

## Article

# Praying Together, Hating Together—Transforming Hostility through the Effective Direction of Religious Communitarization

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**Abstract:** Perceived belonging to a community is one of the most frequently given reasons for the regularity of religious practice. However, it also plays a key role in the practice of religious violence. The paper addresses the relationship between felt belonging, which is established in shared religious experiences, and different expressions of religious hostility. By means of a phenomenological analysis based on the work of Bernhard Waldenfels, the author distinguishes between different modes of religious self-localization. On the one hand, the performative moments of religious practices are reconstructed, unfolding their effect even in regular and less intensive experiences. On the other hand, the intrinsically shared nature of religious assemblies becomes describable, which includes the co-actors in the process of religious self-constitution. Due to the existential and shared nature of this self-constitution, violent affects appear to be group-directed, which particularly encourages the self-sacrificial behavior that seems to distinguish religious violence. This methodological focus on performative communitarization keeps the study also interoperable with a variety of meaning-based theories, promoting phenomenology as a resourceful method for a philosophical division of labor.

**Keywords:** social phenomenology; religious violence; intersubjectivity; shared agency; existential experience; pathos and response; phenomenology of affects; religious communities; theory of assembly; religious practice



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## 1. Introduction

Religious violence is not only one of the most vicious and self-sacrificial manifestations of hostility, it is also tightly bound to a group or community, both idealized and existing, for whom the risk of harm and death is worth taking. Religious communities construct and sustain collective identities and provide definitions for social problems and a symbolic repertoire that legitimizes and gives meaning to communal actions (Kniss and Burns 2004, p. 696). One key experience in which this communal self-understanding constitutes itself is found whilst gatherings and shared religious experiences. Though not exclusively, shared religious experiences situate the self in an *existential* relationship to the world (Harfensteller 2021) and are thus especially prone to self-sacrificing expressions of hostility. The following paper suggests that there are multiple aspects of self-localization that differently influence affects overall, including hostility. The focus is on the *performative* or “non-reflexive” constitution of meaning and its influence on hostility. Thus, forms of interpersonal interaction, architectural spatial division, or the acoustic and visual backdrop are not understood as a medium for conveying meaning, for instance, the conveyance of myths or a specific world order. Rather, the *performative sense-making of belonging* will be examined, which itself creates a specific group affiliation in the way these aspects are experienced and performed. We will also address over the course of the text three main reasons, why this differentiation got little to no attention in phenomenological studies until now: the performative mediation, the mundanity of experience and its intrinsic communality.

Accordingly, we do not directly address the problem of religious violence here. No definition is offered, nor are explicit forms traced or distinguished, let alone explained.

We rather start from the aspect of religious practice that comes across as most innocent: the sense of belonging to a religious community and its binding processes as processes of *religious communitarization*. Two argumentative steps are required in order to comprehensibly tie these processes of communitarization to religious violence. First, it must be shown that there is a subspectrum of communitarization that is primarily established in religious contexts. Then, it must be demonstrated how this communal affiliation influences affective hostility. It is not the intention here to show that religious communitarization necessarily results in violence. Even if there is no area of life that is free from the possibility of violence, it is the author's humble belief that religious group membership involves far more desirable affects than the consequences for the expression of hostility discussed in this paper. However, these are not exclusively desirable affects; as a consequence, we try to bring the influence of religious communitarization on hostility out of the *shadows of religious experience*.

Being concerned with the *performative modification of hostility* in shared religious experiences, the interaction between social actors as well as the setting and ambiance of religious gatherings will be focused on.<sup>1</sup> Under the umbrella term of communitarization the social meaning of the self and its relation to other believers and to the world in its mediation will be the predominant interest of this paper. For this investigation of hostility, we focus on an intrinsic shift of perspective that takes place in the processes of religious communitarization, *resulting in hostile affects that emerge as group directed*. Based on the self-localization, this shift comes into effect long before any "rational" or "anti-rational" justification like counter-violence, clashing worldviews or ethics are applied and even before any explicit other can appear, that seemingly triggers the affective rivalry or the hostile act (see Girard 1986, 2005; Ricoeur 1999, 2010; Goplen and Plant 2015; Johnson et al. 2012).<sup>2</sup> It is closely connected to Kippenbergs' thesis that the *framing of the situation* influences the common script of action chosen, including hostile and violent acts (Kippenberg 2011).<sup>3</sup> However, it also goes beyond his inquiry and weakens the links between the radicality of an expressed opinion of social actors and the radicality of their choice of action, a phenomenon that in psychological investigations of radicalization results in models considering the two areas separate from each other (see McCauley and Moskalenko 2017). Needless to say, narratives and myths play an essential role when it comes to religious self-understanding and belonging to a group. Nevertheless, we focus here on the inherent meaning that emerges in the interaction of religious community membership. This approach has been chosen not because we think it would be worthless to investigate narratives and myths, the opposite is true. So many more capable scholars have devoted themselves to this that we do not presume to add to it. This paper, which focuses on performative communitarization, is, therefore, to be understood in terms of a philosophical division of labor. The aim of this paper is thus twofold: Firstly developing a broad framework for categorizing religious belonging in its *performativity* and secondly demonstrating how that affiliation relates to the experience of threats and the expression of hostility.

So we try to find a common denominator of hostility based on the affective belonging to a religious community, even before something like a shared *sacred value* takes effect.<sup>4</sup> Though this investigation is still anchored in the context of meaning, it is not shared meaning in the sense of an ideology or narrative. It is the meaning of belonging for the individual actor that constitutes itself in shared experiences. However, it should not be concluded that religious communitarization is the sole cause for the extreme forms of religious violence. This paper is also meant to be additive to the investigations of actual hostile acts, their intrinsic rationality and the connection to scripture and society. Through the eidetic variation of religious communitarization, a spectrum of self-location can be demonstrated, that surely has an influence but could never be the single cause. It manifests as the multifactorial interconnection between the social sphere of religion and the expressions of religious violence, neither being reducible to the other.

To accomplish the tracing of *effective directionality*, two parallel aspects of self-constitution in religious experience will be distinguished. The broad structure is based on Bernhard

Waldenfels' distinction between pathos and response as well as their intersocial variation—*ko-pathos* and *ko-response* (see Waldenfels 2015) (2).<sup>5</sup> After we outline the diastatic relationship between these aspects of experience, their impact on self-constitution in communal religious experiences will be developed. Focusing first on the pathic, the subject finds itself on a spectrum in between an *inclusion* in or *exclusion* from the gifted interconnection of existence. This is based on the specific relationship of self-givenness (Steinbock 2009) and paralleled world-givenness (3). For the self-justification and resilience of religious hostility and violence, these pathic aspects of shared religious experience would be the primary focus of inquiry, and they often are, and rightly so, especially in hermeneutical-heavy approaches and investigations of the foundational source of religious affects (Ricoeur 1999; Staudigl 2016). However, an often-overlooked aspect lies in the *effective direction* of this relationship between the self and the world, which is predominantly shaped by performative processes of communitarization (4). We find ourselves blindsided by our pathic existential localization in a religious experience, but our relation to the world follows the direction of our “affective” intentionality, resulting in an *internalized* or *externalized* directedness. I hypothesize that the effective direction of communal affects like threat, but also familiarity or warmth, is mirrored by this self-constitutional directedness of communitarization. Becoming and being part of a community has a great impact on how hostility is experienced and is an essential component of the affective horizon of religious violence.

## 2. Pathos and Response

In the context of religious experience, we can broadly differentiate between two phenomenologically significant time distinctions. The diastasis between pathos and response presented over the next pages is a good candidate for a third. First, *protention*, *retention* and *urimpression* mark the broadest and well-known distinction, temporally encapsulating the flow of the lived presence and enabling recollection and expectation (Husserl 1966). However, their structure and role do not really change in communal religious experiences. The second prominent temporal distinction is found in the correlation between a call or appeal—confronting oneself with the gift of existential givenness by the absolute other—and the following “[...] call for response in terms of symbolic appresentation and interpretation” (Staudigl 2016, p. 767). This approach leads to highly sophisticated hermeneutical investigations regarding a narrative identity but leaves near to no room for the communal aspect of the experience itself. The strong emphasis on the *what* of pathic exposure and the following interpretation leaves a blind spot for the *with whom* of being addressed, the action is already confined to a single actor.

With the interconnected nature of *pathos* and *response* based on Bernhard Waldenfels as the central phenomenological differentiation of this analysis, the missing communal aspect of religious experiences can be grasped, even if a less sophisticated development of identity compared to more hermeneutical approaches is to be expected.

Pathos and response—as constitutional aspects of experience—never occur alone: the pathos—as the state of “being overwhelmed” in a religious experience—only becomes accessible in the response. The response, on the other hand, needs pathos as its “reason”. In the communal response within a religious experience, the pathic localization constitutes itself as shared and identical (Waldenfels 2015, p. 270).

Yet how can this peculiar separation, this *diastasis*, be conceptualized? Pathos and response, according to Waldenfels, are mutually temporally displaced, the pathos—as being struck—is always already initiated, comes too early, surprises, overwhelms and is still prior to the determination of a “what” by which one is struck. The response—as the means of reacting—is, on the other hand, delayed, lagging behind, always already too late (Waldenfels 2009, 145ff; Waldenfels 2015, p. 83). Through the given response the pathos only becomes accessible and determinable “retrospectively”. Pathos, then, is neither sense data nor content of experience, however accessible, nor a determinable reason for it. For example, the “call of the absolute other” is in its hermeneutical accessibility already the result of a diastatic constitution. Pathos just describes the “demand” of an experience

as *affectively being addressed*, the pre-intentional part of an emerging experience. This diastasis, this mutual constitutional relation based on a simultaneous temporal separation, is described by Waldenfels as follows:

“What separates are neither real pieces that appear externally separate, nor ideal or structural moments that are already internally connected beforehand and are only distinguished afterwards. Diastasis’ denotes a process of differentiation in which that which is differentiated first emerges”.

(Waldenfels 1994, p. 335, translated by the author)

So, as far as we understand Waldenfels accurately, pathos and response are mainly constitutional aspects of experience, but they share an intrinsic temporal relation in their constitutional interaction. Thus, pathos and response are methodically closer connected to intentionality than to the specific subjective capacities of protention and retention.

He underlines this constitutional aspect for the self on multiple occasions, recurring on the pathic character of a happening or *Widerfahrnis* (i.a. Waldenfels 2015, 81f). With the *Widerfahrnis* he emphasizes the form of a counter-experience, as something that goes against our own plans and expectations. The self is here just in the plural dative or accusative, in the form of a me or my that is part of a we to whom something happens (Waldenfels 2015, p. 94). It constitutes itself in the “real” nominative by responding, in the transition from patient to the respondent the I will appear. And it is the same with the world, it constitutes itself from the wherefrom to the whereupon one is responding to.

This equiprimordiality of pathos and response can be shown quite clearly in liminal religious experiences: shock induced paralysis or being struck with awe go back to a radical pathic-otherness (Waldenfels 1997, p. 78; Waldenfels 1999, p. 185), which only becomes accessible in its radicality through the responsive impossibility of action (Waldenfels 2015, p. 121).<sup>6</sup> Though not being shared intrinsically, we can show shared aspects of experience in the pathic being addressed and the responsive answer. Many of our examples are characterized by coordinated and co-creative behavior that confronts the *Widerfahrnis* as a shared encounter. The extent to which pathos and response can be a shared experience, a shared being addressed and responding in co-pathos and co-responding, is discussed in more detail in Section 3c. Additionally, even if the terminology may suggest it, pathos should not be understood as a passive part of the experience, and response should not be understood as an active or creative part of the experience. The interdependence of “active” and “passive” aspects in the emergence of meaning is the very reason Bernhard Waldenfels provides the methodological foundation here. The constitution of meaning that can be revealed by the pathos-response diastasis is framed by the ineluctability of pathos and the retardation of response. Meeting the inescapability of this interdependence is the essential achievement of the pathos-response diastasis for this inquiry. It will allow us to trace complex interactions and determine the influence of synchronized and coordinated interactions. Moreover, we will be able to map variations and transitions among our circumscribed types of religious communitarization and leave open space for more complex forms of religious experience to account for the diversity of religious communities. Fortunately, by focusing on hostility, we have chosen a constraint that leaves the complexity of the situation manageable. The countless positive effects of communalization would certainly go beyond the scope of such an investigation. With the methodological foundation we have elaborated on so far, it is possible for us to describe situations of communitarization without explicitly addressing the shared content of meaning. If we were concerned with a more general form of communitarization, Waldenfels is straightforward:

“Communitization takes place in the transition from the whereof of pathos to the whereupon of response, in the transformation of affects into meaning, form, structure, type and habitus. This transformation is not reduced to common results that everyone acquires for themselves; rather, it is realised in a process of joint shaping and structuring, in the form of mutual habituation and cohabitation. (...) The site of this performative commonality is a pre-objective and pre-subjective field of experience (, ...)”.

(Waldenfels 2015, p. 95, translated by the author)

However, how this mutual cohabitation and structuring is realized in *religious* experiences is left for us to demonstrate.

### 3. Excluded and Included Givenness in the Oneness of Creation

By putting the big question of the otherness of the absolute other or its transcendence aside, we are left to at least outline why the pathos of religious experience is characterized as an existential localization as we stated in the beginning. With such a big premise, an un-phenomenological shortcut is needed. Looking with Emil Durkheim at the themes of religious rituals and cultural products and their function for the social actor, we can make that claim of an existential localization at least plausible: with creation myths, religions provide answers to one's own existential origin, with the problematization of the hereafter they respond to the inevitability of death, and with guidance for our ethical behavior they give fundamental meaning to the time of lived presence in between (Durkheim 1981, p. 180). Thus, not every arbitrary existential experience is a religious experience. The discernable meaning of existence seems to play an integral part in the categorization as a religious experience, even if it withstands a cognitive or reflexive grasp: it foremost feels like something that has a meaning for our existential place in the world. Recurring on action theory and thus on the habituality of meaning, as the means and orientation for action-taking in the world, a shared existential localization seems to be quite a good fit for religious communitization. Even with this unphenomenological detour, we are surprisingly close to Husserl, who encapsulates the existential border crossing by a theme of totality: “Mythical-religious attitude now consists in the fact that the world as totality becomes thematic, and in fact practically thematic” (Husserl 1954, 330f, translated by the author).

This concept of existential localization can also be understood as a narrowing to fellowship in confrontation with the religious province of meaning (Barber 2017; Schütz 1945). The shared religious knowledge can thus be understood as a typification system answering the temporally orientated questions concerned with the meaning of existence, questions that withstand the everyday attitude. Following Michael Barber, the transition to the religious province of meaning is characterized by a perspective shift to a transcendent other, which mitigates the fundamental fear of dying by giving meaning to action in the *Wirkwelt*, the working life (Barber 2017, p. 113). Be it the feeling of being thrown into the world or the fear of a meaningless death: from the specific existential relationship between self and world, action in everyday life is given meaning beyond the actual practical goals.

Religion as a province of meaning also builds a promising bridge to understand religious hostility out of an everyday attitude after a successful religious communitization. Provinces of meaning, as systems of appresentation, are able to make transcendent realms accessible to everyday human activity and to integrate them into the everyday lifeworld (Srubar 1988, p. 270). They overlap the elements of the everyday world and make them appear in a new context. The religious province of meaning can therefore be understood as a meaning-authority for conclusions (Srubar 1988, p. 247) concerned with existential problems, which the social actor can fall back on in everyday life without having a religious experience per se.

And yet both approaches, the Durkheimian as well as the Schutzian, give the impression that there is something that claims to be totality. For a more hermeneutical approach, this does not pose a problem, as the metaphysical assumptions remain in the methodological brackets and thus function as description and raw material for the phenomenological



analysis. Even if the religious pathos is understood more generally and is determined, for example, by the omnipotence of a creator God and the creatureliness of one's own existence, this problem between phenomenology and metaphysics would not arise. For our interest in the meaning inscribed in the experience of interaction and atmosphere itself, however, such metaphysical descriptions quickly break through the boundary between experiential content and methodological presupposition. Being concerned with revealing the constitutional acts instead of the results, we hope to adhere to Ilja Srubars proposal of avoiding metaphysical assertions into phenomenology (Srubar 2020, p. 477), an accusation that has been leveled against quite a few of the contemporary authors on which this inquiry is based on (Tuckett 2019). In following Bernhard Waldenfels, the otherness or strangeness can and must be qualified without a metaphysical backdrop as its "reason". The constitutional aspect is dependent on a *being addressed* from outside of any order or system of thought, including metaphysics. The analogous relation to intentionality is also reflected in the methodological incorporation; pathos and response should be understood as subjective capacities. The following descriptions insinuating metaphysics are thus thought of as examples of interpretation to tackle the pathic self and world givenness, not as preconditions.

Being mainly interested in the communitarizational aspects of religious experience, we focus on the existential localization of the self and other believers in the world and use the otherness of the religious pathos or the affective horizon of the setting as correlations and as aspects that help to inform this localization. If our understanding of the constitutional aspect of the pathos-response diastasis is correct, then any inclination of causality on this level should be an ontological misconception: the absolute other, the other believers, the self and the world emerge as differentiated in the process of diastatical differentiation. So, any correlative conclusion is an acceptable methodological approach for the eidetic variations that follow.

Putting these concerns aside, let us start with what strikes us first, the religious pathos.<sup>7</sup> The interpretational variation we can find in the philosophy of religion, including phenomenology, are a treasure-trove for this investigation. Following them, there seem to be two diametrically opposed places where the self finds itself. I want to propose that the felt *absolute* or *total givenness*—often described in the religious myth of creation—can be understood as a localization that situates the self and the world in a context of the one-ness of that givenness.<sup>8</sup>

**3. (a) Exclusion.** One possible pathic self-localization is being struck as *excluded* from the one-ness of creation or givenness, correlating with a "frightening" numinous (Otto 1991, p. 83). Philosophical analyses based on the *abyss* or the *groundless ground* (Ricoeur 2010)<sup>9</sup> are definitely describing exclusionary self-localizations. The world appears in this context as gifted as a totality, and the self and its consciousness appear separated from that totality. This culminates in an intensely felt difference between the sacred and the profane. On the affective side, pathic compulsions for hiding or fortification seem to be paradigmatic here. If we look at different religious experiences, shared habituation of performative protection like inward-directed hugging, bowing or pleading prayer are quite prominent. However, the scenery of religious gatherings plays its part as well, defensive architecture and a distinctively different sacred ground compared to the outside can lead to a felt disjunction between self and world in their existential givenness, especially if there is a sacred area not inhabited by the group, like a shrine, and when objects in this area are prohibited to contact. This goes as far as the prohibition of our gaze, which endangers the sacred order that we are not a part of (Durkheim 1981, p. 411).

**3. (b) Inclusion.** On the other hand, the self can be "mightily" given (Otto 1991, p. 83) by the numinous as an included part of one-ness of existence, correlating with interpretations of vocation or self-sanctity. Here the self-consciousness of the believer is part of the given totality, with a correlating *good-in-it-self-for-me* that Anthony Steinbock coins as a *given-givenness* (Steinbock 2009, p. 195). Though focusing on the uniqueness of the social actor, the expression of such a given vocation is still interlaced with the other individuals

of a shared religious experience. Pathic compulsions for group expression and extension in everyday life are the result. On the side of the religious gathering, dancing, holy mimicry or group ecstasy are forms of interactions that are good candidates for interactive expressions of pathic inclusion with enough room for an explicit expression of the self. Especially individual responsibilities in the execution of a ritual “simulate” the personal role in a shared givenness. Open and breathing architecture underline this even further, as a result opening up and expanding the sacred space and its content. If the place of the gathering is only temporarily consecrated, and otherwise a profane or “worldly” place, so much the better.

Even if we keep inclusion and exclusion descriptively apart for a manageable illustration, we should think about them more as two ends on a graph or spectrum, rather than rigid types. Add to this the fact that they are graphs for a single or paradigmatic experience, with the typical social actor being influenced by a variety of different rituals, liturgies, and forms of interaction. Moreover, the relation to the totality or one-ness of creation is not the only religious pathos, not even in the context of communitarization. However, we have chosen this characterization because the common world itself becomes thematic in this existential givenness, as something that includes the other believer and is available to all of us in its totality and oneness. Both the fundamental claim and the inherent participation make the relationship between inclusion and exclusion a promising starting point.

At this point, it seems to be quite obvious that most of the described interactions between the believers are, in a common sense, shared and habitative reactions, they are some sort of shared responsorium and not pathic in a common sense. However, as stated before, there is not first a pathos and after that a response, they are constitutional equiprimordial. A descriptive account needs to follow the same rule, the diastasis envelopes itself, getting access to the pathos through the response. Thus, the communal aspects can be grasped. The “co” in co-pathos describes a with, a felt co-presence and sharing of the “pathic” exposure to that givenness. This sharing of inclusion or exclusion becomes first accessible through the shared response, but there is more than an affirmative or mirroring interaction and even more than the *mutual tuning-in relations* by sharing a lived presence (Schütz 1951, p. 79):

**3. (c) Shared character.** In the same way as the lifeworld presents itself to me as an index and a world for us (Husserl 1954, pp. 111, 175, 188ff.), we can find aspects of experience that are intrinsically shared. The spatial aspects of sound, smell and light are peak contenders for that (Waldenfels 2015, p. 100), and even taste and pressure can be experienced as intrinsically shared. They are co-pathic in the sense that they imply the affection of others in their spatial extension. Unlike thoughts and ideas, by which we are privately addressed, smell and sound, as well as visibility, are naturally attributed to others. With Merleau-Ponty, we can speak here of an intermediate corporeality of experience (Merleau-Ponty 1966). We discover the world not only through our own bodies in private confrontation. The world is realized among us in mutual exposure and shared physical action. Not surprisingly, these moments are quite emphasized in religious gatherings, be it room-filling incense clouds and colored or geometrically structured light-rays. Additionally, even the auditory aspects play their part in a religious encompassing “from all sides of us all” through either a diligent sound-design of the architecture, communal choral singing or by shared auditory reactions to a signal, as a “speaking in one tongue and voice”.<sup>10</sup> Singing together also incorporates an “active” part that happens to us in the form of a shared pathos. It is not only a symbolization of the institution as a co-active group, it also envelops itself as an expression of a collective (Roy 2010, p. 188) in us, an expression preceding any possible individual fragmentation. If we remember the pathic character as leaning towards a happening or *Widerfahrnis*, this givenness of self happens to the social actor, and with her to all believers who share the space that the experience claims. Additionally, by collectively reacting in multiple ways, such as synchronized devoted bowing, ecstatic singing or a highly choreographed performance, *we constitute that pathic givenness as only accessible through communal action*. It is only graspable as shared in the co-affective character

of spatial encompassing and the bodily interactions we witness and experience. At the same time, this affective topography resists as much a clear attribution of reason and consequence as it does a reduction to an affective surplus of the co, which is attached to the experienced thing or is added to the experience as a conclusion.

As with the individual, the pathos in the common is only accessible in the corresponding response. It is precisely the immediate and bodily reaction that makes it possible to grasp the commonality of a pathos. Even different degrees of shared and mutual contagion and repulsion can be recognized and realized. A mutual seeing and hearing, as well as a mutual distancing, can only be actualized in a common direction of sight and sound, adopted together (Waldenfels 2015, p. 104). The gaze of the others can serve as a reference or orientation, or grow into a disruptive factor for the interaction. Shared laughter and crying as well as fright and astonishment are not only contagious but in many cases need the with or co- of the others in their pathic envelopment. They indicate a voluntary or involuntary alignment of the experienced space or, in the absence of sympathy, open a rift between the actors. As with the “private” pathos and response, co-pathos and co-response bring each other into being and do not occur in succession. In everyday life, these co-responses allow for a great deal of leeway and serve as an essential clue to a shared or divided world. In religious gatherings, however, co-response is more guided, promoting successful communitarization.

If we couple that with the existential dimension of that shared self- and world-givenness, the communal aspect becomes even stronger, thus being prone to rationalizational and explanatory results. An experience of existential world-givenness encompasses other believers by necessity, so there is even a straight “rational” argumentation to group-givenness by a coaffective existential givenness. Not surprisingly, the Abrahamic religions make that group-givenness quite explicit in their religious narratives. However, even in extremes on the other side of the spectrum, like zen-Buddhist communal sitting meditation or *zazen*, we can find strong co-pathic aspects. The accomplished vacancy or emptiness encompasses the other practitioners as well. They take part as co-present in two forms, as parallel practicing and as a to-be-detached, guiding the detachment from the own self. They are objects, co-subjects and models for detachment, the “meditative” vacancy or emptiness is shared on multiple levels and especially in the form of a personal inter-relationship, as something experienced side by side. This can be understood as a *ritual embodiment and enactment of Buddhahood itself* (van der Braak 2015, p. 165), a shared mimesis, bringing *zazen* closer to a shared ritual performance than parallel meditation.

After that short investigation of the shared character and the two extensions of pathic self-givenness, we have to take a step back. We need to tackle the relatability of our investigation for the everyday social actors who are prone to act hostile in the name of the religious community. We do not want to encompass only the extreme forms of horrendous violent acts against non-believers.

**3. (d) Mundanity.** In good continental fashion, most of our examples seem quite extreme and not applicable to our religiously hostile uncle that we only meet at the annual family gathering. Relying on a religio-sociological shortcut again, the mundanity of the religious gatherings can be compensated by their reoccurrence, and thus revitalizing the awareness the group has of itself (Durkheim 1981, 471f.). Even though a striking epiphany is a quite tempting phenomenological recourse, clearly shown in the prominent use of mystic experiences in the phenomenology of religion, this self-givenness can also be constituted over time, as a growing intuition, being facilitated every time believers come together. Our hostile uncle is not a mystic, but he attends every Sunday mass—or respectively Monday demonstration here in Germany and Austria—and identifies highly with his community. The habitual and performative aspects we focus on, aspects of interaction and ambiance, pile up emotionally and do not need to conclude in an accessible epiphany.

Additionally, there is a multitude of other aspects besides the singular gathering. Preparing the place of faith, training the coordination for a special event, having explicit communal components such as rites of passage... all these extraordinary modes of gather-



ings are influencing the process of religious communitarization and are worth their own investigation. However, they all share, as far as we can tell, the basic diastatic distinction of self-giveness either as included or as excluded outlined till now.

With this first proposal for pathic self-location in the context of the oneness of existence, we have delimited the situatedness of the religious actor. In the response, we now clarify possible affective directions of flow between self and world that this situation may already imply. Although they modify a variety of modes of experience, for the sake of the topic we limit ourselves to the flow of hostile affects.

One last word of caution: The following distinction between the different modes of self- and world-giveness and the effective direction of that givenness is not mutually exclusive. Either the individual by itself or the community in its gatherings can be the result of a multitude of communitarizational constitutions. This lack of a clear-cut and exclusive typification for the single subject is hopefully mitigated by the differentiation and their descriptive value. The interconnections between religious communitarization and their effects on expressions of hostility and self-sacrifice are vast, this investigation can only give one facet of a much bigger picture. The four variants that this description amounts to are thus limited and circumscribed types of religious communitarization. They are borderstones of a religious subsphere of communitarization, chosen primarily to capture the influence of belonging on religious violence and to do justice to the great diversity of religious hostility. Based on performative processes, they describe the influence not instead of, but in addition to, the influence of scriptures, myths, or types of sacred world orders. However, one advantage of the consideration can already be outlined. It allows us to track the development of the community in the context of the given “secular” world, thus informing explanations of extreme forms of violence like suicide attacks. An insightful distinction is given by Michel Wieviorka, tightly binding the violent act to the relation between subject, community and the world. He distinguishes between the feeling of the coming end of the community, the active defense as a worthy sacrifice or a reaction to the removal from their community, often becoming the object of hostility itself (Wieviorka 2009, p. 111). Belonging is not just a single emotional background of the *plethora of meaning* underlying religious violence, it plays an integral part in what he calls hyper-subjection (Wieviorka 2009, p. 152) and its relation to other social actors, be it benevolence, fear or blind hate.

#### 4. Externalized and Internalized Existential Communitarization

I want to suggest in the following last part of the paper that the direction of the relationship between self and world is determined by the performative response and settles with that the *intentional object that initiates the dependence* and thus the direction for hostility.

*Initial object of affective dependency* seems to be a rather unusual expression, so a short terminological distinction is warranted. Even though Waldenfels himself uses pathos and affect interchangeably, I would like to argue for a conceptual distinction that is applicable to our everyday use and simplifies interdisciplinary collaboration. The constitutional aspect of pathos is not as nearly as predominant in the term affect, and most of the time affect is used as a causal “it”, as a “felt” reason that leads to some specific action. Religious pathos, on the other hand, provides two intentional objects in our limited account of communization. In their givenness, the self and the totality of the world appear connected in an intentional state, as the self that is “included” or “excluded”. Following on from this, we suggest that an affective movement between the self and the world is revealed in the response, clarifying the foundational claim through a directedness that emanates from either the self or the world. Although this is highly simplified, we can think of this dependence in terms of attention, with either the world or the self receiving the *initial* attention and being affectively directed toward the other. They present themselves in terms of their dependence. In the context of an existential givenness, the *initial object* of the entire intentional state clarifies this interdependency. With this terminological specification, we aim at a descriptive added value and not at a fundamental extension of the phenomenological method. Therefore, the

*initial object of affective dependency* is rather an auxiliary term, which does not reach beyond a manageable description of our examples.

So, the response clarifies the relationship between self and world in terms of their interdependence, in terms of their mutual influence on each other's realization. It is not surprising that most religions have quite complex interdependencies between the self and the world, a lot of experienced givenness needs to accumulate to form a cohesive religious narrative. Focusing on the experienced givenness, the performative aspects of religious gathering seem to split into two directions as well, being *externalized* or *internalized*. However, both can be understood as an interpretation of the pathic situation, as far as the self contextualizes its response. This directionality bears a more active component, not as an act itself, but as *taking a point of view* to grasp the pathos and is thus integral for the religious identity. Understanding hostility as a response to threat and defense, even through the pathic aspects of experience alone, leads to religious identity as the fulcrum of religious violence (Staudigl 2016, p. 766). Wholeheartedly agreeing with that assumption, we want to broaden the frame of reference for religious identity as communal identity with a specific directedness of affects, that lead the excess of the foundation (Ricoeur 2010) in a specific direction.

**4. (a) Externalized givenness.** If the givenness “starts” with the self as its initial object and is *externalized*, the orientation of action will have an initiating quality. At a descriptive level of the gathering, outwardly directed or individually initiated interactions seem to be paradigmatic. The self is directed outwards in its foundational direction. Be it the habituation of spontaneous self-expression, gatherings in public as well as individualized role-taking in ritualized interactions. Every active part that presents itself as a decision is underlining an externalized response, be it a conscious preparation for the religious experience like washing, the lighting of candles, active approaches towards other believers (and non-believers) or ecstatic dancing. This initiating quality even affects the community itself: the shared givenness can be realized in individual action that is explicitly presented as a decision for the faith and the community, most commonly by a creed or rite of passage. It can even be explicit in the defense of the community, like confronting blasphemy or martyrism as part of the fulfillment of belonging. Even further, the community itself can project itself into the seemingly secular world, in the Abrahamic context mostly by acts of solidarity with the poor and being a model citizen in interpersonal interactions, building social capital for the community as its own social actor (see Kippenberg 2013). The rationalization of religion as a needed foundation for moral principles is most likely related to this externalized communitarization as well.

Going one step back to our pathic distinction, an *externalized inclusion* in the oneness of creation constitutes the self and its affects as an active part of the realization of this oneness from within. An *externalized exclusion* on the other side constitutes the self and its affects as either reason for the exclusion and prompt an overcoming, or as a way of remedying and reacquiring a primordial oneness.

These externalized modes of givenness seem to be quite prominent in the context of extremely violent acts. The self as the initial object and a directedness outwards into the world can lead to a multitude of “radical” expressions that need just a minimal communal aspect on the horizon (even if it is often explicit in letters of confession). As excluded from the givenness, they result in an act of active repentance and projected self-mortification. Based on a pathic inclusion, the externalization results in a working of God through me as hostile emotion, as a cleansing of the sacred oneness or as a vocation of the defense of the holy. Here, the religious actor and the community show a rather untypical relationship to agency and the enabling of action. The group is not a condition for action in the strict sense, it is rather the individual action itself that develops the common space of action. This reveals an intriguing analogy to political activists, who underlie their actions with a similar enabling relationship for the community. This context between group membership and agency seems to depend significantly on the performative aspect of religious practice. A further inquiry could provide a point of reference to describe the differences in agency

among faith groups that share the content of faith, sacred scripture and mediated myth. Since we have dealt here with hostility as only a small sub-area of religious affect, especially the investigation of charity, hospitality, or reverence leaves much to be hoped for in a further analysis of performative modification of affect.

**4. (b) Internalized givenness.** If the experienced givenness has the world as its initial object and is *internalized*, modes of “passive” self-understanding emerge and the role of the community weighs much higher. At the level of the gathering, shared prayer and highly synchronized interactions like singing and clapping are paradigmatic, as well as shared responses to a given signal. To be clear, the self is not necessarily directed inwards, but the *constitutional dependency* has its origin in the world and is directed at the self. Here the differentiation between effective directedness of affects and the expression itself becomes quite important. This internalized self-constitution can be highly expressive in its response, as a form of felt exposure we can loudly celebrate or lament the pathic gift of included or excluded givenness.

In our shared reaction and the felt passivity, be it the inclusion in or exclusion from the oneness of existence, good and bad affects appear as group directed. This is validated by focusing on the co-presence and the intrinsically shared spatial aspects over the course of a religious experience. If we perform in synchronicity, be it more expressive gospel-singing or bowing and praying, or even the desacralized sitting together, the existential givenness itself appears as something that happens to all of us. The self does not appear as grouped together with others, it constitutes itself as just one individualization of an intrinsically shared existential givenness. Following the directionality in its constitutional dependence, a religious community is first constituted before a stand-alone religious self emerges.

Additionally, following the existential givenness, even hostile affects share this initial object and directedness of passivity. Being excluded from the oneness of creation, internalized hostile affects appear as “being tested”, up to an interpretation of punishment by sinful thoughts or feelings of inadequacy. If we internalize a given inclusion, hostile affects are experienced as instrumental, and the self and the group are instruments in god’s hand. Internalization becomes part of their very being, which goes back to a previous act of creation or an underlying structure of the unfolding of the world, not an independent expression. Thus, they underline emerging hostile affects with a group motive, be it the exclusion or eradication of something that threatens not me alone, but the group in its existential foundation as a whole, or a punishment that maintains and strengthens the common space of action and the essential unity of the group. Within an internalized communitarization, the community enables the individual agency by providing a common space for action. If the initial object of religious givenness is the world, whether in our exclusion or inclusion, and religious practice encounters this internalizing movement in shared and concerted action, then this shared space of agency emerges as a precondition for individual expression. Not only does the religious group enable agency, but affective resistances to and disruptions of agency are constituted to relate first to the group and only subsequently to me as part of the group. Thus, a perceived resistance or threat does not relate to me as an individual, but to the community as the actual enabling condition of the action. Consequently, the sustenance of the group and the common possibility of action are given a higher weight in internalized communalization than the sustenance of the individual, which increases the willingness for self-sacrificial behavior. If the religious actor responds to felt resistance with hostile affects, then the interdependence between group membership and agency is also reflected in the affective direction, resulting in an increased possibility of self-sacrificing violence. They are affects that are directed towards the group through religious communitarization.

Certainly, the reasons for hostile affects are many-sided, and religious practice also influences in quite a few cases that they will not be pursued. Should they nevertheless occur, then the respective form of religious communitarization has a considerable influence on their appearance. Hostile acts, up to violence and revenge, are genuine forms of religious violence, if religious communitarization has a substantial influence on the way they realize

themselves. This is also the reason why, at the beginning of the study, we spoke of a modification or expression of hostile affects and left out the search for the actual reasons or definition of religious violence. Not the source of religious violence, but the influence of religious affiliation on violence has been the subject of the study.

## 5. Conclusions

*Through the intrinsically shared nature of the internalized direction of communitarization, hostile affects emerge as group-directed, which can result in highly self-sacrificial behavior.* Moreover, the potential number of affected social actors is much higher, resulting in an overall atmosphere of hostility for out-group members that are perceived as factors of resistance. Though not prone to the most vicious reactions by itself, internalized religious communitarization plays a major role in everyday religious hostility and has a reinforcing impact on externalized self-constitution, furthering religious extremism. Here it becomes particularly clear that we did not describe personal traits that are engrained during shared religious experiences or that are mutually exclusive. With this classification of religious communitarization, we distinguish constitutional processes of group belonging which can relate to each other within one's personal biography. One last time, however, we want to highlight the following. Even though we have descriptively distinguished inclusion and exclusion, as well as externalization and internalization, we should not view them as rigid types, but as border stones for a sub-spectrum of communitarization. Moreover, their format is chosen for the specific context of religious communitarization and violence. The characterization as *Widerfahrnisse* makes it clear that we can never fully do justice to the pathic demands within religious experiences even through a performative understanding, and that these will ultimately always resist full understanding. They are *Widerfahrnisse* in a literal sense, happenings that shape us and our view of the world in their experienced resistance.

Let us now briefly conclude what our investigation has brought forth. The *existential givenness as excluded or included* explains the resilience and self-justification of religious violence, but the *performatively primed effective directionality* of affects of that givenness plays a highly overlooked role in the analysis of religious hostility and its manifestations. Especially on the societal and structural level of religious hostility and violence, this aspect seems quite promising as an overall field that is historically not a strong point of phenomenological inquiry. This investigation concerned with the *performatively primed directedness* of self-givenness could be a foundation for a better understanding of religious practices and their relevance, up to a descriptive method that could predict and inform not just the self-understanding of communities, but their transformation and affective expressions. Although such an exercise can never result in an exhaustive explanation of religious agency, it could prove to be a valuable analytical tool in its own right.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Besides the focus on communitarizational processes, there are many interconnected avenues of investigation for a broader analysis of shared religious experiences in its performativity and hostility. Especially the modification of attitudes and personality traits like "risk tolerance", "thrill seeking" up to a self-understanding as an "moral crusader" (concerning so-called ISIS and social media see (Awan 2017, p. 147), sensation seeking as a personality trait see (Nussio 2020)) seem quite closely connected, though both moments can be thought of as subsequent to the communitarizational process itself.
- <sup>2</sup> For an investigation of the rationality or a-rationality concerning religious violence, see (Staudigl 2016).
- <sup>3</sup> Though not explicit, the effective direction of threat is a noticeable aspect in his analysis, from Jonestown, the Middle East Conflict up to the US war against Islamic Networks.
- <sup>4</sup> On the relationship between ritual performance, experienced danger to the self-group, and sacred values see (Sheikh et al. 2012).

- 5 The analysis of the relationship between pathos and response is motivated in part by Emil Durkheim's thesis that within a religious ritual, the conformity and synchronization of movement is related to the conformity of thought (Durkheim 1981, p. 23).
- 6 However, preempting an obvious objection, most communal religious experiences are not liminal experiences, and there is no reason to assume, that liminal experiences are mandatory either for communitarization or for religious violence. This assumption seems to be an often-unchecked relic from theories of religion that try to show spirituality as an intrinsic unreasonable attitude.
- 7 Though it only "appears" and is accessible through the response, it is easier for this investigation to follow the temporal relationship instead of the structure of accessibility.
- 8 As far as we understand Jean-Luc Marion correctly, his concept of revelation as self-giveness of God can also be understood as such a localization. See (Marion and Lewis 2016, p. 88): "The Trinity becomes the place of the uncovering as much as its stake: we can see that which shows itself only by receiving it as it gives itself, that is, only by receiving ourselves from the one who gives himself, and who gives... everything, including our seeing of it."
- 9 Though not in as a structure of experience, we can find the concept of the pathic and its influence on action in Ricoeurs philosophy of a capable man as well: "In the broad sense of the word, it is about an approach to the human phenomenon in terms of acting and suffering, of praxis and pathos." (Ricoeur 2010, p. 27f.).
- 10 An impressive technical replication is found in (Pentcheva 2020), which incorporated both the architecture and the chosen singing technique into the analysis of the listening experience in the historic Hagia Sophia.

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