

Wisdom and the Other: Responsiveness in Development between the Egocentric and Xenocentric Style

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Abstract

This text networks contributions from three disciplines: phenomenological-philosophical perspectives on the Other, current discussions in wisdom research, and developmental models of social perspective-taking. The common theme is the concept of the ‘other,’ which is ambivalent, because, on the one hand, it may produce othering that can be the entry point into vicious circles of xenophobia, hate, and annihilation, but the Other may be the source of responsiveness and wisdom, on the other hand. A deeper understanding of responsiveness in the self-other relation results from a reading of Waldenfels’ philosophy. This sharpens the perspective on wisdom emerging from the relation to the Other, for which the neologism ‘xenosophia’ is suggested, which supports the view that wisdom as xenosophia and xenophobia are opposites. The implications of Waldenfels’ responsive phenomenology for wisdom research are exemplified for two key concepts, intellectual humility and perspective-taking. Finally, for a developmental perspective on responsiveness to the Other, a typological model is proposed with reference to models of social perspective-taking in the tradition of Piaget and Selman. The proposed typology includes four styles of responsiveness: the egocentric, conventional, negotiatory, and xenocentric style. Implications for research are discussed.

Keywords

Wisdom, Xenophobia, Xenosophia, Waldenfels, Responsiveness, Structural development

Funding Sources

This work was supported by grants of the John Templeton Foundation [Grant 61834] and the German Research Foundation [Grant STR570/22-1].

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In face of the ubiquity of prejudice and xenophobia in our world, psychologists suggest wisdom as an important contribution to a solution (see, for example, Sternberg et al., 2019; Sternberg & Glück, 2022). This text is a contribution to carrying this project forward with a focus on the self-other relation and with special attention to the responsiveness to the other. Though not a well-established concept in psychology, responsiveness, as I hope to demonstrate, is a key factor for wise reasoning and behaving.

An entry point into the discussion is the ambiguity of the word ‘other.’ We are used to talking about others, perhaps ‘significant others,’ referring to loved ones such as a spouse or a partner, parents or children, peers or other people on the street, or even supernatural beings we seek for protection. The others that we imagine to be on our side and part of our ingroup are generally positively valued. However, when we refer to people of outgroups, the ‘other’ may receive a negative valuation. Such negative valuation is most obvious when ‘other’ is used in the form of a verb as in ‘to other’ or ‘othering’ (Mountz, 2009). Who is the other, when they are subject to othering? The process of making someone an *other* does often come with devaluation and exclusion, if not hate and violence. Consistently, othering is a term often used in critique of colonialization (Siouti et al., 2022), critique against the devaluation of women (Scharff, 2011), sexual minorities (Verhoeven et al., 2023) or people from other religions (Shaker et al., 2021; Shaker & Ahmadi, 2022; Gerteis & Rotem, 2023). In the context of wisdom research, this is the least we may say, othering is *unwise*. But othering can be toxic, and the poisoned relations are all but easy to decontaminate and heal. Othering may lead to vicious circles: othering is based on xenophobia, the anxiety of the other and strange; and othering amplifies xenophobia. From these examples it is evident that othering is not just an individual problem, but a societal issue, reinforced by societal norms, policies and politics—factors that even make it difficult for the individual to swim against the current. This is the *vicious* (the ‘*devilish*’) feature in the vicious cycles (in German: *Teufelskreis*). Othering is an immense challenge for which I note two examples, a world plagued by xenophobia and endangered by a threatened environment.

Othering, xenophobia, prejudice, hate, violence, war, death and devastation—this is one vicious circle of othering, resembling Allport’s (1954, pp. 14-15) list of acting out prejudice. Challenges of our time are abundant, and certainly hate speech (Nusbaum, 2019) and populism and polarization (Glück, 2019) belong to the currently most severe challenges. And here, the so-called social networks function as media that accelerate and exaggerate othering. With reference to Fisher’s (2022) *Chaos Machine*, they function as ‘othering machines.’ Since February 24, 2022, we are witnessing a war of aggression by Russia against the Ukraine that many deemed impossible to occur in our century. This is another manifestation of a vicious circle, and one vicious circle emanates other vicious circles, when, according to Staudigl (2019, p. 75), there is “legitimization of collective violence in terms of ‘counterviolence’” that “is mediated by constructions of ‘the other’ in terms of ‘violence incarnate.’” Othering begets othering. Another vicious circle regards *othering nature*, subduing the earth, commercial exploitation, neglecting ecological devastation, denial of the problem despite increasing evidence, global warming past the tipping points. And one vicious circle appears to superimpose the

other: going to war delivers not only the killing of people on a massive scale, but immense pollution, perhaps radioactive, and scorched earth.

Are there remedies for xenophobia? Is there a countermovement to the vicious circles of othering? Can the Other be the source of wisdom? These are the key questions that are discussed in this text. I refer to the positive, wisdom-generating process of relating to the Other by the term *xenosophia*, a neologism that explicitly connects wisdom (σοφία) and the Other (το ξέρον = the unknown, the alien).¹ Note that το ξέρον is a neuter noun (perhaps a nominalized adjective), thus, not limited to a person, but may include, for example, nature or a ‘generalized other;’ and, most importantly, it can refer to the *radical* alien or the *extraordinary* Other (that should therefore be capitalized).² What deserves explanation is *how* the Other can be the source of wisdom, and how responding to the Other relates to the development of wise reasoning and behaving.

Deeper insights in the self-other relation and the responsiveness to the Other may be expected from philosophical contributions that are, for example, discussing alterity in anthropology (Leistle, 2016a), the hospitality for strangers (Kearney & Semonovitch, 2011) or philosophy in face of violence (Christopher & Nathan, 2011). Note that all three edited volumes include contributions by Waldenfels, who besides several other philosophers such as Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, or Derrida are regarded relevant in these contexts. While a comparative discussion of these great philosophical works would be very interesting, it would go beyond the limits of this article. Thus, I need to be concise and take the risk of being criticized for ignoring other valuable contributions, when I concentrate here on a reading of Waldenfels’ work with a focus on his contribution to understanding the self-other relation in the framework of his responsive phenomenology (see also Streib, 2018).

This text proceeds in three steps: First, my reading of the philosophical contribution of Waldenfels is presented with a focus on his perspectives on the self-other relation and responsiveness. Then, I examine connecting points to current psychology, especially the psychology of wisdom, regarding the understanding of the Other and othering, and I will discuss the implications of the philosophical

¹ To my knowledge the term ‘xenosophia’ was first used and explained in Nakamura’s (2000) dissertation. We have used the term to name a subscale of the Religious Schema Scale (Streib et al., 2010) and to characterize a religious style and type (Streib et al., 2020). It also appears in the title of a book (Streib & Klein, 2018) in which we present research on prejudice in Germany.

² Waldenfels often prefers the term ‘the alien’ for the *radical* or *extraordinary* Other. I suggest to mainly use ‘Other’ and capitalize the word. For this I agree with Leistle (2016b, p. 52): “To signify its conceptual and abstract character, ‘Other’ is usually capitalized [...]. The singular term ‘the Other’ is an attempt to preserve an openness to alterity, to express a relation to otherness prior to its differentiation into concrete ‘others’ – persons, objects, facts or events – that are endowed with particular significations. To speak of the Other is the attempt to address a thing before it is experienced as something.”

insights about responsiveness to the Other. Finally, I propose a typological model that delineates four styles of responsiveness, which allows understanding movements between egocentrism and xenocentrism as *developmental processes* and opens perspectives on empirical investigation.

1 Responsiveness – A Reading of Waldenfels’ Phenomenology

1.1 The Other as Radical Other/Extraordinary Alien

Otherness and othering occur in many everyday situations such as in a crowded street or a subway car, which is increased by multicultural diversity and global migration. This certainly cannot be ignored, but philosophical-phenomenological analysis takes a more fundamental perspective, as Waldenfels (2003, p. 23) says, “the alien is more than the mere symptom of a growing multiculturalism on the background of a globalization process”. Instead, *beyond and beneath* the many instances of otherness in everyday is the fundamental challenge, where the Other comes across as the *radical* or *extraordinary* Other. Waldenfels (2011a, p. 75) explains this radicality as follows:

“By the term ‘radical’ I designate an alienness that can neither be traced back to something of the own nor integrated into a whole, and which is therefore irreducible [...]. Such a radical alienness presupposes that the so-called subject is not a master of itself and that every order, which ‘there is’ and which could always also be different, has its limits. Alienness in its radical form means that the self in a certain way lies outside of itself and that every order is surrounded by the shadows of the extraordinary. As long as we fail to see this insight, we are caught up in relative alienness, a mere alienness for us, which corresponds to a preliminary state of appropriation.”

To refer to the “surplus of otherness or of heterogeneity which exceeds the given order,” Waldenfels (2007, p. 13) speaks also of an ‘extraordinary alienness.’ This radicality or extraordinariness is based on a specific phenomenological perspective.

1.2 Responsive Phenomenology

When we apply the taken-for-granted toolbox for perception, experience, meaning-making, and communication, the target is identified, interpreted, objectified, or communicated *as* something; it is to be integrated in the systems of order and should find its place in our system of categories. The processes of experience, comprehension, interpretation and communication follow their business as usual. When we deal with the *Other* in this framework, our taken-for-granted tools and activities are successful only if we don’t mind that the Other is objectified, that is, integrated in our systems of order, treated as a ‘relative alien’, or, worse, superimposed with prejudice.

This is the point to argue that this is not doing justice to the Other, and that we may miss options for wisdom—and for a better world. The argument rests on the assumption that the relation to the Other is a special case: Taken as radical Other, as extraordinary Alien, it requires that we realize that this Other

is at play *before* interpretation, objectifying and prejudice come on stage. The Other as Alien requires a *response*. “Responding,” in Waldenfels’ (2003) words, “means more than intending or understanding;” thus, an adequate perspective on the alien “requires a new sort of responsive phenomenology,” which “goes beyond the traditional form of intentional phenomenology just as it leaves behind every sort of hermeneutics” (p. 23). As Waldenfels (2020a, p. 342) summarizes: “what we term ‘responsive’ is something that escapes from the intentions of subjects and from the matrices of given orders.” Thus, Waldenfels (2003, p. 32) aims at developing a “special logic of response that differs considerably from the logic of intentional acts, from the logic of comprehension or from the logic of communicative action. It leads to a proper form of rationality, namely a rationality which arises from responsiveness itself.” Responsiveness can be understood as a “basic trait, present in all our behaviour toward things, towards ourselves, and towards others” that “mostly remains unnoticed and implicit.” In contrast to other acts, “responding is especially characterized by its starting *from elsewhere*. When responding, we are always incited, attracted, threatened, challenged, or appealed to by a somewhat or a somebody, before taking the initiative and aiming at something or applying certain norms.” (Waldenfels, 2012b, pp. 423-424).

For discovering the extraordinary, we need “a special sort of responsive epoché that leads from what we experience to the by-which of pathos and the to-what of response” (Waldenfels, 2020a, p. 353). Concluding his *Phenomenology of the Alien*, Waldenfels (2011a, p. 84) writes: “As a phenomenologist, I propagate a specific kind of *epoché* that instigates a suspension of assumptions that are taken for granted, a departure from the familiar, a stepping-back in front of the alien.” Thus, deeply rooted in phenomenological philosophy that with Husserl calls for an *epoché*, that is, for the bracketing and suspending taken-for-granted assumptions, in the special case of the Other as *extraordinary* alien Waldenfels calls for a radicalization and a special kind of *epoché* that gives way to *responsiveness* to the Other.

1.3 Pathos and the Sting of the Alien

What are the outcomes of the encounter with the Other and alien? Because the Other is the source of irritation and elicits us outside our systems of order, it opens possibilities and alternatives, thus yields creativity and wise responses. When Waldenfels (2011a, p. 84) claims that the alien “takes us outside ourselves and lets us transcend the boundaries of the specific order,” he indicates that there is a kind of *decentration* at work: we are taken “outside ourselves.” Then, the encounter with the alien offers a *surplus*:

“The alien... brings itself to attention as surplus which precedes and exceeds every foreign observation [*Fremdbetrachtung*] and foreign treatment [*Fremdbehandlung*] of the alien. Not only the reduction of the alien to one’s own, but also the attempt of a synthesis between the two belongs to the violent acts which silence the demand of the alien.” (Waldenfels, 1999, p. 50, transl. H.S.)

The metaphor of the “sting of the alien” (Waldenfels, 1990 used it as the title of a book) is a particularly strong expression of the *demand* of the alien: the challenge comes from outside and creates a situation in which we are being affected, a *pathic* situation (cf. Waldenfels, 2011a, pp. 21-34). “The sting of the alien not only puts in motion, it penetrates into one’s own flesh like the sting of a gadfly, the symbol of Socratic questioning” (Waldenfels, 1990, p. 8, transl. H.S.). The metaphor of the sting is also an indication that responsivity for the Other is not simply a cognitive process but involves emotions and the body. Therefore, with reference to Merleau-Ponty, Waldenfels (2004, p. 244) suggests speaking of “intercorporeity,” rather than of “intersubjectivity” only.

The allusion to Socratic wisdom, but, more specifically, the conclusion that *responsiveness* is the reaction to the pathic experience of encountering the Other, indicate the relevance of Waldenfels’ thought for a new understanding of wisdom: Wisdom could then be defined as responsiveness to the demand, the sting, of the Other. And *xenosophia* is an adequate term, because it combines ‘wisdom’ and ‘the Other’ in one word. The Other as stimulus for *wisdom as xenosophia*. The potential problem with the term *xenosophia* is the possible misunderstanding as it were a trait-like achievement or possession of the individual, while in fact it is a dynamic process that can neither be induced nor controlled. *Xenosophia* therefore needs to be understood as rooted in the dynamics of pathos and response: “The Alien emerges by befalling us [indem es uns widerfährt], makes us astonished, threatened, enticed; in this sense I talk about a ‘Pathos of the Alien’” (Waldenfels, 2012a, p. 303, transl. H.S.).

1.4 Birth of Ethos in Pathos: Responsive Ethics

In face of the above-mentioned vicious circles that have othering at their entry points, a new ethic is desirable. And in this regard, it is possible to develop a proposal that emerges from the very encounter with the Other. In a more recent text, Waldenfels (2016) speaks about the birth of ἦθος (ethos, morality) out of πάθος (pathos = being-affected-by something or someone). As earlier explained by Waldenfels (2011a, p. 26), pathos indicates “those events which are not at our disposal, as if merely waiting for a prompt or command, but rather happen to us, overcome, stir, surprise, and attack us.” It signifies exposure to something unintended, unpredictable, unexpected, surprising. Pathos confronts us with a surplus that is both sense- and goal-less. It disrupts “the familiar formation of sense and rule, thus provoking the creation of new ones” (Waldenfels, 2011a, p. 36).

Pathic openness may elicit awe and wonder, and new ways of relating to the world. Thus, interestingly, but not surprisingly, the theme of pathic encounter enjoys resonance in aesthetics (Griffero, 2019; Rouhiainen, 2020), and Waldenfels (2020b) himself refers to theater as scene of otherness. And of special importance for our theme, pathos gives birth to a new ethic, as Waldenfels (2016, p. 145) concludes:

“The ethical does not coincide with the pathic but it is nurtured by it. Ἠθικός or morality without πάθος would be robbed of their own engines. Ἠθικός out of πάθος, which pushes us forward, demands a bottom-up ethics that begins in the depths of experience.”

It is this “bottom-up ethics” that reveals novel perspectives on the world and opens options for action that confront othering. The ethics that emerges from pathic encounter is a *responsive* ethics (Waldenfels, 2012b): “What I call responsive ethics,” Waldenfels (2020a, p. 347) recently concludes, “emerges on a pre-moral level of turning towards and turning away, of listening to the Other’s voice and looking at the Other’s face.” Responsive ethics presents a challenge to the existing order (Waldenfels, 1996) and reveals new perspectives on reality by disrupting existing systems of order and prejudice and stimulating us to revise them and create new ones.

It should be noted that responsive ethics opens perspectives also on othering, xenophobia, and enmity. “Enmity means more than a lack of understanding and poor recognition. It stands for repressed strangeness and refused hospitality” (Waldenfels, 2011b, p. 99). Othering, xenophobia, and enmity occur, when the encounter with the Other went wrong, when the pathic experience was *repressed*.

1.5 Conclusion

One of the most thought-provoking ideas from reading Waldenfels’ texts is the fundamental change in how the self relates to the other, when the other is seen as *radical* and *extraordinary Other*. It means a *reversal* of perspectives, that includes a reversal of *subject* and *object*, since the Other is like a sting, eliciting us out of ourselves in a movement of decentration. The Other initiates a dynamic of *pathos and response*, and this suggests an ethic of responsiveness that leads us far beyond the taken-for-granted imperatives of perspective-taking, mutual understanding, and communicative action.

Thus, Waldenfels’ (2007; 2011a; 2016) philosophy of the Other presents an important perspective that has the potential to break new ground in the social sciences, especially when the self-other relation is an issue. I do not see myself walking this new path alone, since my approach echoes Leistle’s (2015; 2016a; 2016b; 2020) proposal to include Waldenfels’ phenomenology as an inspiration for the discussion of alterity in anthropology, and since many colleagues who link phenomenology and the social sciences, in particular regarding themes such as strangeness (Kearney & Semonovitch, 2011) or violence (Christopher & Nathan, 2011), include Waldenfels’ texts in their discussion. In the psychology of wisdom literature, however, I did not find Waldenfels’ work referenced. This might change, because wisdom includes so many key concepts concerning the self-other relation such as perspective-taking, intellectual humility, moral aspirations, or concern for others. Connecting ‘wisdom’ and ‘the Other’ and understanding wisdom as xenosophic responsiveness are major challenges for which I present a first delineation in this article.

2 Contributions to the Psychology of Wisdom from Responsive Phenomenology

Recently, wisdom researchers have presented several comprehensive conceptual frameworks and models that integrate, advance, and critically evaluate previous theory and research on wisdom. Outstanding examples are Sternberg and Karami's (2021) unified 6P framework, which is based on Phan and colleagues' (2021) proposal to use a four-category nomological lens model, Grossmann and colleagues' (2020) *common model* of wisdom (CMW), and Glück and Weststrate's (2022) *integrative model* of wisdom (IMW). Viewed in the context of such ambitious integrative frameworks, this article appears to call attention to a rather small detail: the relation between self and Other. But a more decisive and explicit focus on the Other, understood in light of Waldenfels' responsive phenomenology, would strengthen the innovative potential in the self-other relation for wise and responsive reasoning and behavior. This may deepen the understanding of wisdom, its components and processes as depicted in the recent models and frameworks.

Certainly, the self-other relation has always been important for theory and research on wisdom. Across the variety of definitions of wisdom (for a recent overview, see Glück & Weststrate, 2022), the self-other relation is a pivotal theme, which includes, for example, caring for others' needs, considering others' perspectives, recognizing interconnectedness with others. The self-other relation is important in wisdom-related moral aspirations, emotions, and cognitive and meta-cognitive operations. To go some more into detail, at least aspects of the *suspension of taken-for-granted assumptions* to make room for pathos and responsiveness, as described by Waldenfels, are already included in various conceptions of wisdom: The understanding of wisdom as self-transcendence (Levenson et al., 2005; Aldwin et al., 2019), for example, clearly highlights a non-evaluating, open, accepting-as-is stance toward events and people as characteristic of wisdom. In her seminal critique of the intellectual bias of the Berlin wisdom paradigm, Ardel (2004) draws attention to the emotional confrontation and the reflective component for overcoming one's own biases and blind spots. And especially the MORE Life Experience Model of the development of wisdom (Glück & Bluck, 2013; Glück et al., 2019) assumes that growth and the development of wisdom occur when experiences shatter a person's previous set of beliefs and lead the person to integrate and rebuild their understanding of the world. Glück, Bluck, and Weststrate (2019, p. 367) conclude:

"(W)e have come to believe that wisdom is both: deep, personal, experience-based knowledge about life that is acquired through and goes along with a certain mindset: the willingness and ability to take a broad, non-self-centered perspective on life with the goal of understanding it in all its complexity. People who have this mindset are more likely than others to learn more about life and accumulate wisdom-related knowledge over time, and they are more often able to deal with difficult situations wisely."

The MORE model as expressed in this quotation comes very close to what I call with reference to Waldenfels 'pathic experience.' What could be made more explicit is the dynamics of responsiveness to the *extraordinary Other* that precedes and exceeds understanding. And viewed in the wider context of wisdom research, the interpretation of wisdom in terms of xenosophic responsiveness is new and ambitious. Is this interpretation of wisdom justified? What is its advantage or surplus? Is it promising for understanding and fostering the development of wise thinking and behavior? Xenosophic responsiveness with its focus on the *radical* and *extraordinary Other* suggests the widening of horizons to arrive at a new and specific interpretation of wisdom and its development. This can be exemplified by re-examining intellectual humility and perspective-taking that are regarded key components of wisdom, and finally by discussing the integration of xenosophia and responsiveness in one of the recent models.

2.1 Intellectual Humility: From Self-focus to Responsiveness to the Other

Wisdom and humility are connected – a view for which Socrates is regarded as a brilliant example. Doubting that he is wise himself and claiming that he knows not to know anything, Socrates' perspective on wisdom may suggest a "humility theory of wisdom" (Ryan, 2020). Thus, it is consistent that intellectual humility ranges among the top characteristics of wisdom identified by wisdom researchers (Grossmann, Weststrate, et al., 2020), and intellectual or epistemic humility is firmly established in wisdom research (Grossmann, 2017; Brienza et al., 2018; Zachry et al., 2018; Brienza et al., 2021; Grossmann, 2022).

The literature about intellectual humility has a wide range far beyond wisdom research. In their recent review article, Porter, Elnakouri, et al. (2022) define intellectual humility as "a metacognitive core composed of recognizing the limits of one's knowledge and awareness of one's fallibility" (p. 525), thus, the authors identify as common element of intellectual humility the "meta-cognitive ability to recognize the limitations of one's beliefs and knowledge" (p. 524). This could be read as a primary focus on the *self*, if this impression was not balanced by another recent contribution by Porter, Baldwin et al. (2022), which, in a summary review of intellectual humility characteristics, demonstrates that most conceptual and empirical approaches include also an *other*-focus. Porter, Baldwin and colleagues (2022) conclude with an interesting classification framework in which two axes (internal vs. expressed; self vs. other) constitute four fields. Thus, the polarity of self and other is explicitly implemented in their framework. While in the two segments for *self*, the characteristics of intellectual humility are the internal awareness and expressed admission of "one's ignorance and fallibility," in the two segments for *other*, the characteristics for intellectual humility are "awareness of value in other people's intellect," "listening to other people's ideas," and "openness to corrective feedback" (p. 581).

This echoes conceptualizations in measures that promote an other-focus for intellectual humility: Krumrei-Mancuso and Rouse's (2016) scale, for example, features a low self-focus which is indicated

by labeling one subscale ‘lack of overconfidence’ and another subscale ‘independence of intellect and ego,’ while an other-focus is presented in their ‘respect for other’s viewpoints’ subscale. Further, that intellectual humility is characterized by a *low self-focus* and a *high other-focus* is made an explicit assumption by Nadelhoffer and Wright (2017) who have operationalized this in their Dual-Dimension Humility Scale (Wright et al., 2018). And, to note a third example, based on their earlier semantic analysis of intellectual humility (Christen et al., 2014), Alfano and colleagues (2017, p. 3) conclude that the concept of intellectual humility includes “self- and other-oriented facets, as well as dispositions to respond in characteristic ways to new ideas, to seek out new information, and to be mindful of others’ feelings and reactions in intellectual engagements.” And indeed, their synonym map (Christen et al., 2014, p. 6) includes synonyms for intellectual humility such as ‘responsiveness,’ ‘attentiveness,’ ‘sensitivity,’ ‘wisdom,’ and ‘mindfulness’ (associated with what the authors call the ‘sensible self’) or ‘inquiry’ and ‘curiosity’ (associated with the ‘inquisitive self’). These are clear indications of how an other-focus is included conceptually and methodically in intellectual humility.

These suggestions for a shift from an egocentric self-focus to a wise other-focus are very thoughtful, but their other-focus appears mostly directed toward (and limited to) the other person’s *intellect*, their *ideas*, their *corrective feedback*. It appears as if intellectual humility was imagined in a framework of communicative action, where individuals cognitively negotiate potentially conflicting truth and rightness claims. Such understanding of intellectual humility as a way to perfect our pursuit of truth is endorsed, for example, by Ballantyne (2023, p. 205) who views the essence of intellectual humility as a way “to manage information that’s relevant to our pursuit of truth and avoidance of error;” and adds that “the essence of IH, then, is not a matter of how we react to other people, but how we react to information relevant to our inquiry. It is about how we respond to evidence concerning reality.” Consequently and in explicit contrast to definitions of intellectual humility as characterized by “down-regulation of egoistic motives in favor of other-orientedness as well as an accurate view of oneself” (Van Tongeren et al., 2014, p. 63), Ballantyne (2023, p. 205) claims that “IH ‘down-regulates’ egoic and egoistic motives in favor of reality-orientedness.”

From a perspective of responsive phenomenology, intellectual humility is more than that. The other-focus should not be excluded or downgraded; on the contrary, the above-mentioned beginnings to account for and emphasize the essential role of the *other-focus* should be more fully developed and specified. The other-focus should be specified more clearly as a focus on the *radical and extraordinary* Other. And thereby also *humility* is radicalized to designate a humble openness to the *pathic* encounter with the Other. This means going beyond the attention to the *self* as constructive, interpretive, meaning-making, and practicing actor, and shifting attention to the *Other* as source of being affected and impressed, of being confronted with demands and challenges, or of receiving inspiration and creativity. In other words, intellectual humility comes into its own, when it yields the dynamic of pathos and response to develop and thrive. And with the consideration of the *radical and*

extraordinary Other, the horizon of intellectual humility is widened beyond other people and their truth claims to include other domains such as nature/environment or the ultimate environment.

In conclusion, understanding wisdom in terms of xenosophic responsiveness suggests reconsidering lost dimensions, namely the humility, perspective-taking, and wisdom of a Socratic sort, which considers the wise not as a teacher who knows all the answers, nor a negotiator who is perfectly skilled in balancing truth and rightness claims, but rather the wise is a humble listener to the Other and their demand, a creative and responsive learner. This corresponds with a move from intentionality to responsiveness (Waldenfels, 2003), and perhaps we should, for this new understanding of intellectual humility, take into consideration terms such as *humility in responding to the Other* or shorter: *xenosophic humility*.

2.2 Perspective-taking: Toward a Xenocentric Approach

The discussion of intellectual humility and the plea for a decisive shift of focus from self to the Other has implications also for the understanding of perspective-taking. In short: it suggests a *reversal* of perspectives for which ‘*perspective-getting*’ or a ‘*xenocentric perspective*’ may be adequate terms.

That perspective-taking is a central concept in wisdom research is supported by the majority (90%) of wisdom researchers (Grossmann, Weststrate, et al., 2020). This high regard for perspective-taking appears rather shallow, however, when we realize that there is a broad range of understandings and definitions of perspective-taking. But there is progress: perspective-taking and other components that are regarded central for wisdom have been thoughtfully integrated in the construct of perspectival meta-cognitions (PMC) in the recent proposal for a Common Model of Wisdom (Grossmann, Weststrate, et al., 2020). With reference to the results from surveying wisdom researchers, the authors note (p. 109) that “it is apparent that non-propositional aspects of meta-cognition (e.g., epistemic humility, consideration of diverse perspectives, balance across different interests, insight) dominate scientific conceptualizations of wisdom. What unites these aspects of meta-cognition is that they afford greater understanding of and balance between potentially divergent interests on the issue at hand.” The idea of assembling cognitive components that are regarded constitutive for wisdom in the framework of meta-cognitive competencies, thus moving beyond propositional reasoning, is thoughtful and innovative. The limitation of this approach is its continuation of a restriction to the *epistemic self* that now engages in non-propositional instead of propositional reasoning to promote “understanding” and “balancing.” Continuing the line of argumentation in this article, I would suggest that a shift of focus from self to the Other be included in the PCM. Perspective-taking and other PCMs (as noted in the previous section about intellectual humility) *can* and *should* reflect the radical shift of focus from self to the Other.

For a better understanding of this shift, it is worthwhile considering the recent proposal by Glăveanu (2019) that presents a new understanding of the self-other relation that he calls ‘*allocentrism*’—as clearly opposed to *egocentrism*. Glăveanu is proposing a new reading of intersubjectivity “that starts

from the other and what it means to be other to other people, instead of systematically focusing on the self, how the self becomes self, and how it becomes other (within itself)” (p. 444). This new proposal for understanding intersubjectivity involves a reversal of perspectives; it answers the question how novelty, creativity, and new possibilities are “opened, maintained and transformed by the experience of difference, the experience of (being the) other” (ibid.). Glăveanu’s text is a contribution not only to social psychology, but especially to creativity theory (see also Glăveanu et al., 2019; Kaufman & Glăveanu, 2019); but may reveal to be highly relevant also for wisdom research, because it could be read as a radicalization of the meta-cognitive perspective.

Going some more into detail: The allocentric approach is the fourth, and most desirable, in the typological climax that includes three other approaches to intersubjectivity. The climax begins at the lower end with what Glăveanu calls the ‘*cognitive approach*’ that features ‘*being self*’ and Glăveanu associates with Descartes’ philosophy and the contemporary Theory of Mind. This first approach is understood by Glăveanu as featuring an egocentric bias, where the self is the center and others are external. There is perspective-making, but only of a sort “in which the perspective constructed is entirely built from the knowledge of the self (about itself)” (p. 448).

Next, Glăveanu describes the ‘*pragmatist approach*’ where the self has “the propensity of ‘*becoming other*’” and perspective-taking accounts for *differences*; this approach is involved in the search of a common ground and expects the coordination of perspectives. This approach finds support, according to Glăveanu, from Mead and contemporary Median scholars (such as Gillespie, 2005; Gillespie & Martin, 2014). As third model, Glăveanu lists the ‘*dialogical approach*’ or ‘*becoming self*’ for which Buber is named as the main reference. Despite the somewhat greater resonance with his own allocentric approach, Glăveanu critically asks, whether the dialogical approach is truly other-centered, and concludes that “(d)espite the interdependence between self and other, the focus still remains squarely on the self” (p. 453).

Finally, Glăveanu presents his ‘*allocentric approach*’ that features the self-understanding of ‘*being other*’ and mentions Bakhtin and Levinas as most important references.³ Allocentrism, Glăveanu (2019, p. 454) states, “aims to approach intersubjectivity from the position of the other and what it means to be other, rather than the self.” And he explains that in allocentrism

“(r)eality, in particular the reality of the other, is no longer a construction of the self or a kind of strangeness expressed in dialogue, but a premise for responsibility. The other can never be fully tamed or understood – just as the self will never be fully understood by others – but this motives partners to constantly grasp towards each other. It is this grasping, this need for

³ It is worth mentioning that both were important inspirations also for Waldenfels, who—unfortunately—is not included in Glăveanu’s discussion.

establishing relations and understanding, that makes connecting to others in allocentrism an intersubjective project that is always ongoing but never completed.” (p. 455).

This is echoed in Glăveanu’s (2020a) recent book, where he nicely summarized the surplus of the other and the never-ending process of intersubjectivity:

“The other always has a surplus of knowledge or insight about the self precisely because of its ‘external’ position or, rather, because it is other to the self. Conversely, the self, by remaining other to others, represents an inexhaustible source of novelty and possibility for them. Exchanges can lead to mutual understanding and the establishment of common ground, but these are merely temporary phases within the wider picture of productive tensions and ongoing differences. The other is not there to be apprehended and incorporated by the self; it is there to help the self expand its own possibilities.” (Glăveanu, 2020a, p. 44)

Allocentrism features a reversal of perspectives, or rather: the reallocation of the sovereignty of interpretation from the *self* onto the *other*, who’s perspective is assumed to be more realistic and to contribute a “surplus of knowledge” just because of the external position of the other. This reversal of perspectives is embedded in an intersubjective *mutuality* that features the exchange of untamable and inexhaustible *differences*; and these differences are regarded productive for the self in finding novel and creative possibilities. Thus, the allocentric approach suggests a repositioning from perspective-taking (or perspective-making) to perspective-getting (which by the way has proven more effective than perspective-taking in prejudice research as documented by Kalla & Broockman, 2023), from putting others in the boxes of our interpretative frameworks to listening and attending to their views, from naïve assumptions of concord to the consideration of productive *differences*. With respect to these considerable changes in perspective, regard for difference, openness to creative possibilities, and concern for the other, Glăveanu’s allocentric approach makes a great contribution to conceptualizing perspective-taking.

Glăveanu’s allocentric approach gets close to what I conclude from my reading of Waldenfels, but I claim that Glăveanu’s allocentric approach can be taken one step further to what I call the *xenocentric* perspective.⁴ The move from *allocentric* to *xenocentric* is justified and adding something new, since the other should be regarded not only as the *different*, that is, a fellow human who confronts me with their *differences* in perspective, including their perspective on myself, but the other person who I

⁴ Perhaps Glăveanu, in his discussion of wonder and the other, aims at something similar, when he (2020b, p. 132) notes: “(T)o wonder about others is to keep them distinct from us in order to have a real and authentic dialogue with them (and not a monologue with an ‘other’ made up in our own image). Making the other strange might be a short, fleeing moment, but it is one filled with new possibilities and fresh insights about the world.” Nevertheless, I think, ‘*xenocentrism*’ is more precise because of its stronger focus on the *extraordinary*.

encounter presents me with the *extraordinary* Other—in Levinas' (1999, p. 97) terms: when we encounter „the infinitely other in the other person.”⁵

In conclusion, the xenocentric approach that I suggest is grounded in Waldenfels' responsive phenomenology and corresponds with my translation of το ξέρον (= the unknown, the alien) as a neuter noun. Thus, my suggestion is an interpretation of perspective-taking in light of Waldenfels' responsive phenomenology. And I conclude that the most adequate understanding is the *xenocentric-responsive perspective-getting* by which the self encounters the *extraordinary* Other.

2.3 Pathos and Responsiveness – Contributions for Modeling Wisdom

Finally, I discuss the question whether the phenomenological perspective and its focus on pathos and responsiveness may be promising for understanding and fostering the development of wise thinking and behavior. Recently, Glück and Weststrate (2022) presented their IMW. One of the assumptions implemented in the IMW is that a set of *non-cognitive* and a set of *cognitive* traits must both be highly positive to yield wise thinking and behavior. In a tree model both sets of factors are entered in a kind of two-key process in which both function as necessary (*sine qua non*) conditions. Thus, three traits, (a) exploratory orientation such as openness to experience, (b) emotion regulation, and (c) compassion/concern for others are the *non-cognitive*, emotional and motivational *presuppositions* or *mediators* that determine whether a wisdom-requiring challenge is met with a wisdom-fostering emotional and motivational state. Conversely, if emotion regulation, compassion or exploratory openness are absent or very low, wisdom has little or no chance to unfold. Thus, one of the assertions that the IMW appears to make about the psychological mechanism of wisdom development is that the non-cognitive, emotional, and motivational traits determine whether the wisdom-related cognitive factors (d) meta-cognitive capacities, (e) wisdom-related knowledge, and (f) competencies for reflection can come into play at all and may lead to wisdom-fostering thinking and reasoning states and finally to wise behavior.

Glück and Weststrate's IMW—this is especially obvious in their tree model (p. 358, Figure 2)—is structured by the polarity between wise and unwise thinking and behavior. And in my reading, the polarity of high vs. low scores on the three non-cognitive traits (exploratory orientation, emotion regulation, and concern for others) that determine the emotional and motivational state may reflect the opposition between egocentrism and xenocentric responsiveness. This distinction also reflects the opposition between two of Glăveanu's approaches: between the cognitive approach that features

⁵ Levinas is well known for his interpretation of the other's face that, in its disarmed and naked presence, presents us with the command 'Thou shalt not kill.' And, beyond that "(t)here is, in the face, the supreme authority that commands, and I always say it is the word of God. The face is the locus of the word of God. There is the word of God in the other, a non-thematized word." (Levinas, 1999, p. 104). To take this seriously would require a more extensive, philosophical and *theological* (see, for example, Zimmermann, 2013; Welten, 2020) discussion as can be included in this article, unfortunately.

egocentrism, on the one hand, and the allocentric approach that is associated with wisdom and perspective-getting, on the other hand. Thus, for the polarity between the egocentric self-focus and the xenocentric-responsive other-focus, the IMW indicates psychological mechanisms—which are of course tentatively and, as Glück and Weststrate note, open to future revisions.

Therefore, I suggest an improvement that springs from my concern with pathos and responsiveness, which is inspired by my reading of Waldenfels' work and discussed in the previous section. The suggestion is to explicitly include 'pathic experiences of the Other' into the set of emotional and motivational presuppositions. To be sure, I am aware that the components of the IMW are somehow related to and allow for the experience of the Other; but this could be made stronger and more explicit. For example, an intellectual humility scale—optimally in a revised version that includes *humility in responding to the Other*—could be included in the set of non-cognitive predictors in the IMW, when the aim is to more precisely account for the conditions under which xenocentric responsiveness and xenocentric perspective-getting can emerge and develop. In conclusion, a comprehensive understanding of the psychological mechanisms that account for the development of wise thinking and behavior could be advanced by attending to the dynamics of pathos and responsiveness.

3 A Typology of Styles of Responsiveness

Wisdom and its development are often understood in terms of linear models that range from unwise (or foolish) to wise thinking and behavior. Glück and Weststrate's (2022) IMW presents an advanced example for such a model, and could, as the authors note, become the blueprint of a structural equation model. Such modeling has the advantage that all variables can be continuous and results present wisdom as continuum between two extreme poles. However, the more wisdom researchers afford a wider perspective to include potential circumstances of wisdom, such as cognitive-structural competences, levels of perspective-taking, approaches to intersubjectivity, cultural or lifeworld contexts, or situational differences (Grossmann, 2018; Grossmann, Dorfman, et al., 2020; Karami et al., 2020), the more *qualitative* differences need to be considered in the equation. Thus, the modeling with continuous variables may be superimposed by qualitative, typological differences. I suggest that the self-other responsiveness that is the focus of this text requires attending to *qualitative* differences and thus considering typological modeling. Exemplars for typological models that help developing our model of styles of self-other responsiveness are Glăveanu's (2019) four approaches to intersubjectivity and models of perspective-taking in developmental psychology. Both are considered valuable contributions for a model of styles of responsiveness and will be briefly discussed, before my own typology is presented.

3.1 Contributions to a Typology of Styles of Responsiveness

3.1.1 Glăveanu's Four Approaches to Self-other Relations

Glăveanu's (2019) four approaches to intersubjectivity were already introduced above. Going more into detail with the relation between the four approaches, Glăveanu (2019, p. 444) notes that they differ in "how they specifically approach the self–other as 'being self', 'becoming other', 'becoming self', and 'being other'." Thus, the allocentric approach involves a decisive shift of focus from self to the other. When Glăveanu notes that the other three approaches "need to be complemented (not replaced) by an allocentric standpoint," he clearly indicates that his four-approach model should not be understood in terms of a stage theory in which climbing up the stairs means rising above and abandoning the previous stages (as proposed for 'hard stage' developmental models by Kohlberg et al., 1983), but rather a typology of qualitatively distinct, but equally available approaches. Nevertheless, Glăveanu bestows the allocentric approach with primacy and even necessity, when the aim is opening new ways and creative possibilities (Glăveanu, 2022). Glăveanu (2019, p. 456) is going one step further, when he confirms that he is "not claiming these four approaches as mutually exclusive, except for the cognitive one. This is because ... the cognitive perspective is grounded in a different epistemology than the others: one cannot operate within the Cartesian separation between minds and, at the same time, transcend it." Conversely, the pragmatist and the dialogical approaches have many things in common—and they can and should be complemented by the allocentric approach.

This is an interesting construction of a typology, since it combines equal availability and principal legitimacy of all four types, on the one hand, with a claim of primacy and high desirability for one specific type, on the other hand. That the favored type is even considered mutually exclusive with one other, namely the cognitive type, indicates a tendency for a hierarchical order of the the approaches between two extreme poles. Here are structural similarities between Glăveanu's construction of a typology of versions of intersubjectivity and the typology of styles of responsiveness presented below. And also regarding the content I see parallels: The allocentric approach and the xenocentric style, respectively, are furthest from the cognitive or egocentric style. Both types/styles that are remotest from each other are regarded mutually exclusive, while the two types/styles in the middle are thought to have many points in common, and are in need to be complemented by the allocentric and/or xenocentric approach, when the aim is realizing the highest and most adequate ethical possibilities and opening the most valuable human potential.

3.1.2 Perspective-taking in Developmental Psychology

The construction of a typology of styles of responsiveness incorporates contributions also from cognitive-structural models in developmental psychology. The focus on the self-other relation suggests the consideration of models of perspective-taking. Perspective-taking has been discussed above in the context of key components of wisdom that may receive a new interpretation in light of responsive phenomenology. Now, for the construction of a typology of styles of responsiveness, the *question of*

development in the adult lifespan will be the focus. How can we understand, in terms of developmental psychology, the development from egocentrism to *xenocentric-responsive perspective-getting*, which is the most adequate version?

The most influential conceptualization of *development* with regard to egocentrism and perspective-taking has been contributed by Piaget, who, in his earlier work (see Piaget, 1926, for example), notes that “the child's intellectual egocentricity constitutes a serious obstacle to knowing him by pure observation unaided by questions.” (Piaget, 1926, p. 6). Egocentrism is considered to be associated with deficits: being not conscious, having serious obstacles, and confusing things: “That the child shows a keen interest in himself, a logical, and no doubt a moral, egocentricity, does not prove that he is conscious of his self, but suggests, on the contrary, that he confuses his self with the universe, in other words that he is unconscious of his self.” (p. 125). Egocentricity is “innate” (p. 230) and makes the child believe “the world to centre in himself, and his respect for his parents which tends always to make him believe that the world is governed by moral rather than physical laws” (p. 145). An example is the child’s animism that, Piaget (p. 160) says, results from “egocentric realism” and the inability to “distinguish the psychical from the physical.” In their reconstruction of Piaget’s concept of egocentrism, Kesselring and Müller (2011, p. 329) conclude: “in Piaget’s early work egocentrism refers to a developmental stage that is characterized by the unconsciousness of the self and the lack of differentiation between, on the one hand, ego and world, and ego and alter ego, on the other hand.”

But Piaget also notes that development beyond the immature and primitive egocentrism is possible and occurs in communication and self-awareness: “(I)n the degree in which, by reason of exchange and discussions between individuals, the self becomes aware of itself and breaks away from its egocentricity, it ceases to introject feelings into things and by dissociation of the confused primitive ideas is able to escape from animism even in its diffuse form.” (Piaget, 1926, p. 245). Nevertheless, it may appear from this earlier work of Piaget that egocentrism is a problem in childhood in the pre-school years, and that children normally leave behind any egocentrism in later childhood and early adolescence. Does Piaget suggest that there is no egocentrism in adolescence and adulthood?

This would be a misinterpretation of Piaget, when we consider his later writings, where Piaget has changed and advanced his understanding of egocentrism, as Kesselring and Müller (2011, p. 335) note: “Piaget himself expanded the egocentrism-concept in the 1940s and 1950s by introducing concepts such as ‘sociocentrism’ to refer to an attitude that is biased by the ideology of a group.” And now, Piaget assumes that egocentrism re-emerges at each new developmental stage. Piaget and Weil (1951) demonstrated this, for example, in their study of Swiss children’s understanding of their ‘homeland.’ Piaget and Weil (1951, p. 578) draw two conclusions from their study: „One is that the child's discovery of his homeland and understanding of other countries is a process of transition from egocentricity to reciprocity. The other is that this gradual development is liable to constant setbacks, usually through the re-emergence of egocentricity on a broader or sociocentric plane, at each new

stage in this development, or as each new conflict arises.“ It is especially the second conclusion that opens a perspective on the development of egocentrism in the adult lifespan: When constant setbacks and re-emergences of egocentrism are the rule and not the exception in any stage transition or newly arising conflict, how can we exclude the development of egocentrism in adolescence and adulthood, where egocentrism may be expanded and transformed into sociocentrism? And “all ideologies are to varying degrees sociocentric” (Piaget, 1951, p. 280).

Anyway, the model of Piaget’s stages of the development of cognitive operations appeared too focused on children and early adolescents. Are formal operations in adolescence the end of development? Is there cognitive development in adulthood? In the cognitive-structural discussion in the 1980s, colleagues saw the necessity to extend Piaget’s stages of cognitive development into adulthood, and they designed, for example, post-formal operations (Kramer, 1983) and schemata of dialectical thinking (Basseches, 1980). This discussion (for a review of the literature and an extensive discussion with respect to wisdom research, see Grossmann, 2018) may open perspectives on the advanced forms of thinking in adult development (Kallio, 2015; 2020) that are needed for wisdom and wise perspective-taking to develop. The ambitious task of coordinating multiple perspectives, for example, requires forms of thinking that may include dialecticism and complementarity. The coordination of multiple perspectives therefore is included in the so-called “perspectival meta-cognitions” in the CMW (Grossmann, Weststrate, et al., 2020).

Selman (1980), who contributed another influential conceptualization of *development* with regard to egocentrism and perspective-taking, has, with reference to Piaget, specified perspective-taking as *social* perspective-taking or role-taking. Selman suggests that social perspective-taking proceeds from an undifferentiated and egocentric level, through an initial self-other differentiation, a second-person reciprocity, a third-person perspective, to finally arrive at a societal-symbolic conventional and systemic perspective-taking. The aim of development in Selman’s model appears to be a conventional system, while post-conventional or meta-reflective levels are missing in his model. Two reconstructions of Selman’s model (Habermas, 1983; Martin et al., 2008) therefore look beyond Selman’s model—and therefore are most interesting for the project developed in this text.

Habermas (1983) published a reconstruction of Selman’s (1980) levels of perspective-taking as an integral and central part of his theoretical confirmation of Kohlberg’s developmental model of moral reasoning. Habermas suggests a revision especially of the highest level of perspective taking, which, as Habermas posits, must be a post-conventional and procedural coordination of perspectives using universal-pragmatic communication, where rightness claims and principles are communicatively re-examined. Habermas’ highest level of perspective-taking is certainly going beyond Selman’s model. The problem with Habermas’ reconstruction is that his definition of the final and highest level of perspective-taking in terms of a purely cognitive and universal-pragmatic communication of rightness claims *requires* that the individual has left behind themselves any lifeworld embeddedness (see also

Streib & Hood Jr, in press). Thus, my modest proposal for a modification is that the communicative action and the coordination of *speakers'* perspectives, as Habermas wants to have it, is advanced to become the communication of *listeners*—including listening to those who cannot afford a seat at the communication table—and afford a *pathic* experience of the *extraordinary* Other, as Waldenfels suggests.

Another interesting contribution is Martin and colleagues' (2008) reconstruction of Selman's (1980) levels of perspective-taking.⁶ Martin and colleagues saw the need to extend Selman's model of perspective-taking to include what they call "dialogical engagement," which means that the individual remains "open to the fallibility of any and all positions" and recognizes "the need to generate novel approaches to address context-specific challenges and conditions" (Martin et al., 2008, p. 308). This level certainly depicts an advanced form of perspective-taking that not only goes beyond the Selman-reconstruction of Habermas, but also can be seen as the precondition for Glăveanu's allocentric approach. But also here: when this highest level in Martin and colleagues' reconstruction should be applied to *xenocentric responsiveness*, it would need to be specified as *epoché* that enables *pathos*; this level then would involve listening and being open to the *extraordinary* Other.

Finally, looking back from the highest level of perspective-taking and attending to the 'previous' and 'lower' levels of perspective-taking, I agree with Habermas (1983) and Martin and colleagues (2008) that Selman's forms of egocentric, third-person mutual, or societal symbolic perspective-taking should be integrated in a typology. For this, I find Habermas' more parsimonious categorization most plausible, which posits, below the highest levels of principled and procedural social perspective-taking, three levels: (1) the egocentric perspective, (2) the primary group perspective, and (3) the perspective of a collectivity (the systems point of view).

3.2 The Styles of Responsiveness

The conclusion of the discussion about Glăveanu's (2019) four approaches to intersubjectivity and about the discussion of the reconstruction of perspective-taking in developmental psychology is that the styles of responsiveness can be categorized according to their alignment with an *egocentric*, *conventional*, *systemic*, or *xenocentric* perspective-taking. The styles of responsiveness are therefore

⁶ Martin and colleagues' (2008) re-consideration and extension of Selman's model of perspective-taking may overcome the problem of possible cognitive bias, because their interpretation of perspective-taking aims at a model of "coordination of relational activity within a worldly context" (p. 297). For this project, the authors refer to the original theories of Piaget and Mead. And regarding Piaget, the authors strongly reject the misunderstanding that Piaget was "primarily concerned with the development of logical operations and structures in isolated individuals" (p. 298). On the contrary, Piaget's account of perspective-taking is an integral part of his social-relational approach. This view is supported by Piaget experts such as Kesselring and Müller (2011).

called *egocentric*, *conventional*, *negotiatory*, and *xenocentric*. Because of their roots in developmental psychology, the models of social perspective-taking are highly relevant for devising and substantiating the developmental dynamic, especially in modeling the first three styles of responsiveness. Glăveanu's allocentric approach and similarly Martin and colleagues' "dialogical engagement" can be interpreted as aiming at the pathic experience of the extraordinary Other that is the core of the *xenocentric* style of responsiveness. This idea that is inspired by Waldenfels' responsive phenomenology suggests going beyond an understanding of the highest form of perspective-taking as pragmatic coordination of perspectives.

The differences between the styles of responsiveness also reflect an expanding social horizon that may indicate the context, in which the individual's response takes place: the ego and nothing (or not much) else, members of one's primary group, other people of one's collectivity or societal system, or a wide horizon that includes all of humanity that naturally includes strangers. But this categorization according to social horizon should not be understood deterministic and exclusively. Pathic experiences can occur across all sociological formations.

The typology starts with the *egocentric style of responsiveness*. This style is characterized by the absence or irrelevance of another perspective. Pathic experiences are absent or very low, because silenced by othering. The egocentric style of responsiveness corresponds to the self-focused cognitive approach in Glăveanu's typology. Egocentrism is positing one's own opinion as it were the absolute truth—which is called overconfidence. There is a tendency in the egocentric style to intensify overconfidence by submission to authority figures or systems of prescriptions, beliefs or collective myths (sociocentrism). Thus, the egocentric style may not only facilitate *cohesion* and *solidarity* with like-minded others, but also foster *xenophobia* to outgroups, which can remain implicit and invisible but can also become explicit and hostile (for more details about this, see below section 3.3).

The style of conventional responsiveness is based on the conventional coordination of perspectives that applies a second-person, but not third-person perspective. The embeddedness in one's primary group of family, social network or lifeworld segment features a preoccupation with conventional roles and conventional norms. Pathic experiences most often occur in the small lifeworld in which the self is embedded. Also, responsiveness is focused on this small lifeworld and mainly consists in compliance with the needs and desires in one's primary group; it is restricted to the options within the range of conventional norms and roles that govern the primary lifeworld. The products of the conventional style of responsiveness are twofold: it facilitates the supply of care in the primary group, while, at the same time, it may produce a variety of forms of conventional outgroup othering such as ignorance, social marginalization, spatial exclusion, or exotism.

The style of negotiatory responsiveness is based on the systemic coordination of perspectives, which includes a third-person perspective and applies a systems perspective. Pathic experiences are relevant but curtailed to the societal norms. The response is shaped as respectful consideration of the interests

and rightness claims of the participants in the negotiation. Products of negotiatory responsiveness are the balancing and compromising of interests in the framework of existing collective societal norms. The response is restricted to the proposals and claims that can be put on the negotiation table.

The xenocentric style of responsiveness is based on the postconventional, xenocentric reversal of perspectives, which includes an *epoché*, the bracketing one's inclination to develop and apply prejudgments, and yields unrestricted pathic openness to the extraordinary Other. In xenocentric responsiveness the ideal-typical interplay between pathos and response can take place. The moment of pathic experience provokes a response that transcends the intended, predictable, expected, and taken-for-granted roles, expectations, and norms. This structures the response as creative and innovative act that is based on the experience of being affected by the Other and their demands, as suggested in responsive ethics. Products are the emergence of new insights about the Other and their demands, which includes potential future needs—the invention of wise reactions to the Other and their demands. Xenocentric responsiveness aims at the invention of something new, creative, and innovative, the finding of wise syntheses in a never-ending dialectical process.

A summary overview or the typology of the styles of responsiveness is presented in Table 1. This table allows a synoptic view of the typology and the differences between the styles. The styles of responsiveness differ according to the *structure* of responding (Column 4) that is based on the version of *social perspectives* (Column 2), the relevance and shape of *pathic experiences* (Column 3), and result in a number of specific *products* (Column 5).

Table 1. *The Model of Styles of Responsiveness*

Style of Responsiveness	Perspective-taking	Pathos	Response	Product
Egocentric	preconventional-egocentric/sociocentric	absent or low, because silenced by othering	overconfidence; perhaps reinforced by submission to authority figures or myths	cohesion with like-minded others; xenophobia toward outgroups (implicit or explicit)
Conventional	conventional coordination (conventional roles)	limited to the primary group	compliance with the needs and desires in the primary group	supply of care in the ingroup; conventional outgroup othering
Negotiatory	systemic coordination of third-person perspectives	limited to the framework of existing collective norms	respectful consideration of the rightness claims of any participant in the negotiation	balancing and compromising of interests in the framework of existing collective norms
Xenocentric	postconventional-xenocentric reversal of perspectives, perspective- <i>getting</i>	pathic openness to the Other (based on <i>epoché</i>)	response based on the experience of being affected by the Other and their demands	emergence of new insights, possibilities, and the invention of wise reactions

3.3 Othering and the Styles of Responsiveness

It is important to note that especially the egocentric style of responsiveness includes a tendency to promote authoritarianism and othering. In its radical form, this can be called a pathological or “extreme form of response without pathos” (Waldenfels, 2020a, p. 349), for which Waldenfels adds as examples that “neo-nationalist trends and new waves of xenophobia recently haunting Europe are effects of such a political irresponsivity.” As noted already in the Introduction, othering is an immense challenge and an entering point into vicious cycles. Wisdom is desirable as a remedy and should be part of education in school and in public education. When it is important to apply wisdom to contemporary world problems (Sternberg et al., 2019), othering certainly needs to be addressed in wisdom research. And indeed, wisdom researchers address, for example, xenophobic challenges of our time such as hate speech (Nusbaum, 2019), populism and polarization (Glück, 2019). And Sternberg has published extensively not only on wisdom (Sternberg, 2019a; 2019b; Sternberg & Glück, 2021; 2022), but also on foolishness (Sternberg, 2005; 2019a), toxicity (Sternberg, 2018b) and hate (Sternberg, 2003; 2018a; 2020). Thereby, Sternberg has taken a stand regarding the question of the opposite to wisdom. Previously he considered *foolishness* as opposed to wisdom—a foolishness that includes several components such as unrealistic optimism, egocentrism, false omniscience, false omnipotence, false invulnerability, and ethical disengagement (see, for example, Sternberg, 2005, pp. 337-338). But Sternberg (2018b, p. 203) recently notes: “Foolishness is not the worst possible outcome of failing to develop wisdom. The worst possible outcome is not the absence of wisdom (foolishness), but rather its opposite, toxicity.” Of course, ‘toxicity’ has a figurative meaning when used in sociology and psychology, but it is very effective in emphasizing the contaminating effect that othering can have.

Discussing wisdom and its opposite in terms of the Other and othering allows to exactly determine the fork where the path toward wisdom and the path toward its opposite diverge: It is a fundamental difference between objectifying or ‘othering’ the other and listening or being responsive to the Other. And very likely a suppression or lack of pathos goes hand in hand with othering. Othering silences pathos. Thus, from the phenomenological-philosophical reflection the term ‘othering’ receives a profound and precise meaning. Using the Greek terms, the polarity is between xenophobia and xenosophia.⁷ Thereby, ‘xenophobia’ is well established in sociology and social psychology for addressing prejudice and enmity towards outgroups, while ‘xenosophia’ is new, however, as I argue, appropriate.

⁷ Perhaps some readers, like one reviewer, would rather see ‘xenophilia’ as opposite to ‘xenophobia.’ Then, fearing and loving the Strange and the stranger would be seen as being opposed. However, in the context of my line of argument, I would defend my polarization of ‘xenophobia’ and ‘xenosophia’ with the explanation that xenosophia, by its open, ‘pathic’ encounter with the Other, can result in both, agreement/love and disagreement/dislike. Thus, the polarity is between prejudiced fear and unprejudiced pathos and response.

Of course, othering is not restricted to the egocentric style. Prejudice and othering, as noted above, may also emerge as a product of the conventional style in form of conventional outgroup othering such as ignorance, social marginalization, spatial exclusion, or exotism. And also in the negotiatory and xenocentric styles, othering is theoretically not excluded, because there may be othering and negative attitudes toward those who reject societal norms, oppose diversity, or rebuff pathic openness to the Other. But it is in the egocentric style, that othering in its more extreme forms belongs to the potential core characteristics of the style.

In conclusion, the typology of styles of responsiveness account for the opposition between wisdom and xenophobic enmity—or toxicity to use Sternberg’s terms. Especially when egocentrism or sociocentrism occurs or re-emerges in later adolescence and adulthood, it may produce xenophobic othering. And egocentrism in later adolescence and adulthood has the potential of posing dangerous risks to society and democracy.

3.4 Empirical Evidence and the Question of Development

The styles of responsiveness describe a hierarchical order, which is prescriptive and aims toward the highest style that is defined as *xenocentric*. But, as stated above in the discussion of Glăveanu’s (2019) typology, I do *not* suggest to adopt the ‘logic of development’ that was designed for ‘*stages*’ (very explicitly by Kohlberg et al., 1983)—which are assumed to progress mono-directionally, sequentially, and irreversibly, and are valid universally.⁸ By using the term ‘style’ I indicate the rejection of mono-directionality, sequentiality, and irreversibility, but also the rejection of the idea that respondents can only be on one exclusive and all-domain-embracing stage (structural whole assumption). Rather, styles are like waves in the sea that can swell up and flatten out. Different styles may overlap and coexist. Thus, earlier styles of responsiveness are *not* abandoned at the advent of a new style. Rather, earlier styles remain available in later development; or they may “re-emerge,” as Piaget assumes for egocentrism/sociocentrism in his later work. And indeed, earlier styles are very likely to re-emerge in situations of transitions, challenges, and stressful experiences. I should also note that I see ‘styles’ not restricted and fixed to trait-like dispositions that are invariant across situations. Rather, I see styles in a more fluid and dynamic development between trait and state: Styles develop from situational reactions; the more often they are used, the more they may constitute a kind of habitus, trait-like dispositions. But nevertheless, the preference for a style may vary from situation to situation.

The consequence of the above remarks about the understanding of ‘styles’ and their *qualitative* differences for empirical investigation is this: The best start would be an exploratory study of the styles of responsiveness by the coding of narrative text in interviews using newly developed coding

⁸ The assumption of ‘universalism’ is often included in the theoretical a priori presuppositions for stage theories. And the assumption of universalism for xenosophia and xenocentrism is a great vision. But I suggest regarding this as a question for cross-cultural empirical investigation.

schemes. Further, empirical investigation should pay special attention to intra-individual differences, and thus use idiographic analyses based in longitudinal assessment, followed by inter-individual (idiothetic) comparison of their trajectories. Included in this investigation is the focus on changes from one style to another. And when documenting the existence of change and development, a more complex set of questions arises: *Why* does an individual move upward, stay, or move down in the hierarchy of styles? Are there situational or biographical changes associated with these changes? How can we understand trajectories that include regressive *and* progressive changes? Is style development different in different domains? How can the simultaneous presence of two or more styles be explained?

As long as there is no self-report measure for the assessment of styles of responsiveness, qualitative research is the ideal avenue. But even after there is a successful scale development, qualitative investigation may be helpful in the effort to mutually confirm (or disconfirm) results on the base of a triangulation of mixed-method approaches (Steppacher et al., in press). In any case, empirical investigation of the styles of responsiveness needs to include the analysis of correlates, predictors, and outcomes. The question about the dynamics of development of the styles of responsiveness is primarily a question for empirical investigation. These analyses should be based on longitudinal data. Are the styles of responsiveness, and the style of xenocentric responsiveness in particular, predicted by traits such as intellectual humility, openness to experience, [compassion](#), [emotion regulation](#), or mystical experiences? What are the outcomes on scales for generativity and psychological well-being? And most importantly: quantitative assessment needs to include items for prejudice and xenophobia in the individual and in the lifeworld in which the individuals are at home; otherwise, it may not be possible to document the development on the background of a societal perspective. A reminder for this is also Piaget's widening the perspective from egocentrism to sociocentrism.

Assumptions about predictors and outcomes of responsiveness and its different styles could be based on the overviews of research results about the other-oriented components of wisdom, which are broadly acknowledged by wisdom researchers and exemplarily included in Grossmann et al.'s (2020) CMW or Glück and Weststrate's (2022) IMW: intellectual humility, perspective-taking, moral aspirations, context orientation, to name some of the most prominent. Correlations between scale measures (for wisdom, personality traits, etc.) and selected components of wisdom are presented in a massive table by Glück and Weststrate (2022). This can be taken as an initial indication of correlations between the styles of responsiveness and these other variables. And based on the assumption that intellectual humility has high family resemblance with responsiveness, Porter, Elnakouri, et al.'s (2022) most recent compilation of correlates of intellectual humility may add valuable insights. And finally, with reference to the close relation of responsiveness and wisdom-related thinking and behavior, the following hypothesis could be put to the test: Xenocentric responsiveness leads to wise resolutions, where 'xenocentric responsiveness' is assessed qualitatively by codes for the pathic experience of the extraordinary Other, and 'wisdom' is assessed by one or the other measure used in

wisdom research (Ardelt, 2003; Webster, 2003; Thomas et al., 2017; Brienza et al., 2018; Thomas et al., 2021).

In conclusion, for an initial phase of investigating the styles of responsiveness, the most adequate approach is the idiographic lens to get the styles themselves and their development into relief. Regarding the developmental perspective, it appears necessary that empirical research on wisdom as xenosophia adopts a biographical perspective and engages in longitudinal investigation. This also includes the use of quantitative approaches. The triangulation of idiographic, idiothetic and nomothetic analyses based on longitudinal data in mixed-method designs may yield the most promising results.

4 Conclusion

In my proposal for interpreting wisdom as xenosophia and xenocentric responsiveness, different streams of thought were combined. I have focused on the contributions from Waldenfels's philosophy of the alien and his proposal for a responsive phenomenology, which includes the idea of a special *epoché* to allow for 'pathic' openness for the extraordinary Other. This can be considered a contribution to better understanding wisdom and its development. To my knowledge this article is the first to view wisdom and its development from the perspective of responsive phenomenology. For the project of conceptualizing styles of responsiveness and understanding the development from xenophobia to xenosophia, responsive phenomenology is particularly helpful, because it suggests disambiguating the 'other' by proposing a convincing and powerful alternative to 'othering' and the vicious circles it may induce.

A central feature of wisdom as xenosophia is receptivity for, and the unprejudiced response to, the needs and demands of the Other—where the Other can be, for example, a human other, a specific social situation, another culture, or the natural environment as a whole in far-sighted perspective. Wisdom is the positive reaction that diverges from, and leaves behind, negative alternatives and less wise or unwise precursors, and, of course, toxic othering. Thus, my proposal dovetails with and strengthens Sternberg's (2018b) claim that the opposite to wisdom is toxicity—which goes beyond and radicalizes foolishness as opposite to wisdom. Xenosophia is opposed to xenophobia, to othering, prejudice, irresponsible neglect, and irresponsibility. Research on responsiveness has implications for wisdom research in psychology, and the social sciences in general. The consideration of responsiveness implies the reversal of perspectives such that the other is not seen as the problem, but the source of inspiration and new possibilities that lead to wise thinking and behavior.

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