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**“Je suis en terrasse”:
Political Violence, Civilisational Politics and the Everyday Courage to Be**

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Abstract

Following the attacks against the Paris offices of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in January 2015 and the subsequent acts of political violence in Paris the following November a number of memes spread swiftly across social media. Most notable of these were proclamations of *Je suis Charlie*, *Je suis Paris*, *Je suis en terrasse* and tricolouring one’s Facebook profile page. Although there are various ways by which this phenomenon might be explained this paper argues that, at least for some people, they seem to have operated as key mechanisms by which individuals/society sought to re-establish what Tillich calls ‘the courage to be’, and which in more contemporary terminology might be labelled a sense of ontological security – the ability to go on in the face of what would otherwise be debilitating anxieties of existential dread. The paper argues the memes did this through a number of mechanisms. These included, establishing a sense of vicarious identification with the victims; embracing increased levels of danger and seeking to confront the question of mortality head on; reasserting a sense of community and home via the re-instantiation of everyday routines now ascribed with enhanced political and existential significance; and reaffirming a new civilisationally inflected self-narrative.

Key words:

Ontological security and anxiety, vicarious identity, civilizational politics, Paris attacks, social media and memes

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“Je suis en terrasse”:

Political Violence, Civilizational Politics and the Everyday Courage to Be

Introduction

During the evening of 13 November 2015 terror came to the streets of Paris, as terrorists affiliated with Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) targeted cafes, restaurants, the national stadium and the Bataclan theatre. The shootings and suicide bombings left 130 dead and a further 368 injured. The attacks in November followed an earlier attack in Paris in January, that killed 17, but which is most remembered for the targeting of the offices of the satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo, where 12 people were killed. Both these attacks resulted in a number of intriguing and ‘apparently’ rather spontaneous – as opposed to (officially) orchestrated – responses across civil society, within Paris, France and even beyond. These took the form of a number of memes that spread swiftly across social media depicting what might be viewed as everyday acts of defiance against the attackers and solidarity with the victims. Following the attack on the offices of Charlie Hebdo, the slogan, ‘*Je suis Charlie*’ was popularised. Following the wider set of attacks later in November a similar meme emerged with widespread adoption of the slogan, ‘*Je suis Paris*’. However, other memes also emerged in this context. One included updating personal profile pictures on Facebook via overlaying a semi-translucent French tricolore on top of one’s (usually unadorned) personal identifying picture. Another was the meme, ‘*Je suis en terrasse*’, in which people posted pictures on social media of themselves sitting out drinking coffee and wine in cafés and other public spaces, in doing so reclaiming the public space.

Some of these memes have generated more comment than others. The *'Je suis Charlie'* meme, for instance, provoked much discussion as to the politics of publicly proclaiming *'Je suis Charlie'*. This was because people did not always agree on what it actually stood for. The publication's values therefore subsequently came under scrutiny. For some those wearing *'Je suis Charlie'* t-shirts seemed to be upholding the right of unbounded free speech, of the right for irreverent publications like Charlie Hebdo to insult one and all, without regard for cultural, political, religious or racial sensitivities. For others, such criticisms missed the point of the high levels of irony and satire underpinning many of the magazine's stories, but which the publication's defenders argued were frequently misunderstood. Although these issues are important the main concern of this article is with the initial response and the very decision to proclaim *'Je suis Charlie'* via twitter/Facebook, or to adorn oneself in a t-shirt emblazoned with the slogan. Or in the context of the later attack, to proclaim *'Je suis Paris'*, *'Je suis en terrasse'*, while also editing one's Facebook profile to make it tricolore compliant.

How should we understand these actions? Should they be understood as simple manifestations of distress and outpourings of solidarity, empathy and sympathy for the victims, mixed with a certain amount of rage, anger and defiance, or is something more going on? This article suggests there is. Amongst other things, for instance, the memes' swift and spontaneous emergence demonstrated a significant element of vicarious identification with the victims and in doing so also an implied willingness to embrace increased levels of danger, to actively turn oneself into a potential future target and ultimately confront one's mortality. The memes also reasserted a sense of community and home via the re-instantiation of everyday routines – now ascribed with enhanced political and existential significance – and a

new civilizationaly inflected self-narrative. The memes, therefore, can be seen as key mechanisms by which individuals/society sought to re-establish what Tillich (2014/1952) calls 'the courage to be', and which in more contemporary terminology might be labelled a sense of ontological security – the ability to go on in the face of what would otherwise be debilitating anxieties of existential dread (Laing 1969; Giddens 1991).

In this respect, the article seeks to make several contributions to the emerging ontological security studies literature. First, it highlights the existence of ontological security practices at both an individual and a transnational level. Of note here is that the article therefore steers clear of methodological debates that have emerged with the concept's appropriation within International Relations, in particular the issue of whether or not (and what might be lost in doing so) of scaling up and applying the concept to states (see Steele 2008: 15-20; Krowlikowski 2008). Instead, the argument remains focused at the level of individuals and society, to which ontological security and related concepts (like anxiety) were initially developed and applied. However, by steering clear of state-centric frameworks it also shows how individual and societal ontological security seeking practices can have transnational dimensions to them of broader significance to international politics. Second, with its focus on individual and societal practices the article also emphasises the importance of the 'everyday' for 'ontological security', thereby bringing together two themes and literatures which in recent years have become increasingly developed but rarely in conversation with each other. In particular, in contrast to the tendency to treat social media practices like tweeting, clicking 'like' or sharing Facebook posts as politically epiphenomenal manifestations of 'slacktivism' (Berents 2016: 3; Verrall 2016: 237), the article starts from the premise that, at least for some people – and in particular amongst the generation of so-called 'digital natives' (Prensky 2001)

who increasingly live their lives through social media – interactions on social media often do matter.¹ At the same time, the article’s concern with the everyday extends beyond social media, not least because following the attacks social media was also being used as a means to record, communicate and promote ‘offline’ everyday practices like going out and drinking coffee, and not only to signal people’s views and feelings in response to the attacks. Third, the article places particular emphasis on issues of anxiety and death, which have been surprisingly underexplored in many studies of the concept in International Relations (Rumelili 2015a in respect of anxiety and Heath-Kelly forthcoming in respect of death being notable exceptions). This accounts for the article’s particular focus on the work of Tillich (2014/1952), for whom these were central concerns and upon whom writers such as Rumelili have subsequently drawn. However, the article also builds upon existing work on ontological security within International Relations, in particular that focusing on the relationship between anxiety and fear and the concept of ‘home’. In this respect, one of the contributions lies in bringing together a range of concerns that have often been analysed in isolation in the existing ontological security literature. Finally, in doing this the article draws particular attention to

¹ Research on internet usage has noted important developments in the transition from Web 1.0 (Web-as-information-source) to Web 2.0 (Web-as-participation-platform). Although this distinction has itself been called into question – because the early internet (Web 1.0) also included sites that actively encouraged user participation through the development of online communities – it does appear that user participation in Web 2.0 has different characteristics. For instance, the early social communities of Web 1.0 tended to be focused around developing new (variably viewed as idealised and improved, or as inferior copies of conventional) communities that required members to assume particular personas in order to engage with strangers ‘in imagined spaces and contexts’. In contrast, social media platforms central to Web 2.0 (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) presume ‘members have profiles that ostensibly represent their actual offline identities’ and which they use to engage with pre-existing friends or contacts. The online and offline lives of digital natives that have embraced these new platforms are therefore seen to be increasingly seamlessly integrated (Song 2010: 254-5, 266). In this respect, the social media platforms of Web 2.0 are seen to offer users a sense of ‘ambient awareness’ and intimacy with friends and associates, thereby enhancing one’s feelings of being socially connected (Thompson 2008). Indeed, in this respect it has been argued that the social media sites of Web 2.0, with their emphasis on continuously signalling to one’s connected community elements of selfhood (one’s views, activities, habits, moods, whereabouts), where the topic of oneself becomes the basis and purpose of community, also fosters a different form of ‘personalist’ individualism. Personalist selves, it is argued, are developed through constantly reflecting on one’s biography and establishing one’s individuality in relation to varying cultural, religious, or political authorities. In this respect, Song (2010: 267-9) argues the social media sites of Web 2.0 provide a set of ‘personalist institutions’ that enable personalist forms of subjectivity to thrive.

the workings and practice of vicarious identification, both in global politics and as a form of ontological security seeking, a theme which has also so far received only limited discussion in the discipline (see Steele and Amoureux 2009; Steele 2014).

The article starts by focusing in on questions of anxiety and ontological security, drawing on the work of Tillich and Giddens to show how existential anxieties about death, meaninglessness and guilt/condemnation plague us at every turn. Drawing on broader work on ontological security within International Relations and beyond the article then highlights how these are typically contained through a combination of mechanisms and practices (ontological security seeking strategies) related to: the securitisation of anxieties into identifiable objects of fear; the sequestration of death; biographical routinisation; vicarious identification of the individual with broader communities; and the establishment of 'home' as a space of safety and certitude. In the following section this framework is then applied to the case of the attacks in Paris in January and November 2015. Finally, the conclusion provides a restatement of the central arguments but also raises a number of cautionary points regarding how existential anxieties have been tackled and ontological security reached for, suggesting that there is always a danger of existential anxieties turning pathological.

Is There More to Life than Vol-au-Vents?

TAKE THESE THINGS, NOW, said Death, fingering a passing canapé. I MEAN, MUSHROOMS YES, CHICKEN YES, CREAM YES, I'VE NOTHING AGAINST ANY OF THEM, BUT WHY IN THE NAME OF SANITY MINCE THEM ALL UP AND PUT THEM IN LITTLE PASTRY CASES?... THAT'S MORTALS FOR YOU, Death continued. THEY'VE ONLY GOT A

FEW YEARS IN THIS WORLD AND THEY SPEND THEM ALL IN MAKING THINGS COMPLICATED FOR THEMSELVES. FASCINATING. (Pratchett 1987: 59).

Given the tenuous and brief nature of individual existence Death's puzzlement with the time and effort involved in concocting and making a plateful of vol-au-vents seems reasonable. Surely humans might better spend their time focusing on issues of much greater significance. The fact that they would devote their energies to canapés appears to strike him as frivolous. But Death is also fascinated, suggesting he also is aware that the canapé making process may be much more significant than he can so far fathom. Could it be that the humble vol-au-vent tells us something about the very nature of human existence? In this section I will suggest it does, precisely for the reason that making, commenting on and consuming canapés is just one of the many mundane everyday activities that enables humans to 'go on' with everyday life without slipping into existential and potentially debilitating anxieties about the nature of existence (Giddens 1991: 35-7). Put differently, without the humble vol-au-vent, without the alarm clock, tooth brushes, showers, diaries, jobs and whatever else we might manage to fit into our daily routine, we might struggle to get out of bed at all. This, at least, is part of the claim of the literature on ontological security, a literature that long predates the term, and which in this article is reframed in terms of Paul Tillich's (2014) concern with the everyday 'courage to be' in the face of otherwise potentially overwhelming existential anxieties.

The idea that existential anxiety represents one of the most fundamental challenges facing humans has been widely accepted in philosophical (e.g. Kierkegaard 1980; Heidegger 2010), theological (e.g. Tillich 2014), sociological (e.g. Giddens 1991) and psychological (e.g. Laing 1969) thought, and has become an increasingly important focus of research in International

Relations (e.g. Browning and Joenniemi 2017; Chernobrov 2016; Kinnvall 2004; Mälksoo 2015; Mitzen 2006; Rumelili 2015b; Steele 2008; Zarakol 2011). Seen from this perspective anxiety cannot be eliminated, it stalks us constantly, threatening to overpower us and leave us floundering in despair and helplessness if we fail to keep it at bay. Tillich (2014: 34) describes anxiety as ‘the state in which a being is aware of its possible nonbeing’ and, since the only thing certain in life is death, it ‘cannot be eliminated. It belongs to existence itself’ (Tillich 2014: 38). However, Tillich also provides a broader analytical framework suggesting that existential anxieties about nonbeing come in three interconnected forms.

First, he argues, is the *anxiety of fate and death*, where ‘nonbeing threatens man’s ontic self-affirmation’ (Tillich 2014: 39) and in which we become aware that our very existence is both temporally (we exist now, not at some other time) and spatially (we exist here, not somewhere else) contingent (Tillich 2014: 41-2). Indeed, our being is ‘contingent in every respect’, with this itself providing a motivation to anchor the self in time and space to overcome the omnipresent threat of non-existence. Second, is the *anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness*, where nonbeing threatens man’s spiritual self-affirmation and relates to ‘the loss of an ultimate concern, of a meaning which gives meaning to all meanings. This anxiety is aroused by the loss of a spiritual center, of an answer, however symbolic and indirect, to the question of the meaning of existence’ (Tillich 2014: 45). Beliefs may break down for various reasons – because of external events or inner processes – but when they do anxieties will manifest as the individual fails to find satisfaction in ideas, practices and beliefs through which they had previously generated self-affirmation and made sense of the nature of existence and their salient environment. While a spiritual sense of meaning and self-affirmation may be essential, once it is gone, insofar as a sense of emptiness has developed,

then replacing it with another scheme providing cosmic meaning will be difficult as it too will always be open to sustained doubt (Tillich 2014: 45). Third is the *anxiety of guilt and condemnation*, which concerns threats to man's moral self-affirmation (Tillich 2014: 48). This relates to the idea that people are not only concerned with life and cosmic meaning, but also feel deeply and morally responsible for their lives. As Tillich (2014: 48-9) puts it, we are required to answer to ourselves as much as to others – including God – what we have made of ourselves. We therefore always stand at the mercy of anxieties of self-rejection or condemnation. At stake here is not fears of external punishment, but despair at having lost ourselves and our destiny and which can generate 'a striving for perfection and moral self-discipline' (Rumelili 2015a: 12).

Importantly, Tillich (2014: 53-8) argues that all three forms of anxiety are always present, often deeply interconnected, with their relative salience with respect to each other dependent upon changing historical and cultural contexts. This suggests that cultural norms, practices and beliefs are likely to frame the ways in which ontological anxieties play out and emerge in different settings. Thus, he argues that ontic anxieties about fate and death were predominant during the period towards the end of the ancient classical (Greek/Roman) civilizations; moral anxieties about guilt and condemnation predominated during the Middle Ages; while the modern age has become preoccupied with spiritual anxieties about emptiness and meaninglessness. Indeed, this last is a point which Giddens (1991) picks up on in his more specific analysis of the quest for ontological security and self-identity in an age of (post)modernity.

Central to Giddens' analysis, for example, are a number of processes that provide profound challenges for how individuals generate a sense of order and continuity and make sense of their everyday lives in the contemporary world – or in Giddens' terms, how they establish and maintain a sense of ontological security (Stone and Sharpley 2008: 580). Several processes stand out and concern how the enlightenment rise of science and the scientific method has led to the death of God and the desacralisation of social life. For Giddens it is not only that religious certainties about the nature and purpose of existence (and life after death) have been undermined by science and rising secularism, but also that scientific truths and discoveries have failed to replace the religious systems of meaning now in retreat with anything like the same level of certainty. The reason, Giddens (1990: 38-9; 1991: 2-3) argues, is because the scientific method is one premised on radical doubt, meaning all scientific claims are also inherently open to revision in light of new theories and investigations. Science, therefore, undermines institutionalised frameworks of cosmic ordering without offering a similarly all-encompassing alternative, let alone one that provides guiding values for how to live one's life (Stone and Sharpley 2008: 580). In doing so, however, science has also proceeded hand in glove with the rise of individualism and what Stone and Sharpley (2008: 580) refer to as the privatisation of meaning. The contention, therefore, is that in the modern age individuals have increasingly been left to their own devices in 'establishing and maintaining values to guide them and make sense of their daily lives' (Stone and Sharpley 2008: 581), with self-identity becoming a 'reflexive project' to be constantly worked at (Giddens 1991: 5) – a point which Giddens suggests provides a fundamental explanation for the rise of the self-help publishing phenomenon throughout the last decades of the twentieth century.

Ontological Security Seeking and the Everyday Courage to Be

In the face of these interconnected existential anxieties of nonbeing, from where do we derive the everyday 'courage to be', how is ontological security gained in the face of such potentially overwhelming anxieties about death, meaninglessness and guilt? Two points are immediately evident. The first is that ontological security seeking, generating an everyday 'courage to be', is always a work in progress, it is not a state of being, but a process that needs to be cultivated constantly but which is always in danger of breaking down in the face of both external events (such as traumatic terrorist attacks) and internal processes. The second point is that while anxieties about nonbeing can appear (and may be) highly destructive for individuals, they can also provide a spur to action and as such operate as a potentially generative force. This, however, may happen in different (and apparently divergent) ways. For instance, while Giddens argues societies and individuals find themselves propelled to try and 'bracket out' from 'everyday life those questions which might be raised about the social frameworks which contain human existence' (Giddens 1991: 37-8; Stone and Sharpley 2008: 581), others suggest ontological security and the courage to be may at times require confronting such anxieties head on. This disjuncture not only suggests there is no specific recipe for upholding ontological security, it also points towards issues of whether it might be possible to conceive of a distinction between healthier and more pathological forms of ontological security seeking, something which also has the potential to raise ethical questions. We return to these issues at the end of the article.

For now, it is important to note that within the ontological security literature a number of behaviours and practices are usually identified by which actors are typically seen to undertake

Giddens' bracketing-out process. It is, however, worth making a couple of preliminary clarifications. First, as noted earlier the actors this article focuses on are individuals, with a particular concern with how individuals generate a sense of ontological security through drawing on shared collective societal processes, identities and loyalties in everyday routines and practices. The argument is therefore not concerned with the ontological security of collective actors like states that has characterised many analyses of ontological security in International Relations (e.g. Mitzen 2006; Steele 2008; Zarakol 2011), but which has in turn generated debates and criticisms about the discipline's tendency to anthropomorphise states. For critics the issue is whether we can sensibly speak of collective actors like states having psychologies or experiencing psychological pressures and processes in the same way as individuals (Krowlikowski 2008). Sophisticated arguments have been made to justify such scaling up (e.g. Steele 2008: 15-20), but are tangential to this article given its focus on individuals and rather how collective actors like states often become sources of ontological security for them (see below). The second clarification is that it has become common to label the behaviours and practices by which actors undertake Giddens' 'bracketing out' process 'ontological security seeking strategies' (e.g. Browning and Joenniemi 2013). Unfortunately, this label can give the impression that ontological security seeking is an inherently strategic practice carried out by rationally calculating actors. While it is possible to identify instances where this may be the case – for instance, states seeking to provide a clear narrative to their citizens about the nature of the situation the country finds itself in – often ontological security seeking will be a largely reflexive, and to some extent un/subconscious, activity reliant upon activating already established understandings, codes and practices within society on a largely instinctive and intuitive basis. With this clarification noted the article perseveres with the established terminology.

Interestingly, two ontological security seeking strategies tend to be highlighted over and above all others. These concern the generation of biographical narratives of self-identity and the development of everyday routines (including the routinisation of established self-narratives). In brief, biographical narratives of self-identity help establish a sense of ontological security and a 'courage to be' by locating the self in time and space, providing the self with an identity and role in relation to what are established as significant others (be they friends or enemies), and in doing so providing a narrative of the nature of their salient environment (Steele 2008: 10-2). To this extent, such narratives provide a cognitive ordering function within which everyday events and activities can be comprehended and processed. Moreover, narrative consistency is also usually emphasised as supporting the development of a stable sense of subjectivity and self-hood, in contrast to inconsistent or unclear self-narratives that are seen as potentially anxiety-inducing (Solomon forthcoming).

Routines perform a similar function. This may be because some routines reproduce everyday self-identity narratives (e.g. checking one's work email, preparing lectures, being nice to one's partner, making canapés if you are a chef). However, as Giddens (1991: 39-41) argues, much of everyday life actually takes place via the maintenance of largely habituated routines. Such routines can often appear highly mundane – preparing canapés for a dinner party, brushing one's teeth, reading the news, drinking coffee with friends in a café – but at other times can also, as this article argues, become deeply significant, both ontologically and politically. Combined, Giddens argues that in order to preserve a sense of ontological security reflexive subjects need to periodically consider the suitability of their self-identity narratives and

established routines in light of changes in their salient environment, and be prepared to adapt them if they appear contradictory or insufficient in some way.

However, this article also argues that sometimes the emphasis on biographical self-identity narratives and routinisation has occluded the fact that ontological security and the courage to be is frequently also established through a range of other interconnected processes. It is important to emphasise that these additional processes of ontological security seeking are not completely distinct from biographical narratives of self-identity and routinisation, but ultimately become embedded and reproduced within and through them – though without being reducible to them and likely transforming them in the process. Without claiming to be exhaustive four processes are noted here.

The first has already been identified in previous discussions of ontological security in the IR literature and concerns securitisation processes that transpose existential anxieties about the unknown into identifiable objects of fear (Rumelili 2015a: 14; also see Croft 2012; Steele 2008). Simply put, the problem with existential anxieties – about death or meaning for instance – is that they can generate helplessness expressed ‘in loss of direction, inadequate reactions, lack of “intentionality”’ (Tillich 2014: 35) because what lies behind them is the unknown and the threat of nothingness. There is, in short, nothing to concentrate on, to counter, only the dread of nonbeing. Tillich argues that such a situation is intolerable and as such subjects routinely divert their attention away from such anxieties and refocus on objects of fear that can be acted against, prepared for or tackled. As he puts it, ‘Anxiety strives to become fear, because fear can be met with courage’ (Tillich 2014: 37). Thus, regarding mortality, he argues people typically shift from contemplating their non-existence to focusing

on what might actually kill them (e.g. a disease) and how they might prepare for or against it. In a political context, this often entails identifying enemies, determining strategies to fight them, and reasserting a sense of meaning and certitude by reaffirming what one stands (and is prepared to die) for. Such identifications are then typically integrated into (though likely transforming them in the process) biographical narratives of self-identity and routinized practices with this always entailing the potential to result in the securitisation of self-identity in the face of an identified enduring enemy threat (Kinnvall 2004; Mitzen 2006).

The example of nonbeing occasioned by death leads to a second process, where – aside from anxieties about death being diverted into securitisations of identifiable objects of fear – Giddens argues that in the contemporary modern age there has been a more general tendency towards its ‘sequestration’ from society. This refers to the steady removal of death from the public sphere, and the effacing of its existential significance, in particular via processes of medicalisation that turn it into a largely technical matter hidden away in the institutionalised setting of the hospital. Death, in a sense, has become privatised (Giddens 1991: 161-2; Bauman 1992). Some context is useful here, since this was not always so. During the medieval period death was kept highly visible in everyday life, with the Church in particular inculcating a fear of death, emphasising the horrors of different types of death and not least of the trepidations of hell. This, of course, operated as a mechanism of social, political and economic control on the part of religious authorities (Seaton 1996: 236). However, while death was to be seen and made terrifying, it was also tamed insofar as a good life could bring divine salvation. In contrast, in the modern age, where – at least in the West – the authority of the Church has been fundamentally challenged and God proclaimed dead, the ‘promise of eternal salvation to mitigate the knowledge of mortality’ has evaporated

(Heath-Kelly forthcoming). Anxieties about death therefore have to be 'bracketed out' in new ways, with this primarily taking the form of a general effacing of death from the public sphere (Heath-Kelly forthcoming). For instance, it has been noted that instead of focusing on death, modern (Western) ideology typically 'espouses a celebration of life and living, amplified by a post-modern focus on youth, beauty and the body', the result being that thoughts about death are inevitably repressed (Stone and Sharpley 2008: 582). While death occurs, it is typically hidden away from public sight and consciousness in medical institutions and care homes. Death has become largely privatised and removed from public experience, in contrast to the open and communal event it was previously.

An interesting example of how this has become (increasingly) manifest in state policy has been presented by Heath-Kelly (forthcoming). Focusing on the emergence of resilience as a major framework for organising state security provision, she points out how resilience discourse entails acceptance by the state that it can no longer provide security for citizens against a range of risks. Resilience, however, shifts the focus away from prevention of attacks and what they may bring to acceptance of their inevitability and an emphasis on recovery and future flourishing. So, while events will occur and people will die, the focus is instead shifted away from individual mortality to society's recovery and endurance. In a sense, those deaths that do happen are effaced/bracketed out insofar as the emphasis shifts to future recovery and life. As Heath-Kelly puts it, 'Life is now used to defeat death, as it were'. Applying the analysis to contemporary memorialisation and regeneration practices following terrorist attacks, she argues the very process has become one of taking back the space for renewed life. As she notes, the emphasis is typically on architectural modernisation and urban renewal

projects that reaffirm the 'vitality of capitalism and economic power' via the 'architectural promise of hope, perpetuity and life' (Heath-Kelly forthcoming).

However, the public sequestering away, ignoring and effacing of death does not actually directly address individuals' ontological anxieties by fostering a 'coming to terms' with death. Thus, while such practices of sequestration may provide one means of affirming ontological security by bracketing out death, ultimately death cannot be contained, has a tendency to break through, and may continue to generate ontological insecurities that people may seek to deal with in different ways. In this respect, the literature on 'dark tourism' – where people actively seek out places of tragedy and death – is interesting. People may visit such places for various reasons, ranging from basic bloodlust, to ghoulish voyeurism/rubber-necking, to nostalgia, to a celebration of crime or deviance. However, it has also been suggested that such experiences may be a way in which people seek to enhance their resilience to death anxieties by drawing closer to death, thereby confronting the inevitable mortality of themselves and others (Stone and Sharpley 2008: 576, 585-7; Seaton 1996: 236-8; Lisle 2004; Heath-Kelly forthcoming).

This willingness to confront the anxiety of death more directly also suggests that Giddens' emphasis on how ontological security requires fundamentally bracketing out existential anxieties can be taken too far. Heidegger, for instance, suggested that subjects seeking ontological security are not solely concerned with questions of narrative coherence, routinisation and cognitive ordering (as Giddens sometimes seems to imply), but are also often concerned about living virtuous lives in the limited time available to them (Inwood: 2000: 69-79; Browning 2016: 171). As such, an awareness of one's mortality and impending

death may itself be essential in providing motivation to fully embrace life, one element of which may be interrogating whether or not one's established routines and narratives need reframing in light of the sort of person one wishes to be. Understood this way, anxiety about death is not simply a negative to bracket out, but may ultimately be a core aspect of the creative life force to be invited in – but not too far. From this perspective mortality very well may be 'the spice of life', as conjectured by Foley (2010: 210).

Bringing in virtue, however, also enables us to reaffirm Tillich's claim that there is no obvious hierarchy between anxieties of death, meaninglessness and guilt/condemnation. As Tillich (2014: 6-7) reminds us, the 'courage to be' often requires that we are willing to sacrifice elements of our being 'which, if not sacrificed, would prevent us reaching our actual fulfilment. This sacrifice may include pleasure, happiness, *even one's own existence*' (emphasis added). This point has subsequently been affirmed by various studies utilising ontological security in IR, which have noted that ontological security imperatives are often at odds with (and directly detrimental to) physical security (Mitzen 2006; Steele 2008; Rumelili 2015a).

A third process by which individuals cope with existential anxieties of non-being and establish a sense of ontological security is through vicariously identifying with broader communities. Vicarious identification entails a process, not just of identifying with, but of actively living through others' experiences and achievements (Goldstein and Cialdini 2007). Most typically we can think of parents living through their children's achievements, but it is also common to find people vicariously identifying with collective religious and national groups (Kinnvall 2004: 742-4; Marlow 2002: 247; Krolkowski 2008). As will be argued in the case analysis, this can

also apply with respect to civilizations. Vicariously identifying with such groups can help individuals generate a sense of meaning and subjectivity and enhance their sense of self-esteem and certainty about the world. Such attachments also often become deeply emotionally binding generating considerable amounts of 'we feeling' (Solomon 2013: 131). Significantly, though, such relationships can also offer the promise of immortality by proxy, of cheating death by contributing to and living on through, the group even after one has worldly departed (Berenskoetter 2010). However, while we can seek ontological security and the courage to be through immersion within a broader collective identity, Tillich (2014: 84) notes that in turn the collective can itself become subject to anxieties about the collective's nonbeing, especially when the collective is seen to be under threat and where, he argues, such anxieties can become contagious. In such situations the securitisation of the collective's sense of subjectivity is always possible (see above), with vicarious identification with a broader self becoming problematically dependent on the securitisation of others, a danger noted in the case analysis below.

Conceptually it is important to distinguish vicarious identification from vicarious experience. Vicarious experience refers to the routine and necessary ways in which people draw upon others' experiences in everyday communication, and not least when trying to establish a sense of their own identity. Norrick (2013: 385) defines vicarious experience as people telling 'stories about other people engaged in actions that the tellers did not witness', and as Neumann and Nexon (2006: 7) note, it is actually impossible to narrate the self without drawing on others' lived experiences. In contrast, vicarious identification relates to actually 'living through' others' experiences, as opposed to just drawing on them, and can be identified in those moments when people actually appropriate others' stories as their own,

as if they happened to them, integrating them as part of their own biography. Thus, whereas stories of vicarious experience are rendered in the third person, using the pronouns she, he, they, stories of vicarious identity are narrated in the first person, using the pronouns I, me, we (Norrick 2013: 385). In cases of vicarious identity, therefore, events the self did not experience directly are presented precisely as if they were.

Finally, attempts to enhance ontological security also frequently seek to locate the subject in space, and more specifically to designate a particular place as 'home'. Thus, one way of coping with the radical contingency of non-being – that one could have been born anywhere, anytime – is to establish a link between the self and a particular place that provides an 'aura of permanence' (Heath Kelly forthcoming). As Kinnvall (2004: 747) argues, the idea of 'home' is psychologically powerful insofar as it offers the promise of 'a site of constancy in the social and material environment... a secure base on which identities are constructed'. In contrast, homelessness offers only impermanence and discontinuity. Home should therefore be a place of safety where existential anxieties can be kept at bay. Problems arise, of course, when the security of home is lost or is questioned. For example, we might consider the high levels of anxiety and feelings of 'betrayal and 'dread' experienced by many in the UK following the June 2016 'Brexit' referendum on whether the UK should leave the EU. Anxieties related to the possible loss of 'home' or of no longer being welcome in one's own home (and maybe having no other home to turn too) have been particularly notable amongst UK-resident EU nationals and ethnic minorities, many of whom are actually British citizens. For many such people biographical narratives of self-identity have been fundamentally challenged, while everyday routines like going shopping have become traumatic experiences frequently characterised by insults and feelings of alienation (*The Guardian* 2016). With their sense of

home and belonging questioned many such people clearly feel cast adrift, lost, and deeply anxious.

The Paris Attacks, Memes and Ontological (In)security

Turning to the case analysis, the attacks in Paris in January and November 2015 posed a significant challenge to many people's sense of ontological (and physical) security and undoubtedly brought existential anxieties of nonbeing to the fore, not just locally in Paris, but also nationally and transnationally. Central to this was the fact that the terrorists chose 'soft targets', with this clearly designed to enhance the population's sense of vulnerability (Lisle 2013: 135). Not least, the attacks disturbed established mechanisms of ontological security production – most notably for Parisians, but also for French society in general, and others beyond, most notably in the 'West' and for whom the fear arose of 'if Paris, why not also here'. Thus, the attacks disturbed established routines of everyday life by making eating in restaurants, going to cafes and attending music concerts appear inherently dangerous, with people scared to go out, or, after the January attack, with Jewish parents in particular worried about sending their children to school. As such, the apparent randomness of the attacks (especially of the November attacks) and the authorities' inability to prevent them destabilised notions of the inherent safety of home, which in turn also challenged established narratives of social cohesion and, for Parisians, of the Parisian *joie de vivre*. Not least, bringing mass death to places usually considered safe and secure, not only destabilised everyday patterns of life, but also broke through the usual sequestration of death from society, making death public and putting anxieties about nonbeing front and centre. The traumatic void created by such events, however, not only activated death anxieties, but also those connected

to meaning and guilt as people/society sought to establish a sense of what was happening, why, and are we in some sense responsible.

The attacks therefore fundamentally challenged established aspects of ontological security, generating existential anxieties. This was not least because the future now seemed uncertain, be it in terms of the longer-term future, but certainly in terms of the immediate hours, days and weeks following the attacks, and not only in Paris. If the 'courage to be' was to be upheld, a response was needed, a response that filled with new meaning the void created (Berenskoetter 2014: 272). The contention of this article is that memes that emerged almost immediately after the initial shock of the attacks – *Je suis Charlie*, *Je suis Paris*, *Je suis en terrasse*, tricolorising facebook profile pages etc – can be seen as one crucial aspect of this response, a response that was society (rather than officially) led. The rest of this section shows how these memes activated/drew on various of the ontological security seeking strategies noted above, and did so in intriguing interconnected ways. At the same time, it is likely that different memes may have appealed more to different communities; for instance, the *je suis en terrasse* meme seems to have appealed more at a local level, while the other memes appear to have been picked up and replicated more broadly.

For illustrative purposes only the following discussion is divided into four subsections corresponding to four of the ontological security seeking mechanisms in play. As will be noted, in practice these were deeply intertwined making a clear distinction between them problematic as such. Moreover, since (as noted above) biographical narratives of self-identity and routinisation are always implicated in the other mechanisms, they are interwoven into the discussion below and not provided with separate sections.

Vicarious Identification

Perhaps most intriguing is that proclamations of '*Je suis Charlie*' and '*Je suis Paris*' entailed notable elements of vicarious identification. Such memes suggested that the attacks were not just against employees of a specific publication in the Charlie Hebdo case, or against those unfortunate enough to be in the wrong place at the wrong time in respect of the November attacks in Paris, they were against 'us' – be that Parisians, French society, the West. Instead of relying on third person pronouns like 'il, elle, ils/elles' (he, she, they), as is more usual when we reflect on and talk about things that happened to others (i.e. vicarious experiences), the use of the first person pronoun, 'Je' (I), suggests that, at least to some extent, the distinction between 'us' and those directly killed or injured had broken down. *They were us*, and as such their experiences could be vicariously appropriated as our own. In short, *we too were victims*.² For French citizens this was a relatively easy piece of mental and emotional gymnastics since the attacks could easily be read – and were intended to be by the attackers – as an attack on French society in general (Marsden 2015). Insofar as 'French' citizens view themselves as 'French' and see themselves as constitutive members of something called 'French society', this is already indicative of the everyday ways in which we merge our conceptions of self-identity into broader collective associations via processes of vicarious identification.

² The analysis presented here does not preclude other possible interpretations. The claim is not that everyone shared the same motivations and psychological impulses, only that the evidence suggests that the memes demonstrated at least some level of vicarious identification on the part of some people. Some people reproducing the memes were probably motivated by more selfish/self-absorbed and exhibitionist urges (that are certainly facilitated by social media) of seeking status/kudos by establishing a closeness and element of participation with the events at hand (Perkins 2015). This correlates more to a sense of vicarious experience than vicarious identification and parallels some of the arguments of the Dark Tourism literature discussed earlier, that suggests people often seek out death for largely voyeuristic purposes. Others might have been engaging in forms of 'slacktivism' – the easy and shallow engagement with a cause via social media that can make one feel self-righteous and engaged but without any genuine level of empathy present (Berents 2016: 3; Verrall 2016: 237).

In Tillich's terms, partaking in the production, demonstration and sharing of the outpourings of emotion connected to the memes, was not just a way of coming to terms with the trauma of the events, but fundamentally also served to assert a sense of collective identity and continuity over the threat of nonbeing. Moreover, there was arguably also an element of 'emotional contagion' in responses of donning a t-shirt proclaiming a *Je suis...* slogan, posting pictures of drinking *en terrasse* on social media, tricolorising one's Facebook profile, or simply 'liking' others for having done so. Thrift (2008: 237; Solomon forthcoming) uses the term 'emotional contagion' to refer to humans' tendency to imitate the gestures and actions of others and bring 'their feelings into correspondence' with them, with this ultimately breaking down the self-other divide and fostering the merging of identities and subject positions that make vicarious identifications possible. Especially for the generation of 'digital natives' who live their lives (including their emotional lives) online (Prensky 2001) the internet and social media provide important channels through which these processes increasingly take place, also at a transnational level (Song 2010). In turn, such processes can help generate 'affective affinities' characterised by trust, solidarity or pride as a result of participating in the community's rituals (Ross 2013 cited in Solomon forthcoming). The reactivation of the *Je suis* slogan in November, following its initial appearance after the January attack on the offices of Charlie Hebdo, is indicative of such ritualization.

Importantly, though, these practices and the sense of vicarious identification appears to have extended beyond French society. The community constructed was not just French, but inherently transnational, though with an indelibly 'Western' civilizational element to it that is returned to below. For Bono, for instance, the attack on the Bataclan was not simply an attack

targeting a crowded venue designed to cause maximum casualties, it was ‘the first direct hit on music we’ve had in this so called war on terror’ and ultimately (in part at least) an attack on musicians – everywhere, not just in France – an attack also on him.³ Thus, he went on: ‘This and the cold-blooded aspect of last night’s attacks are what are really upsetting because it means it could have been any of us’ (*The Irish Times* 2015).

Likewise, while many French people clearly found some solace in reasserting their national identity by reaffirming their connection to the tricolore on Facebook, the fact that people of other nationalities did likewise is intriguing, but also indicative of the extent to which the symbolic repertoire of banal nationalism (e.g. flags) was evident as a means of expressing and experiencing pain, death, grief and solidarity even amongst non-nationals (Verrell (2016: 237-8)). In part this was clearly a case of an outpouring of cosmopolitan solidarity. However, such solidarity spread across national boundaries, and was even manifest at the England-France international football friendly held at Wembley a few days after the Paris attacks. At this match, in a somewhat more officially orchestrated display, usually nationalistic English football fans attempted, with varying degrees of success, to sing the French national anthem at the start of proceedings. The Marseillaise was then played at numerous other sporting events in the UK the following weekend. To my knowledge, this playing and singing of another nation’s national anthem – as opposed to a minute’s silence – was unprecedented.

To some extent, French identity was leaking beyond its usual borders, and insofar as this was all a display of cosmopolitan solidarity, it was one reasserting a common sense of selfhood.

³ Bono was wrong. The Taliban, Al Qaeda and ISIS have all waged campaigns against music, while the Bali bombing specifically targeted a nightclub. What is interesting, though, is Bono’s internalisation of this specific event as an attack on him – unlike the other cases.

By contrast, the attacks on the Tunisian tourist resort of Port El Kantaoui on 26 June 2015, which killed 38 (including 15 Brits), and which followed a previous attack on the National Museum, elicited no such similar display. There was no playing of the Tunisian national anthem at sporting events in the UK, or even the UK's own God Save the Queen, there was no meme sweeping Facebook related to the Tunisian (or indeed British) flag, no collective proclaiming 'I am Port El Kantaoui'. And rather than people jumping on planes to assert solidarity by retaking the beaches as they retook the *terrasse* across France, Tunisian beaches became desolate. Of course, we can say the same about similar attacks in Egypt, Nigeria, Syria, Turkey, Yemen and countless other cases.

For instance, the day preceding the November Paris attack, ISIS claimed responsibility for an attack that caused 250 casualties in Beirut. Again, there were no trending hashtags or solidarity marches throughout the West. Indeed, the obvious double-standards provoked criticisms from some on social media in an attempt at shaming the West (Catto 2016: 229). The lack of a similar mimetic response in Beirut and Tunisia to that following the Paris attacks therefore suggest that the vicarious identification evident after Paris was implicitly limited by civilizational/cultural (and potentially racial) hierarchies of whose suffering counts. In slightly less polarising terms it may also be understood as resulting from the inherent limits of individuals to experience and appropriate the suffering of others. As Catto (2016: 230) notes, it seems to be baked in that we are most likely to empathise with those most like us and whom we most closely identify with. As Butler puts it, this is why some people are 'eminently grievable and [O]thers whose loss is no loss at all' (cited in Catto 2016: 230). For Butler, this suggests that in cases like Paris, Beirut and Tunisia racism/exclusion is embedded in the social imaginaries through which we identify others as varyingly similar/different to the self. In

principle, these exclusions and hierarchies could be overcome through embracing different social imaginaries that escaped the nationalist and civilizational framings that this article argues were evident in the Paris case. This might also help explain other 'failed' cases *within* the West. For instance, the bombing of a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida in June 2016 by an attacker claiming allegiance to ISIS, also did not generate the same level of mimetic response. While it certainly gained transnational dimensions amongst the LGBT community via the posting of rainbow flags, the fact that the response did not extend much beyond that might suggest homophobic dimensions in play with respect to present day capacities and practices of vicarious identification within the West.⁴

Evident, then, and unlike in these other cases, is that in respect of the attacks in Paris and on the offices of Charlie Hebdo, insofar as people identified vicariously with those who directly experienced the full horror of the events, then they too became (or perceived themselves to be) victims, part of a broader collective 'we' under attack.

Confronting/Sequestering Death

This is interesting and it ties into a second observation about the nature of the response in Paris, France and beyond. This is that, actions such as heading out to cafes to publicly proclaim '*Je suis en terrasse*', or to wear garments publicly asserting '*Je suis Charlie*'/'*Je suis Paris*', were not simply actions of defiance and solidarity. They were also actions in which people

⁴ Interestingly, the Orlando attack also provoked arguments about which community was actually attacked and therefore who has rights of grief and ultimately of vicarious identification. Some wanted to see it as an attack on humans in general, others as an attack specifically aimed at the LGBT community. See 'Owen Jones walks out of Sky News interview about Orlando attack', <https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2016/jun/13/owen-jones-walks-out-sky-news-orlando-lgbt-video> 13 June 2016.

consciously courted danger and vulnerability, making themselves potential future targets by identifying themselves as people of a particular type with particular views (especially in the case of '*Je suis Charlie*') and re-occupying public spaces the safety of which was now very much in question. This was especially so for Parisians given that some of the attackers remained unaccounted for. Instead of running away from danger and death, as might be expected, they drew closer to it, in some respects gaining a sense of purpose, meaning and vitality through their vulnerability and determination to reclaim the public and symbolic space. To clarify, given the heightened anxieties of the immediate days and weeks following the attacks, activities like going out for coffee were not about sequestering death once more by reasserting a return to normality, but were perhaps better interpreted as an act of resistance and defiance given the evident dangers. This is not to say sequestering did not happen later, especially as more time elapsed following the November attacks. For example, a month after the attack the Eagles of Death Metal – who were playing at the Bataclan theatre when it was attacked – were invited by U2 to join them on stage at a different Paris concert venue – an act which perhaps could be seen as marking a statement that music/life must go on.

However, this itself is interesting and enables us to highlight a dual dimension evident in the assertion of particular routines – like drinking coffee or attending concerts – as a response to the attacks. In this respect, routines became doubly meaningful. Proclaiming '*Je suis en terrasse*' was no longer indicative of everyday routines 'bracketing out' existential questions, but marked a self-conscious decision to proclaim who I am/we are through routines, irrespective of the possible consequences (for one's mortality). As one Parisian student reflected: 'This weekend I have close friends coming to Paris and [we] are going to celebrate

life for them [the victims]' (quoted in Horton 2015). On the one hand, therefore, death anxieties about nonbeing were being dealt with by embracing the fear of what it is that might actually get you killed, and standing resolute in the face of it – which no doubt included being *en terrasse* with a higher degree of awareness of one's surroundings. On the other hand, being *en terrasse* was no longer just about having a drink, socialising or watching the world go by, but had become a symbolically essential part of us that also responded to anxieties about meaninglessness.

In short, being *en terrasse* was transformed into virtuous behaviour as a fundamental expression of 'our' core values. Those killed in the cafés, restaurants and theatres of Paris, therefore, did not die in vain, and neither will those killed in the next random act of violence. Indeed, extrapolating from Elias (2000), everyday habits like drinking coffee, and more particularly how we drink coffee – i.e. *en terrasse* – have never been purely mundane activities but can be seen as a central part of what he terms 'the civilizing process'. Our routines, in this regard, mark out what we view as civilized behaviour, and our adherence to them confirm a sense of status, but also elicit a shared emotional knowledge amongst members of the group that in turn helps to draw hierarchical boundaries between insiders and outsiders.⁵ In this respect, the *Je suis en terrasse* meme positioned the dead – but also future denizens of the *terrasse* – as civilizational representatives. Such memes, therefore, responded to death anxieties about nonbeing by shifting anxieties about life after death to

⁵ Or as (the US located) 'Blackpoodles' (nationality unclear) wrote as a comment to a *New York Times* story the day after the attacks in November: 'France embodies everything religious zealots everywhere hate: enjoyment of life here on earth in a myriad little ways: a fragrant cup of coffee and buttery croissant in the morning, beautiful women in short dresses smiling freely on the street, the smell of warm bread, a bottle of wine shared with friends, a dab of perfume, children paying [sic] in the Luxembourg Gardens, the right not to believe in any god, not to worry about calories, to flirt and smoke and enjoy sex outside of marriage, to take vacations, to read any book you want, to go to school for free, to play, to laugh, to argue, to make fun of prelates and politicians alike, to leave worrying about the afterlife to the dead' (quoted in Ferner 2015).

fears surrounding activities that might get you killed (drinking coffee, freedom of speech), but also responded to anxieties of meaninglessness by consciously locating otherwise mundane activities in a civilizational script. Insofar as people responded to the call to 'retake the *terrasse*' then it appears that, for them at least, responding to anxieties about meaninglessness superseded those about death. In a stoical fashion, they were deciding, in Tillich's (2014: 21) terms, to live according to one's virtue and true nature, irrespective of the consequences.

Securitisation

Although implicitly invoked by the memes and their routinisation, the restatement of a civilizational script and self-narrative was also made explicit in various rhetorical responses that also transposed existential anxieties into securitised objects of fear and securitised conceptions of subjectivity. This was notably evident in various media commentaries that sought to capture the public mood, but which in doing so also provided a frame for understanding the nature of the events, and which in turn outlined an orientation for thinking about the future. Some of the responses took notably similar forms. For instance, on 15 November the US-based British comedian, John Oliver, responded to the Paris attacks on his popular HBO news satire programme by stating that they had been perpetrated 'by gigantic fucking arseholes... working in service of an ideology of pure arseholery'. However, he asserted they would fail and that France will endure because 'If you're in a war of culture and lifestyle with France, good fucking luck. Go ahead, go ahead, bring your bankrupt ideology, they'll bring Jean Paul Sartre, Edith Piaf, fine wine, Gauloises cigarettes, Camut, camembert, madelaines, macaroons, Marcel Proust and the fucking croquembouche... You just brought a

philosophy of rigorous self-abnegation to a pastry fight my friend. You are fucked'.⁶ In less expletive-laden, but no less passionate terms, Andrew Neil, a respected political broadcaster on the BBC, responded similarly, labelling the attackers a 'bunch of loser jihadists' trying 'to prove the future belongs to them, rather than a civilization like France'. He then provided a much lengthier list of French thinkers, historical, economic, scientific and cultural achievements, which he contrasted to the contributions of ISIS:

'Beheadings, crucifixions, amputations, slavery, mass murder, medieval squalor, a death cult barbarity that would shame the Middle Ages... Whatever atrocities you are currently capable of committing, you will lose. In a thousand years' time Paris, that glorious city of lights, will still be shining bright, as will every other city like it, while you will be as dust along with the ragbag of fascists, Nazism, Stalinists that have previously dared to challenge democracy, and failed'.⁷

The highlighting of two non-French responses is deliberate. On the one hand, they reaffirm how responses to the attacks, both inside and outside France, were culturally framed; however, in the rhetoric of Oliver and Neil we also see how Paris is presented as a spiritual centre, not just of France, but implicitly of the West more broadly. When they say Paris/France, Oliver and Neil are implicitly invoking 'us', reminding 'us' of 'our' cultural achievements in comparison to the nihilism of ISIS. It is this element of vicarious identification – where Paris/France become symbolic of the West – that brings the civilizational narrative together and helps reproduce a sense of meaning by locating the West in a civilizational

⁶ John Oliver Paris Attacks, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glxh9ZgP7kc>. 15 November 2014.

⁷ 'Andrew Neil's message to those who attacked Paris' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-34877683>. 20 November 2015.

struggle against a securitised enemy depicted as nothing short of animalistic savages.⁸ Moreover, this civilizational narrative not only responds to anxieties of death and meaninglessness but also brackets out anxieties about guilt and condemnation, since the depiction of the attackers as (even worse than) medieval savages means the question of our possible responsibility need not be raised. Indeed, this parallels President Bush's argument following 9/11: that the terrorists hate us for who we are, not what we do. This similarly bracketed out any suggestion of America's/the West's own culpability, and which, in turn, justified a characteristically violent military response. Following the November attacks on Paris it is notable that in its statement claiming responsibility ISIS in part justified the attack in cultural and civilizational terms, stating they were attacking 'the lead carrier of the cross in Europe' and 'pagans gathered for a concert of prostitution and vice'. In so doing, they provided justification for the civilizational narrative that emerged in response. However, they also justified the attack in terms of retaliation against French actions in 'boasting[ing] about their war against Islam in France and their strikes against Muslims in the lands of the caliphate with their jets' (quoted in Marsden 2015). As also after 9/11, this more political justification was largely ignored in narrative attempts to re-establish ontological security and the courage to be.

Home

Finally, it is also important to note that this civilizational narrative of self-identity and the memes that routinized and reproduced it also contained a notable spatial element that sought to re-establish notions of home as a place of safety and certitude, despite the evident

⁸ This is not to suggest that vicarious identification with a broader Self is necessarily dependent on the securitisation of others. While this is always a possibility vicarious identification does not preclude relating to others in more positive terms as well.

dangers. This was evident in two respects. First, the *Je suis en terrasse* meme clearly operated as an attempt to reclaim and re-domesticate the public space. 'Home' was to be reasserted even though the safety of home had been challenged. Second, this also entailed an explicit element of border drawing in order to re-inscribe the boundaries of home, which is only really evident if compared with other cases. For example, as noted earlier, the attacks in Tunisia provoked a very different response, with Tunisia suffering a disastrous drop-off in tourism. It appeared almost self-evident that Tunisia was not considered 'our space', let alone home. It therefore did not need reclaiming. Arguably, this difference in response relates to the fact that, geographically and culturally, Tunisia is considered alien. Indeed, such events, on what was historically labelled as 'the dark continent' in the European geospatial imagination, are almost to be expected, and simply serve to reaffirm established stereotypes that emphasise the inherent dangers of the spaces beyond the West's civilizational borders.

Conclusion – From Existential to Pathological Anxiety?

The memes that emerged in response to the attacks in Paris in January and November 2015 can therefore be seen as responding to ontological anxieties about nonbeing – in the form of anxieties about death, meaninglessness and guilt – that the attacks generated. At least in part, it has been shown that the memes countered (or kept at bay) feelings of existential dread, by reactivating a number of established ontological security seeking strategies. Most notably, those focused on processes of vicarious identification with the victims reframed the attack on them into an attack on us, and in doing so began to re-establish a specific sense of community. Likewise, instead of sequestering death, memes such as *Je suis en terrasse* acknowledged and even embraced the precarious nature of existence, almost wilfully challenging those who

would attack to try it again. In doing so, such memes also suggested a privileging of anxieties about meaninglessness over anxieties of death. In short, routinizing being *en terrasse* was transformed into a virtue locating participants in a broader civilizational project. In doing so this civilizational narrative also implicitly carved out a notion of 'home' that extended from Parisian street cafes to Western civilization writ large, but which also transformed anxieties about the unknown into identifiable objects of fear – Islamic fundamentalists – that could be securitised and prepared against. These memes, therefore, went some way to staving off existential anxieties of nonbeing, but did so by re-instantiating a civilizational politics of ontological security enhancement, a civilizational politics of home, reproduced in everyday routines of wearing sloganized t-shirts, drinking coffee, amending Facebook profiles and clicking 'like'.

As we have seen, in the face of existential anxieties about nonbeing individuals are impelled to try and re-establish a sense of ontological security. This is especially so in the context of traumatic events like terrorist attacks that place questions of death, meaning and guilt front and centre. In this respect, establishing a 'courage to be' via a mixture of ontological security seeking strategies is a necessity, not an option, and where failure to do so could leave one neurotic, afraid to go out, avoiding public spaces and living a limited life. In this respect, the *Je suis* memes that followed the Paris attacks suggested a rather healthy response and way of reclaiming ontological security. A typical sentiment shared in tweets and Facebook posts was that, despite evident fear and uncertainty, 'We told each other if we don't sit at the terrace today, we probably won't do it again... We can't just stop living' (*The Guardian* 2015).

However, and as hinted at above, ontological security seeking can also take unhealthy forms, especially when existential anxieties slip into despair. At this point, Tillich (2014: 61) argues, existential anxieties (and the ontological security seeking strategies activated in response) can become pathological. Tillich (2014: 64, 69-70) suggests this happens when the dangers one faces become overplayed, out of touch with the reality of the situation, and is something that can drive people toward seeking certitude in systems of meaning and into a fanatical defence of the established order (see Mälksoo 2015). In particular, he argues, this can lead to a relapse into 'tribal collectivism', escapism into authority/authoritarianism, and the persecution of dissenters (Tillich 2014: 46-7, 89, 120). We might suggest that after the November attacks in Paris elements of this have also been apparent in different societies. In France, for example, they were perhaps evident in President Hollande's determination to wage a 'merciless' war on ISIS and provide exceptional powers to the police via a reform of the constitution (Lichfield 2015). We also see this, however, in the more general stigmatisation throughout Europe of refugees and migrants as potential terrorists, and even more explicitly in Donald Trump's call during the US presidential election campaign for a complete ban on Muslim migration into the US and his declaration that as President he would actively seek to kill the families of ISIS members. It is also evident in the threats of violence he and his supporters make against his critics. Indeed, to a large degree, Trump's attraction appears to lie in his strong man image and his ability to seduce his supporters into living vicariously through him and his successes.

There are two dangers evident when existential anxieties take a pathological turn. The first is that we lose our sense of virtue and courage to be oneself. Hence, critics of Hollande worried that his measures threatened to betray the very ideals France stood for and that were being proclaimed on the streets of Paris. In other words, in the search for meaning and certitude

we lose our sense of destiny, something which may itself later manifest as existential anxieties of guilt and condemnation, although Tillich (2014: 66) warns that attempts to preach courage to somebody 'who is pathologically fixed to a limited self-affirmation' are likely to be compulsively resisted. Second, we can also anticipate negative political and security implications, since pathologically motivated ontological security seeking is itself likely to undermine the ontological and physical security of others. We see this, for instance, with respect to Muslim communities in the West today, which have been systematically securitised and viewed as inherently suspect. While such practices have reasserted a sense of ontological security by shifting existential anxieties about nonbeing onto identifiable objects of fear (Muslims), this has been at the expense of enhanced anxiety for Muslims, whose loyalty and sense of belonging is constantly questioned (Croft 2012). Indeed, this constant questioning of Muslims' loyalty and belonging in the national/Western 'home' may well help explain why, feeling excluded and marginalised, some Muslims have been tempted by ISIS's offer of a new home, and the ontological security that brings (Ragazzi 2016: 226).

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