by members of minority communities during and in the aftermath of their struggle to overcome the no longer tenable binary of identity ascriptions, demonstrating identities as produced by multiple discourses (Tschernokoshewa 2012: 527). However, as Tlostanova (2004: 23) has cautioned, 'the most popular and heavily-quoted scholars, those most easily absorbed by the system, are those with a minimal and predictable degree

and nature of alterity ... while those who offer alternative epistemological models to Western readers, suggesting “other” theories of otherness, remain largely unknown.’

Brubaker’s (2004) postulate of an ‘ethnicity without groups’, or Geertz’s (2000) contemplation of non-consensual culture offered attempts to overcome the ghosts of essentialism that are often invoked when difference is emphasised. Hybridology is another such attempt, but one that may reconcile and resolve the fear of difference with the fear of essentialism, since ‘hybridization does not mean that differences disappear; it merely suggests that boundaries become more permeable. It means that the one element is implied in the other’ (Tschernokoshewa 2012: 525). This mutual implication of elements, reminiscent of the Yin-Yang relationship, has been suggested in various models of societal development, including Fritjof Capra’s influential *Turning Point* (1982), which was based on his earlier *Tao of Physics* (1975) and emphasised both the idea that everything involves everything else and the notion that all parts of the cosmos are really just patterns in an on-going process – there is motion but there are, ultimately, no moving objects; there is activity but there are no actors; there are no dancers, there is only the dance (Capra 1982). This cosmology, based on so-called ‘bootstrap theory’, denies the existence of fundamental entities, laws, or constants. The properties of any particular element in this ‘cosmic web’ follow from the properties of all the other parts, and the overall consistency of their interrelations determines the structure of the entire web.

These ideas have met with a mixed reception, from earnest attempts to apply them in fields such as town and regional planning, to their outright rejection as emanating from the lunatic fringes of a syncretic New Age movement. While Capra and others at the time were influenced by Eastern mysticism, the decades around the turn of the century also saw the emergence of a critical literature drawing on other non-Western cultural backgrounds, including both non-European ‘high cultures’ and indigenous peoples, but also increasingly voices from the European margins. Tlostanova (2004: 15), having reviewed a range of alternative theoretical approaches, pointed out that, rather than being entirely new, ‘these parallel discourses emerged prior to postmodernist constructs, but remained in a void, invisible to the world, starting to gain some recognition only in the last decade of the 20th century.’ The ‘Third’ emerges as ‘one of the most interesting and fruitful concepts that gets re-interpreted in these newer and less-known theories of otherness’ (Tlostanova 2004: 16).

In theorising Self and Other, introducing the concept of ‘thirdness’, especially with reference to ‘the third in ... dialogue, the third that increases the polyphony of cultures and discourses involved, can be treated as an effort further to destabilize from within the opposition same/other, or self/other’ (Tlostanova 2004: 17). Unlike the Other, the Third exists beyond the horizon, quasi *in absentiam*, and therefore not familiarised, being instead ‘allowed to remain a complete stranger’

(Kulisz 2004: 78), epitomised by the nomad who is recognised as being ‘some-where out there’ but – unlike the Other – remains (deliberately) excluded from the discourse (Kulisz 2004: 79). Although the use of the triad ‘Self – Other – Third’ implies equivalence, the Third is in no way equivalent to the other two, as indicated above. Unlike the hybrid arising from the interplay of Self and Other, the ‘Third’ tends to be defined in ways that make it appear simply as ‘a form of pre-existence of the Other’ (Kulisz 2004: 79).

With regard to migration, both the ‘hybrid’ and the ‘Third’ are useful concepts; they denote states that may co-exist in mutually supportive as well as in conflicting ways. ‘I am not half and half, but both, double, or something else’ says Irena, interviewed in Bautzen, Germany, during a research project on women with immigrant backgrounds (Tschernokoshewa 2012: 529). An interactive process of lived experience, migration generates something new ‘that transcends the binary opposition of here and there, of us and the others, ours and theirs, ... a “third space.” There is no firm ground in this third space, there are no stops and there is no endpoint’ (Tschernokoshewa 2012: 530). Once again, we find ourselves at the intersection of temporality and spatiality, co-ordinates of our existence that are at once experienced, perceived and conceived. We are thus called to reconsider and, if necessary also, reframe our way of reflexively being in the world. The intersection of our temporality and spatiality is the place, the *topos* (in all its relativity) we find ourselves in at the point in time of our observation.

The hybrid that is ‘both ... and’ is not an easy concept in a secular age that rejects the ‘fully human yet fully divine’ identity of Christ as out-dated mystic-mythic nonsense, unless one takes a step further and regards the hybrid as a new being born out of a union that leaves its original components intact – but that interpretation, projecting the hybrid as a Third, would run counter to the very spirit of hybridology unless, again, we shift and change our ontological framework beyond not only binarism but, indeed, the trinarism that a theory of the Third implies and necessitates. Attempts to overcome the binarism of much Western thought are mainly associated with postcolonial and subaltern theorists but have also emerged from geopolitical locations closer to the nexus of post-Enlightenment Western thought, such as Central and Eastern Europe, regions that may be (and have been) interpreted as the ‘interior other’ (Tlostanova 2004: 21) of Western epistemology. In that spirit, I have previously called for ‘a certain re-orientation – a re-Easting – of what it means to be a European’ (Kockel 2010: 196). As Tlostanova (2004: 21; orig. emph.) has argued, ‘*third* thinking in this sense can be equated with epistemological decolonization ... with its dis-post-modernization’. From a Latin-American perspective, Mignolo has postulated a complete ‘relocation of languages, peoples and cultures, where differences are looked at not in one direction, but in all possible directions and regional temporalities’ (Mignolo 2000: 203; quoted in Tlostanova 2004: 27).

Triangulating Ethnology 2: Hand, Head, Heart

Mignolo (2000: 66) diagnosed the ‘modern universal view of knowledge and epistemology, where concepts are not related to local histories, but to global designs,’ arguing that such ‘global designs are always controlled by certain kinds of local histories’ (quoted in Tlostanova 2004: 17). This draws attention to a somewhat paradoxical process by which the erasure of the grounded local is affected by the elevation of a particular local history or narrow set of histories in the interest of power and control. When Escobar (2001: 146) observed that being connected with the land remains ‘an integral part of the contemporary modern life of ... communities, even in cases in which such connectedness might be a vehicle for the exercise of power over them’, he pointed to yet another, related paradox: that precisely because ‘the local’ remains a powerful factor in a world increasingly perceived as mobile, footloose, neither here nor there, it can be perverted into an instrument of control over people. At the same time, it constitutes a valuable resource with the potential to liberate – which might just be why the hegemony has been so evidently intent on demonstrating the suffocating parochialism of any interest in and attachment to the local – and why indigenous thinkers especially have long been emphasising its importance. Paradoxically, therefore, a return to the local may be a way of resolving ethnology’s predicaments.

Elsewhere I have developed such a perspective in some detail (Kockel 2009, 2012), arguing that ethnology can be seen as an approach to the Local promoting a comparative understanding of the Self and the Other (and therefore of encounters and conflicts), not only among humans but also between human and non-human subjects who together constitute a local ‘household’ (*oikomene*). As an applied, relational and system-oriented regional science with a local focus, it concentrates on local communities and issues such as migration, using multi-sited methods. At the same time, it offers a mode of cultural philosophy based on self-reflexive analysis and lived experience that brings questions of origin, perspective and vanishing point (*telos*) into view, highlighting responsibilities that arise from one’s chosen position.

Topography by Hand

A fundamental premise of this perspective is that, in ethnological fieldwork as in everyday life, we have to ‘start digging where we stand’ (McIntosh 2001), meaning that we need to start with a clear idea of where we are at – where and what is this place, what time is it, and so on. The perspective therefore proceeds from the assumption that ‘place’ matters, not just as the construct it invariably also is, but as ontological datum: if we are at all, then there is a place at, in, from

and towards which we thus are. Any postulate of an ontological datum nowadays arouses accusations of 'essentialism'. Partly justified, since ontological data are 'essential' in the sense that they define aspects of being (the Latin 'esse' means 'to be') in every sense of the term 'define', such accusations are based on a 'shallow essentialism' (Kockel 2012) that, driven by the hegemonic desire for erasure of place in the contradictory interest of market liberalism and political control, has seeped into academic discourse unnoticed and unreflected. The common critique of 'essentialism' tends to confuse the ontological significance of reality and actuality – the former designates a definite material existence regardless of our sensory experience, the latter factors that affect our experience regardless of whether they have any definite material existence at all outside that effect. Epistemological approaches such as phenomenology and thick description have tried to come to grips with actuality. Attempts to deduce from such accounts any insights into a reality beyond sensory experience are fraught: we simply cannot access a reality beyond the limits of our perceptual apparatus. Contrary to widely held belief, this is in fact all that critics of 'essentialism' are saying, although many go a step further, claiming that there is no such reality. But within the limits of our perceptual apparatus, we cannot establish that either. What we can do, as phenomenologists, deep ecologists and others encourage us to, is to describe carefully the actuality of place(s), validating our resulting accounts by diligent comparison with those of others, including in particular the people who inhabit and thereby make these places.

Whereas a 'shallow essentialism' makes unreasonable assertions about the nature of a presumed 'reality' (of people and places; see Kockel 2012: 66–68), a 'deep essentialism' seeks to establish, rather than assert, the relationships and processes through which people engage with places and vice versa. From this perspective, 'place' is accorded agency, which may strike the reader as animistic, or at least in some way metaphysical. It may be both, but in an age that is led to believe uncritically in the supreme agency of metaphysical constructs like 'the Market' or 'interest rates', the imposition of any hierarchies of metaphysical forces that may or may not be acceptable in discourse smacks of pandering to powerful interests that seek to affect erasure.

'Place', in this framework, may be regarded as a kind of Third, the arena where the Self and the Other engage, and which they also engage with through that very relationship – we cannot meet one another except in place (even if that happens to be located in cyberspace). This Third, however, is not a 'third space' in Bhabha's sense – a semi-discrete realm between the Self and the Other that may keep apart as much as connect them; rather, 'place' is always an integral part of our various relationships. Moreover, it is ultimately 'place' that brings us together and enables relationships – and the activities they engender – to 'take place'. Thus it can be said to have agency, without any need to 'essentialise' it in the shallow sense. Philosophers like Edward Casey and Jeff Malpas have grappled with these

and other issues of 'place', as have human ecologists and indigenous scholars (see the essays in Williams, Roberts and McIntosh 2012). A currently fashionable methodology that also accords agency to non-human actors, as yet without having to face challenges of 'essentialism', is Actor-Network-Theory. Networks are composed of nodes that are connected with one another, and nodes, whether they refer to an individual human being, an institutions or something else, are places where these actors act, since their actions have to take place somewhere in order to have any effect.

Topography, the careful description of these places – where and what they are, how they work – provides the necessary foundation for ethnological understanding. Achieving such careful description may require more than the acute observation of the Other that one encounters in these places. Artists have woken up to this realisation long before most social scientists dared to peek outside their Ivory Tower. The need to 'dig where we stand' in order to come to grips with place may require a shovel and a wheelbarrow, or the planting of 7000 oaks (see Kockel 2011), in the process getting our pants dirty, as Robert Park famously encouraged his students to do in the 1920s. Topography, like most applied anthropology, is mainly a manual job requiring active engagement not just with the various subject(s) of our research, but with the very place that facilitates our encounter with them.

Topology by Head

This deep engagement with the materiality as well as the spirit of 'place' needs a reflexive, rational methodology. I am writing in an analogue, linear pattern because that is how writing and reading works – it would not be intelligible otherwise. But that is not how an ethnological understanding of people and places is developed. Some actuality is linear, but most of the time our experience will be of non-linear processes and relationships – some circular, some cyclical, some simultaneous, others asynchronous, often random and sometimes deliberate, most connected and a few just one-off. The perceptual apparatus we use to generate data for our ethnographies is usually described in terms of our five senses, but it has been increasingly recognised that there are more than those, perhaps the most important one being memory (Fig. 1).

The sixth sense, memory, incorporates recollections of the other five, but takes us beyond the all too common fixation with experiences of the 'here-and-now', to a 'there-and-then' that may have been in the same place or elsewhere. Including memory as part of our apparatus also broadens the scope of inquiry, not just to the past of the Other, which we explore by our hearing (their oral testimony) and sometimes vision (such as when they show us old photographs), but beyond, to our own past as experienced and now remembered. Because our Self relates to and engages with an Other in a place we simultaneously co-create and seek to understand, we need to shed pretences of 'objectivity' and acknowledge

that we cannot tell the story of this place and the Other in it without telling our own – and vice versa – as the ‘writing culture’ debate has been reminding us since the 1980s. This requires emotional and intellectual effort if we want the outcome to make sense to anyone other than just ourselves. We must understand a place from within, but in order to be able to explain it to others – which is what our academic ethnology is all about – we must distance ourselves from it and translate our experience. Topography, even at its most careful and sophisticated, is not enough; untranslated it remains a self-centred exercise of the individual ethnographer, not much good to anyone else. The same goes for much of contemporary cultural studies. However, there is an issue here pointing well beyond the scope of this essay – that of intercultural translation. Can experience be translated from one place to another without loss (or gain)? And if not, how do we deal with the difference? Is such difference always a bad thing? One might agree that loss is, but is that necessarily so? And is a gain always a good thing? Answers to these questions may be found in the places we relate to, but rarely immediately so; finding them requires a different kind of approach than was needed to achieve the careful topography outlined above, and perhaps even a different kind of rationality.

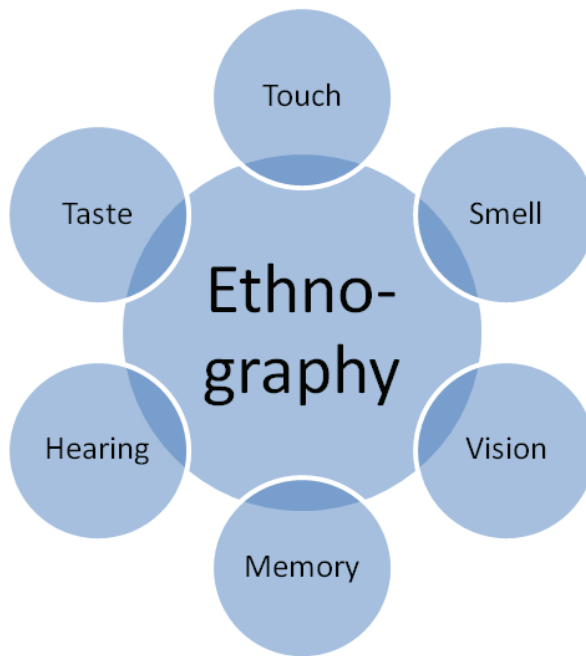


Figure 1: Perceptual sensory sources of ethnography

The emplaced relationships between Self and Other(s) can be represented in terms of logical identity perceptions projected across different fields of enactment, where ‘logical’ refers to a certain knowledge of the Self (= autological) and the Other (= xenological), intentionally conveyed in the act and directed at both the

Self and the Other, often simultaneously. For the purpose of illustration, I want to distinguish just two types of identity, which I shall refer to as ‘home identities’ and ‘public identities’ (Kockel 2007). Both relational, as identities always are, their orientation is very different. ‘Home identities’ are inward-directed, defining the individual vis-à-vis him- or herself, while ‘public identities’ are outward-directed, projecting that individual in relation to an outside world of Others. Each of these has in turn ‘inward’ and ‘outward’ aspects. For ‘home identities’, these may be called ‘autological’ – affirming knowledge about the Self to the Self – and ‘xenological’: projecting aspects of such knowledge towards (usually selected) Others. For ‘public identities’, a distinction may be made between ‘performance’ directed from the present towards the future (what the Self wants to be seen as, by it-Self and Others) and ‘heritage’, directed from the present towards the past (where the Self wishes to have come from). This distinction could equally be cast in terms of ‘constructivist’ and ‘essentialist’. Figure 2 illustrates the four fields thus mapped. For example: A person speaking Gaelic in Northern Ireland by that speech act autologically affirms their identity for their Self, while the same act connects them with Others who share the same heritage, familiarising these Others to the point where they become almost-Selves. Xenologically, that performance includes an empathic audience of Others who, while they may not speak the language, appreciate its significance to the actor; at the same time it excludes all Others – speakers and non-speakers alike – who do not (wish to) share that heritage version.

		Public Identities	
		Performance Identities (P)	Heritage Identities (H)
Home Identities	Autological Identities (A)	AP exclusive (the acting Self performs for it-Self, excluding any audience of Others)	AH inclusive (the acting Self identifies by sharing a past with certain Others)
	Xenological Identities (X)	XP inclusive (an audience of Others is needed for the performance of the acting Self)	XH exclusive (the acting Self identifies by not sharing a past with certain Others)

Figure 2: Home and Public Identities (adapted from Kockel 2007)

These performances ‘take place’, in the dual sense of happening somewhere, and acquiring that somewhere, occupying it, and using it, sometimes as a mere backdrop, but more often as a key actor in the performance – one that is an in-

tegral part both of the Self and the Other, a relationship affirmed by the performance. The Marching Season in Northern Ireland, with its ritual demarcations of historical identity territories for present and future reference, is a salient example of this (Kockel 2010). To those not in or from a place, such performances may often seem incomprehensible, even irrational; yet they follow an ethnologic that claims its place. Topology, the empathic translation of careful topography into knowledge accessible beyond the place of its creation in the interaction of Self and Other, must draw on a wide spectrum of methodologies to achieve its purpose, including an appropriate level of reflexive auto-ethnography. The process is iterative and cyclical, not linear. We cannot start inductively, with topography that leads to topology, which then generates toposophy. Rather, we are thrown into a situation where we start with what little sense of a place we may have, and try to assemble a meaningful narrative about what happens. If that seems a bit like Grounded Theory, appearances are not too far off the mark. Topology uses Grounded Theory as it does other methodologies, but roots them firmly in place; it is important not to lose sight of the place in which the Self engages with the Other, and on that foundation gradually to develop a deeper sense of this place and all its relations.

Toposophy by Heart

Places come in a variety of shapes, forms and significances. There are, for example, accidental places that pop up and disappear leaving barely a trace; fleeting places detached from their moorings that turn up next to other places and may temporarily change the composure of either or both; passing places where events of significance can be avoided as actors proceed in opposite directions (or one of them can rest for a while before journeying on to an actual place of engagement). It may be time to introduce Place as a capitalised concept, to designate what toposophy is all about: Place as a site of wisdom that is born out of encounters between Selves and Others on their manifold trajectories, where Selves and Others may include 'other-than-human persons' (Hallowell 1960). Toposophy in that sense is about 'deep' places (or Places), built through layers of memory, where community – in the broad human ecological sense (McIntosh 2008) – takes its place and its time. Before the spectre of a 'shallow essentialism' raises its head again: any place can be such a 'deep' Place, and no place is a Place by some 'naturally' ordained law that would make it any better than other places. Toposophy is about understanding what it is that makes some places more, or differently, 'deep' than others, what their respective 'depth' entails, and what all that means to the respective locals and outsiders, the Selves that are variously Others or Thirds. Western scholarship has acknowledged the existence of 'sacred places', which have attracted attention from several genres across the range of the social sciences

and humanities, including geography, which is often administratively put with the natural sciences. But according to many indigenous scholars, all ground is sacred, if only because the elders cannot be sure which bits are and which are not (see Nabokov 2007). Places therefore exude some kind of ethical imperative – to tread gently, since we do not know where we go, and to dig with reverence, since we do not know where we stand. That applies to all places, until we understand them well enough to do otherwise. Whether we may have achieved a sufficient understanding is a question neither for our-Selves alone nor for Others themselves on their own to answer, but rather a matter of our relational engagement with these Other Selves and the various significant Thirds that affect – in the dual sense of that term – the Place of our encounter.

Knots and Swords, Hybrid Beasts and Silver Threads

If that sounds as if the discourse has ended up in knots, or lost in an a-maze-ment all of its own, it would be in good company among the plethora of post- and postpost-modern cultural theorising. Let me try to unpick at least some of it.

The discourses of Self, Other and Third revolve around the central issue of trying to grasp difference and similarity, and to link these with concepts of agency. Whereas the Self is a relatively straightforward (if not entirely uncontested) category, the Other is more difficult to categorise beyond the acknowledgement that he or she ultimately is a Self other than ours. It should also be noted that the analytical power of any discourse of the Other depends not least on the language in which it is conducted; for example, in German the Other can be rendered as *Fremde*, a term that can take three different genders with at least four different meanings, including one – the Other as ‘frontier’ – that is psycho-geographically linked to the Self and its position in relation to its cultural horizons, whereby ‘the self is at the centre of the frontier (*das Zentrum der Fremde ist das Eigene*) and ... the frontier emanates from the self into the world (*geht vom Eigenen aus in die Welt hinein*)’ (Kockel 2010: 191; orig. emph.). In contrast to Self and Other, which can both be associated with and understood in terms of the Western concept of individual agency, the Third is rather more metaphysical. It can be a kind of ‘black box’ used conceptually to lump together sundry ill-perceived or indeed imagined agents. This ‘black box’, occasionally described as ‘the Other’s Other’ (see Kulisz 2004: 79), is a way of contending with the non-Western – that is, Oriental, Exotic – ‘barbarians out there’, where the ‘there’ is beyond our horizon. Alternatively, the Third is not so much an ‘in-between’ space (which would separate them) as a space ‘shared between’ Self and Other, the metaphysical copula between Self and Other that at best creates a shared isolation from the world beyond, in line with the Western image of an isolated individual who now, however, consists of

both Self and Other. Here, then, is difference as positive diversity, rather than as negative exclusion.

There are three basic paradigms of 'diversity' – 'cultural differentialism, cultural convergence, and sharing diversity – associated with different politics of multiculturalism (Nederveen Pieterse 1996). In this context, the hybrid's capacity to cross boundaries and mediate diversity has been celebrated, but to the extent that hybridity becomes normal routine it loses that transgressive power; so 'what do we mean by cultural hybridity when identity is built in the face of postmodern uncertainties that render even the notion of strangerhood meaningless?' (Werber 1997: 2). Does the notion of the Other as stranger lose its meaning in a hybrid world? And what about the Third? Is this a way of moving beyond Other and Third, towards a more harmonious world of – the Self?

When confronted with the Gordian knot, historians surmise that Alexander the Great may not have used his sword but pulled the knot off its pole to expose both ends of the rope. Is it perhaps time to acknowledge that the whole ethnological enterprise has not been corrupt just because some, or even most of its past practitioners took a wrong turn? We cannot go back and reinvent ethnology, undo those wrong turns. What we can do is take the good in the enterprise and raise it to a new level, fashion appropriate concepts and analytical tools, build on them. The aspect I have tried to highlight in this essay is the significance of place, the material location in the *oikomene* that transcends the human-focused attention given to Self, Other and Third. Place is said to be progressively eroded by globalisation processes popularly referred to as McDonaldization (Ritzer 1993). However, 'McDonaldization' may be not so much about the creation of an absolute sameness (the sense in which the term is often used), but rather about an underlying sameness that ensures the powerful coherence of superficially diverse cultural expressions. Just as a 'shallow essentialism' (Kockel 2012) has given rise to problematic and contradictory theorising about the nature of difference, so a 'shallow diversity' that is actually a theorised post-modern indifference can obscure social divisions and group conflicts. Simon Harrison has analysed cases where for a particular community 'similarities with outsiders, rather than differences, are the principal perceived threats to its identity' (Harrison 2006: 150) – sameness and assimilation, rather than differentiation, as problematic.

The hybrid has become a fashionable image; 'non-White, non-European ethnicity' is in vogue and 'the more peasant-like and low-class this ancestry is, the better' (Tlostanova 2004: 22). One may wonder whether this self-othering of academic analysts, the deliberate and emphatic association with the subaltern, is a better form of intellectual *Anbiederung* than the association with hegemonic interests that many ethnologists of a different era pursued. Or should we rather be concerned with 'disinterested inquiry'? Again, one wonders whether the champions of an anodyne version of epistemology might have particular interests at heart. The hybrid is a persuasive idea and a useful analytical tool, but it does

not take us beyond the constraints of an ultimately Self-centred discourse that acknowledges the various presences of Others and Thirds. A discourse of ‘hybrid’ brings to my mind images of Centaurs and the Minotaur. Classics scholars see the latter as representing the tributary relations of the city of Athens with Crete, and the slaying of the beast as breaking that dependency relationship. We have been a-maze-d by a discourse of Self, Other and Third. To lead him out of the maze of the Minotaur, Theseus relied on a thread Ariadne had given him – Ariadne, daughter of an earlier age, whom he abandoned after returning to safety. It might be worth looking again at the thread the older half-sister of the beast provided, to see whether it might lead us out of the maze by another way, to a place ‘on the far side of revenge’, a place where ‘hope and history rhyme’, as the late poet Seamus Heaney wrote in *The Cure of Troy* (1990) – there to find the displaced and abandoned Ariadne, and this time to try making a new home with her.

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ULLRICH KOCKEL

ETNOLOGIJA ir SĄVOKOS AŠ, KITAS bei TREČIAS: TOPOSOFINIAI AIŠKINIMAI

Santrauka

Viešoje ir netgi akademinėje erdvėje yra žinomi konkretūs *etnologijos* esmės ir jos sampratos stereotipai. Amerikos kontekste tai yra „mokslas apie akmenis, kaulus ir balsus“, visų pirma siejant ją su *archeologija*, *biologine antropologija* ir *lingvistika*. Europietiška kontekste tokios stereotipinės nuostatos yra taip pat gerai žinomos, tačiau čia šis mokslas dažniau siejamas su britų *socialine antropologija* ir netgi laikomas jos sinonimu. Kitu atveju *etnologija* čia įvardijama *europietiška* (ar kurios nors konkrečios tautos) *etnologija*, taip pabrėžiant jos ideologinę (kai kada – ir praktinę) atskirtį nuo senamadiškų folkloro tyrimų, šiuo metu dažnai įvardijamų kaip „*greitosios pagalbos*“ *etnologija* (angl. „*salvage ethnology*“). Būtent *europietiškosios etnologijos* sampratoms aiškinti yra skirtas šis straipsnis. Autorius čia tęsia savo jau ankstesnėse publikacijose pradėtą diskusiją apie „parapines“ etnologijos metodologinio nacionalizmo nuostatas, kai šis mokslas ir jo ištakos istoriškai (pagrįstai ar nepagrįstai) yra tuo kaltinami.

Įvairių teorinių idėjų bei praktinių jų realizavimo atvejų istoriniai tyrimai atskleidžia gausius tokių kaltinimų liudijimus, tačiau visada verta pabrėžti, kad čia netrūksta ir ne mažiau gausių priešingų faktų, leidžiančių suvokti etnologiją ir kaip savo kultūrinių nuostatų esme tarptautinę, lyginamąją ir netgi kosmopolitinę mokslo šaką. Nėra lengva viename straipsnyje visa tai išsamiai apžvelgti, argumentuoti ar kontrargumentuoti. Realu yra tik apsibrėžti vieną kurį nors šios problematikos šiuolaikinių idėjų ir praktinių tyrimų ypatumų aspektą ir jį išsamiai aptarti. Taip autorius elgiasi ir nustatydamas šiame straipsnyje aptariamų aktualijų ribas.

Jis pabrėžia, kad etnologija jau kuris laikas įprastai siejama su tautos (nacijos) konstravimo sampratomis ir tuo būdu čia visų pirma yra plėtojami tautiniu pagrindu parengti moksliniai projektai. XIX a. istoriniame bei socialiniame kontekste tai padėjo aiškiau apibrėžti vienų ar kitų tautų esminius bruožus, tautinių valstybių iškilimą, tačiau ne tik Centrinės, Rytų ir Pietų Europos šalių istorijos atvejais. Tačiau ir XX a. kai kurios Vakarų Europos tautos iškėlė regioninio nacionalizmo idėjas (Katalonija, Škotija), tapusias reikšmingais politiniais judėjimais. Kartu čia yra natūraliai operuojama bei diskutuojama sąvokomis *Aš* (*Pats*, *Savas*) ir *Kitas*. O Centrinėje Europoje (ypač Vokietijoje) dėl objektyvių istorinės ir ideologinės patirties priežasčių iki pat šiol vengiama kalbėti bet kokiomis vietinėmis regionalizmo ar nacionalizmo temomis. Čia bet koks tautinės kultūros paveldo kontekstualizavimas vietos ar atminties aspektais moksliniuose projektuose vis dar susiduria su rimtomis problemomis.

Vietos bruožai yra nulemti ne vien bendruomenės narių tarpusavio saitų, apibrėžtų geografinėmis ribomis. Čia veikia ir atitinkami socialiniai bei moraliniai gyvenimosi kriterijai, galintys dar esmingiau paveikti ir nulemti asmeninės bei etninės tapatybės nuostatas. Tai ypač aktualu įsisaugoti grupėms, vienu ar kitu laiku susidūrusioms su fatališkais nacionalizmo ar kolonializmo praeities patirtimis. Tai ypač išryškėja įgyvendinant tautinės gyvenimosi projektus su grupėmis („iš čia“) ir persikėlėliais iš kitų geografinių sričių („iš kitur, svetur“). Žvelgiant iš humanistinės ekologijos perspektyvų šiame straipsnyje ieškoma argumentų naujiems vietinių tapatybių įvertinimams šiuolaikinės Europos kontekste. Siekdama paaiškinti trejopos sandaros Pasaulio įvaizdį, kur išskiriamos sąvokos *Aš (Pats, Savas) – Kitas* – ir *Trečias*, etnologija šiuo atveju remiasi ir *topografijos*, *topologijos* ir netgi *toposofijos* mokslų nuostatomis.

Straipsnyje aptariama dviejų lygmenų trejybės sistema. Pirmuoju lygmeniu autoriaus dėmesio akiratyje išskiriama bene ryškiausia minėtoji trejopų sąvokų *Aš (Pats, Savas) – Kitas* – ir *Trečias* sfera. Antroji, santykinai mažiau apibrėžta, yra *Rankos, Galvos* ir *Širdies* triada, siejama atitinkamai su jau minėtų *topografijos*, *topologijos* ir *toposofijos* mokslų nuostatomis, liudijančiomis poziciją „išmintis glūdi vietose“ (Basso 1996). Tokia pozicija leidžia suvokti atitinkamą „vietą“ ne kaip vienaip ar kitaip suformuotą objektą, o kaip ontologinį atskaitos tašką. Kitaip tariant, jeigu pripažįstame savo paties egzistavimą, privalome pripažinti ir objektyviai egzistuojančią „vietą“ („erdvę“), kurioje esame, kuri yra čia pat prieš mus ar už mūsų. Tokios ontologinės nuostatos postulatai šiais laikais dažnai kaltinami esencializmu ir yra grindžiami „paviršutiniško esencializmo“ samprata. Verta pripažinti, kad kontroversiški laisvosios rinkos liberalizmo ir politinės kontrolės interesai esmingai lemia „vietos“ sampratos mobilumo ir galimybės ją netrukdomai perkelti „kitur“ galimybes ir kad toks atvejis akademinėje aplinkoje iki pat šiol tebėra ignoruojamas – nepastebimas ir neaptiriamas.