



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

from words
to ACTION

defining tolerance

Defining Tolerance was first published in 1997
under the supervision of Katérina Stenou, Chief of Section, Division of Cultural Pluralism, UNESCO.
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This publication, initiated by the Section for cultural identities and intercultural dialogue,
is part of the follow-up to the International Year for Tolerance (1995).

Praxiling, Unité Propre de Recherche de l'Enseignement Supérieur Associée au
Centre National de la Recherche
Scientifique,

Discours, textualité et production de sens.

Université Paul Valéry, 34199 Montpellier Cedex 5 (France)

Composed and printed by ATRESA, 46, rue Albert Luthuli,
34090 Montpellier (France).

Published in 1997 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

7, place de Fontenay, 75352 Paris 07 SP (France).

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Reprint: © UNESCO 2014, in "From words to action", published in the framework of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022) and its flagship project on the promotion of intercultural competences based on Human Rights.

SHS-2014/WS/7

defining tolerance

Edited by
Paul Siblot

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Preface

Tolerance, as we well know, is neither built into our behaviour, in the way that physiological needs like hunger and thirst are, nor a universal value practised by everyone. As the basis of democratic culture, in which truth is relative and differences are legitimate, tolerance is incompatible with totalitarian regimes, which advocate a single belief system. And yet, in a world that aspires to peace and where democracy is on the rise, it is still not a universal fact. On the contrary, we are witnessing a strong resurgence of racism, xenophobia, extreme forms of nationalism, religious fanaticism, and all kinds of social exclusion and discrimination.

Peace, concord and democracy presuppose a shared vision of the past, present and future. And to firmly establish common values, all stakeholders need to know not only what they are talking *about* but also what they are talking *with*. We cannot deal in ideas – especially ideas that have a variable or debatable content – without dealing in words, which are the vehicles of strong cultural traditions, social sensitivities and symbolic values; if we reduce them to a single formulation in some international working language, we run the risk of impoverishing or obscuring them.

Tolerance does not have a constant meaning, either in space or in time. The present, linguistically based project – which is both lexicographical and discourse-oriented, and invites further investigations of the same kind – fulfils an ethical purpose: to disseminate the sort of knowledge that will promote mutual respect and understanding. Above all, it is a response to questions about culture. There are particular moments in times of peace, or, on the contrary, in times of crisis, when tolerance and its antonyms, *intolerance* and *the intolerable*, appear, in every language, to acquire a special meaning, overlaid with ethnic, religious, social and sexual connotations, which eventually exercises a strong influence on how the concept, which has not quite come of age still, is handled.

An initial sample of languages representing various regions of the world has enabled researchers, mainly sociolinguists, led by Professor Paul Siblot, the Director of the *Praxiling* research team in Linguistic Science at the Paul Valéry University in Montpellier to conduct some initial research. Each language area has been the focus of a specific analysis that includes a description of the term, the circumstances in which it first emerged, the stages of its evolution, its use and the social milieu in which it has had currency. The intention behind these thumbnail sketches was not to produce a multilingual lexicon devised by linguists for the benefit of interpreters and translators, but, more simply and more basically, to alert the greatest number possible of those who are actively engaged in the struggle for a fairer and more harmonious society to the difficulties raised by an attempt to define their shared aspiration of living in harmony with others.

The Tower of Babel was a construction project doomed to remain uncompleted because its workers – prisoners of the logic specific to each of their languages – could not communicate with one another or agree on the building of the final storeys. The project of building tolerance, an essential element of a culture of peace, must not remain unfinished, for lack of workers. These builders – men, women and young people of goodwill – must be able to communicate with one another, whatever their

language, in order to carry out a task which, in an era of globalization, is a precondition of living in harmony.

This glossary is only the preliminary draft of an indispensable thesaurus. It reveals, notwithstanding, the riches of a common treasure of words and experiences which express, in every culture, the urgent necessity of accepting the Other.

Federico Mayor
Director-General of UNESCO (1997)

Presentation

The *logos* has always played a part, and usually a central part, in cosmogonies and foundational myths. Speech is testimony to humanity's pre-eminent position in the animal kingdom and language gives these early stories their *raison d'être*: the desire to make sense of the world. For the same reason, every philosophy must pay particular attention to language, because language is its precondition and the form of its expression. By the same token, all language-users, regardless of the nature of their discourse, is dependent on the metalinguistic level of language to elucidate the meaning of their utterances. If we feel compelled to provide a gloss in this way on what we say, it is because the meaning of the terms with which we develop and communicate our thoughts is neither fixed nor uniformly shared. Words get handed down to us with a variety of senses, senses which sometimes contradict one another and which have been assigned to them by those who came before us. We inherit these meanings for our own use, and either accept them in part or reject them entirely. These variations and this debate within language itself, a form of dialogue that is inherent to the way language works, has long been obscured by the seemingly conflicting need for a code that is common to all speakers.

Obviously, the fact that meaning is liable to change does not entitle us to confer on words any meaning we like. Not only is this power denied us, but all individuals are obliged to adhere to the common rule that governs all verbal exchanges. Homespun philosophy has always expressed it in the form of an aphorism: 'Before we can understand one another, we have first to agree on the meaning of words'. This is why this meaning is the subject of constant negotiations and transactions between speakers. This is why the need was felt, very early on, to codify, as precisely as possible, the linguistic systems that make verbal communication possible. It remains the prime function of grammars and dictionaries. The science of language, along with a handful of other sciences, like law and mathematics, has shared in the founding of cultures in the course of history. The earliest surviving evidence to date of metalinguistic activity consists of word lists carved on Sumerian clay tablets 3,000 years before our era¹. Their function has not been clearly established. Some of them seem to have had a mnemonic role, others, which are bilingual, were used for translation. But whatever their purpose, they still bear the traces of life in Mesopotamia as it was five millennia ago. Through their composition and structure, these first glossaries, just like any other lexicon, bear witness to the technology, social practices and beliefs which organize and found our societies. Words keep alive the memory of our cultures in the form of semantic strata which build up in the course of history. In the process, they do not just record passively: they also act on individuals as well as societies, and do so in a very decisive way.

At the mythological level, words were seen as having the power to act directly on the world: magical, esoteric and cabalistic formulae that are perfectly exemplified by the verses in Genesis. The capacity of language to act upon the realities it represents is visible on a smaller scale in the ordinary language of everyday life, where the meaning of words expresses a point of view, and proposes a view of the world that will then have a powerful impact on how people behave. This is confirmed by the amount of attention given thereto by social institutions. Just like individuals, States, Churches, intellectual movements, ideological currents and doctrines labour incessantly to promote their own vocabularies to win approval for their own understanding of the world. This is a part of their *raison d'être*. However, there is a great temptation for secular power to seek a spiritual status ('spiritual' in the etymological

sense of the word) and to govern attitudes as they are formed: by controlling the very processes of thought, prescribing the words to be used and the meaning they are to have. This ultimate and insane power of a truly absolute monarch was turned into a work of fiction by George Orwell. His frightening apologue illustrates how the consummate dictatorship, one which is no longer content to lay down the law but feels it can dictate to others their very thoughts, how this perfected form of tyranny defines itself in terms of linguistic orthodoxy, in a newspeak that outlaws all dissent and protest: the madness of 'Big Brother', the indisputable master of meaning.

Fortunately, that this model of totalitarianism is even conceivable has a good side. If would-be despots dream of controlling the meaning of words so that they conform to their views, it is because meaning can vary, can escape the efforts to standardize it – even the meaning of specialized terminology, the purpose of which is to impose precision, a purpose which, in this particular case, is both necessary and legitimate. The words in the lexicon, contrary to the naïve and archetypal view we may have of them, are not already endowed with a 'real meaning'. They are tools for producing meaning, a fact which profoundly affects our understanding of them.² This complex linguistic machinery works within a framework of rules that apply to all speakers of the language. Word values, however, which are the stuff of language, are susceptible to meaning variation, and this allows us a degree of latitude in evaluating a word's semantic content, a degree of freedom of interpretation. When words are used in discourse, their meaning has to be 'adjusted' to make them fit the particular circumstances and aims of the exchange. This flexibility enables them to chart the changes, over time, in our practices, techniques and knowledge: it allows them, under the same designation, to keep pace with the progress our societies make in understanding the real world and to accommodate the resulting semantic transformations to these designations. The same flexibility also allows words to absorb changes of meaning in language use, especially when a term gains currency and is adopted by other social groups, which then assign different, even conflicting, values to it. All of these variants added together can lead to some strange results.

This is what happened with the French word *tolérance* – a history shared by English *tolerance* –, which once prompted the remark that it is 'an ugly term for a beautiful thing'³. The democratic principles of freedom of thought and freedom of speech are now sufficiently embedded to prevent us from perceiving or accepting as a concession something we now consider to be a basic right. This healthy reaction, however, is due to an anachronism concerning the word's history. The idea of 'tolérance' first emerged within societies dominated by religious thought: it was only logical that this should happen in the context of monotheism, since polytheism is pluralistic by definition and so does not have to confront the issue of different beliefs. The idea of one god, on the other hand, is only conceivable by virtue of the deity's absolute nature, which cannot be relativized. And yet, within the context of monotheism, this is what the idea of religious tolerance necessarily entailed. Thus, Bossuet, the Bishop of Meaux, maintained, when French Catholics and Protestants confronted each other, that tolerance was intolerable, since it led to the acceptance of heresy and unbelief, and a failure in one's duty of Christian charity towards others, abandoned thereby to damnation. A similar argument explains the appellation of the 1562 *Edict of Tolerance*, which, still in France, gave Protestants the right to practise their faith. But this right was granted in the name of civil order and in the interests of the kingdom, not by virtue of a right, which would have been unacceptable at the time. It therefore made good sense for the Romance languages to borrow from Latin the word *tolerare*, which means to 'carry, bear (in the sense of 'endure'), hold

out, resist', in order to express the notion of resigning oneself to a 'necessary evil' in the way that we 'cut our losses': it applies to the distress we have borne in the face of opinions or behaviour deemed unacceptable in respect of our innermost convictions. This verb itself comes from another verb, *tollere*, to 'lift, raise, erect', based on the Indo-European root **tel-*, **tol-*, **tla-*, to 'bear (the weight of), lift'. This root, which, in Greek, gave Atlas his name, establishes *tolérance/tolerance* as heaviness and constraint. The result has been a contradictory situation, constantly seized on in commentaries and visible, very early on, in semantic analyses of word families. The Vulgate does indeed tell us that the crowd's demands for Jesus to be crucified were accompanied with shouts of 'Tolle! Tolle!', indicating that the instrument for his execution should be erected (the phrase 'tollé d'indignation' – 'a general outcry' – still exists in French). What we see from all this is that words with a common root can express the idea of tolerance and, at the same time, its opposite. Such antonyms are not an inconsistency in the language, because a language merely records the ever-present contradictions in human beings. The paradox can be compared to the one that turned the message of Christian charity, intended to promote love of one's fellows, into the unjustifiable justification of the Inquisition and thousands of deaths at the stake. It is not difficult to find similar aberrations in the practice of other religions, or indeed in the implementation of political projects that are presented as an improvement of the human lot. A word can therefore give a paradoxical twist to the idea it is meant to express. Other contradictions appear when we consider the vocabulary of a language as a whole.

Lexicons are the 'grids' through which humans see, divide up, categorize, name and mentally represent the world, in order to give it meaning, and every culture does this differently. The German philologist Wilhelm von Humboldt was the first person to reflect systematically on the diversity of language systems, in a work called *The Heterogeneity of Language and its Influence on the Intellectual Development of Mankind*, published in 1836. In the twentieth century, the American anthropologist Edward Sapir and his compatriot the linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf in turn took up this idea, developed it and dug more deeply into it by applying it to American Indian languages. According to their analyses, or at least to what has been preserved of their teachings, the ways in which the lexicons of remote languages divide up reality are so language-specific that the translation of terms can only be approximate, if not impossible. And yet translations keep on appearing and are sometimes remarkably accurate. This is precisely because the meaning of words can be adjusted, and because, however diverse the practices of human beings may be, they overlap sufficiently for mutual understanding to be possible.

Thus the meaning of words in general, and the meaning of *tolérance* – and *tolerance* – in particular, tells the conflict-torn story of human beings and their ideological confrontations alongside their aspiration to a common humanity. For the idea of 'tolerance' persists and has embedded itself in languages and cultures as, it seems, a commonly shared characteristic, over and above its different senses and the terms that denote them. It is this observation that spawned the present collection of essays. *How is 'tolerance' perceived, expressed and experienced in the various cultures? Which words in the various languages have the job of expressing this idea? How do they do it? What are the variants, convergences and divergences in different parts of the world? Is it possible to identify a common core within the range of terms recorded in the different languages? Or can one at least identify a common set of problems?* Put in these terms, our project is setting its sights too high; and we do not know whether a systematic programme can deliver on these issues.⁴ Our intention is the more modest one of exploring an area that needs to be uncovered in a more systematic way. The researchers who have taken part

in this venture have done so because they are in sympathy with its aims. Though conscious of the limits set for this preliminary study, and therefore its limitations, they have nevertheless felt that the scientific community could not remain indifferent to the demands of our age.

While we have tried to present a good sample of the diversity of words denoting tolerance, we do not claim to have produced a corpus representative of the thousands of languages, living or dead, that have been documented. We have tried to vary our choices, but they were sometimes dictated by available resources, research networks and even some lucky coincidences. A first group consists of several ancient languages (*Egyptian, Hebrew, Greek and Latin*). The second group brings together European languages, linked, in the case of the Romance languages, by their common ancestry, and, in terms of the group as a whole, by a history characterized by the intensity of their cultural exchanges (*Occitan, Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, French and Italian; English, Russian, Finnish and Bulgarian*). The third group has been determined on the basis of contrast (*Algonquin, Arabic, Bambara, Chinese, Gbaya, Hindi, Japanese, Kiswahili, Quechua and Wolof*). Its purpose is to illustrate, in contrast to the previous group, the sheer range of linguistic forms that express 'tolerance'. A justifiable criticism that could be made of this sample is that it does not always give enough attention to language families: that could only have been achieved through a systematic approach that would have taken us far beyond the confines of the project. As for the space given to European languages, it is, of course, a reflection of the composition of the team engaged in this initial exploration, but not just that. It was, after all, the ideas of the Enlightenment that so decisively promoted the debate on 'tolerance', in tandem with the debate on democracy, and which have given to 'Modern Times' their most characteristic traits. It is also regrettable that the limited scope of the project has meant privileging the lexicographical dimension at the expense of discourse analysis, which is the only real way of capturing nuances of meaning. These areas of investigation may well become the subject of later analyses in different contexts.

Researchers have been given a free rein and assume responsibility for what they have written. The effect of this openness has been to highlight two orientations that, at first sight, seem to be opposed to each other. Some researchers, dissatisfied with linguistic usage and the social, religious and political practices relating to 'tolerance', criticize what they see as unacceptable shortcomings. Others, in contrast, are at pains to show that the culture, language and society about which they are writing provide a blueprint, as it were, for 'tolerance'. If we take this reasoning to its logical conclusion, we encounter the familiar view that intolerance is mainly other people's intolerance, and so we discover within the body of the analyses the very attitudes they purport to denounce... This only goes to show that researchers in the human sciences are not detached from the object of their research nor from the dialectics they are working on. It also goes to show, and this is the important point, that these ostensibly opposed attitudes are in reality based on the same recognition of the complete legitimacy of 'tolerance'.

The first lesson to be learnt from our collective approach lies in the observation that humanity is only conceivable if we acknowledge others; in a mutual tolerance, a principle which is the very first of common rules.

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tolerance, in a word

each is right from his own point of view, but it is not impossible that everyone is wrong; hence the need for tolerance.

by cultivating in ourselves tolerance of other views, we acquire a truer understanding of our own.

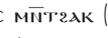
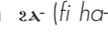
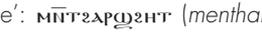
gandhi

Ancient Egyptian

Religious tolerance and national intransigence

Egyptian is a Semitic language, which, in its hieroglyphic form, omits vowels, save for rare exceptions – the written form of words of Babylonian origin includes their full syllabic composition –, unlike Coptic (fourth and fifth centuries), the latest stage of the Egyptian language, which uses the Greek alphabet and signs borrowed from the Demotic script. In hieroglyphic writing, the determiner aids word comprehension; it immediately allows a word to be distinguished from a homograph with a different vowel.

Egyptian has two terms that correspond to the notion of *tolerance* or *indulgence*, derived from their original meaning: the verbs  *oukhed* to 'suffer, endure, bear' and  *tjam*, meaning to 'cover oneself', referring essentially to the face. The former, which relates mainly to physical suffering, can render the idea of to 'tolerate' someone, to 'behave in a kind or indulgent manner (towards others)'. The latter, 'to cover one's face with regard to someone', is the equivalent of to 'be indulgent or tolerant (towards others)'; it has a corresponding noun: *jamet* 'indulgence' .

Documents written in Coptic, the latest stage of Egyptian, evoke concepts belonging to a different mental universe from that of early Egyptian. In biblical texts, Greek *épieikeia* 'tolerance' is rendered by Coptic  (*menthak*) 'level-headedness, abstemiousness, of good character', formed with the prefix denoting abstraction  – (*ment*) and the adjective  (*hak*) 'gentle, level-headed'. It is even the equivalent of 'serenity', since it includes the meaning of 'thoughtful, restrained, not acting on impulse', and is thus the opposite of a word of identical construction  (*mentsok*) 'madness, a senseless act, recklessness'. 'To bear, endure (someone or an attitude)' is rendered by the expression 'to bear (a burden)', in  (*fi ha-*), from the verb  to 'bear' and the preposition  (*ha-*) 'under, about'. Greek also uses an expression that has the meaning of 'patience, endurance, indulgence':  (*mentarch het*), which can be broken down into:  (*ment*), (prefix denoting abstraction) +  (*harch*) 'to be heavy' (as a qualifying adjective) +  (*het*) 'heart', in sum 'to be patient, to be able to withstand the test whatever the cost'.

The divine is one, and its expression multiple

Egyptian, then, makes use of several words related to tolerance as applied to the relations between individuals. Tolerance is described as being all the more essential when living conditions are difficult. This is what the seer Neferti has to say, in describing the troubled times that preceded the Twelfth Dynasty: 'We respond to a word, brandishing our weapons: people say: Do not kill him'. Dialogue has the effect of fire on the heart; we cannot tolerate what comes out of the mouths of others.¹⁵

On the other hand, words denoting this concept are not applied to basic beliefs, since rites and cults are founded upon 'divine words' – *medou-netjer* – communicated through ancestors, and therefore the only guarantee of efficacy.

i do Not Like
the word
tolerance,
but i cannot
think of a
better one.

gandhi

Any departure from artistic or religious traditions was prohibited in intellectual life, even if the proposer of the reforms was a king. Akhenaten, in espousing an ideology that took the solar disc – Aton – as the privileged expression of the Divine, challenged conventions in the most radical way. The worshippers of Aton, in an attempt to obliterate all traces of the cult of Amun-Re, used their chisels to erase the Karnak god's name. But the Armana Period, which constituted a revolution in ideas about institutions, art and beliefs, ended in failure and oblivion. Egypt had never before experienced to the same degree such a need for change, but one that was soon suppressed because of the overriding necessity of adhering to ancestral principles. What we see in the centuries that followed the Armana interlude, is a gradual rise in the expression of social desires, culminating in a clash between the last upholders of traditional culture and Christianity. This struggle, like the earlier one, unfolded without either of the parties invoking the principle of tolerance.

Life in Ancient Egypt was unrelievedly punctuated by ethno-religious conflicts. The various human groups distributed along the Nile valley did not form a homogeneous civilization in terms of their beliefs. The result was a burgeoning of pantheism, perfectly summed up by Iamblichus (+ 330-325 C.E.) in his *Egyptian Mysteries*: '*[Egyptian doctrine] starts with the One and proceeds to the many, the many in turn being governed by the One, and indeterminate nature is controlled everywhere by a certain determinate measure and by the final cause which unifies everything*'.⁶

Although the Divine is one, its expression is multiple. Its local variants took the form that was best suited to the original environment. Eventually, the inhabitants of each province embraced the local expression of the divinity. On the basis of traditions, whose main characteristics were reproduced in treatises on religious geography, these characteristics maintained powerful links or else gave rise to deep, ritualistic antagonisms. The conception of the diversity of the Divine stemmed from the desire to unite Egypt as a nation. At the same time, this principle did not negate the individual as one who came from a cultural space with its own particular values.

Nationalism and reactions against the foreign culture

The core of Egyptian culture, to which Egyptians were instinctively bound, consisted of knowledge of the sacred books, which had been listed by Clement of Alexandria and reproduced in the texts of the sacerdotal libraries, and a familiarity with legends and pilgrimages to the most ancient sites, which were associated with age-old traditions. The attachment of Egyptians to their national and local cults, especially those concerning sacred animals, which they saw as the intermediaries of divine forces, grew stronger as the political, economic and religious pressures from outside the country became more severe, especially during the Ptolemaic and Roman period. This period saw a spate of reactions of unaccustomed violence, especially towards those who failed to observe Egyptian customs. In the reign of Ptolemy II, for instance, a Roman, having accidentally killed a cat, was set upon by the local people and slaughtered.

Other reactions reflected the quarrels that set at odds the inhabitants of two neighbouring nomes – the Ombites and the Tentyrites –, the two parties accusing each other of violating their respective taboos. Generally speaking, the specific nature of cults and interdictions was a way of asserting

i Hdve never
caused men,
MY fellow
HUMANS, to
weep.

the book of the dead

one's identity, so that anyone who wanted to bring humiliation upon a neighbouring town would begin by attacking the values that its inhabitants held dear.

The intensity of this animosity, which excluded any form of forbearance, strengthened towards the first half of the fourth century (the Edict of Constantine, 313), a period in which governments oscillated between traditional forms of worship and Christianity, the oscillations becoming more extreme in the fifth century. The ideological quarrels that had set the two camps against each other immediately became an incompatibility issue, to the extent that culture, Egyptian patriotism and the defence of traditional beliefs became one and the same thing. Maintaining the hieroglyphic Egyptian language and spoken Egyptian formed part of the resistance to Greek, the language of oppression. In the eyes of the last remaining worshippers of Hellenized Egyptian divinities, switching to Christianity and abandoning ancestral values amounted to heresy. Nevertheless, denial was imminent.

This position is embodied in Horapollo, a famous author who belonged to this dual Greco-Egyptian culture. Horapollo, though a well-known philosopher from an old family that had traditionally defended what was left of Egyptian religion, set about teaching with fanatical zeal the last remnants of the language written in monumental hieroglyphics. Despite the fact that he belonged to a current of resistance that had asserted itself while the Greco-Roman world was going into a decline, the second half of his life was marked by a forced conversion.

Horapollo and the Alexandrian circle to which he belonged embodied the last token of resistance of pagan Alexandrian philosophy, which was desperately defending its doctrine.⁷

A great divide thus separated forces that were antagonistic and irreconcilable, one side served by the last remaining priests from Thebaid, who were seeing all their values evaporate, and the other by the Fathers of the Church, who did not hesitate to use the whole panoply of ideological arguments deriving from the Greco-Latin philosophical tradition. Although tolerance was not its strong point, Christianity did nevertheless develop this subject, even in Egypt, where it appears in Coptic texts, vividly portrayed in images that invariably favour the idea of a 'burden'. However, these images, as in earlier antiquity, stood no chance of being applied to dogma itself, since, in this rapidly changing world, there was no possibility of compromise on either side.

Sidney Aufrère

the stranger
who dwells
among you
shall be to
you as one
born among
you, and
you shall
love him as
yourself.

Leviticus 19, 34

Hebrew

Tolerance or co-existence?

While Modern Hebrew does not have an exact equivalent for the word 'tolerance', it does have terms related to the notion and especially to political, social and cultural practices.

This semantic peculiarity, which is certainly connected with the place that such a modern and European notion may have in Semitic thought, only takes on its full meaning in the context of Hebrew traditions and the history of Israel. It has to be borne in mind that, during the Jewish diaspora, Jews became exiles and therefore ceased to be actors at a national level; this meant that, to begin with, the problem of intolerance was posed primarily in terms of the host countries. It is not until the twentieth century, and more specifically the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, that the problem is posed *in real terms*, that is to say, in the institutional and linguistic terms of a territory and a political and social reality dominated by time-honoured traditions, but also by the complexity of a multi-community situation, which is precisely what brings the notion of tolerance into play. In fact, it is around this situation and its interpretation that a practice defining the relations between the different components of Israel's mosaic has taken shape, the most prominent of such relations being those between a religious and a non-religious public. The ideal of tolerance generally accepted and prevalent in a society whose philosophical and ideological models are profoundly European comes up against the reality of living out this ideal, most of the time, in purely mythical, even negative, terms. To criticize this reality, 'intolerance' is used far more than 'tolerance', and it is mainly expressions relating to intolerance that have survived in the lexicon of Modern Hebrew, as in, for example, *kfiyah datit* (literally 'religious constraint'), synonymous in this context with 'religious intolerance'.

More generally but with a very diffuse meaning, it is the term *sovlanut*, derived from a root associated mainly with suffering, that will be used to denote, or more to the point to translate, the idea of tolerance. However, nothing is more alien, it seems, to the Hebrew tradition than the duty of kindness and compassion implied by tolerance. Rather, this tradition tells us that the relationship to the stranger, to what is different from oneself, is inextricably bound up with the presence of place, with the home. The stranger is a part of the household, so that he is given no special treatment, except to be regarded as a *ben-bait* (a 'son of the family'). This is registered by the language, which establishes a significant link between *guer* ('the stranger') and *lagur* ('to inhabit'), and is illustrated by the biblical examples of Ruth, the foreigner called to share the house of Israel, and Ishmael, the son of Agar, the servant, who was circumcised to show that he, too, belonged to the 'household'.

Michel Eckhard Elial

therefore,
whatever
you want
men to do to
you, do also
to them, for
this is the
law and the
prophets.

new testament, matthew 7, 12

Greek

Demystification, religious pluralism and monotheistic absolutism

Τὰ οὐόματα [ta onomata]: words

Consulting the various dictionaries, we come up with the following words, sufficiently numerous to demonstrate the concept's wide range of meanings:

Άνοχή [anokhē]: in Ancient Greek (a) with a prefix **Άνα-** [ana-] meaning 'upwards': the action of pulling up (water from a well, for instance); (b) with a prefix **Άνα-** [ana-] meaning 'behind': the action of retaining, stopping or suspending' ('armistice' in Xenophon, Aeschines and Plutarch, 'rest' or 'leisure' in the Septuagint, 'patience, forbearance' among the Stoics – we find in one Stoic context a development of the famous Epictetus quotation *Endure and abstain*, **άνέχου καὶ άπέχου** [anekhō kai apekhō] – and in Christian texts from the New Testament onwards). The corresponding verb **άνέχω** [anekhō] means 'I carry upwards, I bear, I support', and in its mediopassive form **άνέχομαι** [anekhōmai] 'I hold myself, I contain myself, I am firm, I bear'. We also find the adjective **άνεκτός** [anektos], the adverb **άνεκτώς** [anektōs], and even the noun denoting the character of that which is bearable **άνεκτότης** [anektotēs]. The word and its derivatives have essentially kept their moral meanings up to the present.

Υπομονή [hypomonē]: (verb, **ύπομένω** [hypomenō], 'I stay behind, I remain, I withstand the shock, I endure'; adjective **ύπομενετικός** [hypomenetikos]). Modern developments confirm this meaning. Both terms, then, have a moral dimension, whether, as a victim, one suffers another's aggression, with the individual's moral strength overcoming the harm done to him, or whether, from a position of superiority, one accepts and forgives. It is certainly the latter meaning that **άνοχή** assumes in the *New Testament* and among the Church Fathers in connection with God's tolerance concerning the sins of humankind. Moreover, in most cases, the term is accompanied by **μακροθυμία** [makrothymia], which means 'forbearance' and is related to indulgence, an idea that is also found in the other terms that express the notion of tolerance; **επιείκεια** [epieikeia] originally 'the happy medium, fairness, kindness, clemency'; **εϋνοία** [eunoia] 'goodwill, kindness'; **συνχώρησις** to 'meet in the same place', to 'move closer together', to 'concede', then to 'forgive'.

It is clear that none of the terms examined above accounts for the notion of social tolerance, as defined by the French philosophers of the Enlightenment. It was not until 1766, when E. Voulgaris translated a work by Voltaire – adding to it a short treatise on tolerance, composed by himself but owing much to Voltaire – that the compound **άνεξιθρησκεία** [anexithrēskeia] is introduced, which means precisely **ή άνοχή τών θρησκειών** [hē anokhē tōn thrēskeiōn] 'tolerance of religions'. When there was a desire to include the tolerance of political and religious ideas in the first Constitution of 1822, the term **άνοχή** [anokhē] was used, to which was added **τών θρησκευτικών καὶ**

we are all,
and in all,
identical
by birth,
greeks and
barbarians.

ANTIPHON (5th century b.c.e.)

πολιτικῶν φρονημάτων [tôn thrêskeutikôn kai politikôn phronêmatôn] ‘tolerance of religious and political ideas’.

Can this complex and rather loosely connected collection of lexical items be explained by the fact that, throughout its history, Hellenism was not fertile ground for the development of values connected with the notion of tolerance?

The other, the *barbarian*

In the classical period, the Greeks, who used a single term, ‘barbarian’, to refer to foreigners, were disinclined to accept otherness. Moreover, the virtue of tolerance was hardly practised, even under Athenian democracy: the Sophist Protagoras was accused of impiety, Socrates was condemned to drink hemlock, which was also said to have been the fate of the Sophist Prodicus on the grounds of atheism. This last piece of information is incorrect but what is significant is that it was long held to be true. Nevertheless, we find among the early Sophists ideas that were conducive to a tolerant attitude. As disciples of nature, they stressed the conventional nature of civic laws and customs and regarded as illegitimate all discrimination against those who did not adapt to the civic model of excellence; they also rejected distinctions based on ethnic origin, social status and religious convictions: Hippias asserted that all men were related to one another and fellow-citizens, in the name of nature; Lycophron spoke out against social discrimination and the predominance of the aristocracy; Antiphon condemned ‘racism’ against barbarians, declaring that nature had made all men alike; and Alcidas proclaimed that no human being is a slave by nature. Finally, we should not forget the arguments of the Cynics on the return to nature, which led them to relativize the moral ideas that were current in different societies. This demystification of the rules by which each city made its value judgements obviously enabled intolerant attitudes to be called into question. However, the example of the Sophists and Cynics remained a marginal phenomenon in Greek society during the classical period.

Hellenistic times were characterized by a degree of cosmopolitanism: to give greater cohesion to his empire, Alexander married the daughter of Darius, while his soldiers took Persian wives. A certain kind of tolerance is seen to emerge with the religious syncretism that he promoted. To recognize Zeus in the god Ammon and to seek in Mithra the attributes of the Greek gods was a way of acknowledging the Other.

Belief in the existence of the same divinity under different names, which developed during the Hellenistic period (henotheism), resulted in a de facto tolerance.

The uncertainties of religious freedoms

The spread of Christianity in the Greco-Roman world would put a stop to this evolution of mentalities. Monotheism was not prepared to co-exist alongside other religions and did not tolerate the unauthorized use of its doctrine, hence its condemnation of the Gnostics, for example, and the persecution that cast Christians in the role of either victim or villain. Edicts of tolerance, which seemed

do Not think
that ONLY
You are
wise, that
You can
speak and
think like no
one else.

sophocles (495 – 406).

capable of ensuring the peaceful coexistence of pagans and Christians through the introduction of religious freedom, would not last long. Christianity, which quickly became the State religion, would close Athens University, where pagan philosophers and rhetors were teaching (526) and a theocratic Byzantium would organize an auto-da-fé for the works of Gemistus Pletho (fifteenth century), whose disciple Jovenarios suffered a martyr's death.

After 1453, the Greeks, having once been dominant, were now dominated. Their religion, once the State religion, was now a tolerated religion. The Ottomans respected the fact that they belonged to a religion of the Book and, in return for the payment of a special tax, authorized religious worship under the responsibility of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Apart from uprisings that were always savagely suppressed, it was in this Ottoman city that the Greeks had their first taste of religious pluralism. At the same time that their national consciousness was galvanized by their orthodox identity, Enlightenment ideas spread among Greek intellectuals, especially in the Phanariot circles of Moldavia and Wallachia. Here, people read and translated Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. Also, it is in this context that the word **ἀνεξιθρησκεία** [anexithrêskeia], referred to above, was introduced.

Thus, when the Greeks rose up in 1821 in their bid for independence, and following the Epidaurus Constitution of 1822, Christianity once again became the State religion. However, probably under the influence of the French Constitution of 1793 and the Declaration of the Rights of Man, the law introduced the notion of religious tolerance, a concept that would henceforth be written into all official texts. The 1975 Constitution, revised in 1985, established the constitutional regime of **ἀνεξιθρησκεία** [anexithrêskeia], implying the recognition of other religions, and the rule that had made the orthodox religion a precondition for becoming head of State was abolished. In spite of this, however, the regime was not one of religious equality, in which all religions benefited from the same status, the same protection and the same prerogatives in the eyes of the government: orthodoxy, described as the State religion, had precedence over all other so-called 'known' religions, whose doctrines and cultural practices could not remain secret and which were obliged to refrain from any form of proselytism. Religious equality never had currency in Greece, despite the attempt by Rhigas, the translator of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, to have the wording of Constantine's Edicts of Tolerance (c. 313 BCE) adopted: **ἐλευθερία της θρησκείας** [eleutheria tês thirêskeias] 'freedom of religion', a formulation we owe to Eusebius of Caesarea, the translator of the Latin text of the Edicts.

As we have seen, it is history that explains why the notion of tolerance is expressed in Greek by a variety of terms that only occasionally correspond to the French word's meaning, as it is defined in Enlightenment thought and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.⁸

Marie-Paule Masson, Vana Nicolai-Kirianidou and Stavros Pérentidis

Live your
Life in truth
and justice
and with
tolerance,
even of the
false and
the unjust.

Marcus Aurelius (121-180)

Latin

Were the Romans tolerant?

Verba (words)

The word *tolerance* is unquestionably of Latin origin. Like the adjectives *tolerans* 'patient' and *tolerabilis* 'bearable', the adverb *toleranter* 'patiently' and the noun *toleratio* 'the capacity to bear', *tolerantia* is derived from the verb *tolerare* to 'bear, withstand', which belongs to the family of *tollere* to 'lift, remove', which, originally, must have meant to 'carry, bear'. However, *tolerantia* is rare in Classical Latin and only ever denotes the capacity to endure physical pain, tiredness or cold... There is no sign of it having evolved into the modern meaning of the term, even in Late Latin.

That still leaves the question as to whether the Romans called tolerance by other names. Latin did, in fact, have different words with meanings that were close to this idea: *patientia* 'indulgence' (which tended to be perceived as a fault), *lenitas* 'gentleness', *benignitas* 'goodness', *facilitas* 'kindness', *mansuetudo* 'leniency', *misericordia* 'pity', *clementia* 'clemency', *benevolentia* 'charity' and *humanitas* 'humanity'.

'Nothing that is human is alien to me'

Of all these terms, *humanitas* is perhaps the one that comes closest to what we understand by 'tolerance', namely a physical, moral, religious and cultural respect for others. The Romans liked to quote this striking maxim: *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto*, 'I am a human being. I consider nothing that is human alien to me.'⁹ According to Cicero, it is our 'humanity' that distinguishes us from the animals; it is defined by language and reason (*oratio* and *ratio*) and obliges us to show a minimum of generosity to our fellows (*liberalitas*): such as providing a glass of water, fire, or showing someone the way. This falls short of tolerance as a primordial and universal virtue, for although the human community is the widest of the circles to which individuals belong, it is not this circle to which they feel most closely bound: the homeland, friends, family and the small band of good people (*boni*) come before it.¹⁰

Seneca goes further when he bases the respect that is due to slaves on the existence of a 'right of living beings', an idea he probably owed to the Stoics. *Cum in servum omnia liceant, est aliquid quod in homine licere commune ius animantium vetet*. 'Although the law allows anything when dealing with a slave, yet in dealing with a human being there is an extreme which the right common to all living creatures refuses to allow.'¹¹ Christians continued along this path by attaching great importance to the unity of humankind: *Nec nobis de nostra frequentia blandiamur: multi nobis videmur sed deo admodum pauci sumus. Nos gentes nationesque distinguimus: deo una domus est mundus hic totus*. 'Neither let us flatter ourselves concerning our multitude. We seem many to

it is impious
to take
away men's
freedom in
religious
matters.

turtuLLiAN (155-200)

ourselves, but to God we are very few. We distinguish people and nations; to God this whole world is just one family.¹²

But alas, practice is often a far cry from theory and we are justified in wondering whether the Romans, who spoke of *humanitas*, actually practised the virtue of tolerance. It is obviously a very difficult task to judge a people as a whole and the historian's verdict can only be a qualified one.

'Crimes against humanity'

Military success had given the Romans an unshakeable faith in the superiority of their warrior virtues, their material civilization, their institutions and their gods. Despite reversals, sometimes serious ones, this certainty remained intact, until Rome was sacked by the Visigoth Alaric in 410. The image of the Romans as arrogant, rigid, and at times cruel and xenophobic, is unfortunately borne out by a number of 'crimes against humanity': gladiator fights, the existence of slavery and the persecution of Christians. To this roll of dishonour could be added the savage suppression of the cult of Dionysius-Bacchus in 186 BCE (several thousands of victims), periodic expulsions of philosophers, Jews and even... Italians and Latins (177 and 122 BCE)! Xenophobia sometimes took a brutal form, nor did writers themselves pull their punches, as evidenced by Juvenal's famous third satire, which compared the flow of Orientals into the Capital to a sewer spewing its contents into the Tiber. Julius Caesar, who was noted for his clemency, nonetheless, justified genocide against the Eburon Gauls in terms that send shivers down one's spine: *ut... pro tali facinore stirps ac nomen civitatis tollatur*, 'in order that... the race and name of that State may be annihilated for such a crime.'¹³

These crimes are indisputable, but, without in any way excusing the horrors that were perpetrated, certain qualifications need to be made, for it would be impossible to understand how the *Imperium Romanum* was able to expand to the limits of the Mediterranean world and physically survive for more than a millennium – and for still longer in people's imagination – if it had been founded purely on violence and contempt for other peoples.

The Roman melting-pot

There was nothing systematic about Rome's hostility towards foreigners. They were usually well received and their identity respected. Texts can even be found which defend their integration into the city. The most famous of these was a speech delivered before the Senate by Claudius on 15 August 48 CE, requesting that Gallic dignitaries be admitted to the famous Assembly. The Emperor reminded his listeners that Rome had had Etruscan kings and that it had always made Roman citizenship and political office accessible to foreigners. In fact, in the last years of the Republic and during the Empire, few dignitaries could pride themselves of having only Roman ancestors. Cicero himself was of Italian origin and was called an 'immigrant' (*inquilinus urbis Romae*) by his political enemies. He retorted that he had a dual homeland: the one where he was born and Rome.¹⁴ With the hindsight of history, at a time when contemporary nations seem to be withdrawing behind their borders and restricting access by foreigners to their territory and privileges, the Ancient Romans did

just the opposite: in 212 CE, all free men in the Empire were granted the rights of Roman citizenship (*civitas*).

The same contrast is apparent in the Roman attitude to foreign cultures. They considered their civilization to be superior to all others, but for the most part they had borrowed it from the Greeks. Their faculty for assimilation was both intellectual and ethnic. Thus, two attitudes are completely absent from their mind-set: doctrinal racism, and linguistic and religious constraints. It is impossible to find a single text in which anyone is singled out because of the colour of their skin. Furthermore, the Romans never tried to enforce the use of their language, except in administrative matters, and they practised Greco-Latin bilingualism themselves. As for religion, polytheism did not entail any orthodoxy and adapted without any difficulty to innovations and borrowings from foreign cults: gods, rituals and even superstitions... the only limit was civil obedience: it was the Christians' refusal to worship the Emperor that led to their being persecuted. Besides, the Christians themselves did not prove to be any more respectful, once they in turn constituted the majority in the population: barely more than 40 years separate Constantine's edicts of tolerance (313) and the banning of pagan sacrifices by Magnentius under pain of death (1 December 354). In 529, the Emperor Justinian would suppress freedom of conscience, but in the monasteries, Christians continued to patiently copy out the manuscripts of the ancient authors. Without them, that vast cultural heritage would have been lost and, with it, this wonderful defence of tolerance, which had not yet been given a name, and which we owe to the pagan orator Symmachus, who, in 384 CE, claimed the right to think and to live in accordance with the ancient traditions: *Aequum est, quicquid omnes colunt, unum putari: eadem spectamus astra, commune caelum est, idem nos mundus involuit: quid interest qua quisque prudentia verum requirat? Uno itinere non potest perveniri ad tam grande secretum*: 'Whatever the beliefs of each of us, it is right to look upon them as one and the same thing: we see the same stars, the same sky is above us, the same world around us. What does it matter if each pursues the truth through his own wisdom? We cannot arrive at the solution to so great a mystery by a single path.'¹⁵

Michel Griffe

kill them
all, for god
knows his
own.

the papal Legate, 1209,
the crusade against the Albigensians

The Area of Romance

Language families and word families

It is from the verb form (Catalan: *tolerar*; Castilian: *tolerar*; French: *tolérer*; Portuguese: *tolerar*; and Italian: *tollerare*) that the different Romance languages form the noun *tolerance* (Catalan: *tolerança*, then *tolerancia*; French: *tolérance*; Portuguese: *tolerância*; and Italian: *tolleranza*). In French and Spanish, this form exists alongside a second form, which actually preceded it and is based on another suffix: *tolération*, *toleracion*, which disappeared at the end of the Middle Ages.

We shall start from the French verb to account for the production of the different meanings of the noun, and for the following reason, in particular: although in Modern French *tolérance* is indisputably a virtue, *tolérer* still means essentially to accept a state of affairs that is deemed not to be legitimate, or to accept reluctantly someone's presence, in spite of his faults.

French *tolérer*, which comes from the Latin *tolerare* ('to bear', 'to endure'), is itself derived from *tollere* ('to bear', in the physical sense in which the columns of a temple bear its weight), means first and foremost in the different languages 'to bear or to suffer something unpleasant', whether it is a case of physical ills or of moral ones. Thus, in 1399, we find the Catalan author Bernat Metge writing: 'You have spoken ill of the woman I love most in the whole world: This – I warn you – I cannot tolerate with patience.' (*Has dit terrible mal de la dona que jo més am en lo mon; dicte que aço no poria pacientment tollerar*) Somni, IV.

Like any other verb, French *tolérer* contains a syntactic representation of the human action: it connects the act to the actor (a human subject or a comparable one); as a transitive verb, it expresses the target on which the action will imprint its result: in French, as in English, one tolerates (*tolère*) *something* or *the way things are* or less frequently *someone*. The favoured object of *tolérer* consists, therefore, in something being done, an action: *to tolerate* ('tolérer') *X doing (or not doing) Y*. Like *permettre* ('to allow') and *autoriser* ('to authorize'), *tolérer* concerns not the attitude of an isolated individual (or group) but interaction between opposing forces. The verb presupposes a power relationship, and its temporary stabilization, for want of something better. The *Diccionario de Autoridas* of the Spanish eighteenth century gives for *tolerar*, apart from the sense of 'to endure', two other meanings: - 'to turn a blind eye to an action that deserves to be punished'; - to allow actions that are unlawful, without punishing the offender'. All of which went on to have an impact on the early semantic make-up of words for *tolerance* in the Romance languages.

Jacques Bres

Occitan

Were Occitania and Andalusia a golden age for 'living in harmony'?

Without going so far as to claim that Medieval Occitan society has generated a great deal of fantasizing, we can at least suggest that it has been credited with many qualities, perhaps, in the end, because to those that have shall be given...¹⁶

It has been said that Medieval Occitan had difficult and beautiful words for tolerance: *convivencia*, which is not adequately rendered by 'coexistence', *paratge*, tentatively defined as equality in perfection... These words allowed one to presuppose or to imagine the existence of an Occitania that was an open society, in which the art of the troubadours placed on an equal footing a powerful lord like Guilhem d'Aquitaine and Bernart de Ventadorn, the son of his valet, in which the beauty of poetry wove links between Arabic poetry in Spain and the Occitanian *trobar*, and in which scientific curiosity ensured a welcome for Jewish and Arab scientists, whose names still feature on the marble plaques of Montpellier's Université de Médecine, even though their historical existence is more than doubtful... If the 'sages of Provence', addressed by the troubadour Guilhem de Montanhagol in his mysterious *A Lunel lutz una luna luzens*... really were cabbalist scientists, then it would mean that Jews were integrated into Occitanian intellectual circles.

This was how the Jewish traveller Benjamin de Todèle described the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Montpellier in the thirteenth century: 'People come from all over to do business: from Edom, Ishmael, the Algarve, Lombardy, the Empire of the great city of Rome, every part of Egypt, Palestine, Greece, France, Asia and England. One meets the peoples of every nation busy trading through the Genoans and Pisans they use as intermediaries.' In fact, according to historians, opposition between religions did not impede trade unduly, in spite of protests from the Church: even wood and iron were exported, which were used by the Saracens to manufacture weapons. Trading between Muslims and the Montpellier bourgeoisie was so common that the Bishop of Maguelone, one Berenguer de Fredol, allowed coins with an Arabic inscription to be minted, for which he was taken to task by Pope Clement IV in 1266.

We should not, however, confuse easy access to trade with a sense of equality or humanity: any Saracen, man or woman, who entered the city in the second half of the twelfth century was deemed taxable just like a good, and had to pay a customs duty of three sous. He or she was recorded in a special category, alongside pigs. Occitanian traders were just as unscrupulous when it came to trading Saracen slaves. This all came down to the fact that the right to tolerance was sacred so long as it did not impinge on the right to do business, which just goes to show what a thoroughly modern outlook they had.

On a more serious note, at the very time when, in literature, the *chansons de geste* were singing the praises of a fresh and exuberant Crusade, in which shedding Saracen blood was tantamount

they openly
defend,
maintain
and profess
their errors
before the
inquisitors.

inquisitor b. gui

to purifying oneself, the *langue d'oc* version of the *Song of Roland*, the *Ronsasvals*, shows us the very Christian hero assisted, as he lies dying at Ronceveaux, by a Saracen, Falceron, one who has chosen the false faith: 'Falceron said: "I am going to see die / the best warrior that death could ever kill: / if I could revive or heal him, / I would dearly want to help to prolong his life." / He moved very close to him, / raised his head and wiped his face: / "Roland, he said, it is time for God to hear you." / At this point the soul separated itself from the body / and Falceron took it upon himself to bless him: "Roland, he said, this is all I can say to you. May this God who decided to create so beautiful a body / save your soul and protect you from all danger; / I can do nothing more for you: I must flee." / He immediately took his leave of him, / for he could clearly hear Charlemagne's army approaching.'

The last gesture of tenderness on the battlefield at Ronceveaux is that of a Saracen, who is capable of conceiving of religious otherness; and it is, moreover, a Christian author who grants him this ability! This is what makes us want to go on fantasizing about this Atlantis that Occitania was in the Middle Ages.

The Toledo of the Spanish Middle Ages has also set people dreaming a great deal, the Toledo of the three religions (Catholic, Jewish and Muslim). This myth was sustained by an abundance of symbols. Among them featured the famous translations involving two interpreters (often Jews), from Arabic into Castilian and from Castilian into Latin, a perfect example of positive interaction between cultures. There are also the illustrations in the *Book of Games* by Alphonse Le Sage (twelfth century), which shows on each side of a chessboard sometimes a Christian and a Muslim, sometimes a Muslim and a Jew: the actors have changed, the confrontation has shifted to the ground of friendly interaction and the only activity is recreational and intellectual – images pregnant with meaning!

But the reality was somewhat different. Far from involving freedom and equality, this harmonious living was based on discrimination by the culturally or religiously dominant group – whether this was Christian or Muslim – against minorities who were exposed to all kinds of abuse. Whatever the praxis which the real world imposed and which was masked by this '*harmonious living*' (before the term tolerance became established), the aim of Islam, like that of Christianity, remained the disappearance of the other religion. But since otherness could not be abolished, it was tolerated...

G rard Gouiron

who could
approve of
sentencing
to death
an entire
world that
has done no
wrong?

bartolomé de las casás (1474-1566)

Spanish

An intolerable *tolerancia*

In the Spanish lexicon, it is the noun *tolerancia* that immediately springs to mind. Morphological proximity to the other Romance languages obviously points to the Latin etymon (*tolerantia*). A semantic analysis brings to light a range of common meanings. Thus, current Spanish dictionaries record the meaning inherited from Enlightenment philosophy: a tolerant person is one who has no difficulty in accepting opinions that are different from his or her own. If the word was able to accommodate this modern meaning, it is because it was already associated with the idea of indulgence. The *Diccionario de Autoridades*, a lexicographical monument of the classical language, documents the fact: a tolerant person is one who refuses to condemn the attitudes of others, even though he or she would be justified in doing so. Spanish speakers, like French speakers, also apply the term tolerance to an organism's capacity to withstand the action of a foreign body, in conformity to its etymological meaning. And, again like French speakers, they tolerate the acceptable margin between the technical specifications of a product and its actual performance.

However, *tolerancia* seems more mindful of its Latin past. On the Spanish side of the Pyrenees, a person will still say that a bridge cannot 'tolerate' a load of more than five tons. And so, the entity being 'tolerated' is a burden.

Spain's 'black legend'

Does this mean that Spanish speakers are linguistically discouraged from being tolerant? That they equate tolerance with suffering? That they cannot cope with the 'difference' except through *pronunciamientos* or *guerras de guerrillas*, through civil wars or inquisitorial trials? It is true that the great theorists of tolerance have used the Iberian counter-example in support of their arguments. In his *Treatise on Tolerance*, Voltaire attacks both peninsular States:

'Human rights can only ever be founded on natural rights: and the great principle, the universal principle of both, everywhere on earth, is: "Do not do that which you would not want done to you". Now, it is impossible to understand, according to this principle, how one man could say to another: "Believe what I believe, and what you do not believe, or else you will die." But this is what is said in Portugal, Spain and Goa. (Ch.VI)

'We know that the first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem were circumcised Jews, who observed the Sabbath and abstained from eating the forbidden meats. A Spanish or Portuguese bishop who got himself circumcised and observed the Sabbath would be burnt alive in an auto-da-fé. (Ch. XI).'

This is the beginning of Spain's 'Black Legend', the Spain of the Inquisition and the Conquistadors, which, a century later, spawned its very opposite, a tolerant Spain, the Spain with three religions.

Leave each to
deal, as best
he can, with
his own sins.
it is not fitting
for honest
men to be the
executioners of
other men.

cervantes (1547-1616)

Two features have been identified, one semantic (tolerance is also suffering, endurance), the other historical, which projects Spain as the very model of *intolerance*, according to the definition given by Enlightenment philosophy. It remains to be determined whether the two are connected.

A semantic analysis brings to light the ambiguities inherent in the very notion of tolerance. The tolerant person is supposed to respect the other, while suffering from his or her presence. This is a lovely paradox, which prevents us from thinking that the tolerant person does not believe in the ultimate truth and sees in the Other an Equal. Looking at the matter more closely, we discover that the person who tolerates can only do so by virtue of a superiority bestowed on him-or herself. The person tolerated is not respected, but merely has the right to exist, owing to the goodwill of the dominator. For the tolerant person – this is who is in question here – is the person who decides on the acceptable margin between what must be and what may be. Applied to politics, the same power relationship obtains. The prince cannot tolerate anything that might call his legitimacy into question: he could not bear it (*tollere*). In short, tolerance can only thrive so long as political power is not challenged; and this was an aspect that Voltaire did not fail to highlight:

'I am not saying that all those who do not subscribe to the religion of the ruler should share the positions and honours of those who do subscribe to the dominant religion. In England, the Catholics, who are seen as belonging to the Pretender's party, are not allowed to take employment; they even pay twice the normal amount of tax; but apart from these things, they enjoy all the rights of other citizens' (A Treatise on Tolerance, IV).

Thus the Medieval Spain of Christian kingdoms, in which Moorish and Jewish communities also lived, could tolerate these populations because the Reconquest was above all an enterprise to appropriate territory and not the religious crusade it was later made out to be. Don Juan Manuel wrote in the fourteenth century: *'The war between Christians and Moors is lasting and will last until the Christians have recovered the territories that were taken from them by force; for neither religion nor belief are a cause of war between them.'* The tolerated were tolerated because they did not pose a threat to Christian power.

When the inquisitorial system was established, the situation was completely different. The Catholic Monarchs had made the Christian religion the foundations of their kingdom. It is no accident that Spain was the only country in Christendom to institute a State Inquisition, which was independent of the religious authorities and the only jurisdiction to exercise authority over the entire kingdom and over all its subjects. Unlike the medieval Christian kingdoms, therefore, inquisitorial Spain could not accept religious difference (either in the form of heretics or infidels): it viewed non-respect of religious dogma as literally intolerable.

The conquest of the Indies

We all know about the violence used by the conquistadors to take possession of the New World and the fate they reserved for the native Indians. By the process of *requerimiento*, the latter were ordered to embrace Christianity. Ecclesiastics protested against these practices. The most famous of them, Bartolomé de las Casas, well known for his defence of Indians' rights, denounced the brutality

of the method. Was he, in doing what he did, being respectful of the conquered peoples' beliefs? It is far from certain. Indeed, he writes:

'We must first of all erase these idols from their hearts, in other words erase the faith they have in them, thinking them to be the true gods: by teaching them daily, with diligence and perseverance, we must impress upon their hearts the real concept of the true God: then, of their own accord, they will recognise their error and will begin to destroy with their own hands, and in complete freedom, the idols they revered as gods' (Historias de la Indias, III, Ch. 117).

Such an approach was not confined to Spain: it is found in the Enlightenment. It is well known that Voltaire fought against tolerance in the name of social peace. Violence begets violence. We have only to recall Candide's reply to Cunégonde, after he has killed the Inquisitor and the Jew: *'when you are in love, jealous and have been whipped by the Inquisition, you are no longer yourself' (Candide, Ch. IX)*. To Voltaire, then, to tolerate was to patiently accept the Other, his difference and the trouble he never fails to cause, and all for an eminently pragmatic reason: to guarantee social cohesion. Tolerance is never a matter of seeing merit in what the other person thinks. Analysing the tolerance of the Greeks, the philosopher from Ferney writes: *'The Greeks, for example, however religious they may have been, thought it quite acceptable that the Epicureans denied Providence and the existence of the soul. Not to mention the other sects, all of which offended against the healthy ideas one should have of the creator, and all of which were tolerated' (A Treatise on Tolerance, VII)*.

To tolerate, as we have seen, means to suffer another person's presence without showing any signs of rejection. It is in this sense that a bridge can be said to tolerate a certain weight, that our skin can, in varying degrees, tolerate a product's action or that a tolerant society refuses to resort to violence to impose its own views on religious minorities. For Casas, *tolerancia*, or more precisely non-violence, becomes an instrument of evangelization. Can this still be called tolerance? In the final analysis, is not integration, conversion to the thought system of the dominator, the logical extension of the tolerant State?

Historical reality, the Inquisition, which was not finally abolished until 1834, forced conversions in the Americas, in short, the strong ties between religion and power in Spanish-speaking countries, certainly hampered the semantic slippage of the term *tolerancia*. Suffering, let us remind ourselves, goes hand in hand with respect. Voltaire's definition was not able to erase the initial meaning of the word – perhaps because tolerance was for a long time intolerable in the Spanish Empire; and because the assimilation process prevailed, a process which suppresses respect of religious difference.

Sophie Sarrasin

Catalan

Tolerance and intolerance in history

History abounds in examples of tolerance, and even more so in examples of intolerance. The following have been chosen because, over and above the individual's relations to others, they illustrate types of political government.

In the fifteenth century, King Philippe II of Spain was one of the most powerful monarchs in the world. He ruled over a large number of territories, including the Netherlands. When the Flemish rebelled, because they could no longer tolerate being governed by outsiders, but also because of the Inquisition's persecution of Protestants, Philippe responded harshly by sending the Duke of Alba to govern them. The Duke was given full powers and an army of 12,000 men. He used all possible means to quell the religious revolt. For six years, he applied a policy of coercion, based on repression, intolerance, intransigence and taxation. He also established the *Court of Blood*; investigations were carried out into the purity of every individual's blood, each having to prove that his four closest ancestors had neither Jewish nor Moorish blood in his veins. The descendants of Moors and Jews were excluded from all types of public employment, secular and ecclesiastical.

His successor, Lluís de Requesens, a Catalan by birth (Barcelona, 1528-1576) governed the Netherlands right up until his death. He implemented a policy of moderation, for he was inclined by nature to be understanding and, above all, tolerant. Conscious of the accumulation of mistakes and the exasperation of the Flemish, and displaying intuition and perspicacity, from the start of his governorship he advised King Philip II to offer a general pardon, to abolish the *Court of Blood* established by his predecessor and to abandon the taxation measure. He wanted to allow heretics to be reconciled with the Church. His plan was to convene the States General and negotiate with the rebels. Particularly sympathetic to the indigenous Flemish, he shared their anger and did not hesitate to write: *'Not one of the most loyal and the most submissive provinces in the world, having suffered all that (this one) has endured for the last eight years, would have been this patient.'* Unfortunately, death intervened to end a moderate and tolerant style of government.

Christian Camps

to tolerate is
purely an act
of the mind.
that is the
essence of virtue.
to tolerate is a
strength. if we
cannot obtain
what we desire,
then let us turn
to tolerance.
we should live
and let live.

Lope de Vega (1655)

Portuguese

Between contrary meanings

The verb *tolerar* appears in texts written in Portuguese as early as the sixteenth century, with the meaning of to 'bear, endure', on the one hand, and to 'show kindness', on the other. It presupposes a precarious area of freedom conceded by the goodwill of an authority that is prepared to compromise on matters of secondary importance and on an exceptional basis. As for the noun *tolerância*, it appears for the first time in 1813, in the second edition of Morais and Silva's *Dicionário de Língua Portuguesa*, which defines it first and foremost as constancy in withstanding adversity or a hostile environment. Its synonyms are *indulgência*, *condescendência* and *paciência*, which imply paternalism. It has yielded two adjectives: *tolerante* and *tolerável*. The latter is the equivalent of *tolerable* (French *tolérable*) and can be used for a value judgement of the type 'mediocre' or 'passable'.

The same terms also feature in the *Dicionário Português*, based on the work of a monk of the Order of St Augustine, Domingos Vieira, and published in Porto in 1871 – in other words, in the city that, throughout the nineteenth century, was the most important centre of liberalism in the country. In dedicating this work to the Emperor of Brazil, Pedro II, the publishers were immediately placing the five volumes under the patronage of a monarch who enjoyed the positive image of a liberal and 'progressive' sovereign. The dictionary defines *tolerar* in the following manner:

- to tacitly allow, not to denounce an action deserving of punishment or censure:
- to exercise religious tolerance:
- to show patience:
- not to persecute anyone because of their political opinions or the speeches they have made
- to allow by law cults other than the religion of the State and of the nation's majority.

The past participle of *tolerar* allows a distinction to be made between the excommunicated individual who is *tolerado*, to whom the faithful may not speak, and the excommunicated individual who is *vitando*, with whom one must 'neither converse nor associate nor attend any meeting whatsoever'.

In this thesaurus, the article for *tolerância* differentiates between theological tolerance (also described as 'Catholic' or 'religious') – 'when condescendence is shown on certain matters not deemed central to religion' – and civil tolerance, 'permission granted by the government for other cults to be practised, under the same conditions as that recognized by the State'. In the same article, we are told that 'from a philosophical standpoint, tolerance consists in accepting the principle of not persecuting those who do not share our religious convictions.' In addition, it is stated that tolerance 'consists in withstanding hurt or abuse by ignoring its existence or malice; it neither approves these things nor allows them, and does not avoid punishing them'; whereas indulgence 'covers up faults or finds it easy to pardon them; it can be the result of kindness or weakness; tolerance, however, is dictated by prudence'.

In addition, there is an entry on the noun *tolerantismo*, 'the opinion of those who take theological tolerance to great lengths' and 'the name give, deliberately to mislead, to the system of those who believe that the State should tolerate every form of religion'. Finally, the adjective *tolerante* is illustrated by the parting shot: 'the Catholic religion is the strictest and the least tolerant of all religions'.

Tolerância Lusitania

It doesn't take a genius to detect in these data an affirmation of the notion of tolerance in the face of the hegemony of Roman Catholicism. They are a faint echo of the conflicts that, because of this hegemony, have punctuated Portugal's history since its foundation as a nation, built, with the help of the Church and its institutions, as a crusade against Islam, but also, in a European context, as a means of persecuting Judaism. Over the centuries, a part of Portuguese culture has thus managed to develop along the lines of an antagonism between fundamentalism and anticlericalism, both equally militant: in times of crisis, this antagonism has culminated in phases of violence, which State intervention, either in favour of or against the Church, depending on the political context, has helped to exacerbate – to such an extent that one is left wondering whether the notion of *tolerância* wasn't sustained by denouncing the intolerance of others.

By the end of the nineteenth century, therefore, the notion we are discussing is seen to be largely determined by the religious question: this orientation remains a strong one in the Portuguese language today, where the word *tolerância* invariably presupposes the demands of a minority in a socio-cultural context in which the values and taboos inherited from Catholicism remain very much alive – the recent debates in Portugal over the right to have an abortion are testimony to this, as is the rejection suffered by homosexuals in the Portuguese-speaking world, for example.

In defence of racial mixing

On the other hand, the Portuguese language offers through other terms – *convivência*, which French does not completely capture with *convivialité* (*conviviality*), and *cordialidade* – positive connotations which come close to the modern concept of tolerance in the wider sense of accepting the other and his differences, whatever they may be. At the same time, it is the word *cordialidade* that the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre put forward in his theory of 'Lusotropicalism'. This theory held that, by virtue of his cordiality and natural friendliness, the Portuguese colonizer was the agent of the 'democratization of human societies by miscegenation'. This unique achievement, which was 'proof of brotherly feeling between races and peoples, and of an affinity between their diverse moral and material values, under the aegis of Portugal and under the direction of Christianity', made Brazil a perfect crucible for harmoniously amalgamating three races: Indians, Blacks and Whites.

This eulogistic judgement needs to be put in context: whilst the Brazil of the 1940s was faced with the rising tide of Plinto Salgado's fundamentalism, a South- American version of Hitler's Nazism, and racial purity found zealots throughout the world, Gilberto Freyre's vision served as an antidote. Reflecting the ideal of tolerance and fraternity allegedly practised under the influence of an authentic form of Christianity by the representatives of a nation with a 'racial mix of Nordic and Semitic blood',

planted by History in the far west of Europe, Lusotropicalism was short-lived. The fact is that slavery was practised in Portugal up until the eighteenth century; Jews and Moors were put under house arrest in areas reserved for that purpose; the Tribunal of the Holy Office was resurrected in 1536 and continued in existence until 1821, pursuing in the innermost recesses of the metropolis and the Empire the 'new Christians' (by which was meant Jewish converts who were accused of practising their own religion in secret) and, along with them, as a secondary activity, sodomites, bigamists and priests who took advantage of the confessional to incite their penitents to commit the sin of the flesh. And so, by what miracle could men coming from a culture strongly characterized by the reality of discrimination have built a society based on fraternity with those whom their intellectual mentors portrayed as belonging to 'the vilest of races'? Was the reputedly excessive sexual appetite of the Portuguese sufficient to establish the bond of fraternity?

More complex realities

In Brazil today, a new generation of sociologists, led by Roberto da Matta, is putting forward a less enthusiastic image: according to them, Brazilian society is the result of a process that gave it an hierarchical structure, established by an aristocratic caste of white Portuguese who had brought with them and extended the preconceptions that held sway in the home country. The myth of racial democracy, they argue, concealed the reality of a hierarchical ordering that operated more subtly, through gradations. Brazilian *tolerância* was thus based on an underlying assumption that everyone 'should know their place' and remain there... For anyone who tried to wreck the system, this was a gentle reminder. Should we, then, abandon the myth? Certainly not, but we should make it operational by denouncing the injustices that became tolerable as soon as the imagination began to embroider on a cordiality that was claimed to be natural.

Finally, as far as Africa is concerned, especially the Africa that finds expression in the new literature of Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde, the collective memory has not retained much of the *cordialidade lusitana*: for the time being at least, only the negative behaviour stands out, which is comparable in every respect to the behaviour displayed by the colonizers of all other nationalities everywhere else in the world. As for institutions, the status that the Salazarist system had contrived for the 'indigenous peoples' of its 'Overseas Provinces', just like the 'labour contracts', which were forced labour in disguise, hardly pointed the way to racial democracy and fraternity. And the traumas of the colonial wars, prolonged by other violent confrontations, will certainly take time to fade away, before more dispassionate assessments can be made. In the Portuguese-speaking world of today, while Roman Catholicism has renounced its hegemony, even though it remains a powerful force, religious tolerance is a reality. Other forms of worship have proliferated, which have not necessarily excluded one another, as shown by the particular example of Brazil, where the faithful have no qualms about frequenting in each other's company conventional churches, Spiritist or Pentecostal churches and Candoblé or Umbanda *terreiros*.

Francis Utéza

tolerance is
ONLY ever the
system of the
persecuted,
a system he
abandons as
soon as he
becomes strong
to be the
persecutor.

diderot (1713-1784)

French

The ideology of the Enlightenment

From the individual's capacity to endure to society's concessions

In the Middle Ages, *tolérance* (or *tolération*), in keeping with the meaning of *tolérer*, meant to endure – or the capacity to endure – something unpleasant. The modern meaning 'Not to forbid or demand when one could' would evolve in the sixteenth century and apply first and foremost, given the power structure in place, to the domain of religion. In France, it is attested in the *Mémoires* of Condé (the leader of the Protestant faction): '*In a spirit of tolerance (tolérance), the Chancellor Michel de L'Hospital gave permission for ministers to preach in public*', where the word refers to the arrangement allowing dissenters to freely practise their religion. This meaning appears in France in a climate of civil war and fear of the other, with Protestants, in the eyes of Catholics, appearing as people who rejected the rituals that bind one to a society (they did not dance, they did not go to taverns, they did not play cards and their personal morality cut them off from the group), as criminals guilty of treason (daring to take up arms against the King – the Conspiracy of Amboise in 1560 – they challenged the *mystique* of royalty), and profaners of the sacred (they preached in French and rejected the images of the religious pantheon): in short, as foreigners on their territory.

Catherine de Médicis (going against the clergy loyal to the Guise party) was the instigator of the first *Edict of Tolerance* (January 1561), because she was convinced that *one had to adapt to the times in which one lived* and therefore work for national conciliation. It was, in fact, a simple declaration by her Chancellor, Michel de L'Hospital, aimed at stopping the persecution of Protestants by granting them freedom of conscience, out of realism as much as out of humanism: since the Protestants were powerful and numerous, a policy of non-violence was necessary to preserve the State's integrity, which was embodied by the King.

The second *Edict of Tolerance* (January 1562) went further: it asserted the existence of Protestantism as an independent Church, consecrated the reality of two religions and granted to Protestants relative freedom of worship. The King, unable to approve, had to *tolerate (tolérer)*, i.e. accept religious pluralism, if he did not want civil disorder, and could not *tolerate (tolérer)* the extermination of his subjects, since this, too, would have meant mutilation of the State. These decisions were to lead to retaliation by the Catholics with the Massacre of Wassy (1562), which triggered the wars of religion.

The word *tolérance* is seen to be used less to refer to the capacity to withstand pain (= a personal virtue) than to the social capacity to accept denominational pluralism (= a social value): which is a completely radical evolution, since it goes against State denominationalism, separating the political community from the denominational community, which was to lead historically to the *Edict of Nantes* (1598)... its revocation (*Edict of Fontainebleau* 1685), the *Edict of Tolerance* in 1785 and finally to Article X of the Declaration of the Rights of Man: all of them critical moments in history, surrounding the emergence of the concept of the secular state. At the same time, the shift in etymological meaning is a linguistic manifestation of the inability of the Counter-Reformation (the outcome of the Council of Trent, 1545-1563) to stem the tide of Reformist ideas (with virtually half of the nobility converting to Protestantism during this period) in the historical context

it is Not
the great
Number of
religions
that has
caused
wars, but
the spirit of
intolerance.

Montesquieu (168-1755)

of the State's weakness, a weakness linked to the Regency. Since it is related to the verb *tolérer*, *tolérance* presupposes an activity: that of negotiation resulting from the interaction of social forces that clash. Although in the sixteenth century religious vocabulary considered that *tolérer* was indulgence with respect to dissenting views on points of dogma that were not held to be essential – which presupposes the abandonment of legitimate demands –, certain current meanings of *tolerance* have retained this idea of concession, of the behaviour of someone who is unable to force his legitimate views on others, and so tolerates the illegitimacy of *their* views as the only viable option. The same applies to our *tolérance* to drugs, to *margins of tolerance*, and to what the French call '*maisons de tolérance*' (literally, 'houses of tolerance', i.e. brothels). It was by playing on this sense that the poet Claudel was able, in the twentieth century, to reply, when accused of a lack of tolerance: '*tolérance, il y a des maisons pour cela*' (= 'tolerance, there are houses for that sort of thing'). Tolerance, then, can be either a sign of weakness or a sign of condescendence, built into the one-sidedness of the relationship: the dominator tolerates, the dominated is tolerated.

Negative in its connotation, *tolérance* does, nevertheless, as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, assume a positive dimension when it describes the relationship between religious beliefs. The *Dictionnaire du français classique* (Larousse) states that the concept of a 'readiness to accept in others ways of thinking that are different from one's own' is attested from the end of the seventeenth century, and offers the following example: '*He openly declared himself in favour of universal tolerance (tolérance universelle), deciding categorically that it had been wrong to send Servet to the stake*' (Bayle, a letter written on 24 February 1689). It still seemed impossible to imagine that different ways of thinking could be anything but religious, Servet having been burnt as a heretic on Calvin's orders, after escaping the Inquisition.

The secularization of tolerance

This process began to appear tentatively from the eighteenth century onwards. A number of writers treated the notion: Bayle in his *Philosophical Commentary on these words of Jesus Christ: 'Compel them to come in'* (1686), Montesquieu in his *Persian Letters* (1721) and *Spirit of Laws* (1748), Voltaire in *La Henriade* (1728), the *Treatise on Tolerance* (1763) and the *Philosophical Dictionary* (1764), Diderot in the *Encyclopaedia* (the article on *Tolerance*, though it was not written by him) and Rousseau, who throughout his work sees intolerance as the sign of a corrupt society.

The name of Voltaire more than any other, with his watchword *Crush the infamous thing*, is synonymous with the fight for tolerance, owing to his involvement in the Calas Affair, which caused a sensation throughout Europe, and in other campaigns against intolerance, such as the Chevalier de la Barre Affair (1766). Calas was a Protestant who was broken on the wheel in Toulouse (1762), having been accused, without any evidence, of murdering his son to prevent him from converting to Catholicism. He was rehabilitated posthumously thanks to the efforts of Voltaire. This struggle was part of the wider debate on the civil tolerance of Protestants, on their place in Ancien Régime society. It took place between the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) by Louis XIV, who withdrew the recognition conceded to them by Henri IV (1598), and the Edict of 1787 granted by Louis XVI, who acknowledged that good, loyal subjects could be non-Catholic. We can measure the change that occurred within the space of a century. In 1685, the Revocation of Edict of Nantes had the approval of nearly all the writers of the time, Racine, La Fontaine, La Bruyère and Mme de Sévigné. In contrast, the *philosophes* are unanimous in their denunciation of the damaging political and economic consequences of this decision. In the course of the eighteenth century, the *philosophes* changed

freedom
begins
with a
prohibition:
do not
curtail the
freedom of
others.

Logan, May 1968

the sign of the word *tolérance*: intolerance, up until then considered a duty of allegiance to God and the Church, became, through their writings, the hallmark of fanaticism, and tolerance, previously condemned as halfheartedness, scepticism or a betrayal, became a duty and the prime virtue of an enlightened human being. This inversion of values is not as clear-cut as it might appear from a reading of the great philosophical works. Right up until the end of the century, we find in Catholic writing apologies of intolerance, and a denunciation of tolerance through the pejorative term 'tolérantisme' ('the attitude of those who take religious tolerance too far.' It is interesting to note that in Spanish *tolerantismo* – 'doctrine favourable to the diversity of worship' – does not have this negative sense).

In addition, what is so striking about the Edict of November 1787 is both the opposition it encountered and the tentative nature of its content and vocabulary (even in comparison to Article X of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, adopted a few months later). The concept of tolerance as defended by Voltaire rests on the conviction that the limited nature of the human mind prevents it from asserting anything meaningful in the field of metaphysics, and that all revealed religions are merely deviations from natural religion or deism. Tolerance finds it difficult to rid itself of a whiff of superiority and condescendence and to cross what seems to us that vital boundary, the one set by Bayle, who, at the beginning of the century, asserted the pre-eminence of a sincere conscience, even a misguided one, over the interests of the State and society, or by Rabaut Saint-Étienne, who declared at the States General in 1789: '*It isn't tolerance I demand but freedom!*'

Today, the opposite *intolérance*, which is synonymous with *fanaticism*, *sectarianism*, *intransigence* and *narrow-mindedness*, has a strongly negative connotation. That implies, logically, that *tolérance* has a positive polarity, which is indeed confirmed by synonyms that confer value on it: *understanding*, *kindness*, *clemency*, *mercy*, *forbearance*, *liberalism* and *open-mindedness*. This positivity is not only in the magnanimity that 'tolerates' with generosity; it is also in the beneficial nature of the freedom that results from the refusal to forbid or to demand. Enlightenment philosophy has imprinted itself more easily on the abstract noun than on the verb, which denotes a concrete attitude or act. The noun additionally bears the stamp of the democratic practices that were its consequence and which argue for the recognition of diversity. And this is where tolerance seems to entail a fundamental limit. We do not speak of *tolerance* in connection with freedom of thought, freedom of speech or religious freedom. These are rights, whereas *tolerance isn't a right*. Once we encounter a real-life problem, we are made acutely aware of the distinction. Should secular, republican schools tolerate the display of conspicuous religious symbols, some of which have become the emblems of integralism or fundamentalism? Should it be tolerated when, on the day commemorating the victims of Auschwitz, a guide behaves as if a *concentration camp* were a *theme park*? At this point, the notions of limiting and banning reappear, present, like a photographic negative, in the notion of *threshold of tolerance*. Tolerance then seems to depend on its opposite, and to be necessarily subject to the law and to pragmatism. However, history has taught us all about the inconsistencies to which this intransigence can lead (*No freedom for the enemies of freedom*). The area of what is tolerable has always to be revisited and renegotiated, and so cannot be fixed once and for all in language; but it remains a constant subject of dialogue between Sameness and Otherness, and with itself.

Catherine Détrie and Claude Lauriol

Italian

Neology at work

In the early 1980s, Italy stopped being an exporter of labour and became, for the first time in its history, a land of immigration. The number of foreigners living on the peninsula, mainly from the Maghreb, Albania, the former Yugoslavia and Black Africa, is estimated at a million and a half.

During the same period, a new word was coined to refer to these foreigners: the *extracomunitari*, in other words, those people who come from outside the European Community. The Italian language thus distinguishes between different degrees of foreign-ness.

The expansionist Italy of Mussolini laid claim to the Mediterranean, calling it *Mare Nostrum*; today, people from this region are emigrating to Italy and the weekly newspaper *L'Espresso* (centre right) describes this immigration as a siege (*anatomia di un assedio*; 30.09.94), as an unstoppable invasion (*invasione irrefrenabile*) and as a tide that is impossible to control (*marea che sfugga al controllo*). In spite of this, newspaper editors do not defend this hounding of foreigners. On the contrary, they warn of the dangers of intolerance (*il rischi dell'intolleranza*; 31.01.95) and equate *intolleranza* with *razzismo* (*limitari i rischi dell'intolleranza e le episodiche esplosione del razzismo*; 13.01.95). In the same newspaper, a use of the apocalyptic imagery of the great invasions of the past is combined with, what to some may appear paradoxical, a call to fight intolerance and racism.

Moreover, although the term *intolleranza* is used to condemn the possible excesses of the collective mind-set, it is not *tolleranza* that is used to refer to a more hospitable attitude towards foreigners but *convivenza* (19.08.94) and *coabitazione* (09.12.94). The gap between *tolleranza* and *convivenza* or *coabitazione* is a wide one: it is the difference between an attitude of superiority – whatever is tolerated is bad – and the assertion of equality, as expressed by the prefixes *con-* and *co-*, and a reaching out to the Other.

These articles give a good indication of just how ambiguous a position today's Italians take towards foreigners, torn between a new fear of the Other, expressed in terms of an invasion, and an unquestionable tradition of openness towards the foreigner: xenophobia has never been a source of political capital, even under fascism, and Italians themselves have emigrated en masse.

Over and above the number of immigrants, which is much smaller than in Germany or France, it is the identity of Italians that is challenged by this sudden incursion of the Other at a time when they are going through a period of great uncertainty.

Bruno Maurer

freedom of
conscience
is a natural
right; and
whoever
wants it for
himself must
also grant
it to his
neighbour.

cromwell (1599-1658)

Case law and legislation

English language dictionaries observe the simultaneous and frequent presence, from the beginning of the sixteenth century onwards, of Germanic *forbearance* and the Romance doublet of *tolerance* and *toleration*. Noble *forbearance* seems to have been demoted to a narrow semantic field: it implies a source of authority that concedes and bestows, out of indulgence or munificence, thereby expressing its power. As for *tolerance* and *toleration*, which some dictionaries present as partially synonymous, the mysteries of usage have separated them. *Tolerance* tends to denote a frame of mind and *toleration* more an implementation. At the same time, *tolerance* sometimes replaces *forbearance*, which has become rare, to denote a passive and haughty type of kindness. Because of these connotations, the term 'tolerance' will not be used in the contemporary, secular sense of the term, as, for example, in the context of the fight against racism or social discrimination. In such cases, it is rather terms like *fair-mindedness*, *progressiveness*, or even *equal opportunities* that will be chosen, with the consequent shift from the idea of a concession made to the individual one is tolerating to that of a right to be different.

It was mainly in the political discourse of the Enlightenment that *toleration* became established. The term appears in the titles of two texts by the philosopher and political theorist John Locke (1632-1704): *The Letter Concerning Toleration*, composed in Latin in 1688 and translated in 1689, and the *Essay on Toleration*, unpublished during the author's lifetime. In these texts, as in the *Two Tracts on Government*, the *Two Treatises on Civil Government* and *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, it is well and truly the separation of Church and State that is presented, more or less explicitly and more or less directly, as a precondition of religious tolerance. Although, for the purpose of social peace and public order, the regulation of practices can remain a responsibility of government, the respect of the individual in terms of doctrines and rituals must be total, and the sovereign should have no part to play in this area. Locke's plea in favour of tolerance on the part of the State fits into his more general theory of sovereignty, which is based on the will and the autonomy of the individual, the moral validity of individual ownership and the contract whereby the individual asserts his power of decision by freely choosing how he is to be represented. 'Erastianism', a theoretical justification of Anglicism which makes the monarch the spiritual head of the Church, is explicitly criticized here. Locke is one of the first to promote an almost exclusively secular view of the creation and exercise of political institutions.

The *Statute Book*, a chronological legal archive, which in Great Britain acts as a constitution, the British never having formally drawn one up, plots both the stages of Anglican Erastianism and its gradual erosion to the pure formalism it is today. The *Acts of Uniformity* of 1549, 1552, 1559 and 1662 defined political and religious orthodoxy and are all acts of the civic exclusion of non-conformists; this exclusion that was reiterated after the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, by the *Clarendon Code*, which was extremely detailed about what it banned. As for the *Test Acts* of 1673 and 1678, the main aim of which had been to keep off the throne a future Catholic monarch, James II, without being able to prevent this accession, they spell out in legal terms a practice that has been

the Heretic
is He who
prepares the
fire, Not He
who will be
burnt.

Shakespeare (1564-1616)

respected almost continuously since the reign of Elisabeth I, that of denying all non-Anglicans access to service of the State.

One of the ironies of history is that it was the Republican Oliver Cromwell, a Puritan well known for his religious fanaticism, who was the first to show a relative degree of tolerance, by authorizing the return of Jews and temporarily ending the persecution of Catholics (1655). We find in the *Statute Book* a first, tentative application of the spirit of tolerance, as conceived by Locke, with the *Toleration Act* of 1689, which, without granting to non-Anglicans all of their civic rights, goes back on the *Clarendon Code* by restoring their right to assemble in their own places of worship, and to have their own preachers and their own places of learning: the 'dissenting academies'. However, it was not until 1828 that the last remnant of the *Clarendon Code* was dropped, the *Corporation Act*, which prohibited anyone who refused to swear an oath of allegiance to Anglicism from entering local government. Catholics would see their full citizenship recognized by the *Catholic Emancipation Act* in 1829, which complemented the *Roman Catholic Relief Act* of 1778. The political rights of Jews would be recognized in 1858, when they became fully eligible to enter the House of Commons, then in 1885 the House of Lords.

While in Great Britain political and religious tolerance was the result of an accumulation of concessions made by the State, the founding fathers of the American Constitution were keen to include tolerance as a right in their *Bill of Rights*, the first ten amendments added in 1791 to the original text adopted in 1787. It was the first of these amendments that addressed the question of religious tolerance, by making it illegal for Congress to adopt any law that might lead to the establishment of a State religion or that limited an individual's freedom of worship or free speech. In the course of the two hundred years of its application, the meaning of this first amendment has been reworked many times. No-one in the United States reads this amendment any more for what it is, that is as a limitation of the prerogatives of Congress. It is read – if it is still read – as guaranteeing every American citizen complete freedom of religious, or other forms of, expression. The Supreme Court is probably largely responsible for this extension of meaning: since 1803, it has claimed the right – so long as the matter is referred to it – to freely judge the constitutionality of laws and public actions. Since no other State body is able to amend or overrule its judgements, only the Supreme Court – subject to the changes in its more or less liberal majority, depending on its political composition – can in the last resort decide what actions in public or private life are tolerable, that is to say conform to the first amendment. Thus, over the last two hundred years, this amendment, via the Supreme Court, has served as a last resort, once the resources of the other courts have been exhausted, in turn and with subtle oscillations, to allow, regulate or ban trade-union activity, pre-revolutionary activism, subversion, antimilitarism, the red flag, strike pickets, communism, the burning of military passbooks or the American flag, press freedom, obscenity and pornography, advertisements, the reintroduction of morning prayers in State schools, the choice between Darwinian evolution and 'creationism' in science teaching, and even abortion.

Tolerance was gradually conceded by the State in Great Britain and clearly defined as an original right in the United States: in both countries, the possibilities of interpretation are difficult to pin down.

Christine Béal and Gabriel Calori¹⁷

Russian

The sceptre and the aspergillum

The term currently used is *terpimost'*, the etymological origin of which is the verb *terpet'*: to 'bear, tolerate, suffer'... (initial idea: 'to be patient' = to wait for something better, to hope, to be humble (in the Christian sense), to be resigned... // Then: to condescend, to be indulgent, to accept (idea of 'laxness', as a possibility).

The verb *terpet'* is no longer used and *terpimost'* dates from the end of the eighteenth century. Its semantics borrows from the meanings of the French word *tolérance*, a product of Encyclopaedist discourse. The term *tolerantnost*, a lexicographical calque on *tolérance*, is also found in the twentieth century – but is not very common.

The Russian Orthodox Church itself seems to have been fairly tolerant (in accordance with the precepts of Christ, who allowed Gentiles to be saved and demonstrated 'infinite patience', in the hope of seeing every human being sooner or later embrace the universal principles of his teaching). This decision or principle of tolerance stems from a mystical vision: every human being or 'living soul' should normally 'hear the voice of God', his creator, rather than listen too much to his contemporaries. No one should forcibly intervene between a 'living soul' and God, his creator. Each must 'seek his own path' in saving his soul: he has the right to make mistakes and to feel his way forward... God will forgive him so long as he manages to become aware of his errors and his sins, sincerely repent and try to make amends (or 'compensate' or pay for them...). Religious chronicles, from the twelfth to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, are full of examples of repentant sinners who have succeeded in finding salvation and in gaining God's favour through serving just causes.

The Russian Orthodox Church became less patient and tolerant, when an alliance began to take shape between the Sceptre and the Aspergillum, after the fall of Byzantium in the fifteenth century. The idea emerged that Moscow would be the Third Rome (after Rome itself and Byzantium) and that 'there would never be a fourth'. The 'prince' (Kniaz' = Koenig-king) becomes a 'tsar' (= Caesar) (1547), both a 'political decision-maker' and 'the Lord's anointed', receiving his powers from God (therefore answerable for his people to God (= 'Father of the people', 'Guide of the people': a term also used of Stalin). Up until 1905, the Tsar was, in the minds of ordinary people, 'the Father' of the Russian people: if there was injustice, 'the Tsar' knew nothing of it... Otherwise, he would have put things right! It was on 9 January 1905 ('Bloody Sunday') that the people stopped believing in the justice of the Emperor-Tsar. Leo Tolstoy, among others, criticized the Russian Orthodox Church for colluding with the temporal power, which caused it to betray true Christianity.

In this context, intolerance assumed many guises:

- after the reform of the Church by Nikon (1667), under Alexis Mikhailovitch, the father of Peter the Great, the 'Old Believers', who did not accept the reforms, were persecuted (many of them

A HUMANITY
filled with
Love is a
formidable
force, UNLIKE
No other.

dostoeievski (1821-1881)

would flee far away from the big centres: to the North, to the far side of the Volga, to the Urals and beyond).

- the Tsarist State refused to take into its service (at least into posts involving certain responsibilities in the army or the civil administration) people of other religions (or atheists and agnostics): to serve the Tsar properly, one had to be Orthodox;
- Jews could only settle and work in certain towns and regions, in Belarus, in Odessa in Ukraine... they did not have the right to own land. The law imposed a limit on the numbers attending secondary school or university that could not be exceeded. And after the 1905 Revolution, the police and the army rarely intervened to stop pogroms. It was claimed by some that they actually encouraged them;
- religious instruction and attendance at daily services were compulsory in schools until the 1917 Revolution.

After the Revolution and the Civil War (1918-1922), the new government took its revenge on the Orthodox (who were assumed to be 'Tsarists' or 'Whites') and in their turn persecuted the clergy and ordinary church-goers. The Soviet authorities did their best to inculcate 'scientific atheism' and to reduce to the point of extinction the religious authorities. With Gorbachev, they started to become legal again, and with Yeltsin, Orthodoxy tended once more to become the State religion.

Irène Cahuet

Finnish

To suffer, to open up or to desire?

In modern Finnish, the concept of tolerance is usually expressed by the word *suvaitsevaisuus* (-*suvaitsevuus*), which is derived from the adjective *suvaitsevainen* (*suvaitseva*) ‘*salliva, vapaamielinen, avarahenkinen, tolerantti*’. The earliest data come from dictionaries published at the beginning of the 1850s (a Russian-French-Finnish dictionary of 1851 and a Swedish-Finnish Dictionary of 1853). The dictionaries’ authors created these words from their Russian and Swedish synonyms.

The root of the words is the singular verb *suvaita*, which in standard usage means to ‘endure, allow, accept’. In Finnish dialects, the verb *sallia* has other meanings, such as to ‘favour, love, like’, and to ‘be on heat, desire’.

The concept of tolerance has also been translated by the word *kärsiväisyys* (1838). Although it is now archaic, its root is the verb *kärsiä*, which, in today’s language, means ‘to be unwell, to be in pain, physically or psychologically’ or ‘to bear, to let’. The word *kärsivällisyys*, which has nearly the same spelling, means ‘moderation, serenity, tranquillity’.

The literary language of Old Finnish clearly had no word for the concept of tolerance. On the other hand, a few occurrences of the corresponding adjective are attested. The first, in the event *avara*, dates from 1690, in the sense of ‘open-minded, tolerant’. In the following century, it appears in texts quite frequently. In modern Finnish, the prime meaning of the adjective *avara* is ‘vast, open (e.g. a view), wide’ and ‘spacious, wide’.

The concept of tolerance, as well as its various nuances, can in modern Finnish, be expressed in a number of other ways. As an example, we might mention *avarakatseisuus* (*avara* = vast, wide + *katse* = gaze), *avaramielisyys* (*avara* + *mieli* ‘internal, mental essence of a human being’), *laajakatseisuus* (*laaja* ‘vast, wide’ + *katse* ‘gaze’, *ennakkoluulottomuus* (*ennakko* ‘which arrives early’ + *luulo* ‘a subjective, often mistaken, conception’ + *-ton-* a negative particle, *vapaamielisyys* (*vapaa* ‘free’ + *mieli*) and *malittisuus* ‘moderation, measure’. The borrowings *humanisuus*, *liberalisuus* and *toleranssi* are also used.

Raimo Jussila

Love bears
aLL things,
believes
aLL things,
Hopes aLL
things,
endures aLL
things.

new testament

Bulgarian

The virtues of endurance

Understanding the meaning of a notion like *tolerance* can be looked at in two ways. In a hermeneutic framework, we can choose to interpret it within the set of signs that are related to it. We can also take a historical perspective and trace its evolution and variations in terms of the various problems it has raised.

Since Antiquity, the idea of *tolerance* has included that of a burden to be borne or endured. The subject submits to it: it is not the result of his free will but is imposed on him from the outside. The Stoics made a virtue of endurance in the face of 'things that do not depend on our power'. And the 'strength in our weakness' consists in patiently persevering in order to assert our capacity to survive. For living, as we are reminded by the Latin *tolero vitam*, is always a case of surviving. Notions close to *tolerance* in Old Bulgarian, like *târpelivost* and *pnosimost*, incorporate the idea of 'passivity'. Ideologists who have studied the nation's mentality, have, in the context of Ottoman domination, made ambivalent assessments of passivity. Thus for Kv. Kristev (1909), who was a friend of Tolstoy, 'non-opposition to evil' is a 'prime example of Slavonic passivity', a kind of 'female acquiescence', which is in contrast to the active, masculine values of western democracy. On the other hand, not only does 'endurance' constitute an assertion and a strengthening of the self, but it encourages us to place ourselves above any ethnic or religious hatred. The Christian's celebration of patience with respect to wills that transcend our own confirms tolerance as an essential virtue, embodied in Jesus as the supreme example and presented by Saint Paul, in his Epistle to the Jews (XII, 1-3), as a universal rule. Whereas God is tolerant, the devil is 'impatient' and 'intolerant'. These semantic values as a whole are attested in Old Bulgarian literature. The terms *dlagoterpenie* and *dlagoslovjenie*, with the meaning 'helpfulness' or 'zealous service,' appear as early as the eleventh century in the *Souprasal'ski sbornik*. However, this patience has its limits, as evidenced by the impatience of Job, or that of Mary, no longer able to bear being tormented by Joseph and entreating the angel to reveal the truth about the child she is bearing (a collection of the sixteenth century). This suggests we should abandon any aspiration to understand tolerance completely.

Ethnic diversity has familiarized Bulgarians with the acceptance of minorities and this may explain why they refused to deport Jews during the Second World War. In the Middle Ages, the Church showed tolerance towards heretics: there is only one recorded case of death by burning (in Constantinople in 1111), and there was no Inquisition. Conversely, during the debate in Venice on the sacred languages (Hebrew, Greek and Latin) and the religious service, the philosopher Saint Constantine-Cyril argued for a Slavonic service and the translation of the Bible into Old Bulgarian, on the grounds that all men have the same sun and breathe the same air: '*There are so many words in the world and there is not one that does not have its own meaning: if I do not understand that meaning, I will be as a foreigner for him who speaks to me*' (ninth century). Such an understanding of *understanding* prohibits anyone from claiming exclusive rights on it.

Lydia Denkova, Maria Iovtcheva and Lora Tasseva

Arabic

Equality in principle and discrimination in practice

What we normally call 'apartheid' today has been from time immemorial the most common of realities both within human societies and in their relations with one another. The types of legitimacy which they give rise to and which justify this phenomenon are determined by a power relationship and favour a dominant group. This group's image comes down to the flattering identity it confers on itself, to the exclusion of the dominated other. Tolerance has to be examined starting from the historical, political, cultural or religious context in which one is speaking. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem has been the responsibility of a Muslim family for centuries, so as to avoid any conflict of jurisdiction between Christians of the Latin Church and Christians of the Greek Church. At the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, a mosque and a synagogue dedicated to the same divinity and the same objects of worship have stood side by side for centuries. In India, however, religious fanatics recently destroyed an ancient mosque, which, they said, had been built on the site of an ancient temple; while in Hebron other religious fanatics murdered worshippers at early morning prayer.

In Bosnia, Ruanda, Algeria, Sudan and elsewhere in the world, when what has been repressed gets to express itself, this takes the form of a settling of old –historical – scores, each side in the conflict usually invoking the same legitimacy for slaughtering the other. Are there, perhaps, grounds for thinking that the sacred imagination contains within itself the seeds of intolerance and of violence inflicted on the other? When the imagination gets to work on sacred texts like the Qur'an, it tends to generate a perception of the other that is differentiated in time and space, expressing itself through hagiographical or mythical stories, through isolated quotations, selected with the benefit of hindsight, from the sacred text or from the law.

Tolerance is only universally thinkable in relation to its opposite: intolerance. In both cases, and in numerous languages, violence is perpetrated against the self by the self or against the other by the self. The Arabic language is no exception and the term tolerance relates back to stems that make sense through the forms derived from them, so that they define an area of tolerance, based on a power relationship that legitimizes the tolerant party, diminishes the tolerated party and codifies the relations between them to the advantage of the former.

The polysemy of the lexicon

Ha Ma La: means to 'carry, transport, carry a child, be pregnant'. But it also means, in its transitive form, to 'overburden someone'. In a general way, the idea of 'bearing a load, a capacity (of a container) or a person', or even an idea that is vague or arbitrary, implies making an effort to accept what is abnormal and can be rejected. The same stem in the sixth form *ta Hâ Mu La* has the transitive meaning of showing intolerance, bias, sectarianism towards someone, or even towards oneself in the sense of 'taking upon oneself, making oneself, forcing oneself'.

we have
made you
people and
tribes that
you may
know one
another.

the qur'an

Sa Ma Ha: the meaning of this term relates back to a case of polysemy centred on ‘gentleness’ and ‘permissiveness’ in relation to the norm. In this case, it is not a matter of bearing or suffering but of having the capacity to forgive, to authorize or to allow; in other words, in all these cases, to use one’s freedom in order to accept something. The ideas of ‘kindness, forgiveness, gentleness, facility, of the possible and the permitted, dispensation, leniency, conciliatoriness and tolerance’ are all expressed through this stem in its various derivations. In contemporary Arab and Muslim countries that have become largely secular, have signed up to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and have constitutions that were voted for, the modern language has constructed, from the fourth form *Sa Ma Ha*, the concept *ta Sâ Mu H* and also *mu Sâ Ma Ha*. These notions imply reciprocity inasmuch as tolerance, in this particular case, entails a relation of equivalence between two individuals, each of them constructing it by disregarding up to a point his own standards. Tolerance, in these conditions, involves an active, one-to-one relation of equivalence between citizens. In this respect, in most Arab and Muslim countries, religious tolerance, in particular, is based, as a form of behaviour, on the notions of civil society, citizenship, republic and nation, spawned by the historical process of secularization of Arab and Muslim societies, a process that has been at work since the nineteenth century and is still continuing.

Sa Hu La: this stem refers directly to a meaning that is more refined than *Ha Ma La*. It points to anything that is ‘effortless, mild, simple, easy or steady’. The second derived form means the action of making something easier for someone, of smoothing out the difficulties. However, it is the fourth form that means tolerance, conciliatoriness or mutual understanding: *ta Sâ Hu L*.

From the sacred text to its interpretations

A hagiographic story, found in an oasis in South West Algeria, appears to set the standard for tolerance in a Muslim society, in which Jewish communities were not only numerous but extremely active:

Sidi Bahnini had founded a zawiya (religious school) in Zaglou. There, he taught the Qur’an and the other sciences and offered hospitality to the poor and anyone who was passing through. One day, after all the guests had eaten and gone to bed, Sidi Bahnini said to one of his helpers, who was serving the food that evening: ‘Have all the guests dined?’ The helper replied: ‘Yes, Master!’ The Master did not appear satisfied and persisted: ‘Go outside, there may be someone who has not yet eaten’. The helper went out, looked around the courtyard, then came back in and confirmed his earlier observation: ‘There is nobody outside, Master!’ Sidi Bahnini then replied: ‘There is a man outside still. Go and bring him in and serve him the meal to which he is entitled!’ The helper protested: ‘But he’s only a Jew!’ The Master ended the conversation, saying: ‘Is this Jew your creation or the creation of God? Give him something to eat immediately!’ Since then, a helping of couscous and a piece of chicken are set aside in Sidi Bahnini’s zawiya for Jews who are passing through, as a gesture of hospitality.

This edifying story shows, better than anything, how, in the imagination of Muslim societies of the Maghreb, relations between communities have been managed for centuries by the members of

the ONLY
believer
is he who
wants for his
brother what
he wants for
himself.

Hadith

Muslim communities. The fact is that the collective imagination of these societies dispenses with abstract, legal notions in a region where Islam was a form of mysticism, spirituality (*taḥawwuf*) and the regulation of social relations by law, all rolled into one. At the same time, and even though the law is not being invoked here, the Master's decision completely conforms to the orthodoxy of the lawmakers.

The offer of food in a *zawiya* or during a pilgrimage is to be interpreted as table companionship between men who, through this symbolic gesture, become *ipso facto* equals, sharing the same meal and, in the process, warding off any chance of harm or violence from one another. Universal table-companionship belongs, then, to the sphere of the sacred, for it is based on an institution that teaches the word of God and in which the table is always prepared. To the extent that the Qur'an is addressed to man (*el insân*), table companionship concerns the whole of humanity. A disjunction through a reduction of being occurs in a sacred enclosure, when a servant denies a Jew his status as a human being. This act of discrimination by a representative of Muslim society, creates a disturbance which breaks God's law and the obligation that follows from it. The permanent risk of a rift, of the violation of a relation of universal equivalence between human beings comes, then, from society.

Sidi Bahnini, a friend of God, repairs the disjunction twice over, at two different levels: firstly, by reminding Muslim society (in the shape of his helper) of God's law, namely that the Jew is a man, one of God's creatures, before being a Jew; secondly, in demanding that this man be treated like the rest of humanity, especially the Muslim community. The Jewish man will be given hospitality in the same way that all the others of God's creatures descended from Adam. Indeed, in addressing the human race (*en nâs*), God says: 'O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women' (The Qur'an, IV, 1).

But this is where the contract of tolerance gets more complicated: Jewish men are denied access to a sacred Muslim area, to the full contract of equivalence between the sons of Adam. The universal hospitality due to them is not a problem; but it is only due to them insofar as they are human beings; and since they present themselves as non-Muslims, their distinctness will be acknowledged by the introduction of a different kind of food which will strengthen their identity as Jews, as 'People of the Book', like Muslims and Christians.

As the word of God, Islam cannot be mistaken for its historical, political and legal manifestations, good or bad. But interpreting the Book has always caused problems, among others problems in the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims and even in the way the commandments of God should be executed. All Muslims are agreed that Islam is the religion of mercy (*rahma*, 79 occurrences in the Qur'an), justice and equality. God's commandments are addressed to man (*el insân*) in 45 chapters out of 114, and to humans (*en nâs*) on 245 occasions, whereas man is free to believe or not to believe, since he is himself answerable to God for his being and his actions. Likewise, violence and constraint in religion are rejected: 'There shall be no compulsion in religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing' (Qur'an, II, 256).

there shall
be no
compulsion
in religion.

the qur'an

The Prophet of Islam has left behind a tradition of sayings (*es sunna*), from which Muslims are supposed to draw inspiration, in that they provide a template for human behaviour. A list of more than two thousand sayings points out the path and the method to be followed in all human relationships. In terms of tolerance, the attitude of Muhammad was characterized by a certain universalism and a strong sense of equality and clemency. Tradition has it that, in a year of famine, he sent a substantial amount of financial aid to the Makkans, who were idolaters, even though they were at war with him. Among the many sayings, we may recall the most famous of them: *'Humans are equal like the teeth of a comb'*. The modernity of the saying is obvious. Unfortunately, it is not often highlighted, even though it has a universal significance and contains the idea of tolerance that has the most relevant meaning today. The perception of non-Muslims in the Qur'an, the ultimate reference, never ceases to surprise with regard to actual historical relations between them and Muslims. Leaving aside Arab idolaters, who are constantly condemned to hell, the 'People of the Book' (Christians and Jews) are frequently addressed by God, as in the following instance:

'And do not argue with the People of the Scripture, except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say, "We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him."' (Qur'an, XXIX, 46).

Justice for non-Muslims

An abundance of laws was produced in Islamic countries to codify the relations with non-Muslims and, in particular, those who lived in Muslim societies. The Book is not the religious thought. The latter developed mainly within the context of the Law (*fiqh*): it was the work of men who legislated for their own time and in relation to the particular political problems they encountered. This meant that the law relating to the protected Jews, Christians, Hindus and Zoroastrians (*dhimmi*) bore the stamp of its historical period. Starting from the only verse in the Qur'an that deals with non-Muslims and their protection in return for the payment of a head tax (the Qur'an, IX, 29), Muslim law in this area started to become properly organized under the fifth Caliph, Omar ibn Abd el-Aziz (717-730 C.E.). With the fifth caliph began the systematic collection of the head tax and discrimination in matters of clothing, architecture, social relations, and so on.

The head tax (*el djizia*) was, at first, just a charge levied for the non-adoption of Islam but compensated by a sort of right to be different. Nevertheless, non-Muslims everywhere, from Spain to the Maghreb and as far afield as Sindh, were able to keep their own particular laws, appoint the leaders of their respective communities, to such an extent that, during many periods, the Christian Patriarchs in the East, for instance, had complete control over administrative, religious and financial matters in their community. The law defined thresholds of tolerance, which varied from period to period and from region to region. Omar's severity, rarely applied in times of prosperity, reappeared during political, economic or social crises. The Almohad conquest of Spain (1146), for example, was accompanied by the virtual abolition of legislation protecting religious minorities. On the whole, however, and despite divergences among lawmakers, all trades were open to the 'People of the Book', except for the functions of sovereignty, legislation, deliberation and supreme commander of the Muslim community; generally speaking, all those functions requiring religious expertise. Exceptions confirmed

the rule throughout the Muslim world, as exemplified by Samuel ibn Nghrela, a Jewish subject, a Prime Minister, the Treasurer and the Commander of the Armies of Badis Ibn Habbus Ez Ziri, the Emir of Granada, who incurred the wrath of the theologian and lawmaker Ibn Hazm, at the very beginning of the second millennium.

Equality in theory, discrimination in practice

If the thresholds of tolerance or intolerance, from the advent of Islam to the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, were determined by lawmakers and so were quite variable, the real status of non-Muslims in Islamic countries and in Christendom were only comparable on the Iberian Peninsula. Nearly everywhere else, massacres and expulsions had caused the Jews to flee Europe. But political regimes change. In 1492, Catholic Spain won back Grenada from the last independent Muslims and expelled the Jews. The latter either regained their status as protected subjects in the Maghreb or were welcomed by the Ottoman Sultan Bajazet II, again as protected subjects. The Ottoman Empire abolished both the status and its servitude in 1856. However, it was re-introduced into Sudan in 1989, towards the end of the twentieth century. It certainly seems, then, that depending on the time, the place, the political regime and the religion, the reading and interpretation of sacred texts is relative to the interests of those in power and oblivious to what the Prophet said about the equality of human beings.

Ahmed Ben Naoum

Hindi

For the peaceful coexistence of the incompatible

In all the dictionaries of the Hindi language, the word 'tolerance' is rendered by *sahisnuta* and comes from the infinitive *sahana*, which means to 'tolerate, endure or bear something unpleasant', as does *tolerance* in English. The noun *sahisnuta*, however, has a modern, positive value and is always accompanied by an adjective that specifies the nature of the tolerance: for example, *dharmik sahisnuta* ('religious tolerance'), *vaicarik sahisnuta* ('ideological tolerance') or *sampradayik sahisnuta* ('tolerance of sects'). To denote this notion of tolerance, dictionaries also give the term *udarta* ('liberalism, generosity'), which includes 'the idea of not forbidding or demanding, when one could easily do so'.

A very ancient practice

The notion of tolerance has permeated the whole of India's religious, political and legal history. Indeed, Indian thinkers have always been conscious of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious character of the Indian sub-continent. This why they developed a *Weltanschauung* informed by tolerance, which accepted the specificity of every *varna* (social group), every *dés* (regional group) and every *Kal* (period). The English jurist Derrett claimed that '*what the Indians tolerate is the co-existence of the incompatible!*'

Many examples of the application of this idea of tolerance can be found in India's history. Emperor Ashoka (273-232 BCE) had engraved on columns and stones in various places in his empire edicts requiring his subjects to respect all faiths and sects in India, and established non-violence as the credo of his State.

Well before the Christian era, the first Indian legislators (Manou, Yajnavalkya and Kantilya) displayed a remarkable degree of tolerance: they demanded that a victorious king did everything within his power to win over the people he had conquered and that he respected the country's practices and customs, and even its family traditions. This is in stark contrast to Western practice, which dictated that the religion of the victorious king automatically became that of the conquered people.

The same idea of tolerance inspired the great Mughal Emperor Akbar (1542-1605). He passed laws to abolish the *jazia* (a discriminatory tax on Hindus). Akbar was even in the habit of convening assemblies in which the representatives of every sect and religion could exchange ideas.

Respect, tolerance and non-violence

Jainism, a religion contemporaneous with Buddhism, laid great stress on the ideas of non-violence (*ahimsa*) and tolerance, even in the areas of ontology and epistemology through the concepts of *anekantavada* (the validity of the plurality of assertions) and *syadvada* (the doctrine of the 'perhaps').

ALL cities
are one, all
peoples are
brothers;
good and
evil do not
come to us
from others.

ἑρμηνεύου (second century)

Jains believe that all reality is too complex to be defined in absolute terms, drawing the conclusion that every assertion is relative.

The fifteenth century saw the birth of a great literary and mystical movement in the Hindi language, called the *Bhakti*. Its great bard was the poet Kabir, who denounced all manifestations of intolerance among Hindu and Islamic scholars, seeing them as pretentious and ignorant. His spirit of tolerance had much influence down through the centuries, notably on Tagore and Gandhi.

It was via Gandhi's doctrine (1869-1948) that the idea of tolerance and non-violence was put to good use in the political arena (*satyagraha*: tenacity in defending the truth, passive resistance in the fight for India's independence). In Gandhi's eyes, fighting a political opponent was inconceivable if one did not have respect for and an understanding of his point of view. The ultimate aim of this battle against one's opponent was to produce a change of heart without coercing him. This idea will be taken up in Hindi literature by the two great writers Premchand and Jainendra Kumar. Even if tolerance has not always been respected on the ground, at times of serious crisis, it can nevertheless be said that, in principle and in spirit, Indian thought never loses sight of the ideal of tolerance.

Bengali Kumar Jain

ALL of the
wisdom of
our master
consists in
perfecting
oneself
and loving
others as
oneself.

CONFUCIUS (551-479)

Chinese

Integrating opposites and contradictions

When Voltaire wrote his famous *Treatise on Tolerance* in 1763, he had China very much in mind. Defending the idea of 'tolerance' in the name of the existence of a supreme being who is intelligent, all-powerful and the organizer of matter and of thinking beings, the philosopher saw the religion of Chinese men of letters as a perfect illustration of his own version of deism or theism. Voltaire was mistaken: the religion of Chinese men of letters is not founded on a being who has organized matter, and if religious tolerance is, on the whole, a reality in the Chinese Empire, it is also the case that intolerance surfaces in non-religious contexts.

All truth is relative

In China, in contrast to the West, nothing except impersonal forces presides over the workings of the universe, neither some sacred power nor a supernatural divinity. The only order comes from the nature of things themselves and the linkages they forge among themselves. Knowledge consists in discovering their multiple interconnections, such as those which link the human microcosm to the macrocosm of the universe.

Since society and nature do not form two distinct worlds, there are no eternal and immutable truths, but only relative ones, dependent on place, time and circumstance. Therefore, Chinese thought is devoted to apprehending the subtle interplay of the forces that animate time and space, and bring about future change; to serve purely practical purposes, it is aimed at knowledge of the ever-changing order of the world and the discovery, through a purely rational form of reasoning, of the cosmological principles that govern the social order. In this way, a close connection is established between independence from any fixed dogma and the idea that we never get beyond the provisional and the relative. At the same time, because of its organicist and relational vision of the universe, Chinese thought is averse to dismissing what is contradictory and to setting contradictory elements against each other – Manichaeism just isn't Chinese – and proceeds on a basis of inclusion: two opposites that complement each other form the underlying pattern of the universe, and, correlatively, the human world.

From the outset, then, and in its essence, Chinese universalism was more tolerant than established Christianity, the purveyor of absolute truths and the enemy of other religions. But Chinese *tolerance* is also less liberal, because it is linked to subordination to a principle that is totalizing, cosmic and social in nature, with the Son of Heaven and his bureaucracy constituting its human expression. This creates a clear contrast between Europe, where intolerance was initially linked to the question of religious truth, and China, where it was practised at times of political conflict, setting against each other the State and religions of salvation, which were, to some extent, outside its authority. When the Tang Empire lost some of its arrogance, after a reign of splendour in the first half of the eighth century, Confucian scholars orchestrated a nationalist and xenophobic campaign of violence that

do Not do to
others what
you do Not
want them
to do to
YOU.

CONFUCIUS (551-479)

resulted, in particular, in the outlawing of foreign religions, especially Buddhism, which had become a real economic and political force. The anticlerical diatribe drew on economic, political and social arguments, but was in no way a refutation on religious grounds, given the absence of dogmatic truth from Chinese thought.

Tolerance, a human virtue

In the context of the decline of the ancient order and the proliferation of new ideas that characterized the end of Chinese antiquity (the sixth to the third century B.C.E.), Confucius, an itinerant philosopher, invented the notion of *ren*, usually rendered by the word 'humanity', which underpins the Chinese conception of 'tolerance': the ideogram combines man and the figure two, thus portraying the idea of a relation between two men.

Far from treating men as spiritual equals before God as in Western humanism, the virtue of humanity advocated by Confucius consists in treating men differently, according to their social status or their personal temperament. Moral perfection is achieved without the help of faith. The individual who respects social rituals follows the rectitude of things and realizes his true nature. Even if its meaning is never finalized, humanity as a virtue, which is love of others, appears as a combination of five cardinal virtues: deference, *tolerance*, faithfulness to one's word, diligence and generosity. To his disciple Zigong, who asked him which word could guide one's actions throughout one's entire life, Confucius replied that it was *shu*, a word that Sinologists render by 'kindness, indulgence or consideration', but which is also attested as a synonym for *kuan*, or 'tolerance'.

The character *kuan* translates the idea of 'tolerance' within the virtue of humanity inasmuch as it is the quality that allows us to win over the greatest number. It is thought originally to have denoted a 'vast dwelling', later coming to mean 'kind-hearted, generous, tolerant'. The character *rong*, very similar to *kuan* at first meant 'to contain'; it then acquired the meaning of 'calm, quiet, indulgent', and finally of 'generous and tolerant'. Both characters are formed from the radical *mian*, roof, and a phonetic element. The meaning of 'tolerance' is the product of the idea of 'amplitude' and 'capacity' (as in the capacity of a container). This may well reflect the principle of inclusion, so dear to Chinese thought, which is reluctant to exclude opposites and the contradictory, preferring to incorporate them into a whole.

The test of political disorder

The political will for a return to order in the world, so passionately wished for by Confucius, was not reflected in those in power at the time. The conflict between the different currents of thought deepened. The Taoists saw tolerance as a return to a primitive, natural state, characterized by the existence of small communities isolated from one another, whose inhabitants would die in old age, without ever having had any contact with one another. The majority of thinkers praised exclusion and displayed intolerance, starting with Melchior, who discredited his adversaries and was wary of intellectual debate. At the ideological level, the most realistic programme during the so-called Warring States period would be that of the lawmakers, who, on the orders of their Qin rulers

and becoming the apostles of the totalitarian order in order to bring to an end the political disorder, suppressed the men of learning and destroyed all books. In the following era, under the Han Dynasty, these scholars, having become cogs in the government machine, would merely have the right of remonstrance (which was not devoid of risks), an institution that would not be called into question until the end of the Chinese Empire early in the twentieth century.

Jean-François Vignaud

Japanese

Authority and relativity

The idea of 'tolerance' is expressed in Japanese by the same combinations of characters as in Chinese. As is well known, Japan borrowed from China the ideograms that, along with the *Hiragana*, *Katakana* and Western syllabaries, form a component of the writing system. It does not follow, however, that the practice of 'tolerance' has followed the same course or applied to the same objects in Japan's history from the earliest times to the present, nor that what might appear to us from our perspective as a manifestation of 'tolerance' has the same behavioural significance in a Japanese context.

The absence of centrality

Unlike China, which thought of itself as the Middle Kingdom, Japan saw itself as being on the periphery of the world. This explains her interest in and curiosity about things foreign. It also explains her ability to adapt foreign cultures to suit her needs, first China's then that of the West. Thus, Japan is able to pass for a world where the old and the new, tradition and progress, the old-fashioned and the up-to-date intermingle, without the native population thinking it heretical. In the fifteenth century, many a southern warlord embraced Christianity, which existed side by side with local religions, especially Buddhism, which had been amalgamated with Shintoism. Admittedly, this *tolerance* which consisted of 'a willingness to accept behaviour and beliefs which are different from your own, although you might not agree with or approve of them' (*Cambridge International Dictionary of English*), can have ulterior motives, and Nobunaga, a great feudal warlord, relied on Christianity to combat the military aggression of Buddhism. But, as long as otherness posed no threat to civil peace or the consensus, the non-existence of misoneism in Japan, in combination with a certain eclecticism, engendered a world that was more aware of and more open to difference, to the newness of this other who came from outside.

The inability to conceive of the absolute

According to Mr Ichikawa Hiroshi (in *Dictionnaire de la civilisation japonaise*, Hazan, 1994), Japanese thought was characterized by 'the absence of monism and monotheism', 'the absence of a cosmogonic point of reference', which tends to favour syncretism, and 'positive vitalism', which contrasts with the original sin of Christianity and Buddhist detachment and find expression in the enjoyment of life and games. These are all traits which signal a rejection of metaphysics and of any interest whatsoever, traits which mark out a space for 'tolerance', not the kind of 'tolerance' which consists in 'tolerating, not making demands when we could do', but the kind that stems from our inability to conceive of the absolute. We need only recall that a Japanese is born a Shintoist and dies a Buddhist, but may well have no qualms about entering a temple or a church, or even about having a religious wedding, without faith coming into it.

think of
all other
beings with
love and
sympathy,
whoever
they may
be.

HONEN (12th century)

Japanese society can be described as tolerant in many respects, insofar as it is less inclined than the West to condemn someone for his otherness or for being different: there was no death penalty in the Heian period, there were no wars of religion in the sixteenth century, there was much leniency in the repression of peasant revolts and military uprisings, and no sexual taboos. But it is also a holistic society, which confines an individual to his social class, also a society that has its pariahs (*hinin* and *burakumin*) and sometimes conceals the fact, and finally, a society whose rulers are intolerant of any system of thought that competes with their own. And yet, however strongly it may be drawn to the norm, Japanese society manages to create a personal space for those who depart from its rules or do not feel comfortable with the norms it prescribes. For example, it is frequently the case that the needs of Westerners are perceived to be different from those of the Japanese themselves and are treated as such at the social level. At the cost of such compartmentalization, 'tolerance' exists in Japan. It is the expression of a readiness to accept difference in others so long as it can be incorporated into the everyday environment without threatening social harmony.

G rard Siary

dispose of us
as you will.
this is all we
can say in
reply to you
who are our
masters.

Aztec sages, 1524

Quechua

Fatum or colonialism?

The Quechua lexicon has no term approximating to the notion of *tolerance*, for the simple reason that the Incas were intransigent when it to respecting and complying with the law. Garcilaso de la Vega writes that the Incas never resorted to financial penalties or confiscation, because they felt that to punish offenders by targeting their assets, while sparing their lives, did nothing to rid the republic of its ills but simply deprived wrong-doers of their possessions, leaving them free to do yet more harm. Such laws, which may seem barbaric in their severity, were considered to be of divine origin, since the Incas believed that their kings were the sons of the sun, and the sun was their god. If the most ordinary command of an Inca king was divine, the specific laws he issued for the collective good were even more so.¹⁹

The severity of these laws is mentioned in an incident relating to the captivity of the last Inca Atawallpa, who communicated with Pizarro through his interpreter, Felipillo, an Indian whom the conquistador had taken back to Spain with him at the time of his second expedition to Peru. Felipillo was said to have had an affair with one of Atawallpa's mistresses, and for this reason wanted Atawallpa dead, both to escape his anger and the severity of the law, and to go on enjoying his affair. On discovering the affront, Atawallpa complained to Pizarro, declaring that such an outrage was much more difficult to bear than either prison or death, and that he found it intolerable that he should fall foul of such an insult.²⁰ Of course, the law provided an exemplary punishment for the crime of *lèse-majesté*. The guilty party, male or female (one of the *virgins of the sun* losing her virginity, for instance), was burnt at the stake and his parents put to death, as were his brothers and sisters, his children and all his other close relatives, and even his animals. Not only that, but his village was depopulated, salt was scattered everywhere, the houses were razed to the ground and, lastly, the trees and all other forms of vegetation were destroyed, as a reminder of this abhorrent crime. And because the locality had produced such a thoroughly bad lot, it remained cursed and abandoned for all time. This was the law. Felipillo's insolence provided, perhaps, an opportunity for applying it, but the Inca Atawallpa no longer had any authority and Pizarro wasn't keen to lose his interpreter.

The spirit of model behaviour was supposed to govern the everyday existence of the Incas, who greeted one another with the motto *Ama lulla, ama suwa, ama qilla*, 'Be neither a liar nor a thief nor a good-for-nothing'. It was ousted by Spanish forms of greeting like *Buenos dias* or *vaya con Dios*. The motto reveals, nonetheless, the notion of intolerance towards attitudes that the Incas considered ignoble. For all that, 'tolerance' was not specifically named and the prohibition has to be inferred from the imperative of the negative *ama* 'do not touch', which is different from the declarative negative *mana*, 'no touching'.

Can the non-existence of terms for *tolerance* and *intolerance* be ascribed to colonialism? It has to be remembered that when the Spanish conquered Peru, the use of Quechua was forcibly suppressed and Inca society went into a sharp decline. A series of prohibitions was imposed, together with the systematic destruction of *kipus*, 'multi-coloured cords, knotted in many different ways', and

the extermination of *kipukamayuc*, 'the officials responsible for guarding and interpreting them'. There was even a ban on reading Garcilaso de la Vega's *Comentarios Reales*, which recounts the rebellion led by Tupac Amaru II in 1781.²¹

Even to this day, the Incas (including those who are bilingual) have not assimilated the notion of 'tolerance'. What could they possibly 'tolerate'? Their fate has not changed since they were reduced to servitude and they do not enjoy the kind of status that would allow them to 'tolerate' anything at all. It is the whites, the mixed races and foreigners who hold the power. As for the Indians, they don't get involved (one is tempted to say that they '*tolerate*' the situation), because, to them, this is just the way things are and they go along with them.

The Incas do not know what it is 'to tolerate'. They submit to things, endure them, bear them: *tolerance* is a luxury for the powerful, not for the oppressed.

Guido Carrasco

Algonquin

Absence of the word, reality of the practice

Algonquin is a native language of Canada, spoken mainly in the north west of Québec Province. This Amerindian language of North America belongs to the large family of Algonquian languages, and more specifically to a sub-family called 'Centre-East', which includes, in addition to Algonquin: Ojibwe, Montagnais, Cree, Atikamekw and Mi'kmaq. Algonquin doesn't have a word meaning 'tolerance' as such (nor do any of the languages closely related to it). Quite remarkably, however, the specific notion of 'tolerance' is pervasive in the language, at both the grammatical and the lexical level, and the culture itself is an especially tolerant one. Consequently, it makes sense to discuss the notion of tolerance in Algonquin even in the absence of a specific term in the language that can be rendered in English as *tolerance*.

An open, welcoming society

The very notion of tolerance implies a respect for 'the other'. Now Algonquian (and Algonquin) communities are remarkably respectful of 'the other', regardless of whether he belongs to their own community or comes from outside; as evidenced by, among other things, the ease with which Europeans have been able to settle, with their assistance, on their territory.

The first thing that strikes us when we study the life style of these communities is a relative lack of hierarchical structure, compared to our cultures. Thus, in Algonquin, there is, strictly speaking, no such thing as a 'leader' in the traditional sense,²² but rather a kind of consensus centred on several individuals who are noted for their wisdom. This is demonstrated at the linguistic level by the fact that there is no verb, for example, that can be translated into English as 'to order' or 'to command'. Though Algonquin does have a verb, *-dibenindan*, that can be rendered by 'to have authority', in other words, in terms of this culture, 'to impose respect'. Every individual is free to take up or reject a 'suggestion'. Moreover, this respect of the other is also reflected in the language's grammatical structure. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, this can be taken as an indicator of this people's view of the world. The most striking example in this respect is the way the morphology of the verb is organized (the same observations apply to all Algonquian languages).

Transitive verbs agree not only with their subjects but also with their objects, and the verb has morphological markers that refer to both. These markers can be either prefixes or suffixes. Thus, every transitive verb will have both a prefix and a suffix, but the surprising thing about this system is that the prefix doesn't automatically stand for the agent of the action or the suffix for the patient. To illustrate this, let us take the following example:

gi-wâbam-a-ini 'I see you'

2^e p. see 1^e p. subject

you see I

In this example, the prefix *gi-* refers to the second person, despite being the object of the verb. However, if we say in Algonquin 'you see me', the prefix will still refer to the second person, which this time is the subject of the verb. This is illustrated by the following example:

gi-wâbam-i-jinan 'you see me'

2^e p. see 1^e p. object

You see me

Accordingly, the second person, 'you', is always represented by the prefix, regardless of its grammatical function in the sentence. There exists in Algonquin (and in all related languages) what we call, for traditional reasons and for want of a better understanding of the phenomenon, 'the hierarchy of persons in the conjugation of verbs': this hierarchy is the following one: 2 < 1 < 3 < 4.²³ From this, we can draw the conclusion that, unlike in Indo-European languages, where the whole of the verbal system is built around the 'I' as the point of reference, in the reference languages, in Algonquian languages, it is the 'you' which is, without exception, the reference person.

If we start from the premise that a community's linguistic system says much about its view of the world, can we not conclude from this that the Algonquins, despite having no word for tolerance, have a system of reference with regard to the world that is implicitly based on tolerance, since they always give precedence to the other? And that this is embedded in the deep structures of the language, in its syntax?

Diane Daviault

the rainbow
owes its
beauty to
the variety
of its
colours.

salif tall tierno-bokar (1884-1948)

Wolof

An open or closed space

Wolof is an African language belonging to what is known as the West Atlantic (or simply Atlantic) group; it is spoken in Gambia, Senegal and Mauritania. The concept of *tolerance* is covered by four different expressions in Wolof: *mun labir*, *yatu*, *dënn* and *xajo dara*.

The lexeme *mun* refers more frequently to the notion of 'patience' and *labir* to the notion of 'generosity' or 'kindness'. A survey carried out among native speakers of Wolof revealed that an intercultural or interethnic definition of the concept of *tolerance* would tend to favour the expressions *yatu dënn* and *xajo dara*. Each of these conveys the image of a space. With *yatu dënn*, 'to have a broad (*yatu*) chest (*dënn*)', the space where one does the welcoming is made concrete by the breast, the part of the body where the heart is located, the organ traditionally perceived as the source of the expression of feelings. To say in Wolof *nit ku yatu dënn*, literally 'a man who has a broad chest' amounts to describing this individual as being naturally inclined to share his space, irrespective of whether it is cultural, material or personal. Thus, to deny one's space to the other is not part of the 'being' of someone who is *yatu dënn*. Native speakers also paired together *labir* and *yatu den* as near-synonyms.

As for the expression *xajo dara*, it refers to a space that is narrow or already full, and which the subject has to re-arrange in order to accommodate the Other; *xajo* is thought to be derived either from the adjective *xat*, 'narrow', or from the verb *xajal*, 'to create a space, to heap together to be able to add more'. *Xajo dara*, then, is indicative of the effort one makes to accommodate the Other. *Xajo dara*, through the effort demanded of the subject, would find more of a resonance in the lexeme *mun* (patience) and would reveal more the negativity of 'indulgence' and the idea of a limit contained in the lexeme *tolerate* in English.²⁴

Khadiyatoulah Fall

Gbaya

The refusal to judge differences

The Gbaya group accounts for more than 500,000 speakers, who mainly occupy the western half of the Central African Republic and a small area in eastern Cameroun. According to Greenberg, it constitutes Group 1 of the eastern branch of subfamily 6, 'Adamawa-Eastern', also known as Oubangian. The dialect used here is a dialect of Gbaya-kara, Bodoë, which is spoken south-west of Bouar in the Central African Republic.

In the Gbaya lexicon, there is no term that corresponds to the notion of tolerance, although respect of others and the acknowledgement of each person's individuality are values that are fundamental to a Gbaya's behaviour. To symbolize each person's individuality, native speakers resort to the proverb *The sick man knows where to lay his head* (**wàn zéé ʔà ʔíŋ fàrá ʔè zu**), which literally means that the person who is unwell is best placed to know how he feels. Thus, in the area of food, although there are some 'taboos' or 'restrictions' (**zîm**), which apply to everyone but which are, nevertheless, few in number and often linked to a time of life, everyone readily makes known his personal dislikes 'restricting himself' (**zim**) to food he enjoys. Such an attitude is widespread and perfectly acceptable. With regard to the 'stranger', the 'traveller' (a single term for both (**géné**)) who is passing through the village, the person he stays with has a duty to offer him a meal. The meal is offered to him in the house, where he is left alone, away from prying eyes, free to eat or not eat, free to eat as much as he likes. No comments will be made.

That the stranger is different is regarded as perfectly normal; he cannot be expected to know the customs of the Gbaya, and nothing will be done to introduce him to them. For example, when a group of young men invited to their village a Banda friend – an ethnic community in the east of the Central African Republic – they offered him chicken, which had been prepared by the wife of one member of the group and which they ate with their guest, everyone dipping into the same plate. In doing this, they had all, on this particular occasion, broken quite strict rules regarding the eating of chicken which prohibited some of them from eating from a single plate. The explanation they gave me for breaking the rule was that they did not know how to convey to their guest the reasons behind this traditional form of behaviour, which could have been misinterpreted as a refusal by some of the group to share a meal symbolizing their friendship; and so they found it easier, on this one occasion, to eat all together, as if it were the normal thing to do. Of course, the stranger, who settles permanently in the village to some extent loses his status as a stranger and acquires a new one, which, while signalling his origins as an outsider, also indicates that he has been adopted by the community. Thus, in the village where I have worked as an ethnologist and a linguist for more than twenty years, my title is *the white woman from Ndongué* (**bùí kó ndóngé**).

A Gbaya who visits other places is also an outsider to the people he meets. He is advised not to draw attention to himself or get drawn into arguments. They have a proverb which sums up this attitude and which states that *the penis of the traveller becomes erect when he defecates* (**bor géné kúr zú dór**): what this means is that, while erection cannot be controlled during defecation

(since it is considered by this community to be a reflex action), any other cause of erection would be forbidden to the outsider, who is duty-bound to control his every action. On the other hand, a Gbaya will observe behaviour that is different from his own without judging it. For example, when a newly-wed claimed that his wife had eaten python, which is forbidden among the Gbaya, and she was judged by traditional standards, a number of people immediately intervened to play down the offence, one insisting that he had heard on the radio that 'the wives of politicians ate python', another maintaining that when he was in Cameroon, he had seen 'young women being served python at mealtimes'. In the case of close neighbours, the Gbaya are often ironic about characteristic forms of behaviour that differ from their own. Finally, it is worth pointing out that this society, which has no hierarchy or central government, has in its vocabulary an expression for the prohibition *one must not* (**yák ká... ná**), but does not have a phrase for 'obligation', which is rendered, nowadays, by a borrowing from French *il faut* (**ʔɪfô**).

Paulette Roulon-Doko

Bambara

Difference in points of view as a principle

The notion of ‘tolerance’ such as it features in Western societies does not exist in Bambara. It is also significant that no Bambara-French or French-Bambara dictionary or word-list includes an entry, or even a sub-entry, for this lexeme. What might explain the absence of this item from scholarly works? Is it an unknown value in Bambara or in Manding society generally, or is there no way of transposing the respective notions?

One of the basic principles of designation is that each society invents words in accordance with its needs and practices. Now, the constraints are not the same in all cases. As a result, it is normal for there to be no exact equivalence between different representations of the world, even if one argues that the realities remain the same. Each people conceives and expresses reality in terms of its own experience.

Although lexicographers do not record the term, the notion is nonetheless familiar, indeed very familiar, to the Bambara people. It even represents one of the central elements around which this society is organized. They conceive ‘tolerance’ in terms of two characteristics and a virtue.

The right to be different

When ‘tolerance’ concerns individuals, Bambara uses *sabali*. This word is a compound of a noun (*se*)²⁵ and a verb (*bali*). It can take the form of either a noun phrase (*sabali ye dubaden danbe ye*: ‘tolerance is a virtue of the children of large families’) or a verb phrase (*m i ye hòròn ye, i bè sabali*: ‘If you are a man of honour, you will tolerate’): *se*: ‘the power, the strength to act’; *ka bali*: ‘to prevent, deprive’.

This lexical item (*se bali*) means: to refrain from using one’s power in situations where there is a natural tendency or good reason to use it: it is a form of self-censorship. When two people are in conflict, the stronger is addressed with the expression *sabali*, to urge him not to defeat his adversary, although he has the means of doing so. *Segu Faama, ... a xira i ka baramuso ka so, nka kana a faga, sabali fòlò, i bè Jònkolonin sarakaw d’a ma*, ‘King of Segu, ... he has admittedly slept in the house of your favourite wife, but do not kill him, tolerate him for the time being and ask him to carry out the difficult sacrifices against Djonkilonin.’ In this context, *sabali* strictly refers to the indulgence and magnanimity of the person addressed. For he has the physical and the social means to show his mettle and, in addition, ‘he is in the right’. In other words, he has all he needs in order to take action, but he doesn’t act.

When tolerance concerns groups or communities, Bambara uses the form: *ko-to-nyògòn-ta-la*. This complex form, which constitutes a single unit – made up of *ko* ‘thing’, *to* ‘to let’, *nyògòn* ‘mutually’, *ta* ‘possessive pronoun particle’ and *la* ‘locative postposition’ – refers directly to a difference of points

if You are
a man of
HONOUR,
You will
tolerate.

maxim

of view by advocating that there should be mutual acceptance between groups, with ‘acceptance’ being understood as an acceptance of differences. *Kotonyò-gòntala* contains the notion of a group through *nyògòn*, which conveys the idea of ‘mutual relations’. The only pronouns that can be used in the same sentence are *an* ‘we’, *a* ‘you (plural)’ and *u* ‘they’. Thus, each time one hears this word, it is in the name of a group that it is being used, even when it is clear that only one person is speaking and defending his difference.

An old expression *kotonyògòntala bé jè diya* (‘to accept/tolerate others’ points of view promotes communal living’), was used in initiation society gatherings. Through this slogan, all of society’s other rules, which traditionally have the force of law, take a back seat, to enable its youngest members to give and defend their opinions, and assert their difference. It was in the name of this same principle that words and actions of leaders and kings could be called into question. In other words, Bambara society, which appears to have a rigid social structure, both accepts difference and gives the weakest group a voice.

***Munyun*, or an indispensable virtue**

The two characteristics of ‘tolerance’ that have just been discussed require an essential virtue: *munyun*. We say of someone *a bè munyun* when he is given to tolerating what displeases him, but also when he has the physical capacity to tolerate it. In other words, *munyun* is defined by two indispensable qualities:

- the will or inclination to tolerate (*hakilimaya*);
- the physical capacity and energy to tolerate (*ke ko kun*).

Munyun is usually translated by ‘patience’ (*munyun tè hòrònmuso sòn ye*: ‘patience is not a failing in a woman of honour’, although this word is rather a consequence of the physical and mental stance that tolerance requires).

Tolerance is primarily a code of honour that helps to define the Bambara, for it is impossible to be a man in this society without being imbued with an acceptance of others. If Manding griots have sung of warriors for their feats of arms, they have also sung the praises of those who have stood out through their *hakilimaya* (‘a person with a conscience’). In other words, unless a person is tolerant, he is not worthy of being treated as a Man: *e tè mògò ye tugun, ekèra began ye*, ‘you are no longer a human being, you are from now on an animal’. And Bambara society puts a premium on the capacity to endure and to wait, the better to learn. Hence, *munyun* plays a key part in learning and the acquisition of wisdom.

The notion of tolerance in Bambara culture makes no mention of differences except for those relating to points of view and to behaviour. A host of ethnic groups, religions, and cultural and linguistic traditions have forged the acceptance of difference as an essential character and, whatever its nature and origin, difference is required to integrate itself into the system. It is not usually physical difference that disturbs but differences in systems of reference. Once these are accepted, the question of intolerance no longer arises. It is, moreover, one of the reasons behind the extensive religious

to accept
the opinions
of others
favours life.

maxim

syncretism and, at the present time, of the fragility and the uncertain future of Bambara cultures, because of their openness and permeability. Bambaras see this as a strength, that of always being able to add, rather than in terms of oppositions.

Nor has it been without consequences for the speed with which the Bambara language has been changing in the sub-region, since it is a language that does not often come into conflict with the languages that share the same environment, but provides the speakers of these languages with the means to relate to that environment.

Ismaël Maïga

the colours
of men
are the
ornaments
of god.

shabdan robert

Kiswahili

Patience, humility and moral excellence

In terms of its grammatical structure and origin – Bantu –, Kiswahili is an African language which has evolved over the centuries along the East African seaboard, absorbing lexical offerings stemming from its transoceanic contacts and the foreign powers who colonized the region. It has borrowed widely from Arabic, which accounts for about 35% of its vocabulary, and has been further enriched by words of Persian origin and from European languages such as Portuguese, English and German. It is the second most important language on the African continent, after Arabic. With the development of social and commercial links and colonial expansion, Kiswahili gradually penetrated the continent's interior from the coast, becoming the *lingua franca* of East Africa and beyond. It is the national language of both Tanzania and Kenya and one of their official languages. It is spoken, to varying degrees, in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and a number of other neighbouring countries.

The word 'tolerance', as conceived in Kiswahili, is testimony to its complexity. It would take a much longer study to capture the historical richness of the term for Swahili native speakers. An analysis of the concept of 'tolerance' in Kiswahili shows that the notion is multifaceted and varies according to context. There are several words that express the notion of 'tolerance'. The terms that offer the best translation of the concept in Kiswahili are *kuvumiliana*, *kustahamiliana* and *kuchukuliana*.

The virtues of humility

The first two terms, *kuvumiliana* and *kustahamiliana*, are synonymous. They differ only in terms of their lexical origin but mean the same thing. The former is a word of African origin, whereas the latter is Arabic in origin. Both are based on the question of patience (*kuvumilia* / *kustahamili*), followed by a suffix *-ana*, which adds the idea of reciprocity to the verb, hence *kuvumiliana* / *kustahamiliana*. We should note in passing that the reciprocal form of the verb in Kiswahili, indicating an action performed by both parties, always ends in *-ana*. The terms *kuvumiliana* and *kustahamiliana* translate literally as 'to be patient with each other or to tolerate each other'. This implies 'an inclination or determination by each to tolerate or suffer something unpleasant in the other person without creating a crisis. What we observe, then, is that patience is backed by a moral argument. This fact is nicely summed up by the Swahili proverb *Mvmilivu* / *Mstahamilivu hula mbivu*, which literally means 'He who has the patience will eat the ripe fruit': the person who is patient will enjoy the fruits of his patience.

The third word *kuchukuliana* seems to be broader in meaning and the one that best conveys the concept of 'tolerance' in Kiswahili. Unlike the two previous terms, (*kuvumiliana* and *kustahamiliana*), *kuchukuliana* loses the connotation of passivity, the action conveying a sense of linear continuity. *Kuchukuliana* is made up of the verb *kuchukulia*, which literally means 'to consider' (in the sense of caring about or respecting), followed by the suffix *-ana*, which adds the notion of reciprocity, to give

kuchukuliana. If tolerance 'is a virtue' and if to tolerate means 'to accept something that is felt to be unjustified or to reluctantly accept someone in spite of his faults', the Kiswahilian terms *kuchukuliana* and *kuchukulia* do not have this negative connotation. *Kuchukuliana* is simply a prolongation of the term *kuchukulia*, 'to consider, to respect'.

A moral force

This verb is laden with a moral value and, at the same time, many symbols and images. It presupposes the substitution of a generalized humility for a relationship based on power. It is the cornerstone which holds everything together: patience, consideration of the other and mutual enrichment. What is in question is not passivity but of its opposite, activity: it implies a transcending of the self in order to understand the other. And so, the notion of tolerance in Kiswahili, *kuchukuliana*, can be summed up as a virtue, a value, an opening of the mind towards the other, consideration for our fellowmen, as though they were extensions of ourselves and an effort of reciprocal understanding culminating in mutual comprehension.

Thus, the first four lines of the poem by the distinguished Swahili poet Shaaban Robert, on the question of the colour of our skin is testimony to what Swahilis understand by tolerance:

- *Rangi pambo lake Mungu, rangi hanta kashifa,*
- *Ni wamoja walimwengu, wa chapatti na wa mofa:*
- *Walaji ngano na dengu, wazima na wenye kufa*
- *Rangi pambo lake Mungu, si alama ya maafa.*

'Colour is God's ornament, and not at all a failing, We all belong to the same species, in spite of our differences; Those who eat wheat or lentils, those who are alive or dead, they are all equal, Colour is God's ornament, and not at all a failing.'

Mohamed Ahmed Saleh

Postface

Linguistic relativism rests on two essential constraints: on the one hand, language is a technical means of communication, of memorization and of intellection; on the other, it is the product of the contingent and distinct historical evolution of the human groups who use it. Consequently, we find it contains, in equal measure, universal features that are linked to the former aspect and idiosyncratic characteristics that are attached to the latter. Hence, there is always, and simultaneously, similarity and incommensurability between languages that belong to different civilizations. However, incommensurability does not mean incomparability; nor does it dispense us from the imperative duty of making inter-comprehension possible and maximal.

Inter-comprehension, of course, ultimately concerns social practices; but it needs to be anchored in language. This is why it is essential to approach it via linguistic analysis: each language contains the key elements of a social history and the crystallization of a system of values elaborated over generations. The difficulty lies in deciding where to start: if relativism means a lack of direct equivalence, any attempt at correlation must begin with a choice and a method. The approach adopted by the authors of this modest volume is, in this respect, exemplary. In addressing *tolerance*, they have started from the semantic field as it was constructed by the West in the eighteenth century (that is to say from their own culture), to determine whether a particular vocabulary exists and to identify practices in the social domain that can be compared, without, of course, making vague generalizations on the basis of unjustifiable assumptions.

The findings are impressive in their precision, they give grounds for moral optimism and provide a real basis for future policies. In the light of the comparisons made, we quickly discover, as readers, that our idea of ‘tolerance’ can focus on two relatively distinct, if not totally separate, semantic poles. One is constructed in negative terms, so to speak, and refers to what is ‘bearable’: the other, in contrast to this, implies a positive approach, and corresponds to ‘the way in which we respond to ‘otherness’, at least in its simplest form, the ‘foreigner’.

The clearest constant to emerge from the comparison is that a vocabulary is shaped by reference points in the physical world. This is a fairly general empirical phenomenon that is seen to apply to most moral concepts. In European languages, it corresponds to the etymology of the word. To *tolerate* is to ‘bear’, in the sense in which one bears a weight or a pain (cf. Egyptian *fi ha*). Morally, the *threshold of tolerance* is variable, like that of pain at the physical level. It is dependent on the cultural context. It is understandable that lowering it can be a virtue in the individual, one resembling *leniency* or *patience*. On the other hand, anyone who attempted to ‘bear’ everything would be well and truly crushed, and cease to exist. To advocate ‘tolerance’ is to adjust the threshold. Now, this threshold depends on two things: the constitution of the person who has to ‘tolerate’ and the nature of the burden. It is clear how the Western societies of the Renaissance dealt with the matter. Their problem was a religious one: they had gradually to change the social impact of religion (the long-term goal was to secularize the State and to make religion a matter for the individual) and reduce the level of religious zeal. The problem did not arise for the Romans and the Greeks; in their case, religion wasn’t blighted by fanaticism. Taken in this sense, ‘tolerance’ is selective, it has different

thresholds, depending on its objects and the civilizations involved. One can 'tolerate' sexual or religious diversity and, at the same time, 'tolerate' human sacrifices, slavery or the death penalty. In the end, it is a question of sensibility, in the true sense of the word, as to whether one refuses to abuse one's strength or privileges (cf. the *sabali* of the Bambaras or the *udarta* of the Indians). It is possible for a society to have developed 'tolerance' to the point of rejecting violence, but to do so against a backcloth of social segregation.

Our reception of others is something quite different: it is a gesture *towards* others. Our capacity for welcoming others can be an individual virtue and 'tolerance' is measured by its generosity. It can obviously be a social virtue as well. In that case, it has two extremes. On the one hand, it can be the rejection of otherness, the foreigner is always, as among the Greeks, the barbarian, a kind of photographic negative that bolsters the identity of the community. On the other, it can take the form of a capacity to totally integrate the outsider, as though there were no longer an 'outside'. But even in this case, there are numerous differences, just as there are numerous codifications concerning foreigners. The cost of their integration into social life can even be quantified by the payment of a capitation tax (*Qur'an*, IX, 29). Even the completely positive consideration that is given to foreigners in the form of the *kuchuculiana* of the Kiswahili, does not necessarily exclude discrimination. We have seen this consideration only tends to remain positive with regard to the traveller, the person who is just passing through. Hospitality is the minimal form of 'tolerance-as-welcome' (we need only think of all its African variants) and itself has a minimal form: the right of passage (in today's terms, the tourist's visa). This means that the welcome can be 'tolerant' of those who are passing through but totally opposed to those who wish to stay permanently. And whenever those who wish to stay are 'tolerated', their wish may be granted but alongside the conferment of a special status that is totally discriminatory. The other is 'tolerated', but he has his place, which isn't ours.

Languages do not impose limits on the construction of concepts; they simply make them more or less accessible. The concept of 'tolerance' constructed by Enlightenment philosophy does not have its exact equivalent in any language, not even Western languages, because the concept is an intellectual construction based on a particular conception of rights and of society. This conception presupposes universality. There are two ways of looking at universality: as an aggregation, when differences are added together (one thinks of China), or as non-determination, when differences are eliminated. Universal man only exists if we abstract all ethnic, religious, sexual and racial peculiarities. The basis of Enlightenment *tolerance* is the acknowledgement of an intangible core of humanity; its axioms are equality and absolute reciprocity. This *tolerance* cannot accept human sacrifices, mutilation or slavery, because it does not tolerate the intolerable and considers, along with Kant, the humanity of each human being as an end in itself and not as a means.

It might be said that no form of society exists in which there is no evidence at all of 'tolerance' in one form or another (even though the Incas, as always, cause us to wonder about this), as if a general family resemblance shone through from beneath the diversity. It might equally be said that none exists in which the Enlightenment concept was truly lexicalized. The concept itself can be perceived as contradictory, since it amounts to acknowledging differences on condition of abolishing them: there is only 'tolerance' where men are all alike, are brothers, and then only to the extent that they can

remain so. Taken in this sense, 'tolerance' can only apply to the set of variations that are not likely to make the similar dissimilar.

The series of studies we have just read give grounds, then, for optimism: 'tolerance' has sown its seeds everywhere. There is, in the Enlightenment conception, another indispensable side to this optimism: the underpinnings of the law and the legitimacy of societies are consensualist in nature. The seeds sown by tolerance, which are scattered across the lexicons of the peoples of the world can also be the seeds of consent.

Sylvain Auroux

Notes

- 1 See S. Auroux, 1994, *La Révolution technologique de la grammatisation* [The Technological Revolution in Grammatization], Liège, Mardaga, Ch. 1.
- 2 At the University of Montpellier, this problematic has led to the elaboration of a theory based on the *praxeme*, a concept designed to replace Saussure's sign and the lexeme, in order to take account of the dynamic nature of meaning production in language.
- 3 See the article on *tolérance* in *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie* [A technical and critical vocabulary of philosophy], by A. Lalande, 1926-1993, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.
- 4 As part of its activities, the *Praxiling* research team, in partnership with several other universities and with the support of the Fonds International de Coopération Universitaire de L'AUFEL-UREF, organizes a multi-annual programme, called *The Lexicon. Categorizations and Representations*. Its aim is to deepen our understanding of how different languages (Algonquin, English, Arabic, Finnish, French, Wolof...) divide up reality in comparable practical and conceptual areas.
- 5 Adapted from G. Lefebvre, *Romans et contes égyptiens* [Egyptian novels and short stories], Paris, 1949, p. 102.
- 6 Jamblique, *Les Mystères d'Égypte* [The Mysteries of Egypt], Vol. VIII, 3 (éd. 'Les Belles Lettres', text established and translated by E. des Places, Paris, 1966, p. 197)
- 7 In this connection, see J. Maspero, 'Horapollon et la fin du paganisme égyptien' [Horapollo and the end of Egyptian Paganism], *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Archéologie orientale* 11, Cairo, 1914, pp. 163-195 ; Cl. Brunon, 'Les Hieroglyphica d'Horus Apollon: décadence et mémoire' [The Hieroglyphica of Horus Apollo: decadence and memory], *Les Fins de siècles* [Century ends], Toulouse, Université de Toulouse Le Mirail, 1988, pp. 13-23; R. Rémondon, 'L'Égypte et la suprême résistance au christianisme (V^e-VII^e siècles)' [Egypt and its extreme resistance to Christianity, fifth to seventh centuries], *BIFAO* 51, 1952, pp. 63-78.
- 8 According to Jacqueline de Romilly, the use of terms like (*syngignosko*) – *to think about someone*, hence *to understand, concede, apologize, forgive*, shows that the idea of tolerance was deeply embedded in everyday vocabulary during the classical age. Other terms, too, like (*xénos*), prove by their double meaning (*foreigner* but also *guest*) that tolerance was a feature of everyday life: indeed, in Homer, the two camps, Achaeans and Trojans, share the same gods and the same values. The important feeling of the common filiation of all human beings, which appears in Homer's poems, underlies the whole of Greek literature and is eventually expressed in the famous dictum of Menander (342-41 / 291-90 B.C.), quoted by Terence: '*I am a human being and I consider nothing that is human alien to me.*'

The death of Socrates, which is considered an act of intolerance, should also be seen in the context of the storm of protests his sentence caused in Athens, even in those accounts resonant with indignation that have come down to us (Jacqueline Romilly, 'L'exemple des Grecs est vivant' [The example of the Greeks is still alive], in *Le Figaro*, 27 March 1997. This article summarizes a paper on the subject of intolerance delivered at the Forum de l'Académie universelle des cultures: the proceedings will shortly be published by Grasset).
- 9 Terence, *Heauton Timorumenos*, 'The Self-Tormentor', line 77.
- 10 *De Officiis*, 50-52.
- 11 *De Clementia*, I. 18. 2 (translated by John W. Basore, the Loeb Classical Library).
- 12 Minucius Felix, *Octavius* XXXIII. I
- 13 *De Bello Gallico* VI, 34.
- 14 Cf. *De Legibus* II. 5.
- 15 A Report on the Altar of Victory, a text in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*.

- 16 The propensity to see Occitania as a blissful Arcadia is given a powerful boost by the contrast afforded by the intolerance demonstrated in the most terrible fashion during the sacking of the region by the Northern barons at the time of the Crusade against the Albigensians ordered by Rome.
- 17 G. Calori is the author of the article, with additions made by Ch. Béal.
- 18 R. Al-Ghannouchi, *Huqûq el muâtana. Huqûq ghir el muslimvfil mudjîama' El Islâmi*, Washington, [Toledo, 12th-13th centuries, Muslims, Christians and Jews : knowledge and tolerance], Paris, Autrement, 1990.
- 19 Cf. Garcilaso de la Vega, *Inca, Comentarios reales de los Incas*, Tomo 1, Editorial Universo, Lima, n.d. (1970), p. 100.
- 20 Cf. William H. Prescott, *La Conquista del Perú*. Einaudi Editori, Torino, 1982, p. 295.
- 21 Romero Adolpho Cáceres, *Poesie quechua*, édition trilingue, Patiño, Geneva, 1990.
- 22 'Leader' entities, as we understand them, as well as 'Band leadership', were imposed by Whites.
- 23 The fourth person is known as the obviative.
- 24 A reader has been kind enough to communicate to us some additional observations on Wolof, which are summarized below. The nuances observable demonstrate the need for further fieldwork. (P.S.)
Xejo comes from *xej*, meaning 'to fit into, to have a space in'; it also evokes *xejal*, 'to fit someone into, to create space for someone in'. *Xejo* conveys the idea of going to a lot of trouble to find space for someone, but also to tolerate someone or endure his presence. *Xejo* is the normal term in the language for rendering 'to tolerate' in its standard meanings.
- 25 One frequently slips between /e/ and /a/ in Bambara without it posing problems of comprehension: *seri/sari* 'boiled rice'; *seli/sali* 'to pray'. The two forms are still found in the language because the transition from one to the other is not yet complete.

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This list comprises mainly authors and titles that are easily accessible in French. Given the aim of the publication, a systematic, multilingual and multidisciplinary bibliography would have appeared excessive. More exhaustive bibliographies will be found in the books and other studies listed below.

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Words are a common treasure that provide humans with the means to interpret the world, develop self-awareness and understand others. They keep the memory of paths and steps that have led to the development of languages and cultures. They teach us how languages and cultures, in various ways, describe tolerance, thereby defining humanity itself.