European Subjectivities -

Comparing Subject Formations of 'the West'

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'European':

'From Europe', 'originating in Europe'

'Subjectivities:'

Plurality of a 'self', 'those who are speaking'.

This text will look at the concept of 'The West':

How it is used to define a territory, a population, a mindset or *subject*.

Further, how this subject came into being, what its philosophical foundations are.

This will help explain the social consequences from thinking within the 'West'.

And finally it will look at some tensions within the subject caused by differences in the languages that constitute 'The West'.

'The West': A territory?

What is meant when one speaks of 'The West'? A geographic *territory*?

The United Nations Regional Groups, on the map shown below, are not legally enshrined entities, but the votes of UN-elections are often organised along these divisions[1]:
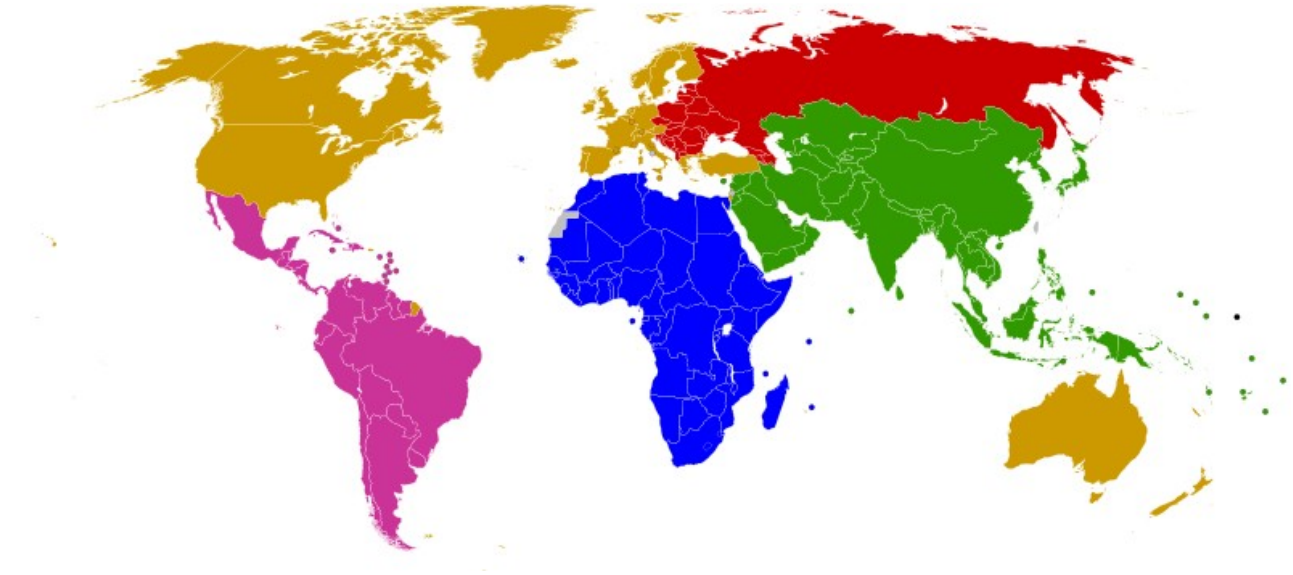
*United Nations Regional Groups. Yellow: 'Western European and Others Group' Source: Wikipedia*

As such 'Western Europe and Others' forms a polity, but its distribution on the planet shows that its is not based on any coherent geographic unit like 'Asia', 'Africa', 'Eastern Europe' or 'Latin America'.

The awkwardness in the official definition is because these 'Regional Groups' stem from the Cold War and therefore would have been described as 'capitalist' before the fall of the Iron Curtain. Nowadays this definition is not seen as valid, but it indicates how they are basically shaped along ideological lines, and not geographic in terms of physical characteristics like, even approximate, proximity.

1 As for example for the 'UN Framework Convention on Climate Change', whose website states: "Based on the tradition of the United Nations, Parties are organized into five regional groups, mainly for the purposes of electing the Bureaux, namely: African States, Asian States, Eastern European States, Latin American and the Caribbean States, and the Western European and Other States (the "Other States" include Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and the United States of America, but not Japan, which is in the Asian Group)."

The West: A civilization?

Samuel P. Huntington names as 'Western Christian' civilisation the areas of land that include North America, divides Europe based on a definition from William Wallace by a "line [that] runs along what are now boundaries between Finland and Russia, cuts trough Belarus and Ukraine, … swings westward separating Transylvania from the rest of Romania, and then goes through Yugoslavia almost exactly along the line now separating Croatia and Slovenia from the rest of Yugoslavia." And then he also includes Australia and New Zealand.
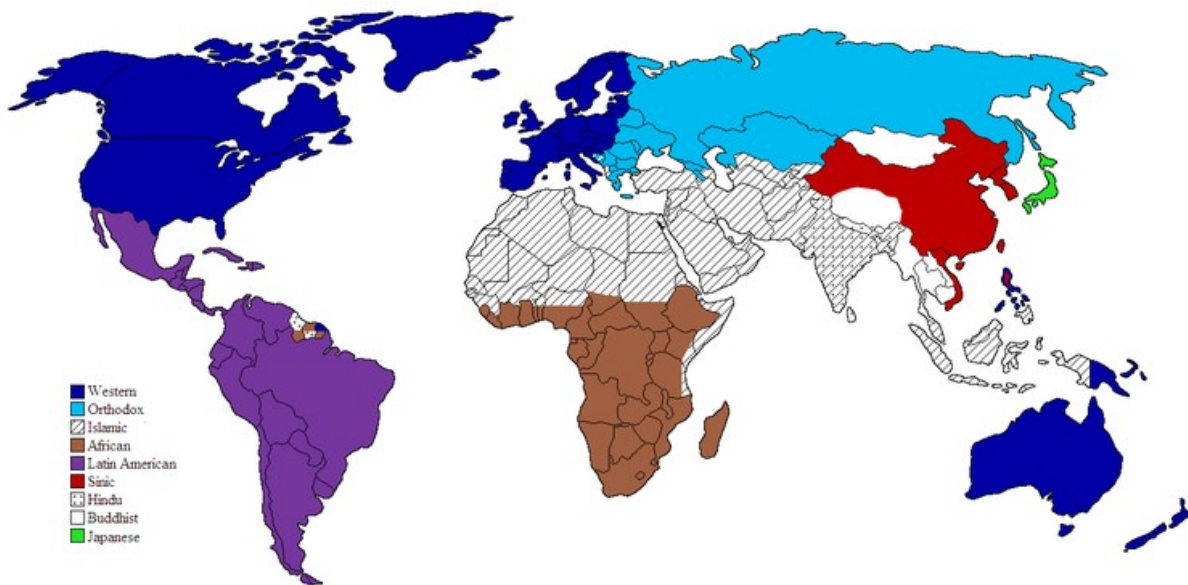
World's 'civilisations' according to Samuel P. Huntington. Blue: 'Western'

In his version 'Western civilisation' is supposedly based on religious beliefs[2].
But it seems arbitrary to equate some of the major strains of Christianity, but not the Orthodox Christian church. Although this could be justified as being based on the split of the Roman Empire into its eastern and western half and corresponding to the medieval Christian Schism, it turns a blind eye on the Thirty Years War, the Dutch Revolt and many other conflicts between Protestants and Catholics that devastated Europe, pushed significant portions of the population to flee to the New World to enjoy religious freedom and which could be seen as splitting the 'West' in different cultural spheres up to the present. Also there seems no clear reason as to why Catholic 'Latin America' would be excluded from this definition of 'The West'. So to describe 'The West' as Christianity seems at least contentious.

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2   "differences among civilizations are not only real; they are basic. Civilizations are differentiated from each other by history, language, culture, tradition and, most important, religion. The people of different civilizations have different views on the relations between God and man, the individual and the group, the citizen and the state, parents and children, husband and wife, as well as differing views of the relative importance of rights and responsibilities, liberty and authority, equality and hierarchy. These differences are the product of centuries." Huntington 1993, p. 25

'The West': A People?

The inclusion of Europe's former settler colonies in both of the above definitions indicates that the formation of the 'West' is not based on geographic or religious features, but is rather related to *population*.

More precisely the idea of the 'West' seems to correspond to areas where descendants of Europeans historically hold political power, i.e. 'white people'/'Europeans'/'Caucasians', and the so-called 'civilisations' as Huntington calls them, match the definitions of racial theorists of the 18th century. In 'Systema Naturae' Carolus Linnaeus divided humanity into five different species, whose names (except one, 'Homo ferus', wild man) where based on the perceived geographic distribution of the colour of skin: Europaeus albus (white European), Americanus rubescus (red American), Asiaticus luridus (yellow Asian) and Afer niger (black African).

In another vision, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, in the third edition of 'The Natural Variety of Mankind', sorts the human population according to the shapes of their skulls, as well as skin colour, and concludes that there are: Caucasians, Mongolians, Ethiopians, Americans and Malays. Again these 'types' take their names from geographic locations and one is used to define the original inhabitants of Europe and settlers to its colonies, the 'Caucasians', whereas the colonies' original inhabitants are seen as a different type. [3]

Already from their inception these differing types, species, or 'races', as they later came to be known, were endowed with certain characteristics.

Linnaeus describes the 'white European' as being 'ingenious' and 'governed by law'.

This is precisely what Huntington hints at when he describes 'Western ideas' as: "individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state, …"

Individualism can be understood as philosophical expression of one's ingenuity and the political consequence of this would be liberalism, liberty and free market, whereas constitutionalism, human rights and democracy are directly linked to the 'rule of law'.

The separation of church and state on the other hand would imply a division between ideology and the political (and therefore would be in direct contradiction of Huntington's definition of 'The West' as

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3   Hannaford 1996, p. 203 ff

based on religion). While this is achieved on the surface by separating the institutions governing the soul (church) and the body (government), it betrays itself by pretending to be free from any ideology and therefore 'universal', even though simply the absence of 'religion' from the state does not mean the absence of ideology from discourse.

While all these ideological/philosophical characteristics may indeed be what makes the Westerners' 'West', the populations of all of the colonies have been from the beginning marked by its non-white, i.e. non-European parts of the population and all of the values and ideas were shaped in exchange with various people from all over the world. As described by Linnebaugh and Rediker in 'The Many-Headed Hydra', this happened often aboard ships and in ports, where knowledge along goods was transported in the builiding of global capitalism.

And as Paul Gilroy has shown in 'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack', the contributions of 'black' persons to British, American and generally Western society can only be overlooked by strenuously sticking to an imagined national character construction, such as the 'British' identity, that has nothing to do with the actual past.

So in any case, even if 'The West' is projected unto the 'white people', it does not in the least way mean that it is exclusive to any parts of the population.

'The West': A Subject Formation

So if 'The West' is not a territory, nor a civilisation or a population, then it is a mindset, a mentality, a *subject* in head of the people talking of themselves as in 'The West'.

And as an ideological construct, it is one which pretends not to be one.

Edward Said first observed this when he stated that corresponding to Orientalism there exists no discipline called Occidentalism, a study of the West. Each aspect of British, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian etc. national character was defined not unto itself, as that is cognitively impossible (Butler), but in opposition to an encountered or imagined 'other'. This could be the other competing European powers, as is the case with the 'national character' of any certain 'nation state' in difference to the others, but very often and certainly in the case of the 'Western self', it was rather developed in the colonial contact zone with the entirely 'other' other.

As European powers took hold of most of the planets habitable surface in the 18th and 19th century, bourgeois capitalists - the agents in charge of the imperial projects - were deeply steeped in Enlightenment philosophy, which saw itself as based only on something called 'reason' and, claiming to have left religion to a separate realm or left it completely, and therefore being free from any ideology.

When Kant split the perceptiveness of the human mind into different categories of 'reason' (Vernunft), i.e. the 'practical reason' (Kritik der praktischen Vernunft) and 'pure reason' (Kritik der reinen Vernunft), and the latter again into 'transcendental aesthetics' and the actual 'pure' and 'empirical' types of reason, he conveniently separated all socialisation (practical reason) and taste/culture/identity (transcendental aesthetics) from the act of thinking, which for him is 'pure' reason. While he himself remained deeply religious, this division of consciousness enabled a form of thinking that reduced the 'other' to an object to be analysed, without reflecting on one's own position in regard to that 'other' or the world as a whole.[4]

As Michel Foucault much later demonstrated, even the most 'scientific' of institutions such as the school, the university, the hospital and the prison are in themselves entirely ideological in their functioning. But the division of the cognitive process allowed for a disavowal of their inherent ideology and a view on the world that treats everything in it as an object, without placing oneself in the world.

In order to consolidate other religious and philosophic traditions within and outside of Europe with the brutal economic and political consequences of imperialism, it placed other parts of the world not just in a different geographic location, but also in a different period of time. By historicising others, but placing itself within a 'homogenous, empty time', as Walter Benjamin put it, European powers were able to see the objects of its Imperialism as backwards in time and could therefore hold off discourse about the aim of the imperial project.

It became not a matter of good or bad, categories ascribed to taste and feelings (Kant), but simply about being *ahead in time*.

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4   This is even visible in the writing of this text. I am strenuously trying to avoid the mentioning of 'me', the author, so as not to seem biased, i.e. ideological, and thereby I take on the same, impersonal stance that is characteristic of writing from within 'The West'. So it is that very same subject, which I am writing about that now speaks trough me. At the same time I am entirely obscuring the fact that obviously there always is a 'me' writing and no text is created outside of any con-text, meaning a life shaped by its previous experiences.

The Powerful, Capitalist West

Hanna Arendt argues that the one and only philosophical basis for bourgeois capitalists are the ideas of Thomas Hobbes[5]. By giving the human only so much value, as he or she is of use to others, any 'other' can be reduced to an object of one's own aspirations. Value, in this view, is not inherent in anything, but established in exchange, and everything is exchangeable. This is not just valid for products, but also for ideas and persons.

What gives the advantage in any exchange, is power[6]. The holding of power and its execution then is that, which gives value and right.
In this circular argument power then becomes the justification for the right to power, a logic which was widely tested in the various colonial projects.
The successful application of power confirmed the inferiority of any other people, 'race' (or 'civilisation'), their domination as such was what gave the imperialists the right to dominate.

Sven Lindqvist illustrates the devastating application of this theory in 'A History of Bombing', where he traces the development of aerial bombardment to its initial use in the colonial context. A technology that was perceived to be too inhumane to be applied to the 'civilised same, i.e. other European powers that could eventually use the same technology, was deployed on the 'inferior races' and used to destroy entire cities and exterminate populations. The successful use of such power was then seen as proof of this inferiority of the people bombed, as they were unable to use the same technology.

Another example of this would be the transatlantic slave trade, wherein slaves were initially bought on the west African coast and the fact that these people were slaves to begin with justified their use as slaves in the American and Caribbean colonies.
Captivity was seen as a proof of weakness and therefore confirmed their inferiority, something manifested in racist theories and policies that relegated the 'black' people to a subordinate role in

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[5]"Hobbes ist in der Tat der einzige Philosoph, auf den die Bourgeoisie sich je hätte berufen dürfen; ihre Weltanschauung jedenfalls, gereinigt von aller Heuchelei und unbeirrt von allen christlichen Zugeständnissen, die die bürgerliche Gesellschaft dann doch durch Jahrhunderte zu machen sich gezwungen sah, ist von ihm entworfen und nahezu endgültig formuliert worden, Jahrhunderte bevor die neue Klasse den Mut fand, sich ausdrücklich zu ihr zu bekennen, wiewohl sie zu entsprechenden Verhaltungsweisen eindeutig gezwungen war." Arendt 1986, p. 317-318

[6]"Macht ist die Monopolherrschaft über die öffentliche Meinung, welche dem Individuum erlaubt, die Preise so festzusetzen, Angebot und Nachfrage so zu regulieren, dass sie dem betreffenden Individuum zu grösstmöglichem Vorteil gereichen." Arendt 1986, p. 319

society, as that was their initial position in the encounter. The actual economic and military conditions that led to their captivity could thus be overlooked, as they were not of importance in this view of the world from a market perspective, which was the only reference as to the value of any object or human being.

The same could be said of any use of human material for the building of Empire, such as the relocation of people from the Indian sub-continent to other areas under British control and their employment for the benefit of the British dominion.

That these human materials would then be seen as inferior is the only logical consequence, once that these persons were dehumanised to the extent that their only apparent use-value to a society remained in their actual force of their body.

The basis of such a philosophy, according to Arendt, is Hobbes' view of the natural state of the world as perpetual war, and she even admires him for his honesty and precision in his definition of 'Western' or Capitalist, as she calls them, values.

It creates an absolute relativism of all values and a seemingly total individualism, as all social contracts are only established to enhance the position of the individual.
But obviously the value of the individual himself then can only be defined by its use-value to the society and the value of the human experience is only established in comparison to the experience of other people's lives (p. 321).

This line of thought has fundamental philosophical implications and is basically what we refer to as *modernity*.

The Authentic, Modern West

In 'The Malaise of Modernity' Charles Taylor analyses the roots of *modern* thought, or as I am approaching it, this Western ideology[7], and how it disguises itself as not being ideological. Developed out of German and English Romantic ideas, authenticity became the absolute goal of personal human life, and in its closeness to a 'true, inner self', the success of one's life is measured.

7"Individualist ideas developed in the thought and sensibility, particularly of educated Europeans, during the seventeenth century. These seem to have facilitated the growth of new political forms that challenged the ancient hierarchies, and of new modes of economic life, which gave a greater place to the market and entrepreneurial enterprise. But once these new forms are in place, and people are brought up in them, then this individualism is greatly strengthened, because it is rooted in their everyday practice, in the way they make their living and the way they relate to others in political life." Taylor 1991, p. 58

And as such, even a per se destructive path can be considered 'right' and justified as being simply the shortening of an anyway necessary process.

This is also the way in which Darwin's theory of evolution has been misinterpreted by social Darwinists and eugenicists and often still is in popular thought. As if randomness was not the overall factor by which genetic variation is distributed in human population, the apparent phenotypes and social characteristics of humans are seen indicative of some underlying evolutionary principle and used to explain devastation that is really caused by human interaction.

Again using the example of the transatlantic slave trade: 'Black' people were the victims because of an inherent inferiority, and that inferiority is caused by *nature* to begin with. So really the capitalists who use the slaves are doing just what *their role in nature* should be, i.e. being masters, and anything else would not be 'authentic'. Once this perspective of a dehumanised society based on *natural* hierarchy is accepted, there is no point in questioning one's own actions, as they are seemingly *pre-programmed* – by nature, or genes, into each 'culture' or 'civilisation'. And defying any such conditioning would not just be *un-natural* and therefore 'wrong', but in the long run even futile, as evolutionary selection would make way with it.

The West = Capitalism = Modernity?

In this text I am equating 'The West' with *capitalism* and *modernity*. While capitalism refers to an economic mode of production, this is inextricably linked with its development of the subject called 'The West'. Similarly modernity, as it tries to define a mode of living or a period of time, can only be separated from the 'West' if that is defined as a geographically different from the 'rest of modernity'. But as I have shown that 'The West' is neither a territory, a civilisation, nor a population, it describes most accurately a certain mode of thinking that is behind the economics of 'capitalism' and the lifestyle of 'modernity'.
This then can also explain the use of the expression 'Westernisation', as describing the diffusion of values related to the process of 'modernisation' around the world and 'the spread of market capitalism'.

But to come to term with the deeply rooted construction of 'Western' subjectivity, we must look at each of the terms that are used in constituting it, as the danger of Eurocentrism is just as present in post-colonial studies, as in any other discipline practised and theorised within 'The West'.

Dipesh Chakraborty specifically names this task as a difficulty in 'Provincialising Europe', where he wrirtes: "The problem of capitalist modernity cannot any longer be seen simply as a sociological

problem of historical transition … but as a problem of translation, as well. There was a time – before scholarship itself became globalised – when the process of translating diverse forms, practices, and understandings of life into universalist political-theoretical categories of deeply European origin seemed to most social scientists an unproblematic proposition. That which was an analytical category (such as capital) was understood to have transcended the fragment of European history in which it may have originated. At most we acknowledged as 'rough' was adequate for the task of comprehension."[8] He goes on to analyse the translation difficulties of Bengali middle-class histories and a critique of subaltern studies. But instead of using a non-European language, this text will look at the difficulties in translation within a few European languages:

Language Differences in the Subject's Formation

One of the reasons for the opaqueness of the 'West''s subject formation are the differences in the languages constituting it.

As all the major thinkers, including the one's referenced in this text, write in a specific European language that is each embedded in a specific historical context, key thoughts fall victim to the difficulties of translation and the incommensurability of the pasts tied to each language.

Without a differentiation of the different human experiences that come to use its words and speak within the subject that is the 'West', an identification of Westernism can not take place.
For this purpose the text will look at a four words central to the construction of 'The West' and its differing use and resonance in up to three European languages, English, German, French.

Reason and Aesthetics

Starting with the word so crucial to the West's self-understanding, 'reason', as Kant's 'Vernunft' is rendered in English, or 'raison' in French: While it's meaning seems obvious in one language alone, 'Vernunft' has quite different implications in German, where it bears more resemblance to 'Verstand', as in 'gesunder Menschenverstand', 'common sense' as this would be translated in English (and an expression often used by Hanna Arendt in the context of Anti-Semitism). This probably explains Kant's necessity of splitting off the 'pure', 'empirical' reason from the 'practical' (common sense) reason, as in German the latter would not automatically be excluded from the concept of 'reason'. Kant himself seemed well aware of the difficulties in translation, as is evidenced in footnote no. 1 of part 1, §1 in the 'Elementarlehre' of the 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft':

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8 Chakrabarty 2000, p.17

"The Germans are the only ones who now use the word aesthetics to name that, which others call critique of taste. Therein lies the misplaced hope, which was created by the excellent analyst Baumgarten, to bring the critical measurement of the beautiful within the principles of reason and elevate the rules thereof to a science. This attempt alone is futile. Because thought rules, or criteria, even from the most *noble* sources, are only empirical, and therefore can never be used as *specific* laws a priori, as to which our sense of taste should follow, rather is the latter the testing stone for the correctness of the former. | Because of that it is commendable to let this expression vanish and keep it in that teaching, which is the true science, (which would bring one closer to the language of the Ancients, to whom the division of knowledge in αισθητα και νοητα was very famous), or to share the expression with the speculative philosophy and to take aesthetics partly in the transcendental sense, partly in psychological meaning."[9] (Translation by the author)

With this Kant tried to free his use of the word 'aesthetics' from its meaning in German and referred to its use in Ancient Greek, hoping that readers with a similar background in classical education would see trough the restraints of the language he is writing in. But in doing so, he underestimated (A) the increasing influence of nationalism and the fading away of antiquity as a frame of reference and (B) his own power of influence unto the use of language.

(A) While may have been obvious for classically educated upper-class Europeans that the cognitive processes can be divided in aesthetics (αισθητα) and understanding (νοητα), this definitions seem very unclear without a further deconstruction of the words. And as (B) even readers in other languages, such as English, would have tried to understand the word in its 'authentic', i.e. German sense, as this is the language he is writing in, there lacked a frame of reference that is not steeped in any language or cultural background.

So in defining 'empirical reason' as that 'understanding', which is free from 'aesthetics', without being clear about what 'aesthetics' means to begin with, we can see how easily there can be misunderstanding even concerning the most basic expressions of what constitutes the essence of 'The West'. By simply

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[9] "Die Deutschen sind die einzigen, welche sich jetzt des Worts Ä s t h e t i k bedienen, um dadurch das zu bezeichnen, was andre Kritik des Geschmacks heissen. Es liegt hier die verfehlte Hoffnung zum Grunde, die der vortreffliche Analyst Baumgarten fasste, die kritische Beurteilung des Schönen unter Vernunftsprinzipien zu bringen, und die Regeln derselben zur Wissenschaft zu erheben. Allein diese Bemühung ist vergeblich. Denn gedachte Regeln, oder Kriterien, sind ihren *vornehmsten* Quellen nach bloss empirisch, und können also niemals zu *bestimmten* Gesetzen a priori dienen, wornach sich unser Geschmacksurteil richten müsste, vielmehr macht des letztere dein eigentlichen Probierstein der Richtigkeit des ersteren aus. | Um deswillen ist es ratsam, diese Benennung entweder eingehen zu lassen, und sie derjenigen Lehre aufzubehalten, die wahre Wissenschaft ist, (wodurch man auch der Sprache dem Sinne der Alten näher treten würde, bei denen die Einteilung der Erkenntniss in αισθητα και νοητα sehr berühmt war), oder sich in die Benennung mit der spekulativen Philosophie zu teilen und die Ästhetik teils im transzendentalen Sinne, teils in psychologischer Bedeutung zu nehmen." Kant 1998, p- 95

assigning the other kind of 'aesthetics' to a different field concerned with cognition -psychology-, he could evade a further investigation about how socialisation is essential in the shaping of understanding.

Even in French 'raison' has very different implications, as it is also the word used for 'right', as in 'avoir raison' = 'being right' (correct), where 'raison' is free from the allusion of rationality and the exclusivity to a culturally defined 'Vernunftdenken' (reasonable thought), but simply the universal measure of correctness of any given statement.

Imperialism

As any one subject is formed in exchange and opposition to it 'other', the same difficulties in language concern its critique, for example in the use and understanding of the word 'imperialism'.

Hanna Arendt -herself bilingual and a translator- cautiously takes her initial definition of the word from the British historian J.A. Hobson, who named 'Imperialism' as the period from 1884-1914. Now despite her excellent analysis and the deconstruction of the term, as the period leading up to the massacres of the 20th century, and thus historicising the developments, rather than separating them of in a 'homogenous, empty time', she cannot change the historical context in which such a word is read in different languages.

The word Empire (with a capital E) that lies at the heart of the word imperialism, is the British Empire, and so in every understanding of the word in an English or English speaking context, it directly refers to the history of that very Empire. Whether this is in a British ear, who hears it as *their* past, or an American ear, who hears it as their *origin overcome* and a past left behind a long time ago, i.e. with American independence and therefore even before the onset of the actual period of Imperialism. So while in a British context it is something to be either forgotten or consciously remembered, to the American it is something inherently irrelevant.

It is even more so in other languages: As in German and French the word empire was not not used to directly describe the political construct that was the agent of their imperialism, it can easily be relegated to being something outside of their culture and therefore also irrelevant. Of course the term can be used to describe certain acts perpetuated by Nazi Germany, such as the slaughter of the Herereo and Namaqua, but because this then falls in parallel to the other genocides committed by the Nazis, it looses all meaning in that specific context.

French imperialism on the other hand, spreading under the label of expanding 'La République', also has an entirely different self-understanding: As it is connected to Napoleon's previous expansionist politics across the European continent and with it the spread of certain 'democratic' values of the French revolution, no matter how brutal their implementation was, even on mainland Europe (as for example in Switzerland during the period of the 'République Helvetique)', it was long and partly still is perceived

as 'progress'. As the values apparently exported to the colonies are still valued as such, i.e. liberté, égalité, fraternité (see Huntignton's list of Western ideals), the timeframe and process in which France is dealing with its own colonial past is very different, and is less associated with the word 'Imperialism'. Instead they retain much more of their 'universalité' (universality), as that is how they were framed to begin with during the French Revolution.

Capitalism

The word capitalism, first articulated by the British Adam Smith and most famously critiqued by the German Karl Marx, is another crucial word in the constitution of 'The West'.
Because of its invention by British industrialists, traders and slavers in dealing with the products and peoples of its Empire, and as the core of US economic policy from its the start of its creation, capitalism remains seen as an deeply Anglosaxon construct in other European countries.
This is certainly the case in regards to France, where from Mercantilism originated and which still retains more protectionist national policies.

But also in Germany, which stays divided in its views of absolute market freedom – for obvious historical reasons, though not necessarily along the old divide between the BRD[10] and the DDR[11]. Rather than geographic, the differences arise from the use of the word: While the former BRD would have avoided the word altogether and instead employed 'freedom', the DDR, RAF[12] and other critics firmly insisted on characterising 'The West' (in this case 'of Germany') as 'kapitalistisch', and so the expression retains a strong element of critique even when employed simply 'descriptive'.

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10 Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 'West Germany'
11 Deutsche Demokratische Republik, 'East Germany'
12 Rote Armee Fraktion

Conclusion

This text should have demonstrated what is meant when one speaks or writes about 'The West'. That it is not a geographic entity, nor a civilisation, and only from a racist perspective, a population.
In reality 'The West' is a subject formation, a mode of thinking, that traces its roots to Enlightenment philosophies of the 18th and 19th century, was developed in the colonial projects, and is directly linked to the corresponding concepts of 'capitalism' and 'modernity'.

A disavowal of the historical construction of 'The West' obscures its inherent ideology and pretends a universality concerning its values, which have spread across the globe with Imperialism.

But the differences between the languages through which 'The West' is constituted, renders more difficult its self-realisation as an ideological construct, as it is riddled with inner contradictions and misunderstandings, even concerning some of the most basic terms that should be characteristic of it.

In order to critically re-evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of thinking from within 'The West', we first have to be aware of the power of said subject formation, as well as address the discrepancies in the languages that defines it. Only then an we try to step out of the restraints of such a mode of thinking, and maybe, if it seems warranted, salvage some of the values that lie within 'The West', or not.

Robin Bhattacharya, April 2009

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