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推進國際關係理論的哲學詮釋學框架

Advancing a Philosophical Hermeneutical Framework for  
International Relations Theory

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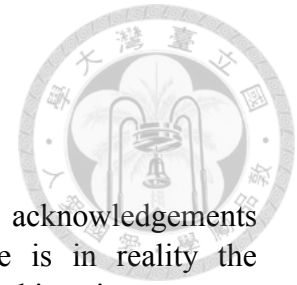
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# Acknowledgements



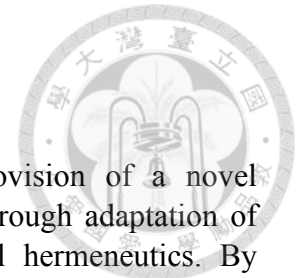
Despite being the author of this thesis, it is in starting to pen this acknowledgements that I fully comprehend how the understanding conveyed here is in reality the crystallisation of multiple contributors who have helped me arrive at this point.

First and foremost, a large credit for this work's genesis and cultivation rests with my advisor Professor Sy-shyan Chen, whose class sparked the inspiration for this line of questioning, and whose consistent encouragement, advice and willingness to help, has made this whole enterprise a pleasure. A huge thanks also is due for my committee members, Professors I Yuan, Chang-ling Huang and Jason M. Kuo, whose insights and challenges were candid and immensely helpful.

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# Abstract



This thesis contributes to international relations theory by provision of a novel conceptualisation of interaction in the international, formulated through adaptation of the theory and method of Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. By utilising interpretation and Gadamer's *fusion of horizons* as the human means of understanding the world and the Other, a radical constructivist and sophisticated theoretical approach is built through a framework of philosophical hermeneutical concepts, which together provide answers to normative questions of interaction in the international. Specifically, the framework construes international engagement as meetings of interlocutors in structures of discourse, through which Self-Other relationships manifest. Language is not only the formation of understanding about the world, but is also the means of transmission of meaning between lifeworlds constructed of shared meaning between individuals (*sensus communi*), which are given agency and manifestation as interlocutors, termed here as *Volksgeists*. Meetings of *Volksgeists* continually shape the international system as the temporal immediacy of interpretation constantly redefines understanding of the world for individuals. In order to validate the knowledge attained through the philosophical hermeneutical framework, epistemological reasoning is conducted to demonstrate the advantages of hermeneutical methods in response of *synthetic questions* in social science. Finally, this thesis operationalises the framework by conducting an analysis of China and its interpretative engagement with the international, simultaneously providing an up-to-date assessment of Chinese intention and intentionality towards the international arena. The analysis of China demonstrates a strong irredentist sentiment formulated on Gadamerian *pre-understanding* and *tradition* which drives the contemporary Chinese *Volksgeist*, leading to conflict with the international.

**Keywords:** philosophical hermeneutics, *sensus communis*, *Volksgeist*, interpretative international relations theory.



# 中文摘要



本論文使用漢斯·格奧爾格·伽達默爾 (Hans-Georg Gadamer) 成立的哲學詮釋學的理论與方法，以新的概念應用於國際關係理論。本文將伽達默爾的視域融合 (fusion of horizons) 概念，作為人類理解世界與他者的方法。並以哲學詮釋學概念作為框架，建立激進的建構主義 (constructivist) 與複雜的理論方法，為國際互動的規範性問題提供了答案。具體而言，本文的理論框架把國際互動視為對話者們在敘事結構中的交會，透過這種交會互動，體現出自我與他者 (Self-Other) 的關係。語言不僅有助於了解這個世界的形塑過程，也是人們在這個世界中因互相瞭解產生共同感 (sensus communi) 時傳達意義方法，而共同感獲得能動性後，即能化身為對話者，本文稱之為民族精神 (Volksgeists)。由於個人對世界的直接詮釋會不停重塑人們對於世界的理解，因此民族精神的互動會不斷地塑造國際體系。為了辯證由哲學詮釋學框架產生的理論知識，本文進行認識論的探究，論證詮釋學方法在回應社會科學中綜合問題 (synthetic questions) 的優勢。最後，本文運用哲學詮釋學的理论框架，分析中國與國際環境的詮釋互動，同時地對中國在國際舞台上的意圖與意向性進行最新的評估。在本文對於中國的分析中，顯現了強烈的領土收復主義 (irredentist) 的情緒，驅動了當代中國的民族精神，導致中國與國際環境可能發生衝突，此結論呼應了伽達默爾的先見與傳統概念。

關鍵字：哲學詮釋學、共同感、民族精神、詮釋國際關係理論。

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Table 1.1: Habermasian Knowledge and Human Interests.....26





*homines ante saecula multa sine oppidis legibusque uitam exegerunt, una lingua loquentes, sub Iouis imperio, sed postquam Mercurius sermones hominum interpretatus est, unde ἑρμηνευτῆς dicitur [esse] interpres (Mercurius enim Graece Ἑρμῆς uocatur; idem nationes distribuit), tum discordia inter mortales esse coepit, quod Ioui placitum non est. itaque exordium regnandi tradidit Phoroneo, ob id beneficium quod Iunoni sacra primus fecit.*

*Men for many centuries before lived without town or laws, speaking one tongue under the rule of Jove. But after Mercury had explained the languages of men (when he is called hermeneutes, "interpreter;" for Mercury in Greek is called Hermes; he too, divided the nations), then discord arose among mortals, which was not pleasing to Jove. And so he gave over the first rule to Phoroneus, because he was first to make offerings to Juno.*

Hyginus, *Fabulae* 143

# I. Introduction



*War (n) - late Old English wyrre, werre "large-scale military conflict," from Old North French werre "war" (Old French guerre "**difficulty, dispute; hostility; fight, combat, war;**" Modern French guerre), from Frankish \*werra, from Proto-Germanic \*werz-a- (source also of Old Saxon werran, Old High German werran, German verwirren "**to confuse, perplex**"), from PIE \*wers- (1) "**to confuse, mix up**". Cognates suggest the original sense was "**to bring into confusion**".<sup>1</sup>*

Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021b

This thesis delivers a novel and radical contribution to existing international relations theory through construction of a theoretical framework based on the philosophical hermeneutics of German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002). By developing a theoretical framework upon several of the principles of Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics, interaction between units of the international can be construed in terms of *discourses* that may lead to understanding or misunderstanding.<sup>2</sup> Understanding as agreement and misunderstanding as conflict come at the conjunction or divergence of lifeworlds that are constructed through language, which when interpreted by both the Self and the Other, manifest the Self in opposition to the Other. Where there is shared understanding between individuals, *sensus communi* (*Gemeinsinn*) form, representing collectives of individuals with common experiences and outlooks toward the world, from which an intersubjective conceptualisation of collective identity forms a *Volksgeist*, distinct from the state polity, which can drive the intention and intentionality of units in the international, and thus explain international

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<sup>1</sup> Emphasis in bold added.

<sup>2</sup> The terms discourse, dialogue and dialectic are not synonymous. Discourse refers to a communicative act, which could be interpreted as one directional, that is speaker to listener only, or more generally as an umbrella term for both dialogue and dialectic. Dialogue is understood to be communication back and forth between listener and speaker. Dialectic is dialogue with purpose aimed at understanding.

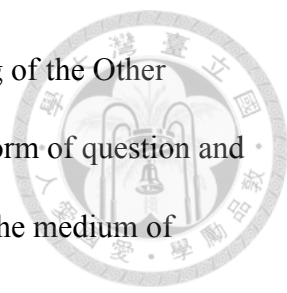
behaviour.<sup>3</sup> In addition to epistemological and methodological considerations underpinning usage of philosophical hermeneutics as delivering a method of understanding, the operationalisation of the framework in a case study of Chinese interaction with the international serves to validate the approach taken here, while also presenting an updated understanding of modern Chinese intention towards the international. To this end, this thesis undoubtedly pursues an ambitious enterprise.

The foundational thinking for philosophical hermeneutics comes from Gadamer, the most influential hermeneutist of the twentieth century, whose *magnus opus Truth and Method* (2004) remains a defining text of interpretative theory. Fundamentally speaking, philosophical hermeneutics seeks to understand human understanding by delineating the process of understanding. Crucial to this is the act of *continuous interpretation*, understood as inherent and fundamental to basic human thinking and *being*, the process of which is described in hermeneutical terminology as the *hermeneutic circle* (*hermeneutischer Zirkel*).<sup>4</sup> Additionally, Gadamer's *fusion of horizons* (*Horizontverschmelzung*) offers a framework for dialectic, whereby subjective

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<sup>3</sup> There are several terminology used for to describe “units” in the international. Throughout, units are synonymous with *sensus communi*, representing the base unit of international cooperation under this philosophical hermeneutical framework. The *sensus communis* is a heavily historically loaded word and has had multiple formulations of meaning. Here the *sensus communis* is understood roughly in the terms of Gadamer's understanding of Giambattista Vico's *sensus communis* as “the sense of what is right and of the common good that is to be found in all men; moreover, it is a sense that is acquired through living in the community and is determined by its structures and aims” (Gadamer, 2004:22). See John Schaeffer (1981; 1990) for further discussion. The term “actor” is also used to better represent *sensus communi* as inhabiting agency within the international, and “interlocutor” is employed when demonstrating units as engaged in dialogue. Intention and intentionality also need to be clearly differentiated. In this thesis, intention is understood as the purpose in pursuing an act, thus demonstrating reasoning; i.e. my intention to do X is Y. Intentionality, on the other hand, demonstrates the possibility of intention within one's lifeworld, i.e. the ability for my mind to think about something or intend towards something. For instance, intentionality of the world as experienced daily around oneself is much greater than towards phenomena one never or rarely considers.

<sup>4</sup> The term hermeneutic circle has its own historical tradition through the hermeneutic corpus of writing. It can be understood in this thesis along the lines used by Gadamer, whereby it describes the interactive process of engaging with an object, usually a linguistic entity, whereby the context in which the entity is received and interpreted has an influence on the meaning at the point of reception. These contexts are constantly changing, hence the reinterpretation and importance of the temporal immediacy of interpretation discussed in chapter two.



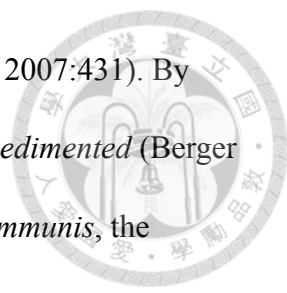
horizons of the lifeworlds of the individual gain closer understanding of the Other through *meaningful* attempt to understand the Other, usually in the form of question and answer. Since lifeworlds are manifested in language, as language is the medium of thought and *being*, bridging lifeworlds across languages involves a greater challenge than within the same language. The linguistic coverage of thought, communication and lifeworld is crucial in understanding how lifeworlds can be bridged, agreement reached, or conflict created between actors, extrapolated here to units in the international.

At the level of the international, both individuals and collectives meet, and in doing so present an understanding of one's identity as constructed in the international and *belonging* to a unit of the international; that is, as belonging to what is termed here as a *Volksgeist*. Understanding the manifestation of a *Volksgeist* relies on understanding the shared understanding of a *sensus communis*, developed in philosophical hermeneutical terms by *tradition* and *pre-understanding* (*prejudice* or *Vorurteil*),<sup>5</sup> which is brought to any dialogue with the Other. Gadamer argued for the existence of a historically-effected consciousness (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*), which involves the intergenerational and social *handing down* of shared custom, culture (*Geisteswissenschaften*) and world view (*Weltanschuuang*) as permitted by the transference of ontological meaning conveyed in language.<sup>6</sup> This contributes to construction of our individual and shared lifeworlds, to which end “[n]o human is an island. Humans stock their minds with mental artefacts, such as names and other kinds

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<sup>5</sup> The term pre-understanding is used over Gadamer's preference for prejudice in this thesis for clarity, as pre-understanding describes better the process of coming to discourse with established understanding of contexts, importantly the Self and the Other. Tradition remains tradition for its etymological routes in the Latin *traditio* (to hand over), which helpfully describes the process of the handing down of understanding about the world from generation to generation, and from Self to Other in daily life.

<sup>6</sup> *Geisteswissenschaften* is synonymous with the humanities, including arts, history, languages, literature et al. Its use in the German form is not only to keep in touch with Gadamer's work, but to take advantage of the connection between the *Geist* (spirit) of the nation as formed by traditions of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, which is not as readily embodied in the English word “humanities”.



of words, which are products of the minds of other humans” (Pinker, 2007:431). By isolating which such "mental artefacts” are retained, here termed as *sedimented* (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:85), in the shared understanding of a *sensus communis*, the intention and intentionality of units of the international becomes reflective of a shared experience, imagined or perceived, which shapes how they interact with others in the international. Thus, the hermeneutical project of bridging the conflict between the past and present becomes realised in how international units perform a similarly hermeneutical task in continuous reinterpretation of the world, the Self, and the Other against a backdrop of their understanding of material and, importantly, social ontologies.

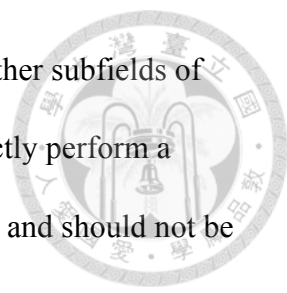
Aside from the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer, other philosophers also make immensely important contributions to the programme of this thesis. Martin Heidegger, Paul Ricoeur, Emmanuel Levinas, G.W.F. Hegel, Peter Winch, and José Ortega y Gasset all shape discussion here, and prove the fruitful offering and potential that philosophy still can provide international relations, to which this thesis owes its foundations. Speaking overall, the wide breadth of literature that is analysed and employed in this thesis varies from methodological and epistemological analysis of social science, to hermeneutical and linguistic philosophical thought, to texts of Chinese social and political commentary. This smorgasbord of literature is testament to the *holism* that hermeneutical inquiry demands in its theoretical composition, as well as in its practical application to the international as seen in the area studies approach of the case study. In meeting the Other, it is not in a singular aspect that one understands the Other, but rather as a whole, irreducible to a scientific controlled environment of singular variables. In understanding the experience of the social to be comprehended by

holistic understanding of the individual interpretation, encompassing personal experience as well as processes of interpretation of the Self and the Other, a more accurate depiction of the social can be built, allowing the *Volksgeist* constituted by shared understand to reveal itself.



The previous literature engaging the issue of philosophical hermeneutics and its application to the international is relatively sparse, and no singular treatise has adopted philosophical hermeneutics as a basis for construction of a functional framework for delivery of understanding about the international, making the contribution of this thesis important in establishing lines of thought for future discourse. The translation of philosophical hermeneutics into a functional apparatus for the international relations scholar offers a panoply of rewards in responding to fundamental and ontological questions of the international. These include questions of unit formation in the international, intentionality and intention of international units, formation of national spirits in the *Volksgeist*, provision of frameworks of understanding and interaction, and explanation for systemic and structural change in world politics, among many others, all of which hold relevance for the international relations scholar. This wide coverage of themes results in the lengthy yet comprehensive approach to modern international relations theory developed in this thesis, with plenty of scope for further research.

Particular to this thesis, is the proposition of interpretation as method to understand the context forming the meaning behind interactions and intentionality of units towards the international, and the operationalisation of this in the case study. This is fundamental to discourse between units, which is representative of the social and the political, and the ability to change the lifeworlds of others through discourse. This is, it should be stated, not unfamiliar to international relations theory, as demonstrated by




Social Constructivism and to some extent, the English School, and other subfields of interpretative international relations theory. This thesis does not directly perform a comparative exercise with existing theoretical frameworks, however, and should not be interpreted as seeking such a project. The contribution presented here is solely the translation of philosophical hermeneutics, with its well developed explanation of hermeneutical understanding existing already, from which a holistic interpretative approach defined within a workable framework arises.

In taking philosophical hermeneutics as its theoretical bedrock, this thesis will be challenging and appear radical to mainstream international relations theorists who prefer to organise the world structurally and systemically. Even radical constructivist scholars, such as Patrick Jackson, believe that international relations scholars should not be expected to engage in the philosophy of international relations, and should rather focus on producing knowledge concerning world politics (Jackson, 2011:17). This line of thinking serves only to the detriment of international relations theory. This thesis is acutely aware of a modern milieu of “state of soul-searching, if not disorientation” that characterises the field of international relations theory today (Hellman and Steffek, 2022:1). The extent of the stagnation that grips the field, the result of factors both internal and external to the field of international relations, is significant. As Hellman and Steffek state:

Proliferation of ever new approaches and increasing fragmentation of debates dominate the disciplinary landscape today. IR theory discussions are now clustering within specific academic schools and subfields that revolve around their preferred ‘ism’ and hardly speak to each other, while much of

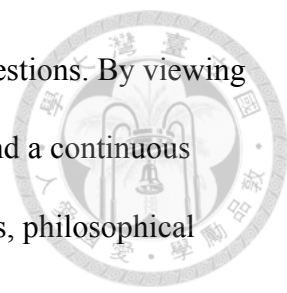




the mainstream of the discipline is turning its attention to questions of methodology rather than theory. Practitioners of international politics, all the while, find it increasingly difficult to see the relevance of these academic debates for their own work and the pressing political (as well as theoretical) challenges posed by the rise of authoritarianism and populism, escalating climate change and the return of global pandemics. (Hellman and Steffek, 2022:1)

Against this backdrop of siloed and stagnant international relations theory, provision of new theoretical directions for international relations should be welcomed. Interpretative international relations has already flourished in recent years in response to deficits of previous frameworks, and philosophical hermeneutics allows this to be developed further, with exciting possibilities. This initial dive into philosophical hermeneutical thinking, while laying out a holistic approach, should not be thought of as representative of a complete and comprehensive overview of what philosophical hermeneutics has to offer international relations. Instead, it lays the groundwork for future debate and research about what contribution philosophical hermeneutics can bring to international relations, where this thesis believes there is still significant room for growth.

The difference in direction that this thesis brings can be seen foremost in its methodological foundations. By pursuing understanding as Weberian *Verstehen* as delivered by Habermasian *practical interest* (Habermas 1971, 1984) in response to *synthetic questions* about the nature of international interaction, this thesis constructs an epistemological argument that validates its usage of philosophical hermeneutical theory,



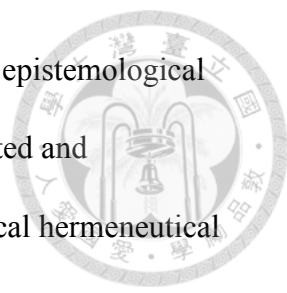
over positivistic and empirical methods in response to *analytical* questions. By viewing achievement of *Verstehen* as representative of a fusion of horizons and a continuous movement of the hermeneutic circle of the social scientist themselves, philosophical hermeneutics itself provides the model for achieving *Verstehen* itself and reveals the *reflective experience* of the social scientist that takes place simultaneously. To the modern social scientist ensconced within empirical methods for validation of truth, relying on interpretation as leading to an untestable and unmeasurable understanding will be cause for alarm. This is by Gadamerian design, however, by which Gadamer has demonstrated some knowledge about the world to exist outside of validation by method. The distinction between method and truth made by Gadamer is addressed in this thesis in methodological terms of synthetic questions, which are in their very nature, demanding of answers reliant on interpretive questioning, and validation for interpretative understanding remains limited. Thus, most significant for validation in this thesis is the operationalisation of the philosophical hermeneutical framework in its case study analysis of Chinese intention and intentionality towards the international.

The importance of understanding China in the modern context is obvious. Chinese economic and political growth over the last forty years means China is now a superpower to rival the USA, and has already begun to destabilise the post-Cold War international status-quo and international context. Chinese widening of intentionality towards the international, which has increased dramatically under the tenure of President Xi Jinping (习近平. Tenure 2012 - present) represents one of the significant phenomena of the twenty first century. This seismic change in the international landscape is galvanising international relations to understand Chinese intention, as its

international role changes, and leads to the possibility of great power conflict with the USA and Western civilisational lifeworld as a whole.

This thesis enters into this debate by arguing that a irredentist China is being driven by a *Volksgeist* constituted of sedimented shared memories of humiliation and shame towards oneself, and anger towards those international actors to contributed to this historical process, particular in reference to the Hundred Years of National Humiliation (*bainian guochi*, 百年國恥; 1841-1949). The need for China to regain what it interprets as deservedly belonging to China shapes interaction with the international, as it interprets and engages in Gadamerian *play* with the international. China brings this pre-understanding to its engagements with the international, constantly reinterpreting its identity as an international player, and in the modern era, strengthening and crystallising its *Volksgeist* as confidence and Chinese nationalism grows.

The contributions of this thesis are thus wide ranging and current. The explanation that philosophical hermeneutics as theory provides for interpreting the actions of actors in the international is novel in its direction and aggressively challenges established ways of conceptualising international relations theory. Its contributions and mission is also timely. As modern international relations become more and more polarised, “[u]ncovering the nature, strength, and dynamics of such resentments is therefore vital for Western scholars who want to help defusing tensions with these actors [China, Russia and others]” (Wolf in Koschut et al., 2017:496). There is a need for scholars to understand those Others who are significantly remote and interpret the world differently, and by addressing understanding itself, that being the analysandum of philosophical hermeneutics, revealing the Other can start to take place.

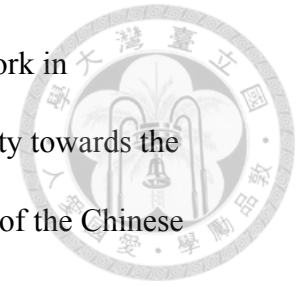


The structure of this thesis is arranged such that foundational epistemological questions are answered first before the theoretical position is delineated and understanding of China demonstrated, thus validating the philosophical hermeneutical framework as functional. This is to try to maintain a holistic experience of dialectic with this text that transports the reader along the thinking of the author.

In chapter one, this thesis grapples with methodological concerns underlying the approach taken here. There is a brief analysis of the current challenge that philosophical hermeneutics poses to previous literature and the context of international relations today. Habermas's three domains of knowledge are outlined and integrated within a synthetic and analytical question divide to reveal an epistemological framework that encourages hermeneutical explanation. Causality is tackled in its deficits in application to hermeneutical understanding, and the reflective experience of the international relations scholar engaged in *πρᾶξις* (*praxis*) leading to *φρόνησις* (*phronesis*) and better judgement demonstrates the advantages of philosophical hermeneutics as a method of analysis.

In the second chapter the philosophical hermeneutical framework is developed in depth. This includes introduction of Gadamerian principles of philosophical hermeneutics, linguistic formation of *sensus communi* and lifeworlds, pre-understanding and interaction with the Other, conflict with the Other, and importantly, the temporal immediacy of interpretation which explains change in the international. Formation and manifestation of the *Volksgeist* is theorised, giving explanation for collective agency at the level of the international, and for difference in intention and intentionality among units in the international.

In the final chapter, the philosophical hermeneutical framework is operationalised by a case study of Chinese intention and intentionality towards the international. This involves a historical appraisal and understanding of the Chinese lifeworld as it has been handed down to Chinese people today, and how pre-understanding shared within the Chinese *sensus communis* manifests itself in the Chinese *Volksgeist* which drives Chinese interaction with the international today. It is argued that an irredentist *Volksgeist* coopted by the Chinese leadership drives nationalist sentiment towards the Other, built on preconceptions of Chinese civilisation as in binary opposition with the Other.



## II. Philosophical Hermeneutics as Method for Understanding the Social in International Relations



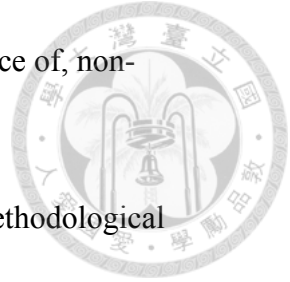
The first objective of this thesis is to explain the efficacy of using philosophical hermeneutics as a method of understanding the social, and subsequently, interaction between collective units in the international. By doing this, the knowledge which is generated by application of philosophical hermeneutics to international relations can be shown to be valuable when operationalised in the case study. Without this methodological inquiry, the theoretical claims of a philosophical hermeneutical framework may be easily challenged. The epistemological argument presented here, however, demonstrates that a certain type of knowledge, that derived from Habermas's conceptualisation of *practical interest* (1971; 1984), desired by the international relations scholar is best attained through application of philosophical hermeneutics as method.

This chapter is broken down into three sections. Firstly, the existing literature on hermeneutic approaches to international relations is engaged, demonstrating this thesis's understanding of the contribution of hermeneutics to the existing literature within international relations. This literature review demonstrates that other international relations scholars have successfully adopted the ideas of hermeneutics in their research, yet that lacunas and many possibilities for development remain. Moreover, this section conducts a brief analysis of the epistemological debate between rationalist and reflectionist positions, summarised in the fourth debate of international relations, and

representative of the field's continued outlook towards, and acceptance of, non-positivist methods.

Secondly, Gadamer's fusion of horizons is introduced as a methodological process by which understanding as *Verstehen* is achieved by the individual through dialectic, and the superiority of philosophical hermeneutics over empirical approaches in attaining *practical* knowledge through synthetic questions is demonstrated.

Lastly, the reflexive experience of the international relations scholar, inherent to understanding, is explored, demonstrating the importance of area studies to the hermeneutic inquiry in international relations, and the pursuit of *phronesis* through *praxis*, leading to achievement of the Aristotelian *phronimos*.



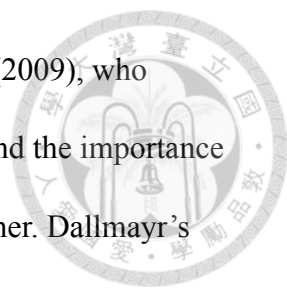


## 2.1. Philosophical Hermeneutics and International Relations Literature



This thesis is by no means the first to approach the question of hermeneutics or Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics, and non-positivist and interpretative methods in relation to international relations theory. As the below literature review demonstrates, other scholars have recognised the value in recognising *interpretation* as key to understanding international interaction, and some of the ideas that have been developed by these scholars are utilised throughout this thesis in tandem with the philosophical literature outlined in the introduction. In light of the contributions that this thesis is making, however, the arguments develop throughout this thesis differ significantly from the work previously conducted by other academics, and present a novel conceptualisation of international interaction that demonstrates the efficacy and potential of philosophical hermeneutical thinking in international relations.

In turning first to utilisation of Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics in international relations, the literature remains underdeveloped. Most closely related to the project of this thesis is the work of Richard Shapcott (1994; 2001), who employed Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics in his analysis of normative international discourse and has applied to justice and cosmopolitanism. His longer work, *Justice, Community and Dialogue in International Relations* (2001) presented his longest exposition on application of philosophical hermeneutics in the international. Shapcott's primary focus concerning justice and cosmopolitanism, however, means his analysis pursues a significantly different direction to the foundational one taken in this thesis.



Another important voice in the conversation is Fred Dallmayr (2009), who employed Gadamer's writings in explaining intercultural dialogue, and the importance of recognising one's pre-understanding when interacting with the Other. Dallmayr's transference of hermeneutical theory from reading of texts to interhuman relations, and subsequently intercultural and intercivilisational has clear parallels with the inquiry taken in this thesis. His inquiry remains, however, limited, and without operationalisation or a framework to animate philosophical hermeneutics.

Elsewhere, the literature is varied in purpose. Tarja Väyrynen (2005) employed Gadamerian conceptions of understanding as a means of understanding conflict resolution processes. Chris Farrands (2010) enlisted Gadamer's epistemological arguments in promoting interpretative approaches to international relations, while Dieter Teichert (2020) recently provided a brief oversight of the relationship between philosophical hermeneutics and politics. Markus Kornprobst (2009) argued for Gadamerian understanding to be employed to bridge interparadigm debate within international relations itself. This diversity of inquiries has, therefore, left space and need for a more general overview of the foundational relevance of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics for international relations study.

Despite the above forays, the application of philosophical hermeneutics to the international remains significantly underdeveloped. The existing literature lacks a holistic approach that encompasses the experience of the international as a whole, and suffers from the need to explain the dynamics of philosophical hermeneutics, leaving scant space for its operationalisation in the international. Furthermore, many features of the Gadamer's inquiries have been overlooked, such as his crucial inquiries into language utilised in this thesis. The approach taken in utilising philosophical

hermeneutics in analysing the international in this thesis varies greatly, therefore, from the previously produced literature, most prominently by its holism, extent of inquiry, and development of lesser known features of philosophical hermeneutics.

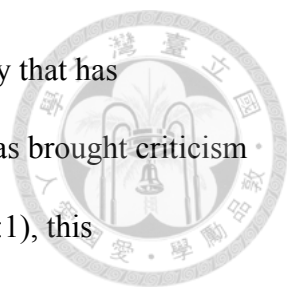
More generally speaking, interpretative theory holds a significant place within constructivist thinking in international relations. Interpretative theory does not believe in the separation of the observer from their world, and chooses to study the object as situated within a context (Kurowska, 2020:95). As with application of Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutical ideas, broader hermeneutical ideas taking interpretation as the basis of understanding have produced a wide range of literature. In Xymena Kurowska's (2020) overview of the last two decades of interpretative international relations theory, Kurowska outlined various scholars that have taken interpretative international relations in different directions, including institution building (Fierke and Wiener, 1999), security studies (Ciuta, 2007), agency (Lynch, 1999) and conflict (Fujii, 2011). This variety again demonstrates the richness and potential for development that hermeneutical philosophy has regarding international relations theory.

A particular subsection of interpretative international relations concerns emotions, which has been stated as “one of the most promising developments in the field” (Koschut et al., 2017:482) and is relevant to the construction of the *Volksgeist* outlined in this thesis. One of the prominent scholars on this topic is Todd Hall, who described emotion as “what happens when a collective, institutional actor such as a state displays the behaviour associated with an emotional response in the form of explicit, outwardly directed behaviour” (Hall, 2015:16). Agency is encapsulated with emotional international relations, as “emotional diplomacy is intentional” (Hall, 2015:17). Interpretative international relations demonstrates emotion *towards* something, and as

such an intention and intentionality which is representative of agency of a *Volkgeist*. Moreover, Hutchinson and Bleiker (Koschut et al., 2017:501-505) conceived of emotions manifesting within a *discourse*, echoing the approach of using discourse within the framework of philosophical hermeneutics explored in this thesis.

There is, therefore, a recent fertile body of literature that already supports this inquiry. Despite this, discussions undertaken in this literature are not mainstream for international relations study, and the arguments and philosophical basis on which the above scholars have developed their theories of international relations present exciting opportunities for further research within constructivist thought. This thesis contributes in this vein, placing itself at the forefront of these discussions.

In pursuing philosophical hermeneutics and interpretation as method for understanding the world, there is an inexorable confrontation with the existing epistemological condition of mainstream international relations. This confrontation is best articulated by the fourth debate divide between rationalists and post-positivists during the eighties and nineties. This epistemological debate and its consequences has been well covered in the scholarship and does not need to be repeated here (Keohane, 1988; George and Campbell, 1990; Hollis and Smith, 1990; Neufeld, 1993; Wendt, 1998; 1999; Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001; Kratochwil, 2008; Lake, 2013; Dunne, Hansen and Wight, 2013; Reus Smit, 2013; Barkin and Sjoberg, 2019). Since the fourth debate did not produce a conclusion to epistemological differences in international relations's conceptualisation of what constitutes truth, its lack of finality kept the epistemological door open for a plurality of approaches to international relations research. Thus international relations remains fertile ground for epistemological debate.



Although the relatively laissez-faire approach to epistemology that has characterised international relations over the previous two decades has brought criticism of its own (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2013; Steffek and Hellman, 2022:1), this fragmentation allows this thesis to pursue a less mainstream epistemological approach to the generation of its knowledge within the boundaries of the field. Despite the lack of consensus that currently exists within the epistemological understanding of international relations scholars, this thesis's stance is clear in its critical approach of analytical methods in answering synthetic questions, rejecting absolutely the stance of Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba that “research defined to help us understand social reality can only succeed if it follows the logic of scientific inference” (1994:229). As is demonstrated in this thesis, a hermeneutic method can produce more accurate truth than scientific inference, and moreover, an understanding of the social more useful to the international relations scholar.

## 2.2. The Advantages of Philosophical Hermeneutics as Method



Having outlined the existing contributions made to international relations using philosophical hermeneutics and interpretative methods, this section now turns to tangible features of philosophical hermeneutics which respond successfully as method to questions of international relations, presenting a different epistemological foundation to that presented by positivist methodology. This provides the methodological reasoning for how the contribution of this thesis in developing philosophical hermeneutics for application in international relations can be understood as producing truth about the nature of the international interaction. Key to the mission here, therefore, is to demonstrate the validity of the knowledge produced by philosophical hermeneutics.

While this is done in part through the philosophical application and operationalisation of the framework in the case study, and in the enhanced *phronesis* of the international relations scholar, the epistemological argument expounded here provides theoretical suitability for philosophical hermeneutics producing *Verstehen* and knowledge that can be understood as valid. A primary motivation for Gadamer in designing his philosophical hermeneutics was to demonstrate that the knowledge that is attained through understanding is conceived of as *truth* - that to understand something means to understand it as being true - and that this is a form of truth which is distinct and more fundamental than that produced by science (George, 2021). While this is not applicable to analytical questions or brute facts for obvious reasons,<sup>7</sup> its application to

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<sup>7</sup> Brute facts in opposition to institutional facts are discussed further on in this chapter.


the social provides functionality for understanding why units interact in the international.



The argument taken here rests upon several epistemological factors that are relevant to presenting a persuasive case for the validity of hermeneutical truth: firstly, the separation of knowledge into Habermas's three domains of knowledge designates the type of knowledge which philosophical hermeneutics is most apt for producing; secondly, the bifurcation of synthetic and analytical questions delineates the type of question being asked in reference to the knowledge it achieves; thirdly, the separation between brute and institutional facts as outlined by John Searle (1995) reinforces the differentiation between social and natural facts; fourthly, employing scientific causality for answering of synthetic questions presents deficits in analysis of international relations which philosophical hermeneutics can solve. Through these factors, it becomes clear that synthetic questions of international relations that pursue *practical interest* of the kind outlined by Habermas resting on institutional facts are well served by philosophical hermeneutics.

In valuing hermeneutical approaches over scientific ones in the pursuit of answers to synthetic questions, a philosophical hermeneutical approach does not denigrate the ability to science within social science to produce knowledge of use for the social scientist. However, it does seek to challenge epistemological hierarchies of international relations that value scientific approaches in explanation over philosophical ones. Not only does it agree with John Gunnell that social scientists should not equate social science with natural science (1969:1233), but it also acknowledges that the demarcation problem of *what science precisely is* within philosophy of science continues to be of issue to philosophers (Jackson 2011:10).





Before reaching this conclusion, however, the relationship between *Verstehen* and philosophical hermeneutics should be understood, in order to provide a compelling case for using philosophical hermeneutics in international relations. General hermeneutical philosophy as a means of understanding is commonly conceptualised in the social sciences as *Verstehen*, primarily in reference to analysis of human behaviour (Abel, 1948; Tinning, 1992). Originating officially with Max Weber, *Verstehen* was the means of understanding all social behaviour (Tucker, 1965:158), yet previous questioning of the nature of knowledge concerning the social was developed long before Weber with Giambattista Vico, Wilhelm Dilthey, Johann Gottfried von Herder and others. In his explanation of *Verstehen* as method, John Ruggie summarises the constituent elements as:

The first is to discern a "direct" or an "empathetic" understanding of whatever act is being performed, from the vantage point of the actor. The second is to devise an "explanatory understanding" of that act by locating it in some set of social practices recognized as such by the relevant social collectivity or identifying, as Searle puts it, what the act "counts as" within the intersubjective frameworks held by that collectivity. The third is to unify these individualized experiences into a broader set of objectively valid truth statements or explanations of "objectivating" *Verstehen*. (Ruggie, 1998:860)

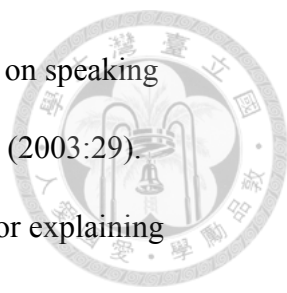
This sequencing of *Verstehen* as phenomenological and hermeneutical processes tallies closely with the process that Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics expounds as its

route to understanding of phenomenon, by placing dialectic aimed at understanding within the subjective context of individual lifeworlds.



This contextualisation and objectivisation of phenomenon in achieving *Verstehen* is particularly important, as this provides the basis for tradition and shared understanding that exists within nations explored later. In relation to analysis of a society as a whole, Herder argued that understanding another culture could be achieved through a "feeling one's way into" (*Einfühlung*) a culture through a gradual process of historical-philological inquiry into the human studies (*Geisteswissenschaft*) of a nation (Grimm, 2021). As Richard Palmer argued, "[t]he human studies do not deal with facts and phenomena which are silent about man but with facts and phenomena which are meaningful only as they shed light on man's inner processes, his 'inner' experience" (1969:103-4). Contextual understanding of social phenomena is therefore to be found in human studies, from which the meanings and intentions of social acts can be given justification.

Additionally, philosophical hermeneutics makes a suitable partner for the social scientists employing *Verstehen*, as our experience of the social world is inherently subjective, and interpretative. Philosophical hermeneutics's focus on *language* through dialectic as the provision of understanding means that it carries *Verstehen* one step forward as a methodological tool of analysis, since it outlines the conditions for the happening of understanding in discourse, and as a result, a process that can be analysed. Gadamer's insistence on *language* as constituting the internal and external conscious constitution of one's experience of the world, signifying subjective experience formed through interpretative experience, means that human interaction cannot be founded without some form of language (2004:438-474). Nicholas Onuf has supported this

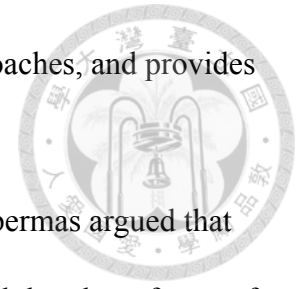


statement, declaring that “[l]anguage is a social activity that depends on speaking subjects (and, in the absence of language, no activity is fully *social*)” (2003:29). Philosophical hermeneutics thus provides the methodological basis for explaining experience of the social. Not only is language required for the social, but so too is that of the tradition and language of a given community, whereby contextualisation and intersubjectivity occurs. The social only makes sense when placed within a context, just as we find with language itself. Without language there is no dialectic and no cooperation, as it is at the core of both the *inter* and the *national* of international relations, as well as interaction itself. Without analysis of language and its role in formation of understanding between people in forming the social, there can be no international relations. Gadamer’s analysis of language allows for this reasoning to be achieved.

As a result, at the level of the international, in seeking to understand intention and interaction in the world between units of shared understanding, language, tradition and interpretation as how international units experience the international, as well as conceive their past experiences in the present, become the means to achieving *Verstehen* and understanding the international better.

Although the overarching direction of philosophical hermeneutics as method is clear, in order to present convincingly the advantages and suitability of utilising philosophical hermeneutics in pursuing *Verstehen*, a reframing of this desire on a more granular epistemological level yields greater clarity. Put simply, this involves delineating what kind of knowledge is desired and what kind of question is being asked. Through this process of inquiry, philosophical hermeneutics arises as a suitable

methodology that has advantages over empirical and positivist approaches, and provides steps for operationalisation that can be replicated by other scholars.

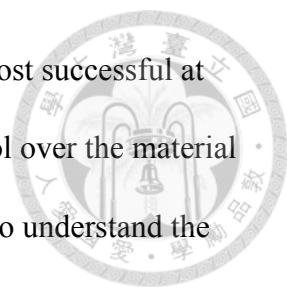


In his investigations of knowledge constitutive-interests, Habermas argued that there are three different types of knowledge available to humans, and that these forms of knowledge are delineated by the interest which they serve (Habermas, 1971). For Habermas, there are three types of knowledge which correlate with positivism, hermeneutics, and critical theory, namely, *technical interest*, *practical interest*, and *emancipatory interest* respectively. Important to grasp in understanding Habermas’s thinking is that knowledge is not independent of the world in which it is created (Tinning, 1992:3). Knowledge arises in the pursuit of a goal, or *interest*, concerning the world. It therefore has an innate connection with that facet of the world with which it is concerned.

**Table 1.1 (adapted from Carr and Kemmis, 1986)**

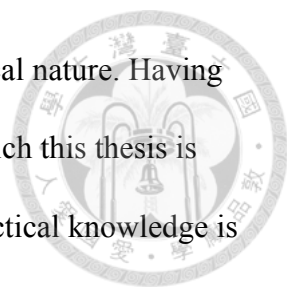
<b>Habermasian Knowledge and Human Interests</b>		
<u>Interest</u>	<u>Knowledge</u>	<u>Research Methods</u>
Technical (prediction)	Instrumental (causal explanation)	Positivist sciences (empirical-analytic)
Practical (interpretation and understanding)	Practical (understanding)	Interpretive research (hermeneutic methods)
Emancipatory (criticism and liberation)	Emancipation (reflection)	Critical social sciences (critical theory methods)

It is necessary to fully explain the differences at hand here. *Technical interest* is that knowledge which allows humans to have control over the natural world. It is best used to explain processes in the natural world where causal mechanisms verifiable by the scientific method produce truth which is highly suited for manipulation of the



natural world. Empirical and positivist methods have proved to be most successful at producing explanation by which humans can continue to exert control over the material world around them. *Practical interest* is that knowledge which tries to understand the social world, best obtained through interpretative methods (*Verstehen*), and correlates with the methods provided by philosophical hermeneutics. This form of knowledge is much more protean, and therefore challenging, than that obtained by technical interest, since it is rooted in personal experience of the world, and differs from person to person in the social. Lastly, *emancipatory interest* is knowledge that is best suited to critical theory, whereby humans are self-reflective of their experience in the world, aware of the structure and social histories which confine their experiences, and are therefore driven to change the status-quo. There will inevitably be overlaps between these, but the reflexive experience of conducting a philosophical hermeneutical inquiry can lead to *phronesis*, discussed at the end of this chapter, which aids in judgement of the overlaps. Hence it is for the international relations scholar relying on their understanding of epistemological philosophy to differentiate these spheres of knowledge as between modes of “nature and that of spirit” (Ricoeur, 1978b:149), and to transfer them into social science where they can be understood in a different context.

Since philosophical hermeneutics promotes interpretation as the means of understanding the world, practical interest is best associated with the knowledge that can be achieved through its application. In conceiving international relations as dialogue or dialectic between units in the international, understanding their agency and intention as based upon their interpretations of the world and the Other, makes practical interest most appropriate due to its interpretative foundations. Since this thesis is engaged in creating a philosophical hermeneutical framework to explain the international, the



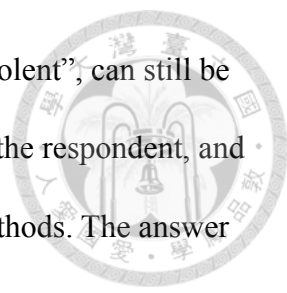
knowledge created by the framework will inevitably likely be practical nature. Having established practical interest as the basis of the social knowledge which this thesis is concerned with, the next step is to isolate what type of questions practical knowledge is receptive to. As a corollary, this can help establish what type of questions philosophical hermeneutics can provide valid answers for.

In pursuit of this, *analytical* and *synthetic* questions provide a key delineation. By correlating the type of question being asked with the type of knowledge being attained, a greater accuracy is attained as a result, because the question reinforces the use of the method in attaining the answer. Analytical questions are statements which are true solely based upon knowledge of the meanings of the words used alone. For instance, “the world is round”, whereby knowledge of the meaning of the words “world” and “round”, the meaning and forms of the copula, and the usage of the definite article in English, together can allow the audience to determine the statement as true or false.<sup>8</sup> Verification can be done using the scientific method, whereby replication will demonstrate the continued validity of the proposition as fact, and hence analytical questions are found more in the natural sciences. Analytical questions therefore lend themselves more to positivistic and empirical thinking in constructing methods to answer them, as manifested in quantitative research in the social sciences and international relations.

Synthetic questions, on the other hand, are characterised by the necessity of background context and interpretation based on individual experience of the world in

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<sup>8</sup> There may still be interpretation that takes place here, principally ontological differences, in how individuals interpret foundational features of the world. In order to avoid *reductio ad absurdum* and solipsism when talking about interpretation within *sensus communi*, it is taken as granted that interpretation of analysandum for analytical questions is more or less the same for individuals. Questions of interpretation where answers vary much more widely based on personal experience appear much more less reducible to answers that suggest everyone should be expected to understand the analysandum in the same way.



order to determine the truth of a statement. For instance, “rugby is violent”, can still be answered yes or no, but the answer is reliant on the interpretation of the respondent, and it is much harder to verify the truth of the answer using scientific methods. The answer given by the respondent can change, varies from person to person, and is representative of a snapshot of the individual’s experience at the time. This is true of both material and ideational phenomena, as Searle’s analysis of observer relative features demonstrates (Searle, 1995:10). Philosophy is primarily interested in synthetic questions (Ortega y Gasset, 1967:16), as is *Verstehen* and large sections of the social sciences, as demonstrated by this thesis’s case study. In trying to understand how and why China intends the international, scholars are firmly in the realm of the synthetic rather than analytic.

Modern social sciences and international relations inquiry straddles both analytical and synthetic questions, first and foremost in the qualitative-quantitative methodological and epistemological divide, as well as the two pronged nature of how the social sciences conceive epistemological difficulties that haunt it still. There are inevitable grey areas. However, in their belief that validation of truth is more reliable through the scientific method, and understandably dissatisfied with the lack of verification provided by *Verstehen* and interpretative understanding, some social scientists seek answers to synthetic questions through the scientific method, and hence create the rationalist position in the rationalist-reflectivist debate. While they are, of course, not wrong to engage in such a pursuit, they are, fundamentally speaking, metaphorically running into the wind when they attempt to do so. Synthetic questions at their heart are interpretative questions, and hence truth first and foremost rests in the multiplicity of possible answers. In response to this, philosophical hermeneutics

acknowledges this epistemological difficulty, and presents an arguably more accurate reflection of truth creation for certain parts of social science inquiry.



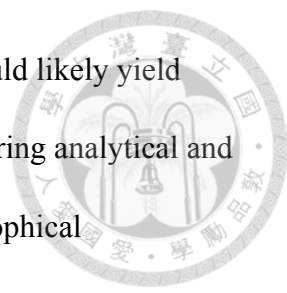
Supporting this line of reasoning is the demarcation of knowledge between brute and institutional facts, which further emphasises the difference in the type of knowledge being sought. Brute facts are facts that make up the natural world, such as evolution or atomic theory (Searle, 1995:2-6), and therefore require no human institution to exist to be true.<sup>9</sup> Institutional facts, also designated as *social facts*, require human institutions for their existence (Searle, 1995:1). International relations is the study of interaction between complex social and institutional structures, and is therefore interested primarily in institutional facts. Institutional facts are based upon *interpretation* and *language*, as “only beings that have a language or some more or less language-like system of representation can create most, perhaps all, institutional facts, because *the linguistic element appears to be partly constitutive of the fact*” (Searle, 1995:37). That means that for the fact to exist, there needs to be language and understanding of the fact within a social context, thus involving interpretation, and placing the inquiry firmly in the realm of philosophical hermeneutics.

Having demonstrated that the linkage between certain knowledge and questions about the social are best served by hermeneutical understanding, outlining the intent of this knowledge aids the international relations scholar in understanding expectations about what knowledge is attainable in international relations. The key feature examined here is causality, on account of its importance to positivist and empirical methods in international relations, but further research into the epistemological boundaries of

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<sup>9</sup> Searle recognised that for the fact to be *stated*, the institution of language does need to exist (1995:2). There will therefore be some possibility of interpretation in the terming or recognition of natural phenomena in the world, for which the scientific method and analytical appraisal should be pursued by social science. The main points is that brute facts exist regardless of language.





knowledge creation using philosophical hermeneutics in general would likely yield further results. In analysing causality, the bifurcation between answering analytical and synthetic questions becomes clearer, as well as the method of philosophical hermeneutics, thus aiding scholars in epistemological understanding, and application of philosophical hermeneutics to the international. Causality has long been questioned for its applicability for analysis of the social (Popper, 2002; Winch, 2008), since causality of the type used for natural laws faces issues when confronted with practical and emancipatory knowledge, hermeneutics, and intersubjectivity. To engage this inquiry into causation, two steps are taken. Firstly, the deficit of positivist and empirical approaches in creating strong causal inference for answering synthetic questions will demonstrate the weakness of these approaches. Secondly, the primacy of philosophical hermeneutics in answering synthetic questions and more general advantages philosophical hermeneutics in approaching causality will be demonstrated in response.

Traditional empiricism treats all explanations as derived from the same fundamental structure, providing the platform for treating social changes as logically analogous with natural changes. In answering a synthetic question concerning why a phenomenon happens in the international, however, even when presented with multiple data points, it is still difficult to present reliable causal inference that can be the foundation of normative truth for international relations and that can rival scientific truth of natural law. As Karl Popper argued in *The Poverty of Historicism* (2002), there are foundational weaknesses in transferring history into analytical data points. For Popper, history is a sequence of unique events without the potential for replication using causal thinking. Therefore, its use as a predictor for future events in the international,

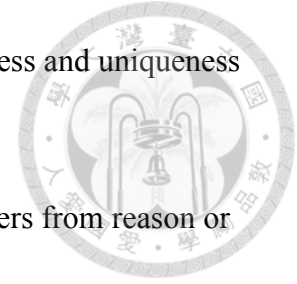
such as conflict, is irrefutably a non-scientific process, presenting at best estimation of trends, “but trends are not laws” (Popper, 2002:106).

These trends exist along a continuum of reliability and use to the international relations scholar, and will appear more or less acceptable to different scholars. Aside from philosophers of science, international relations scholars such as Dunne, Hansen and Wight remarked, “[m]any events in international relations can be considered to be so unique that the idea that we can generalize from them to seemingly similar phenomena is misguided” (2013:409). Key to the analysis of much research undertaken in international relations theory is that the experiences of the past can be reflective of causative processes between nations demonstrating something akin to general laws or natural law. Trends may be satisfactory for the international relations scholar, but it does not conform to the level of truth provided by natural sciences, nor does should it be seen to be superior to hermeneutical methods in the context of synthetic questions or practical knowledge.

The large number of variables contained within human interpretation further limits the ability to deliver a quasi-scientific approach to causality. In scientific methodology, accuracy is achieved through removal of variables and controlling of testing environments, in order to pinpoint the causality between variables. This, however, is fundamentally impossible within human studies, as the number of variables is too large to achieve answers approaching the level of science. At the level of international relations where the number of data points and possible variables involved in interaction between nations is extremely large, it means isolating causality is especially difficult. Similarly, synthetic questions inquiring into questions based on the past experience of individuals in forming interpretation present a difficult challenge for




isolation of analytical causation, due to the breadth, interconnectedness and uniqueness of individual human experience.



Another important factor is that *motivation*, or *intention*, differs from reason or physiological, even psychological impulse. While traditional empiricism argues for impulse as delivered is a physiological reasoning based on natural causation, this assumes causation as indicative of action A directly causing action B. As Peter Winch demonstrated, however, *justification* for social action is often intelligible only within the *context* of a societal expectations and shared understandings (2008:77). To use Winch's example, the justification for murder of one's wife being jealousy does not subsequently lead to inference of jealousy as leading to murder in all cases. It is by understanding jealousy within a social context that it can be understood as valid reasoning for an act of murder. As Winch stated, "[l]earning what a motive is belongs to learning the standards governing life in the society in which one lives; and that again belongs to the process of learning to live as a social being" (2008:77). As a result, understanding the intention of units in the international requires contextual understanding in which their actions have justification and meaning, synonymous with the process of *Verstehen*.

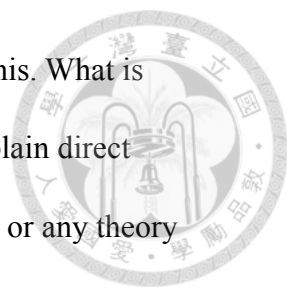
Thus, interpretation is anathema to a logic of inferential truth delivered by fixed causality as in the natural sciences, and therefore the truth that is produced should not be expected to be of the same variety, as demonstrated by Habermas's bifurcation of practical and technical interests. As stated this is key to Gadamer's epistemological mission. If our interest is *practical*, by which we want to understand why a person, or nation, thinks the way they do, we must understand that there is the possibility for multiplicity of truths based on individual experience, and that this truth is different, and possibly even more true, than that delivered by the sciences. As explained above, causal



inference's inability to evidence general law-like reasoning for human behaviour, on account of its inability to present general laws comparable to those of natural sciences, reduces its efficacy and production of reliable truth within the social sciences, production of trends rather than causality. Thus, the inability to create natural laws that govern for causation of intentionality in humans drives social science to return to a form of interpretative methodology (Habermas, 1977:67). Natural law, therefore, cannot effectively explain intention as intention can only be understood within an intersubjective context, which as argued, cannot be understood completely by non-interpretative methods.

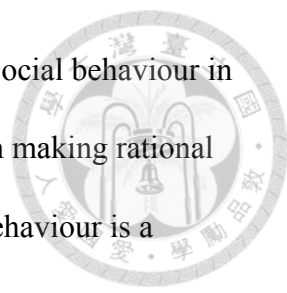
Another aspect of the weakness of analytical causation in answering synthetic questions concerns replication. The inability to replicate the same social environment and elicit the same conclusions is well documented in social sciences. Philosophical hermeneutics provides the solution to this, since by understanding interpretation as immediate and ongoing, the experience of the individual in responding to synthetic questions will never be replicable based on the same contextual conditions that produced the initial answer. This means that it is impossible for scientific causation to be derived, and although weak causal explanation may be derivable, it is not reliable enough to be argued as truth alongside scientific truth.

One answer to this dichotomy from within constructivist international relations literature has come from Alexander Wendt, who posited *constitutive knowledge* as evidence of causality beneficial to understanding the world (1998). Constitutive theory does not seek to explain the transition which takes place between phenomena, that of causation, but rather takes a snapshot in time of what *constitutes* a certain phenomenon. Wendt's favoured approach to his international relations theory prioritises ontology



rather than epistemology, and thus constitutive knowledge conveys this. What is important for this inquiry is that a constitutive approach does not explain direct causation, and hence the causal questions required for critical theory, or any theory analysing change in the world. Moreover, the knowledge interest does not change either. Technical or practical interest will achieve their respective knowledges whether constitutive or otherwise. Unlike Wendt, philosophical hermeneutics cannot, and does not, disregard epistemological concerns.

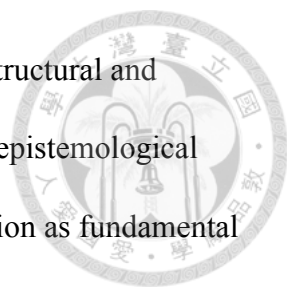
Context and intersubjectivity is key to the subjective intention of the world. As Karl-Otto Apel argues, a single individual cannot follow or break rules without the understanding of a common context in which they operate (1977:307), that being knowledge of the intersubjective context in which an action can take place. In causal inference, however, there is a separation between the subject and object, yet in dialogue and understanding, intersubjectivity works on a multidimensional plane, whereby there is no one absolute causation between subject and object. From the perspective of traditional literary hermeneutics, the separation of subject and object in relation to the text means pursuing what Palmer calls so-called *Realism*, whereby the text and the author's intentions are detached from the experience of the interpreter (Palmer, 1969:5). In the world, however, actors engage with one another and the intersubjective simultaneously and intensely, creating phenomena which cannot be bifurcated on Palmer's realist terms. Positivist approaches are unable to cater sufficiently for intersubjectivity, due to subject and object responding differently to the intersubjective. Where positive approaches try to assess intersubjectivity, it is only through behaviour, yet this has failed to convey intersubjective meaning (Kratochwil and Ruggie, 1986:764-5).



The influence of the intersubjective on decision making and social behaviour in creating norms within social interaction which deter individuals from making rational decisions in preference to those that adhere to socially constructed behaviour is a distinction that has been made by James March and Johan Olsen, constituted as the difference between a “logic of consequentialism” and a “logic of appropriateness.” (1989; 1998). A logic of consequentialism describes actors as entirely rational, able to maximise their benefit through rational choices, and cooperate only where it is in their interest; this represents a Realist view towards epistemology and international relations. However, the opposite contention is a logic of appropriateness, whereby human actors are context driven in making their decisions, in which their identities and self are contained by rules outside of their control; this represents a social constructivist interpretation of international relations. The logic of appropriateness is hermeneutical in its foundations, since it implies that intention is derived from interpretation of context rather than foundational laws of human thinking, demonstrating ever-changing nexuses of justification for action rather than fixed causative reasoning.

Thus the bifurcation that exists in causal analysis between analytical and synthetic reasoning tallies with the epistemology explored above. Specifically, philosophical hermeneutics neatly ties together the strands of synthetic, practical interest, and institutional facts into an epistemological matrix. To this end, adopting philosophical hermeneutics as a method has several advantages.

Firstly, by understanding the individual experience of the world as interpretative, and subsequently the experience of a unit of the international as interpretative, it promotes a foundational understanding, i.e. a general law in itself, which has ramifications for the construction of the international, as explored in this thesis.

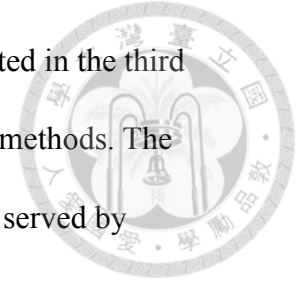


Accepting interpretation as foundational means that it is *a priori* to structural and systemic explanations for international interaction. Establishing this epistemological foundation provides the epistemological understanding of interpretation as fundamental to understanding of practical knowledge in international relations, which acquired through positing of synthetic questions, can be understood and validated within this epistemological framework.

Secondly, in understanding the interpretative experience as immediate and ongoing, philosophical hermeneutics avoids the pitfalls of historical causation conceived of as analytical data points in the past, marking fixed causal process. This does not mean that historical events do not shape the present, as will be shown by the role of tradition and historical trauma, but the experience of these are interpreted in the present. This gives a more truthful understanding of how history affects present conceptualisation of the world, and subsequent intentionality of actors. In doing so, this avoids historical trends being misinterpreted as general laws, which can be easily done instead of accepting the less likely satisfying truth of interpretative experience, and instead delivers causal inference that is open to debate. As José Ortega y Gasset argued, “[w]e are currently accustomed to regard truth as something quite unattainable. This attitude is reasonable. Simultaneously, however, we are prone to think of error as being overly likely, which is less salutary” (1967:20).

Lastly, philosophical hermeneutics provides a holistic epistemology for answering synthetic questions concerning the social. By understanding understanding of the object as reliant on understanding of the context in which it exists, the being of the object, its intentionality towards the world and how it interprets that world can be more accurately understood. For causality, this means potentially understanding several

causalities as existing coterminously. Ultimately, the inquiry conducted in the third chapter of this thesis could not be done using positivist or empirical methods. The question of intentionality of international units is synthetic, and best served by philosophical hermeneutical thinking.



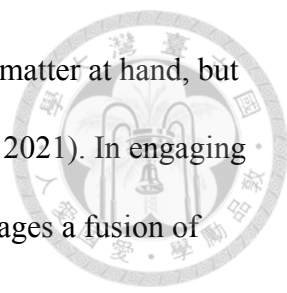


## 2.3. The Reflexive Experience of the International Relations Scholar Engaging in Hermeneutic Methods



Empirical methods that prioritise objectivity between the subject and object of observation do not need to consider the reflexive experience of the scholar when conducting their inquiry. As Maurice Merleau-Ponty stated, “[s]cience manipulates things and gives up living in them” (1964:159), and as such, scientific methods dissociate and distance the inquirer from the object of inquiry. This is not the case for hermeneutical approaches, however, where the access to greater perspicuity and accuracy of knowledge is connected with the scholar’s own understanding of the world. As Yvonne Sherratt explained, “[s]cience has particular methodologies which we may or may not deploy. Hermeneutics, however, is simply part of our being” (Sherratt, 2006:94). Having demonstrated the efficacy of philosophical hermeneutics as a method in validating *practical knowledge* achieved through synthetic questioning, this third section explains the reflexive experience of the international relations scholar in conducting research into synthetic questions, and outlines the contribution that philosophical hermeneutics makes to area studies as a subfield, as well as the *phronesis* of the international relations scholar. Overall, it propounds that judgement needed to assess interpretation, especially interpretation concerning grey areas of methodology, accumulates through the experience of inquiry itself.

The hermeneutic experience is educative, as continual understanding of the world shapes the human spirit. By learning about the world through language, Gadamer connects the interpretative experience with *Bildung*, a process by which success in



hermeneutical understanding not only tells us greater truth about the matter at hand, but also teaches us more about ourselves, the world, and others (George, 2021). In engaging with the analysandum at hand, the international relations scholar engages a fusion of horizons with the object of inquiry which transforms them, thus *cultivating* their personal *Bildung* in the process. One cannot avoid this, as the hermeneutic experience of existence in the world is linked with continual cultivation of ourselves, which is *Bildung*.

It is in experiential *praxis* that our knowledge about the world can be increased and revitalised as change takes place in the world. *Praxis* in the traditional sense means social action “here and now” (Hellman and Steffek, 2022:2), correlating with the immediacy of the interpretative action found in philosophical hermeneutics. It is in continuous *action*, which for analysis of the social, is *interaction*, that continually updated knowledge about the world arises; as Peter Steinberger argued, “[t]rue knowledge comes through action and immersion” (1977:101). In recent years, some scholars have already stated the need to return to *praxis* as a means of conducting international relations (Hellman and Steffek, 2022; Kratochwil, 2018), and through its emphasis on interpretative understanding in international relations, this thesis continues this recent argument in the need for *praxis* as delivered through dialectic with units of the international. Through *praxis* there is further cultivation of *Bildung* for the international relations scholar, as the knowledge of *doing* with the object of analysis influences the experience of that object for the individual scholar.

It is also in application of philosophical theory in *praxis* that philosophy can be verified as valuable method, which is relevant for this thesis’s use of philosophical hermeneutics. Instead of using the scientific method, it is the *judgement* of repeated

application that brings verification to the method. In essence, the personal experience of engaging with the object at hand can deliver experiential validity, i.e. right and wrong, which although subjective, can still deliver truth about the analysandum. These judgements are linked with a wisdom derived from *praxis* understood as *phronesis*.<sup>10</sup>

This line of thought has already been taken up in international relations in the “practice turn” of recent decades (Brown 2012). “In essence, *phronēsis* is about knowing the right thing to do in the context at hand” (McCourt 2012a), encompassing the skill of weighing up evidence and arguments. Greater *phronesis* for the international relations scholar can help to identify ambiguous relations in data - *grey areas* - which can be misconstrued. In their study of positivistic methods for social science, King, Keohane and Verba conceded that humans are “are not very good at recognizing nonpatterns. (Most of us see patterns in random ink blots!)” (1994:21). Through experience conducting *praxis*, the international relations scholar gains a *phronesis* which makes them better equipped to make judgments about interpretations, that is *practical knowledge*, concerning synthetic questions in the world.

In performing inquiry, judgement is made, which is central to conducting *praxis* (Kratowichil, 2018:427-40). In international relations, much knowledge and argument is formed on the basis of judgements (Farrands, 2010:37). For hermeneutics and interpretation, such judgements are context sensitive, underlying the importance of understanding international units as placed within individual contexts formed within individual *Geisteswissenschaften*, discovered through interaction with said culture’s

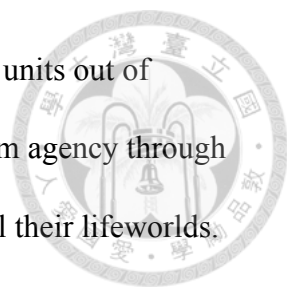
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<sup>10</sup> This is Aristotelian by design. Aristotle stated that “[n]or is Wisdom the knowledge of first principles either: for the philosopher has to arrive at some things by demonstration” οὐδὲ δὴ σοφία τούτων ἐστίν: τοῦ γὰρ σοφοῦ περὶ ἐνίων ἔχειν ἀπόδειξιν ἐστίν (Nic. Eth. 1141a).

*Geisteswissenschaften*. Without understanding of the context, of what comes before and after in the text, the hermeneutic experience is denigrated and reduced.

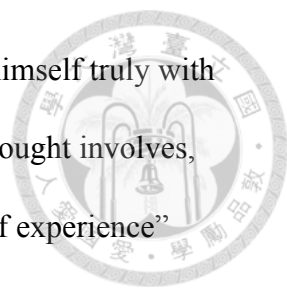
Thus this reflexive experience intersects with the need for a greater focus on area studies within the field of international relations as a means of understanding the interpretations of the Other when engaging in the international. In adopting philosophical hermeneutics in pursuit of *practical knowledge* of the international, the analysandum, which for international relations is a unit of the international, will have agency and intention towards the world formed through interpretative ability. *Verstehen* requires understanding the pre-understanding of these units, which can be garnered through their *Geisteswissenschaft* and *Weltenschuuang* and linguistic conceptualisation of the world (*Weltensicht*). This falls directly into the realm of area studies, and therefore crystallises the connection between international relations and the need for in-depth understanding of a particular region of analysis (Hurrell, 2020). *Verstehen* requires deep immersion into an analysandum. For Steinberger, “to arrive at those concepts and notions that constitute knowledge, means to participate in the object under consideration” (1977:101); participation which philosophical hermeneutics encourages as *praxis* and cultivation of *Bildung*. Similarly, in pursuit of *Verstehen*, immersion is required as “in all its essential features the operation of *Verstehen* is based upon the application of personal experience to observed behaviour” (Abel, 1948:216). The social scientist therefore becomes engaged in conversation with the object, with an inevitable back and forth process moving towards understanding as described by Gadamerian *play* and a fusion of horizons, leading to enlargement of the hermeneutic circle.

Furthermore, by locating interpretative understanding as key to a unit’s understanding of the international, there begins a disintegration of the hold of traditional



Western approaches on international relations, bringing international units out of Chakrabarty's "waiting room of history" (2000:7), and providing them agency through opening conversation with them, and giving them the power to reveal their lifeworlds. Instead of the international existing singularly and universally within the usually Western orientated lifeworld of the international relations scholar, pluralities of thinking about the international are allowed to succeed. This has been noted by Shapcott, who stated that the adopting of Gadamer's hermeneutics "would enjoin us to move beyond the traditional conceptions of international society and towards an arguably less Western conception of the nature of coexistence" (1994:81). That difference is recognised as fundamental on account of each individual's interpretative experience of the world, and as a result each *nation's* experience of the international, is an advantage of utilising philosophical hermeneutics. The greater richness that this approach delivers, in forming alternative worlds of international relations theory, not only provides more accurate appraisals of different interpretations of the international, but drives the international relations scholar to broaden their understanding of the international through conversation with these interpretative worlds. The emergence of new schools of international relations has already started with postcolonial thought, with the Chinese School of international relations being one example, evidencing the polyphony of theoretical approaches which philosophical hermeneutics can aid the international relations scholar in engaging with.

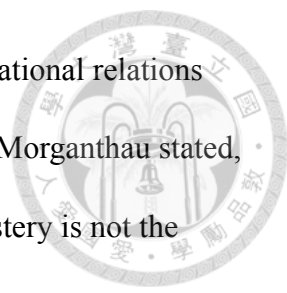
From these factors, when adopting philosophical hermeneutics as an approach, there is an inescapable confrontation with reflexivity for the international relations scholar. There is an engagement with the data that cannot conform to the separation of subject and object delivered by scientific methods, or in answering analytical questions.



As Steinberger states, “[k]nowledge requires the knower to involve himself truly with his material, and thereby to discover the I in the Thou. Conceptual thought involves, most fundamentally, a process whereby the fact of experience is itself experience” (1977:101). It requires pursuit of *Verstehen*, in which the social scientist is well equipped to engage in analysis of the social, having first realised the conditions of their own human experience and that which is embodied in the Other. In order to understand international units as they appear to one another, philosophical hermeneutics therefore demands an acrobatic dynamism from its proponents. This process is summarised by Steinberger, who argued:

One further implication here is that the social inquirer, in order to understand his subject, cannot maintain the traditionally detached posture of scientific observation. Rather, he, like anyone else, must in some way become intimate with his subject in order to know it properly. He must therefore adopt a nonpositivist stance usually involving any of a variety of techniques and methods, including (for example) participant observation, in-depth interviewing, certain case-study techniques, and the historical-philosophical methods implied in such terms as hermeneutics, dialectics and *Verstehen*. (1977:104)

In pursuing this process, *phronesis* leads to greater embodiment of the Aristotelian *phronimos*, the moral expert “must not only know the conclusions that follow from his first principles, but also have a true conception of those principles themselves”



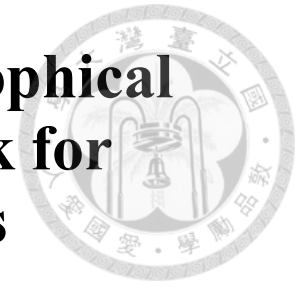
(Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 1141a).<sup>11</sup> For engaging in the social as the international relations scholar is tasked to do, encapsulating the *phronimos* is desirable. As Morgenthau stated, “[p]olitics is an art and not a science, and what is required for its mastery is not the rationality of the engineer but the wisdom and the moral strength of the statesman” (1946:10). Recognising that social scientists are subject to this way of thinking is necessary to truly understand our nexus with the social. Fortunately, philosophical hermeneutics provides an outline for delineating this process.

This thesis now turns to utilising philosophical hermeneutics to build a model of dialogue through which interaction in the international can be understood. This first chapter has demonstrated the epistemological suitability for using practical knowledge attained through philosophical hermeneutics to answer synthetic questions concerning the international. Following on, chapter three will operationalise the framework to understand Chinese interaction in the international, and in doing so, prove the concrete value and function of the hermeneutic framework for international relations in addition to its theoretical contributions, and the validity of the knowledge produced.

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<sup>11</sup> *δεῖ ἄρα τὸν σοφὸν μὴ μόνον τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἀρχῶν εἰδέναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς ἀληθεύειν.* Aristotle made the important distinction that wisdom and political science are not the same thing when he already recognised the importance of interpretation to understanding differences in how people see the world. As Aristotle stated, “as ‘wholesome’ and ‘good’ mean one thing for men and another for fishes, whereas ‘white’ and ‘straight’ mean the same thing always, so everybody would denote the same thing by ‘wise,’ but not by ‘prudent’; for each kind of beings will describe as prudent, and will entrust itself to, one who can discern its own particular welfare; hence even some of the lower animals are said to be prudent, namely those which display a capacity for forethought as regards their own lives” (Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* 1141a).

### III. Construction of a Philosophical Hermeneutical Framework for International Relations



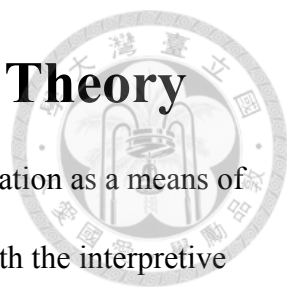
*Unsere Sprache ist auch unsere Geschichte.*  
(Our language is also our history).

Jacob Grimm, 1851

Gadamerian Philosophical hermeneutics argues that understanding is reached through dialectic involving the fusion of horizons, which is the philosophical basis this thesis utilises to analyse interaction between international units. In constructing interaction at the level of the international in terms of discourses, there are several features which must be initially understood and fleshed out: first, language is the fundamental means of transmission and actualisation of meaning concerning how humans interpret the world, and is, therefore, the method of constructing the social; second, the construction and ontology of the Self who brings pre-understanding to their meeting with the Other is manifested in the role of interlocutor in discourse; third, agreement and conflict as representative of shared, reached understanding or *misunderstanding* about the world forms the result of interaction in discourse; fourth, the immediacy of continuous interpretation, as the driver of change in human understanding about the world, provides explanation for change in the world more broadly, including at the level of the international. Transmuting these features of discourse to the international is the feat undertaken in this chapter.



### 3.1 Philosophical Hermeneutical Theory



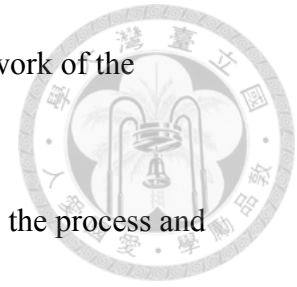
Philosophical hermeneutics is the theory, practice and art of interpretation as a means of understanding the world around us. It is a philosophy which deals with the interpretive experience of understanding itself, traditionally employed in understanding the conflict of past and present reception of meaning in literature, and in more recent philosophy, enjoined with understanding of language as method for interpreting the world.<sup>12</sup> This thesis's foremost guide for employing this line of philosophy is Hans-Georg Gadamer and his twentieth century work on philosophical hermeneutics, outlined primarily in his *magnus opus Truth and Method*. Although not intentionally political, Gadamer's philosophy provides the foundations for philosophical hermeneutics, which through the transmutation delivered here, provides a significant contribution to understanding the social in international relations and political science study in general.

The scope of hermeneutical philosophy, containing a much broader range of work than Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics, is undeniably broad in its inquiries, and even taking the works of a singular hermeneutical philosopher such as Gadamer or Paul Ricoeur involves a wide spectrum of topics that cover the holistic expanse of the human experience. This thesis narrows its focus, therefore, by utilising Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as its principal lead, but in doing so, cherry-picks several key Gadamerian ideas, leaving excellent potential for future extrapolation and development of philosophical hermeneutics for social science. From the work of Gadamer, there are four primary ideas utilised here as a means of understanding the international, and

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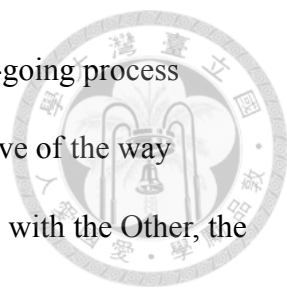
<sup>12</sup> Gadamer's contribution in the third section of *Truth and Method* was particularly important in this regard by outlining how language is constitutive of the lifeworld of the individual. The importance of this is immense, to the extent that Heidegger asserted that all philosophy is or should be, in fact, hermeneutical (Palmer 1969:3).

which will be used in building a philosophical hermeneutical framework of the international.



Firstly, Gadamer's concept of the fusion of horizons presents the process and conclusion of reaching understanding between interlocutors, providing a conception of the process of understanding. In Gadamer's words, "[t]o understand means to come to an understanding with each other... understanding is, primarily, agreement" about a subject matter (*Sache*) common to interlocutors (2004:180). This presents a conceptualisation for understanding interaction between actors in the international, as they meet in *conversation*, and the success of dialectic in achieving agreement, or conversely, misunderstanding leading to conflict through a *talking past* one another. Through attempting to understand the Other through meaningful dialectic, the individuality and uniqueness of the Other become understood (Gadamer, 2004:180). Having understood this, and crossed any barriers of linguistic difference, the reflective question arises of how did the Other come to such an opinion and interpretation, answered here through analysis of *intention* and *intentionality*. This forms the key motivation of the case study, building upon the *practical interest* form of knowledge attainable from hermeneutical inquiry.

Secondly, the hermeneutic circle describes the circular process of understanding through dialectic. In the hermeneutic circle, understanding is a constant, iterative process of interplay. Instead of conceptualising understanding as being built on previous understanding in a bottom-up structural process, such as that presented in scientific inquiry, understanding is circular and outwards, reflecting the protean nature of social understanding. This thesis also argues that this can be inwards as well, as reduced understanding about the current situation of the object of inquiry logically means a



reduced hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutic circle is a dynamic, on-going process which correlates with the temporal immediacy of interaction, reflective of the way actors interact with one another in the world. In engaging in dialectic with the Other, the hermeneutic circle is the measure of understanding that takes place between Self and Other, and is therefore the means for understanding the extent of understanding that takes place between individuals in a society, and units at the level of the international.

Thirdly, the *sensus communis* is the “sense that founds community...the concrete universality represented by the community of a group, a people, a nation, or the whole human race. Hence developing this communal sense is of decisive importance for living” (Gadamer 2004:21). Building on Gadamer, this understands the *sensus communis* to be representing the shared understanding that links communities, which this thesis understands as existing in shared understanding between individuals constructed by language and tradition, and in conceiving a shared linguistic world (*Weltansicht*) that enables a shared lifeworld (*Weltanschauung*).<sup>13</sup> “[T]o be in society is to participate in its dialectic” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:149), and this dialectic manifests itself most commonly in human societies as dialogue between individuals. Subsequently, civilisations form as shared understandings of reality and *morality*, creating the basis for an objective “common sense” against which individuals judge the validity of interpretation in the world (Cox, 2000:271). Hence, dialectic is crucial to understanding the manifestation and constitution of units of the international. In supplanting the state with the *sensus communis* as the theoretical unit of inquiry, the

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<sup>13</sup> Von Humbolt used the term *Weltansicht* to refer to a general phenomenological experience of the world shared within a *linguistic* community. For this inquiry, the term *Weltansicht* takes primacy over the more commonly used *Weltanschauung*, which popularised by Kant and Hegel, refers more to the *zeitgeist* of political, social and religious thought, rather than interpretation of the world by a linguistic community. It is not within the scope of this inquiry to determine the merits of *Weltansicht* or *Weltanschauung* as more or less reflective of the collective intentionality towards the world, rather to posit that Gadamer’s conceptualisation of the *sensus communis* is in line with von Humbolt’s *Weltansicht*.

*sensus communis* forms the basis of understanding how units construct their national Self, and subsequently their international Self on meeting the international Other, thus developing a new interpretation of one of the basic ontologies of international relations, and forming a key contribution of this thesis.

Lastly, the concepts of *play* and the *game* (*Spiel*) are used by Gadamer to outline the experience of contextualised interpretation taking place between players. When engaging in a game, players, of whom there must be more than one,<sup>14</sup> give themselves over to the rules, norms and context of the game, and can become lost in the game (Gadamer, 2004:101-110), whereby “all playing is a being-played” (Gadamer, 2004:106). For Gadamer, this is used to explain the experience of interpreting artwork, whereby interpretation is based within the context of the artwork and the norms of communication with art. Gadamerian play and games take place continually within the social experience, and explain the hermeneutical games and processes which take place at the level of the international. *Play* involves a “self-presentation”, an adoption and allusion to roles that have meaning within the context of the game (Gadamer, 2004:108), by which other players and the audience can become absorbed in, which echoes Searle’s conceptualisation of institutional knowledge. This line of thinking in application for the international has already been developed, for example by Risse who contended that building of common knowledge between two parties results if there is greater understanding of the “rules of the game” of interaction, in essence establishing norms which allow for dialogue to take place (2000:2). International institutions, laws

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<sup>14</sup> The player may not necessarily be another player in the sense of an actor, but an Other of some sort. As Gadamer explained, “[t]he movement to-and-fro obviously belongs so essentially to the game that there is an ultimate sense in which you cannot have a game by yourself. In order for there to be a game, there always has to be, not necessarily literally another player, but something else with which the player plays and which automatically response to his move with a countermove” (2004:105-106).

and norms are clearly related to this point in defining the structures of the international game. But more important is the interpretative understanding that international units and individuals themselves as the audience understand both the context of the game and the adoption of roles presented by players.

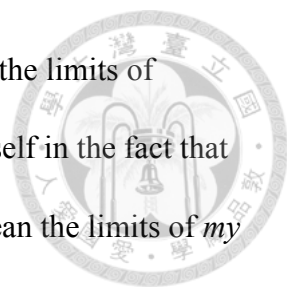
Fundamental, however, to the mechanisms of these facets of philosophical hermeneutics is the role of language in providing the means of construction of meaning, transmitted, received and understood, by humans.

## 3.2. Language as Constitutive of the Social



All human existence as experienced by humans is conditional on the phenomenon of language (Palmer, 1969:9). Thus, one of the key contributions of Gadamer to the tradition of hermeneutical study was the addition of his third chapter of *Truth and Method* concerning language. For Gadamer, language is crucial to understanding, as “[l]anguage is the universal medium in which understanding occurs” (2004:389). Humans understand the world around them through language, and interaction with and understanding of the Other is formed in language; the fusion of horizons is reliant on language, which can be understood by interlocutors, existing between two parties. As Gadamer explains, language is “the fundamental mode of our being-in-the-world and the all embracing form of the constitution of the world” (1977:4). Ricoeur concurs with Gadamer on this fundamental aspect, stating that “[I]t is first of all and always in language that all notice and ontological understanding arrives at its expression” (Ricoeur, 1978a:97). Language is the medium in which “we live, and move, and have our being” (Palmer, 1969:9), and is therefore fundamental to our being-in-the-world (*Dasein*) and being with others (*Mitdasein*), thus providing the basis for Gadamer’s gnomic pronouncement that “*Being that can be understood is language*” (2004:474).

More fundamentally, language is integral to human consciousness and intentionality towards the world; “[n]o one will deny that our language influences our thought. We think with words. To think is to think something with oneself; and to think something with oneself is to say something with oneself” (Gadamer, 2004:542). Language situates us in a lifeworld (*Weltansicht*), which simultaneously constitutes our understanding the world, founded in our experience of the world. Importantly, the world



that we inhabit is specific to us, subjective therefore, and founded in the limits of individual linguistic capacity; “[t]hat the world is *my* world shows itself in the fact that the limits of my language (of the only language I can understand) mean the limits of *my* world” (Wittgenstein, 1922:74). As we encounter and experience new experiences in the world, language morphs and creates in order to be reflective of the world around us. Language understood as *organic* is in constant flux, and this changeability provides the basis for change within the international world.

When encountering language, we are simultaneously reencountering past experience initiated by reception of words, creating a “historical encounter which calls forth personal experience of being here in the world” (Palmer, 1969:10). Joshua Foa Dienstag echoed this, stating “[l]anguage is not some thing that we could choose to subtract from experience—rather, it is an element of all experiences that is inseparable from them” (2016:3). As Dienstag helpfully explains:

To share a language with someone can mean that one shares an initial life-world and horizon of experience. But to Gadamer such a sharing is not (and cannot be) a fixed object that one could preserve or hold onto, even if one wanted to. Horizons by their nature are constantly in motion and the attempt to fix them in place is the most unnatural stance that one can take toward one’s own experiences. Language binds us into communities only by its use, that is, only by its employment in dialogue that ultimately will challenge our prejudices and expand our horizon. Not every conversation does this of course, but it is, for Gadamer, in the nature of language for it to do so. To seek


fixity for a language community is like trying to preserve a single style of art or a single wave of fashion—it is in the nature of these to grow and change through interaction. (2016:11)



Understanding language in this way as axiomatic about the experience of the individual in the world, language then becomes a foundation of interaction with the world, and crucially for international relations study, interaction with others, a feature specific to humans. Cognitive scientist Steven Pinker hypothesised that one reason humans evolved to be able to build complex structures of social meaning such as science, philosophy or mathematics, was because humans could manipulate their environment through causal reasoning and social cooperation founded in language (2013:350). Although many animals have developed communication, “humans appear to be unique in using an open-ended combinatorial system, grammatical language” (Pinker, 2013:352) that allows for transmission and understanding of more complex ideas. Human development of complex language has enabled the manifestation of the social, cultivating shared understanding between humans in *sensus communi*. As Winch stated, “[a] man’s social relations with his fellows are permeated with his ideas about reality” (2008:21), thus illustrating the connection between understanding of our world around us through language being connected with construction of social realities.

The intersection of different languages in relation to understanding of the world is therefore key to international relations study, for its influence on the formation of international units, and communication between them. Language constituting shared reality is of relevance for any study analysing the social as reflective of shared understanding existing between humans. By understanding language is manifesting the

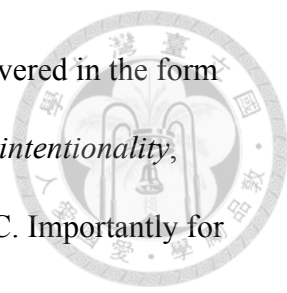




human Self in the world, language is therefore a holistic and universal approach to the social, reflecting the experience of all humans, human social experience, and construction of all human societies. The relevance of language for international relations, however, still remains underdeveloped and outside of mainstream thought within international relations theory. Thus, the approach adopted in constructing a philosophical hermeneutical framework provides a contribution and future direction for international relations thought.

The potential for social understanding between humans is significantly greater than among any other animal, partly because humans are able to understand concepts of high complexity. Complex concepts such as justice, morality, or the international are built on more levels of shared understanding than those constructing more simple ontologies, such as objects in the material world, and therefore contain greater opportunity for misunderstanding, requiring understanding of contexts in which institutional facts can appear and have legitimacy. Where disagreement concerning conflict of complex concepts, understanding such disagreement as a clash of lifeworlds founded in language constitutive of institutional facts existing within complex contexts, demands analysis of interpretation of worlds, leading to hermeneutical methods pursuing practical interest, rather than analytical ones. Enterprises such as philosophy or politics strive to explain these complex social concepts, and thus find function here.

Although these units of collective understanding are highly complex, John Searle's explanation of "institutional facts" aids in explaining how nations form complex social institutions. Institutional facts, as mentioned in chapter one, are those that require some form of human institution for their existence, for instance the value of



money or the existence of the government of Taiwan.<sup>15</sup> They are delivered in the form of “X counts as Y in C” (Searle, 1995:46), where, through *collective intentionality*, phenomenon X is given the designation of Y when in the context of C. Importantly for this thesis, institutional reality in Searle’s mind is constituted by language, and therefore institutional facts are subject to meaning and change in language. Shared understanding allows for the formation of institutional facts that form conflicting *sensus communi* and the traditions of *sensus communi* when encountering the international. Therefore, it can be shown that the agreement or disagreement in dialogue between units in the international can to some extent be founded in institutional facts, whereby the foundation is language.

Institutional facts, moreover, are *indexical*, meaning they are self-referential and exist with the tradition and institutional facts encapsulated within the words that create them. For instance, a mountain remains a mountain without being termed that, and is therefore not indexical. However, an abstract concept or institutional fact requires understanding in language, most simply a word, in order for its existence. As Searle puts it, “only beings that have a language or some more or less language-like system of representation can create most, perhaps all, institutional facts, because *the linguistic element appears to be partly constitutive of the fact*” (1995:37). The being of the institutional fact is dependent upon its ability to be referred to, and hence understood, and therefore fundamentally contains a hermeneutical element.

As stated, the creation of institutional facts is reliant on *collective understanding* that a certain phenomenon performs a certain function within a context (Searle,

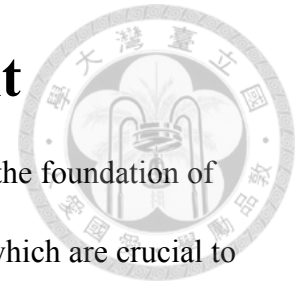
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<sup>15</sup> They are in opposition to *brute facts*, those facts which do not require human institutions for their existence, and most closely align with scientific explanation of phenomena in the world, such as atomic theory or evolution (Searle, 1995:2-6).

1995:46). As demonstrated, the application of such functions through institutional facts is tied to language. To understand the meaning of an institutional fact is reliant on understanding of the language of the fact. Shared understanding that can lead to agreement is more easily possible where there is shared language between actors, and conversely more difficult where language is not shared. Therefore, we see collective action formed more easily within shared-language groups in the world.

The relevance of this for international relations scholarship is clear. The modern international world is built on institutional facts in international institutions, laws and norms, state formation, and interaction between nations involves the meeting of lifeworlds built mainly through various complexities of institutional facts supported by language. Taking philosophical hermeneutics as the understanding of the world based on interpretation through language, the connection between the building of complex institutions based on layers of interpretations conducted in language demonstrates the importance of hermeneutics in explaining interactions in a multi-linguistic and cultural diverse world. As Palmer stated, “[w]hen a text is in the reader’s own language, the clash between the world of the text and that of its reader may escape notice. When the text is in a foreign language, however, the contrast in perspectives and horizons can no longer be ignored” (1969:26-27). So is it true with cultural institutionalism which affects nations worldviews and intention towards the international. In considering the role of language in construction of complex nexuses of institutional facts, a radically different social constructionism is presented to the international relations scholar.

### 3.3. Tradition and Context



Having understood language and institutional facts as being the foundation of social institutions, this leads to discussion of tradition and context, which are crucial to the framework being constructed in this thesis. While representative of different ideas, context and tradition are overlapping and linked. Crucially, they provide the platform for why international units show varied intentionality towards the world, and explain why the actions of the Other are received in such a manner by the Self. The case study presented in chapter three will utilise this thinking heavily as it demonstrates Chinese intentionality towards the international stemming from interpretation of Chinese *being* in the past.

In both language and philosophical hermeneutics, context has a large role to play. As Teichert remarked, "[i]n general, philosophical hermeneutics is highly context-sensitive" (2020:123). Meaning in language is reliant and changeable depending on what is around it. Thus, in order to understand the text in the middle, you need to understand the pages before and after. In reception of meaning, there is a gulf between interlocutors dependent upon their individual understanding of the world, which affects the reception of the meaning being elicited; i.e. the context of speech for one interlocutor can be different to that of another. Dependable factors can include environment, temporality and the experience of the interlocutor, among others. Conducting a discourse is always context dependent, and this therefore has ramifications for the meeting of interlocutors in the international, where separate

traditions have built wider or thinner gulfs in understanding between international interlocutors.<sup>16</sup>



Tradition, on the other hand, is the *handing down* of meaning through words themselves, connecting words with their historical contexts. We do not invent our linguistic and cultural lifeworlds from birth, but instead are forcibly delivered into them. This is important from a sociological perspective, as it describes the constitution of societal culture, whereby language representing social worlds “is precisely something not created by the individual but something that is found by him, previously established by his social environs, his tribe, *polis*, city, or nation” (Ortega y Gasset, 1967:60). Tradition is the linguistic connection with the past, which creates the setting for our present; thus for Ortega y Gasset, “[m]an has no nature; what he has is history” (1965:217). Similarly for Heidegger, humans are *historical beings*, formed by the historical period we exist in, and the traditions we inherit (Sherratt, 2006:89). We inherit a historical and societal context by our entry into that lifeworld revealed and engendered to us by language.

Humans are inescapably *thrown* into a linguistic tradition, which provides a pre-established social world, a context, built through the language of the tradition into which an individual is born.<sup>17</sup> Shapcott recognised this connection, arguing “[I]f linguisticity is both the constitution of our world and the manner of our experience of it, then what is contained within it, what it carries or bears, is history and tradition”

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<sup>16</sup> Gadamer explores this idea through the role of the translator. The translator may be able to recognise the barriers to understanding the lifeworld of the language of the text or speech that they are translating, but they can never remove themselves entirely from the biases of the lifeworld they already exist within in order to reach a place of objective appraisal of a translation (2004:384-389), such that even the professional translator cannot fully convey their understanding of a word into a new language.

<sup>17</sup> *Thrownness* (Geworfenheit) is Heideggerian terminology to describe the experience of *Dasein* as being launched into the world, finding oneself in a particular condition or state. As argued here, this can include a being launched into a cultural and historical milieu.

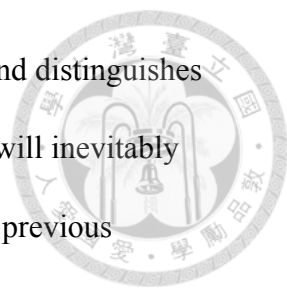
(2001:135). Tradition traps the individual within a context for understanding the world, from which it is never possible to fully extricate oneself, and where one is compelled towards adherence and affiliation (*Zugehörigkeit*), engendering within the individual a pre-understanding (*Vorurteil*) towards the Other and the international which that individual hands down to subsequent generations.

Learning language growing up, children learn that institutions exist in the world as being, as what *is*, and that such institutions are representative of the true nature of the world, such that “[a]n institutional world, then, is experienced as an objective reality” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:77). Gadamer describes this process as “[t]here is no first word and yet, while learning, we grow into language and into world” (2004:543). Denial of established institutional facts appears as deviation from reality. As we continue to experience the world, we use language to reinforce our linguistic experience of the world. Even when we encounter something new, we use our original language to base this new experience in linguistic familiarity, moulding new experience to fit the original language experience (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:39). The result, therefore, is layers of institutional facts constituting the social world, cemented by use of copulas designating linguistically, and therefore within social reality, designated being.

The potency of this effect is high, as the constitution of social reality is reinforced through interaction with a *sensus communis* in average everydayness.<sup>18</sup> Berger and Luckmann term this “typification” (1966:45), whereby coterminously with understanding, we classify phenomena based on what we already know about the world.

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<sup>18</sup> Average everydayness is Heidegger’s conceptualisation of our normal mode of *being* as we experience the world around us. It is a form of tranquility which brings calmness to our worlds, and dampens our ability to see the truth about *Dasein* (Heidegger, 1962:222).



Phenomena are built through interaction, where A interacts with B, and distinguishes patterns of behaviour. Once categorised, phenomena of either party will inevitably seem to conform to or deviate from that established behaviour of the previous interaction (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:74), as the established practice forms the context for whether the action is correct or not. Through this process, a social background between actors begins to form, which can subsequently be passed down to future generations, just as institutional facts are. These actions uphold role making institutional cultures, in which actors assume the character of the cultural institutional framework in which they are situated, and perform the actions associated with that role, as in Gadamerian *games*. These roles are manifestations of the institutional order, and are subject to definition and adherence to expectations by those who control the institutional order.

Berger and Luckmann address this directly through their analysis of institutions, arguing:

Institutions further imply historicity and control. Reciprocal typifications of actions are built up in the course of a shared history. They cannot be created instantaneously. Institutions always have a history, of which they are products. It is impossible to understand an institution adequately without an understanding of the historical process in which it was produced.

Institutions also, by the very fact of their existence, control human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct, which channel it in one direction as against the many other directions that would theoretically be possible. (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:72)



It is only when challenged by *difference* that the average everydayness of the individual intentionality towards the world is challenged. This will be discussed later as the origin of conflict in the world.

Through this historical basis in tradition, the meaning contained in language passed down from previous generations becomes the foundation of shared identities within human collectives. “The horizon of our tradition is, therefore, that which is formed by our embeddedness in language and history” (Shapcott, 2001:136); from our *Geisteswissenschaften* comes our identity. As Anderson points out, who does a language belong to if not to its native speakers (1991:70-71); language seems to make identity to some extent (Anderson, 1991:40-41). While Anderson is correct in forming a relationship between language and identity, he is incorrect in understanding language as belonging to the individual. Instead, what context and tradition demonstrate is that language captures the individual from birth, and foists the lifeworld of a *sensus communis*, onto the individual.

In Ricoeur’s view, “[t]he story thus belongs to a chain of speeches by which a cultural community is constituted and by which this community interprets itself by means of narratives. This belonging to a tradition says...something about the fundamental belonging” (Ricoeur, 1978b:154), i.e. that belonging within the individual. Through their desire to belong, humans partake in the collective shared identity, already engendered within them. Shared identity formed in this way will underpin how both individual and collective units in the international have different understandings of the world, and therefore use the fusion of horizons to reach shared understanding about the world. This view was supported by Habermas, who does not differ too far in his



understanding of a common lifeworld (*gemeinsame Lebenswelt*), in which shared understanding of history, culture, and language creates a common interpretation of a collective's identity, on which actors can make truth claims about their own and shared identities when engaging in dialectic (1984, 1985).

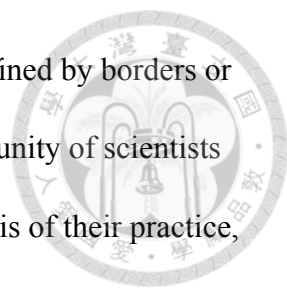
Thus, there are several conclusions that can be derived from the above analysis. Context forms the basis of meaningful interaction in discourse between individuals, fundamentally as language, and then forming institutional facts which are representative of the social world in which individuals inhabit their understandings of the social world of their context. Context is built in groups of shared understanding through tradition, which is passed down from generation to generation, and delivers institutional facts, which are reinforced through typification and repetition. This lays the foundation for understanding how collective identity forming nations and states manifests, and explains why there is difference concerning interpretation of institutional facts between units of the international in their interactions. As is demonstrated later in this chapter, this difference is the cause of disagreement and misunderstanding leading to conflict in the world.

### 3.4. Formation of Shared Social Identity through Understanding, Leading to Agency



Identity is a key part of constructivist approaches to international relations, but has remained difficult to pin down in relation to units in the international. Partly, this is due to the amorphous nature of units in the international, and the ontological imprecision of international relations regarding what constitutes a unit that can engage in the international. Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities* admitted early in his argument that “[n]ation, nationality, nationalism - all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyse” (1991:3). Yet the existence of the nation in some form is undeniable. Hugh Seton-Watson expounded that “no ‘scientific definition’ of the national can be decided; yet the phenomenon has existed and exists” (1977:5). Nicholas Onuf similarly stated his reluctance to use identity as “one of the murkiest” terms, due to its complexity and the easy assumptions made about it among scholars of international relations (2003:26). Reconstitution of nationality in more concrete terms can therefore help to clarify which collective units are active in performing international phenomena, and outline more clearly the processes of interaction that take place in the international.

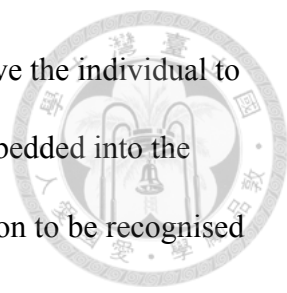
The previous section has outlined the foundation for a shared understanding about the world that can provide better reasoning for identity formation within collectives. While the term *sensus communis* may be relatively unknown to international relations as a foundational unit of analysis, the conceptualisation of shared understanding as being a mode of analysis is not. For instance, in conceiving of international relations scholarship as *manifold practices*, Adler and Pouliot began to



discern transnational communities of practice, rather than states confined by borders or national identities (2011:29-30). This could, for instance, be a community of scientists working internationally, who are taken as an analysandum on the basis of their practice, rather than their constituent national identity. This approach, however, while helpful in contributing to dissolve the rigidities of taking states as the basic unit of international relations, lacks inclusion of the interpretative understanding that is fundamental to individuals based on their lifeworld, since understanding of practices will vary from lifeworld to lifeworld.

Just as entering into a tradition is inescapable for an individual born into society, shared identity produces a similar affect, whereby shared identity simultaneously creates shared *belonging*, which for the international is just as inescapable in the modern world. Just as the individual is born into a tradition, they are similar identified with collective identity in the form of nationality. This nationality will be *unique*, and will therefore need to be interpreted as thus, hence the preference for an area studies approach encouraged in this thesis to account for the uniqueness of individual communities. This Hegelian understanding of societal history is summarised by Frederick Beiser, who argued “[I]t is necessary to recognize that Hegel’s philosophy of history operates on two levels, one horizontal and the other vertical. The horizontal level comprises the specific circumstances of a nation, its economic, geographic, climactic, and demographic conditions. Since each nation must adapt to these circumstances, and since these circumstances are unique, each nation will have unique and incommensurable values” (1993:279–280).

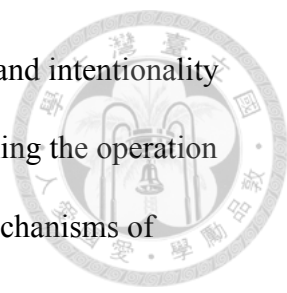
There may be those, who in following Diogenes the Cynic, proclaim world citizenship, or discard the notion of belonging to a certain nationality. They cannot,



however, ignore modern international institutional structures that drive the individual to conforming to a national identity, which in the modern world are embedded into the international. The international demands the individual to pick a nation to be recognised and given agency as an individual. Nations similarly demand their citizens to comply with their given identities, and to adopt the worldview, laws, customs and spirit of their nations. There is, therefore, a Self and Other dichotomy in the recognition of nationality for the individual.

Even rejection of any nation is a rejection of, and an opposition to, the very idea of a given nation, that is, the belonging to a collective identity. This is impossible when the Other drives the Self to perform self-recognition. When the Other inquires of the nationality of the Self, this forces an answer, at least initiating a process of self-inquiry. In the case of Switzerland for example, nationhood was born out of desire for conformity to nationhood norms spreading across Europe (Zimmer, 2011). Our national identities therefore are difficult to separate ourselves from. They can certainly be created, and can be altered and disfigured; we can lie about our previous history, or reject it entirely. But we cannot escape that we all inherit a *Geisteswissenschaften* in which is built shared identity and shared understanding, and that these experiences have shaped our worldview and how we intend the world. Moreover, the internationalised world has meant structures of designation drive the individual towards formal identification of nationality.

To return briefly to methodological considerations, having grounded the international unit in shared understanding of the world, using *Verstehen* as a method to understand international relations becomes more persuasive. Since the *sensus communis* in constitutive of shared understanding built on tradition and shared experience which



underlie understanding within a society, understanding the intention and intentionality of a unit in the international towards the international means performing the operation of *Verstehen*. Moreover, if one is to understand deeply the unique mechanisms of specific *sensus communi*, they eventually need to engage in area studies, with a specific focus on the world of a single *sensus communis*. If the international relations scholar seeks a question of *intentionality* about a particular actor's behaviour towards the international, in asking this synthetic question, they need to research and understand the context which drove that actor's agency.

The context for which actors both individual and collective act within the international is constantly changing, and through their changing experiences, the interpretations of actors are continually updated and changed. The lifeworld of the individual is not extinguished by its engagement with those around them, or by engaging in formation of shared identity. Instead, every interaction contributes to the individual's personal interpretative experience, and simultaneously shapes the intersubjective that exists between individuals, representing interacting hermeneutic circles. Thus the intentionality of actors towards the international changes as their experience of their lifeworld develops.

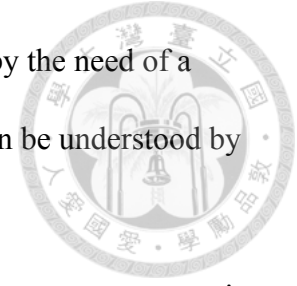
As explored already in its effects on the social scientist, in Gadamer's philosophy, *Bildung* is the educational cultivation that includes cultural habits, customs and understanding, which shapes both individuals and societies in establishing a historical accumulation of knowledge (Lawn and Keane, 2011:17-18). The connection with this historical accumulation is enabled through historical consciousness. In acknowledging our historical existence, both that of ourselves and of our *Volksgeist*, a connection between the past and present is bridged by the fusion of horizons. This can

allow conversation with ancestors, who may seem closer than the international Other alive today, since their practices and writings may correlate closer with our lifeworlds.

Language plays a crucial part again in this bridging of lifeworlds, allowing the present access to understand the past, subsequently affecting our understanding of tradition by enlarging our intentionality of a historical *Volksggeist*. For example, the naming of North Eastern America as New England demonstrates a hearkening back to a shared history previously on the European continent (Anderson, 1991:188), which early colonists preserved for themselves. The relatively small change in writing system within the Chinese language provides a linguistic manifestation of the same idea. Chinese can claim community going back to the creation of the oracle bones, a common thread which allows familiarity with a shared idea. These connections allow individuals to preserve and cultivate *Bildung* that leads to identity formation.

Having understood formation of identity and belonging as situated in individual and shared lifeworlds, a Heideggerian analysis of existence as self-interpretation, allows for understanding actualisation of *agency* in nations. Beginning on the level of the individual, for Heidegger, humans are fundamentally interpretive creatures, and this phenomenon manifests itself as existence in situations where we find ourselves with the possibility of interpretation of possibilities (George, 2021). These interpretations are manifested in language that can be verbalised, such that “*Dasein*, man’s Being is ‘defined’ as the ζῶον λόγον ἔχον - as that living thing whose *Being* is essentially determined by the potentiality for discourse” (Heidegger, 1962:47). Thus existence for Heidegger, is enacted through attempts of understanding our *being*; we are beings for which *being* is a concern. Self-interpretation is made difficult, however, because we are living in the world with others. By living in the world with others, interpretation of our

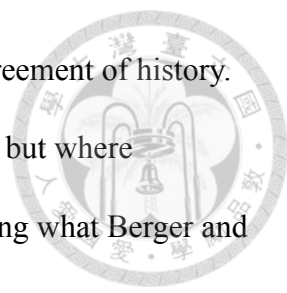
true selves is distorted by the context in which we are, exemplified by the need of a pronoun to demarcate ourselves, such that we are an entity which can be understood by the Other (George, 2021).



Part of this lies in the language of indexicality which collective actors can use in discourse. In linguistics, indexicality refers to the ability to sign (or index) an object within a context. Most fundamentally, countries have names, and can perform self-referential speech, in the process confirming their chosen identity and existence. Language becomes, therefore, the vehicle for delivering identity.<sup>19</sup> As Shapcott explains, “[b]ecause human identity is shaped and constituted linguistically...it is capable of articulation through language; in other words, it can be communicated” (Shapcott, 2001:13). Thus, the role of language in actualising the understanding of the Self is apparent, as argued for by philosophical hermeneutics. On the individual level, then, when we speak, we speak for ourselves and animate our being in the world. When the collective speaks for the community, indexicality allows collectives to speak for the whole; “[b]y speaking for somebody, and by extension acting by any means on somebody's behalf, the speaker, or actor, has become an agent.” (Onuf, 2003:37). Again, part of the effect is structural. *Volksgeists* are represented under names of states or collectives, which can similarly conduct interactions such as sport, dialogue or war. Thus collectives become agents that can be understood by the individual in part by means of this process, and are spoken into *being*.

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<sup>19</sup> It should be noted here that this thesis steers clear of argumentation that may confirm cultural relativistic interpretations of the world along the lines of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, since it is beyond the scope of this inquiry. Linguistic relativity does, however, offer another route for further research within international relations. In his study of Somalian languages and their influence on thought and politics, Laitin argued that different languages showed different self-conceptions and ideas of nationality, varying understanding of and deference to authority, differing acceptability of different bargaining or political styles, variance in attitudes to the relevance of religious values (O’Barr, 1978:799). Further research conducted along these lines when paired with philosophical hermeneutics would make an extremely compelling theory of interaction in the international.



Shared understanding within a *sensus communis* involves agreement of history. Only a small amount of consciousness is retained in human memory, but where consciousness is remembered, it is reified and memorialised, becoming what Berger and Luckmann term “sedimentation”. This sedimentation takes on an intersubjective form, of a common biography existing in a common stock of knowledge shared between individuals (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:85). These shared memories will be relatively few, depending on the size and experience of the *sensus communis*, but where they do exist, they have been selected to be memorised with reasoning. Language allows for the transmission of such sedimentation from member to member and generation to generation, becoming the cement-like substance which holds national identity together; sedimentation thus forms the data which contributes to what is handed down in tradition and forms the building blocks of identity and intentionality towards the world. In the case study presented in chapter three, this is represented by the historical and social sedimentation of the Chinese people retained within the Chinese *sensus communis*.

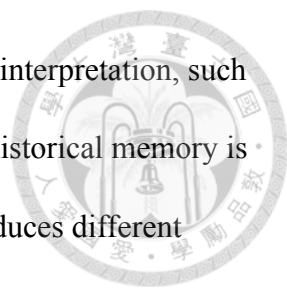
Just as the memories of individuals are confirmation of how the past led to a present identity, collective memories also give historical meaning and purpose to present collective identity. “Memory is inextricable from the construction of a coherent past and the projection of a plausible future” (Onuf, 2003:44), and nations have stories and myths which cement their self understanding, contributing meaning without which the belonging of individuals to collectives wouldn’t be possible.

Sedimented memories are open to reinterpretation that affects national identity, however, as the hermeneutic project of bridging the past and the present takes place.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> This is partly because historical memory always has the potential for being politicised, and is controlled primarily by those who control reinterpretation, such as the historian, the author, and the politician. See Hannes Hansen-Magnusson (2014:158), who argues that collective historical memory is always political.





Collective memories are subject to the hermeneutic experience of re-interpretation, such that our reactions to history are reconfigured with each encounter; “historical memory is itself a fluid concept” (Becker, 2014:57). Just as rereading a text produces different results, so too is it the case with rereading the historical Self, as both the Self and the Other are engaged in the ongoing reinterpretation of the Self of the hermeneutic circle. Often, reinterpreting one’s history is to demonstrate *change* having taken place, highlighting a new beginning or break with the past. It is only in the ability of humans and language to reflect historical consciousness in this way that we can achieve this hermeneutical phenomenon, and thus, be aware of ourselves existing within a historical tradition. A historical tradition can be more powerful than the original event itself, as “it is the *interiorising recollection* (Er-innerung) of the still *externalised* spirit manifest in them” (Hegel, quoted in Gadamer 2004:168), which is separate from the initial understanding of the event. For *sensus communi*, this allows the possibility for individuals to reflect internally upon the historical being of their collective history, even when far removed, linguistically different, and entirely Other to the Self. There is always choice in hermeneutic interpretation, as that which is obvious requires less interpretation and understanding. Just as Heidegger understands the individual enacting its *being* through self-interpretation, so does the *Volksggeist* choose its historical memory.

Perhaps the most serious and powerful examples of sedimented memories in nations are historical encounters with the Other, which feature centrally in nations's historical memories, and are key international relations scholarship. Sedimented memories concerning interaction with the Other are particularly strong since the agency generated by interaction with the Other reinforces actualisation of shared intentionality

delivered by the Volksgeist, and solidifies the individual's sense of belonging to the collective memory.

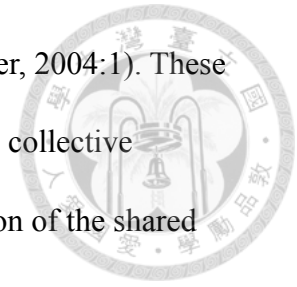
Especially prominent in the development of national collective memories are victories and defeats in war. When faced with war, war forces delineation of sides based on identity to fit within an enemy-ally interaction, driving recognition and inquiry of the collective Self in antithesis to the Other.<sup>21</sup> In Tzvetan Todorov's paradigm of this effect, there are two protagonists of good, the *hero* and the *victim*, and two markers of evil, the villain and the beneficiary of evil (2010:8). Both the hero and victim roles are desirable, as the former does moral good, and the latter represents injustice that should be righted, and the collective Self is much more likely to lean towards understanding itself in terms of hero or victim, than that of villain or beneficiary. It is an intense form of collective intention and intentionality, in which the possible confrontation with death of the collective Self, as well as the sudden confrontation with one's identity results in a reduction of plurality and plural thinking to singular absolute collective identities. Since war involves death and trauma, war induces strong memories that continue long after wars have ended, and often provide strong cases of pre-understanding among *sensus communi*.

While war may for one side deliver historical memory of victory, national trauma induces a wholly negative memory which has longterm affects on the intentionality of a *sensus communis*. Such “[c]ultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing

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<sup>21</sup> Tilly stated that “War made the State and the State made War” (1975:42). A more fundamental reconfiguration of this statement would be that war forces recognition of Self.

their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (Alexander, 2004:1). These experiences are so intense that they easily become sedimented in the collective understanding of the *sensus communis*, as a direct attack on the notion of the shared *Volksgeist* as a whole, rather than on any individual basis.



In understanding national trauma as a shared experience, it becomes a reinforcer of national identity, and instilled as pre-understanding brought to further encounters with the international, if involving the international. As Douglas Becker wrote:

In other formulations, identity becomes a vehicle by which a nation can define its historical existence. It is a lens through which international interactions are viewed. Information on potential international interactions is filtered through this lens of image, so that threats are perceived as they relate to historical threats to the nation. (2014:59)

Similarly, Guy Alitto has argued that nations that have suffered foreign aggression often find it difficult to find the basis for national rejuvenation, and therefore construct historical and cultural narratives to give hope for the chance of national rejuvenation (1999, 36). National trauma as shared trauma provides fertile support for this, and as the case study of China will show, trauma is a key part of demonstrating China’s intentionality and *Being* in the world.

In his longitudinal study of national trauma, Jan Assman identified the life cycle of national trauma narratives existing for approximately three or four generations after the national trauma takes place (referenced in Becker, 2014:62). This correlates with the transmission of experience through generations of individuals within a nation, as they engage in dialogue with younger generations. The memory of the trauma is transmitted

by grandparents to grandchildren and by those who continue to see it as worth remembering, and continues to be sedimented as long as it is valued. Those national traumas which are closest and most memorable are especially influential for pre-understanding. For example, British peoples are more likely to remember and memorialise the First and Second World Wars than Crimean or Napoleonic Wars.

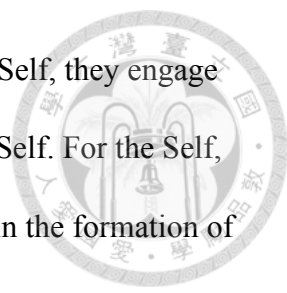
Severe trauma is found often after encounters with death, whereby the national identity and *Volksggeist* faced potential destruction. For Heidegger, death in the case of the individual is *non-relational* (1962:294), whereby one's own death cannot be shared with another. So too does the international reflect this, whereby the death of a nation or *sensus communis* is contained and felt within itself. Thus the anxiety towards one's own death is experienced by the Self and not by the Other. This anxiety in the face of death is anxiety "in the face of that potentiality-for-Being which is one's ownmost, non-relational, and not to be outstripped ...Being-towards-death" (Heidegger, 1962:294). Collectively experienced trauma does not change death as being *non-relational* for the individual, but death as possibility for the individual and the *collective* can create *anxiety* for the individual on the basis of both their personal *Being*, but also that *Being* of the collective. This explains the desire of individuals for their collective unit conceived in their own identities to continue to exist in the world. Those nations that have experienced trauma in recent generations and continue narratives of trauma, creating trans-generational trauma, similarly remind themselves of their collective *anxiety* towards death, and therefore their need to escape death at all costs. Becker has already placed this in an international relations perspective, arguing that states that experience trauma can use trauma to pursue either aggressive or pacifist approaches to

foreign policy (2014:63).<sup>22</sup> Shared understanding of a trauma between individuals in a community creates a potent historical background against which shared intention towards the world is built. Thus the effects of trauma are clear: “[w]hen states experience trauma, it tends to cast a longer and more indelible shadow over the creation of memory and hence identity” (Becker, 2014:57).

Through identity shared within a collective, collective groups can begin to take on understanding of the Self leading to shared intentionality from which agency in the form of action *for* arises. This can be through action delivered through judgement, such that Kant thought that nations are moral actors themselves (Holland, 2017). Study of emotions in international relations similarly advances this debate (Hall, 2015), as emotions demonstrate an anthropomorphisation of the *sensus communis* which is contained in the real emotions of people. Jacques Hymans has stated that “states are not gigantic calculating machines; they are hierarchically organized groups of emotional people” (2010:462). These emotions are evidence of intentionality and received collective meaning which can then be the case for intention. “Identities are the basis of interests” (Wendt 1992:398), since they form the platform for reception that allows for collective response. Neither the philosophical hermeneutical scholar nor the international relations scholar can ignore this aspect of identity, as it is inseparable from belonging and *Being* of both the individual, and the individual and their relationship with the shared understanding and lifeworld of the collective.

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<sup>22</sup> As a whole, however, collective memory, of which trauma is a part, remains as a subject on the margins of international relations research (Becker, 2014:60), yet its contribution in forming national identity through which nations intend the world, is significant, and deserving of further insight. There are many examples of national trauma driving international intentionality, such as within Jewish communities and the international engagement of Israel, or indigenous communities distrust of their respective federal governments. The case study presented in the third chapter demonstrates this in the case of China.



When the collective Self takes action acting as the collective Self, they engage with the world in a way which actualises their interpretation of their Self. For the Self, this means the Hegelian actualisation of the political and social Self in the formation of the state (Hegel, 1991 §260), as the freedom of the individual is recognised in law by the Other; the Self becomes legitimised as an actor with agency and thus achieves its freedom. This actualisation of Self is also interpreted and either confirmed or denied through interaction with the Other. At the level of the international, nations find legitimisation of their Selves through agency recognised by the Self as well as the Other. The Other receives the Self, and unavoidably must interpret the Self as something, i.e. to give the Self an identity. This involves interpretation which remains affected by the lifeworld of the Other, as well as the ability of the Self and Other to communicate and understand one another. Thus the Other can truly deny the agency of the Self even when the Self demonstrates agency recognised by the Other as existing within itself.

### 3.5. Formation of the *Volksgeist*



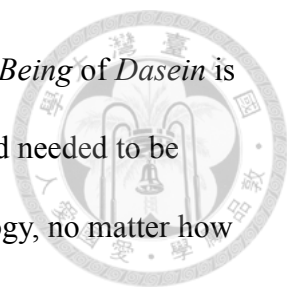
As demonstrated towards the end of the last section, shared identity as formulated through the *sensus communis* constitutes an ontic-ontological and ontological description of collective units capable of agency leading to interaction in the international. Through this description, the manifestation of international units capable of being interlocutors has been delineated. This does not, however, describe their *Being* in the ontological sense of their mode of existing within the world.<sup>23</sup> For this, this thesis now turns to a radical conceptualisation of units of the international, utilising Heidegger's individual *Dasein* as a guide to understand collective understanding of the collective Self encapsulated by the term *Volksgeist*. As a student of Heidegger, Gadamer carried over the Heideggerian conceptualisation of thinking, language, human experience and history into his own work (Palmer, 1969:166), and it is therefore worthwhile connecting the dots between the two philosophers. By establishing similarities between *Dasein* and *Volksgeist*, the agency and intentionality of the *sensus communis* will become clearer.<sup>24</sup>

Using Heidegger to analyse the international is not without precedent, but is recognised to be a “precarious undertaking” (Van Der Ree, 2015:798) and presents considerable complexities. Other scholars (Seckenelgin, 2006; Odysseos, 2007, 2010; Van Der Ree, 2015) have already approached the topic of Heidegger and international relations, but translation of *Dasein* for the international is difficult as Heideggerian

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<sup>23</sup> The difference between a being, i.e. a thing, and *Being* which is a gerund, is delineated here with italics and a capital letter. This distinction is clearer in the original German (*das Seiende/das Sein*).

<sup>24</sup> The conceptualisation of the *Volksgeist* originally found its genesis in Herder's ethnological approach, which tallies closely with the hermeneutical theoretical approach to international relations explored in this thesis. The term *Volksgeist* was officially coined by Hegel to denote the individual national spirits that would eventually arrive at the end of history through dialectic and achievement of the *Weltgeist*.



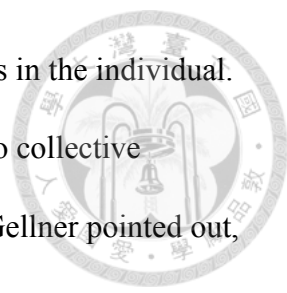
*Dasein* is relevant only for the individual, not for the collective. The *Being* of *Dasein* is the most basic of all ontologies of the Self, which Heidegger believed needed to be outlined building other ontologies, stating that “[b]asically, all ontology, no matter how rich and firmly compacted a system of categories it has at its disposal, remains blind and perverted from its own most aim, if it has not first adequately clarified the meaning of *Being*, and conceived this clarification as its fundamental task” (1962:31). If we are to fully understand the role of unit with unit interaction in the international, the ontological task is clear.

For Heidegger, *Dasein* was reserved for humans, as in his mind humans solely have the potential to recognise their existence. Hermeneutics is a key component for this as recognising existence is itself a conversation and interpretation, eventually reaching understanding of oneself. As Heidegger stated:

Hermeneutics has the task of making the *Dasein* which is in each case our own accessible to this *Dasein* itself with regard to the character of its being, communicating *Dasein* to itself in this regard, hunting down the alienation from itself with which it is smitten. In hermeneutics what is developed for *Dasein* is a possibility of its becoming and being for itself in the manner of an understanding of itself. (Heidegger, 2008:11)

Undoubtedly, modern states and all varieties of collectives both international and otherwise are able to be anthropomorphised by individual thought, and clearly there is not some manner of *Being* that can be achieved for states or collective groups. Instead, levels of reception and understanding in *individuals* partnered with intersubjective





meaning bring *Volkgeists* into being; the idea of the *Volksgeist* resides in the individual. This idea is based in shared understanding which can breathe life into collective understandings of ourselves, and create nations this way. As Ernest Gellner pointed out, “[n]ationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist” (1964:168). This is true for all sense of collective identity, beginning first with a phenomenological process of recognition of the Other, before a shared understanding of the Other takes place which confirms or rejects construction of shared national identity.

Most of the time, individual *Dasein* finds itself in the world of *average everydayness*, whereby the world appears familiar and stable. This familiarity is not immune to change, which can be dramatic, but will eventually return to a state of *average everydayness* once the hermeneutic process of understanding the new world is completed. The international shares this phenomenon. For most of the time, the *Volksgeist* does not continually challenge itself, but exists in a state of “ongoing coping” (Van Der Ree, 2015:784).


Collective units show intention and intentionality towards themselves inwardly and outwardly towards the international. For *Dasein*, this is representative of *care* (*Sorge*). This means that when we are in the world, we are fascinated by it, and drawn to interact with it. Consciousness involves continuous intention towards our environs. This is true for the collective and international unit. For example, the collective unit can ask inwardly, “what is best for us?”, and also ask outwardly, “what is our viewpoint towards the Other?”. Both these processes involve the *Volksgeist* as an agent in driving intention and intentionality, whose *Being* is actualised through the process. This manifestation of *Being* can be thought of as a reflection of agency in terms of “for-the-sake-of-which”,

whereby the intentionality of the *Volksgeist* is purposeful as an agent, rather than random in action.

Dramatic shifts can occur, however, which disturb the *Volksgeist*, galvanising its intentionality towards the world and driving engagement in the hermeneutic process of dialogue with the world, and drag the intentionality of the *Volksgeist* towards the international. Heidegger refers to these as a “breakdown” (Van Der Ree, 2015:787) which occurs when the object of everyday intentionality is disturbed in some way. This could be an international event which causes the everyday to become disturbed by that event. For instance, if a war disturbs a supply chain, suddenly, what was distant and international disturbs the local. The *Volksgeist* is affected by this as the disturbance is intended as taking place at the international rather than the local, yet is felt at the level of the local by individuals.

For Heidegger, “*Dasein* is always local - it is a being-here, a being that is somehow interested in, and familiar with, its surroundings” (Van Der Ree, 2015:785). This is not representative of a geographical spatiality for *Dasein*, but an existential reflection of what is close by. For the international, this explains the intentionality units display towards one another regardless of geographical distance. China and the USA are in existential terms proximally next to one another; their intentionality towards one another is much greater than towards other countries, yet they are not geographical regional. Globalisation has supercharged this aspect of *Dasein* for all individuals, including *Volksgeists*.

What is local to the individual is commonly in contrast to the international, and the international challenges the local, hence creating a duality separated by horizons, or a “splitting” (Van Der Ree, 2015:790). *Being* outside of the local becomes the



international, treated as the international. This inevitably creates an Othering effect whereby the Self is constitutive of the local and inner, and the Other constitutive of the foreign and outer, which could manifest itself other nations or the international itself (Van Der Ree, 2015:790). This aspect of the Other is developed later in this thesis. Van Dee Ree takes this further by explaining that while the local is fully revealed to ourselves through our everyday interaction with it, the international is only partially exposed when it is not representative of the local (2015:786). The international is therefore, always in some way unfamiliar, and therefore representative of a possible threat to the *Volksgeist*.

Were a collective not to intend, it would no longer exist, for it would no longer have agency for itself, and subsequently lose its *Being* and identity through the absence of belonging from any individual, and subsequently, accept death. For nations in the modern world, this is an anathema to their *Being*, and is hence avoided at all costs. The *Volksgeist* strives to avoid death, just as *Dasein* does. The *Volksgeist* resists death to such an extent, that it drives individuals to sacrifice their own lives for its continuation.

For Heidegger, *Dasein* is Being-in-the-world with others, which at its most initial stage, is *confrontation* with the Other. Just as the idea of the international drives self identification and fulfilment of being something international, so too does Being-in-the-world with the Other create a meeting with others in the world. For Emmanuel Levinas (1979), this fact of existence is a bond embodying responsibility and care for that Other as fundamental to *Being*. David Campbell similarly recognised this feature of intentionality, since states are “always already engaged with the other and can feign neither ignorance about nor lack of interest in the other’s fate” (1993:96). There is an

undeniable confrontation caused by Being-in-the-world with others which forces actors to interpret and react, and continues the existence of the *Volksgeist*.



In the case of states, Being-in-the-world with others subverts the idea of immortality among collectives. Although death cannot be shared by *Dasein*, and one's own death is only understood by oneself, observation of the death of the Other challenges the immortality of the Self as a possibility for *Dasein*, and hence induces anxiety about the possibility of its death. This anxiety is the challenge of one's established lifeworld, as the "appearance of an alternative symbolic universe poses a threat because its very existence demonstrates empirically that one's own universe is less than inevitable" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:126).

For the *Volksgeist* in the international, Being-in-the-world with others presents similar parallels. Humans know that the deletion of the *Volksgeist* is possible, and this is transmuted to the *Volksgeist* which ordinarily urges protection of itself, inducing competition. Hence, Realism in international relations is built upon this phenomenon of the *Volksgeist*. Collective trauma held by communities is reflective of a past attack on one's *Volksgeist*, felt especially by those whose *Volksgeist* was almost destroyed, and remains a collective memory within the *Volksgeist*.

In intending the international, the *Volksgeist* seeks recognition of itself to confirm its understanding of the international, as "for-the-sake-of-which" it intends it. In the modern international world, this is in statehood. States understand themselves as existing distinct from other states, and have shared understanding of statehood, yet this is always conceived of in joint understanding with the Other. In understanding the ultimate drive of engagement with the Other, theories of recognition are useful, as they generally outline that the achievement of practical identity is dependent on recognition

by the Other (Iser, 2019). Hegel's theory of recognition provides a normative reasoning in the drive for actor behaviour.

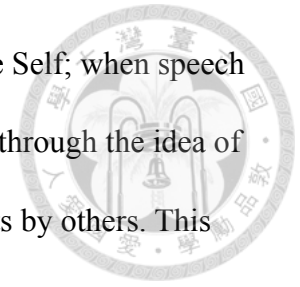
The basis of recognition is that of identity as what one believes oneself to be, in order to achieve freedom for oneself. Within the context of the international, this is again designation as a state. Units in the international will strive for recognition within the context of the international, which explains why units desire to be recognised by the international community, for instance Taiwan or Kosovo. There is an undeniable drive within nations to embody nationhood. According to Anderson, this followed proliferation of nationalist fervour following the French Revolution, as “[t]he ‘nation’ thus became something capable of being consciously aspired to” (Anderson, 1991:67). Where there is suppression or non-recognition, “misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being” (Shapcott, 2001:10).<sup>25</sup> Non-recognition forces the rejection of the Self, the denial of one's own *Being*, and an injustice for what we believe to be true about our own existence.

Recognition in turn drives identity formation as a state. Linguistically speaking, this can be seen in the deictic situation on encountering the Other, where intersubjective communication demands deictic construction of the subjective to distinguish the Self from the Other (Liu, 2004:17). States distinguish themselves from the Other, and thus the *Volksgeist* needs to reflect difference as well. For Jacques Lacan, this identity formation is reliant on the Other since it fills a part of the Self which is lacking, that being recognition by the Other; there is an absence of wholeness within the Self which demands recognition from the Other, which results in formation of the Self (Onuf,

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<sup>25</sup> Shapcott here is summarising Charles Taylor (1994:25).

2003:31). For Lacan, speech is the formation and continuation of the Self; when speech stops, one disappears into the void. This idea has been taken further through the idea of interpellation, whereby we are made and confirmed as living subjects by others. This discussion leads to the next section, in which the meeting with the Other is outlined as understanding of the social and recognition of difference.



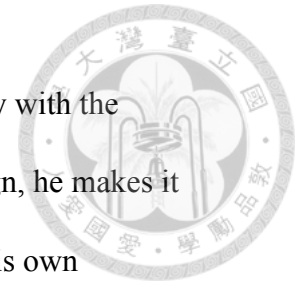
### 3.6. Entering into Dialogue with the Other



Having constituted the international interlocutor as existing within in the *sensus communis*, and given it agency, intention and intentionality towards the world through construction of the *Volksgeist*, it is through engagement with the Other that the actual phenomena of interpretation and understanding of the social happen. The fusion of horizons and hermeneutical circle are key facets for understanding this process, and appraisal of how dialogue is conducted and dialectic achieved or not achieved is relevant not only for the formation of shared understanding between individuals within societies, but the interactions that take place between them, i.e. in their international relations. It is therefore to the process and actualisation of interaction itself that this inquiry now turns in order to demonstrate the relevance of philosophical hermeneutics for explaining how this process manifests itself, and can be useful to the international relations scholar in conceptualising interaction between nations.

As this thesis argues, philosophical hermeneutics can teach the international relations scholar how to view international interaction as interpretation and understanding, which in process terms is understood as *conversation*, dialogue or dialectic. In understanding why international units choose to work together or choose conflict with each other, the process of dialectic is of primary interest here. Understanding dialectic as attempting to understand the Other's worldview, and misunderstanding as lack of this, helps to frame the process of understanding, explained by Gadamer's fusion of horizons. A successful dialectic will result in a fusion of horizons, and represents a reduction in the possibility for misunderstanding. As Ricoeur stated:

By overcoming this distance, by making himself contemporary with the text, the exegete can appropriate its meaning to himself: foreign, he makes it familiar, that is, he makes it his own. It is thus the growth of his own understanding of himself that he pursues through his understanding of the other. Every hermeneutics is thus, explicitly or implicitly, self-understanding by means of understanding others. (Ricoeur, 1978a:101)

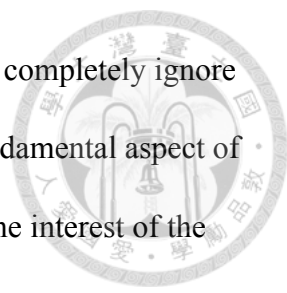


From this basis, the concepts that are required to build the outline of a dialectic are provided. Communication through language, the need to reach understanding and the possibility for conflict or peace with the Other are the fundamental subjects of this section.

This thesis is not the first to attempt to map the process of interaction between the Self and Other in the international, however. One example comes in the argument of *Conquest of America* (1982), in which Todorov introduced a framework for engagement with the Other, following his analysis of the Spanish arrival in the New World. He delineated four categories of interaction: annihilation, assimilation, coexistence and communication, the conclusion being clear. For interaction to be anything other than annihilation, assimilation, or coexistence, *communication* in the form of proposition rather than imposition is preferable; dialogue is preferable to force. In Gadamerian terms, this means sharing of lifeworlds through conversation, whereby attempting to understand the Other, i.e. dialectic, takes precedent over the application of force.

A key feature of dialogue and dialectic in particular is that they offer structure to engagement with the Other. On encountering the Other, one is presented with an



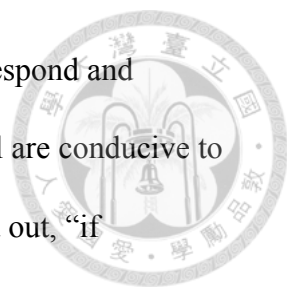


unavoidable choice of whether to engage or not engage. Choosing to completely ignore the presence of the Other, however, is not possible, since this is a fundamental aspect of being-with-others. In particular, the human face of the Other draws the interest of the Self, and is treated differently as something resembling the same as the Self, and different from any other object. This is expounded on by Levinas in his philosophy of the face-to-face.<sup>26</sup> Sharing the same space and presence with the Other is not the same as being engaged by dialogue, however. When the Other speaks, it is a command to be heard, be recognised, and for the Self to respond.

While agency rests to some extent with the actor in choosing how to respond, when encountering the Other, there is an inescapable force of interpretation which takes place, that is, a judgement. This judgement in turn forces identity to be emphasised, created in the mind of the Self, connected with their pre-understanding, and engaged with. Judgement of the Other begins as soon as the encounter begins, but it is also already decided to some extent by pre-understanding of the Other, both specific to the Other at hand and the Other in general. Levinas summarised this process as “a matter of *responding* to the Other. According to Levinas, we always speak in response to the Other, whose face presents itself as a kind of order or command to be heard” (Atterton and Calarco, 2005:28). In responding to the Other, there is recognition to an extent, of the existence of the Other in the world. It is, however, a contentious response, one which says “one has to respond to one’s right to be” (Levinas, 1989:82), and demands to be recognised as such.

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<sup>26</sup> Research by Elinor Ostrom has demonstrated that face-to-face communication increases the likelihood of cooperation drastically, correlating with Levinas’s belief in the power of the face (Ostrom, 1998).



Having intended the Other, interlocutors can decide how to respond and approach dialogue with the Other in many different forms, but not all are conducive to achieving understanding. As Wild in his appraisal of Levinas pointed out, “if communication and community is to be achieved, a real response, a responsible answer must be given. This means that I must be ready to put my world into words, and to offer it to the other. There can be no free interchange without something to give” (1979:14). This means dialectic, engaging in the fusion of horizons, with the intention being to understand the Other.

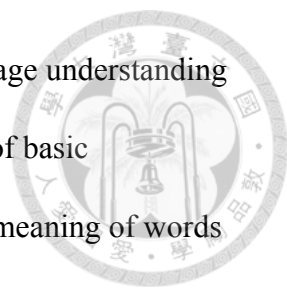
For dialectic to be successful, interlocutors must be first willing to *try* to understand the Other, and their difference (*Andersheit*). Difference will always be there, and may vary in degree throughout the process of understanding. Acceptance of the possibility of difference between the Self and Other is therefore a requirement for dialectic to be established. Expecting the Other to be the same as the Self, and rejection of difference, will inevitably lead to misunderstanding. Willingness is therefore necessary. In the words of Gadamer:

Reaching an understanding in conversation presupposes that both partners are ready for it and trying to recognise the full value of what is alien and opposed to them. If this happens mutually, and each of the partners, while simultaneously holding on to his own arguments, weighs the counter-arguments, it is finally possible to achieve - in an imperceptible but not arbitrary reciprocal translation of the other’s position (we call this exchange of views) - a common diction and a common dictum. (1979:387)

Willingness understands that the Self may be changed by the Other through the process of dialectic, by accepting that one's worldview is wrong or deficient. Pre-understanding may hinder the Self in engaging in dialectic for this reason, if the Self believes that the Other presents a risk to its *Being*.

In practice, understanding of the Other takes the form of dialectic, performed usually through question and answer. Where dialogue only takes the form of *talking past* the Other, rather than engaging with them directly, nothing can be learned from the Other and the hermeneutical circle will shrink or not take place at all, leading to misunderstanding continuing. There is always work to be done, however, in order to understand the Other and reach a fusion of horizons. Understanding does not come for free. Time and space are both hinderances to understanding, but for the international, however, it is language which likely forms the most difficult and common barrier to understanding, and where work is most urgently required in order to reach understanding. The labour undertaken in order to do this is in itself transformative for the receiver, as it challenges them to alter their understanding of the world (Dallmayr, 2009:24). Furthermore, we naturally expect that others interpret the world in the same way that we do, heightening the difficulty of accepting truths that seem anathema to our experience of the world.

While interlocutors have agency over how they speak, they do not control the interpretative understanding of the receiver. Interlocutors are, therefore, reliant on the understanding of the Other when conveying meaning and are trapped by their level of understanding as a result, which Levinas often refers to as being a hostage persecuted



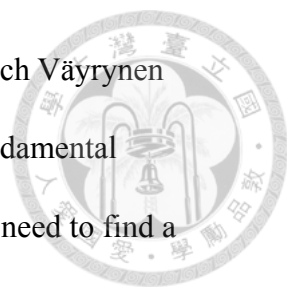
by the Other (Hutchens, 2004:20).<sup>27</sup> For instance, one cannot encourage understanding of complex mathematics without the receiver having understanding of basic mathematics; that is without the receiver understanding context and meaning of words specific to the idea being conveyed. This effect can be seen in communication within society more generally. During childhood, children listen carefully to the constructions and words used in their communities so that they can be understood by others (Pinker, 2007:78), and as they seek to engage and be recognised within their respective collective.

This process is made more difficult when the Other speaks a different language and has a different understanding of the world, even when there is willingness to understand. Not only is transference of meaning more difficult due to any language barrier, but the crossing of lifeworlds means meaning may not exist in the lifeworld of the Other in the same form, and language may not provide the means for constructing that meaning. Complex institutional facts involving layers of meaning will require more work in order to reach understanding, as meanings are constructed within already understood contexts of meaning. The receiver may even understand themselves to have understood despite not having fully understood the true intention of the speaker. These factors all contribute to increasing the likelihood of misunderstanding between interlocutors, and are potential for conflict.

In her analysis of conflict resolution, Väyrynen perceives the back and forth interpretation of meaning and values between two parties as the process of searching for a shared reality (Väyrynen, 2005:348), suggesting the possibility for a Hegelian

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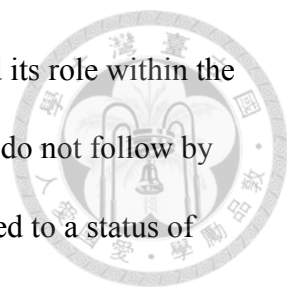
<sup>27</sup> Interlocutors are also trapped linguistically by the grammar and syntax of their respective language. Pinker argues that not only is the vocabulary of a language shaped by its history, but that language constructions are related to need to communicate certain ideas, demonstrated by the existence of similar usages of linguistic constructions among unrelated languages (Pinker, 2007:79).



synthesis of lifeworlds. This question of shared reality is not one which Väyrynen lingers on, and is taken as given in her argument: “[o]wing to the fundamental breakdown of a shared reality that characterises conflicts, the parties need to find a common language as a medium for understanding” (Väyrynen, 2005:354). While partially shared reality is of course achievable and exemplified throughout our existence with others, it should not be assumed to be achievable at all times and, in the view of this thesis supported by Gadamer’s hermeneutics, complete, holistic understanding of the Other is not achievable. Moreover, a new synthetic reality does not necessarily result from a fusion of horizons, and rather the displacement or enhancement of a lifeworld in line with the hermeneutic circle appears more representative of international interaction.

In the modern international world, through common understanding in the international, the establishment of frameworks of understanding - institutions based on norms and rules - has been possible. These are only possible, however, because of the ability of actors to understand adherence and violation of rules as conditional upon their entering the *play* of the international, through understanding that is delivered in language of norms and historical contexts. Universal rules, such as international laws, can only be understood in scenarios where everyone can understand the rule. For understanding how these are interpreted by specific units in the international, this means understanding the definition and ontological meaning of the language of the rule as interpreted, as well as its meaning within the lifeworld of that specific state.

The institutional international world is reliant on being interpreted as qualifying for recognition as a state. This requires recognition by the Other as a player, so that a *sensus communis* may enter the *game* of the international as a state. In doing so, the




intentionality of a *Volksgeist* changes, whereby it seeks to understand its role within the game, and perform its role within the rules of the game. When states do not follow by the rules, are they termed *rogue states*, or have their statehood revoked to a status of non-state by the Other. While structures arise to order states within the international, this assumes that nations all understand the same game to be occurring, and understand themselves to be rule-abiding players. Absence of agreement (anarchy) is the state before the rules of the game are implemented. While players continue to play by the rules of the game, the game continues to exist, and players are swept up in *play*. If players challenge the rules, the game changes or no longer performs as it was meant to, becoming destabilised and uncertain. Some may continue to play by the rules they believe actualise their identity as a player, while others may seek to find new actualisation within new games.<sup>28</sup> Continuous interpretation is therefore important as it determines whether the game continues to have legitimacy or not. Thus employing the *play* of philosophical hermeneutics produces a different conceptualisation of the international system arises for the international relations scholar.

### 3.6.1. Globalisation

In discussing interaction in the modern world, this thesis cannot ignore the contribution globalisation has had in dramatically increasing interaction in the world, in what Bertrand Badie has called the “resurgence of the social realm” (Badie, 2020). The globalisation and internationalisation of our times means that the international in the modern world presents greater unavoidability of interaction with the Other than ever

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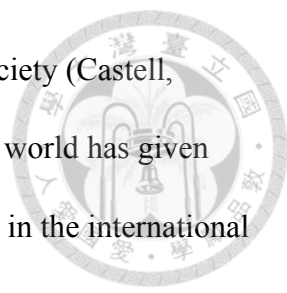
<sup>28</sup> Gadamerian *play* is the philosophical theory employed here but similar thinking is put forth by Shih, who conceptualised a similar phenomenon as “drama”, which forces leaders to take up roles and embody what is expected from their worldview, which is subsequently enacted (Shih 1993:13). *Play* has a similar effect in that when players are immersed in the game, they perform the expectations of the context in which they play.



before. In particular, the result of mass global communication means that power relations and the means of power relations are increasingly decided within the communication field (Castells, 2007:239), and as a result, Bengt Kristensson Uggla has stated we are living in the “age of hermeneutics” (Kristensson Uggla, 2010:6). This inevitably drives the international towards dialogue, and as a result, philosophical hermeneutical processes of understanding. The success and failure of these interactions is reflected everyday in the international. Understanding how actors understand one another in an intensely globalised world is therefore key to modern international relations theory, to which the exposition laid out here contributes.

Globalisation has widened the scope of the intentionality of both individuals as well as countries, and the public sphere of debate has changed radically in the process. Although countries, just like individuals, continue to intend what is most proximal on one level, represented at the level of the international best by regionalisation across the world, no longer can countries choose to intend *only* their neighbours or immediate regions as previous. For some countries, especially those with a tradition of engaging with all regions of the world, intentionality of far away locales is easy. Where previously a singular *Geisteswissenschaften* existed for each collective, the interconnectedness of the world allows access for individuals to multiple *Geisteswissenschaften*, allowing the individual to enlarge their lifeworld, and engage in cross-lifeworld experience, that being cosmopolitanism.

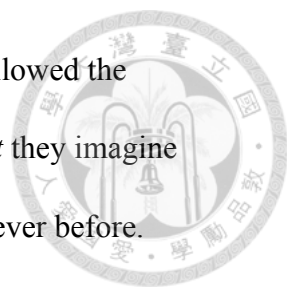
A large part of this in the modern world has been on account of virtualisation of the world through the internet, which has enabled an easy stripping of the *Volksgeist* from the individual when encountering the Other. Previously, the public space was defined by geographical boundaries of the nation state, which encouraged



institutionalisation of the nation in democracy, judiciary, and civil society (Castell, 2007:258). The advent of mass-horizontal communication across the world has given agency to humans everywhere to shift from spectators to participants in the international without being subject to structural restraints of the international, enlarging the public sphere of the individual to the international. In its most radical form, the international can be entirely removed, as a modern VPN can render the individual digitally stateless within a click. Furthermore, online translation means that anyone can speak to anyone without the barrier of language, providing the ability to disguise one's lifeworld and access lifeworlds previously indecipherable. The internet has provided greater access to information about the Other than ever before, such that we understand the Other as being closer, as being better understood, and a greater feature of the *average everydayness* for a significant amount of individuals in the world. Similarly, ease of travel has allowed for greater face-to-face meetings with the international Other, as well as migration, than ever before. This ease at which social interactions and stakeholders can interact with one another without political mediation, therefore, means understanding the social as constructed today is more important than ever.

Globalisation has also allowed cosmopolitanism to flourish in new spaces dominated by internationality rather than locality, referred to by Marc Augé as “nonspaces” (1995). These spaces, “devoid of a proper identity or history, and merely facilitating scripted interactions and standardised ritualistic engagements” (Van Der Ree, 2015:790), find the sake of their *Being* intended as being intended as international and removed from the local, becoming spaces of neutrality and universality. Cities with a high degree of cosmopolitanism such as New York or London demonstrate this, as difference becomes familiar through everyday interaction.





Most of all, the increase in literacy and communication has allowed the individual greater access to the social understanding of the *Volksgeist* they imagine belonging to, and greater ability to interact with that *Volksgeist* than ever before. Individuals understand their *Volksgeists* better, and the *Volksgeist* speaks to the individual constantly through mass media. Social media and the opening of the digital public sphere has allowed for the *Volksgeist* to become digitised and sped up, anonymous, democratised and unaccountable. Perhaps most worrying of all, as digital spheres become more greatly tailored to the Self, difference has been reduced by the ability to delete disagreement in a single click. Media is more targeted, becoming *indexed* (Bennett, 1990), whereby views contrary to an established narrative are removed or pushed to the sides.

These effects will continue and are worth investigating further as technology facilitating interaction evolves in the future. The hermeneutical framework outlined here provides a good starting point for this.

### 3.7. Conflict with the Other

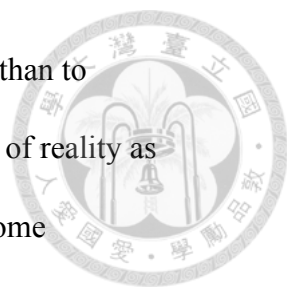


International conflict remains a reality of the world today, and iterations of international relations theory have sought to explain international conflict through different lenses.

This thesis, however, argues that philosophical hermeneutics can provide an understanding for how conflict arises between actors in the international, and also provides the means of diffusion of conflict through promotion of dialectic and outlining of the conditions for dialectic to take place. As has already been argued, engagement in dialectic with the Other can lead to understanding, which subsequently can help reduce perception of threat and misunderstanding which can lead to conflict. This means a fusion of horizons between lifeworlds occurring and subsequent understanding of intention and intentionality.

Berger and Luckmann addressed the conflict of meeting the lifeworld of the Other in interpretative terms directly, which echo several ideas suggested here and is worth quoting at length:

A major occasion for the development of universe-maintaining conceptualisation arises when a society is confronted with another society having a greatly different history. The problem posed by such a confrontation is typically sharper than that posed by intra-societal heresies because here there is an alternative symbolic universe with an 'official' tradition whose taken-for-granted objectivity is equal to one's own. It is much less shocking to the reality status of one's own universe to have to deal with minority groups of deviants, whose

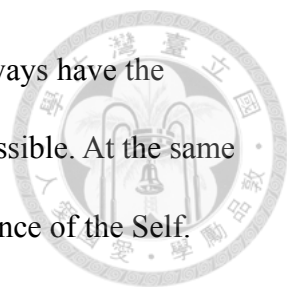


contrariness is *ipso facto* defined as folly or wickedness, than to confront another society that views *one's own* definitions of reality as ignorant, mad or downright evil. It is one thing to have some individuals around, even if they band together as a minority group, who cannot or will not abide by the institutional rules of cousinhood. It is quite another thing to meet an entire society that has never heard of these rules, perhaps does not even have a word for 'cousin', and that nevertheless seems to get along very well as a going concern. The alternative universe presented by the other society must be met with the best possible reasons for the superiority of one's own. (1966:125)

As Berger and Luckmann pointed out, it is the difference with the Other that is conducive to conflict, which includes inducement of a questioning of oneself. Difference refers to the horizons of difference which exists between the Self and Other, and is fundamental to the worlds that humans inhabit.<sup>29</sup> According to Levinas, we exist in a world of unfamiliar things and features which are other than, but not negations of ourselves (Wild, 1979:12). Linguistically, this is reflected in the ability of language to perform deixis, which is significant in indicating that "I am I because I am not you", since it separates lifeworlds into the subjective experience of the Self in reference to the Other. In an international context, Liu argues that deixis "underlies almost all colonial claims of universals and difference" (2004:62). The Other will always reject the Same to some extent and we ultimately cannot avoid difference in the world, which can be

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<sup>29</sup> Partly this is a result of developed consciousness. Searle has stated that "it is just a fact of biology that organisms that have consciousness have, in general, much greater powers of discrimination than those that do not" (quoted in Onuf, 2003:36), creating the high degree of human competence in seeing difference in the world.

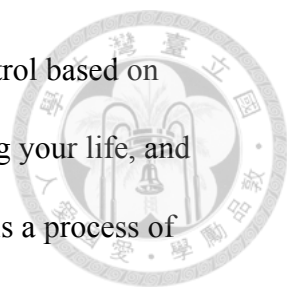


understood as axiomatic about human interaction. Difference can always have the possibility of conflict between lifeworlds, and is therefore always possible. At the same time, however, the Other needs to exist in order to validate the existence of the Self. Without the Other, the Self does not have a reference for recognition of itself, and we are therefore tied to difference for our own recognition of our uniqueness.

Difference is confirmed through language and dialogue, and hence an affirmation of the Self takes place in a form of reversed understanding. When I ask the question of how myself is unlike another, I instigate a self-inquiry that confirms or questions my own identity, potentially stabilising or destabilising the harmony of my identity. Dialogue offers uncertainty for the identities of both parties engaged. Hence, parties that hold nationalistic intent will reject forces that destabilise their view of the world and world views that risk negating themselves.

Control of this is difficult, since language can never be completely restricted, and will always allow for the possibility of interpreting the world in a way which leads to difference. Not only is linguistic variation always possible as individuals convey meaning in different variations, such as new words or syntactic structures, but the experiential aspect of words in experienced contexts will also always remain different for individuals, thus allowing for the individual calibration of subjective lifeworlds. This therefore argues for an ever-changing understanding of the international, unrestricted by linguistic certitude, which reflects the historical process of the international.

The *thrownness* of national identity and the intense gravitational pull of belonging to a nation provides a further driver of difference leading to conflict with the international. As stated previously, the international system forces the individual to



comply with it, designating nationality and structural features of control based on nationality. Your nationality decides a multitude of factors concerning your life, and places you immediately in difference with other nationalities. There is a process of dehumanisation that takes place, as the individual is reduced to the collective unit to some extent in the eyes of the Other.

Through this process of national identity designation, the individual is reduced and removed from their individual humanity. What was previously a meeting of the individuals face to face becomes the meeting of national identities as represented in those individuals. Where the presence of the *Volksgeist* among the *sensus communis* is strong, such as during war time or when the *Volksgeist* feels threatened for its survival, the reduction of the Other and of the individual will be high. In the context of war, for instance, the reduction of the international Other is total, such that killing of the Other is permitted where within one's *sensus communis* it is murder. For Levinas, his ethical politics is the rejection of such a reduction, in preference for a return to the neutrality of the individual meeting with an individual, but his philosophical goals in this do not, unfortunately, conform to the reality of the *Weltgeist* that exists today.

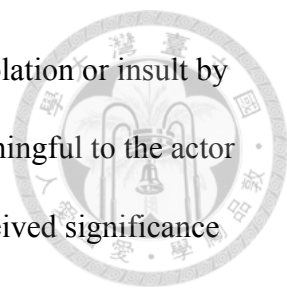
When interpreting a text, one's interpretation may not parry completely with the original intention of the author. Moreover, one may not understand the intention of the author without dialectic which can confirm interpretation. Our meeting with others in the world, and collective with other collectives, reflects a similar process of interpretation with potential for conflict of interpretation. Dialectical method provides a salve to difference, however, by seeking agreement, and by striving to understand the interpretation of the Other, hence reducing potential for misunderstanding of potential harm from the Other to the Self. Through this line of reasoning, philosophical

hermeneutics provides a reasoning for conflict, but also a method of reducing conflict, thus operationalising itself practically for both the individual and the collective.

This difference is troublesome for pursuit of international community (Shapcott, 2001:2), and the tension exhibited in the meshing of difference with community is for Shapcott the source of all discussion of morality in international relations. It also has ramifications for cosmopolitanism, since difference seeks to undermine the possibility of a unified lifeworld. Nevertheless, philosophical hermeneutics outlines the process of understanding as leading to agreement which this thesis argues can operationalise itself in the international firstly by understanding the Other, but then by utilising understanding as a means of deescalation of the potential for conflict.

As stated, globalisation has allowed for international cooperation and establishment of a shared understanding of the international realm. For the international, conflict can also derive from difference between the lifeworld of a *sensus communis*, and established international norms and laws, representing a conflict between a lifeworld and the context of the international system. Norms are inherent to social contexts, and thus discourses that are embedded in social contexts, of which all discourses are, are restrained by norms. Discourses that deviates from those norms, such as breaking of international law, are in conflict with intentions of the international of established lifeworlds, creating dissonance with the truth for actors, and therefore become a source of conflict between actors.

Breaking of norms or expectations about one's lifeworld can be signalled by the *Volkgeist*. To give one example, conflict with the Other can be expressed as *anger*. Hall summarises the manifestation of anger well, which it worth quoting at length:



Anger is a reactive emotion, a response to a wrongful violation or insult by a blameworthy party. Anger involves issues that are meaningful to the actor in question, and thus communicates to its target the perceived significance of the issue at stake. Anger also has an important moral component. *It signals not just that others are behaving against an actor's wishes, but that others ought not to be behaving in such a manner, that their conduct is unjust, unfair, or wrong...* Actors in a state of anger are seen as less rational, more prone to belligerent behavior, and likely to lash out at the source of the obstruction or violation. Anger is also frequently accompanied by a discourse of accusation and blame. Anger on the individual level manifests itself in expressions that signal hostility and aggression—elevated tone of voice, glowering, sudden and violent movements. Anger motivates actors to strike back at and punish the cause of the eliciting offense, and the force of the reaction is related to the perceived importance of the violation in question. Actors under the sway of anger may be capable of destructive acts in which they otherwise would not engage. (Hall, 2015:47. Emphasis added)

Not only does Hall's outlining of anger demonstrate the actualisation of the *Volksgeist* in the world, but it also gives the fundamental reasoning behind anger. That is, anger arrives by the violation of the Self's understanding of the world by the Other, by causing something that is *wrong* and incompatible within the context of the Self's lifeworld. By pursuing dialectic, and understanding the reasoning behind the actions of the Other, anger may be assuaged or tempered, reducing the possibility for conflict. The Other may also see the attempt by the Self at understanding why the Other is angry as a

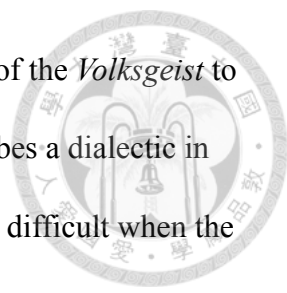
form of recognition. Overall, however, anger is representative of the potential for conflict, and the philosophical hermeneutical framework provides the reasoning behind this.



A fusion of horizons does not guarantee the avoidance of conflict, however, and does not guarantee a Hegelian synthesis of understanding between two parties. For greater avoidance of conflict, one side must *yield* their understanding of the world to the Other in order to avoid conflict, and in doing so synthesise or adopt their worldview with that of the Other. As Risse argued, “[w]hen actors engage in a truth-seeking discourse, they must be prepared to change their own views of the world, their interests, and sometimes even their identities” (2000:2). This involves rejection of the truth held by the Self, admittance of being wrong, and subsequent demonstration of weakness, all of which are representative of cognitive dissonance. Hence, actors are usually unwilling to do this without the significant threat, usually the destruction of their *Volksgeist*. The fundamental of philosophical hermeneutics, however, is to recognise this process and accept reduction of one’s lifeworld and perform this suspension of one’s direction of thought in respect for that of the Other. In the words of Gadamer, “[t]hat is the essence, the soul of my hermeneutics: to understand someone else is to see the justice, the truth, of their position” (1992:152).

The *Volksgeist* will always seek to reject this to some extent, for fear of destruction of itself. Looking at the world today, however, some nations are more willing to be changed by the Other than others. These are those nations more willing to engage in dialogue with the Other, and thus are captive less to the base desire of the *Volksgeist* to preserve itself. Moreover, these nations often privilege the individual over the collective, reducing the power of the *Volksgeist*.





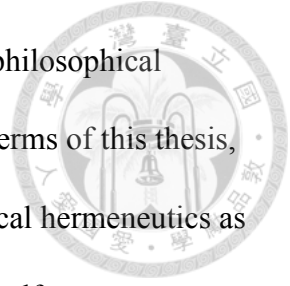
On the whole, however, it is difficult to overcome the power of the *Volksgeist* to reject change of itself. Argumentative rationality, for instance, describes a dialectic in which actors are willing to concede to the better argument, yet this is difficult when the *Volksgeist* drives actors to reject yielding. Philosophical hermeneutical study is one method to respond to this, by emphasising that dialectic remains our best antidote to misunderstanding, and to understanding both the Other and ourselves. As Dienstag explains:

In fact, Gadamer's theory suggests that expansion of one's horizon outside our initial language-group is superior to that within it. The further we reach outside our life-world, the more we will learn about our own prejudices. That we simultaneously learn about ourselves as we learn about the other is, to Gadamer, a confirmation of the Hegelian view that the self expands through knowledge by taking the content of its intellectual objects into its subjectivity by means of language. (2016:11)

The idea conveyed is that yielding for the *Volksgeist* can be a positive experience, not only for avoiding conflict, but also opening the door for new experience for the Self.

By recognising difference and its potential for conflict as misunderstanding, there is the possibility of avoiding conflict through dialectic as outlined throughout this chapter. Firstly, by understanding the intention of the Other better, the Self can feel more secure. But more importantly, yielding can provide a route for the *Volksgeist* to improve itself, rather than remaining stubborn to its worldview. In this way, philosophical hermeneutics provides a philosophy that is functional for the international relations scholar, by providing a route to avoidance of at least some conflict that take

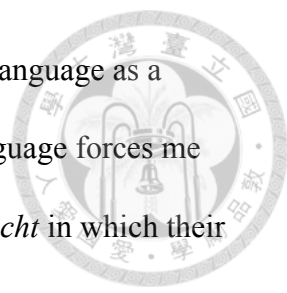
place in the international. This not only serves to prove the value of philosophical hermeneutics to the international relations scholar in the theoretical terms of this thesis, but also practical terms whereby the operationalisation of philosophical hermeneutics as method for conducting peaceful relations with the Other can prove itself.



### 3.7.1. Power

One principal concept in modern international relations is the role of power in determining structure in the international system, which also carries relevance for interpretative discourse between actors in the international. Power, both soft and hard, is *perceived power*, formed through interpretation of action, rather than objective quantitative material amount conditional for theories of structural realism. As social constructionism has already shown, one nuclear weapon held by a single rogue state can represent greater threat and power over a country's intention and intentionality than that of many nuclear weapons held by an ally (Wendt, 1995:73). It is only through change in the intention of an actor under influence of the will of another actor that power can be said to have been truly manifested, which relies on understanding of change in intention to decipher. While interpretation of power has been developed among large swathes of mainstream literature within international relations, this thesis seeks a more nuanced area to contribute to the discussion of power through philosophical hermeneutics, namely the role of systems of power within language which alter the lifeworlds of individuals, and thus control intention and intentionality towards the international.

Beginning on the fundamental level of the individual, power can be viewed as ability to control and influence the lifeworld of the individual, inclusive of both personal and collective identity, which as has been expounded above, is manifested



through language. As Berger and Luckmann point out, “I encounter language as a facticity external to myself and it is coercive in its effect on me. Language forces me into its patterns” (1966:53), forcing the individual to enter a *Weltansicht* in which their lifeworld is constructed. The previous argument above has demonstrated that choice of entry into a lifeworld is removed for the individual, who instead is *thrown* into their lifeworld conditioned primarily by their language growing up. Individuals, therefore, are forced into a worldview, and have intentionality and intention controlled due to their context.

Language as reflective of personal interpretative experience will always remain open to change, and can influence are lifeworlds. Where there is insufficient control over discourse, there will always be the possibility for *struggle* within discourse (Foucault, 1982:793-5), as interlocutors challenge the lifeworlds of one another. In the modern age of multimodal and extensive international communication networks, control of the international discourse is more important than ever before, and governments recognise this. Control of narratives both international and domestic have become battlegrounds for control over interpreted narratives.

This can involve Foucauldian discourse, which demonstrates how the ability to generate truth within discourse is influenced by structures of power, such as social hierarchies, within discourses. This power is still perceived power, reliant on a contextual understanding in which the subject communicates and in how the receiver perceives their position relative to the subject to be. At the level of the international, this can be seen in the discourse of international great powers such as USA or China, which carries greater perceived power than those of smaller nations. While this may be

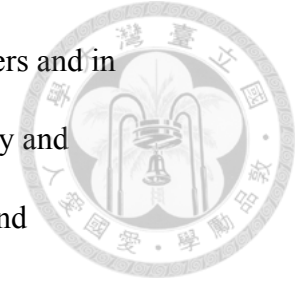
influenced by material power, this provides the context for the discourse, while at the same time, the discourse itself contains structures of power that influences reception.

The ability of governments to control narratives means that they are able to shape interaction between individuals under their control, and therefore influence social reality. To some extent, the one who has the bigger stick has the better chance of imposing their definitions of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:127), that stick in the modern world being ability to control narratives and discourses at both national and international levels. The ability for a *sensus communis* to supplant the lifeworld of another with theirs is representative of power to change the Other fundamentally, rather than power to constrain the Other through threat of violence or material means. As Castells argued, “[w]hile coercion and fear are critical sources for imposing the will of the dominants over the dominated, few institutional systems can last long if they are predominantly based on sheer repression. Torturing bodies is less effective than shaping minds” (2007:238). This philosophical hermeneutical framework demonstrates the importance of this form of power, and locates it in a novel understanding of control over the Other.

For international relations scholars, this is an area that requires greater development. In taking up arguments of power, constructivist scholars can shift the narrative of power away from monopolies held by realist and materialist positions. Searle engages such materialist positions directly, saying:

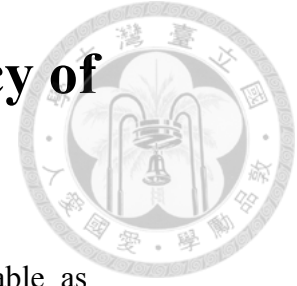
The temptation in all these cases is to think that in the end it all depends on who has the most armed might, that brute facts will always prevail over institutional facts. But that is not really true. The guns are ineffectual except

to those who are prepared to use them in cooperation with others and in structures, however informal, with recognised lines of authority and command. And all of that requires collective internationality and institutional facts. (1995:177)



In taking *language* as the seat of institutional and collective power, the narrative on power in international relations is changed dramatically, and the potential for philosophical hermeneutics further verified.


### 3.8. The Temporal Immediacy of Interpretation



For philosophical hermeneutics, time and understanding are inseparable, as understanding happens at the point of the reception of information, *in media res*. This tallies with a Heideggerian perspective where *Being* and time are inseparable. Interpretation and reinterpretation of the world is constantly taking place in the minds of individuals, and as a corollary, in the shared understanding within societies towards themselves and the outside at the level of the international. This means that the hermeneutic circle is always in a state of flux, widening and shrinking as interlocutors understand the world and each other better or worse. By adopting a philosophical hermeneutical approach, a clear explanation is given to explain the constant systemic, structural and ideational *change* that takes place within the international.

Human experience of the world is one of temporal immediacy, whereby we experience what is current and exists only in the present. “Temporality is an intrinsic property of consciousness” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:40) true to all humans. This is a truth of reality and hermeneutics; we experience and interpret the world concurrently. However, our experience of the world is also always in flux, responsive to both ideational and material changes, changing how we then interpret past, present and future experience. Interpretation is thus, a continuous event.

In Gadamer's fusion of horizons, however, understanding is the meeting of past and present, whereby previous understanding is reinterpreted by the present conditions; pre-understanding meets and conflicts with an interpretation formed in the present. The advantage of linking language and continuous interpretation, as embodied in the




hermeneutic circle, is that an approach to international relations can be developed which avoids anachronistic ontological absolutism about phenomena happening in the world and instead reflects the world as it is. This approach understands international relations as happening in the present, and recognises therefore, the methodological difficulties of interpreting truth about an every-changing world.

Key to understanding the hermeneutic process is understanding that one cannot have exactly the same experience of reading a text as they did in the past. As Heraclitus understood, we can never step into the same river twice, and thus never experience the same phenomenon in exactly the same way again (Heraclitus, fr. 91).<sup>30</sup> Not only does the new experience affect the present interpretation of that phenomenon, but that experience affects all future experience of the same the phenomenon through its effect on tradition and pre-understanding. Likewise, former interpretations of the same phenomenon are made relative by their relationship to the same phenomenon through reinterpretation and the continuous functioning of the hermeneutic circle.

Our lifeworlds are, therefore, in a state of flux through reinterpretation. When the changes through reinterpretation are extensive enough, lifeworlds can be challenged significantly, and large social change can take place subsequently which can take place in the international. In their theories of society, both Vico and Marx saw change in the international as understood broadly as social struggle arising from conflict of lifeworlds (Cox, 2000:231). The time scale for this effect is indefinite, as nations can remain at peace despite conflicting worldviews indefinitely, and yet in a short time radically adjust their positions for war.

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<sup>30</sup> “For, according to Heraclitus, it is not possible to step twice into the same river, nor is it possible to touch a mortal substance twice in so far as its state is concerned.” Original as: *ποταμῶν γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμβῆναι δις τῶ αὐτῶ καθ’ Ἡράκλειτον οὐδὲ θνητῆς οὐσίας δις ἄψασθαι κατὰ ἕξιν τῆς αὐτῆς.*



The immediacy of interpretation is reflected and actualised by language, reflecting the requirement of the *Weltansicht* to effectively transmit shared understanding about the social world. The evolution of languages demonstrates this, as words fall out of use, or new words are coined to express new experiences and viewpoints. Language as it is used today is therefore a reflection of the present, and as such is a good representation of the world as it appears around us. Language as used in the past is a reflection of the context of the world as it appeared at the time. In Lucien Febvre's construction of the context of sixteenth century France, he argues that the deficiency of certain words within the language of the time meant there was a restriction to thought possible at the time (1982:355-358). Languages represent the thinking of the societies that use them, the ideas that they produce, and therefore their reaction to the world around them, including the international. Historicity and historical consciousness demonstrate our ability to notice this, and to be able to make reflexive judgements concerning the difference between present and past selves.

Time is rarely discussed in mainstream international relations literature, and thus its foundational nature in the process of understanding itself, delivers further contribution via the philosophical hermeneutical framework developed here. From the discussion here, the inclusion of time in the hermeneutical framework provides a foundational account for explaining change in shared understanding within nations, and subsequent changes in attitudes between nations that takes place in the world.



## IV. Chinese Intentionality towards the International



*The average Chinese, however, is resigned to this. By now in almost every part of his own land he has seen “external country” men. Yet he rests secure. No matter what the times have brought, however violent may have been recent irruptions, it is his feeling that some day the tide is bound to recede. Thus it has always been since the events of far-off history. The Chinese, being superior, even to the obvious physical details of their bodies, must eventually, even passively, triumph. This is a conviction.*

George N. Kates, writing in the 1930s, (1989:143)

*The entire party, armed forces, and all citizens need to unite even more closely together, not forgetting our original intentions, keeping out mission firmly in mind, and continue to consolidate our people’s republic, to develop, and continue to struggle to realise the objectives of the Two Centenaries, and the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people.<sup>31</sup>*

Xi Jinping, 2019

In order to avoid criticism of metaphysical obscurity, this thesis now operationalises the philosophical hermeneutical framework expounded in chapter two, by analysing the intentionality of the Chinese *Volkgeist* as constructed within the shared understanding of the Chinese *sensus communis*. In doing so, a model of dialogue is constructed, through which Chinese pre-understanding, interpretation, and subsequent intentionality and intention towards the international as an interlocutor, can be developed, argued and understood. As a result, this process not only provides further validation beyond the methodological arguments outlined in chapter one for the philosophical hermeneutical framework as *applied philosophy* in delivering greater

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<sup>31</sup> Original as: 「全党全军全国各族人民要更加紧密地团结起来，不忘初心，牢记使命，继续把我们的人民共和国巩固好、发展好，继续为实现“两个一百年”奋斗目标、实现中华民族伟大复兴的中国梦而努力奋斗」(Xi, 2019).

understanding about international relations, but also provides an up-to-date, hermeneutical perspective on the intentionality and intentions of China towards the international.



Demonstrating the intentionality and intention of the Chinese *Volksgeist* is thus the inquiry of this chapter. Intentionality and intention are chosen as the analysanda since they represent fundamental aspects of the interpretative experience of *sensus communi* in the international. This process of understanding why a *Volksgeist* drives actors in their intentionality and intention towards the international is of value to the international relations scholar in explaining international behaviour. It does not, however, mean that intentionality or intention is the sole product of the philosophical hermeneutical framework as applied to a case study. Further applications are possible, and provide the opportunity for extensive future research.

Regarding the choice of case study, there are a multiplicity of reasons for choosing China to prove the effectiveness of the philosophical hermeneutical framework. China's extensive historical and cultural tradition contrasts highly with those of Western nations, which means a worldview constructed from a Chinese *Geisteswissenschaften* is far removed from the English language dominance of modern international relations constructed from a Western perspective. This difference has developed from China's unique cultural and social historical development, and its hegemonic political and cultural influence within East Asia, which have resulted in its construction as a cultural and social monolith. Taking advantage of this significant difference highlights the contrast between the Chinese lifeworld and the international more visibly, aiding the scholar in distinguishing the uniqueness of the Chinese context

of pre-understanding, intention and intentionality of the Chinese lifeworld when Chinese engage in dialogue and interaction.

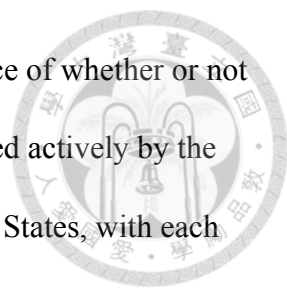


Another factor for choosing China as a case study is the relatively ubiquitous use of Mandarin and Chinese logograms throughout history within the Chinese *sensus communis*, which means access to the Chinese *Geisteswissenschaften*, here understood principally as existing within a Han (漢) ethnic tradition, has allowed the Chinese lifeworld to be *seemingly* continuous and homogenous for the modern Chinese *Volksgeist*.<sup>32</sup> Unlike other nations which have faced large demographic and linguistic change through history, there exists a historical tradition within the Chinese *sensus communis* that allows for access to the Chinese *Geisteswissenschaften*, in historical, linguistic and social terms, to be recognisable to modern Chinese people.

The most urgent reason, however, for choosing China as a case study is the need for international relations scholars to understand China and Chinese intentionality and intention towards the international today. The rise of China since the period of Reform and Opening Up (*gaige kaifang*, 改革開放) in the late seventies, and China's subsequent dynamic and destabilising entry into world affairs is arguably the most consequential phenomenon facing international relations scholars today. Increasing Chinese interest towards the international and foreign policy means there is a greater need to understand synthetic questions of how and why China wants to perform its imagined role in the international. Not only is this discussion relevant to the sinologist and international relations scholar, but is useful to anyone engaging in international dialogue with the Chinese. As Chinese intentionality towards the international continues

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<sup>32</sup> It is "seemingly" continuous as five thousand years of Chinese history, as although the Chinese *sensus communis* understands itself as having is in reality a mix of changing and evolving lifeworlds, there is a common thread of Chinese identity existing throughout Chinese history.



to expand, nations now understand that they no longer have the choice of whether or not to engage in such dialogue with China, but rather are being confronted actively by the Chinese lifeworld. Furthermore, how China engages with the United States, with each nations's *Volksgeists* embodying radically different worldviews, and whether they together can reach understanding in their conceptualisation of the world is the primary concern of great power conflict in our times, having far reaching consequences for the world. The approach taken here, therefore, provides a philosophical hermeneutical solution to solving this puzzle.

There are benefits to this approach, as the uniqueness of China's place in the international is particularly well served by philosophical hermeneutical understanding. The unique nature of Chinese societal growth and state construction mean that it should not be surprising that China defies traditional theories of international relations scholarship as constructed through a European lens, by which methods China undoubtedly remains today a struggle for analysis by scholars (Mitter and Johnson, 2021). As Steve Tsang has argued, "changing relative national power and state to state relations are not the primary driver of Chinese foreign policy" (2020:304), contrasting highly with dominant realist understandings of international relations prevalent in the Western tradition. To account for the relativistic barrier, the *understanding* that philosophical hermeneutical thinking pursues means this impasse is to some extent removed.

For most of its history, China did not conceive of the international, statehood, and its norms in terms commonly dictated by Western international relations theory. Although in the Zhou dynasty, there was already a vague conception of the Chinese state (Yang, 1968:21), even by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there



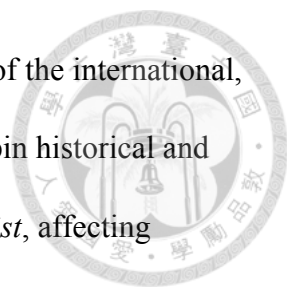
was not a clear definition on the territorial boundaries of a Chinese state, and Chinese territorial integrity was largely an imported conceptualisation of China by foreign powers (Kirby, 2017:107). International interaction conceptualised as "emperor at home, king abroad" (*waiwangneidi*, 外王内帝), *Tianxia* (天下) and the vassal state tribute system (*zhonghua chaogong tixi*, 中華朝貢體系), presented a different model of international interaction to those of Hobbesian social contract theory or Westphalian sovereignty. How to account for this radically different tradition of international relations is a challenge for the scholar analysing China.

By making pursuit of understanding the core feature of how interlocutors proceed in dialogue with one another, the philosophical hermeneutical framework overcomes this issue.<sup>33</sup> By understanding the world experienced as interpretation accounts such relativist difference in conceptualisation of international relations, contributing to a more accurate understanding of Chinese historical understanding of the international, and avoids misunderstanding of concepts specific to the Chinese lifeworld that are not present in the Western international relations tradition. Only by understanding its unique genesis and history as contributing to its tradition through which it sees the world, can the international relations scholar acquire the knowledge to understand the internationality of the Chinese *Volksgeist* today.

In applying China to the philosophical hermeneutical framework, there are several crucial points to the narrative that is built here concerning Chinese intentionality towards the international. Firstly, the enduring, sedimented memory of the hundred years of national humiliation lives on within the Chinese *Volksgeist* as shared, intense

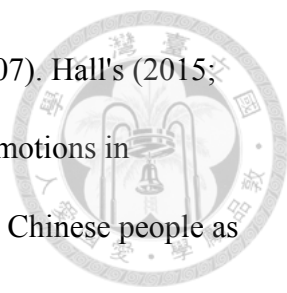
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<sup>33</sup> Tsang himself suggested that Chinese foreign policy is better covered by *Innenpolitik* theories of international relations, whereby internal factors decide a country's foreign policy (2020:305), suggesting an approach more in line with understanding and area studies.



trauma and shame that contributes a pre-understanding of suspicion of the international, particular the former colonisers in the West. This continues to underpin historical and emotion narratives towards the international for the Chinese *Volksgeist*, affecting Chinese dialogue with the international, as well as compels the *Volksgeist* to escape future possibility of death. Secondly, an irredentist teleology, invigorated and animated by China's rising power, drives the Chinese *Volksgeist* to challenge the international order constructed and governed by those who inflicted trauma on the Chinese people. This has been coopted by Xi Jinping in his fantasies of the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese people" (*zhonghua minzu weida fuxing*, 中华民族伟大复兴) and realisation of the "Chinese dream" (*zhongguo meng*, 中国梦). Thirdly, irredentist sentiment within the Chinese *Volksgeist* encourages Han-nationalist sentiments, supported by pre-understanding of Chinese civilisational greatness and superiority. The absoluteness of Chinese civilisation to the *Volksgeist*, and absence of dyadic thinking within Sinology (Shih, 2012:12) has begun to be directed outwards into the international, embodied in foreign policy projects and interaction between China and the international. Fourthly, bridging of Chinese and exterior lifeworlds continues to be challenging, particularly in linguistic understanding of lifeworlds, and disengagement in constructive dialectic between China and the West risks the greatest chance of large-scale international conflict today.

Although employing philosophical hermeneutics as the guide for this understanding, this assessment is by no means the first academic approach to China using interpretative or philosophical methods. Guanjun Wu's (2014) Lacanian philosophical approach made an impressive contribution in philosophising Chinese intentionality as a "Great Dragon Fantasy", and utilised heavily previous insightful



linguistic analysis of the Chinese lifeworld conducted by Davies (2007). Hall's (2015; Koschut, Simon et al., 2017) interpretative assessments of Chinese emotions in international interaction, uses historical pre-understanding within the Chinese people as evidence for contemporary emotional responses. These have been useful forays into understanding Chinese engagement with the international, and this thesis adds to this tradition by its philosophical hermeneutical approach.

Seeking to understand the internationality of a country as large, diverse, and culturally rich as China is a demanding and ambitious task. The philosophical hermeneutical framework delivers a direction for this inquiry, but there is the also requirement of the international relations scholar to demonstrate flexibility in pursuing holistic understanding of this kind. Intentionality and expressions of the *Volksgeist* can be found in many forms, meaning a wide range of data can be employed. Analytical answers are rare and possible choice of sedimented tropes is wide, with a large range of possible causal interpretations as a result. As a result, the *persuasive interpretation* that a hermeneutical approach delivers (Callahan, 2015:216) is the essence of the argument made here.

In this case, to assess China as a unit of the international, historical data which provides the intersubjective sedimentation for the Chinese *Volksgeist* is analysed, to bring to the forefront the shared knowledge within the *sensus communis* that contributes to the Chinese tradition. This demands appraising long term sedimentation affecting interaction with the international that is embedded within Chinese tradition, as well as recent, more short terms effects. In order to give the most accurate appraisal of contemporary Chinese intentionality towards the international, the scope of the analysis is kept as close to the present day as possible. Recent engagements between China and

the international that demonstrate manifestation of the Chinese *Volksgeist* are taken as data, with official government speeches and interaction forming the bulk of this material. This thesis, therefore, delivers an up-to-date appraisal of Chinese interaction with, and understanding of, the international.

The structure of this chapter analyses several sedimented tropes of the Chinese *Volksgeist* in turn, before providing examples to demonstrate their manifestation in the real world. Firstly, the Chinese pre-understanding of the Self and the international Other is shown to have foundations in the *Hua-Yi* civilisational divide (*huayizhibian*, 華夷之辨), supported by spatial zoning unique to Chinese conceptual thought of the international, and a history of trauma in its relationship with the international, sedimented in the hundred years of national humiliation. Secondly, the effect of the pre-understanding and Chinese lifeworld is shown to drive an irredentist mood and intention, which subsequently affects Chinese intentionality towards the international. Thirdly, the effects of language on the Chinese lifeworld will be discussed briefly. Lastly, an assessment of China's interaction with the international will be outlined.



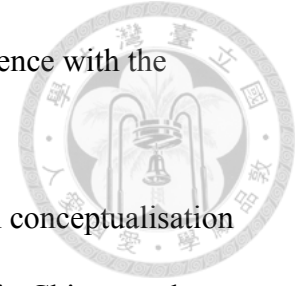
## 4.1. The Self and the Other in Chinese Experience



As the philosophical hermeneutical framework explains, understanding is a meeting of the Self and the Other in some form of discourse, which for the international relations scholar occurs at the level of the international. Before the Self begins interacting with the Other, however, the Self has a pre-understanding of interaction with the Other based on previous experience of the Other. In order to understand the context for which understanding does or does not take place, this pre-understanding, which forms the contextual basis for dialogue to happen, needs to be understood. Once this has been understood, a more accurate interpretation of the meaning and intention of interlocutors can be located in a context. To understand how this works for the case of China, analysis of Chinese historical experience and conceptualisation of interaction with the Other begins to aid in constructing this historical, experiential context for Chinese interpretation of the international today.

As the philosophical framework argues, the data for building the pre-understanding of the *sensus communis* can be found in sedimented ideas. One enduring sedimented trope of the Chinese Self and Other relationship consistent to the historical Chinese understanding of international relations is the role of civilisation in constructing a delineation with the Other along a barbarian-civilisational nexus, historically termed the *Hua-Yi* divide. This mechanism of ontic-ontological designation

constructs the Other in the Chinese lifeworld, in respect to the difference with the civilisational ontic-ontology of the Chinese Self.<sup>34</sup>



This splitting of the international contradicts the Westphalian conceptualisation of equality among a plurality of states, by making participation within Chinese culture a delineating factor for understanding of a nation's or individual's placement within the international.<sup>35</sup> The Other has been a rejection of the Self founded in difference on civilisational terms, rather than on the basis of international treaty or territorial borders. This is not uncommon to international relations; as Walter Benjamin argued, “[t]here is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism” (1968: 256–257). The uniqueness of the Chinese conceptualisation of the divide, however, is the belief in the absoluteness of the Chinese *Geisteswissenschaften* as designating entry into Chinese nationhood.<sup>36</sup>


In the case of China, the amass of material that contributes to the *Geisteswissenschaften* creates a large and intense corpus of historical and cultural memory that aids in constructing a robust sense of identity and shared lifeworld,

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<sup>34</sup> This refers to *Hua/Xia/Huaxia* (華/夏/華夏) being interpreted in opposition to the term *Yi* (夷). The term *Yi* is problematic to such an extent that Liu commented, “[n]ever has a lone word among the myriad languages of humanity made so much history as the Chinese character yi 夷” (2004:31). This thesis does not take a stance on its true meaning, but rather takes it as a placement for understanding the Other in contrast to the Chinese *Volksgeist*.

<sup>35</sup> Demarcation of international relations based upon civilisational terms also exists in the Western tradition. Jonathan Hall has argued that the Greek conceptualisation of the Self was that which was in opposition to the *Barbaros* (βάρβαρος): “Greek identity could be defined ‘from without,’ through opposition to this image of alterity. To find the language, culture or rituals of the barbarian desperately alien was to immediately to define oneself as Greek” (1997:47).

<sup>36</sup> Endymion Wilkinson differs on this. For Wilkinson, the important factor “was the adoption of a Chinese family name (姓), and its official registration for tax paying and labor services, and in some periods the allotment of land or the eligibility to hold office” (2013:337).

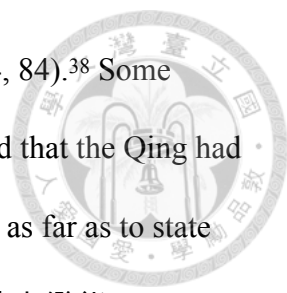


contributing to an intensified *Volksgeist*.<sup>37</sup> This phenomenon is magnified in the Chinese context due to China's long and relatively uninterrupted historical narrative, continuous linguistic homogeneity, and societal value of the Chinese *Geisteswissenschaften*. It is claimed by some scholars that for Chinese people, “[h]istory is the Chinese faith and religion” (quoted in Wang, 2017:22), and historical tradition, mythologised as five thousand years in length, remains embedded in political discourse and genesis myths of the Chinese *Volksgeist* today.

This all contributes to confirming delineation between civilisation and the outside, corroborated by historical examples of Chinese interaction with the international Other. A foremost example is the ascendancy of the Manchu to the emperorship of China under the rule of the Hong Taiji (洪台極/皇太極/*duici beile*) emperor in 1644, which presented a serious challenge to the conceptualisation of the divide in the Chinese lifeworld between Chinese and foreigner. In undertaking the role of Son of Heaven (*tianzi*, 天子), a foreign *Volksgeist* became entrusted with the mandate of heaven (*tianming* 天命) and designated as guardians of Chinese culture. In the case of the Manchu ascendancy to the emperorship, the backlash against the Manchu, as embodied in the Ming loyalist movement to “overthrow the Qing and restore the Ming” (反清復明), was significant. The seventeenth century Chinese scholar Lü Liuliang (呂留良) objected to serving the recently ascended Qing dynasty on the grounds that maintaining the difference between *Huaxia* and the *Yi* was more important than

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<sup>37</sup> It should be stated that this thesis recognises the difficulty in using the term “Chinese” to designate a *sensus communis* that has international agency under the name China. The multitude of ethnicities and languages across China inhabit their own lifeworlds, and as explained later, have dialogue with the Chinese *Volksgeist* internally within the borders of China. Chinese here, therefore, refers to a Han ethnic tradition grounded in connection with *Huaxia* 華夏. This is undeniably rough-round-the-edges in some cases, but this is the nature of *sensus communi*.



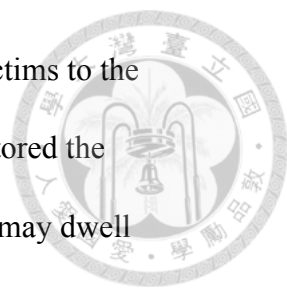
preserving the duty between a minister and their sovereign (Liu 2004, 84).<sup>38</sup> Some Japanese scholars at the time of the Qing ascendancy similarly argued that the Qing had no legitimacy in inheriting the Chinese *Geisteswissenschaften*, going as far as to state that Japan now represented China. One example is the *Kai Hentai* (華夷變態), whose Japanese authors argued that the take over of Beijing by the Qing dynasty represented the fall of Chinese civilisation to barbarity (Wang and Sun, 2008).

Such a divide continued even until the fall of the Qing in the twentieth century. Crossley stated that Chinese historians in the first half of the twentieth century, influenced by nineteenth and twentieth century Chinese nationalism argued that because the Manchu were foreign to China, they were thought not to have the will to resist foreign aggression, leading to the foreign invasions of the hundred years of national humiliation (1997:4). Following the downfall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, Sun Yat-sen (孫中山) went to the grave of the Ming emperor Zhu Yuanzhang (朱元璋) to tell him that the *Huaxia* had been restored and the barbarians overthrown. In his prayer, Sun remarked that:

Often in history has our noble Chinese race been enslaved by petty frontier barbarians from the North. Never have such glorious triumphs been won over them as Your Majesty achieved. But your descendants were degenerate and failed to carry on your glorious heritage...The Tartar savages were able to take advantage of the presence of rebels to invade and possess themselves of your sacred capital. From a bad eminence of glory basely won, they lorded it over this most holy soil, and our beloved China's rivers and hills

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<sup>38</sup> Original as: “*hua yi zhi fen, da yu jun chen zhi yi*”, 「華夷之分，大於君臣之義」.



were defiled by their corrupting touch, while the people fell victims to the headman's axe or the avenging sword... Today it has at last restored the Government to the Chinese people and the five races of China may dwell together in peace and mutual trust. Let us joyfully give thanks. How could we have attained this measure of victory had not Your Majesty's soul in heaven bestowed upon us your protecting influence? (Sun Yat-sen, 1912)

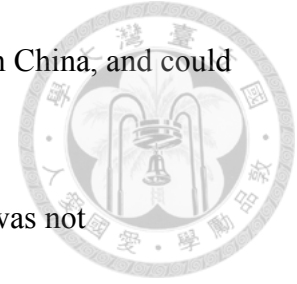
In the words of Sun Yat-sen, the Qing had never been the legitimate inheritors of the Chinese *Volksgeist* as handed down from the Ming Dynasty, and had continually remained the international Other. In fact, the Qing eventually accepted sinocisation, adopting the customs and lifeworld of the Chinese *Volksgeist*, and allowing the Chinese lifeworld to continue to exist rather than be supplanted by a Manchu lifeworld.<sup>39</sup>

By the Qing allowing the Chinese *Volksgeist* to remain, it meant continuation of the *Hua-Yi* divide, even practiced by the Manchu Qing rulers. In his letter to King George III of England in 1793, Qianlong explicitly stated that those foreigners who “have been permitted to live at Peking, but they are compelled to adopt Chinese dress, they are strictly confined to their own precincts and are never permitted to return home”, and such are the complexities of Chinese culture, Qianlong continued, that “even if your Envoy were able to acquire the rudiments of our civilisation, you could not possibly transplant our manners and customs to your alien soil” (Backhouse and Bland, 1914:322-331). For Qianlong, the Chinese understanding of itself represented a

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<sup>39</sup> This is debated in the literature, and emperors such as Qianlong promoted Manchu culture and language. Most telling of the power of the Chinese *Volksgeist* and the Sinicisation (中国化) that took place during the Qing Dynasty, however, is that by its end Puyi only knew one word of Manchu (Elliott, 2001:484), the Qing having been absorbed into the world of the Chinese *Volksgeist*.

civilisation that the Other could only find in China, which belongs in China, and could not exist outside Chinese boundaries.



Despite the words of Qianlong, however, the *Hua-Yi* divide was not insurmountable. In the past, foreigners who migrated to China and adopted Chinese customs had the potential to become included in *Hua* culture. In Chen An's (陳黯) Tang dynasty essay, *The Heart of Being Hua* (*hua xin*, 華心), the *Hua-Yi* divide was undoubtedly geographical (*jing yi di yan zhi, ze you hua yi ye*, 苟以地言之，则有华夷也), but could also be seen as residing in people's hearts (*fu hua yi zhe, bian zai yu xin*, 夫华夷者，辨在于心). As Chen stated:

There are some who were born in the central state but whose actions violate the teachings of decorum and justice: they have Chinese appearance but barbarian hearts. There are also those who were born in foreign regions but whose actions conform to the teachings of decorum and justice: they have foreign appearances but Chinese hearts... Now Yanshen came from overseas but was known and recognized by the command-in-chief by virtue of his practice of dao. That is why the command-in-chief distinguished and recommended him, with a view to encouraging those coming from the foreign lands so that all under the light of the sun and the moon can return to the enlightenment of civilization. For he judged his heart as Chinese, with

no regard to where he came from, which is a foreign land. (Chen An, Tang  
dynasty)<sup>40</sup>



What made the Arabian Yanshen Chinese at heart was his practice of Dao (道), and his understanding of Chinese culture, through which he could transgress the *Hua-Yi* divide. It was not impossible, therefore, to enter understanding with the Chinese lifeworld, but it was only a *one way* conversation in practice, rather than a two-way dialectic. The foreign Other understands the Chinese Self only, rather than the Chinese Self understanding the foreign Other.

Traditional conceptualisation of the Other and Self divide in Chinese as being along civilisational boundaries is echoed elsewhere in sinologist literature. Writing in the 1930s, the American George Kates wrote of a superiority within the Chinese that appeared to him to be innate to such an extent that it made friendships with the Chinese almost impossible. Kates wrote that, “[n]o matter how much courtesy, how much enlightened self-interest a Chinese brings to the affair, he is constantly making comparisons which are either invidious, or worse still, necessitate placing part of his own superiority in the realm of the invisible” (167:140). Mark Mancall has argued that the traditional Confucian scholar-bureaucrat did not conceive of a national Chinese identity, but instead understood only the differentiation between civilisation and barbarianism (1968:63). In a similar vein, Schwartz goes as far as to say that the “traditional Chinese perception of world order was not based simply on a deception to

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<sup>40</sup> Original as: 「有生乎中州，而行戾乎礼义，是形华而心夷也。生于夷域，而行合乎礼义，是形夷而心华也。若卢缩少卿之叛亡，其夷人乎？金日碑之忠赤，其华人乎？……今彦升也，来从海外，能以道析知于帅，帅故异而荐之，以激夫戎狄，俾日月所烛，皆归于文明之化。盖华其心，而不以其地也，而又夷焉。」（《全唐文》（卷七百六十七）陈黯《华心》）。

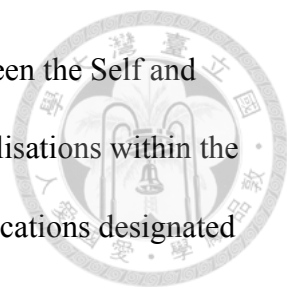
the abstract doctrine that the world ought to be organised hierarchically about some one higher centre of civilisation but on the concrete belief that Chinese civilisation was that civilisation” (1968:286). As Schwartz explains:



Attitudes toward foreign ethnic groups ranged from an idealistic “Mencian” view that the barbarians could be easily “transformed” (*Hua*) by simple exposure to Confucian culture to views that compared the barbarians to beasts and birds doomed to eternal inferiority by their ill-favoured geographic environment. One finds views on foreign policy ranging from the pacifism of the Confucian party in the *Discourses on Salt and Iron* to the Yung-lo Emperor’s aggressive determination to bring the whole known world into the framework of the Chinese system. (1968:281)

An outlook that emphasises a Self Other divide is not particular to the Chinese *sensus communis*. As Andrew Linklater has pointed out, “[p]olitical communities endure because they are exclusive, and most establish their peculiar identities by accentuating the differences between insiders and aliens” (1998:1), and an Othering effect, as explain in chapter two, is inherent to the meeting with the Other. The argument made here is that this effect is particularly strong in the Chinese lifeworld, becoming sedimented and subsequently influencing intentionality. This has even been reflected in empirical sociological study, which has argued that Chinese aggression towards out-group members can be drastic, showing preferences for physical conflict over verbal mediation (Hwang, 1997:33).






One factor emphasising this strong civilisational divide between the Self and Other is a Chinese tradition of inner and outside spatiality conceptualisations within the Chinese lifeworld. While it is true for all nations that geographical locations designated by language determine sovereignty, control, and subsequently identity, belonging and ownership, the complexity and longevity of the Chinese spatial conceptualisation of the Self and Other is specific to the Chinese lifeworld. This not only strengthens the divide that existed in the *Hua-Yi* distinction, but presents a tradition relevant to Chinese intentionality of the international today.

Traditional Chinese spatiality forms an inner area, with China as the central country (*zhongguo*, 中國), sitting at the centre of the world, while outer areas represent the outside as outside the country (*waiguo*, 外國).<sup>41</sup> Chinese names for Japan (“origin of the sun” (*riben*, 日本)), Tibet (“western land” (*xizang*, 西藏)) and Vietnam (“beyond the South” (*yuenan*, 越南)) all envelop the placement of China at the centre of the international in the minds of Chinese linguistically (Wang, 2017:15). While these words do not in themselves carry power to influence intentionality, they demonstrate a historical tradition of the international being outward and surrounding China, rather than parallel with or equal to.

Throughout Chinese history, conceptualising outer areas of the international has had complex make-ups. Both the Xia (夏) and Shang (商) dynasties relied on five zones (*wufu*, 五服), and up to nine zones existed for the Zhou (周) dynasty, designating different understandings of the international. In the Zhou conception of spatiality, the outermost zone was called *fan-fu* (藩附), where the *fan* character with the grass radical

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<sup>41</sup> The term “*waiguo*” (外國) can be traced back to the Han dynasty (Yang, 1968:21).




added was also used as a variant of the character *fan* that designated something foreign or barbarian (Yang, 1968:21). Through cultural or military conquest, outer areas could be merged into inner areas, such that “‘uncivilised barbarians’ (*sheng-fan* [生番]) could become ‘civilised’ barbarians (*shu-fan* [熟番])” (Yang, 1968:21), in much the same way that the *Hua-Yi* divide could be bridged. In a fusion of civilisation and spatiality, on ascendancy to the emperorship, the Qing were designated as “foreign dynasty” (外朝) by the Japanese scholar Yamaga Sokō (山鹿素行) in his work the *Chucho Jijitsu* (中朝事實); foreign in Chinese civilisation and outside of the Chinese world in spatiality.

This strict bifurcation of the world along inner and outer conceptions of nationhood contrasts significantly with the European experience of multiple different nations existing coterminously in a plurality. As summarised by Norton Ginsberg:

For centuries upon centuries, the perceived political spatial system remained Sinocentric, zonal, roughly concentric, without formal boundaries, characterised by a distance-intensity relationship between power and territorial control, almost exclusively Asia-orientated, and operated from the rest of the world by indifference or ignorance. Nowhere in these centuries of China’s history for which the model appears to apply did China perceive of herself as a state of states, a neighbour among neighbours, a member of a family of nations. (1968:80)

When considering the Westphalian model of equality among states that is the foundation for the modern world order today, the contrast with traditional Chinese




understanding of the international is stark. Instead of a model of a plurality of states existing alongside one another, the traditional Chinese world system of *Tianxia* presents a different conceptualisation of the international order based of centuries of Sino-centric rule of East Asia in line with the Chinese spatial conceptualisation of the world, with legitimacy delivered by the superiority of Chinese civilisation and the rule of the emperor as Son of Heaven, gifted with the Mandate of Heaven. *Tianxia* acted as the system of world order for the Chinese lifeworld from the late 3rd century BCE to the 19th century (Wang, 2017:99), and therefore underpins memory of international world order, as well as explaining the intensity of the contrast when this world order collapse under external and internal pressures. Having been dropped from the Chinese public discourse during the Mao era in preference of a Marxist-centred universalism, the revival of *Tianxia* as a possible conceptualisation of the international system is notable in the popular work of Chinese political philosopher Zhao Tingyang (2005; 2009; 2021). As June Dreyer has pointed out, *Tianxia* as explored by Zhao (2009) dispels with externality in favour of “worldness”, leaving no outsiders, but rather “the world as one community” (*tianxiaweigong*, 天下為公); the Other is reduced to the same (Dreyer 2015, 1022).<sup>42</sup>

The arrival of the West and import of the Westphalian system brought the end to *Tianxia* as a viable model, providing autonomy for states previously under *Tianxia* (Dreyer, 2015:1026). It is unlikely that *Tianxia* or “the world as one community” could ever be systemically realised in a world defined by Westphalian sovereignty and

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<sup>42</sup> Kim has argued that the absence of any potential rival civilisation for the majority of Chinese history became a significant factor in developing the Chinese world order (1979:21). The absence of an Other in the Chinese lifeworld who could truly challenge the Chinese civilisation (i.e. not including the Yuan or Qing dynasties), when compounded by civilisational and spatial sedimentation in the Chinese mindset would have amplified this effect.

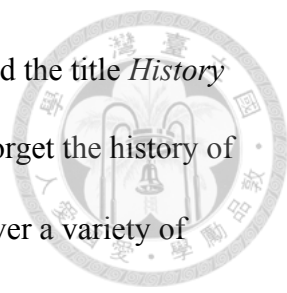


pluralism among states. This does not mean, however, it cannot be influential on regional, ethnic, or bilateral bases. As Shih remarked, “[a]s long as the Chinese notion of world order is dramatically different from the status quo, even though Chinese leaders might not intend to use force to change the situation, the world must still be prepared for such a possibility” (Shih, 1993:3). The rise of China in recent decades as a possible hegemon of the international order revitalises this possibility.

#### 4.1.1. Tradition of Trauma

As explored within the philosophical hermeneutical framework, historical national trauma has a large role to play in forming shared, sedimented understanding that contributes to construction of national identity and intentionality towards the world through its strong sedimentation in tradition and pre-understanding among the *sensus communis*, driving the *Volksgeist* to avoid repeating an event that brought its near destruction. In the case of China, there exists among scholars broad consensus that there exists a narrative of the hundred years of national humiliation, that forms a significant historical narrative in China today (Sutter, 2012:49; Wang, 2017:27; Hess, 2010; Foot, 2019; Callahan, 2015:222).


Conditioned by education and the media, this narrative states that, beginning with the First Opium War (1840-1842), China faced victimisation at the hands of the foreign Other from 1837-1949. This version of events has become the shared reasoning for China’s decline during the period, and is widely known within Chinese shared understanding. Referencing the period in the preface to *Imperial Wounds*, the Chinese public intellectual Zhu Yong wrote “Chinese history of recent centuries is a painful history. This is acknowledged by every Chinese person” (quoted in Wu, 2014:35).



Beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, many school history textbooks had the title *History of National Humiliation* (Callahan, 2010:34) and slogans of “don’t forget the history of national humiliation” (*wu wang guochi lishi*, 勿忘國恥歷史) can cover a variety of historical events from the period (Cohen, 2003:168). History textbooks still emphasise the period as a national humiliation today (Jackson and Du, 2022), and online posts containing “don’t forget the history of national humiliation” can be found in various permutations daily on *Sina Weibo*.

The potency of the narrative within Chinese shared understanding is crucial in constituting the Chinese *Volksgeist* to such an extent that Fei-ling Wang has argued that the "century of the 1840s through the 1940s defined today's China" (2017:135). Chen Jian has similarly argued that the Chinese victim mentality arising from the hundred years of national humiliation drives Chinese officials to be suspicious of any foreign country, believing them to harbour evil intention (2001:75-6). This characterisation of Chinese mistrust of the Other is corroborated by Sutter, who argued that for the Chinese “[t]he world is viewed darkly. It is full of highly competitive, unscrupulous, and duplicitous governments that are seeking their selfish interests at the expense of China and others” (2012:51). Xi Jinping himself has described the period as "the historical period in which China suffered the most unrest and was the most humiliated, it was the historical period in which the Chinese people were most miserable and most suffering” (Xi, 2014) and Xi’s speeches frequently reference the period.

Despite most Chinese today not having experienced the hundred years of national humiliation, the narrative has been handed down through trans-generational trauma as a sedimented trope within the *sensus communis*, and its contribution to the national *Volksgeist* of the Chinese people continues to significantly shape the



intentionality of the *Volksgeist*, particular towards those nations that had a hand in mistreating China during the period. Rana Mitter has argued that the legacy of the May Fourth movement, spurred by mistreatment during deliberations at the treaty of Versailles in 1919, where restitution of Shandong and denial of its status as a legal sovereign state caused significant, distrust of the West (Foot, 2019:143), "underpins the whole history of twentieth-century China" (2004:4). Another potent example is the role of the Nanjing massacre in relations between Japan and China, where continued debate over the number of deaths during the massacre and official visits by Japanese leaders to the Yasukuni Shrine, insult and remind the Chinese *Volksgeist* of past trauma. This trauma's sedimentation in the shared understanding of the Chinese *sensus communis* is apolitical and fundamental to the Chinese *Volksgeist*, providing reasoning for the previous weakness of the *Volksgeist*, drive for irredentism, and anger towards the Other who hinders this (Mitter and Johnson, 2021).

In the minds of the Chinese, the hundred years of national humiliation represented the near complete destruction of the Chinese worldview at the hands of the Other, presenting a direct confrontation with death. Having experienced such confrontation with death, there is as a result, a heightened *anxiety* that arises for the *Volksgeist*, in line with Heideggerian *Dasein*. Transferred into the context of the Chinese *Volksgeist*, anxiety in response to death provides a convincing explanation for Chinese continual referral to the hundred years of national humiliation, and its strong stance on any restriction by foreign powers in the international today. The Chinese *Volksgeist* has experienced the near extinction of its *being*, and thus anxiety as a feature of its *care* has become a feature of its *being* today. Gloria Davies has stated that among contemporary Chinese intellectual discourse there is an act of "worrying about problems that prevent

China from attaining perfection, not only as a nation, but also as an enduring civilization” (2007:1). This has also created an extreme *sensitivity* to criticism which is representative of an attack to China.



Underlying this anxiety also exists a *shame*, representing the loss of belief in the Self. Wolf describes shame as existing after a humiliation has taken place, and states that this can lead to anger: “humiliated actors may react with both anger or a special kind of shame elicited by a profound sense of inadequacy...Just as with shame itself, most people are reluctant to admit this emotional experience” (Wolf in Koschut et al. 2017:494). While the Chinese take effort to make sure that the hundred years of national humiliation remains sedimented within the *sensus communis*, they do not discuss shame in the same manner, yet shame in the sense set out by Bedford and Hwang seems apt in describing the circumstances of the Chinese:

Phenomenologically, shame is the feeling of loss of standing in the eyes of oneself or significant others and can occur as the result of a failure to live up to expectations for a person of one’s role or status. It entails not merely the feeling of having lost status, but the conviction that one is really not who one thought one was—the failure to achieve a wished-for self-image, the failure to live up to an ego ideal, or perhaps even the revelation that one embodies a negative ideal. (2013:128)

An inevitable result of shame is that “[w]hile guilt is felt over one’s actions, shame is felt over who one is...In shame, one’s self-image is brought into question” (Bedford and

Hwang, 2013:127).<sup>43</sup> This is understandable in the reinterpretation of the Self which took place within the Chinese during and after the hundred years of national humiliation. The relative fall from hegemonic status to the sick man of Asia created a narrative of loss and victimisation, a narrative which is utilised by the Chinese today.

As stated, anxiety and shame can lead to expressions of aggression and anger, reflected when China meets with an Other that poses criticism or threat to its *Volksgeist*. Wolf outlined this, stating that “when investigating reactions to humiliation, researchers should look for both angry responses to perceived transgressions and for articulations that indicate that someone feels ‘small,’ helpless, ignored, or otherwise treated as a nonentity” (Wolf in Koschut et al. 2017:494). Examples of when the Chinese *Volksgeist* expresses this are explored later in this chapter, but this line of argument is also reflected in the words of Hall, who argued that this anger can arise in response to a perceived offence:

The diplomacy of anger has its own logic and trajectory—it consists of a vehement and overt state-level display in response to a perceived offense. Although the diplomacy of anger threatens precipitous escalation in the face of further violations, it can be ameliorated by reconciliatory gestures and will subside over time absent new provocations. What is more, the diplomacy of anger can also exercise a reciprocal influence on the emotional dispositions of those that practice it. The diplomacy of anger can contribute to constructing particular issues as sensitive and volatile, and thus possibly outside the realm of standard cost- benefit calculations (2015:40)

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<sup>43</sup> Privette, Hwang and Bundrick also found that the significance of failure meant more to Taiwanese than to Americans, with the Taiwanese expressing extreme meaning in failure (Privette, Hwang and Bundrick, 1997).





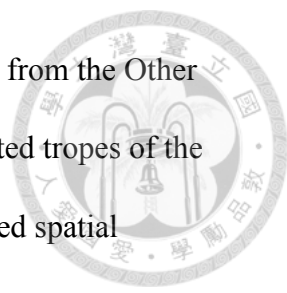
Such analysis of shame and offence, and its role in anger is relevant for the international relations scholar as “[p]henomenologically, shame is the feeling of loss of standing in the eyes of oneself or significant others” (Bedford and Hwang, 2003:128), and hence has a consequence for how the *Volksgeist* inwardly conceives of itself, while also demanding recognition from the Other. Significant humiliation forces self-reflection upon one’s own identity, such that one’s agency can feel as if it has been removed. As Wolf argued, humiliation can be understood as “an act of extreme disrespect that intends to deprive an actor of its status as an autonomous agent that counts” (Wolf in Koschut et al., 2017:494). One feels a loss of agency, powerlessness, and questions one’s agency as a result.

It is against this background of a troubled *Volksgeist* that contemporary commentators have spoken of an “identity dilemma” in China (*rentong kunjing*, 認同困境), as Chinese people ask who is China and what does China want (Qin, 2006).

Despite the longevity of China as a continuous lifeworld, its national consciousness has historically been weak (Zheng, 2019:2).<sup>44</sup> “The problem of China” (中國問題) is a commonly used phrase among intellectuals in China to refer to past socio-political problems as well as China’s future (Wu, 2014:325). This fits with Lai’s appraisal that Han nationalism is inward looking and concerned with searching for roots (尋根), that is, a search for identity (2008:99-160).


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<sup>44</sup> Peter Purdue has argued that the rise of Chinese nationalism can be traced to the 17th century when the Qing armies first encountered Russia (1998:285). While this may work within the philosophical hermeneutical framework as a meeting with the Other defining a inner self-reflection on one’s identity, there needs to be widespread understanding of this among the *sensus communis* in order for this to become representative of a *Volksgeist*.



Turning back to Chinese civilisation as absolute and different from the Other aids the Chinese *Volksgeist* in this search for identity today. Sedimented tropes of the Yangtze and Yellow rivers, and Chinese mountains are commonly used spatial indicators of an imagined greatness of the Chinese Han people stretching back to the earliest attestations of the *Huaxia* located in the Yellow River valley, and throughout geographical locality of the Chinese lifeworld. This provides historical and spatial legitimacy to the sovereignty of the Chinese Self. The dragon as a motif is synonymous with *Tianxia*, legitimate rule, and *Dao*, becoming a symbol for Chinese identity. Since the 1970s, symbols such as the dragon, the Yellow and Yangze rivers, and the Great Wall have gradually supplanted symbols of Lenin-Marxism (Wu, 2014:60), representing a sinocisation of national identity; an inward revising of Chinese identity that can support an undying and "eternal China" (Wu, 2014:63). Aside from metaphorical claims of identity, there are even more fantastical claims among many in China, such that Chinese people evolved independently in East Asia (Qiu, 2016), with some even claiming that China is the origin of humankind (Liu, 2008). The desire to be something *unique* is strong within the Chinese *Volksgeist*. Gelber argued that the deep-rooted civilisational and cultural superiority which China assumes has not lessened in the modern era, and "continues to see itself as, beyond question, special: a subtle and brilliant culture claiming by right a seat at the world's top table" (Gelber, 2007:443). In international terms, this suggests an exceptionalism on meeting the international.

In the international world today, China strives to actualise itself as a nation in terms of its self-interpretation, and to be treated and recognised by the Other as belonging to the international community as its true Self. This means actualising their worldview - actualising what they believe to be true about themselves - in the eyes of



the Other. Analysing the pre-understanding that China brings to the dialogue with itself and the international is helpful in isolating this process, and as the above analysis has demonstrated, can be outlined emotionally as feelings of shame and humiliation leading to anger, and a desire to regain what is believed to be rightfully China's, in order to reestablish the whole of the Chinese *Volksgeist*. As Sutter argued, "China is an aggrieved party. It has suffered greatly at foreign hands for almost two centuries. It needs to build its power and influence to protect what it has and to get back what is rightfully China's" (Sutter, 2012:51). It is the opinion of this thesis that this irredentist thinking is the primary will of the Chinese *Volksgeist* today.

## 4.2. An Irredentist *Volksgeist*




The tradition and pre-understanding engendered by the Chinese historical tradition that China brings to its interaction and dialogue with the Other outlined above, provides the bedrock for the argument for an irredentist China seeking to regain recognition from the Other, argued here as being of representative of Chinese intentionality towards the international. As China has achieved remarkable economic and social growth since Reform and Opening Up in 1978, the possibility of achieving the desire of the Chinese *Volksgeist* to recognise itself and be recognised by the Other as it expects, has strengthened in confidence and actualisation. As a *Xinhua* editorial on the end of the 19th National Congress in 2017 stated, “[b]y 2050, two centuries after the Opium Wars, which plunged the ‘Middle Kingdom’ into a period of hurt and shame, China is set to regain its might and re-ascend to the top of the world” (Hui, 2017); to *regain* what is rightfully Chinese as per the Chinese identity. This sentiment drives the nationalist *Volksgeist*, and subsequently its international intention.

The need to regain is regaining of the imagined Self, and of a deserved recognition from both the Other and the Self, as to who the Chinese Self is. This sense of *irredentism*, whereby having lost, there is the desire within the Chinese to regain respect through glorification of the national past (Shih, 2012:1), has been explained by Shih as follows: “[t]o appreciate the contemporary East Asian reformulation of self in the face of an imagined Other, *qua* the West, retrieving the deep-rooted anxiety/inferiority caused by the historical encounter with the Christian civilisation is necessary” (2012:7). Such a meeting is happening in international relations today. To take Shih’s analysis one step further, however, is to analyse the process of Chinese

meeting with the Other as involving a process of self-interpretation within the Chinese *sensus communis* as driving actualisation of the Chinese identity. There is a regaining which must take place for the Chinese *Volksgeist*, if it is to interpret its perceived deserved recognition from the Other and itself.

As already explored, understanding of the Self as realised through civilisation constitutes a large part of Self-recognition for the Chinese lifeworld, as it drives the aetiology of the *Volksgeist*, fed by previous memories of civilisational glory. Davies has described this civilisational will that exists within contemporary Chinese scholarship, arguing “Chinese intellectual praxis is still fundamentally dominated by the *telos* of reviving China’s civilizational grandeur” (Davies, 2007:8). Sentiment surrounding the revitalisation of a Chinese civilisation in the modern era began long before Xi’s rise to power. Chinese historian Wang Hui stated such sentiment as early as 1994, exclaiming, “I rejoice that I was born in China since what could be more heartbreaking and also more exhilarating than the glorious revival of a decaying civilization of which so many generations of people have dreamed? And what could be more thrilling than to watch and experience the minutiae and process of this collective dream?” (quoted from Davies, 2007:53). This will that exists within the Chinese *Volksgeist* sees itself mirrored in the policy of national rejuvenation enacted by Xi today.

Irredentism has become more prominent during the tenure of President Xi, as government policy has coopted this irredentist *Volksgeist* through nationalist policies, encapsulated in fantasies of the Chinese Dream and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people. These *Volksgeist* defining policies are intrinsically linked with shared historical understanding among the *sensus communis*, which incites memory of Chinese shared historical trauma arising from the hundred years of national humiliation. As



Fewsmith argued, “Xi is deeply invested in a historical narrative in which China was bullied and humiliated by the West until the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), slowly and painfully, found the proper revolutionary road, came to power, and has eventually led the country to wealth and power” (Fewsmith, 2018:13). Historical narrative building allows Xi to create context for how Chinese people understand themselves and their *Volksggeist* today, creating an understandable journey from a weakened China of the past and the strong China of the present, within which hermeneutical turn, the narrative of an irredentist China gains legitimacy. Examples of this collective narrative building as Xi attempts to shape and co-opt the *Volksggeist* can be seen from his speeches.

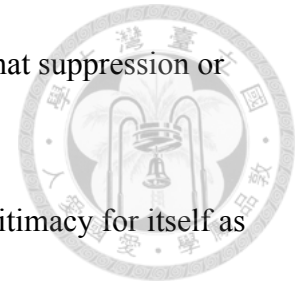
To take one example, during his 2023 Two Sessions (*lianghui*, 兩會) speech, Xi referred directly to the sufferings of the Chinese people, stating that “in the period from the Opium wars to the May Fourth movement, China gradually became half colony half feudal society, receiving harsh bullying, disintegration, frequent wars and intense misery” (Xi, 2023).<sup>45</sup> The arrival of the Communist Party changed this, allowing Chinese people to “become masters of their own fate, to leap from standing up, to becoming rich, to becoming strong, and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has begun an irreversible historical process” (Xi, 2023).<sup>46</sup> This process is the representative of the return of confidence and understanding of self-*agency* to the Chinese *Volksggeist*.

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<sup>45</sup> Originally as: 「近代以后，中国逐步成为半殖民地半封建社会，饱受列强欺凌、四分五裂、战乱频繁、生灵涂炭之苦」 (Xi, 2023). Xi’s understanding of the importance of history as defining the Chinese *Volksggeist* is clear. His appointment of loyalist Gao Xiang (高翔) as head of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (*zhongguo shehui kexueyuan*, 中国社会科学院) in 2019 correlated with the launch of the Chinese Academy of History, whose mission according to Xi is to “push a historical narrative with ‘Chinese characteristics’” (Yu, 2023).

<sup>46</sup> Original as: 「中国人民成为自己命运的主人，中华民族迎来了从站起来、富起来到强起来的伟大飞跃，中华民族伟大复兴进入了不可逆转的历史进程」 (Xi, 2023).

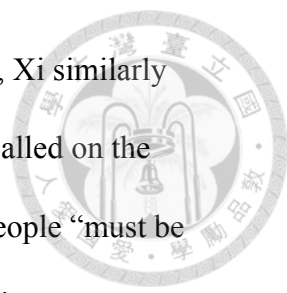
Moreover, its inexorability is definite in the eyes of Xi, suggesting that suppression or concession will be against fate and against history.



In coopting this narrative, the CCP delivers direction and legitimacy for itself as the authoritative leadership of China. Important to note, however, is that the CCP does not equal the *Volksgeist*, as the *Volksgeist* is a product of shared understanding within the *sensus communis* rather than political organisation. This can be seen by the need of China to regain being a longstanding sedimented trope within the Chinese *sensus communis*. One powerful example to support this is the dialogue with the Chinese *Volksgeist* manifesto in Hou Dejian's hugely popular pop song from the late 1980s, "Descendants of the Dragon" (*long de chuanren*, 龍的傳人). In the pop song, China assumes its traditional metaphorical manifestation as the "great dragon" (*julong*, 巨龍), the sleeping dragon that has suffered the sounds of the battle, and now needs to open its eyes (*ni caliang yan*, 你擦亮眼). The song references sedimented tropes, such as the Yangtze and Yellow rivers,<sup>47</sup> the black eyes and hair, and yellow skin of the Chinese people, and the hundred years of humiliation. It speaks directly to the Chinese *Volksgeist*, and its popularity at the time evidences its ability to rouse the Chinese spirit. In his Lacanian analysis of Chinese fantasies, Wu argued that "Descendants of the Dragon" presented the lack of clear vision among the Chinese people as the cause for the Hundred Years of humiliation and subsequent social disasters under Mao (Wu, 2014:47). The lyrics "open your eyes" (*ni caliang yan*, 你擦亮眼) offer the chance of redemption for the great dragon to claim its former greatness, and to reclaim what it means to be Chinese.

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<sup>47</sup> Patriotic songs from both the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China feature references to the Yellow and Yangtze rivers. See the songs 「大中國」, 「万里长城永不」 and 「中華民國頌」.



During his speech at the 20th party congress in October 2022, Xi similarly sought to rouse the Chinese *Volksgeist* by speaking to it directly. Xi called on the Chinese to have confidence in themselves, stating that the Chinese people “must be confident and independent” (*bixu jianchi zixinzili*, 必须坚持自信自立) and should “promote cultural self-confidence and self-improvement” (*tuijin wenhua zixin ziqiang*, 推进文化自信自强) (Xi, 2022a). Xi called on those attending to “strengthen the whole party and every citizen’s drive, backbone, confidence, to not trust in evil, to not fear ghost, to not fear oppression, to press forward despite difficulties and challenges” (Xi, 2022a).<sup>48</sup>

Xi’s remarks concerning confidence among the Chinese people were not new, but echoed those of previous Chinese leaders. In November 2012, former president Hu Jintao called on all Chinese people to acquire the three confidences: confidence in the path, confidence in the theory, and confidence in the institutions (*daolu zixin, lilun zixin, zhidu zixin*, 道路自信, 理論自信, 制度自信) (Hu, 2012). In September 1949, Mao Zedong famously declared that “[o]urs will no longer be a nation subject to insult and humiliation. We have stood up” (Mao, 1949).<sup>49</sup> Through the economic gains of recent decades, Xi and the Chinese *Volksgeist* now have the ability and agency to present a realised version of this confidence. Xi’s call for confidence is mixed with teleological spirit: “the Chinese people and Chinese nation is moving from the deep suffering of the

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<sup>48</sup> Original as: 「增强全党全国各族人民的志气、骨气、底气，不信邪、不怕鬼、不怕压，知难而进、迎难而上」 (Xi, 2022a).

<sup>49</sup> Original as: 「我們的民族將再也不是一個被人侮辱的民族了，我們已經站起來了」 (Mao, 1949).



period from the Opium wars to the May 4th movement towards the bright future of the great national rejuvenation”<sup>50</sup> (Xi, 2022a).



This change in posture from victim to confident Self has been recognised by Wang and Chen, who interpret this as a change from metaphors of an insulted and raped “motherland” as a symbol of national humiliation, to a “daddy state” that can use its economic power to challenge the Other, as well as protect the Chinese people from outside threats (2023). As representative of this narrative becoming instilled within the Chinese *sensus communis*, in a video widely spread on *Sina Weibo* from February 2023, a professor giving a speech concerning life goals to high school students in Anhui province, had the microphone snatched off him by a student from the crowd, before being told to thunderous applause by the student that the purpose of study was in fact the rejuvenation of Chinese people (Ye, 2023). A similarly nationalistic sentiment came from a *Global Times* poll from October 2022, which sought to stress that the majority of young people no longer looked up to the West, but instead looked down on Western countries (Global Times, 2022).<sup>51</sup>

For the international, this means greater confidence in engaging with the international, and greater intentionality and use of agency towards the international. One aspect of this is the Chinese government today understanding China as having a greater role to play in the international community. At voting in the United Nations Security Council, for instance, China has vetoed more times (9) in the last ten years than all the

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<sup>50</sup> Original as: 「中国人民和中华民族从近代以后的深重苦难走向伟大复兴的光明前景」 (Xi, 2022a).

<sup>51</sup> While the statistical validity of polling done in China is difficult to verify for lack of independent verification and transparency, among other reasons, a hermeneutical framework approach seeks to understanding the reception of the data by the object, and the intention of the subject, rather than just look at the data itself. Thus, statistics and data, regardless of validity, can become useful data themselves in assessing the direction of discourse of the *Volksgeist*. In this case, for instance, this polling fits the narrative of growing confidence and willingness to challenge the West.

previous years since 1971(6) (Dag Hammarskjöld Library, 2023), demonstrating its increased interest in application of its agency. Speaking in 2016, Chinese Foreign

Minister Wang Yi (王毅) stated:



As China enters the critical stage of the great national renewal, its future and destiny are ever more closely connected with that of the world. As part of advocating and advancing the building of a community of shared future for mankind, China will promote the interests of its own people in conjunction with the common interests of people all over the world and pursue the Chinese dream in the course of attaining the dream of the whole world, thus adding a more profound global significance to the great renewal of the Chinese nation...China encourages all countries to coexist peacefully, engage in sound interaction and seek win-win cooperation. This in turn will create a favorable environment for the great renewal of the Chinese nation.

(Wang, 2016)

This metamorphosis in how China interprets its role in the world is a driving force of international relations today, as confidence within the Chinese *Volksgeist* means it is able to challenge the international system and to assert itself in dialogue with the international. In 2023, this is best demonstrated by China's role in mediating a deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran, where China was able to assume the role of mediator and diplomatic peace broker, roles traditional assumed by other countries (BBC, 2023b). Not only does this resemble China interpreting itself as suitable for this job, as a reliable international partner with the clout to shape international affairs, but other

countries also recognise the status of China to be able to fulfil this role. The mediator role, being a sign of leadership in the international sphere, is a new development for the Chinese international role as it continues to develop itself as a leader in the international.



As China seeks to engage with the world, it conveys its messaging more outwardly where previously it looked inward, and in recent years, China has sought to engage in dialogue with the international more. China Global Television Network (CGTV) now broadcasts on six channels in five different languages with teams in more than seventy countries, and has stakes in broadcast outlets around the world (Lee, 2022:324). Confucius Institutes, a tool for “telling a good story about China” according to Xi Jinping, disseminate Chinese soft power directly into *sensus communi* all around the world. Xi Jinping’s landmark One Belt One Road initiative (一帶一路) specifically harkens back to the historical silk road, and seeks to place China at the centre of global trade by creating trade links with as many countries as possible. The Asian Infrastructure Bank now seeks to rival the IMF and World Bank, as China projects its Beijing Consensus economic model outwards into the international, challenging the Washington Consensus as an economic route for developing nations. Moreover, Beijing’s desire to increase international business transfers conducted using yuan instead of the dollar demonstrates desire to increase Chinese control over the international economy while also decreasing the economic power of the dollar and the USA (Zakaria, 2023).

The stretch of Chinese jurisdiction and power has also grown in line with Chinese confidence in itself. The opening of the first Chinese overseas military base in Djibouti, built in March 2016, demonstrates materially the military manifestation of




Chinese growing confidence in the international. Island building in the South China Sea challenges the sovereignty of other nations, yet the Chinese feel confident enough to continue despite pressures from other countries. The emergence in 2022 of the running of Chinese overseas service stations (*haiwai fuwu zhan*, 海外服务站) following a report by Safeguard Defenders shocked many Western observers as to the extent to Chinese foreign reach (Safeguard Defenders, 2022). The police stations, while serving the Chinese overseas Chinese community, were also found to be involved in covert policing operations involving Chinese police. They were also involved in “persuading” around 230,000 Chinese living abroad to return to China (Safeguard Defenders, 2022). These active manifestations of Chinese intentionality show challenge to Western international ideals, and increasing confidence on the part of the Chinese.

On the global stage, China has also expressed the desire for greater *huayuquan* (话语权), defined as the right to “speak and be heard, or to speak with authority” (Murphy, 2015). In his 20th party congress speech, Xi Jinping specifically referenced *huayuquan*, stating that there was a need to tell a good story about China and to increase the effectiveness of Chinese messaging to match the status of China (Xi, 2022a).<sup>52</sup> The perceived imbalance between the ability of Chinese to speak about China on the world stage, and to convey the Chinese lifeworld to the international community demonstrates the desire of the *Volksgeist* for recognition. There is a desire to connect with the world through Chinese civilisation inside the Chinese lifeworld.

One longstanding feature of the Chinese *Volksgeist* meeting with the international is the intensity of reaction to matters of sovereignty. Memories of the

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<sup>52</sup> Original as: 「讲好中国故事、传播好中国声音，展现可信、可爱、可敬的中国形象。加强国际传播能力建设，全面提升国际传播效能，形成同我国综合国力和国际地位相匹配的国际话语权。深化文明交流互鉴，推动中华文化更好走向世界」(Xi, 2022a).



hundred years of national humiliation, throughout which Chinese sovereignty was violated by other nations, concessions and territory given over to foreigners, resulted in anxiety that manifests itself in aggressive reaction to any claim concerning Chinese territory contrary to that demanded by the *Volksgeist*. Sovereignty is frequently reiterated by the Chinese in meetings with the international. Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang (秦剛) in March 2023 stated that “[n]o one should ever underestimate the firm resolve, strong will or great capability of the Chinese government and people to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity” (Qin, 2023).

Sovereignty for the Chinese *Volksgeist* is further complicated within the Chinese meeting with the international by its unique conceptualisation of shared identity based on *Hua* (華) culture, which embeds the civilisational aspect of Chinese identity a transnational *sensus communis* in *Huaren* (華人) and *Huaqiao* (華僑). During his 20th Congress speech, president Xi stated that there was the aim to “strengthen the great unity of the Chinese sons and daughters both domestically and abroad, and to form a strong force to realise the collective Chinese dream” (Xi, 2022a).<sup>53</sup> This is operationalised through the “United Front” (統一戰線) organisation, which has nine bureaus which cover all perceived threats to Chinese government interests, such as Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, around 60 million overseas Chinese in more than 180 countries, religion, Tibet and Xinjiang (Lee, 2022:322). As Lee wrote, the United Front's training manual:

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<sup>53</sup> Original as: 「加強海內外中華儿女大团结，形成同心共圆中国梦的强大合力」(Xi, 2022a).

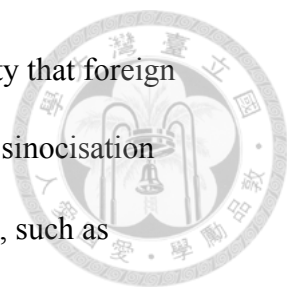
[I]ntroduces a range of methods on how officials can use this ‘magic weapon,’ from the emotional, stressing ‘flesh and blood’ ties to the motherland, to the ideological, focusing on a common participation in the ‘great rejuvenation of the Chinese people,’ and, most importantly, the material, providing funding or other resources to selected overseas Chinese groups and individuals deemed valuable to Beijing’s cause. (2022:322)



This Chinese identity is envisioned as transnational, and reinvigorating *civilisation* as the key to Chinese identity, rather than nationality defined by strict borders or government control. This is a call for transnational self-identification with a Chinese *Volksgeist*, grounded in civilisation, that shares its fate with China as a sovereign nation.


Using the philosophical hermeneutical framework is advantageous in this respect to this analysis, as by taking the *sensus communis* as the root unit of the international means the internal *inter*-national components of a state can be analysed more accurately. This is highly appropriate in the case of China, where interaction and dialogue takes place at an internal state level between many different collective worldviews. The number and size of Chinese ethnic minorities means that there is significant difference in worldview between them and the Han majority *sensus communis*, which creates interaction that can lead to conflict.

This can be seen most intensely by the conflict of lifeworlds between the Uighur minority and Han majority in China. In Xinjiang, the *anxiety* of the Chinese government that extremist and separatist views of an Other could challenge the Chinese *Volksgeist* has led to more than a million Muslims being arbitrarily detained in reeducation camps, and the wider region being subjected to intense surveillance, forced labour, involuntary



sterilisation, and other human rights abuses (Maizland, 2022). Anxiety that foreign powers could use religion to instigate separatist movements initiated sinocisation projects (*zhongguohua*, 中国化) that force religions foreign to China, such as Christianity and Islam, to adopt Chinese styles of architecture, music and practices (*zongjiao shiwu tiaoli*, 宗教事務條例, 2017). Even Chinese religions have been ordered to change themselves to conform to Xi Jinping thought, and to pursue the rejuvenation of the Chinese dream (Penny, 2020:83). Similarly, in both some Tibetan regions and in Inner Mongolia, policies to switch classroom teaching from Tibetan and Mongolian to purely Mandarin have been met with anger, and have been interpreted as attempts at cultural assimilation (Socksang, 2020; Lew, 2020). In other words, the reduction of the lifeworld of the Other, supplanted by the lifeworld of the Mandarin world.

The desire for the Other to be reduced to the same can also be seen in Hong Kong, where the legacy of British colonialism created a *sensus communis* inhabiting a lifeworld different to that of the Chinese *Volksgeist*. While the 1997 handover of Hong Kong represented the material reclamation of land taken back from the Other, the 2020 introduction of the national security law in breach of “one country-two systems” represented the de-facto full reinstatement of control from Beijing in Hong Kong. This has inevitably involved reinterpretation of Hong Kong, but the extent of this is severe. In 2022, new Hong Kong textbooks were created to state that Hong Kong was never a British colony, as the Chinese had never recognised the treaties that originally ceded Hong Kong to the UK following the Opium Wars (Davidson, 2022). Such is Chinese antipathy to the treatment China received at the hands of the British, that history should be changed, and thus the lifeworld of Hong Kongers changed.



Taiwan similarly presents a difficult case of the Chinese *Volksgeist*, since for the Chinese *Volksgeist*, Taiwan represents rejection and denial of the Self by the Self. Taiwan continues in the eyes of the Chinese *Volksgeist* to be interpreted as the Self, and hence notions of separatism from the Chinese *Volksgeist* assault the absoluteness of the *Volksgeist*. In Xi's party congress speech, both Hong Kongers and Taiwanese were referred to as “compatriots” (*tongbao*, 同胞) (Xi, 2022a). In the same speech, however, Xi also threatened the use of force (*dan juebu chengnuo fangqi shiyong wuli*, 但决不承诺放弃使用武力), and this tension within the Chinese Self caused by the inability to form a fusion of horizons with the Other continues to be one of the largest flash points for conflict in the world today. The emphasis of the Chinese on the question of Taiwan being a question for China alone,<sup>54</sup> further demonstrates its diminution of Taiwan as an independent actor with agency and the removal of a Taiwanese *Volksgeist* that could decide for itself. The intensity of the response to Taiwan, and China's inability to drop Taiwan as an issue for itself is because of the drive of the *Volksgeist* to retain its whole sense of Self.

Looking outwards into the international, in pursuing its irredentist ambitions, the Chinese *Volksgeist* inevitably finds conflict with the established world order and hegemony, conceived as a Western, American-led world order. As the Chinese lifeworld finds large difference with the Western lifeworld, conflict in understanding arises, as the underlying context for action in the international has been established on principles of Western interpretations of the international. This conflict between the will of the Chinese *Volksgeist* challenging the Other, and challenging the context as it does so in

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<sup>54</sup> Original as: 「解决台湾问题是中国人自己的事，要由中国人来决定」 (Xi, 2022a).



the play of the international, is the quandary for the international relations scholar analysing China today.




To see this in action, meetings of American and Chinese officials demonstrate such a conflict of lifeworlds. During the US-China meeting in Anchorage in March 2021, Chinese Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs Yang Jiechi's (杨洁篪) dialogue with Secretary of State Anthony Blinken manifested the official interpretation of China's meeting with the confrontation presented by the Other. During the encounter, Yang's robust rebukes of American hegemony and posture towards China demonstrated not only the confidence of the Chinese to challenge the hegemonic order publicly, but also showed Yang as an interlocutor manifesting the Chinese *Volkgeist* through his dialogue. In particular, the phrase "Chinese people will not accept this" (*zhongguoren bu chi zhe yi tao*, 中国人不吃这一套) delivered a self-confident message which quickly gain popularity among netizens, even appearing on t-shirts (Liberty Times, 2021). Similarly, Yang's use of an archaic form of "foreigner" (*yangren*, 洋人) evoked a return to 19th century encounters with the Other, tapping the latent trauma of the Chinese *Volkgeist*, in which the foreigner presents harm to the Chinese people.

Encounters with the USA have also allowed recognition of difference as self-justification for Chinese actions. During the same meeting in Anchorage, Yang stated that "[t]he United States has its United States-style democracy and China has Chinese-style democracy" (Nikkei Asia, 2021).<sup>55</sup> This sentiment was similarly echoed by President Xi in his meeting with President Biden in Bali in 2022. President Xi repeated

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<sup>55</sup> Original as: 「美国有美国的民主，中国则有中国风格的民主」 (Nikkei Asia, 2021).




that “the United States has its United States-style democracy and China has Chinese-style democracy”, adding that “China’s process of democracy comes from China’s national conditions, history and culture. America has capitalism, China has socialism” (Xi, 2022b).<sup>56</sup> This creates validation for Chinese actions within the Chinese lifeworld, and simultaneously designates the Other as unable to understand that lifeworld, as existing outside of the Chinese lifeworld. This Othering presupposes the inability to understand each other’s lifeworld, resonant of Chinese civilisational superiority sentiment. Clash of lifeworlds is common to Chinese interaction in the world today, as the irredentist *Volksgeist* drives China outwards into conflict with Other lifeworlds.

The phrase used by Yang in Anchorage, that “Chinese people will not accept this”, is also representative of the Chinese *Volksgeist*’s current inability to accept criticism of any sort, and its aggression towards the international is often on account of its *insecurity* in this regard. Despite being a rising power, China continues to receive any criticism with insecurity and aggression. Foot has echoed this sentiment, arguing that it is “peculiar blend of superiority and insecurity” (2019:159) which characterises modern Chinese style nationalism. China continually threatens foreign nationals living abroad, as well as organisations based outside of China that criticise the Chinese government (Agence France-Presse, 2022), so-called wolf warrior Chinese diplomats have responded aggressively to criticism of China publicly.

There are manifold examples of extreme Chinese responses to any form of criticism, evidencing response of the Chinese *Volksgeist* taking agency through Chinese institutions and individuals. When *The Wall Street Journal* ran a story referring to China

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<sup>56</sup> Original as: 「美国有美国式民主，中国有中国式民主...中国全过程人民民主基于中国国情和历史文化。美国搞的是资本主义，中国搞的是社会主义」(Xi, 2022b).



entitled “China is the Real Sick Man of Asia” (Mead, 2020), China's Foreign Ministry cancelled the visas of three journalists working for the publication, claiming the title as racist and demanded an official apology from *The Wall Street Journal* (Feng and Neuman, 2020). The Marriot hotel chain, GAP and Zara fashion brands, Delta Airlines and even a school in Colorado (Denyer, 2018; Woo, 2021; Liff and Lin, 2022:994), have all faced attack from the Chinese government for listing Taiwan as a separate country in some capacity.

This sensitivity of the Chinese *Volksgeist* is now recognised even within popular culture. In 2021, Malaysian rapper Namewee (黃明志) and Australian singer Kimberley Chen (陳芳語), both of Chinese descent, jointly released the song *Fragile* (玻璃心) which attacked the Chinese government and their policies, but especially referred to the response of “Little Pinks” (*xiaofenhong*, 小粉紅), for whom the song was titled. In response, the Chinese government banned and took down all songs by the duo and blocked their accounts on *Sina Weibo* (Chung, 2021). In 2022, Comedian He Huang, originally from China, faced online attacks over a comedy routine she delivered in Australia, which made jokes about Chinese culture and COVID originating in China (Quinn, 2022). Even those within the Chinese lifeworld must defer to the Chinese *Volksgeist*.

The actions of Chinese officials posted at the Manchester Chinese consulate on 16th October 2022 demonstrate many features of the manifestation of the Chinese *Volksgeist* towards the international well. The incident involved Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters being attacked, with one individual being dragged inside of the consulate and beaten before British police recovered him. In response to the attack,

Chinese consul-general Zheng Xiyuan stated that the attacks were warranted, on account of the protester “abusing my country, my leader. I think it's my duty” (BBC, 2022). The spokesman for the Chinese embassy in London later stated that the UK had failed to protect its staff.



In attempting to explain this behaviour, such as that seen in Manchester, wolf warrior diplomats or the Chinese state in general, analysis of Chinese as engaged in dialogue with the international makes sense. In their dialogue they bring historical tradition that has seeped into the Chinese *Volksgeist* of which they become manifest when taking on roles in the play of the international. They view themselves as defending the China and the Chinese *Volksgeist*, especially when confronted by the Other. The response to criticism is to attack, and to defend China at any cost. Furthermore, Chinese attacks on criticism or anomalies with the Chinese lifeworld now cross borders. The Chinese *Volksgeist* is transnational in reach, so that whether in Colorado, Australia or Manchester, the worldview of the Chinese must not be criticised.

This effect is emphasised by the absoluteness and strength of the Chinese *Volksgeist*, which supplants individual identity, and can make Chinese act in extreme ways on account of China, in spite of individual world outlook, such as in the Manchester case. John Mearsheimer has used this line of thought in his analysis of Sino-American relations, arguing that the strong sense of group loyalty visible in both nations overrides other forms of identity. Mearsheimer continues to argue that the inevitable comparison that arises between groups which strong senses of identity leads to chauvinism, which as explored above, is crucial to Chinese civilisational identity (quoted in Rathbun, 2015:10). Thus the way in which Chinese interpret their *Volksgeist*

as a greater or lesser component of their identity constitution, aids in explaining from where their actions arise.

This relatively recent surge of transnational intentionality within the Chinese *Volksgeist* has correlated with the recurrence of *Tianxia* in recent years as a Chinese model of international politics to challenge the Western Westphalian model of sovereignty. While it is unlikely that China could seriously contemplate subverting the international order towards a system resembling *Tianxia*, the continued narrative of *Tianxia* within the Chinese Self has allowed it to stay relevant in the Chinese conceptualisation of the international, and contemporary Chinese scholars today argue for the revitalisation of *Tianxia* as a model for Chinese international order (Zhao 2006; 2009; 2021; Yao 2023; Yang, 2023). Writing in 1972, Wang Gungwu stated of Mao's China that "[t]he spread of the revolutionary vision may sound a little sinister, but the Chinese do believe that they have a duty and a mission to tell the world that they have found an answer to some of its problems, not simply as a private Chinese achievement but as part of a major historical process which the whole world must undergo eventually" (Wang, 1972:616). Fast forward to the beginning of 2023, China Daily's Moscow correspondent Ren Qi began his piece on BRI by stating that, "[t]housands of years ago, China envisaged a world where people would live in perfect harmony and be as neat to one another as family. Today, President Xi Jinping has given the world such a vision in the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind" (Ren, 2023). In an article from 2013 in *Qiushi* (求是) journal, *Tianxia Datong* (天下大同) is understood as a continual dream for the Chinese people, a dream not only for Chinese people but also for everyone in the world (Qiushi, 2013). Chinese scholars have already stated that in light of the decline of the USA, now is the time for China to become world leader,

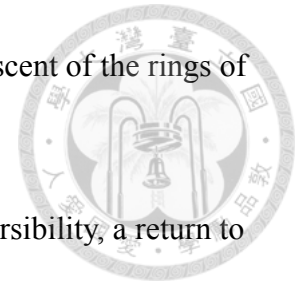
taking up the Mandate of Heaven along the way (Cheng and Wang, 2015; Cheng, 2023), while Zhou stated that the Chinese order mandates the political unification or grand unification (大一統) that is “the ultimate goal and highest rule of Chinese political history” and the “sacred mission for all Chinese rulers” (1999:308).

In March 2023, Xi announced the new Global Civilisation Initiative (*quanqiu wenming changyi*, 全球文明倡議) at the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-Level Meeting with nations from around the world. Under the initiative, Xi called for “diversity of civilizations, advocating the common values of humanity, highly valuing the inheritance and innovation of civilizations, and jointly advocating robust international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation” (CGTN, 2023). Realising this has been the dream of the Chinese people, and so others can now learn from the Chinese people. At the same time, according to the initiative, every country has its own unique national character that should be honoured during modernisation.<sup>57</sup> Yang Ping (杨平), a leading scholar and editor in China’s contemporary ideological and cultural community, has echoed Xi Jinping’s calls for “building of a community with a shared future for humanity” (*renlei mingyun gongtongti*, 人类命运共同体), stating the need for China to start building a new international system parallel to the Western order as a strategic goal (Yang, 2023). Likewise, Cheng Yawen (程亚文), dean of the Department of Political Science at the School of International Relations and Public Affairs at Shanghai International Studies University has suggested a new international framework

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<sup>57</sup> Original as: 「實現現代化是近代以來中國人民矢志奮鬥的夢想」 and 「一個國家走向現代化，既要遵循現代化一般規律，更要立足本國國情，具有本國特色」 (CGTN, 2023).

based upon a “three-ring” (*san huan*, 三环) framework, very reminiscent of the rings of spatiality discussed earlier in this chapter (Cheng 2023).<sup>58</sup>



Chinese irredentism also assumes a predestination and irreversibility, a return to the status quo of Chinese supremacy in the world order which existed throughout human history. This can be seen in the language of Xi, for whom China's rejuvenation has become an “irreversible historic process” (*buke nizhuan de lishi jincheng*, 不可逆转的历史进程) (Xi, 2021c). For any foreign force who attempts to challenge the Chinese people in this, there is a “Great Wall of steel against which outside forces can crack open their heads and spill blood” (Xi, 2021b).<sup>59</sup> The outside cannot challenge this Chinese people in rejuvenation, and threaten this interpretation of the Chinese *Volksggeist* that is understood by the Chinese people.

These developments demonstrate the reinterpretation of the Chinese international intention and intentionality that is taking place. Not only are the Chinese in conversation with themselves, but increased intentionality of the world means that Chinese discourse is stretching to all corners of the globe. It is an ongoing process to determine how the absoluteness of the Chinese worldview can withstand the plurality of the international system it espouses, and to what extent Chinese discourse is reflective of dialectic and fusion of horizons, rather than remaining in a Chinese lifeworld. A philosophical hermeneutical approach brings tools for this endeavour.

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<sup>58</sup> The constitution of these three rings would be “[t]he first ring refers to China’s neighbouring regions of East Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, which present important resource, energy, and security considerations; the second ring refers to the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with which China engages in trade, investment, and infrastructure projects, and to which China mainly delivers its foreign aid; finally, the third ring refers to the United States, European countries, and other industrialised countries with which China exchanges industrial products, technologies, and knowledge” (Cheng, 2023:48).

<sup>59</sup> In the official English version of the speech, the translation of ‘crack heads open and spill blood’ was left out. Original as: “同时，中国人民也绝不允许任何外来势力欺负、压迫、奴役我们，谁妄想这样干，必将在14亿多中国人民用血肉筑成的钢铁长城面前碰得头破血流”。

### 4.3. Language as Constitutive of Chineseness



As Gadamer's contribution to hermeneutics showed the great importance of language in the hermeneutical process, it would be amiss of this thesis to not give some space to consideration of the effect that language has on Chinese intentionality towards the international. A clear advantage of the philosophical hermeneutical framework to analyse the international is that it can include language in its inquiry, since it understands language as being fundamentally constitutive to the method of the social. As Qin Yaqin has stated, the "more distant the two cultural communities are from each other, the more different are the angles they provide" (2018:x), and by understanding lifeworlds constituted in language, it is clearly demonstrable that the Chinese lifeworld faces difficulties in conveyance of its world outwards based on its language.

Historically, language has had a large influence on the experience of the Chinese *Volksgeist*. The *baihua* (白話) vernacular movement of the May Fourth Movement (*wusi yundong*, 五四運動) instigated the "severance of ties with traditional Chinese culture facilitated by major influxes of Western ideas and thoughts resulted in a near total reconfiguration of the landscape of the Chinese language" (Liu and Tao, 2016:120). During the Mao era, Chinese thought was similarly revolutionised by "linguistic engineering, formalization, and orthodoxization, which culminated in the Cultural Revolution" (Liu and Tao, 2016:120).

Today, the *Volksgeist* is driven linguistically in China by internal propaganda programmes (*daneixuan*, 大內宣), including what Gloria Davies has termed "a Sinophone vocabulary of national empowerment" (2007:4-8), to which Wu understands as also containing Hou's "open your eyes" (*ni caliang yan*, 你擦亮眼) and Mao's "the



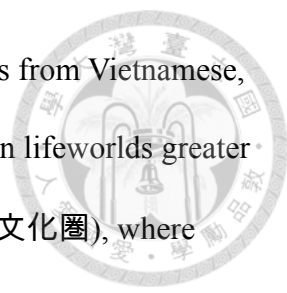
Chinese people have stood up" (*zhongguo renmin zhanqilai le*, 中國人民站起來了) (Wu 2014, 62). In the modern day, we can add Xi's "China Dream" and "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation". These terms identify within the *sensus communis* the idea and intention of the Chinese *Volksgeist*, thus animating it and providing products for the Chinese *sensus communis* to jointly disseminate between one another.<sup>60</sup>

The effect of this is emphasised within China by Foucauldian discourses of power which shape dialectic. Modern and sophisticated mechanisms of censorship of both external and internal media in China mean that hierarchical structures decide access to language, creating both media indexing, and internal propaganda effects. The Great Firewall, for instance, significantly limits the ease to which Chinese can access the lifeworld of the Other, restraining Chinese within their lifeworlds. Not only does this reduce access to outside discourse which challenges CCP power politically, it also reduces understanding of the Other and the Self-reflective process of understanding the Chinese Self in opposition to the Other, thus lessening the opportunity for individual reconceptualisation of the Chinese *Volksgeist*, or fusion of horizons with other *sensus communi*. As a result, narratives built by internal power structures of discourse dictated by Chinese hierarchies are strengthened and left unchallenged.

Relatively speaking, conflict for the Chinese is increased when engaging the international Other in conversation, since Chinese face regional linguistic barriers to conveyance of their worldview more intensely than within European contexts

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<sup>60</sup> Davies has also described a Sinophone "linguistic certitude", which understands language as "what is *really* happening out there", rather than a self-reflexive conceptualisation of language being able to construct multiple interpretations (Davies 2007:11). This unique characteristic of Chinese communication has subsequently enabled modern Chinese authors to write about China as "a powerful *metaphysical presence* [...] which is then tacitly assigned the status of a transcendental signified (like History, Being, Truth, or God)," and "presence imagined as the eventual return to civilizational grandeur." (Davies 2007:23). This linguistic certitude suggests an arguable definiteness to Chinese that disallows relatively for difference. This, however, requires more thinking and analysis to provide useful outcomes.



(Reischauer, 1974). The total or partial removal of Chinese characters from Vietnamese, Korean and Japanese, has encouraged intelligibility among East Asian lifeworlds greater than during the time of the "Chinese-character culture sphere" (漢字文化圈), where literary Chinese was the language of administration and scholarship across East Asia. Although Chinese speaking communities exist around the world, there are few nations where Mandarin Chinese can form an equal meeting of the Self and Other in linguistic terms and lifeworlds.

Mandarin itself has been argued also have a mood and intentionality to itself. Yunnan poet Yu Jian has argued that Mandarin embodies a highly political “social dialect”, “best suited to mass mobilization; metaphysical spirituality; abstraction; central state-sanctioned ideological and literary orthodoxy; propagandistic eulogy in the public sphere; grandiose, heroic, and utopian narrative; formal diction and power; and revolutionary discourse” (2004:137). Yu further stated that when speaking Mandarin, he “has no sense of humor and is self-abased, nervous, stuttering, and pretentiously serious”, reflecting the inner conflict between linguistic lifeworlds (2004:137). While a subjective experience of Mandarin, Yu describes a response to the context in which his use of Mandarin takes place.

To some extent, the political feeling of Mandarin is by design. The strict control that the Chinese Government maintains over language and communication within China maintains a *Volksgeist* that had reduced influence from unapproved sources and the outside. Access to outside conversation that could affect the Chinese lifeworld is kept out. Literature that may lead to veneration of the West was ordered removed from schools in 2021 by the Ministry of Education (Hadano, 2021), following a similar book

banning declaration in 2020 that described inappropriate books as “not in line with the socialist core values; that have deviant world views, life views and values” or are “promoting religious doctrines and canons; promoting narrow nationalism and racism” (Wu, 2020). This represents the absoluteness of worldview which is dictated more and more in modern China, founded principally in Foucauldian discourses that decide what constitutes the Chinese *Volkgeist*.

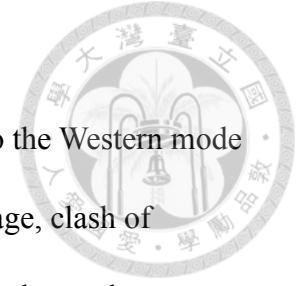
The effect of absolutism regarding Mandarin and its control is further emphasised in China’s relationship with English, which in its role as the global language has had a profound impact on the Chinese lifeworld, which Liu and Tao have described as a “clash” (Liu and Tao, 2016:120). The influence and position of English in the global language conversation has faced criticism from Chinese, who see access to the English lifeworld through English as coterminous with a decline in value of the Chinese lifeworld (Pan, 2008). In 2013, the Beijing Municipal government downgraded the score given over to English examinations, arguing that the change highlighted “the fundamental importance of mother tongue in the curriculum” (Kaiman, 2013). More recently, in 2020, China’s ministry of education banned primary and junior high schools from using foreign textbooks, and in 2021, Shanghai education authorities banned primary schools from holding exams in English (Li, 2021). This presents a dangerous trend for the Chinese lifeworld. By reducing the ability of Chinese to engage with English as the international lifeworld, Chinese risk being locked back in the “iron house” (*tiewu*, 鐵屋) that Lu Xun (魯迅) saw the Chinese inhabiting when he first used the phrase in 1922 (quoted in Davies, 2020:32).

## 4.4. China and the International



When a British East India Company ship sailed up the coast of China in 1832 in search of trade contrary to existing regulations, Qing Admiral Wu Qitai ordered the British to return to Canton. In his order, Wu referred to the British as *Yi* (夷), understood by the British translator to mean “barbarian”. The supercargo of the British ship, Hugh Hamilton Lindsay, decried this, responding that “when you apply the word *yi* to the subjects of Great Britain, you are humiliating...our country, offending its people and provoking anger and retaliation” (Liu, 2004:43). Wu eventually yielded by the removal of *Yi* from the official text of the incident. When Lord Napier arrived in China in 1834 and was similarly addressed as *Yimu* (夷目), Napier understood this as “an outrage against the British crown” (Liu, 2007:47), and ordered British ships to attack Canton in the military action by the British against China. Such was the British disdain for the use of the word *Yi*, that the Anglo-Chinese 1858 Treaty of Tianjin specifically outlawed use of the word. In a constriction of the Chinese lifeworld by the Other, Article 51 stated that:

All official communications addressed by the Diplomatic and Consular Agents of Her Majesty the Queen to the Chinese Authorities shall, henceforth, be written in English. They will for the present be accompanied by a Chinese version, but, it is understood that, in the event of there being any difference of meaning between the English and Chinese text, the English Government will hold the sense as expressed in the English text to be the correct sense. (Treaty of Tientsin, 1858)



The period of the First Opium War and China's awakening to the Western mode of international affairs is heavily entrenched in interpretation, language, clash of lifeworlds, dialogue and misunderstanding leading to conflict. While the modern Chinese subject and the international Other are very different from the context that Admiral Wu and supercargo Hamilton Lindsey, the same challenges of bridging lifeworlds and yielding to the Other remain.

Today, China and the Other still remains a complex relationship. Historical experience leading to pre-understanding entrenches the Chinese in a lifeworld which is suspicious and anxious in its intentionality towards the international. At the same time, growing confidence allows sedimented historical memories of trauma and civilisation to be locked in an irredentist mood. As Shih has argued:

In Sinology, there is no dyad of self and Other. On the contrary, the difference lies between the centre and the periphery, and this difference is not essential as those in the periphery are expected to learn and compete to return to the centre. In other words, the West and the Orient are always the same kind. The point of contention lies in who should be the model of whom. Consequently, Othering is not an essential technique of knowing the self (2012:12).

This absolutism of thought regarding the Other is in part a driver of the nationalism that characterises China today, and the space for dialogue that animates the hermeneutic circle, and that can in any sense achieve a fusion of horizons has shrunk

under the tenure of Xi, both internationally and internally in China. For Wild, this is a rejection of dialogue, supplanted by the singularity of an image:

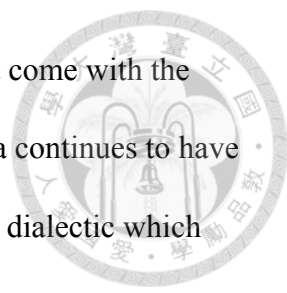


Totalitarian thinking accepts vision rather than language as its model. It aims to gain an all-inclusive, panoramic view of all things, including the other, in a neutral, impersonal light like the Hegelian Geist (Spirit), or the Heideggerian Being. It sees the dangers of an uncontrolled, individual freedom, and puts itself first as the only rational answer to anarchy.

(1979:15)

This has been demonstrated in how the Chinese *Volksggeist* now intends both the Self and the Other. It designates without restraint and without dialogue those who have connection with *Huaxia* as Chinese, seeks to change those whom the *Volksggeist* understands to be deficient to be more Chinese, and confidently does not seek to yield its lifeworld or accept suppression or criticism of its lifeworld. Moreover, it seeks to protect the Chinese *Volksggeist* from influence that could affect it, and in doing so, reduces the possibility for interaction that the Chinese *sensus communis* can have with the international.

China's position here is especially difficult as it continues to intend the international world more, and reinterprets its position in the *play* of the international arena. Although destabilising the existing order may find common allies who dislike the status-quo, primarily those in the Global South who would rather engage in *play* with the international game according to Chinese rules, this action forces the world to intend China, and to engage more than previously. In accepting the role of mediator of the



game, China must also accept the responsibilities and challenges that come with the self-presentation that is required when engaging in *play*. While China continues to have an absolutist approach to its Self and lifeworld, refusing to engage in dialectic which could change China, it will find multifarious conflicts in a highly cosmopolitan modern world. Foot has noted this, stating that:

There is a growing tension between its [China's] recent statements that the world is culturally diverse, that there needs to be mutual respect for other civilizations and states, and that no one model has the monopoly on wisdom, and a growing emphasis on its own political-economic model as the most productive way forward for many countries in the developing world (2019:159).

This incompatibility is likely to hurt China internationally in the long term, as an inability to forge fusions of horizons with other nations creates conflict rather than cooperation.

Xi Jinping understands the contemporary international system as undergoing “major changes unseen in a century” (*bianian wei you zhi da bianju*, 百年未有之大变局) (Xi, 2021a), which is offering the opportunity of irredentism and regaining craved by the Chinese *Volksgeist*. If, however, China is to successfully challenge the hegemonic world order peacefully through positive engagement with other nations, the hermeneutic framework shows that it needs to speak to the language of its interlocutors, try to understand their lifeworlds, not appear as a threat, and to influence the lifeworlds of other interlocutors through dialectic. In this sense, China must avoid any “automatic

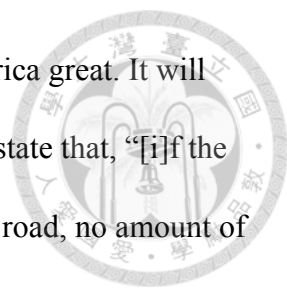
entitlement” that its *Volksgeist* currently demands, to the ascendancy of international hegemon. China must “promote a new content that resonates broadly within international society” (Clark, 2014:338), and must respond to its interlocutors positively, rather than remaining static within its lifeworld.



There are those that claim that Chinese international relations does this already. Yao Zhongqiu, for instance, claims that the construction of a new Chinese international order is based on a policy of “listening to both sides and choosing the middle course” (*zhi liang yong zhong*, 执两用中) (2023:33), and that through *Tianxia*, the autonomy of the Other is respected leading to harmony among nations (*xiehe wanbang* 协和万邦) (2023:35). Yet this seems unlikely while China remains fixed on promoting its interests above promotion of a world order to challenge the status-quo. China has already demonstrated its willingness to go against established rules of the game, hurting other players in the process by violating and threatening to violate territorial sovereignty and contradicting international law. One pertinent example of this is Chinese action in the South China Sea, whereby despite signing up to UNCLOS in 1982, China fails to conform to its regulations, despite the protests of other countries in the region. A United Nations arbitration process found in 2016 “China’s ‘U-shaped line’ claim had no validity under UNCLOS” and that the Spratly Islands could not sustain human habitation (Permanent Court of Arbitration, 2016). China, however, refused to accept the arbitration and continues to build man-made islands in the South China Sea, and attempts to restrict freedom of navigation through the area by foreign vessels.

In 2023, communication with America has deteriorated. When in early February 2023 a Chinese spy balloon appeared over the American mainland, Blinken cancelled his trip to meet with officials in Beijing. Later in March, China’s Foreign Minister Qin

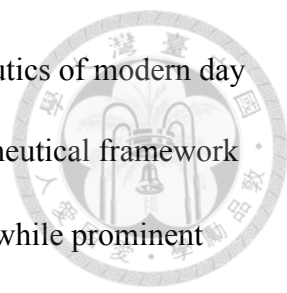




Gang stated that “[c]ontainment and suppression will not make America great. It will not stop the rejuvenation of China” (BBC, 2023a). Qin continued to state that, “[i]f the US does not put on the brakes and continues to roar down the wrong road, no amount of guardrails can stop the derailment and overturning, and it is bound to fall into conflict and confrontation. Who will bear its disastrous consequences?” (BBC, 2023a). In a meeting in March between Xi Jinping and the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, Xi stated that the USA as the head of the West was trying to surround and suppress China, bringing serious issues for its development (Xinhua, 2023).

Under such closed conditions, the ramifications for both the hermeneutic circle and reaching a fusion of horizons are clear. Without dialogue, understanding is limited. During the same period, there has been intensification in the relationship between China and the USA, as well as towards India, the UK and Taiwan. Dialogue takes two to tango, and in order to allow dialectic to take place with China, other nations must be prepared to interact meaningfully, which may mean being influenced and even changed by Chinese conceptualisation of the world.

In addition to recognising the substance of the Chinese lifeworld as different to that of the Other, it should be added that the hermeneutical process of the Chinese understanding also can be conceived of as different to the philosophical hermeneutical approach taken in this thesis, and provides solid ground for further research. The Chinese philosopher Liang Shuming (梁漱溟) in his writings about the difference between East and West delineated a difference in terms of understanding between Chinese and Westerners (Qin, 2018:55), stating that the Chinese had a special outlook that involved being strong in heart and showing strong emotional connection with one



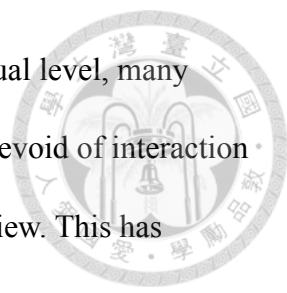
another (Liang, 2009:147).<sup>61</sup> Similarly, the onto-generative hermeneutics of modern day philosopher Chung Cheng-ying (成中英) speak of a different hermeneutical framework for conceptualising Chinese understanding of the world (Ng, 2021), while prominent international relations scholar Qin has already started to build upon this in his relativistic theory of international relations, using *zhongyong* and Daoist dialectics in the formation of the Chinese understanding of the international (Qin, 2018). This provides fruitful thinking for further research using hermeneutical ideas to analyse Chinese thought.

In book 49 (*sangfu sizhi*, 喪服四制) of the *Book of Rites* (*lij*, 禮記), it is stated that “the sky does not have two suns, the land does not have two kings, the country does not have two rulers, and the household only has one demand for respect” (天無二日，土無二王，國無二君，家無二尊) (*sangfu sizhi*, §7). This carries parallels with the inability to form any shared global partnership between American and Chinese lifeworlds, seemingly impossible due to the conflict areas that exist in a globalised world, and the inability for either of these worlds to yield to the other. Although Chinese scholars may argue for the possibility of dual power ownerships within spheres of regional influence (Yang, 2023),<sup>62</sup> within the thinking of Hegel’s slave-master dialectic, only one actor can assume the role of master, while the slave will continue to fight until they achieve recognition. Yielding seems unlikely in this case for either the USA or China.

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<sup>61</sup> Original as: 「中國民族精神在何處？我可以回答，就在富於理性。它表見在兩點上：一為“向上之心強；又一為”相與之情厚“。向上心即是不甘於錯誤的心，知恥的心，嫌惡懶散而喜振作的心，好善服善的心，要求社會生活合理的心」 (Liang, 2009:147).

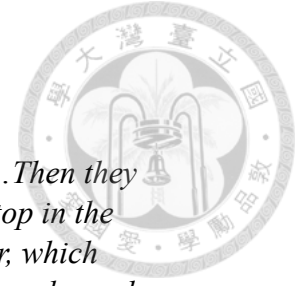
<sup>62</sup> Through which Yang argues, USA and China can build “a community with a shared future for humanity” (*renlei mingyun gongtongti*, 人類命運共同體) in line with President Xi’s vision (Yang, 2023:14).



This is made further difficult to achieve when, on the individual level, many Chinese today live in a lifeworld that remains dominantly Chinese, devoid of interaction with an international Other that significantly challenges their worldview. This has changed immensely over recent decades, however, and China and its people will inexorably continue to be confronted by the Other that exists outside. The success or failure of future interaction with the Other remains based in a hermeneutical framework, and further development of the ideas discussed here can aid scholars in understanding Chinese interaction with the international. Fundamentally, this is an endless task, and requires constant reinterpretation, as the hermeneutical framework explains.

Should China and its interlocutors choose to neither yield nor try to understand one another, both will be driven towards misunderstanding and suspicion of one another. Language of threats from “external forces” and “bullying by the hegemonies” (Zheng, 2023) already contribute to characterising any weaknesses of the Chinese *Volksgeist* as a potential for destruction by the Other. This is most apparent in China-US relations, which continue to evolve dramatically. The danger of this approach is fundamentally a hermeneutical question, as Yuan Yuan Ang has outlined: “the insistence that China is exceptional and opposed to the West in every respect dooms understanding from the beginning. Understanding China requires that we consider both its differences from the West and their similarities” (2020:210). Philosophical hermeneutics provides an explanation for this interaction between two very different *sensus communi*, and as has been explored here, can also provide some reasoning behind China’s actions. In doing so, it has validated the approach taken in this thesis.

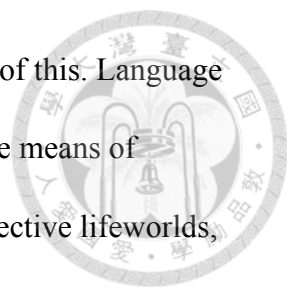
## V. Conclusion



*<sup>1</sup> Now the whole earth had one language and the same words...Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens..."<sup>5</sup> The LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. <sup>6</sup> And the LORD said, "Look, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup> Come, let us go down and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech." <sup>8</sup> So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. <sup>9</sup> Therefore it was called Babel, because there the LORD confused (balal) the language of all the earth, and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.*

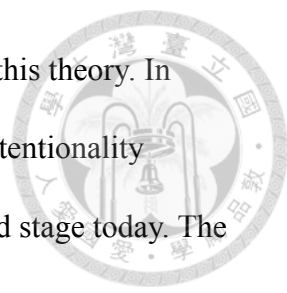
Genesis, 11:1-9

The story of the tower of Babel, depicting the fracturing of a singular linguistic group with a shared intention into different language groups displaying misunderstanding towards one another, is mirrored in cultures across the globe. On the island of Hao in Polynesia, for instance, a similar myth explains how three sons of the mythical character Rata attempted to build a structure into the sky from where they could see the creator god Vatea. On realising this, the god "in anger chased the builders away, broke down the building, and changed their language, so that they spoke diverse tongues" (Williamson, 1933:94). Elsewhere, in a folk tale of the Kaska people of northern British Columbia, people living together with one language became separated following a great flood, and having wandered for a long time, on meeting one another again, could not understand each other (Teit, 1917:442). This preponderance of similar myths throughout world culture demonstrates the universal acknowledgement within human societies of the Other as different through language, and communication as necessary for completion of common purpose.



In the modern world today, the international is still reflective of this. Language remains fundamental to our understanding of the world, providing the means of communication and understanding between the Other and Self's subjective lifeworlds, yet simultaneously creates difference in lifeworld and understanding of, and with, the Other. It is in language that myths and histories are inexorably transferred between ourselves in interaction with one another, and continue to form the basis of our collective identities. Shared understanding within *sensus communi* comes to form sedimented agreements and ideas about the world between individuals, that contribute to formation of *Volksgeists*. The *Volksgeist*, importantly differentiated from the state polity, is the conceptualisation of the international Self that meets the Other, instilled within individuals through tradition forming pre-understanding, and interpretation through experience.

Through examination of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, this process has been shaped and delineated into a theoretical framework that can be replicated by the international relations scholar. International relations cannot avoid confrontation with this nature of the subjective and shared human experience, to which interpretation and language are key constituents. Our experience of the world is fundamentally holistic, with the human experience rejecting a reduction down to select variables or a structural organisation of itself. No more is this felt than in our experience of the social, where the continuous hermeneutic circle and immediacy of human interpretation means that our internal understanding of the world around us is under continual updating. Gadamer outlined this in his philosophical hermeneutics, and it has been the understanding underpinning this thesis's arguments.



China has proved an excellent case study in operationalising this theory. In selecting China as a case study, an up-to-date appraisal of Chinese intentionality towards the world aids understanding of Chinese actions on the world stage today. The analysis of the Chinese *Volksgeist* as conducting dialogue with world explains Chinese actions with the international successfully, and provides insights only gathered from a holistic and hermeneutical perspective. It is not only validation of the theoretical framework presented here, but also a contribution to contemporary China studies in itself, while also demonstrating the limits of what understanding can be garnered for the international relations scholar. In fusing area studies within a larger theoretical framework, a comprehensive route to achieving *Verstehen* has been outlined, and this mode of thinking should continue to be developed within constructivist international relations thinking.

For modern China, the evidence shows an irredentist intention that is in the process of challenging the existing world order and international norms. This is on account of the previous experience of the Chinese *Volksgeist* that is now galvanised with increased intentionality towards the international fuelled recent Chinese development. The difference in lifeworlds between the existing world order built on a Western lifeworld, and the Chinese lifeworld presents an intense difference in the meeting of the Self and Other. If neither China nor those who disagree with the Chinese interpretation of the international are willing to yield to the Other or change the direction of their *Volksgeists*, conflict will likely occur. This is already being evidenced in the bipolarisation of the international community. Only through challenging and changing the lifeworld experience of the Other by engaging in *dialectic*, can the Other's intention

and intentionality be altered through their experience. Some of the most pressing questions of modern international relations rest on this dynamic.

The interpretative nature of this conclusion on Chinese international relations, as well as the lack of statistical and scientific correlation in this thesis as a whole, will have made some readers anxious and doubtful. This is understandable considering the methodological bias of the zeitgeist of social science today. The methodological challenge of hermeneutical reasoning and social science remains unresolved in international relations theory and social sciences as a whole. This, however, should be a tempting proposition for all international relations scholars. In attempting, to answer a synthetic question of how the Chinese interaction with the international constructs itself, a philosophical hermeneutical stance has proved highly effective, presenting a product contributing to *Verstehen* for the reader, and an important challenge to mainstream thinking. Furthermore, in operationalisation of the framework, this thesis has verified the thesis as workable in producing a product that can be replicated to other countries. Not only is there the possibility of replication in other contexts, but there is a raft of additional directions for philosophical hermeneutical thought to pursue in international relations theory. These possibilities are exciting and worthwhile pursuing.

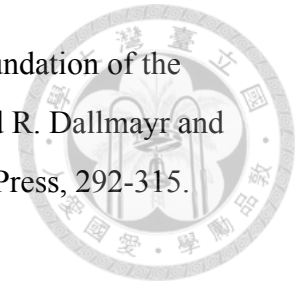
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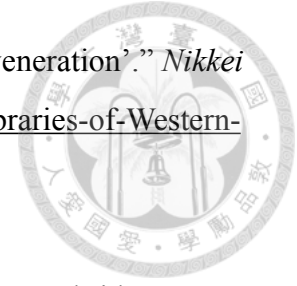
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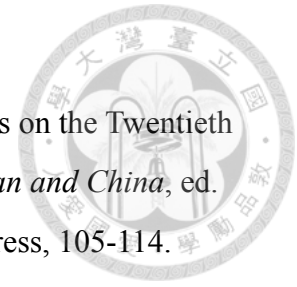
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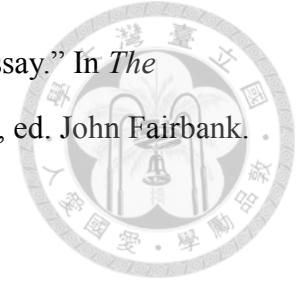
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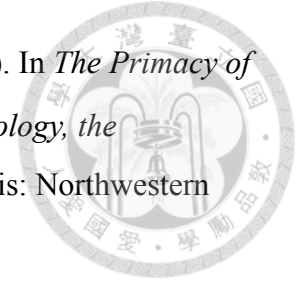
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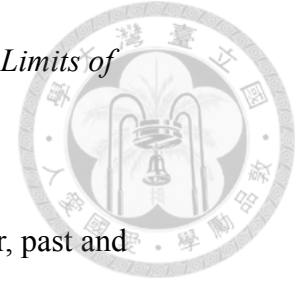
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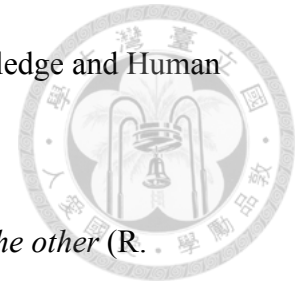
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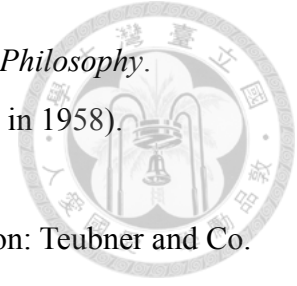
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