

Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics

---Toward Cross-Cultural Religious Understanding---

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1

Ad Enrico Castelli

*in testimonianza di trent'anni
d'amicizia
e di comunione nel mito... della non-ermeneutica
della fede*

* * *

*con legame che non si disfa
ormai più
perchè sigillato
dalla morte.*

Studies

Myth

Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics

यस्यामतं तस्य मतं मतं यस्य न वेद सः /
अविजातं विजानतां विजातमविजानताम् //

yasyāmatam tasya matam

matam yasya na veda sah /

avijñātaṁ vijānatām

vijñātam avijānatām //

By whom it is unthought, by him it is thought;

By whom it is thought, he does not see.

Not understood by whom it is known;

Understood by whom it is not known.

KenU II, 3, 1

(cf. RV I, 164, 32)

(Handwritten notes and scribbles)

Attention
beare follow the
new order

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quoted texts

Unless otherwise noted, all (translations) are the author's own.

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Abbreviations

Yajña

AB Altareya Brāhmana
 AS Āśva Sūtra
 AV Atharva Veda

1 - Index of Names

BC Bhagavad Gītā
 BhagP Bhagavad Purāna
 BU Bhṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad
 CU Chandogya Upaniṣad
 GopB Gopatheśāhmana
 ISU Īśa Upaniṣad
 JāU Jātsā Upaniṣad

2 - Index of Subjects

KatvU Kaivalya Upaniṣad
 KathU Katha Upaniṣad
 KauB Kauṣītaki Brāhmana
 KauU Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad

3 - Index of References

KepU Kēśava Upaniṣad
 MB Mahābhārata
 MaitB Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā
 MaitU Maitrī Upaniṣad
 MandU Māndūkya Upaniṣad
 Manu Manava Dharmasāstra
 MarkP Markandeya Purāna
 MundU Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad
 PañcB Pañcaviṅśa Brāhmana (now part of MB)

Abbreviations

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Texts

| | |
|-------|--|
| AB | Altareya Brāhmaṇa |
| ASS | Āsvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra |
| AV | Atharva Veda |
| BG | Bhagavad Gītā |
| BhagP | Bhāgavata Purāna |
| BS | Brahma Sūtra |
| BU | Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad |
| CU | Chāndogya Upaniṣad |
| GopB | Gopatha Brāhmaṇa |
| IsU | Īsa Upaniṣad |
| JabU | Jābāla Upaniṣad |
| JaimB | Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa |
| KaivU | Kaivalya Upaniṣad |
| KathU | Kātha Upaniṣad |
| KausB | Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa |
| KausU | Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad |
| KenU | Kena Upaniṣad |
| MB | Mahābhārata |
| MaitS | Maitrāyāni Saṁhitā |
| MaitU | Maitrī Upaniṣad |
| MandU | Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad |
| Manu | Mānava Dharmasāstra |
| MarkP | Markaṇḍeya Purāna |
| MundU | Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad |
| PancB | Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa (same text as TMB) |

- Ram Rāmāyaṇa
- RV R̥g Veda
- SF Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
- SSS Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra
- SU Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad
- TB Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa
- TMB Tāṇḍya Mahā Brāhmaṇa (same text as PancB)
- TS Taittirīya Saṃhitā
- TU Taittirīya Upaniṣad
- VisnP Viṣṇu Purāṇa
- VSS Vaitāna Śrauta Sūtra
- YSB Yoga Sūtra Bhāṣya
- YV Yajur Veda (*Vājasaneyi*)

Bible

The usual abbreviations are employed.

- AV Authorized Version
- NEB New English Bible
- OAB Oxford Annotated Bible
- RSV Revised Standard Version
- RV Revised Version

AV
RV
should be distinguished
RV
RV
11.31.2

Other abbreviations

Denz. Schön. Denzinger, H., Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum, et
 declarationum de rebus fidei et morum. ^{Newly} edited by A. Schönmetzer
 (Barcinone, Herder, 1973). ~~e. 1955~~.

- ERE Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Edited by J. Hastings (New York, Scribners Sons, 1928). Reprint: (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1969-1971).
- P. G. Migne, J. P., Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca (Paris, Migne, 1857-1866).
- P. L. Migne, J. P., Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina (Paris, Migne, 1844-1855).
- RGG Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. ^{Third edition} (edited by K. Galling (Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr (P. Siebeck), 1961)).

I Introduction

Athāto brahma jījñāsā

And now it is the proper moment

to tend with our entire being toward the sapiential experience
of the all-embracing Mystery.

BS I, 1, 1.

1 The Volume

Is it just and proper to stop looking ahead or rather to slow down what the ancients called epektasis (the forward tension of Man towards his goal--the infinite Mystery) and busy oneself by revising old thoughts written during the last decade? Or again, what is the value and justification of such a compilation when people are dying of malnutrition, are victims of war and oppression and suffer injustices of all sorts? I feel that these questions cannot in any way be dismissed as unscholarly or non-pertinent. If intellectual activity divorces itself from life, it becomes not only barren and alienating, but also harmful and perhaps eventually criminal. The urgency of these issues cannot be minimized, but it should not ^{obscure} ~~diminish~~ the importance of the problems we deal with here in this volume. I am convinced that we live in a state of human emergency which does not allow us to entertain ourselves with bagatelles of no relevance whatsoever. But I am equally convinced that, precisely because of the seriousness of the human situation, mere short-term solutions and technical stop-gaps will not do. We need the respite given by contemplation, the perspective offered by asakta, ^{detachment} ~~non-attachment~~--which does not mean indifference (pace the Gītā)--we need an insight into the deeper strata of reality which might permit us to go to the roots of the problem. The roots may not be too conspicuous, but they sustain and give life to the tree. In these collected studies I would like to contribute to this radical conversion, this turn of spirit, which I feel is necessary for the survival of humanness. They are not on the level of practical or technical solutions, but on that radical level at the basis of ~~most of the~~ questions vital for humanity today. They are not about what is happening, but are part and parcel of the total human event itself. If I restrain myself now from making connections with action, or from proposing practical programs, it is because the nature of radical reflections is that they do not impose just one line of conduct. They leave room for tensions and polarities;

they nurture branches and leaves, even fruit and flowers, without reducing everything to a single manifestation. An authentic idea inspires, but does not dictate. Commitment, responsibility and active involvement are not logical conclusions of syllogisms, nor do they abolish the constitutive polarities of the human condition. Moreover, when combined with contemplation, reflection and loving serenity, these polarities do not degenerate into irreconcilable--or only dialectical--oppositions. Wisdom does not mean a monochromatic world-view, nor an amorphous multitudinous atomization, but a combination of the many colors into one universe full of polarities because it is full of life. The western traditions at one time interpreted the biblical $\chiιτῶνα ποικίλου$, 'polymitam tunica, circumdata varie^{tat}e' of Joseph, the son of Jacob, precisely in this sense of tension and diversity within a higher--mythical--non-manipulable unity.

It is not for me, and probably not for anybody, to elaborate all the conditions and exigencies of this radical metanoia. I may only point out that overcoming the subject-object dichotomy, as well as the almost schizophrenic split between mythos and logos, heart and mind, action and contemplation, belong to it, along with an undivided vision of reality in which the cosmic, divine and human dimensions are reintegrated in a cosmotheandric experience. The studies in this volume would like to contribute, from several angles, to this turning of heart and mind. The volume itself is an expression of the urge felt in our times for a serene symbiosis between the nova et vetera; or, in other words, between tradition and modernity.

Perhaps the injunction of James, the Brother of the Lord, could express our intention:

$\gammaίγεσθε δὲ ποιηταὶ λόγου...$

'become doers of word [artists of the word, poets of the logos]
and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves [παραλογιζόμενοι,
miscarrying, misleading, misplacing the logos]....'

Bring back the unity of word and work, become also a ποιητής ἔργου, a doer of work, a poet of action, a 'prophet in word and deed' so as to make the words mighty and the works transparent, so as to be word incarnated, ^{or} 'lamps unto yourselves', as Lord Buddha said.

The threefold trait that links together these papers is manifest in the title of the volume.

2 The Title

The first Part centers on myth but does not attempt to offer a treatise on that fundamental area of human experience. This field demands a peculiar attitude: you cannot look directly at the source of light, you turn your back to it so that you may see...not the light, but the illuminated things. Light is invisible. So too with the myth--myth here is not the object of discourse, but the expression of a sui generis form of consciousness. Myth and wisdom go together, as Aristotle had already seen when he affirmed, at the beginning of his Metaphysics, that the lover of myth is a sort of philosopher, a lover of wisdom: ὁ φιλόμυθος φιλόσοφος πῶς ἔστιν . Is this not also the central experience of taoism,

which invites us to regain the uncarved block, or of shinto, which emphasizes an unthought communion, an ontic ^{solidarity} ~~communio~~ with the whole of reality?
A living myth does not allow for

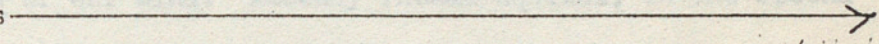
~~Myth does not allow~~ inter-pretation because it needs no inter-mediary. The hermeneutic of a myth is no longer the myth, but its logos. Myth is precisely the horizon over against which any hermeneutic is possible. Myth is that which we take for granted, that which we do not question; and it is unquestioned because, *taoism: like the light* de facto, it is not seen as questionable. The myth is self-luminous, and the mythical story--mythologumenon--is only the form, the garment in which the myth happens to be expressed, enwrapped.

Myth is not the object of thought, nor does it give food for thought. Rather

it purifies thought, it ~~liberates~~ ^{bypasses} thought, so that the unthought may emerge and the intermediary disappear. Myth is the salutary fasting of thinking, it liberates us from the burden of having to think out and think through everything and thus it opens up the realm of freedom: not the mere liberty of choice, but the freedom of being. *When the thinking has not yet landed on the thought ^{so} that it cannot know what is being thought in the thinking, we are still in the domain of the myth.*

This does not at all mean that we should neglect, let alone despise, the value of thought and ignore the realm and the inviolable rights of the logos. It only means that Man cannot be reduced to logos, nor awareness to reflexive consciousness. But we reserve our theories about myth for another occasion.

The second Part of the volume deals with different problems regarding faith.

Faith is understood as that dimension in Man which corresponds to myth. Man is open to an ever-growing horizon of awareness, a horizon provided in the myth. Belief is taken to be the vehicle by which human consciousness passes from mythos to logos. Belief articulates 

the myth in which we believe without 'believing' that we believe in it. To believe is not to hold a belief as one holds an object of knowledge; it is simply the act of believing--which may express itself in different formulations but which does not believe in them: the fides qua of the scholastics. Human reflection on belief can ~~focus, from the one side,~~ ^{fall either} on the fact that we believe, or ~~from the other~~ ^{about belief!} on the contents of our belief. The former case makes discourse ~~possible~~ ^{possible} and ~~gives us an~~ ^{gives us an} awareness of the results of ~~believing.~~ ^{believing.} The latter one either destroys itself as thinking reflection, because it does not understand its contents, ^{if it does,} or ~~destroys~~ ^{destroys} it, for it ~~cannot~~ converts belief into knowledge. This is what the latin Middle Ages called the incompatibility between the cognitum and the creditum, that which is known and that which is believed. We know that we believe (former case) but we do not know what we believe (latter case), which is why we believe and do not know. In other words, faith which expresses itself in belief has no object, it is not an ob-jectum of our mind. Already Thomas Aquinas, in the Second Part of his Summa, formulating a common christian conviction, could say:

actus autem credentis non terminatur ad enuntiabile sed ad rem

'the act of the believer does not end at the formulation, but in the thing itself'

--in the reality itself. Reality is here the ever inexhaustible mystery, beyond the reach of objective knowledge.

'I believe in God', for instance, is a cognitive statement when it stands for the expression of the act of believing (former case) and is a real belief only when I do not know what God is, i.e. when I do not know God as the object of my belief (latter case). If you ask me if I believe in God I cannot properly respond, except when giving a rhetorical answer to a rhetorical question. Otherwise, I simply do not know what you are asking: I do not know what you mean by 'God' and so cannot answer whether I believe in this 'God'. The question about God either destroys itself because it does not know what it is asking for or dissolves the God we are ask-

ing about into something which is no longer God, but a sheer idol. In a way we only believe (what we believe to be) the unquestionable..

The fact that the believed is not the known does not subordinate the one to the other, but it relates knowledge and belief as different forms of consciousness without allow^{ing} the reduction of awareness to mere knowing (of objects) or to sheer believing (in myths). This fact opens up an image of Man irreducible to mere logos or to sheer mythos.

What expresses belief, what carries the dynamism of belief--the conscious passage from mythos to logos--is not the concept but the symbol. Symbol here does not mean an epistemic sign, but an ontomythical reality which is precisely in the symbolizing. A symbol is not a symbol of another ('thing'), but of itself, in the sense of the subjective genitive. A symbol is the symbol of that which is precisely (symbolized) in the symbol, and which, thus, does not exist without its symbol. A symbol is nothing but the symbol of that which appears in and as the symbol. Yet we must beware of identifying the symbol with the symbolized. To overlook the symbolic difference, i.e., to mistake the symbol for the symbolized, is precisely avidyā, ignorance, confusing the appearance with the reality. But reality is reality precisely because it 'appears' real. [By reality I mean not only the res over against the idea, but all that there is, in one way or another, i.e. the entire realm of being, according to another nomenclature. Now all-that-there-is is 'there' precisely because it appears 'there' (as ^{what} there-is). This real appearance is the symbol. Or, in other terms, the symbol is that appearance of the real which also includes the subject to whom it appears. Appearance is always for somebody, some consciousness.

Error is not the appearance ^(as such) but the forgetfulness that the appearance is appearance. And this applies to every being, even to Being itself: Being is also the appearance of Being. This appearance is precisely the Truth of Being.

Truth and Being are not the subjective and the objective sides of the 'real', but the 'real' as such is satya, i.e., truth and being all in 'one' ('ideality' as well as 'reality'). The Real is also the trusty, trusted, truthful, faithful, loyal. The Truth is also the realization, real, thing, matter. Yet several Upaniṣads will remind us that

hiraṇmayena pātreṇa satyasya apihitam mukham

'the face of the truth (the nature of being) is hidden with (concealed by) a golden jar'.

And it is the function of the sacrifice to break the vessel with which the light is covered. Re-velation is this uncovering of the symbol.

The symbol is neither a merely objective entity in the world (the thing 'over there'), nor is it a purely subjective entity in the mind (in us 'over here'). There is no symbol which is not in and for a subject, and there is equally no symbol without a specific content claiming objectivity. The symbol encompasses and constitutively links the two poles of the real: the object and the

subject. Pātra, the word for jar, vessel, recipient also means persona, πρόσωπον and person: "The symbol of the truth is concealed by a shining person." living

sign
ant

This is why a symbol which requires interpretation is no longer a symbol. It has become a mere sign. That with the aid of which we would ultimately interpret the alleged 'symbol', that would be the real symbol.

To say it in the words of that genial master and monk of the XII century, Alanus de Insulis, in his De Incarnatione Christi:

omnis mundi creatura quasi liber et pictura nobis est et speculum.

'Every creature of the world is for us book, picture and mirror.'

The crisis begins when people forget how to read, enjoy and understand...

And yet there are many things which demand interpretation. Man does not live by symbols alone. Thus, the third Part of the book. Hermeneutics is the art

and science of interpretation, of bringing forth significance, of conveying meaning,
to life and eventually of letting new symbols emerge. 10
 of restoring symbols. Hermeneutics is the method of overcoming the distance between
 a knowing subject and an object to be known, once the two have been estranged. Hermes
 is the messenger of the ^Gods but only outside of ^IOlympus, the paradise.

Now one could distinguish a threefold hermeneutics, or rather three kairological
 moments in the hermeneutical enterprise, three intertwined ways of overcoming the
 epistemological distance and thus the human estrangement. Morphological hermeneutics
 entails the explanation or deciphering done by, say, parents, teachers, elders,
 the more intelligent, etc., for those who have not yet had full access to the
 treasure-house of meaning in a particular culture. It is the reading of the text.
 Morphological hermeneutics is the homogeneous unfolding of implicit or de facto
 unknown elements. Here logic is the great method. It moves from past (which was
 once present in the elders) to present. It proceeds by way of com-par-ison--and
 all the other rules of correct thinking.

Diachronical hermeneutics refers to the knowledge of the context necessary
 in order to understand a text, because the temporal gap between the understander

and that which is to be understood has obscured or even changed the meaning of the original datum. Diachronical hermeneutics also implies the problems of ideology and time. It takes the temporal factor as an intrinsic element in the process of understanding. Its method is fundamentally historical. Action and involvement are its basic constituents. It implies going out from my own 'stand' in order to under-stand another world-view. This is the proper place for dialectics: the movement here is from present to past in order to incorporate, subsume or delete it. Diachronical hermeneutics is not the youngster learning about the past from contemporaries. It is the adult firmly based in his present degree of awareness trying to enrich himself by understanding the past.

There is however a third moment in any complete hermeneutical process and the fact that it has often been neglected or overlooked has been a major cause of misunderstandings among the different cultures of the world. I call it diatopical hermeneutics because the distance to be overcome is not merely temporal, within one broad tradition, but the gap existing between two human topoi, "places" of understanding and self-understanding, between two--or more--cultures which have not developed their patterns of intelligibility or their basic assumptions out of a common historical tradition or through mutual influence. To cross the boundaries of one's own culture without realizing that another culture may have a radically different approach to reality is today no longer admissible. If still consciously done, it would be philosophically naive, politically outrageous, theologically sinful and religiously blasphemous. Diatopical hermeneutics stands for the thematic consideration of understanding the other without assuming that the other has the same basic self-understanding and understanding as I have. The ultimate human horizon, and not only differing contexts, is at stake here. The method in this third moment is a peculiar dialogical dialogue, the $\delta\iota\alpha\text{-}\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ piercing the logos in order to reach that dialogical, translogical realm of the heart (according to

allowing for the emergency

most traditions), of the myth in which we commune, and which will ultimately allow under-standing (*stands in contrast to some horizon of intelligibility*).

Diatopical hermeneutics is not objectifiable, because it considers the other an equally original source of understanding. In other words, Man's self-understanding belongs not only to what Man thinks of himself, but to what Man is. In order to understand what Man is we need a fundamentally different method than a 'scientific' approach, because what Man understands himself to be is also part of his being. Indeed, how to understand Man's different self-understandings is a central problem of diatopical hermeneutics. Here we shall put diatopical hermeneutics to work without a systematic study of its theory, which I reserve for another occasion.

I have already indicated the importance and also the limits of hermeneutics. Neither by bread alone nor by word alone does Man live. Myth and faith defy hermeneutics, but without hermeneutics myth and faith would perish the moment that the innocence of the ecstatic attitude passes away. Yet it remains true not only that Man alone can interpret, but also that interpretation is inbuilt in Man's very nature. Not only does Man's self-interpretation belong to what Man is, but Man's interpretation of the world also belongs, in a way, to what the world is. This is why our search here is constitutively open, unachieved, not finished, not finite, infinite.

The title has still two more signs: a comma and a conjunction. These two signs would like to express what we said earlier concerning the urgent and important need to bring together heart and mind, myth and logos, personal involvement and critical reflection. This cosmotheandric insight, as we have called it, realizes that myth, faith and hermeneutics belong to the cosmic, divine and human dimensions of reality, respectively. But we ought to stress again that these three are one, like 'the spirit and the water and the blood', in christian Scripture and many

others as well.

Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics then might represent the threefold--cosmotheandric--unity of the Universe, that unity which neither destroys diversity, nor forgets that the world is inhabited, that God is not alone and that knowledge is based on love.

So much for the title. I should perhaps add that I have been working for many years on a more elaborated theory concerning these three topics; the purport of these essays is only introductory. And although an introduction into new lands is an important venture, I cannot help feeling that this compilation ~~does not~~ ^{is only a timid} ~~tation to~~ ^{what it wants to say.} In this sense the book is a challenge and a prayer. I am convinced of its precariousness and I can only ask you the reader to trans-late my words into your own. *It is the reader who redeems the writer.* And, in point of fact, if I publish all these insights in statu nascendi it is because I have been asked from very many sides to do it.

3 The Style

A word on style may be appropriate at this point. The articles collected here were originally not only written, but also thought, in four languages. And yet in a way I have no language of my own, because a language is more than a tool; it is ~~a link~~, a body, a part of oneself, a part which in a way stands for the whole, a pars pro toto. A language is a way of looking at and, ultimately, of being in the world. This is precisely the characteristic feature of the word; to be the image, the eikon, the expression and manifestation of the totality, the First-born of God, following hindu, christian and other sacred scriptures. But here the singular is essential, *The many words do not substitute for the word. Certainly, and the plural impossible. Certainly pluralism* ~~and the plural impossible. Certainly pluralism~~ *from the ontocosmological to the personal field, a plurality of languages can* ~~may~~ be enriching, but it is also debilitating. A man of many original languages has no word of his own, no image to reflect him, no eikon to manifest him. His only salvation lies not in what he says but in the mystical realm, in his entire *--in becoming Word.* life, in his silent incarnation. But, making a virtue of these factual conditions, this deficit might well suggest the very symbiosis needed for our time. We have to speak a language and in a sense this language even has to be the regional dialect of the concrete community to which we belong. Only a dialect is vital, vivid, and able to express what no contrived idiom, however basic, can ever express. The poets know this. Nonetheless, our present-day forms of dialect can no longer afford to be the slang of a closed group or the mere repetition of clichés. Our dialect must integrate in itself the experience of other world-views. Yet we cannot pour all of human experience into language, not because the poet lacks the skill, but because the enterprise defeats itself. If a language could say all that it wants to say, this would be the end of the world: nothing would remain to be said and without language the world would perish. The poverty of my language may perhaps spur the reader to accelerate not the end of the world, but certainly the end of the divisive times in which we live.

As an aside, I am reminded how irritated my theological 'Gemüt' was when I read an English translation of St. John's Prologue: 'In the beginning of time was the Word'. If the word belongs only to time we have Arius at hand: Christ is only the 'First-born' of all creatures, but not the 'Only Begotten' of the Father. Now, when I have lived most of my life and probably written most of the things I am ever going to write--I don't say 'wanted to write'--now, when the inflation of books and mass-media has put every sublime thought within the reach of everybody, even at the risk of cheapening it; now, when the tempternal side of existence not only overwhelms me--as ever--but overpowers me in that it takes from me the

ambivalence of the word deteriorates when the third person pronouns are used. In point of fact, only the third person, that is, the implied reference outside a living dialogue, is either masculine or feminine. The 'I' and the 'thou' are unambiguous, complete human beings, generally with the preponderance of one gender. When I call you 'you' I call upon your entire humanness, not disregarding but including your sex. I discriminate only when I no longer treat you as a person, as a you, when I no longer speak to or with you, but about you with or to a third party, or when I make you the subject of an objectifying sentence (e.g., when I affirm that you are this or that--which may require a gender in every language). The trouble then is with 'pro-nouns' and 'co-tributes': they discriminate and the neuter is not a solution. What we need is not a neuter (ne-utrum, neither of both), but an influx gender, an affusque, a gender which embraces the two without reducing them to a neuter 'thing', even if we call it 'personhood'. Provisionally I solve the difficulty by stating that 'he' for he stands for the human being (but also for the male, ~~and the male-dominant masculine~~), and 'he' for the other (the personal pronoun 'he-she' (except where the context makes it clear that it is

urge to speak and especially to write; now, I begin to discover the grain of truth in the idea that Word and Time go together and that it was at the beginning of Time that the Logos was--cum tempore and not ex tempore.

A second note on semantics may be still needed. I have strained english grammar enough to be allowed to raise my voice regarding a delicate and touchy point. It is the question of sex and gender. When using the word Man I mean Mensch, homo, άνθρωπος^{manu}, i.e., that word which distinguishes the human beings from the gods on the one hand and the animals on the other. I do not mean male, vir, άνήρ^{manusia}, and I have too much respect for 'women' to call them just 'wo-man'. The ambivalence of the word deteriorates when the third person pronouns are used. In point of fact, only the third person, that is, the reified reference outside a living dialogue, is either masculine or feminine. The 'I' and the 'thou' are androgynous, complete human beings, generally with the preponderance of one gender. When I call you 'you' I call upon your entire humanness, not disregarding but including your sex. I discriminate only when I no longer treat you as a person, as a you, when I no longer speak to or with you, but about you with or to a third party, or when I make you the subject of an objectifying sentence (e.g., when I affirm that you are this or that—which may require a gender in many languages). The trouble then is with 'pro-nouns' and 'ad-tributes'; they discriminate. And the neuter is not a solution. What we need is not a neuter (ne-utrum, neither of both), but an utrum gender, an utrumque, a gender which embraces the two without reducing them to a neuter 'thing', even if we call it 'personhood'. Provisionally I solve the difficulty by stating that Man for me stands for the human being (and ^{man} ~~also~~ for the male, ~~if the context requires~~), and 'he' for the entire personal pronoun 'he-she' (except where the context makes it clear that it is

male). I do not think women should use another word for their humanness. What we should do is to break the male monopoly on Man.

from

It is the work and the merit of two students of mine, Christine Hopper and Scott Eastham, to have transformed these varied perspectives into a coherent and we hope readable book. (They have also compiled the indices and produced the manuscript. *Mana la. Mani has given valuable suggestion*) With the inflation of thanks-giving and the recession of gratitude in our contemporary world, to express heart-felt thanks here is only a pallid expression of the *X* of having found two such collaborators.

Many other people in the past have spurred my thinking, criticized my views and stimulated my responses. To mention them only by name would not be enough to express my deep indebtedness. I can only assure them here that in no way can I forget that wonderful net of friendships which sustains my life and contributes to authentic human existence.

The book is dedicated to my good friend Enrico Castelli, with whom I had the privilege ~~thirteen~~ ^{seventeen} years ago to begin the by now well-known annual Colloquium at the University of Rome under the auspices of the 'Istituto di studi filosofici'. It has been Castelli's merit to gather year after year a number of thinkers who otherwise could not have come together. I say 'could' and not just a factual 'would', because only under the primacy of the myth could people of such different tendencies come together. Half the chapters of this volume were papers for those occasions.

But my dedication is to him, the ^Man. Again another example that what bears fruit is not a powerful organization, but a living person. I would like to assure him that I apply to myself the many-faceted sentence of that 'gentile' of the Old Covenant who dared to stand by his conscience not only against men but also contesting God:

semitam per quam non revertar ambulo

'I walk a path on which there is no return', I live a life from which I do not come back.

When these lines were written and this book was going to press,
 just three months after our last meeting at the University of Rome, in
 January 1977, for the XVII Colloquium, Enrico Castelli finished his earthly
 pilgrimage. He wrote to me when he knew of my intention of dedicating this
 volume to him:
 "Grazie prima di tutto per la dedica in testimonianza di
 trent'anni di amicizia. L'amicizia è un'intesa, la vera intesa.
 L'altra, quella che si riferisce alla presunta evidenza cartes-
 iana ($2 + 2 = 4$) non è un'intesa, anche se si dice: 'Siamo
 intesi che $2 + 2 = 4$, proprio perché estranea alla possibilità
 del contrario, quindi alla libertà. Ecco per me un modo di
 ripensare l'amicizia."

I told him that I don't have a family of my own, but that I live
 because of the family of friends, the mitrabandhu that sustains Man.
 Friendship is for me the highest form of love: if Genesis says "~~male and~~ let us
~~female He created them,~~" St. John's Gospel adds: "I have called you friends."
 make Man in our image and likeness

4. The Chapters

It would be somewhat artificial now to stitch these essays together with a single logical thread. I have already indicated their existential connection. The only real thread is the personal life, but life is lived and not written, although writing may be part of one's life. Now human life lives, first of all, out of myth. The mythical context is always the first given. But human life is not only awareness of the given. It is also awareness of itself on all possible - and sometimes impossible - levels. Faith stands at ~~xxx~~ both ends of the line of awareness: the archai and the eschata, the origins and the 'terminals'. There is no human life without faith. Yet this very faith longs to overcome itself, it searches for understanding and when the intuition does not dawn, ~~ix~~ the quest for interpretation begins: Hermeneutics make their appearance. Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics are here the sigla.

Five other chapters, originally build in this same book have been set apart to make another volume dealing with the more concrete problem of the intrareligious dialogue within this same dynamism of a human life searching its place in the multireligious and multicultural world of our times. This second volume complements this one.

The first part of this book is dedicated to myth. It is not a study on myth, but it tries to unravel a little the mystery of myth by a double approach. On the one hand, the first two chapters relate myth to ~~xxxxx~~ ^{some} fundamental human attitudes like tolerance, ideology ~~xxx~~ (chapter II) and morality (chapter III). On the other hand, the mythologumena studied in the following two chapters (IV and V) offer some insights on the nature and power of myths.

The second part focusses on faith, and again from a double angle. Chapter VI relates directly to the nature of faith and tries to break the monopolizing of faith by a certain restricted understanding of it. Only the symbolic character of words and the mythical use of them can overcome the tendency of our reason to claim a monopoly on the meaning of words. We offer here a concrete example without

indulging in a general theory about names (as I plan to do in a forthcoming publication). Chapter VII is the bridge between the foregoing and the following. It still reflects on faith, but it leads already to the second group of essays in which faith is not thematically reflected upon, but so to speak put into action in order to illuminate some other concrete crosscultural issues involving a plurality of human traditions. Chapter VIII touches the very limits of the human experience, drawing from a fundamental Buddhist insight, while chapter IX explores the possibility of ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{finding harmony between} one of the most basic ~~xxxxxxxx~~ tensions of the human spirit at hand of the wisdom ~~xxxxx~~ ~~xxxxx~~ drawn from the Hindu and Christian traditions. Chapter X attempts to enter that religious or rather mystical core common and accessible to the human experience. It finishes offering a typology of this ultimate experience.

The third part of this volume tries to make hermeneutics function in such a way as to interpret some of the problems in today's encounter of religions and the meeting of world ^dviews. My attempt here is to integrate the understandings that arise from the contemporary situation, first of the so-called fundamental theology (chapter XI) and then of ~~xxx~~ philosophy (chapter XII), ending with a study on the nature of atheism in the light of the world religions ^(chapter XIII). From this hermeneutical perspective two examples are discussed, one coming mainly from Eastern religions (chapter XIV) and the other from Christianity (chapter XV), opening both of them to reciprocal dialogal interactions. The last chapter (XVI)

~~religious encounter (§ XV) with the interpretation of ^aatheism (§ XVI) and so-called fundamental theology (§ XVII). From this hermeneutical perspective we tackle two delicate problems of christianity and of eastern religions: infallibility (§ XVIII) and karma (§ XIX), respectively. The following chapter (§ XX) tries to bring to focus two central and apparently quite opposite notions in christianity and buddhism by discovering their homology. The last chapter (§ XXI) analyzes an important aspect of every religion, which seems often to have been unduly neglected. Secularization and religion certainly meet in stressing not only liberation, but freedom. It would sound a false note of triumphalism to trumpet victory in ~~our~~ interpretations. I would be satisfied if they heralded peace.~~

Perhaps what we need today is not so much intellectuals saying what has to be done, or scholars writing what is the case, or, for that matter, preachers proclaiming the truth, but people living it, people writing with their blood and speaking with their lives. Fortunately we still have more of these living people than entries in the various editions of Who's Who.

So now, after the excruciating experience of trying to put these studies together by revising them, I shall revert to where I began: to being co-author of my life.

Dipāvāli

Santa Barbara, California
 Dipāvāli
 Pentecost, 1975 & ~~1976~~ (1977)

R. P.

###

Part ~~I~~
(Chap. ~~II~~/~~V~~)

I Myth

ὄσῳ αὐτίτης καὶ μονώτης
εἰμί, φιλομῶτερος γέγονα

The more myself and solitary

I am, the more a lover of the myth

I become.

Aristotle

ad Antipater (1582 b 14)

II. Tolerance, Ideology and Myth

1. The Law of Tolerance

Ἐν τῇ ὑπομονῇ ὑμῶν κτήσεσθε τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν.

In your tolerance you will win your lives.

Lk. 21:19

I intend to discuss this concept in depth by focusing on the concrete issue of tolerance, which to light several of its characteristic aspects invisible from a more abstract or a more direct narrative, myth-like the divine-mythological, when it has already passed, and then only in the vestiges it leaves in the laws.

So I would like to state a law which has anthropological roots, but which shows itself more clearly in the sociological realm. I must call it the law of tolerance ('things happen as if... of brotherly love'), and formulate it thus: The tolerance law has its greatest effectiveness in the... you live... in the tolerance law...

2. Terminological Clarification

Let us first clarify our terms, and then try to articulate the meaning of this law.

The tolerance law is composed of the... you take for granted... in reality... you live... the tolerance law... over... in... to be... of this law... the other...

1 The Law of Tolerance

I intend to discuss the connections between ideology and demythification by focusing this contemporary problem on the concrete issue of tolerance, which will enable us to bring to light several of its characteristics which would ^{remain} ~~be quite~~ invisible from a more abstract or a more direct perspective. Myth--like the divine--is unseen except from behind, when it has already passed, and then only in the vestiges it leaves in the losses.

^{an} I would like to state a law which has ^{an} anthropological ^{foundation} ~~roots~~, but which shows itself more clearly in the sociological realm. I might call it the law of tolerance ('things happen as if... et hypothesis non finis'), and formulate it thus: The tolerance you have is directly proportional to the myth you live and inversely proportional to the ideology you follow.

2 Terminological Clarification

Let us first clarify our terms, and then try to explicate the meaning of this law.

The myth you live is comprised of the ensemble of contexts you take for granted, ~~accept as self-evident~~. Myth gives us a reference point which orients us in reality. The myth you live is never lived, ^{or seen} ~~and hence it is never seen~~, as one lives or en-
sues somebody else's myth; it is always the accepted horizon over against which we place our experience of truth. I am immersed in my myth like others are in their own. I am not critically aware of my own myth, just as others are not aware of their own. It is always the other who, to my ear, speaks with an accent.

It is always the other who ~~exposes~~^m from unexamined presuppositions.

And it is ~~the~~^{the} other who discloses the myth I live, since for me it is invisible as myth. My myth is what makes me unique and, hence, irreplaceable; it is at the base of my own history and at the foundation of my language. It is expressed and manifested through my being without my being aware of it; it is what the other sees when he establishes a fully personal relationship with me, which transcends the purely dialectical level. Only beyond dialectics, on the level of the dialogical dialogue do I open myself to the other as I am, allowing myself to be discovered by him--and reciprocally, without either of us taking refuge in a neutral objectivity. (1) -

The ideology you follow is the demythicized part of the view you have of the world; it is the result of the passage from mythos to logos in life and personal reflexion; it is the more or less coherent ensemble of ideas which make up critical awareness, i.e., the doctrinal system which enables you to locate yourself rationally --ideologically--in the world at a particular time, in a particular place. Ideology always implies a spatio-temporal system constructed by the logos as a function of its concrete historical moment. An ideology is a system of ideas formulated by a logos incapable of transcending its own temporality. The problem of ideology arises only once the human logos is assumed to have lost its trans- and/or in-temporal character.

The ideology I follow stems from this conscious part of myself which allows me to integrate my ideas more or less systematically into a doctrinal framework (even if that system declares itself 'open'). In contrast to myth, I can recognize both my own ideology and those of others; this allows a dialectical rapport with them.

The word ideology, like the word myth, has an almost bewildering multiplicity of meanings, which we cannot examine here. I shall only discuss one of the usages most common today: ideology as an intrinsically temporal system of ideas which governs our social life, especially at the level of ^{the} res publica. (2)

The tolerance you have is difficult to define because it depends on the particular ideology which defines it. We must, then, seek some phenomenological traits of the notion of tolerance, which, like symptoms, will help us to discover the ideological coefficient of a given culture.

3 The Four Moments of Tolerance

We can readily agree that tolerance does not necessarily imply either the relativism of truth or indifference to it. (3) You are scarcely tolerant when you disavow any defense of truth whatsoever simply because you are sceptical or indifferent. The radical relativity of human values is not the same thing as a more or less agnostic relativism. You can be truly tolerant only if you do not compromise, having realized that truth itself is tolerant. (4) Tolerance does not come from an indifference to truth but from a deeper realization of truth itself. (5) We cannot deny, however, that scepticism and indifference of every sort have contributed to the practice of tolerance and encouraged reflexion upon it.

Tolerance is characterized by four traits which, in one form or another, are present in those cultures where tolerance still means something.

1) Politeness You tolerate what you cannot discern-hole. You put up with a burden, you tolerate a lesser evil. You tolerate what you cannot completely assimilate, approve, or agree upon.

You are tolerant in order to avoid the greater evil of intolerance which would wipe out many other 'goods'. At bottom, tolerance has to do with prudence and political prudence in particular, at least in the aristotelian sense. Most civil codes recognize that this kind of tolerance cannot serve as a source of law.

6) ^{Theory} 3.2 Tolerance is a practical necessity. Here it is a positive attitude, it places existence before essence, practice before theory, common sense before logical reasoning and, in the final analysis, goodness before truth. But at the same time it is provisional, since it is only justified in the status deviationis, in the itinerant condition, the still-imperfect society, etc. ~~the state of constitutive openness~~, etc. Tolerance bears with it a secret hope of becoming obsolete. Genuine tolerance would rather not be necessary, it would like to become superfluous, it lives in the hope of disappearing. And this is understandable, for we could not accept a ~~constitutive~~ ^{definitive} rupture between goodness and truth. This tolerance then is always the index of the ^{si} ~~provisionality~~ ^{provisionality} of existence.

7) ^{Deliberation} 3.3 Tolerance is also a theoretical necessity which derives from a reflexive awareness of our limits and limitations. It rests on the respect due to what I do not understand, because I understand that I do not understand everything. It is respectful tolerance. It leads us to respect someone else even though we do not agree with his ideas and/or actions.

If the first form of tolerance can be labelled political tolerance, the second might be called theological tolerance since it follows from the awareness of what in ~~christian~~ ^{different} terms is (called) original sin, and in other theologies, Man's unnatural, exceptional, fallen or unachieved situation. This third form of tolerance bears the name philosophical tolerance, since it is grounded in recognizing our limits and the necessarily limited

perspective of all human knowledge. ~~Theologians would perhaps~~
~~see of the tolerance inherent in human structural lines~~

1) But we can discover still a fourth type of tolerance.

The experience, and so the practice, of tolerance reveals a dimension which is not apprehended by theoretical reflexion alone

This experience leads us to something more positive which we could simply call mystical tolerance. It presupposes ^{that you may be capable of} assuming what you

tolerate. (3) You redeem, you raise up what you tolerate; you transform it, and this transformation purifies the active agent as well as the passive agent of the tolerance. Tolerance here is experienced as the sublimation of a state of affairs by the power of tolerance itself. Mystical tolerance represents a non-objectifiable vision of the world and implies the conviction that every human act has a value which is not purely subjective. This notion of tolerance implies that all reality is redeemable because

it is never ^{immutable} ~~definitive~~. It also supposes the existential character of truth and the radical relativity of personal being. Tolerance, then, is the way one being exists in another and expresses the radical interdependence of all that exists. The ^{strength} ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ of

many traditional cultures is not only their resistance to suffering or misfortune, but their ability to tolerate, and by so doing to integrate more thoroughly what ^{in other circumstances} would ~~exasperate~~ or even destroy ^{people} ordinary ~~xxxxxxxx~~.

This may be clearer if we describe a concrete instance. We will use ^a ~~christian~~ ^{example} ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ for ease of understanding:

What ought the christian to tolerate? Evil! The parable of the wheat and the tares leaves us in no doubt of this. But ^{this is not all.} ~~xxxxxxxx~~

~~xxxxxxxx~~ Man should tolerate not only the tares but also the wheat. I would say quite simply: Man has to tolerate the world. Beginning with himself, the christian must tolerate the world. Man must

tolerate that he is not yet what he can become, what he wants to be, what he will be. In short, the christian has to tolerate that he has not reached his goal, the perfection of his being.

He has, further, to tolerate that here he ~~cannot be perfect~~

cannot be holy ⁱⁿ twenty-four hours ~~every~~, that he is a sinner.

~~And~~ He ought to tolerate himself in his entirety--as unfinished, moving on, viator. And just so, he ought to tolerate this unfinished cosmos, this fragile, broken temporality, as well as his fellow pilgrims. Whoever is self-satisfied, no longer receptive, no longer able to learn; whoever no longer feels and suffers as a pilgrin...he cannot share this mystical tolerance.

But here the christian does not simply suffer error and disbelief, he bears them. And this is possible because Man is not alone; the Son of Man is with Man. The christian bears all human situations in and with Christ, the bearer, creator and redeemer of the world. The christian neither judges the world nor stands to one side and observes, secure in his right opinion. He has something to do on earth, a task takes shape in him, a ~~constitutive~~ ~~xxxxx~~ liturgical, sacred and therefore priestly task. He is a co-worker, a con-celebrant, a co-redeemer with Christ. The christian enacts a cosmic role in shaping the new heaven and the new earth. And this role is precisely tolerance, which we might translate here as 'patience'. (7)

Tolerance is that patience by which we save our souls, our very lives. (8) Tolerance also means expectation and hope, not just the perseverance and steadfastness by which the christian and biblical notion is often rendered (a static translation, it seems to me). (9)

Seen in the light of tolerance, then, the christian task is to bear and endure the burden of the other in hope and thereby,

following Paul, ~~(10)~~ fulfill Christ's law. ⁽¹⁰⁾ The kingdom of God
 is in a certain sense already God's kingdom, ^{i.e.} the whole of creation.
 To participate in its fulfillment does not mean raising up an
 edifice--a mundane, powerful, triumphant christendom--but it means
 beginning now, on earth, through all things great and small, to
 collaborate with matter which is itself called upon to ^{arise,} ~~rise,~~
 and so already on the way to resurrection. In this way is the
 christian the light and leaven of the world. (11)

But rather than pursue these considerations further, we
 would like to ^{go back to} ~~convey~~ our thesis.

with examples of other
 traditions

4 Between Ideology and Myth: Tolerance

4.1 The Limits of tolerance.

The more perfect an ideology, the less tolerant it is, but
 also the less it needs to tolerate tolerance. In an ideological
 system, tolerance is the exception; it is always tolerance of the
 exceptional. But the more ideologically perfect a society, the
 more these exceptions are reduced to a minimum.

There is no room for tolerance in a perfect ideology. Insofar
 as it is not yet perfected, ideology must put up with tolerance.
 To the extent that an ideology reaches its perfection, it must be
 intolerant. (12)

Tolerance is only fully justified outside the limits of an
 ideology (this is why partial ideologies become partially 'tolerable');
 but when an ideology becomes totalitarian--when it wants to encompass
 the totality of human experience--it becomes absolutely intolerant
 and hence also intolerable if you do not submit to it. (13)

Ideology can at most tolerate the practice of tolerance, but
 it can neither approve nor justify it theoretically. Tolerance

is the very index of a particular ideology's weakness. An ideology is forced to tolerate what it cannot yet extirpate. (14)

Some examples will clarify this.

When we (ideologically) label certain people 'criminal' or 'sick', we agree not to tolerate the freedom of those whose free movements pose a danger to society and we imprison them or confine them to hospitals. (15)

The example of the mentally ill may be especially enlightening. The ideology of each culture fixes what we might call the index of tolerability of 'abnormals'. For example, in countries where hysteria and certain types of schizophrenia still have a mythic dimension and have not yet been ideologically diagnosed as illnesses, no one would dream of confining or isolating these people; the threshold of the tolerable is fixed as a function of ideology, not of myth.

When a particular communist ideology is convinced that religion is wrong, the opium of the people, it feels obligated to uproot this evil lest it poison the whole of society. It can tolerate religion only when ^acompletely or prematurely ^{on}elimination ^{of} it would provoke even greater ills.

When a certain christian ideology is convinced that heresy is wrong or apostasy criminal, it will tolerate them only to avoid major upheavals. But where these scourges can be eliminated without ^{creating} other problems, this will be done at once. We obviously try to integrate the other dialectically, which means I tolerate another as long as he acquiesces to the rules of the game which enable me to triumph over him. Here the Inquisition may serve as an example: ^{because} the prisoner is freed if he confesses, ^aadmitting his guilt implies he accepts the rules of the game. The culprit even accepts punishment since it has for him a purifying value.

In a democratic ideology, to broaden the spectrum of our examples, the other will be tolerated insofar as he does not represent a menace to the system. He can speak, write or act as long as he does not endanger the system which allows these freedoms.

As an ideology (insofar as it is not a myth), democracy has produced a social system based on the right^s of the individual as expressed by universal suff^orage. Here we do not eliminate the law of the jungle or the law of the strongest, but we mellow it, 'civilize' it, by voluntarily accepting majority rule. If someone does not accept the fundamental rules of democracy, democracy cannot tolerate him.

We measure the perfection of a democratic ideology by its level of unmanifest intolerance, i.e., insofar as it does not need to have recourse to blatant intolerance. When an ideology feels threatened in its existence or its very essence, it neither is, nor can be tolerant any longer. You tolerate only what you can bear without being crushed.

Can we consciously accept our own destruction? Can we voluntarily abdicate our rights? Can we resign in the face of the evidence? If in my system 2 and 2 make 4, can I tolerate them making 5? I can tolerate the error of another who affirms, for example, that 2 and 2 make 5 as long as his affirmation does not interfere with my calculations and I can continue to work from the supposition that 2 and 2 make 4.

Can I tolerate someone who does not accept my interval of the tolerable? Can a calculator somebody who says he would wipe me out if he could? Or someone who would make use of my tolerance to seize power, enabling him to be intolerant?

For an ideology, tolerance becomes a prudent political strategy. 'Since we are a minority, we demand our rights.' But the moment we are in power, 'we can no longer tolerate error'. It would contradict our own standing and even render "aid and comfort" to our opponents. The history of every age supplies us, alas, with plenty of examples. After Constantine came Theodosius^{ius}; after the 'revolution', the dictatorship; after the myth of a free world, an ideology of freedom which does not hesitate to wage war in order to impose ~~itself~~ a democratic regime.

In short, you can only tolerate what you believe you can tolerate, but outside or beyond ^{these} ~~the~~ limits, ~~what is to be tolerated~~ ~~no tolerance is possible.~~

Some would say we should be intolerant only of the intolerable. ¹⁶ (16) Of course, but the problem is the threshold and the consciousness of the intolerable. To tolerate the intolerable is a contradiction. All intolerance can only justify itself to itself and to others because it believes it has already reached the limits of the tolerable. ^{where} But, ~~what~~ are these limits? (17) Could we not define law as that which regulates the limits of the tolerable?

8) Ideology and Tolerance

The fundamental difference between a philosophy which would also like to be practical; and an ideology is that you reverse the classical relation of theory and praxis, (18) The traditional attitude of any philosophy is that practice follows from theory, implying the primacy of thought. Ideology, on the contrary, derives theory from practice; action takes primacy. But we must be more precise: for any ideology, truth and beauty are being--essence and existence--and exclusively what is given in practice, what happens in the world. There is no other reference point, no ulterior instance.

Real transcendence is ideologically unthinkable. We could cite here the radical atheism of certain totalitarian ideologies; there is no other reality than the given. When 'revelation' becomes a given and is no longer a mystery, religion is on the way to becoming ideology. When transcendence becomes an idea, a concept, and is no longer a myth, it shows its internal contradiction. The concept of absolute transcendence denies what it supposedly affirms: that there is something 'beyond' the very idea of this beyond.

If the problem is whether action or practice takes primacy over thought, the difficulty is philosophical. Some philosophical systems willingly accept the primacy of practice. We think only within given parameters, we exist only within a given existence; and although Man may say he shapes his own destiny, he does so *within* a given world, a situation, an horizon which does not enter the process itself, etc. A practical philosophy or a philosophy of action, like any ideology, recognizes the primacy of the given over thought. But unlike all ideology, philosophy does not turn the given into thought; it does not identify them; it conserves the raw, irreducible character of the action, the existence, in short, of the given. Ideology, on the other hand, identifies them; it wants to dominate the given, the existence, the action. (17)

Here also, action certainly has the primacy, but a primacy mastered and domesticated by thought. This action, this given reality becomes thought--even thinkable--and not only the source of thought. Ideology is integral action seen from an idealist perspective which embraces all that is real. Here action is the deployment of the given without any other possible interference from an order which is not already given or calculable. Ideology destroys any transcendence and certainly the transcendence of thought in relation to action.

In other words: action, praxis itself, becomes theoria: ideology. The 'factual' situation is here no longer the source of thought, but thought itself. It is easy to see the idealist climate of all modern ideology.

The limits of the tolerable, then, are simply what you de facto tolerate. Beyond there is the intolerable. Each era, each human power has its inbuilt criteria for what it will tolerate and for what it will not tolerate, and there is no possibility of appeal to any superior instance.

If, on the contrary, praxis is not identified with theoria, the limits of the tolerable stem from an order of thought which is independent from action. Hence tolerance is a function of thought and can therefore be delimited within each cultural or philosophical universe. The transcendence of thought with respect to praxis is the basis of tolerance. When ideology identifies them, the intolerable is exactly what does not adapt to or is not included in the field of thought, i.e., of ideology.

You can only tolerate the tolerable, but ideology says that the tolerable is what it can tolerate⁵. On the other hand, for anyone who does not want to identify with an ideology, the limits of the tolerable do not derive from praxis, but arise from an intellectual consensus open to evolution and/or change, and thus to the possibility of discussion and appeal. Now in any ideology, as long as you do not make explicit room for the tolerable, you cannot tolerate it. To tolerate, for the tolerable amounts to fitting it into the system, albeit in a particular way, i.e., as a factor which is still to be assimilated, or will be assimilated for a while in order to integrate or destroy it later, without destroying other values at the same time. A scholastic ideology, for example, could tolerate human error or imperfections because it was confident that

someday, truth would win out. God would be the guarantor, he would fill in the margins of human ignorance. But at bottom this means we have already left the ideological terrain. It represents our entry into myth, into what we find self-evident, what we believe without believing that we believe it.

c) 473 Tolerance and Myth

Now the other part of our law: the direct proportionality between the myth you live and the tolerance you have.

Myth represents the invisible horizon on which we project our notions of the real. I tolerate the other as long as I find him tolerable. Now ^{on} the conceptual level, I find intolerable all that I cannot integrate into my system of thought in one way or another. But to tolerate positively what is outside my system, I must discover another mode of communing in spite of dialectical incompatibility. This mode is myth. Myth offers us an interval of the tolerable.

Perhaps an example will help us here. You hold political opinion A while I am persuaded that B is the system adequate and just for the same situation. As long as we remain ~~within~~ within the party system, i.e., within a whole comprised of several parts, we can tolerate each other because we consider the other practically indispensable ^{for} maintaining the creative tension necessary for us to complete one another and achieve a more equitable way of life. We disagree about means and perhaps about particular issues, but we agree about ends and about the prevailing ideals which enable us to dialogue and contend. The problem looms large when I no longer consider you as a 'part' of the whole and completely reject you as an entity incompatible with my ideas. I can tolerate you provided that I find some ground where there is sufficient room for both of us. This place is not your ideas nor, in this second

case, the role you might play in a healthy balance of power. I may still tolerate you, on a third level, as a human being since I am still convinced your human value supersedes that of your ideas. I tolerate you in this case because we both believe in the human myth. We still commune in the myth that tolerance is good for both of us. I respect your person. But then I tolerate you as long as you accept being tolerated by me, that is, as long as you do not hinder my being from developing and realizing itself. It is a sort of implicit pact: you tolerate the other in order to be tolerated in your turn. We are both aware of the precarious nature of such a tolerance. As soon as you lose power or cease to be a threat, I shall no longer tolerate you. A glance at the global political scene is enough to convince anyone that we are not idly speculating.

~~The extent to which we~~
~~What enables us to~~ (tolerate one another outside a dialectical contending powers ^{of} ~~or~~ precisely (the myth in which we ~~commune~~ the common believe ~~we still share~~. I tolerate you, for example, because I believe human nature is good, ^{or} _A because I think there is a Providence which guides us, ^{or} _A because I still believe in Man, in humanity, in the possibility of your 'conversion!', etc.; in a word, I tolerate you because there is yet a common mythical 'surround' which embraces us, which unites us.

To give an example, the average American citizen is convinced that if his nation ever does unchallenged military supremacy, there will be world-wide peace since he has no ^{direct} _A intention of attacking any country in order to dominate it. (XC) But he thinks it possible, even probable, that a communist power with such superiority could very well annihilate millions of Americans. This is why the ordinary American supports a military budget counted in the billions of dollars. What is fascinating here is the double standard: you

judge yourself differently than you judge the others. You are not living the same myth. 'We' do not tolerate 'them'. We live in a state of tension and cold war--'detente' notwithstanding. We only begin to tolerate the other when we believe in his good intentions without sharing his ideas. But this is only possible if the ideal (the myth) is not identified with the ~~myth~~ idea (my logos). now

In any case, I do not tolerate you because of the ideas we share, i.e., because of the logos contents of our relationship, but through the myth which ~~sustains us and~~ unites me to you, ~~and~~ ~~without saying~~. When the myth disappears or where the myth does not cover you, I become intolerant, I no longer tolerate you. Where there is intellectual dissension, I can (only tolerate you) if I ~~where we still~~ manage to commune ^{with you} (mythically). Demythification of myth, inevitable as it is, breeds intolerance, since an idea cannot bear, cannot tolerate, a contradictory one.

I tolerate inasmuch as I share with another something which is outside the intellectual domain, insofar as we commune without needing to know it explicitly. I tolerate you as long as I trust you, as long as I do not judge you. As long as we live in the same myth, tolerance is possible. But the moment I demythicize you or you demythicize me, I can no longer fully agree with you since my concept is my 'conception', hence mine and not yours. The relationship of reason is dialectical; that of myth, dialogical. We fully agree only in what we do not consider reflexively, in what we accept as beyond any control, in what neither of us considers his own idea, his own discovery.

We should also be clearly that demythification is a myth does not automatically bring about or eliminate dissension and struggle. On the contrary, fratricidal vendettas and civil wars ^{when} were more violent than ~~cross-cultural~~ ^{cross-cultural} conflicts, ~~for they~~ ^{for they} are cases of two or more ideologies vying for hegemony.

d) 4. Myth and Ideology

We can now summarize our thesis. You can tolerate in a positive and total way only what you accept. Now you can accept only what ^{either} you understand with the logos or embrace in myth. In the first case, i.e., if and insofar as you understand, there is no need to tolerate. On the other hand, positive tolerance has to do with what you accept fully without understanding it. Here is the place and the role of myth. Communion in the same myth is what makes tolerance possible. Love which loves without understanding could be an example.

But human reality is complex because it is one: you cannot completely cut the logos from myth. You can distinguish but not separate them, since the one nourishes the other, and all human culture is a texture of myth and logos. They are like two aspects of one and the same Reality, or rather, they are like two constitutive threads which intertwine to fabricate Reality.

On the other hand, the myth-logos relation is so deeply anchored in human reality that even so-called developed countries have built formidable ideologies only on one front, exposing their flank, as it were, to infiltration by other myths. It is thus that even ideologies end by turning into myth. And so they become tolerable.

Now the ideological coefficient of a culture is what determines that culture's degree of tolerance. A contradiction has no place in ideology unless a contrary will be found there only when it is integrated into an actual or possible synthesis. The more a civilization is ideologically crystallized, ^{the bigger is its ideological coefficient, thus} the less it is tolerant. It has had the opportunity to broaden the field of its comprehension, but at the same time it has reduced the field of its tolerance. Obviously, once a culture achieves a higher degree of civilization, people accept its criteria willingly,

so that it has less need to be tolerant. Since exceptions are rare and minor in a more 'evolved' or 'perfect' society, it is even less tolerant of them.

The extent of tolerance an average citizen in a technological society enjoys is of another order altogether than the extent of tolerance in a situation where a different relation between myth and logos exists. Possibly the average citizen does not always notice this, above all if he is already accustomed to the status quo and has nothing with which to compare his lot, if he is already 'integrated' into society and has become a cog in the huge, complex technocratic mechanism we call modern civilization. So it does not disturb many 'civilized' people that their civilization does not tolerate anyone who is not useful or does not work. Technologically 'evolved' societies can hardly tolerate anyone who arranges his or her own life. The 'modern' mentality is unawakened to any other ~~workable~~ alternative.

Today's pan-economic civilization is radically intolerant of any human activity ^(contemplation for example) which is not at least indirectly profitable. ~~contemplation for example~~ It leaves room for anti-economic factors only insofar as it cannot eliminate or co-opt them.

We can give yet another example. The more a marriage ceases to be a myth and becomes ideology, the more conjugal tolerance diminishes.

Yet to demythologize is always equally to mythologize, and this change of myth is a genuine re-entry into myth. Tolerance is the inherent mythical dynamic that allows mythologizing. And here a further (and invalid) line of inquiry--the former adventure of reconquering myth and man, ^{new} conquering a ~~new~~ innocence. Might we not envision a paranoia instead of an ideological paranoia in the nous of contemporary culture? (2/)

Notes

1. So much has been said and written about myth, and today the bibliography is so huge that I need not develop this theme at greater length here. Cf. however, the volumes of the Colloquia organized by the Istituto di studi filosofici (Roma), edited by E. Castelli (Paris, Aubier, 1961-197⁷).
2. "Bestimmte begriffliche Systeme von praktischer Bedeutung nennen wir Ideologien", notes H. Kuhn at the beginning of his essay, 'Ideologie als hermeneutischer Begriff', Hermeneutik und Dialektik, edited by R. Bubner, K. Kramer, & R. Wiel (Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr (P. Siebeck), 1970), Vol. 1, p. 343. Cf. also: "Ideology, a system of views and ideas: political, legal, ethical, aesthetical, religious, philosophical. I. is part of the superstructure (...) and as such ultimately reflects economic relations", A Dictionary of Philosophy, edited by M. Rosenthal & P. Yudin (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1967), sub hac voce. Again, "Die I. ist ein System des gesellschaftlichen Denkens, worin die ausserempirischen Kategorien und die Auswahl des empirischen Materials durch die gesellschaftlichen Interessen und Affekte des Betrachtenden beeinflusst, wenn nicht gänzlich bestimmt werden", N. Birnbaum, RGG (1959), sub hac voce. Or also Karl Rahner affirming that Ideology's "Wesen darin besteht, eine bestimmte, einzelne Wirklichkeit der pluralistischen Welt der Erfahrung als absoluten Fixpunkt zu setzen". Schriften zur Theologie (Einsiedeln, Benziger, 1965), VI, 82.
3. Cf. A. de Waelhens, 'Sur les fondements possibles de la tolérance', ^{in E. Castelli (ed.)} L'herméneutique de la liberté religieuse (Paris, Aubier, 1968): 'C'est parce que la vérité est non une possession qu'il faudrait défendre ou imposer, mais une manière de s'ouvrir à ..., [sic] voire cette ouverture elle-même.' (p. 394)
4. This makes no sense at all if we consider truth exclusively as logical truth; but the truth which frees us is not this sort of truth (i.e. logical). Cf.

my study, 'Die existentielle Phänomenologie der Wahrheit', Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görresgesellschaft, Nr. 64 (1956), pp. 27-54 and in Māyā e Apocalisse (Roma, Abete, 1966), pp. 241-89.

- 6. It is interesting to note that many Sanskrit, Greek and Latin words used to express the idea of tolerance are derived from roots which also mean victory, conquest, power, force and hence the capacity to resist, sustain, wait patiently, endure, i.e., tolerate. Cf. this same notion in the three groups of Japanese words which express the notion of tolerance in W. M. Fiddell, 'Notes on Japanese Tolerance', Monumenta Nipponica, 27(3), 1971, pp. 294-56.
- 7. This translation, incidentally, is not original. At least once in the Vulgate ὑπομονή is translated not by 'patience' (patientia) but by tolerantia (2 Cor. 1:6).
- 8. 1a. 21:19.
- 9. Following Thomas (Sun. theol. II, II, q. 136, a. 4), patience is 'pars fortitudinis'. Yet hellenistic courage is not the same as christian patience, not even in a passive sense. Patience, 'the perfect virtue' (Jay. 1:4) is not only, nor even primarily, mere steadfastness and resistance in the face of evil; but rather bearing the destiny of Man and of the entire world. ὑπομονή (from the root ὑμ from which comes tolerare, cf. the Latin habeo) means to bear, suffer, endure, persevere, hold out; but hardly ever in a physical sense, but rather in a spiritual sense of resisting. From the double sense of ὑπομονή (to bear and fulfill), we might say that by tolerating, by 'bearing' something onto himself (in the first sense), the christian tolerates this as the object of his patience and therefore he realizes it (the second sense). Thus this is a virtue that can be no christian tolerance--as generally no christian virtue--without love which

5. Div. Thom. in De malo II, 2 saying that there is a kernel of truth in every viewpoint.
6. It is interesting to note that many sanskrit, greek and latin words used to express the idea of tolerance are derived from roots which also mean victory, conquest, power, force and hence the capacity to resist, maintain, wait patiently, assume, i.e., tolerate. Cf. this same notion in the three groups of japanese words which express the notion of tolerance in W. M. Fridell, 'Notes on Japanese Tolerance', Monumenta Nipponica, 27(3), 1972, pp. 254-56.
7. This translation, incidentally, is not original. At least once in the Vulgata ὑπομονή is translated not by 'patience' (patientia) but by tolerantia (2 Cor. 1:6).
8. Lk. 21:19.
9. Following Thomas (Sum. theol. II-II, q. 136, a. 4), patience is 'pars fortitudinis'. Yet hellenistic courage is not the same as christian patience, not even in a passive sense. Patience, 'the perfect value' (Jam. 1:4) is not only, nor even primarily, mere steadfastness and persistence in the face of evil; but rather bearing the destiny of Man and of the entire world. Τάλω (from the root τάλ from which comes tolerance, cf. the latin tolo) means to bear, suffer, endure, persevere, hold out; ~~but~~ hardly ever in a physical sense, but rather in a spiritual sense of redeeming. From the double sense of τέλλω (raise and fulfill), we might say that by tolerating, by 'loading' something onto himself (in the first sense), the christian tolerates this as the object of his tolerance and therefore realizes it (the second sense). From this it is clear that there can be no christian tolerance--as generally no christian value--without love which

9 cont. alone transforms simple endurance into hopeful bearing.

Cf.
10. Gal. 6:22

11. Cf. my study on christian tolerance: 'Pluralismus, Toleranz und Christenheit', Pluralismus, Toleranz und Christenheit (Nürnberg, Abendländische Akademie, 1961), pp. 117-42, and in Los dioses y el Señor (Buenos Aires, Columba, 1967), pp. 116-46.
12. In all scholasticisms making distinctions is the dialectical procedure by which one can be doctrinally tolerant. ^{You are} ~~We~~ tolerate ^d you if you succeed in fitting your opinion into the main-stream of orthodox opinion by making the appropriate distinctions.
13. Cf. the principle of de internis non judicat Ecclesia and on the other hand, the totalitarian principle of ^{and} ~~a~~ certain communist ^{and} ~~or~~ religious ideology ^{ies} which ~~also~~ demands the submission of private convictions. Cf. ~~the~~ ^{will} the problem of religious obedience and how, once demythicized, it becomes intolerable. (W)
14. An analysis of arguments for or against tolerating pornography these last years, especially in the United States, offers an interesting example favoring our law. The more one lives in one or another myth (that of morality or of democracy), the more one tolerates one side or the other. The more one follows one or another ideology (that of the common good or freedom), the more one is intolerant of one cause or another. Those mainly concerned with morality and the common good will espouse stringent anti-pornography laws. Those mainly concerned with democracy and freedom will defend a 'liberal' attitude. ~~...except for and censors~~
15. Cf. as an example: 'Now quite a few people are beginning to understand that jail increases both the quality and the quantity of criminals, that, in fact, it often creates them out of mere nonconformists. Far fewer people, however, seem to understand that mental hospitals, nursing homes, and orphan asylums do much the same thing.' I. Illich, 'The Institutional Spec-

15 cont. trum', Cross Currents, 21(1) (Winter, 1971), p. 89.

16. Cf. the final sentence in the article of H.-W. Bartsch, 'L'idée de tolérance chez Paul', in the volume already cited, L'herméneutique de la liberté religieuse, p. 205: 'L'intolérance de Paul ne se dresse que contre l'intolérance.' Obviously, intolerance is that which one does not tolerate.

17. 'La tolérance ne saurait donc consister à accepter n'importe quoi de n'importe qui, au sens où nous disons accepter les pensées et les actes de quelqu'un. Elle devra consister à laisser chacun exercer les possibilités, de dévoilement ou de découverte, théoretique ou pratique, qui lui sont dévolues de par sa "situation" dans la totalité de l'étant.' Cf. A. de Waelhens, loc. cit. Certainly, but where are the criteria? Who tells us what these possibilities are? Perhaps we could go so far as to permit suicide, but murder?

18. 'Ideologie = Aktion, in Theorie umgesetzt; praktische Philosophie = Theorie, aus der eine Aktion folgt.' Cf. H. Kuhn, op. cit., p. 348.

19. '...für die Ideologie ist der Sachbezug, so wenig er fehlen kann, nicht das Entscheidende. Sie will etwas, und im Licht des von ihr Gewollten liest sie die Chriffren der Wirklichkeit. ...die Theorie und der Theoretiker (als wollendes Subjekt) bilden für sie eine untrennbare Einheit. Die Doktrin ist hier zugleich Aktionsprojékt.' (H. Kuhn, op. cit., p. 348)

20. Cf. the casual remark of former President R. Nixon to a group of Congressmen (quoted in an Editorial of The Progressive, 38(2), February, 1974(6): 'I can go into my office and make a telephone call and within twenty-five minutes seventy million people would be dead.' No average american, believing in the myth of the Founding Fathers, would entertain such a thought. Watergate was only an anecdote of such an attitude of supreme might.

21. Cf. the bibliographical appendix on religious freedom and toleranc

III. Morality and Myth. The 'Moral' of Myth and the Myth of Morals

Only when the great Tao declines

Humanness and morality arise.

Tao Tē Ching 18 (+)

It is characteristic, even symptomatic, of the modern scientific movement to demystify myth. To demystify myth is to destroy it. The myth of morality is morality itself, and what would remain if the myth ceases to be moral. To demystify morality is to demystify morality. To demystify morality does not mean necessarily, explicitly or implicitly, destroying it. Morals, insofar as they survive, subsist in themselves, like a tree that sheds its skin. They are not based on religion or on faith, and they are not based on faith. From faith... and religion...

†. Humanness: jēn, human kindness, humaneness. Morality: yi, righteousness. When Kung-fu-tse (Confucius) was asked about the meaning of jēn he said: "don't do to others what you don't want others to do to you", Analects XII, 2; or again ^{move} ~~and~~ simpler: ^{y/} "love men!" ibid. XII, 22.

1 Morality

It is characteristic, even symptomatic, that contemporary Man, having tried to demythicize dogma, now tries to demythicize morals. Previous centuries tended to moralize religion and so attempted to moralize myth, i.e., to reduce myth to its 'moral' by making it carry a moral message. The point was to salvage myth, or at least what was considered the essence of myth. The present-day tendency mainly wants to salvage morals, which otherwise seem so threatened.

And so we touch on a crucial problem which could easily be the starting point for an entire phenomenology of our times. I shall limit myself to some reflections which are more concentrated than systematic. (1)

Perhaps I should state--as tribute to cartesian clarity?--the scheme of this study:

The 'moral' of myth is the myth itself, and not its 'content' moralized. To moralize myth is to destroy it.

The myth of morals is morality itself, and when morals cease to be a myth, they also cease to be moral. To demythicize morals is tantamount to murdering them.

To remythicize morals does not mean consciously, artificially demythicizing them. Morals, insofar as they survive, remythicize themselves, like a serpent sheds its skin. They are not based on reason or on myth, but flow from faith. From faith,....? ad calendas graecas!

o) The 'Moral' of Myth

The so-called Renaissance neither introduced nor re-introduced myth to the

European world: it only provoked a more or less rational reflection on myth. (2) Thus that hybrid and even self-contradictory science called mythology was born. In fact, by virtue of their very natures, as soon as one approaches mythos with the instrument of the logos, myth can only disappear, just as darkness is no longer darkness after light penetrates. The analogy is appropriate, since in this case the illuminating 'light' of reason indeed destroys the 'obscurity' of myth. To be sure, it has been said that God loves to dwell in 'thick darkness' (3) but it has also been said that the darkness did not receive the light, (4) Moreover, darkness cannot receive the light and remain darkness; the only way for the darkness to encounter the light is not to receive it. If darkness were not dark, it would need no light; but it cannot coexist with light. Can the creature, which is darkness insofar as it is not God, (5) truly receive the Creator and remain creature? If the Creator were really to descend into or unite himself with the creature, what would remain of it? (6) There is a deeper dialectic here than currently suspected. On God's side, redemption is free, but from the side of the created, it is the only way out of the existential impasse: shadows have their raison d'être and so their justification, as a function of light. (7)

However this may be, mythology is the death of myth. Myth is not an 'object', but an instrument of knowing, a fundamental human attitude, if you like, beside, not in front of, the logos. (8) It cannot become the object of the logos without degenerating. Here already we have the whole problematic: when you make myth into an 'object' of knowledge, when you make it the subject-matter of analysis, you destroy it as myth. You can retrieve bits and pieces perhaps, but the myth is dead. Myth does not resist the objectifying light of reason, it demands the innocence of ignorance. We shall see that this is also the case with morals.

There is however another, and in this case acceptable, way of understanding 'mythology'. Here it indicates not the invasion of the mythos by the logos,

reducing the former to the latter, but rather mythos-legein: telling the myth, saying it, the integral word that is both mythos and logos. Myths can be told and told properly, when they are believed; they cannot be investigated by means of another organ just as sound cannot be perceived by the naked eye. Only recently has mythology renounced its pretension to being science and rediscovered that its role is once again to 'recount' the myth: $\mu\omega\theta\acute{o}\nu \lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\iota\nu$. This is mytho-logy demytho-logized. (9)

In addition to these inherent contradictions, mythology as the science of myths is confronted with a practically insurmountable difficulty when it tries to save myth. Even today words like miraculous, marvelous, legendary, unreal, mythical, etc. are almost synonymous in common language. Seen in the light of the logos, myth is not only false, it also proves to be immoral. So a certain affable and apologetic mythology attempted to moralize it. How to moralize myth? By demythicizing it.

The subsequent reversal--demythicization of morals--now asserts itself with a vengeance. And we arrive at our problem. How to demythicize morals? By 'demoralizing' them. We are going to show this schematically.

1.2 Demythicizing Myth

A demythicized myth is by definition no longer myth. If it remains a myth, this means it has been imperfectly demythicized. A demythicized myth is a eunuch, a human face without a nose, without eyes, without ears. A demythicized myth is a cadaver. Some would demythicize to attain 'truth', pure truth, just as pure metal is obtained by physico-chemical experiments. This process kills myth just as vivisection kills a living being in order to extract its vital fluids. Advocates of this method consider truth a concept and thereby sever its umbilical cord with the very 'conception' which conceived it! Demythicization then, means extracting the concept from the unformed, undiscriminated magma of myth. It

goes without saying that this process of demythification, though ultimately related, should not be confused with Bultmannian demythologization or with the 'personal decision' flowing from an 'existential interpretation' of a mythical text.

To take an example: Adam, it is said, could have not existed (note: historically, as an individual--as if existence could only be ^{an individualistically historical category} ~~this way~~); the apple could have not been real (another note: biologically and materially--as if reality could be exhausted by these dimensions); the snake could have not had the power of speech (emphasis: phonetically and with human words--as if all communication had to be in words), etc., etc. But the core of the myth, so we are told, brings to mind notions of obedience, humility, temptation, responsibility for suffering, and so forth. (10) Demythification would then supply the truth of the myth. The myth may not be 'true', i.e. 'historically' true, but it will contain truths. (11)

The problem does not end here. After extracting its truth, we 'rehabilitate' the myth in moral terms. Adam 'knew' his wife, who was in a certain sense his daughter. As for Cain and Abel, Genesis does not tell us who their wives, the mothers of their children, were. (12) Given the Biblical context, we must assume their wives were their sisters. The myth of incest begins; it will develop throughout the western world. (13) Greek myths on this subject are well known. We also know analogies in India. (14) Once again, we are not content to discover the truth-content of these myths, we also want to interpret their message of goodness, to discover their moral. (15) ^{And although a parable is not a myth} (We have done) the same with the Gospel parables: we want them to give a moral lesson. (16)

In the case of Jacob tricking Esau and Isaac, (17) so difficult to moralize, St. Augustine candidly admits: 'non est mendacium, sed mysterium'. (18) By so doing he refuses to demythify, because he understands very well that if he

moralizes too much, the entire myth will flounder and with it whatever truth or goodness it might contain. The vehicle of the mysterium is the myth itself. Without myth, the mystery is doomed and vice-versa, without this sense of mystery, myth dies. (19) Augustine invites us to open ourselves to the mystery and spurn the invasion of reason into a realm which is not its own. But not everybody stops at this threshold. (20) We demand explanations, we want to penetrate everywhere with reason, we profane the cloister of being, we violate the virginity of myth. (21) Strictly speaking it is re-flection, my-self-consciousness, which kills myth. When knowledge loses its ecstasy, when it no longer illumines, when it turns itself in, glances backward, (22) it becomes knowledge of good and evil but it also loses its innocence and the myth vanishes. So to 'save' myth you demythicize it, you try at least to salvage its moral, which is not always easy. Then you demythicize further.

Let us take as an example of moralizing demythicization, the hindu myth of incest. (23) Here we find two different myths, or more precisely two dynamic moments of the same primordial myth of unity and multiplicity, of the absolute and the relative. (24) The first moment refers to the union between the Father of the Gods, Prajāpati, and his daughter, Uṣas. Prajāpati discovers himself alone and is bored. He desires a second. (25) He who is already complete, the primordial ātman identical to the person (26) who could not be afraid of anyone because there is no one other than he, (27) the androgynous being, splits himself in two. (28) Then he (already a masculine priority) unites with Uṣas and mankind is begotten. One could say this myth represents the love of God for his creature and his descent to her in order to divinize her, to have her with him once again. Incest represents the ἀποκατάστασις πάντων and the ἀνακεφαλαιώσις of all things. (29) God grants his creature his own life. He is not content to love her 'platonically', he fertilizes her, makes her his wife. (30) 'God so loved the

world' (31) that he 'descended' and 'entered' his creature and made his own creation fertile. (32) To the dereliction of the creation corresponds the embrace of God's descent, fecundation, Incarnation, whose fruit is the creature's own divinization. (33) We are doubtless far from incest at this point and someone is bound to tell us that the myth is only a particularly crude manner of speaking, and that the essence of the myth is really what we have just said. (34) So we make a cosmic hermeneutic. (35)

The second moment of this myth, already present to some extent in the first version, represents the historical dimension and the anthropological vision of the same problem. It is no longer a question of the union of God with his creature in an atemporal setting, but of the reintegration of Man. Since this is impossible in a single human exemplar, it ought to be accomplished by perpetuating the species. (36) Yama, the first man, must unite with his twin sister because the ancestors desire progeny from the only ones on earth. (37) The first human couple must overcome their repugnance at doing what is 'unheard-of and horrible' in order to reintegrate human being at the price of multiplicity. So it will be the whole of humanity which arrives at the fullness of reintegration. Yamī, the 'Eve of the Rg Veda' (38) 'tempts' her brother Yama:

"I offer my bed as a woman to her man;

Let us roll like cart-wheels!" (39)

He refuses:

"Never will I unite my body with yours;

Sin it is called to approach a sister.

Go from me--take your delight elsewhere.

Your brother, fair one, wants none of it." (40)

Later Yama, the first mortal, dies and becomes king and God of the dead, the

Yama of mythology. (41) In order to ease Yamī's grief, the Gods create night. (42) The heterogeneity of time is made for--and through--Man. (43) The modern West would no doubt try to interpret the myth by means of depth psychology. (44) But the process is the same in both cases: we have moralized the myth. We have 'saved' it, meanwhile condemning incest to the merely human level. The analogy however remains, as also the clear, unambiguous language of the myth.

Why then do we still talk about incest? Have we the right to cut the world in two: into the human realm of morals and the amoral cosmic order? Do morals have such ontological weight that they can divide beings into those addressed by moral law and those whom it does not concern? Is there not a continuum here, beginning with the divinization of the creature and leading to the incest? (45) What, then, are these morals which can demythicize myths with the same rights as reason? Which comes first? myth or morals? Is myth just a fable like those of Aesop or the Pañcatantra, valuable only for its 'moral'? Are we in this 'humanist' epoch so smitten with our little concepts that we are no longer aware that we have reduced them to explaining only the most superficial level of a much richer reality? Does 'incest'--to return to our example--only mean 'sexual relations within a certain range of consanguinity'? Or again, do 'sexual relations' mean exclusively the 'marriage act'? Is there no other 'marriage act' than this? We could multiply examples: We say 'matter' and understand 'physical mass'; 'physics' seems to stem only from the so-called natural 'sciences', and 'nature' only from the material world. Why have we reduced Man to an individual, truth to a concept, goodness to a legality and the flower to its utility? We cannot reduce the truth of myth to its conceptual truth. On the same note, we cannot but impoverish the meaning of goodness if we reduce it to moral goodness. Was Judith moral?

Somebody will object: what does myth want to say then, if it is more than the truth and the moral lesson we squeeze from it? I would answer first, that neither

myth. Now we shall demythicize morals. After all, aren't morals just another myth?

The 'primitive' follows his myth without question. The day he begins to ask why, he attains knowledge of good and evil (49) and immediately becomes aware of the unreasonable, irrational character of myth. By this very fact he loses his 'primitive' innocence; the myth of paradise is no longer valid for him, but he also finds himself expelled from the paradise of myth. An angel armed with a flaming sword guards the entrance to this paradise and forbids entry, lest he eat of the tree of life and understand the mystery of existence. (50)

Isn't it the same for 'civilized' people with respect to morals? They live according to their moral standards without asking for reasons. The moment they do, morals are plunged into crisis, and the day they find their reasons, morals cease to be moral. Morality becomes logic or dialectic; or science. Converted into logos, morals cease to be ethos. So we obey a syllogism. We are good by virtue of a logical conclusion. We accept the rules of this game of life because we have examined and judged their rationale. From here on the good is correct knowledge, and evil merely an error. This can be verified from the individual, as well as the sociological, perspective: morals retreat as 'knowledge' advances. (51)

It is not by chance that Socrates has been called the first western *Man*, the first 'civilized' *Man*, the first of a civilization which even today has not yet succeeded in destroying the mythical, a-rational and often irrational power of morals.

We act morally as long as we do not ask why. The moment we feel obliged to justify morals by reason (and how else could we do it?), they begin to crumble. What arguments do we not enlist today for or against birth control, abortion or euthanasia, for example? How many 'theories' do we construct pro or contra war, violence and deceit? We ignore the plea of believers who do not want to listen

to reasons, but want to know what they ought to do. Obviously the blade is double-edged: the 'penitent' is within his rights in not wanting to hear 'reasons' in the confessional, but he is not if he asks for a simple 'recipe' which would spare him the responsibility of a free and personal stance. (52)

By this we do not intend to propose any theory whatsoever. We are simply setting forth the mythical character of morals, not only as they appear but in their deepest patterns. When morals are no longer self-sustaining, self-evident, when they are no longer accepted without discussion, when they are no longer self-asserting, then, like myths, they must appeal to reason to save and somehow justify themselves. But morality thereby sells its birthright, (53) it ceases to be autonomous and able to elicit a moral duty; it becomes probability (or 'probability') and logic. It is the conclusion of an argument, the coining of a rationalization, the regularizing of propriety, the result of a syllogism, and not the expression of an Order, (54) the manifestation of a Will, the other face of Truth.

But then, he who finds other reasons, draws different conclusions, discovers a better rule (like a more perfect--because more practical--traffic system) is no longer really bound to the moral injunction, which by its very nature claims a far more universal validity than do the principles of reason. Morality is supposed to be valid (binding) even where reason is not too 'developed'. In short, morals cease to be moral; they become a pragmatic regulation of coexistence.

Faced with the advance of European culture, western Man once (with Kant) believed that morality would be more universal, and so more valid, if based on reason rather than grounded in ends. We must note right away, however, that by then these ends had already become aims, that is, subjective intentions. In fact, conscious consciousness had already invaded the objective and cosmic order, the realm of ends. Kant's critique was then inevitable.

Both the heteronomous and the autonomous efforts have failed. In order to save morals we seem to have no other alternative than to demythicize them radically. Kant himself wanted to find the limits of reason um zum Glauben zu bekommen. (55)

6) 2.2 Demythicizing Morals

What then is left of morality? Even if we manage to preserve its truth-content, how are we to safeguard and justify its irreducible ultimacy, its authority, the full thrust of its command, its ought? At the very most, reason can prescribe what should-be, as a function of certain presuppositions and given certain aims. But reason is absolutely unable to command what ought to be. It can give neither reasons nor grounds for the keystone of morals, namely that one ought to do that which should-be. In short, you kill human conscience if you reduce it to tidy rational intellection. Morals would then be nothing else than the conclusion of a rationalization put in the form of injunctions so as to 'convince' those who are not smart enough to see the 'reasons'.

Let us consider, for example, the duty to obey. Why must Adam obey God rather than listen to Eve and the Serpent, or yield to the attraction of the forbidden fruit? Adam can obey or not, he has the choice. He is free to go either way. But once he is conscious of his freedom he is bound to ask why--why obey? And once he asks the reason for his obedience ^{he} ~~thereby admitting~~ ^s the possibility of disobedience if his question finds no satisfactory answer^s. In other words, once he begins to demythicize, he both loses innocence and eschews obedience. By asking himself 'why' he obeys, he no longer trusts the commandment on its own; he wants to justify it. His obedience is no longer spontaneous, it no longer presents itself immediately to his conscience, and so he must appeal to a third party, to the reasons which underlie his question and upon which he will rationally base his obedience.

Then he finds himself destitute, he discovers his nakedness. (56) And, since all dis-covery is an un-covering, he has in fact stripped himself naked. He was not naked before, he was covered by God, covered too by the myth until the dis-covery of his dis-obedience, the dis-closure of his co-gnition. (57) If I am prepared to trust these underlying reasons my questioning claims to discover, I no longer trust God but myself, who discovers the basic rationale for my obedience. If I am not prepared to follow--to obey--the findings of my reason, or if it is only a rhetorical question, hoping that the conflict will not arise, then I am no longer in good faith. For a time the western post-mediaeval christian made God the rational basis he sought, which lead necessarily to the 'death of God' last century. If God is the 'reason' why I should obey, any other reason can supplant Him. Authentic obedience tries to discover the whom, not to scrutinize the reason, the what. It does not confound a decision made by me with the foundation of this decision which is not in me. If I am the ultimate criterion, I become the rival of God-- and there is no room for two on the ultimate level.

The traditional explanation of Adam's fall is simple: he fell into the devil's snare, he succumbed to temptation. Sin is alienation, letting oneself be led astray by another. Man has two yesser, judaism at the time of Christ, used to say, and this doctrine of two spirits, two ways, two inclinations, and even two ends of Man will be common throughout early christianity. (58) One of these inclinations is the propensity to sin. This yesser, residing in the heart, is called διαβούλιον ; later it will be replaced by λογισμός , a word of stoic origin. (59) What I wish to emphasize here is the universal belief in δαιμόνιον as the immediate cause of temptation and sin. This belief, so ridiculed in modern times--doubtless because of the abuses it occasioned--sustained morals: as long as you do not look for a rational explanation, everything stands firm. There is not a why but a who, a demon or a spirit inciting Man to evil or to good. When

the $\epsilon\lambda\mu\acute{\nu}\omicron\nu\omicron\nu$ and the $\pi\nu\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\mu\delta$ disappear, we must explain sin by natural, even rational, causes and this amounts to explaining it away. Sin thereby becomes rational, even reasonable; at most it is an error.

But the problem does not stop here. In fact it begins with the question 'why?' It is facile to say that as long as you ask for an ulterior reason, you have not ^{yet} reached bedrock. The problem arises when we realize that once the question is posed, once the doubt appears, it is impossible not to ask the question; and afterwards it is impossible to ask it ⁱⁿ any other way. The moment I ask why, I cannot ask otherwise. Either I do not ask at all and this ^{is} the myth and the state of innocence; or I ask and the question itself starts to demythicize and destroy morals. The tragedy of the status deviationis is that I cannot not ask why: ~~conscious~~ ^{reflective} consciousness kills moral conscience, destroys not only its spontaneity, but also its irreducibility. In this case, moral consciousness is no longer ultimate, no longer a final instance. It merely manipulates the reasons that my rational mind supplies. Adam might not have been in this state, but we are, ~~without exception~~; Nostalgia for a lost paradise is neither paradise nor redemption.

Today this dilemma is felt in all its acuity.

22:1) If we do not demythicize, obedience--to stay with the example already given-- becomes blind, the corresponding human attitude becomes fanatical and the resulting situation uncritical and untenable. Who tells me if it is God or Satan speaking? Jahweh or the Serpent? If I must decide, then I am the final court of appeal, the definitive judge between God and the devil. If we do not demythicize, anyone could ^{command} anything, and provided the appearances, at least, do not arouse suspicion, I will obey indiscriminately. We must not forget that the first question, therefore the first doubt, in the Bible is really the Serpent's. (60)
Yet if we do not ask questions, we are not human. Man is a being who questions

that most of the human traditions affirm and questions himself. And it is precisely here ~~we recognize~~ that the existential condition of humanity is the status deviationis or naturae lapsae, understood not as a mere superficial blemish but as a wound which pierces to the deepest level of our being. The most primordial question: who am I? is conditioned not only in its answer, but already in the very question, by the fallen existential situation of Man, by the I who questions himself.

We may not feel the need to demythicize, but the moment that somebody asks us, like the Serpent asked Adam, why we obey, we are no longer free to brush aside the question and must, instead, try to justify our decision, nay, our very freedom.

2.2.2) On the other hand, if we demythicize obedience, we destroy it completely; obedience as such disappears. In demythicizing, we either discover the reason, the underlying why, or we do not. But in either instance we no longer obey.

In the first case, either this why which we find is convincing or it is not. (Convincing means that I find a reason to obey.) If it convinces, I no longer ^{a command} obey, rather I follow my reason, my own criterion. I 'obey' because I have discovered, beyond the commandment itself, that I must do what is commanded: if there were no one commanding it, I would obey, i.e., I would do it anyway. This attitude typifies the Nineteenth Century. Religion--identified with morals--was considered good for people, particularly for the illiterates, who needed an authority to direct them. As for the illuminati, the Aufgeklärter, they needed neither religion nor morals outside of themselves. (61) This is also the most common vedāntic attitude: he who has 'realized' the ātman, the ἄγιός, is beyond every commandment and all morals. (62) He who has had the intuition of Reality is (has become) this Reality and there is no higher instance whom or which he must obey. (63) Authority is necessary only for those who have not yet come into their own. Ipsi sibi sunt lex. (64)

The extremes meet!

If, on the contrary, the reason you have ~~not~~ found is not convincing, then a fortiori, you do not obey. You discover at once the motive for the commandment

and its weakness. We may suppose that Adam had found the reason God had forbidden eating the fruit in the motive suggested by the Serpent: divine jealousy, fear of rivals, the desire to keep for himself alone the privilege of knowing good and evil. ^{thought he was not obliged to, he might have felt a 'moral' obligation} (65) So Adam could have ~~obeyed and~~ instead, ~~decided~~ to risk the threat of death, (66) and to challenge the right of God.

We could no doubt admit the possibility of 'obedience' in spite of everything, but then we either act contrary to our own conscience, which would be more immoral than flat disobedience (since we go along with the commandment out of calculation, fear, sloth, pragmatism, etc.--but we can no longer call this obedience); or despite all we remain tied to a myth superior to all 'reasons', which means we have not seriously demythicized it.

If we do not successfully demythicize, i.e., if we cannot disengage the why, the foundation grounding a commandment, we can indeed continue to believe 'mythically' that there is a hidden foundation which cannot be unveiled. By giving credence to this unknown factor, we only seem to obey when in reality we have already decided in its favor and trust blindly in its existence and power. Is this not perhaps the most common 'obedience'? Or we can believe that there is no why, no reason behind the commandment, and then we no longer obey, since the very fact of trying to demythicize means we have deemed this demythicization necessary in order to justify our obedience. But in this case you cannot obey; even if you want to, you cannot regain lost innocence, you cannot retrace your path and begin again as if you had not already taken a step (which faltered) in order to find reasons for obeying. Here is the real place for the current problem of serious atheism.

The dilemma is agonizing. If we do not demythicize morals, they become cancerous, invading everywhere, paralyzing everything with regulations, taboos and irrationality. Most moral laws no longer 'speak' to us, they are no longer

self-asserting for us. Today we cannot dispense with finding--or rather searching for--a foundation for morals. If we demythicize morals, they can only disappear as morals, as the definitive criterion of conduct: there remains only a static rationality, which lacks any authority in which a dynamic duty might take root.

2.3 Remythicizing Morals

Is there a way out of this impasse? It is impossible to give here a solution which is thoroughly adequate to the problem. I shall limit myself to emphasizing the mythical morphology of morality, and to suggesting that the only way to provisionally sustain morals is through their possible remythicization.

This cannot be an artificial, or even a conscious and pragmatic, remythicizing. My only concern is simply to state the existence of a law and explain its importance.

I have spoken elsewhere of Umythologisierung.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Remythicizing morals would be a case in point: it is clearly not a salvage job with more or less conscious, deliberate and artificial grappling hooks, but a spontaneous and natural process which unfolds before our very eyes. (68) Morals, like icebergs, are not only unconscious and hidden for nine-tenths of their 'substance', but they also sail and travel about, they move toward seas still untouched by reflexion, by ^{reflective} ~~conscious~~ consciousness. ^{Is} But moral conscience ~~is not~~ just an ersatz for ~~conscious~~ ^{conscious} consciousness, so that when knowledge appears, morals disappear altogether? ^{Are} ~~mathem~~ the two ~~one~~ incompatible ^{so that} and the one takes the other's place? (67) (68)

There is a kind of indeterminacy here, like the relation Heisenberg proposed between two conjugated variables in physics, between these two types of awareness, the reflexive and the moral. When knowledge waxes, morals wane, and vice-versa. But just as in physics, the two orders are linked, conjugated; no dimension of pure knowledge exists, nor one of blind morality. Morals without knowledge amount

to fanaticism and slavery, just as knowledge which tries to penetrate everywhere and everything kills Man and destroys life. Consequently an idealism which identifies being with knowledge is bound to eliminate morals, and any moral organization (any church for example) is always inclined to view the growth of 'reflexivity' with suspicion.

We have already noted that a morality which questions itself ceases to be moral. When I ask myself why I must love my parents or what reason obliges me always to be truthful, my filial love and sincerity begin to waver.

We do not question the moral values we accept. And this is 'why' we accept them, because we find them ultimate and thus without any further 'why'. Just so, in today's world there are certain social values we do not discuss: justice, democracy, communal well-being, loyalty to one's own country and even national integrity, particularly in the case of young nations. These values are rooted in humanity's collective consciousness. (69) India, for example, simply will not discuss the problem of Kashmir on neutral grounds without a preconceived solution. England will hardly acknowledge that a referendum could resolve the status of the monarchy. Spain flatly refuses to admit that its religious unity can be questioned. Similarly, the United States would scarcely accept a discussion of its right to be 'the most powerful nation'. Even the speculative sciences admit some principles--postulates--which one neither proves nor disputes. Should the need arise, one has recourse to another science, or to philosophy, or to the evidence, or to pragmatism, to justify the hypothesis upon which a science is founded. The example of mathematics is classic.

The traditional christian answer stands if we accept all its presuppositions: ^{or nature of Man, disclosed} the moral order is founded on the will of God, revealed through ~~the~~ Revelation or Reason ^{or Culture, etc.} transmitted by the Church. Nevertheless, between the commandment, which is an absolute, general order--'you shall not kill', for example--and my concrete situation, there is enough distance for any particular instance to be 'picked off' by

all the 'sharp-shooters' imaginable, from 'philosophical' reason or from any of the human 'sciences', psychology in particular. *So the problem remains.* ↵

Vom

Significantly, when we lived morals as we live myth, that is, submerged in it without 'critical' distance, when we lived on the level of 'mythical' morality (modern Man would say), we would consider the gravity of a sin as a function of the amount of will involved in it, and thus with regards to reason as well. An act of passion was not traditionally as reprehensible as one executed with premeditation in cold blood. The seriousness of a sin was directly proportional to the reason and will involved in it. Today it is almost the opposite. If you can succeed in proving the rationality and intentional character of acts otherwise considered to be 'contrary' to accepted morality, society will probably excuse them. We are thinking here not only of the Vanderput case, nor only of abortion or conscientious objection to war, but also of so-called 'immoral' sexual relations between consenting adults, of lies uttered 'for the good of the cause', etc. It seems that if one can explain one's own actions and especially justify them rationally, the evil is eliminated. Rational explanation amounts to moral justification. But for what can we not find some explanation, especially when it is a question of justifying ourselves?

Where does this process lead? Is it a stage in evolution? (70) Is it the kali yuga, the age of original sin? (71) Or is it the entire human kalpa? (72) But is Man himself not just a strand in the web of space and time which unites and diversifies all creation? These are questions we can only mention here, keeping in mind how far they are from 'morals' and how close to myth.

The famous, albeit non-canonical, text of St. Luke, (73) which precedes the liberating formula of Christ--that the Son of Man is also the master of the Sabbath--(74) seems to approve this line of thinking. Moreover it is corroborated by St. Paul's audacious words: 'Blessed is he who does not discern himself in what

he experiences'; (75) blessed the Man who acts with a direct and non-reflexive attitude, so that there is no doubt about what he ought to do. (76) Luke's text reads: 'On the same day, seeing one working on the sabbath, he said unto him: Man, if indeed thou knowst what thou doest, thou art blessed: but if thou knowst not, thou art cursed, and a transgressor of the law.' (77) Christ then cited the example of David eating the shew bread, which only the priests were allowed to eat. (78) Must we conclude that provided you know what you are doing, you are free to do anything? I think not. The text cannot be interpreted in such a purely anarchist fashion. First of all, you must really know what you are doing. (79) Did this same Christ not ask his Father to forgive his executioners, 'for they know not what they do'? (80) The text means that if you know, you are conditioned by that knowing. But true knowledge is always liberating. (81) Only if you know and do not act do you sin. You cannot know an error, but you can ignore a truth or esteem an action good when in fact it is not if you know neither the Father nor the Christ. (82) What is this liberating knowledge? (83) According to St. Paul, who based himself on the Gospel, (84) this knowledge is faith. (85) It is not rational knowledge, without however being unreasonable. (86)

Might we hazard a paraphrase of the first beatitude, the first and dominant note of the entire Sermon on the Mount? (87) 'Blessed are the poor in Spirit!' those who have a real, and thus spiritual, poverty, who do not possess their spirit; who do not own themselves, who are unconscious of their value and grandeur (which is no sooner known than lost). Blessed are those who are un-self-conscious, those born to Life, but who do not know how to handle that very life other than by living it. Blessed are those who have reached the docta ignorantia, those who pray and do not know it, those who do good and even on judgment day will avow they never knew it, (88) because their right hand was unaware of what their left hand was doing. (89) Blessed those who have this faith which moves mountains (90) and which

saves. (91) Blessed those who have lost their life. (92) Blessed those who sing to the Lord a song (93) so new that it excludes all reflexion, for were attention given to it, the praise would no longer be virginal and would slide into flattery or even superstition. Our hours of psalmody do not 'touch' God or bring him anything except when prayed in the Spirit to the Father through the Son, when the Man of prayer is borne up and carried away by it--by prayer which gives God himself to God. Now the authentic awareness of this act cannot be self-conscious, since the αὐτός is no longer our ego but the Spirit; (94) our ego can only disrupt the intra-trinitarian symphony to which we are called and in which we share, provided we remain ontically silent. (95) True apophatism is never reflexive; the same holds for every pure affirmation. (96) 'Blessed are those who have reached infinite ignorance.' (97)

And now the question: how can we have this faith which frees us even from the Law? (98) How can we have this awareness of faith which does not destroy morals, which is neither blind knowledge or fanatical adherence, nor simply a logical conclusion or a rational conviction, which would kill both the freedom and the 'voluntariness' of the act of faith?

Here again we refer to the case of obedience. If obedience is sheer rationality, it is not obedience. If obedience is sheer irrationality, it is also not obedience. I obey not because I see the rationale of the commandment, nor because I do not see it (following the line of irrationality), but because I see I must obey. Faith is this vision. It is ultimate and irreducible, without either ulterior motives or extrinsic reasons for believing (credibility and 'credendity' are very different things).

Here we are at the antipodes of fideism, which amounts to a real assault on the rights of reason. But we are equally far from all so-called naturalism, which claims to base morals on reason or on nature. (99) 'Whatever does not proceed

from faith is sin.' (100)

Perhaps somebody will object that my argument only ^{shifts} ~~dismisses~~ the problem. It could ^{be} that I have unloaded it on the question of faith ~~would be in poor taste to reproduce this~~, but I am convinced that I have contributed to centering the problem. Doubtless ~~we have not solved it~~. Must we re-mythicize or demythicize faith? Is there perhaps a third awareness, the awareness of faith? Has faith something to do with myth? *Following chapters will take up that problem again.*

(JW)

(JW)

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Notes

1. Cf. as an introduction to this problematic, the volumes: Il Problema della Demitizzazione (1961), Demitizzazione e imagine (1962), Ermeneutica e tradizione (1963), Tecnica e casistica (1964), the Proceedings of the Colloquia organized by the Istituto di studi filosofici (Roma) under the direction of E. Castelli (Padova, Cedam ~~Paris, Aubier~~); and the collection, Kerygma und Mythos (Hamburg, Reich, 1963, 1964, 1967), Vol. VI, 1, 2 & 3.
2. Cf. merely as a reminder: M. D. Chenu, La théologie au douzième siècle (Paris, Vrin, 1966); H. de Lubac, Exégèse médiévale; les quatre sens de l'Écriture (Paris, Aubier, 1959 sq.), 4 Vols.
3. Cf. 1 Kg. 8:12; Ps. 17:12, 97:2; Sir. 24:4; etc. Cf. etiam, Dionys. Aerop., Epist., 3; Maximus Conf., Ambigua (P. G., 91, 1048) and SU I, 1, 3. Cf. SB VI, 1, 1, 2: 'The gods love the obscure, the mysterious [lit. the invisible, the unmanifest: paroska], or Heraclitus: φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ' (nature loves to hide itself' (Περὶ φύσεως, fragm. 42). VUM
4. Cf. Jn. 1:5.
5. 'Creatura est tenebra in quantum est ex nihilo.' D. Thom., De veritate, q. 18, a. 2 ad 5.
6. Cf. the beautiful and suggestive expression of the RV I, 164, 47: kṛsnam nīyanam, 'the Path is dark' (cf. Kṛṣṇa, the ^Ggod) (V. S. Agrawala): 'Dark is the descent' (Griffith). Agrawala also translates it: 'Dark is the Source', Vision in Long Darkness (Varanasi, Bhargava Bhusan Press, 1963), p. 185. According to the so-called hymn of creation, the nāsadīya sūkta, in the Beginning there were two kinds of darkness: "Darkness was there, all wrapped around by darkness" (RV X, 129, 3). The first darkness is the Creator himself (svayambhū, the primordial principle, masculine) which envelopes (the theme of incest appears) creation (paramesthī, the feminine principle, emanation from the Creator).

7. Cf. Gen. 1:2-5; etc. Each era has had its own theology of light; even today we have begun slowly to elaborate our own.
8. Cf. R. Panikkar, Le Mystère du culte dans l'hindouisme et le christianisme (Paris, Cerf, 1970), pp. 177-182.
9. Cf. the works of O. W. Otto, K. Kerényi and M. Eliade, etc. on this subject.
10. Apropos of this, we could cite a good number of manuals of theology and Scripture. The still-current discussion on the 'nature' of Adam's sin (pride, covetousness, disobedience, etc.) shows that we are far from having gone beyond the moralistic stage.
11. Even up to our own times, people still assert that Jesus Christ spoke in parables in order to 'adapt' himself to the 'uncouth and primitive' character of his listeners. Obviously, he ought to have spoken in scholastic ^{or marxistic} categories...!
12. Gen. 4:17: 'Cain cognovit uxorem suam.'
13. We know that the strictest endogamy (marriage between brother and sister) in an ancient civilization such as Iran was encouraged by religion, not only for the royal families (as in Ptolemaic Egypt), but for everyone. 'La théologie justifie, bien plus encourage cette pratique par toute une argumentation de caractère mythologique: Ahura Mazda a pour épouse sa fille Spenta Aramati; Gayomart, le premier homme, issue de la terre, féconde sa mère, et le couple qui naît d'eux réalise le premier mariage entre frère et soeur, qui donne naissance à l'humanité tout entière.' J. P. de Menasce, 'Le monde moral (iranien)', Les morales non-chrétiennes, Journées 'Ethnologie et Chrétienté' (Paris, Monde, 1954), p. 49.
14. We find a brief reference to incest in RV X, 162, 5. Incest between a brother and sister (Yama and Yamī) with the names of Yima and Yimak (Yimeh) is also found in the Avesta: the myth is rooted in a very ancient indo-iranian tradition (without doubt anterior to Manu, considered to be the first man). For the second kind of myth, cf. note 23. Cf. chapter IV for the further problematic

15. Cf. the recent work on this subject, written to defend hinduism against the accusation of an 'absence of ethical sense': U. C. Pandey, 'Prajāpati and his Daughter', Bhāratī, Bulletin of the College of Indology--B. H. U., VIII, 1 (Varanasi, 1964/1965), pp. 95-102. The young author sees here 'a myth directly concerned with ritual performance of the natural phenomena of sun and Dawn' (p. 102)
16. Cf. the traditional efforts to show that the 'wise virgins' were not selfish, that the owner of the vineyard was not unjust, that the servant who buried the talent acted improperly, that the man who lacked a marriage garment was wrong, etc.
17. Gen. 27:1 sq.
18. The text reads: 'Jacob autem quod matre fecit auctore, ut patrem fallere videretur, si diligenter et fideliter attendatur, non est mendacium, sed mysterium. Quae si mendacia dixerimus, omnes etiam parabolae ac figurae significandarum quarumcumque rerum, quae non ad proprietatem accipiende sunt, sed in eis aliud ex alio est intelligendum, dicentur esse mendacia: quod absit omnino. (Contra mendacium, X, 24)
19. It is this that R. Garrigou-Lagrange seeks--albeit only in a single direction-- in his fine book, Le sens de mystère et le clair obscur intellectuel (Paris, Desclée, 1934).
20. His famous sentence concerning time: 'What then is time? If nobody asks me, I know; if I want to explain it to someone who asks, I don't know.' ^{pl.} Conf. XI, 14. _{CF.}
- KenU II, 2-3:
- 'By whom it is unthought, by him it is thought;
- By whom it is thought, he does not see.
- Not understood by whom it is known;
- Understood by whom it is not known.'

21. We can compare reason's 'thirst' to decipher everything with the sobriety characteristic of canonical writings (so much so that this very sobriety is almost a decisive criterion for distinguishing canonical from apocryphal texts). Myth is more hidden and implied than manifest and expressed. Wanting to describe the 'hidden life' of Jesus Christ, for example, or regretting it was never written amounts to destroying it.
22. Cf. Lk. 9:62.
23. For incest between God (Prajāpati, etc.) and his daughter (Uṣas--dawn, sky--
etc.), cf. RV I, 71, 5; I, 164, 33; III, 31, 1; VI, 17, 3 (ambiguous); VI, 12, 4;
X, 61, 5 sq.; AV VIII, 6, 7; TMB VIII, 2, 10; AB III, 33; SB I, 7, 4, 1 sq.;
II, 1, 2, 8-10; JaimB III, 2, 61 sq.; TB II, 3, 10 sq.; BU I, 4, 3-4. Cf. also
§ IV ^{note 19}, pp. 171, 1. In the Purāṇas as well we find the same motif with more
graphic and very often cruder details (cf. U. C. Pandey, op. cit.), vgr.
Matsya Purāṇa III, 32 sq. (Brahmā and Śatarūpā, Sāvitrī, Sarasvatī, Gāyatrī,
Brāhmaṇī); BhagP III, 12, 28 sq. (Prajāpati and Vāc, the Word!); ViṣṇuP I, 7,
6 sq. (Manu and Śatarūpā); Garuḍa Purāṇa V, 19; Vāyu Purāṇa III, 168; MarkP
L, 13; Padma Purāṇa; etc.
24. Here we can only sum up briefly what we consider per longum et latum in a
forthcoming book on the problem of creation.
25. 'He desired a second' (sa dvitīyam aicchat), BU I, 4, 3. He, the 'One without
second' (ekam evādvitīyam, CU VI, 2, 1). Before the original sin of the crea-
ture, there was an originating sin on the part of the Creator, creation being
this projection of a not-(yet)-being-(God), hence at one remove from God.
God's sin is creation. And, in creating, he could only create the not-God, ^{i.e. commit} from
a distance, a deformation, a degradation, a sin. In God this sin is not real,
^{has} since he ~~is~~ not created, but he creates in an eternal act by which the distance
is (already) surpassed because creation is (already) 'achieved', that is, it is

- no longer simple 'creature'. This sin becomes 'visible' only in time and further, it becomes real only when the creature stops mid-way, when it never becomes God (cf. ^{and its note 43} § IV). Cf. the felix culpa mentioned in the christian liturgy of Easter night. Cf. the famous etiam peccata of St. Augustine and the two controversial articles of St. Thomas, Sum. theol. III, q.1, aa.1 & 2.
26. Cf. BU I, 4, 1 (purusa).
27. BU I, 4, 2.
28. This is not the place to establish comparisons, but we might recall that this myth is universal and christian as well. Maxim the Confessor says, for example, that the resurrected Christ is no longer male or female since in his paradigmatic reintegration he unified the sexes (De divisionibus Naturae, II, 4; II, 8, 12, 14). Cf. vgr. M. Eliade, Méphistophèles et l'androgynie (Paris, Gallimard, 1962), p. 128 sq.
29. Cf. Eph. 1:10.
30. This theme is well-known: it constitutes the leitmotif of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel. Cf. L. Bouyer, La Bible et l'Évangile (Paris, Cerf, 1953).
31. Jn. 3:16.
32. Cf.: 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you (Ἐπιτελείεταί ἐπὶ σέ) and the power of the Most High will over shadow you' (καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπιτεκίμβει σοί) Lk. 1:35. To avoid any possible misunderstanding (docetic, allegorical), the angel had previously announced: 'ecce concipies in utero et paries filium.' Cf. etiam Pr. 8:31. "Deus".
"Factus est Deus homo, ut homo fieret"
33. Cf. the central idea of christianity: /'God became man in order that Man might become God', Augustine, Sermo 128 (P. L., 39, 1997) and also Sermo de natiuitate, 4 and 12 (P.L., 38, 999 and 1016); or again: 'Verbum Dei ... qui propter immensam suam dilectionem factus est quod sum^{us} nos, uti nos perficeret esse quod est ipse', Iraeneus, Adv. haeres., V, praef. (P. G., 7, 1120) aut etiam,

III, 18, 1 (P. G., 7, 932): 'Ostendimus enim, quia non tunc coepit Filius Dei, existens semper apud Patrem; sed quando incarnatus est, et homo factus, longam hominum expositionem in seipso recapitulavit, in compendio nobis salutem praestans, ut quod perdideramus in Adam, id est secundum imaginem et similitudinem esse Dei, hoc in Christo Jesu reciperemus'; again: III, 18, 7 (P. G., 7, 937): 'Oportuerat enim mediatorem Dei et hominum, per suam ad utrosque domesticitatem, in amicitiam et concordiam utrosque reducere, ut facere, ut et Deus assumeret hominem, et homo so

(... So that what we had lost in Adam, that is, to be according to the image and likeness of God, that we would recover in Christ Jesus)

dederet Deo. Qua enim ^{participi} (patione filiorum adoptionis ejus participes esse
possemus, nisi per Filium eam, quae est ad ipsum, recepissemus ab eo com-
munionem; nisi Verbum ejus communicasset nobis, caro ^{factum?';)}

~~was made Man that we might be made God'; Athanasius, De incarnat. Verbi, 54~~

(P. G., 25, 192). Cf. other texts apud J. Lemarié, La manifestation du Seigneur
(Paris, Cerf, 1957), pp. 145-160. ~~in note 73 of § XX p. 658/659 and also~~

34. Cf. another typical example, illustrating both an ancient and a modern attitude:
'When Kumārila is hard pressed by his opponents about the immoralities of his
gods, he answers with all the freedom of a comparative mythologist: It is fabled
that Prajāpati, the Lord of Creation, did violence to his daughter. But what
does it mean? Prajāpati, the Lord of Creation, is a name of the sun; and he
is called so, because he protects all creatures. [nevertheless we might note
that the sun has never been called the father of the dawn (Uṣas), even though
often identified with Agni (SB VI, 2, 1, 23; VI, 5, 3, 7 & 9; VI, 8, 1, 4;
TMB I, 1, 5, 5) and Savitr̥ (SB XII, 3, 5, 1; PañcB XVI, 5, 17); cf. U. C.
Pandey, op. cit., p. 98] His daughter Uṣas is the dawn. And when it is said
that he was in love with her, this only means that, at sunrise, the sun runs
after the dawn, the dawn being at the same time called the daughter of the
sun, because she rises when he approaches', F. Max Müller, History of Ancient
Sanskrit Literature (London, Williams and Norgate, 1859), pp. 529-30. It is
^{quoted} symptomatic that this entire passage is ~~found~~ in the english translation of
the R̥g Veda by R. T. H. Griffith, The Hymns of the Rig Veda (Varanasi, The
Dhowskamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1926), Vol. II, p. 611.

35. Despite the moral doubts so clearly expressed in the magnificent dialogue
between Yama and Yamī (cf. vers. 4-5 and 12).

36. 'Le secret de l'être humain est lié au secret de l'androgyné.' N. Berdiaev,
Le sens de la création (Paris, Desclée, 1955), p. 261.

37. RV X, 10, 3.

38. Cf. J. Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts (Amsterdam, Oriental Press, 1967), Vol. V, p. 290ⁿ.

39. According to the translation of L. Renou, Hymnes spéculatifs du Véda (Paris, Gallimard, 1956), p. 55 sq., Yama resists and there is no 'fall'. According to L. von Schröder, Mysterium und Mimus in Rig Veda (Leipzig, H. Haessel, 1908), pp. 275-303, incest was perpetrated, and he supports this thesis with parallel myths in the Rg Veda itself. 'Das Dialoglied von Yama and Yamī ist nur der erste Akt eines grösseren kultlichen Dramas, das nach Analogie des Agastyadramas auf einen Generationsritus, resp. phallischen Fruchtbarkeitszauber in grossem Stil hinauslief. Das erste Menschenpaar vereignigte sich zu einer rituellen Zeugung, und unermessliche Fruchtbarkeit musste die Folge sein' (291). A. A. Macdonell, The Vedic Mythology (Varanasi, Indological Book House, 1963), p. 173 (reprint of the original, Strassburg, Trübner, 1897), also favors this interpretation.

40. RV X, 10, 12.

41. RV X, 14, 1 sq., etc.

42. Night, desired in the dialogue of Yama and Yamī in order to commit incest (RV X, 10, 9) and likewise in MaitS I, 5, 1 sq. (which presents a somewhat 'romanticized' version of the myth) is considered the creation of the ^Gods.

43. It is worthwhile to quote the entire passage in the fine translation of Schröder (Leipzig, 1881-86, p. 81 and Mysterium, op. cit., pp. 277-278):

'Yama starb. Die Götter suchten der Yamī den Yama auszureden. Wenn sie sie fragten, dann sagte sie: "Heute ist er gestorben!"-- Da sprachen sie: "Fühwahr, so vergisst diese ihn nicht. Lasst uns die Nacht schaffen!" Es gab nämlich damals nur den Tag, (noch) nicht die Nacht. Die Götter schufen die Nacht. Da wurde ein morgender Tag. Darauf vergass sie ihn. Darum sagt man: Tag und Nacht lassen das Lied vergessen!' MaitS I, 5, 12. →

43. Cf. the same idea in the christian liturgy:

Aeterne rerum Conditor,
Noctem diemque qui regis,
Et temporum das tempora,
Ut alleves fastidium.

Hym. dom. ad Laudes (Brev. Rom.)

44. For example, it is well known that for C. G. Jung, the archetype of incest represents the desire to unite with our true, hidden self, our authentic essence, and provides the path toward 'individuation'. The fact that Yama and Yamī are twins (RV X, 10, 5) might lead one to consider Yamī as the true soul of man, his alter ego. Cf. vgr. from last century, H. E. Meyer, Indo-germanische Mythen, I, pp. 299, 232 (apud Macdonnell, op. cit., p. 173).
45. No need to recall that all christian scholasticism without exception maintains there is an imitation of God in any action. 'Vestigium trinitatis invenitur in unaquaque creatura...', says Augustine, De Trinitate, VI, 10, fin., and D. Thomas specifies: 'in creaturis omnibus ... per modum vestigii', Sum. Theol. I, q. 45, a. 7; 'assimilare ad Deum est ultimus omnium finis', C. Gentes, III, 20, in in. Cf. for a more systematic study, R. Panikkar, El Concepto de naturaleza (Madrid, C. S. I. C., 1972, 2nd edition), pp. 238 sq.
46. ἡ πίστις ἐστὶ λόγος: Rom. 10:17.
47. Cf. R. Panikkar, 'Una meditazione teologica sulle tecniche di comunicazione', Studi cattolici, VII, 37 (1963), pp. 3-7. Cf. also ἐπίκλησις as well as λόγος.
48. Cf. vgr. M. Eliade, Mythes, rêves et mystères (Paris, Gallimard, 1957) (English translation: Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, New York, Harper and Row, 1960).
49. Cf. Gen. 2:17.
50. Cf. Gen. 3:22-24.

51. The old thesis that original sin marks 'the emergence of man into full consciousness' has been brilliantly revived in our time by the late R. C. Zaehner, inspired by Teilhard de Chardin. Cf. The Convergent Spirit (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 44 sq. (p. 61 for the quotation).
52. The two, opposite reactions to the encyclical of Paul VI, Humanae vitae (June 29, 1968) provide a striking example of this. Those who moralize the myth will discuss the right of the Pope to ^{such pronouncements} speak ~~authoritatively~~; those who demythicize morals will focus on the validity of the arguments (used in the encyclical).
53. Gen. 25:29 sq.
54. It is rather significant that this word simultaneously expresses the ultimate structure of a process or a reality and the command of authority.
55. Kritik der reinen Vernunft, prologue to the second edition (1787) ^{edition} (Leipzig, Reclam, 1924), p. 32.
56. Gen. 3:7.
57. Gen. 3:10-11.
58. Cf. J. Daniélou, Théologie de judeo-christianisme (Tournai, Desclée, 1958), p. 413 sq. Cf. also, of course, the platonic myth of the two horses (Phaedrus, 246b sq.), and the similar parable in KathU III, 3 sq.
59. Cf. the abundant documentation in J. Daniélou, loc. cit.
60. Gen. 3:1: 'Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?'"' (NEB)
61. Cf. the well known verse:
 'Wer Wissenschaft und Kunst besitzt, hat auch Religion,
 wer jene beiden nicht besitzt, der habe Religion.'
 Goethe, Zahmen Xenien, 9.
62. Cf. vgr. TU II, 9, 2 quoted in note 81.

63. Cf. MundU III, 2, 9: 'He, verily, who knows the Supreme Brahman becomes Brahma himself' (sa yo ha vai tat paramam brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati).
64. Rom. 2:14.
65. Gen. 3:4-5.
66. Gen. 3:17.
67. Cf. R. Panikkar, 'Die Ummythologisierung in der Begegnung des Christentums mit dem Hinduismus', Kerygma und Mythos (Hamburg, Reich, 1963), Vol. VI, No. 1, pp. 211-35.
68. Cf. R. Panikkar, 'La demitologizzazione nell'incontro tra Cristianesimo e Induismo', in Il problema della demitizzazione cited above (note 1).
69. Cf. R. Panikkar, Patriotismo y Cristiandad (Madrid, Rialp, 1961), p. 37 sq.
70. Cf. the remarkable passage of Teilhard de Chardin: 'Les éléments du Monde refusant de servir le Monde parce qu'ils pensent. Plus exactement encore, le Monde se refusant lui-même en s'apercevant par Réflexion. Voilà le danger. Ce qui, sous l'inquiétude moderne, se forme et grossit, ce n'est rien moins qu'une crise organique de l'Évolution.' Le phénomène humain (Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1955), p. 255.
71. The kali yuga, the fourth age of the world which supposedly began in 3102 B.C. and lasts 432,000 years, is the epoch of the cosmic decline and collapse.
72. Strictly speaking, a kalpa is only one day of Brahma, lasting 4,300 million years.
73. Lk. 6:4 add. according to code D (Cambridge).
74. Lk. 6:5.
75. Rom. 14:22: μακάριος ὁ μὴ κρίνων ἑαυτὸν ἐν ᾧ δοκιμάζει.
- A difficult text to translate, which the Vulgate renders: 'Beatus qui non iudicat semetipsum in eo quod probat'; the Bible de Jérusalem: 'Heureux qui ne se

juge pas coupable au moment même où il se décide'; the RSV: 'Happy is he who has no reason to judge himself for what he approves', and the NEB: 'Happy is the man who can make his decision with a clear conscience!'

76. We must remember that the context is that of an extremely serious problem, especially for the first christians: participation in the rites and culture of the surrounding religions. In the same verse, moreover, St. Paul adds: 'The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God.'

77. Even if, as most exegetes think, the text is not authentic, it is ancient. It could well express--in an ambivalent way perhaps--a profound lesson in the freedom of the spirit, a lesson which moreover follows from the whole attitude of Jesus (cf. etiam 2 Cor. 3:17).

78. Cf. 1 Sam. 21:1-6; Lev. 24:9.

79. Cf. Jas. 4:17: 'Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.' (OAB)

80. Lk. 23:34. Curiously enough this text is omitted in a good number of manuscripts: $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma \gamma\alpha\rho \omicron\iota\delta\alpha\sigma\iota\nu \tau\acute{\iota} \pi\rho\omicron\iota\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu.$

81. Cf. the Upaniṣadic text:

'Whence words recoil, together with the mind,
unable to reach it--whoso knows
that bliss of Brahma has no fear.'

TU II, 4, 1 (cf. etiam II, 9, 1)

Or again: 'He is not tormented at the thought: Have I done good, have I committed a sin? for he ^{who} knows is himself released from both. This is the teaching (ity upaniṣat).' TU II, 9, 2.

82. Jn. 16:2, 3.

83. Jn. 8:32: 'Et veritas liberavit vos.'

84. Cf. Jn. 17:3.

85. Cf. Rom. 3:22 sq.; etc.

86. The entire Gospel relates this 'super-understanding' of faith. An example at random: Having heard the parable of the pharisee and the publican (Lk. 18:9-14), what must be do? It destroys our innocence. If we abase ourselves in order to be raised, if we sit in the last place in order that our host might request us to go up higher (Lk. 14:10); if, knowing the last shall be first and the first last (Mt. 20:16; Lk. 13:30; Mk. 10:31), we consciously choose to be last, surely we will remain there, or at the very least we will not be justified. If one considers oneself first, if one believes himself justified, then the parable applies; likewise if one recognizes he is a sinner and deserves the lowest place. Reflexive consciousness hinders a moral existence. We must know, but unhappy the one who knows he knows. Cf. the same thrust in the hindu, buddhist, confucian and taoist traditions. Simplicity of heart, purity of eye (Mt. 6:22-23; Lk. 11:34-35) is an important, traditional christian theme related to this topic. It is rather characteristic that the quoted ἀπλοῦς translated in the Vulgate by 'simplex', in the modern translations is rendered (and indeed, not incorrectly) by 'sain' (Bible de Jerusalem), 'sano' (Nardoni), 'puro' (Istituto Biblico), 'sound' (NEB, OAB), 'clear' (Knox), 'gesund' (Tillmann, Rösch), etc. Cf. ἀπλότης as opposed to διψυχία in the early christian tradition (cf. C. Edlund, Das Auge der Einfalt, Upsala, 1952), as synonymous with τέλειος (cf. J. Daniélou, op. cit., p. 418 sq.), and related to ἀκακία, innocence. Cf. the prayer without reflexive repetition, the προσευχή μονολόγιστος of the Patristics (vgr. I. Hausherr, Noms du Christ et voies d'oraison, Roma, Pont. Inst. Orient. Stud., 1960, p. 250 sq.), etc. Cf. also: 'Lucifer, because he looked upon himself and saw his own beauty, leapt into pride and from being an angel he became a

loathsome devil. Of Eve, ... the very beginning of her sin, its entry was through her eyes. And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, ...

[Gen. 3:6]. The Ancrene Riwe, II (p. 22-23)

87. Mt. 5:3.

88. Mt. 25:37-39.

89. Cf. Mt. 6:3.

90. Cf. Mt. 17:20; 21:21; etc.

91. Mt. 10:52; Lk. 17:19; 18:42; etc.

92. Cf. Mk. 8:35; Lk. 9:24; 17:33; Mt. 10:39; 16:25; Jn. 12:25; etc.

93. Cf. Ps. 40:3: 'He [the Lord] put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.' Also Ps. 144:9; 149:1; Is. 42:10; Rev. 5:9; 14:3; etc.

94. Cf. Rom. 8:15, 26-27; Gal. 4:6; etc.

95. A scriptural text of hinduism which, in order to remain faithful to its message can only be lost, says 'the ātman is silence', Śaṅkara, Bhāṣya III,

2, 17 as a counterpart Ignatius Antioqu., Epist. ad Magn., VIII, 2 (P. G.,

5, 669): ὁ θεὸς ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ λόγος ~~ἡσυχία~~ ἀπὸ διχῆς προελθὼν... 118,1

118,1 → (~~'qui est Verbum eius aeternum non post silentium procedens...')~~ God is Silence; his Word, his Son, his Expression and Image is no longer He but the Logos. 'Tibi silet laus', translates St. Hieronymous, Ps. 65:2 (P. L., 28 1174) ('date gloriam laudi eius', silence is truly the creature's praise of the Creator, Ps. 66:2 (P. L., 28, 1175)). Augustine writes: 'Sileant ... et ipsa sibi anima sileat', Confes., IX, 10, 25. Mary, 'religiosum silentium Virginis ... circa secretum Dei' (Rupert., In Cantica, I (P. L., 168, 844)), is the 'Verbi silentis muta mater', Santeuil, Hymne pour la Purification, apud H. de Lubac, Méditation sur l'Eglise (Paris, Aubier, 3rd edition, 1954), p. 298.

96. Cf. several references which demand careful elaboration: Is. 45:15; Wis. 18:14-15;

("qui est Verbum eius a silentio progrediens...") (The reading
 ἀἰώνιον, i.e. "...Verbum eius aeternum non post
 silentium...", seems to be a mistake. Cf. M.J. Rouët de Journal,
Enchiridion patristicum (Barcinone,.... Herder, 1969, 45) and
 G.W.H. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon, (Oxford, Clarendon, 1961)
 sub αἰών both opt for the version I have given.

To 118

- Col. 3:3; BG II, 25 ('Unmanifest, unthinkable, immutable is it called...' Zaehner trans.); XIII, 12; BU II, 3, 6; KenU I, 4; -TU II, 9; MandU 7; etc.
97. Evagrius Ponticus, III Centuria, 88. Cf. KenU II, 2-3.
98. Cf. practically the entire Epistle to the Romans.
99. The christian commandment is not to live secundum rationem or secundum naturam, but secundum te. Cf. the prayer of the Eighth Sunday after Pentecost: '...ut qui sine te esse non possumus, secundum te vivere valeamus'.
100. Rom. 14:23.

###

IV. The Myth of Prajāpati

The Originating Fault or Creative Immolation

The Universal Fact of Pain

There is in the world an incontestable element of suffering. There is also will, we can more or less affect indifference to it, but we can scarcely deny it exists.

Let us straightaway state the traditional setting: from evil and suffering. (1) Pain seems to be always the consequence of evil and, at the same time, the first step in overcoming it. An evil without pain will remain hopelessly ever evil. Pain (Pain) is the ransom destined to reduce a sinner. Starting from here it comes to mean expiation, reparation or vengeance on the one hand, punishment, chastisement, penalty on the other. (2)

The word 'pain' originally presented this significant ambivalence: (1) on the one side it meant suffering, sorrow, and from the other, chastisement, punishment. (3) In English this second sense has prevailed over the years, but its roots are clear. In Sanskrit, for example, *duḥkha* means sorrow, distress, and also punish, make suffer, etc.

The bond which unites these two meanings is the notion that by the infliction of pain (punishment), one eliminates the pain (suffering) one has desired. That is, in inflicting the penalty, one effaces the pain. The (accepted) penalty effaces the (desired) pain, because pain itself is a penalty.

Ἄρκετόν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἡ κακία αὐτῆς

Sufficient for the day is the
evil thereof.

Mt. 6:34

1 The Problem

1.1 The Universal Fact of Pain

There is in the world an incontestable element of suffering. There is also evil; we can more or less affect indifference to it, call it real or imaginary, but we can scarcely deny it exists.

Let us straightaway state the traditional setting: the problem of pain stems from evil and suffering. (1) Pain seems to be always the consequence of evil and, at the same time, the first step in overcoming it. An evil without pain would remain hopelessly ever evil. Pain ($\Pi\omicron\nu\iota\nu\acute{\eta}$, poena) is the ransom destined to redeem a murder. Starting from here it comes to mean: compensation, reparation and vengeance on the one hand, punishment, chastisement, penalty on the other. (2)

The word 'pain' originally presented this significant ambivalence; from the one side it meant suffering, sorrow, and from the other, chastisement, punishment. (3) In English this second sense has somewhat eroded over the years, but its roots are clear. In Sanskrit, for example, siksanam means educate, form, elevate and also punish, make suffer, whip.

The bond which unites these two meanings is the notion that by the inflicted pain (punishment), one eliminates the pain (suffering) one has merited, that by accepting the penalty, one effaces the pain. The (accepted) penalty effaces the (merited) pain, because pain itself is a penalty.

Vicarious atonement, traditional penal laws, pardon obtained by repentance, perfection attained by asceticism, the suffering of Christ, etc., offer us some examples of the same problematic (although of very different value): pain is redemptive; suffering has a positive, purifying function in human life. (4)

Since there is no pain without suffering, the implication is grave: suffering seems to be the ultimate structure of the world, because it is through this suffering that the afflicted order seems to be restored.

This is the myth of pain. We suffer and we find in this suffering a value which transcends anything that a physical and psychic causality might propose. Each sin deserves its pain; the bond between sin and punishment is moral as well as ontological. The sin carries with it remorse, and at the same time a penalty, since an objective order of human or divine law has been broken. Such is the traditional position in most cultures and religions. (5) The traditional justification of hell, for example, is rooted in a similar rationale: a 'grievous' or 'mortal' sin merits an 'eternal' punishment. It would be divine injustice not to punish such a sin with a pain of the same order.

The ultimate issue in this problematic is this: there seems to be a defect, a sin, a taint in the cosmic order, in creation. (6) There must be something cutting very deep into Man and the World if perfection, destiny, joy, plenitude, divinization (small matter what name we prefer) can be attained solely on a path of suffering, by a way of the cross. (7)

1.2 The Awareness of Pain as Pain

We live the myth of pain fully when we do not question the fragile double sense of the word 'pain', that is, when we consider as self-evident the fact that pain-suffering and pain-punishment go together, with the effect of restoring order. It is a universal belief that misfortune is a consequence of sin and thus, that pain-suffering is always pain-punishment and so, pain-purification. This equation

can still be found in western countries in the popular conscience, education, penal laws, etc. We punish a child like we punish a criminal, or like the ascetic punishes himself: to repair a disorder, to pay a debt, to purify or correct oneself, to be worthy of pardon, to reconquer or acquire interior liberty, etc. It all rests on the myth of pain. We speak of appeasing a violated justice in order that a just vengeance^{a)} may be obtained (we even speak of vindictive justice!). The guilty, we say, must pay their debt--but to whom? Further, we chastize them, so everyone affirms, in order to cure them, to correct them, restore them to new dignity in society, make them repudiate their affront to the established order, or so that their punishment might serve as example... A whole theology of redemption, of spiritual life and social order has been based on these presuppositions.

The essential question is not to know who has the right to inflict pain, but to understand why punishment exists at all. The first response, already a demythicized answer, speaks of the medicinal character of pain, (8) but clearly this is not satisfying. Experience alone shows, and psychology confirms, that pain has today largely lost its purifying value. Even if punishment still retained its medicinal character the question would not be resolved: one could yet ask why it is necessary to make someone suffer in order to purify him.

The problem looms large as soon as one begins to demythicize. The moment you ask why you must 'suffer' (for your neighbor, or due to a moral fault, or even without apparent reason) you no longer accept pain on its own; the purifying efficacy of pain shrinks in direct proportion to its demythicization. In short: pain without the myth loses its raison d'être and becomes intolerable. The ^{myth} ceases to be effective as soon as you question pain as a purifying process. Without 'faith', no salvation; that is to say that once you cease to believe in the purifying function of pain, it loses its saving function. (9)

Here we are facing a universal problem: what is the meaning of suffering?

Why do we suffer? The myth of the fall seeks only to explicate this cosmic scandal and at the same time safeguard the prestige of God. In the Indian tradition, the law of karma asserts the ^mnormality of suffering, since here pain is always 'consequence' and never 'original'; buddhism likewise begins with the central fact of sorrow; the 'original sin' of the Bible claims only to explicate suffering and evil without blasphemy.

Until now the myth of pain has presented diverse modalities and provoked different reactions, but we have always respected the myth insofar as it is myth. Regarding suffering, for example, we seek to eliminate it (buddhism) or deny it (hinduism) or explain it (judaism, islam) or transfigure it (christianity)... And we succeed to the extent that people believe the myth and live up to it. But now we demythologize even the myth of pain. What will come of this?

The majority of cosmogonic myths have, one way or another, tried to find a plausible answer to this anguishing human question. I do not wish to undertake such research here. I only want to present a myth of pain different from those current in cultures and religions which have grown up in the mediterranean world. This may bring to light an important consideration for contemporary theology: namely, that christian faith is not necessarily bound to ^{a particular} the religions ~~which it has until now enriched and more or less converted.~~ Christian faith is not a religion, but ^{stands at the basis} ~~the conversion and plenitude~~ of all religion. ^V A faith which claims to be universal must be able to inspire, enrich and convert religions other than those which until today have been the vehicle of that faith; it must also be able to ~~craft on other myths.~~ (19)

~~But~~ I do not want here to hinduize christianity or to christianize hinduism. We are concerned with a human problem, felt and expressed by almost every religious tradition. ~~Although using a hindu myth, I shall not do pure indology, nor have I any apologetic intention.~~ I am only convinced, in the first place, that this is

preeminently a human problem which cannot be monopolized by any religion or philosophy, and in the second place, that a mutual fecundation between hinduism and christianity in the depths of myth is not only possible but imperative in our kairos. It will not do merely to compare doctrines, we must also reconcile myths. I should add further that in going beyond the classical hindu interpretation, our hermeneutic is already a conscious attempt at symbiosis. But there is no need to burn our bridges and give as a synthesis what we offer only as a working hypothesis.

c) 1.3 The Christian Answer, Original Sin

The answer which passes for the christian response to the question of the origin of suffering, and which underlies the social order of the western world, says that in the beginning God created the world, that the creation was good, and more particularly that God created Man in his own image and likeness, (1) Later, by at least a sin of disobedience, the first Man lost original innocence, became a sinner, was cut off from intercourse with God and punished, he and the entire human race which springs from him. (2) This is the myth of the fall, the dogma of original sin. Man falls, not God. We shall return to this point. It is hardly necessary to recall that the myth of original sin is not originally christian. Yet the christian fact, the fact of the Cross, ^{is grafted into} ~~applies to~~ the myth of original sin.

The myth of original sin exhibits two weak points. One concerns the origin of evil, which remains unexplained: how can Man commit evil if he has been created 'good'? The other (our focus here) is the problem of a God who must yield to the exigencies of justice: Man has sinned and God must punish him. God can forgive Man's sin, but he cannot, apparently, spare Man's pain. The myth of pain therefore seems superior to God.

Theology's response is familiar: God can avoid inflicting pain but he does not want to, because pain is not malevolent but healing, medicinal. (3) Yet this

same theology recognizes that God could have 'invented' less bitter medicine. The myth of pain becomes the mystery of pain. The difficulty is patent: if God can pardon sin and spare the pain, and he does not do so, his bounty remains rather compromised.

2 The Myth of Prajāpati

The texts of hindu Scripture are of dazzling richness and extraordinary diversity; one can however discover a fundamental intuition regarding the cosmogonic myth. ^{But} (this root intuition cannot be properly expressed in words, because it does not translate into eidōs, into idea, except inadequately: 'Beyond' being and non-being 'there is' a this, a tad, the One, ekam, which 'stands' at the source of everything. (14) It is here that we find the myth of Prajāpati, the God par excellence, (15) the father of creatures, (16) of all who are born (jāta). (17) He is the one who has procreative energy. (18) In the celebrated hymn to Hiranya-garbhā, the 'golden germ' of Book X of the R̥g Veda, Prajāpati is hailed as creator of heaven and earth, of the waters and of all that lives, the one whose ordinance all the ^Gods recognize. (19) He is the father of the ^Gods, (20) the Unique One here from the beginning. (21) He is the first to sacrifice. (22)

In all that follows we call 'God' the Supreme Principle, brahman, Being considered as the Absolute, etc. These concepts doubtless have very different connotations, but since we cannot deal with everything at once, we call this Ultimate Reality God. For this study, it does not matter from which point of view we see it, or by what name we call it.

In the hymn mentioned, this Reality is designated by the interrogative pronoun kah, 'wh^o?' (23) God is the Who underlying everything, and towards whom everything directs itself: action, thought, being, etc.

To better understand this myth, we might divide it into three moments:

1) solitude, 2) sacrifice and 3) integration.

2.1 Solitude

In the beginning there was nothing, not even nothingness; there was absolute vacuity. (24) 'Neither being nor Non-being. There was not air nor yet sky beyond', (25) 'there was no death then, nor yet deathlessness. Of night or day there was not any sign. The One breathed without breath, by its own impulse. (26) Other than that was nothing else at all'. (27) 'Darkness was there, all wrapped around by darkness'. (28) Radical solitude is the primary symbol of the unity and transcendence of the Indescribable, its perfection as well as its simplicity, its original, primordial character. (29)

In a second moment, so to speak (clearly there can be no question of temporal or even ontological priority, which at this level would make no sense), 'that which was hidden by the Void, that One, emerging, stirring, through the power of Ardor, came to be'. (30) The non-being wanted to be and there it was, (31) Prajāpati. It said: 'That I may be' and there it was, the Self (ātman) in the shape of a person (purusavidhah). (32) The Self looks around and obviously can see nothing but itself. It thus becomes aware of itself, saying: 'I am' (so 'ham'). (33)

The One begins to be with itself and, discovering its own company, its shadow so to speak, breaks its total solitude. Solitude turns to isolation. The Self, conscious of this isolation, dreads. (34) Anxiety, the most pure anxiety of being, of being alone in the face of nothing, appears. It sees its own image and takes fright. (35) It has no joy in being alone, but is bored and disgusted. It is on the way to losing innocence. (36)

Then reason overcomes tedium: if there is nothing, there is nothing to fear, the Self thinks. (37) The irrationality of fear becomes plain. Self-reflection appears and innocence disappears. The Self, reflecting upon itself, loses its

simple solitude. Finding itself naked so to speak, (38) realizing it is alone, it desired a second. The longing for a second became unbearable. (39) It wanted to be many, it longed for precreation. It simply desired. (40)

Thus, still deep in that primordial night it begins to go out of itself. (41) 'The path is obscure'. (42) Prajāpati desired a second and so set out on the way of Sacrifice, of alienation, of the Cross.

6) 2.2 Sacrifice

Prajāpati desired a second. (43) He could have cried out, like the God of the mordvines: 'If I had a partner, I would make the world!' (44) But the God of hinduism has no primal matter from which to create the universe. (45) He has no alternative but to sacrifice himself; the dismembering of Prajāpati is the primordial sacrifice by which everything has been made. (46) Creation then is a sacrifice, (47) a giving of oneself, (48) a creative immolation. (49) But there is no one to whom to offer the sacrifice, no one to receive it: (50) Prajāpati must be at once the high-priest, (51) the sacrifice (victim), (52) the one who receives the sacrifice (53) and even its result. (54) He divides himself into as many parts as are necessary to complete the creation. From the sacrifice offered in this total fashion, (55) everything goes forth: strophes and melodies, horses and every animal, the four human castes. (56) His head formed the sky, his chest the atmosphere, his waist the ocean, his feet the earth, the moon is born of his scruples; from his glance is born the sun, from his mouth Indra and Agni, from his breath is born the wind, (57) and so all the rest. (58) Even evil was created by him: 'I have surely created evil, since, in creating them (the asuras, malevolent spirits), darkness as it were appeared.' (59)

What moved Prajāpati to create? Himself, for an act of God can have neither antecedent cause nor final motivation; Prajāpati is sufficient unto himself. If he decides to sacrifice himself it is neither for someone--who does not exist--nor

for something outside himself--which cannot exist either. (60) A single force leads Prajāpati to create: the desire for progeny, the need to multiply himself. (61) Here the texts speak of two mysterious factors which are like the immanent power of reality and the intimate force which animates Prajāpati: tapas and kāma.

Whether we speak of the personalist tradition which symbolizes in Prajāpati the origin of all, or of the non-person^{al} tradition for which the One comes forth from nothingness, from non-being, it is always through these two 'powers' that the creative process originates. It is tapas, primordial heat, ardor, initial fire, divine concentration, energy, the creative vitality which sets in motion the entire cosmos:

'Order (ṛta) and Truth (satya) are born of
incandescent (abhiddha) Heat (tapas).

From it is born Night.

From it the Ocean and its waves.' (62)

So, in the beginning, when other than the One there was nothing whatsoever, when darkness covered darkness like the divine vitality hidden by its own attributes (gunas), (63) the One wrapped in emptiness showed itself by the power of tapas. (64)

It is also through tapas, by concentrating his heat, his creative energy, that Prajāpati dismembers himself. (65)

But desire (kāma) was itself the original reaching out (desire), the first seed (retas) of Consciousness (manas). (66) And indeed, by searching themselves, the poets surely discover the bond of Being in non-Being. (67) It is thus that kāma, desire or love appears. This love or desire cannot be a desire for something that does not exist. It is concentration on itself and in a certain sense it is connected to tapas: it penetrates itself until it implodes and so dismembers itself.

Tapas and kāma go together. (68) Love is the ardor which gives the power to

create, the energy of tapas is actualized by the love which provokes it: "He desired: 'May I become many, may I engender.' He practiced tapas. Having practiced tapas, he created the whole world, such as it is." (69)

Here is the second moment, the immolation. In order for Being to be, it must immolate itself. Being is much more than a noun, it has the value of a verb, and a transitive verb at that. Even the divine being cannot live without giving itself, without loving, without sacrificing itself (ad intra as well as ad extra, a certain theology might add).

2.3 Integration

Prajāpati is dismembered, his body has given birth to all creatures. (70) He has sacrificed himself. But once the sacrifice is performed there is nothing left of him. The creation is such a self-immolation that after having created the world, Prajāpati lay exhausted, old; feeble in spirit; he felt "emptied" and he feared death. (71) We should not forget that Prajāpati was both mortal and immortal, (72) that although he was mortal he emitted immortals. (73) He can die and he fears death. The price of creation, of a true creation, is death. But only if he immolates himself totally can Prajāpati effectively create. When he had emitted the beings, when he was finished and in pieces...the breath went out from the midst of his body and, when the breath was gone, the ^Gods left too. (74) In a modern parlance not altogether foreign to that time: God is dead from having created, he has immolated himself so that his creature might be; the World is nothing else but God sacrificed, immolated. He says to Agni: 'remake me', (75) he cried out: 'Alas, my life!' The waters heard him; with the agnihotra they came to his aid, they brought him back his torso, (76) and the ^Gods carried his limbs back to him. As the consummation of the same sacrifice, Prajāpati is redeemed from death. He had been sacrifice^d and he lives. (77) He had been dismembered, but he remains the same, literally because the sacrifice has remade him. It is by

sacrifice that the ^G gods have existence and immortality. (78) It is by sacrifice that Prajāpati, benefiting from his own sacrifice, as it were, is rebuilt afresh. (79)

But the creatures, once born, flee from the Creator: emitted, they departed, turning away from him. (80) The creatures fear ^{their} creator, they fear being re-absorbed by him. But left to themselves, they are in total confusion: (81) they lacked concord and were devouring one another. Desolate, (82) Prajāpati decided to devour them. Knowing his intention, the creatures fled, terrified. He said to them: Come back to me; I will devour you in such a way that, once eaten, you will multiply yourselves in progeny. (83) He lifted a beacon for them; seeing the light, the creatures came back to him. (84)

It is here in the second moment, when creation has taken place, that the myth of incest comes in. (85) It tells us, not how the cosmos began, but how this same cosmos went on or up or back. The Indian myth of incest appears in two main forms: the incest of God, the father of creation, with his own daughter, often symbolized as Uṣas--the dawn, sky--(86) and the incest of Yama and Yamī, brother and sister, the primordial couple. (87) In this second case the need for incest is clear enough: it is required to perpetuate the human race. And yet the incest taboo is so strong that, in spite of Yamī's arguments, her brother Yama resists the temptation (according to the main texts (88)).

The meaning of the first sort of incest--between God and creature--is obvious: creation, once brought forth, tries to free itself from its creator, but left to itself it is lifeless and chaotic. (89) God must re-enter his creatures in order to give them life. (90) Having created that, he penetrated it. Having penetrated it, he became that which is and that which has been, ^{i.e.} that which is (the manifest)--sat--and that which is otherwise (the unmanifest)--tyat--^{or again} the refuge and the lack of it, the knowing and the unknowing, reality and unreality. Reality became all that exists. It is this we call reality. (91)

This first type of myth presents many variations. Let us simply refer to a few of the most characteristic passages since it is ^{not necessary here} impossible to give ^{an} exhaustive account, ~~for reasons of space and, in any case it is already widely known.~~

Prajāpati produces, generates, separates from himself a feminine counterpart. With her he copulates in order to create other beings. The creature recognizes her parentage in him, is ashamed and flees. She disguises herself as a cow, but he then becomes a bull and impregnates her; she successively takes on other female forms, and he the corresponding male forms. Thus the couples of the universe are produced. (92)

The most popular form of this myth survives in the Purānas, the incest of father and daughter. (93) For creation to continue to exist, it must be fecundated again and again by its Creator, and so Prajāpati pursues the goddess Usas or Dyaus, in order to possess her. ^{93/} Now this amounts to incest because everything is his creation, his offspring. The other ^G gods (his sons) cannot accept this behavior and decide to avenge their sister. (94) In spite of the reproach and contempt of the ^G gods, however, Prajāpati resolves to commit the incest, to descend again, (95) to render creation fertile and thereby incorporate it into his own life. (96)

Occasionally, because this version seems too crude, the incest is shifted from Prajāpati to his sons. (97) Such moral scruples are to be found not only among contemporary writers who try to explain the myth symbolically; they are present from the beginning. And yet the 'fact', i.e., the myth, is meticulously reported. This implies that for the ṛsis, the ancient seers, incest is more than just a shameful act. The human act is wrong, and even blasphemous, precisely because it imitates a specifically divine act which can be re-enacted only mystically, if at all, but not aped. Not only does the modern and the traditional mentality shrink from such behavior, but the ^G gods themselves share the same repulsion. We may say the reason lies in the fact that the ^G gods are only supra-anthropomorphic figures;

they are not really supreme and their moral code reflects our own. We could equally add that the myth speaks of a primordial natural fact, whereas the ^G gods belong to human culture. In any case, Prajāpati's action is unique and cannot be reduced to any general paradigm.

The texts to which I have briefly referred cover a wide range of fundamental topics. All of them speak of incest, but the purpose is not always the same. Limiting ourselves to Prajāpati, we find the following motifs:

(a) A certain type of anthropomorphic love. The Creator falls in love with his daughter and tries to seduce her; the ^G gods protest and try to save their sister. Rudra becomes the avenger and pierces Prajāpati with a dart. Afterwards the ^G gods cure their father (98) and subsequent tradition supplies a ritualistic explanation. (99)

(b) A desire to complete his own creation. The first creatures to issue from Prajāpati were lifeless. A second intervention is required so as to give life--divine life--to the world. Here incest stands for a kind of re-creation, or better said, it symbolizes the completion of the creative act.

(c) A redemptive will. Creation goes astray, all the creatures are dying of hunger. Prajāpati decides to save ^{them} ~~it~~. This is the typical scheme of redemption.

(d) The desire to let the creature participate in the divine fecundity, thereby giving creation its own procreative energy. The creature becomes a partner with God in continuing the world. By this the creature is not only 'saved', but also divinized. It shares a divine dynamism, not a static 'nature'.

The central thrust is clear: after the creation by dismemberment, the creature must in one way or another re-enter its creator, return to the point of departure; in short, it must be divinized. Divinization, however, is not an external activity, like throwing a rope of salvation for the world to catch and so be rescued.

It has to be a real reconstruction of the divine body, a total liberation from bondage, from creatureliness. For this, only an embrace between Creator and creature, their total reunion, will solve the problem. Nothing short of what is symbolized by the myth of incest will do. Let us not forget that for hinduism, as for many other religions, redemption is not merely an external act, ^{of} moral rescue, but an ontological action, a real regeneration, a new life, indeed a divine life. Alone, the creature is impotent. God must ^{re-}descend, consume it, unite himself with it, commit incest in order to divinize the creature, in order to bring it to the only end God can have: Himself.

The basic sense of this rich and ambivalent mythic complex seems to be the following: the ^{primordial} ~~generating~~ source of everything is even more original than being and non-being. Then, by dint of tapas and kāma, being and non-being arise. From the tension between the two (they are compared to two branches (100)), the fundamental principles appear: cosmic order, truth, the primordial elements and the ^klife. In short, the world. And yet this apparition is nothing but the dismembered body of the God who was invisibly enveloped in void, the unmanifest, the ineffable One anterior to being.

~~It is thus that the~~ ^{thus} creation ^{as} appeared ^{as} through the sacrifice of God, ^{through} the ontological degradation of the Supreme Principle, ^{which} ~~in order to~~ produces this intermediate state we call the cosmos, which is neither God, since it is ^{his} the issue, ^{since it is his own dismembered body.} ~~of his body, nor not-God, since such a world could not even be imagined.~~ (101)

But this intermediate state is neither stable nor consistent in itself, it is a constitutively transitory state, a true ex-sistence, an extra causas, beside itself, so to speak. Creation alone, precisely because it is a pascha, a simple passage, is unable to sustain itself and arrive at its appointed destiny. This ^{For} impotence, this radical weakness, is the original fault and the cause of sin. ~~But~~ sin is nothing other than the creature wanting to rely solely on itself and cut

its bond with God, precisely that link which makes the creature what it is by letting it ex-sist. God descends a 'second' time to remedy this impotence, to recover his creature by divinizing it, making it God with him, reintegrating it with its origin.

It is necessary to reassemble the scattered fragments, (102) to reconstruct the broken unity, to repair the originating fault. (103) This is the myth we shall interpret.

3 The Hermeneutic

Here we do not want to make a simple exegesis of this indian myth, nor of all the indian myths concerning the fall or creation by dismemberment or by sacrifice. Besides the myths already mentioned, there would be many other texts to study, like those of the struggle between Indra and the dragon Vrtra, (104) and indeed many other religions to consider as well, for these myths do not belong only to India. (105) From the babylonian Enūma-eliš to the myths of Australia, there is a whole mythic complex which concerns this same problematic and points to a similar solution. (106) What interests us here is a hermeneutic through which we may perhaps shed a little light on the problematic of pain in contemporary philosophical thought.

I shall try to remain faithful to the hindu tradition. If our exegesis goes beyond these limits it is, in the first place, because all tradition exists in order to be ^{handed over,} followed, that is, left behind, and in the second place because we see the problems expressed by these myths in a more universal horizon, which also embraces other cultures and religions.

Here I use the term fault and not sin, primarily because in the hindu myth one cannot properly speak of a sin, since this notion smacks of moralism, and here we are very far indeed from any moralizing.

Moreover, the word 'fault' better expresses the fact of the fall (from the latin fallere) and also the anthropological connotations of the myth without lapsing into ^a ~~the~~ purely voluntary realm of sin. When the christian tradition speaks of original sin, it underscores that it is not concerned with an exclusively moral conception of sin, but with a blemish, a wound in the creature which penetrates the natural order itself. (107)

a) 3.1 The Originating Fault

We have already noted that the myth of original sin, however it may be formulated, is a myth which makes Man responsible for his sin and for the ensuing evil. Man has broken the order established by God and he must suffer the consequences. This spares God responsibility for evil and sorrow. Evil is the consequence of Man's fall, and suffering the fruit of a human sin. (108) But this myth exhibits a weak spot to a metaphysically-minded culture such as that of India. It is not human solidarity that is problematic for indian thought, that is, the fact that a Man must bear and pay for the error and sin of another (a problem which stems from an individualism which perhaps did not exist even in mediaeval Europe). The difficulty for hinduism lies in the fact that the initiative for the sin comes from Man, which seems to contradict the universal rights and absolute power of God. How could Man oppose the will of God? Who is Man to set himself against God? In short, if sin, or anything for that matter, originates in Man--or even in the devil, in any case outside of God--this implies a dualism which is incompatible with the notion of God as the absolute and unique source of everything. Now most myths of the fall are dualistic: (109) the Bible cites the Serpent as the principle of evil prior to Man's sin; the companion desired by the God of the mordvines is in fact the devil. Christianity has seen this from the very beginning and has attempted to surmount the difficulty by the christo-centric vision of creation and by a christic conception of the 'real'; sin is only a

a felix culpa, an opportunity for the full unfolding of the Pantocrator, a moment in the divinization of the cosmos.

But hinduism cannot accept Man as the original source of anything. If there is an original sin, it must first of all be God's sin, and not Man's alone. (110) But in God there can be neither sin, nor imperfection, nor blemish. The notion of an original sin in God is contradictory. What is original cannot be sin. If there were an original sin in God it would not longer be sin, but something divine, because sin, by definition, is incompatible with the divine nature.

Faced with this impasse, the hindu myth takes a middle way: the evil existing in the world cannot issue from Man since this would make of him another--evil--God; however, neither can evil be rooted in God, for this would make God the principle of evil. There is no original sin, that is, a sin in God, a sin affecting God, but an originating fault, a fault of God, coming from God and giving birth to the world. In other words, there is a certain act of God which is not divine--not intratrinitarian, christians might say--an activity which separates from God, an action which 'produces' not-God, therefore a fault and a sin, in a certain sense: it is the creation, the dismembering of the body of God, the throwing 'outside' himself something which is not yet (God), or rather is no longer God. We could leave it at the frailty of all love. If God is love he must want to communicate it, i.e., himself. Finding no one to whom he might give himself, he fabricates, he creates the object of his ardor so that he might desire and realize his love. He goes out of himself, he falls in love, he commits the fault of creating the creature. In brief: we are God's fault.

Looking at it more closely, there is no real original sin according to the myth, but only a provisional originating fault which is on the way to being overcome. Once everything returns to the origin, that is, once the process is finished,

once the divine project is realized, the fault will cease to be. The sin is not in the originating, i.e., not in God; rather, the fault itself is originating, it gives rise to saṃsāra, time, the mortal and decrepit face of the cosmic 'schema'. (111) The fault is provisional. It is real only in time, for those who mistake time for reality, that is, for those who want to ^{possess} ~~stop~~ time, who fossilize it and do not let it flow, for those who stop the flux of ex-sistence, the tensional integrity of the creature. Sin is temporality taken for substance. Existence would indeed be ~~error~~ ^{fault} and even sin if it were considered and accepted as simple sistence cut off from its source and destiny, ^{as a mere fall--into nothingness.} Culpable ignorance (avidyā) is to consider yourself something 'in itself', to substantialize your self, to vainly believe in a self. Creation is sin as a substantive, but not as a verb expressing divine creativity. The christian scholastics themselves speak of creation passive et active sumpta. (112)

The originating fault is that divine act 'unworthy' of God, namely 'creation', at least insofar as it is pure 'creature', for to create means to give existence to what is not-God. Creation is the act by which the world springs forth; or, more precisely, ~~the~~ creation is that part of the divine activity--the demi-act of God, so to speak--which gives to the world its initial existence in time in order that it might come to its transtemporal destination. God does not 'produce' exclusively temporal beings. Creation corresponds ^{only} to the temporal dimension of beings, but the beings 'produced' by God are in reality more than simple temporality. In christian language one could say that God 'begets' his Son in whom there will be the new heaven and the new earth, once everything is fully accomplished. (113) The same act by which the Father engenders his Son also 'creates' the world. (114)

The simple and total act of God then is not the creation, but the generation of the total ^{Body--or mystical body, as christians would put it, i.e.,} Christ. Using another parlance to express the same intuition, we

could say that in creating God simply continues to be God. Now just as here 'to be' is the ^{act by which God} ~~verb by which his act~~ expresses itself, so God is God by stepping beyond himself in pure 'growth', as it were, in an ever new and unedited explosion, without past and without future. The world is nothing else but this demi-reality on the way to becoming God, called to take part in this act of divine 'growth'. Of course, God does not become God, the world becomes him, for its ontological structure is tempiternal. (15)

So existence in itself is not sin, but it has its origin in a fault which corresponds morphologically to the ex nihilo of the occidental christian tradition. Strictly speaking, God does not 'sin', for he has not abandoned the creature mid-way. In reality, he does not 'create'; better said, he gives his life in a full and total way, although we ought to add that he communicates his life to that This is God's growth: not out of some previous 'food', but out of nothing. which, before this communication, is nothing at all. In time this atemporal action is lived, experienced and thought in fragmentary fashion by Man. Existence is an intermediary passage and only sin when it takes itself as definitive or consistent. Sin is stopping half-way, ^{it is} the conversio ad creaturam of the christian tradition.

In other words, in order to reach its goal, the creature must pass through a stage of sin, a ^{transitory} halting place--a trial--which is only as real as one takes it to be; for this reason avidyā, ignorance, is the first human sin, just as knowledge is the originating fault of the cosmos. Without divine knowledge the world would not be. This cosmic process is samsāra, i.e., temporal and inauthentic existence, only if Man has not discovered the whole of reality. There is therefore an originating fault at the origin of the world; without this there would be neither creature nor creator. If there is a creator, there must be a creative act, which, insofar as it produces not-God, constitutes a fault: the originating fault of creation. The creature itself is this fault. Salvation

lies in stepping beyond creatureliness.

b) 3.2 Creative Immolation

All that we have said has been seen and expressed mythically by most religions, the central myth being the sacrifice through which creation comes to be. By sacrifice the world is made and maintains itself in existence; (116) by sacrifice the entire cosmos returns to its source. But here I do not wish to develop a theory of sacrifice in the history of religions. For now, it suffices to continue our hermeneutic. (117)

The originating fault implies the sacrifice of God. The wages of sin is death. (118) God dies, so to speak, in creating his creature; there is no room for two at this level. There is no nihil ex quo God can make anything; God can only create ~~from~~ ^{by} himself. It follows then not that God creates ex Deo, but a Deo. (119) There is neither an other nor any possible help. (120) Only self-immolation remains. God sacrifices himself, he vanishes, he dismembers himself, he dies in order to re-enter, in order to find himself again in his creature. Creation is the altar upon which God sacrifices himself, it is God made victim. The divine love is 'mortified', greater love than this no one has: that he lay down his life for his friends, (121) and there is no greater love than God's. God gives himself to his creation and he dies therein.

Man has in his hands not only his 'private' destiny, but also and preeminently the divine destiny. He is in some ways the successor of God, the agent of divinity. He has not only the power to destroy himself and the ability to explode the material universe; the destiny of God himself is in Man's power. The difference between God and Man is not one of numerical order: they are not two. Neither are they one, for the unity is not yet realized, achieved... Inasmuch as Man is, God is not; insofar as God is, Man is not; the one means the absence of the other. The relation between the temporal and the eternal cannot be expressed in terms of being. Ultimately 'God' and 'Man', as well as 'Cosmos' are mere abstractions of an all-embracing cosmotheandric reality.

God has annihilated himself, emptied himself, (122) sacrificed himself, offered himself. Offered to whom? To nothing, since there was and is nothing 'outside' of God: he has, so to speak, fallen into nothing, into the void--in nihilum. So creation is not only ex nihilo, it is also in nihilum. (123) The result is Man and the ^Cosmos; a God plundered, offered up, sacrificed, dead and now on the way to resurrection by virtue of the divine dynamism itself, which has passed into the hands of Men, the priests of the universe, the intermediaries between the God who was and the God who will be. (124) Of course, for a substantialist notion of God as an immutable being, other and independent, this last phrase makes no sense, since for this God there is neither past nor future. Nevertheless ~~even here~~ the preceding affirmation is valid, ~~since it is true~~ precisely for Man who finds himself as if floating between a nothing which 'was' and a God who 'will be'. Creation is not an illusion; ^{on the contrary,} it is an act ~~improper~~ ^{neither} ~~and~~ ^{to God} ~~nor~~ ^{to Man}; in it the destiny of reality itself is played out. God's sacrifice is a true sacrifice, a real immolation, and because of this is itself creative. The world is born of a sacrifice and by another sacrifice it dies, that is to say it is reborn into true life, it returns home to God. The cosmic sacrifice which remakes what had been made in the creative act in illo tempore (125) is accomplished in time and space. Creation is illusion, pure unreality, only when it cuts itself off from its source and considers itself crystallized on its own, self-sustaining, 'in-itself'.

In fact, the process is ^ecomplementary and reciprocal: God constantly dismembers himself and is constantly remade. The cosmic process is not simply historical, not just a Man-making process, it is also a theopoetic process, it remakes God; It is not exclusively temporal, but tempiternal. Man is not a sort of perishable and despicable worm, a simple dust mote destined to lose itself in the sidereal spaces. Man is a divine 'spark', a moment in the 'recreation'

^{restoration)}
 (of God, an element of the divine sacrifice which inverts the originating fall.

God, from his side, is not a sort of detached being without a care in the world, outside of human life and disentangled from human destiny: he is the God of Man, his divine principle. Thus he infinitely surpasses the empirical Man, but is not another 'thing', an 'other'. Even as original sin implies an originating fault, so the creature requires the creator. The reality is neither creature nor creator, taken separately, but the tension of this very radical relativity.

In other words: the whole process of Man, of history and of the universe is not simply a creatural affair, but belongs to the creation itself: it is the second act in the drama of creation, and the inverse complement of the first divine act.

This means that ^{the} salvation or failure of Man is much more a divine problem and responsibility than it is human. Suffering is above all God's suffering, sin is also his sin, the solidarity between Man and God is total. It is neither an 'other' God who is responsible for human grief, nor an 'other' Man who must bear the burden of an original sin; there are the two embarked on the adventure of existence, in the audacity of creation, on the marvelous path leading through virgin snow to the construction of the cosmotheandric body of reality. (126)

The pati divina of helleno-christian mysticism ought here to be understood not only as Man 'suffering' the weight of God, but also ^{as} the burden of human pain borne by God. (127)

3.3 Ontic Redemption

Accusing the West of dualism and the East of pantheism will lead us nowhere. We miss the ^{power} gravity of the myth of the fall ^{if} we think that the West is necessarily dualistic because it attributes an original activity to Man, be it sin or the ^{capacity} power to sin. We also skirt the depth of the myth of Prajāpati if we make a materialist hermeneutic of his sacrifice and give a pantheistic sense to the dismembering of God.

The vision we have attempted to sketch would leap over this dichotomy: there can be an original sin because it is not Man alone who commits it, God is also involved; there can be an originating fault because it is not the divine essence which perpetrates it.

In other words, what we call creation is only a first moment in the great cosmotheandric drama of reality: to the sacrifice of God, the sacrifice of Man corresponds; to the creation, his divinization. (128) Redemption is not a kind of historical accident in the cosmotheandric adventure, it is not conditioned solely by human affairs, it belongs to the very economy of reality, it is the bridge ^{which} unites the sacrifice of God to that of Man, the road leading to the other shore. It is the way in which God 'lives', unfolds himself, 'creates', loves. The redemption of being is a life-or-death question for all existence. The creature is only a quasi medium inter Deum et nihil. (129). If it does not achieve its plenitude, it falls into vacuity. Redemption is the sacrifice of the creature. (130) Being cannot reach its limit except by a redemptive immolation which completes and gives meaning to the creative immolation. (131)

But we must now return to the myth of pain.

Pain, then, does not represent simply purifying some sin. Its deeper sense would be to take part in the redemption of the cosmos. (131) No one has the right to inflict pain on others. This brahmanic India and the christian Middle Ages saw quite clearly. They inflicted pain only because they believed--rightly or wrongly--that they were acting in the name of God, that is, that they were sharing in the redemptive pain of the cosmos. A deeper reading of the same myth leads us to say that no one has the right to inflict pain, not even God. The reason is simple: If God punishes it is either because there is a justice superior to him which he must obey, and in this case he would not be Supreme; or God punishes because he freely wills it, although he could achieve the same results without

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making his creatures suffer. (132) One can scarcely see how such a God could be good and benevolent toward Men. Because of this, religions have attempted to convince us that pain either is not an evil, or that Man alone is at the root of it.

Only a myth which does not separate God from the world can justify pain. An independent God, having nothing to do with Men, does not exist. Neither Man nor the cosmos are self-sustaining entities; they are both grounded in God. The myth of pain addresses itself to the level where God and Man commune: the cosmotheandric mystery of reality. (133)

The myth of Prajāpati does not speak to us of sin or pain. It exposes the double dynamism of sacrifice: the creative immolation and the redemptive reconstruction. Pain is the creature's resistance to letting itself con-vert, it is the changing of direction which paves the way to what it is not yet.

After all, what must be redeemed is creatureliness itself, and not merely a moral evil; what must be burned away in the sacrifice is contingency itself, for all that can, in one way or another, cease to be, is fuel for the sacrificial fires.

Redemption is ontic. Pain is the smoke produced by whatever was still too green for the sacrifice.

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Notes

1. It is often remarked that ^{κακία} (as understood in Mt. 6:34 (the citation which opens this essay), is unique in the New Testament, but we have not given sufficient attention to the problematic of this 'evil' each day carries with it. Evidently this 'pain' has nothing to do with 'moral' evil nor with a pessimistic or dualistic vision of reality. It is enough to recall the proverb popular in several languages: 'Sufficient unto the day is its own task.' Should we understand this to mean that evil is not at the beginning of the world (original sin), but given with every day?
2. ~~Culture~~ 'Culture not only provides the vehicle for expressing pain and the grammar to make of it a challenge, but it also supplies the myth which interprets pain as a God-willed necessity, as a punishment, as vengeance, as redemption, or even as a mystery.' I. Illich, 'The Killing of Pain', Hygenic Nemesis (CIDOC Cuaderno No. 86, Cuernavaca, Mexico), 1974, p. 40.
3. The greek ^{τιμίω} properly means: to repair, to repay with good or evil. In addition to reward, it (means also) punishment. The latin poena also preserves this sense of penalty in juridical terms. Later the same word will pass into most of the romance languages with the sense of suffering. In sanskrit 'pain' might be translated textually by danda: staff, rod (cf. the greek δένδρον tree); also by pīdā which means primarily suffering, pain and later takes on the sense of torture, correction (cf. pīdāgrha: torture chamber, reformatory). Significantly, the verb pīd was originally used to indicate the action of pressing Soma. So the action of sacrifice would then produce suffering. Sanskrit also uses vedanā to express suffering, pain, torture and also means perception, sensation.
4. 'Souffrir réjouit mes serviteurs, leur souffrance est de ne pas souffrir', St. Catherine of Siena could hear (Dialogues, tr. Hurtaud, ed. Lethielleux, I:289). 'Je ne pensais pas alors qu'il fallait beaucoup souffrir pour arriver à la saintété', adds St. Thérèse of Jesus (Histoire d'une âme, Lisieux,

- 1944, p. 65). Cf. 'pati et contemni pro te' of St. John of the Cross and a good number of saints, and the definition of 'la perfetta letizia' of St. Francis of Assisi (Fioretti). One could also add many other such testimonies from the most diverse traditions.
5. Cf. vgr. D. Thom., Sum. Theol. I-II, q. 87, a. 1 sq.
 6. Since there is no adequate word to express what we wish to say, we will use 'creation', 'creature' and similar words in the most elementary sense of 'the production of beings', without necessarily implying the notion of creatio ex nihilo nor that of a 'personal' God. We prefer 'creation' as the generic term to 'emanation' used by St. Thomas Aquinas (Sum. Theol. I, q. 45). To convey the same notion, sanskrit uses sarj, 'emit' and sometimes also nir-mā, 'construct' used in the middle voice. Neither the active nor the passive voice suffices to express the act ^{by} (which the world proceeds from its source).
 7. Cf. a wellpath of material in Guilt or Pollution and Rites of Purification, Proceedings of the XI International Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (Claremont, 1965), Leiden, Brill, 1968, II.
 8. Cf. for example: 'And behold, they brought to him a paralytic lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic; "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven."' (Mt. 9:2) Cf. also: "'See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you.'" (Jn. 5:14). Or again: "'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'" (Jn. 9:2)
 9. 'Onnis poena est medicina, sed non semper respectu peccantis', says scholasticism. Cf. vgr. D. Thom., Sum. Theol. I-II, q. 87, a. 2 ad 1; a. 3 ad 2; II-II, q. 39, a. 2 ad 1; a. 4 ad 3; etc.
 10. ~~We make this remark only for those theologians who are apprehensive about the christian legitimacy of our effort, although our problematic would be situated on a metatheological level which we do not wish to characterize in such a concentrated fashion.~~

11. Cf. Gen. 1:27.
12. Cf. Gen. 3:14 sq. Cf. for similar myths, R. Pettazzoni, Miti e leggende (Torino, U. T. E. T., 1948-1959), 4 Vols.
13. 'Poena est bona simpliciter, et mala secundum quid', says a Thomist thesis. Cf. D. Thom., Sum. Theol. II-II, q. 19, a. 1, c.
14. Cf. RV X, 129, 2: 'The One breathed without breath, by its own impulse. Other than that was nothing else at all'; AV V, 8, 11: 'What moves, what flies, what stands quite still, what breathes, what breathes not, blinks the eye, this, concentrated into a single One, though multiple its forms, sustains the earth'; IsU 4: 'Unmoving, the One is swifter than the mind. No power can reach him as he speeds on before. Standing still, he outstrips those who run. From him life-power thrills through all things.'
15. This is essentially according to the tradition of the Brāhmanas. Cf. AV X, 1, 5: 'Prajāpati was here being one only in the beginning.' In other traditions--at times represented in the Brāhmanas themselves--Brahman takes the place of 'God'. Cf. SB XI, 2, 3, 1 which speaks of Brahman (Brahma vai idam agre āsīt tad devān asṛjata, 'In the beginning Brahma was this [universe]. He created ^Gods.') in the same words used in TB II, 2, 7, 1 for Prajāpati (Prajāpatih prajāḥ asṛjata, 'Prajapati created living beings.') (Muir translation).
16. Cf. Homer, Iliad, IV, 68 and Plato, Timaeus, 37c, where the Supreme God is called the Father of ^Gods and ^Men.
17. Cf. the entire Brāhmanic tradition. As an example: TB II, 3, 6, 1; GopB II, 3, 9; TMB XXI, 2, 1; XXIV, 11, 2; etc. where the same formula is repeated again and again: Prajāpatih prajā asṛjata. Cf. S. Lévi, La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brāhmanas (Paris, P. U. F., 1966), p. 25 sq.

18. Cf. AV XIX, 17, 9: 'may Prajāpati who possesses the procreative energy (prajananavant) ... protect us.'
19. RV X, 121, 1: 'In the beginning arose the Golden Germ: he was, as soon as born, the Lord of being, sustained of the earth and of this heaven ... He who bestows life-force and hardy vigor, whose ordinances even the ^G gods obey, whose shadow is immortal life--and death--.'
20. Cf. SB XI, 1, 6, 14: 'Now, these are the deities who were created out of Prajāpati,--Agni, Indra, Soma and Parameshthīn Prāpatya' (Eggeling translation); TS III, 3, 7, 1: Prajāpatir devāsūrān asṛjata; and also TB I, 4, 11; VIII, 1, 3, 4; TMB XVIII, 1, 1; etc.
21. Cf. SB II, 2, 4, 1: 'In the beginning, to be sure, the Lord of Creatures was One only.'
22. TB II, 1, 2, 1 sq.; MaitS I, 8, 1; SB II, 2, 4, 6; II, 4, 4, 1; VI, 2, 3, 1; etc.
23. Cf. the refrain of RV X, 121, 1-9: 'What God (kaḥ) shall we adore with our oblation?'; or again: 'Prajāpati, who is he?' (TMB VII, 8, 3; AB XII, 10, 1; TS I, 7, 6, 6; SB IV, 5, 6, 4). One legend tells us the origin of the name: 'Indra, having slain Vṛtra, having won all victories, said to Prajāpati, "Let me be what thou art; let me be great." Prajāpati replied, "Then who am I?" "Even that which thou hast said", ^{he} answered; then indeed did Prajāpati become Who by name...' (AB XII, 10, 1) (Keith translation). TB II, 2, 10, 1-2 gives a slightly different version: 'Prajāpati created Indra, the last born of the ^G gods, and sent him to rule over the ^G gods as their sovereign. The ^G gods said, "Who are you? We are better than you." Indra reported the ^G gods' words to Prajāpati. Now at this time Prajāpati had the splendor of the sun. He (Indra) said to him, "Give me this and I will be the ^G gods' sovereign." "And if I give it to you," he replied, "then who will I be?" "You will be what you

say." And Prajāpati was named Ka.' (Cf. S. Lévi, op. cit., p. 17)

24. Cf. the marvelous hymn addressed to skambha, the cosmic pillar, in AV X, 7.
Cf. Ygr. verse 7: 'The One on whom the Lord of Life leant for support when he propped up the world--Tell me of that Support--who may he be?'
25. RV X, 129, 1.
26. Svadhā (from sva + dhā), by his own power.
27. RV X, 129, 2.
28. RV X, 129, 3.
29. Cf. the expression of Tertullian: 'ante omnia enim deus erat solus', Adversus Praxean, 5, 1. Speaking of the intratrinitarian Logos, he adds: 'Tunc igitur etiam ipse sermo speciem et ornatum suum sumit, sonum et uocem cum dicit Deus: *dum ex deo procedit.*'
Fiat lux. Haec est nativitas' perfecta Sermonis, ibid. 7, 1.
30. RV X, 129, 3.
31. TB II, 2, 9, 1 (tad asad eva san mano 'kuruta syām iti). Cf. TU II, 7.
32. BU I, 4, 1.
33. ~~BU~~. Ibid.
34. Cf. BU I, 4, 2.
35. Cf. CU VIII, 7, 1 sq. (the teaching of Prajāpati on the ātman).
36. Cf. BU I, 4, 3: 'He found no joy'.
37. Cf. Gen. 3:7 sq.
38. Cf. BU I, 4, 2: 'He was afraid; so, even today, one who is all alone is afraid. He thought to himself: "Since nothing exists except me, of what am I afraid?" Thereupon his fear vanished, for of what should he have been afraid? It is of a second that fear arises.'
- ~~38. Cf. BU I, 4, 3: 'He found no joy'.~~
39. Id. ('He yearned for a second'.) Cf. also, for Prajāpati who desired progeny, SB VI, 1, 1, 8; TS VII, 1, 1, 4; TB II, 2, 9, 5; AB X, 1, 5; etc.
40. Cf. CU VI, 2, 3: 'It thought: "Would that I might be many! Would that I might

procreate!" (tad aikṣata bahu syām ^(prajāyeyeti) -).


41. Cf. RV X, 190, 1.
42. RV I, 164, 47. Cf. the commentary in V. S. Agrawala, Vision in Long Darkness (Varanasi, Bhargava Bhushan Press, 1963), p. 184 sq. (cf. note 6 of chapter III).
43. Cf. BU I, 4, 3; and TMB VI, 5, 1 (Prajāpatir akāmayata bahu syām prajāyeyeti); etc. (Cf. note 25 of chapter III)
44. Cf. U. Harva, Die religiöse Vorstellungen der Mordwinen (Helsinki, 1954), p. 154 (apud M. Eliade, 'Structure et fonction du mythe cosmogonique', in the collective work, La naissance du monde (Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1959), p. 489).
45. It must be emphasized that here christian theology, despite its disclaimers, relies heavily on a hellenic idea. The ex nihilo makes no sense divorced from a polemic against the notion of a δημιουργός who makes the world, shapes primary matter, converts chaos into cosmos. We know well enough that the word δημιουργός --so popular in greek literature and gnostic terminology--is never used in the Septuagint to designate the Creator. In the New Testament it appears only in Heb. 11:10.
46. TS VII, 1, 1, 4 sq.: 'He meted out the Trivṛt from his mouth. ... From the breast and arms he meted out the Pañcadaśa Stoma. ... From the middle he meted out the Saptadaśa Stoma. ...' (Keith translation); etc.
47. Cf. RV X, 90.
48. Cf. the sanskrit sva-dhā and its sacrificial sense.
49. Cf. the sentence of Plato: Τίττειν ἐπιθυμεῖ ἡμῶν ἡ φύσις (our nature desires to procreate), Symposium, 206c.
50. This is not contradictory: the gift has value and consistency in itself. Cf. G. Van Der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation (New York, Harper, 1963), p. 13, 50, etc.
51. Cf. AB VII, 8, 2; XXXIV, 1, 1; TB II, 1, 2, 1 sq.; SB II, 2, 4, 6; etc.

52. Cf. TMB VII, 2, 1: 'Prajāpati gave his^very self to the ^Gods in the form of a sacrifice' (Prajāpatir devēbhya ātmānam yajñam kṛtvā prāyacchat); cf. also SB XI, 1, 8, 2 sq.; etc.; TMB VII, 2, 1; etc.
53. Cf. SB X, 2, 2, 1: 'For up to then there ex^sisted no other that was worthy of sacrifice.'
54. Cf. RV X, 90; cf. also SB XI, 1, 8, 5: 'And when (on the following day) he performs the sacrifice, then he redeems himself by sacrifice from the ^Gods, even as Prajāpati thereby redeemed himself... .' (Eggeling translation).
55. Cf. RV X, 90, 8.
56. Cf. id. 9 sq.
57. RV X, 90, 13.
58. Cf. SB XI, 1, 6, 1 sq.
59. SB XI, 1, 6, 9. Cf. also the interesting Biblical parallels: Is. 45:7: 'I am the Lord, and there is no other. ... I make weal and create woe. I am the Lord, who does all these things'; again Is. 41:23; Am. 3:6; Lam. 3:38; Mic. 1:12; Zeph. 1:12; etc.
60. Cf. Pro^v. 16:4: 'universa propter semetipsum operatus est Dominus'; and the role of this text in christian scholastic theology. Cf. v.g. D. Thom. Contra Gentes III, 17; IV, 34.
61. SB VI, 1, 1, 8 (Prajāpatir akāmayata bhūyānt syām prajāyeyeti).
62. RV X, 190, 1.
63. Cf. SU I, 3: '[Sages] well-practised (yoga) in meditation have beheld God's native (ātma-) power deep-hidden by his attributes (guna).' (Zaehner translation)
64. Cf. RV X, 129, 2-3.
65. Cf. TB II, 2, 9, 1 sq.: 'That became fervent (or practised rigorous abstraction, atapyata). From that fervour (or abstraction) smoke was produced. That became again fervent. From that fervour fire was produced...' (Muir translation); etc.

66. RV X, 129, 4.
67. ~~RV~~ Ibid.
68. Cf. SB VI, 1, 1, 1.
69. TU II, 6.
70. Cf. AV VII, 80, 3: 'No one but thou, Prajāpati, none beside thee, pervading, gave to all these ^{forms} (their being.' (Griffith translation) Cf. the translation of L. Silburn, Instant et Cause. Le discontinu dans la pensée philosophique de l'Inde (Paris, Vrinn, 1955), p. 51.
71. TB I, 2, 6, 1. Cf. also TMB XXV, 17, 3 sq. and SB III, 9, 1, 1 sq.; 'Now Prajāpati (the lord of creatures), having created living beings, felt himself as it were exhausted [rīricānah, lit. 'emptied']. The creatures did not abide with him for his joy and food. He thought within him, "I have exhausted myself, and the object for which I have created has not been accomplished: my creatures have turned away from me, the creatures have not abode with me for my joy and food.'" (Eggeling translation). And again SB X, 4, 2, 2: 'Having created all things that exist, he felt like one emptied out, and was afraid of death.'
72. Cf. SB X, 1, 3, 2: 'Now, one half of that Prajāpati was mortal, and the other half was immortal: with that part of him which was mortal he was afraid of death.' (Eggeling translation) (Cf. Mt. 26:36 sq.)
73. BU I, 4, 6.
74. SB VI, 1, 2, 12.
75. SB VI, 1, 2, 13.
76. TB II, 3, 6, 1.
77. Cf. Rev. 5:6 and 12 which speak of 'agnus stantem tanquam occisum'.
78. Cf. SB VIII, 6, 1, 10; TS VI, 3, 4, 7.
79. SB II, 4, 4, 1 sq.

80. TMB XXI, 2, 1.
81. Cf. TB II, 2, 7, 1.
82. TMB XXIV, 11, 2.
83. TMB XXI, 2, 1.
84. TB I, 1, 5, 4.
85. The problem of incest is well known in the field of anthropology, and there is a rich and complex literature on the subject. For a psychological discussion, cf. E. Neumann, Ursprungsgeschichte des Bewusstseins (Zürich, Rascher, 1949; english translation: The Origins and History of Consciousness. R. F. C. Hall (tr.), London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954). More recently, it has achieved prominence with the rise of structuralism. Cf. Y. Sémonis, Claude Lévi-Strauss ou la "passion de l'inceste" (Paris, Aubier-Montagne, 1968) for a good summary. Lévi-Strauss would go so far as to say: '...avant elle (la prohibition de l'incest), la Culture n'est pas encore donnée; avec elle, la Nature cesse d'exister, chez l'homme, comme un règne souverain. La prohibition de l'incest est le processus par lequel la Nature se dépasse elle-même....' Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté (Paris, P. U. F., 1949), p. 31.
86. Cf. for RV alone: I, 71, 5; I, 164, 33; III, 31, 1; VI, 17, 3 (ambiguous cf. however: X, 61, 7); VI, 12, 4.
87. Later on, Manu will be the first ^Mman and Yama the first ^Mman to die, and thereby the king of the dead in the nether world.
88. Cf. RV X, 10, 1 sq.; AV XVIII, 1, 8 sq. Tempting as it is, I also leave aside a proper consideration of the second type of myth, i.e., that of Yama and Yamī. For a Japanese version of this same myth of brother-sister incest, cf. the shinto story of Izanaki and Izanami. Cf. Y. Kojima, 'The Myth of the Marriage of Izanaki and Izanami', Religion East and West, XXXV/4, No. 171 (Tokyo, March, 1962). Interestingly enough, this ancient myth has

- been revived in the new Japanese religion Tenrikyō. Cf. Shōzen Nakayama, A Short History of Tenrikyō (Tenri, Tenrikyō Kyōkai Honbu, 1960), pp. 15-18. Cf. note 14 of chapter III.
89. TB II, 2, 7, 1.
90. Vgr. TB II, 2, 7, 1; GopB II, 3, 6. Cf. also Gen. 2:7.
91. TU II, 6.
92. BU I, 4, 3 sq.
93. Cf. the legend of Manu procreating with his daughter (the sacrifice) once she has 'resisted' Mitra and Varuṇa in SB I, 8, 1, 1-10. The passage is the continuation of the Indian version of the flood story.
94. Cf. SB VI, 1, 3, 8; AB XIII, 9; MaitS IV, 2, 12; etc.
95. Cf. TU II, 6.
96. Cf. vgr. TB II, 2, 7, 1; GopB II, 3, 6 (cf. etiam Gen. 2:7).
97. KausB VI, 1.
98. Cf. SB I, 7, 4, 1-3.
99. Cf. KathU X, II, 5; XXVII, 1 where vāc, the word as ritual, takes the place of the entire creation.
100. Cf. AV X, 7, 21: 'The branch of Non-being which is far-extending men take to be the highest one of all. They reckon as inferior those who worship your other branch, the branch of Being.'
101. Cf. the mediating expression of the world as the indeterminate state between being and non-being: sadasatanirvacanīya.
102. Cf. Jn. 6:12.
103. Cf. the same idea of redemption in the thought of St. Augustine, In Psalm. 58, 10 (P. L., 36, 698): 'Divine Mercy gathered up the fragments from every side, forged them in the fire of love, and welded into one what had been broken. ...He who re-made was himself the Maker, and he who re-fashioned was himself the Fashioner.' Cf. other Christian texts on the idea of redemption as the

re-establishment of a lost unity, as in the work of H. De Lubac, 
Catholicisme (Paris, Ed. du Cerf, 1952), p. 13.

104. Cf. vgr. RV I, 52; IV, 17; 19; VI, 17; etc.

105. Cf. vgr. the egyptian God Atun who created the world by dismembering his body. Cf. J. B. Pritchard, Ancient Near East Texts (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 3-5.

106. Cf. vgr. La naissance du monde, cit., ; A. Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis (Chicago, University Press, 1963); S. G. F. Brandon, Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1963); S. H. Hooke, Middle Eastern Mythology (Baltimore, Penguin, 1963); etc.

107. Cf. vgr. D. Thom., Sum. Theol. I, q. 100, a. 1, c.; I-II q. 74, a. 3 ad 2; etc.

108. Cf. Gen. 3:19; etc.

109. To which we could add the trickster myths in 'primitive' religions.

110. The idea is not only hindu. There is a bulgarian proverb which says: 'God is not without sin since he made the world.' The concept of original sin in late zoroastrianism transposes this sin to God. Cf. R. C. Zaehner, The Con-
 vergent Spirit (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 135. Cf. also the gnostic concept of creation as a fall. Nonetheless we think there is a certain originality in the hindu understanding which distinguishes it from these other myths.

111. Cf. 1 Cor. 7:31; etc.

112. Cf. D. Thom., Sum. Theol. I, q. 49, a. 3 ad 2.

113. Cf. Rev. 21:1.

114. 'Deus enim cognoscendo se, cognoscit omnem creaturam. ... Sed quia Deus uno actu et se omnia intelligit, unicum Verbum eius est expressivum non solum Patris, sed etiam creaturarum.' D. Thom., Sum. Theol. I, a. 34, a. 3, c.

115. Cf. R. Panikkar, 'La templiternidad', Sanctum Sacrificium, Actas del V Congreso

- Eucarístico de Zaragoza, 1961, pp. 75-93, for an elaboration of this idea.
116. Cf. vgr. SB II, 3, 1, 5: 'And when he [the priest] offers in the morning before the sunrise, then he produces that (sun-child) and, having become a light, it rises shining. But, assuredly, it would not rise, were he not to make that offering: this is why he performs that offering.' (Eggeling translation)
117. On this topic in hinduism and christianity, cf. R. Panikkar, Le mystère du culte dans l'hindouism et le christianisme (Paris, Cerf, 1970), pp. 83 sq., and as for the hindu sacred texts cf. The Vedic Experience, Los Angeles: (Univ. California Press), 1977.
118. Cf. Ro. 6:23.
119. Cf. R. Panikkar, Māyā e Apocalisse (Roma, Abete, 1966), pp. 80 sq.
120. CU VI, 2, 1; BU IV, 3, 32; KaiuU 19, etc. Cf. also, in another sense, Sir. 51:10.
121. Cf. Jn. 15:13.
122. Cf. Phil. 2:7; 2 Cor. 8:9. An entire theology of kenosis could be developed here. Cf. also: 'The moment of creation in time is called fanā'i-him 'an baqā'i-him [by Abū'l Qāsim al-Junayd of Baghdad], "their annihilation out of or after their eternal being", that is to say, their entry into time from eternity.' R. C. Zaehner, Hindu and Muslim Mysticism (London, The Athlone Press, 1960), p. 147.
123. Cf. the text of St. Thomas in De aeternitate mundi, 7: 'Prius enim inest unicuique naturaliter quod convenit sibi in se, quam quod solum ex alio habet. Esse autem non habet creatura nisi ab alio, sibi autem relictum in se considerata nihil est: unde prius ^{naturaliter} inest sibi nihil quam esse.' (emphasis added) Cf. also De pot. q. 5, a. 1, c., and again De Veritate, q. 18, a. 2 ad 5.
124. Cf. Rev. 1:4; 1:8; 4:8; RV X, 90, 2; SB XIII, 4, 2, 2; TS III, 1, 1, 1; and also tradition, vgr. Rāmānuja, Gītā-bhāṣya, IX, 19.
125. 'La fonction essentielle du sacrifice est de mettre de nouveau ensemble (sandhā) ce qui fut morcelé in illo tempore.' M. Eliade, Méphistophèles et

- l'androgynie (Paris, Gallimard, 1962), p. 119.
126. Cf. Col. 1:18; etc.
127. An entire theology of incarnation could follow from the idea and would be yet another example of the enrichment deriving from an encounter in the depths between religions. Cf. the interesting work of the Japanese theologian Kazon Kitamori, Theology of the Pain of God (Richmond, Virginia, John Knox, 1965), which speaks of a suffering God.
128. This idea is traditional in Christianity and may be found in one form or another in almost all religions. Cf. as a single example, St. Bernard, De gratia et libero arbitrio, XIV, n. 49 (P. L., 182, 1027) where he speaks of creatio, reformatio, ^{and} consummatio as the three moments in the divine action.
129. M. Eckhart, 'Expos. in Jo.', Latinische Werke, III, p. 185, n. 220.
130. 'Every sacrifice is a boat to heaven' (SB IV, 2, 5, 10). Cf. JaimB I, 166 which also speaks of sacrifice as the ship of the gods: yām ha khalu vai pitāputrau nāvam ajato, na s̄a riṣyati; daivy eṣā naur yad yajñas... ('The boat which father and son use for transport undergoes no damage. Now sacrifice is the boat of the ^Gods...'). Cf. AB III, 2, 29: 'Sacrifice is a reliable ferry.'
131. Cf. 1 Pet. 4:13.
132. Cf. the well-known Thomist thesis: 'Deus potest remittere peccata sine poena', D. Thom., Sum. Theol. II-II, q. 67, a. 4 ad 2; III, q. 46, a. 2 ad 3; etc.
133. Cf. by contrast the gnostic myth of Sophia as reported by Irenaeus of Lyon in his Adversus haereses (I, 7, 1-2) (1851). Here it is the inverted--and thus wrong order. Sophia desires the divine Father, but she is severed from him by fifteen pairs of eons. M. Meslin, in Pour une science des religions (Paris, Seuil, 1973, p. 206 sq.), is right in seeing here a psychoanalytical complex, but this would not justify reducing our problematic entirely to Freudian or Jungian categories.

A Myth of the Human Condition

puruṣo vai ya.jñah

The sacrifice is ^MMan.

SB I, 3, 2, 1 (+)

purusam prathamam ālabhate

Man is the first to be sacrificed.

SB VI, 2, 1, 18

+ Cf. also CU III, 16, 1: puruṣo vava ya.jñah: Man, in truth, is himself a sacrifice.

1 Myth and History

This study is an attempt to elucidate a crucial double function of myth and to illustrate it with a concrete example. First of all, myth offers the subsoil from which differing philosophical systems may draw sustenance. There are no philosophies in vacuo; each philosophy arises in a given context, precisely that furnished by myth. Secondly, due to its philosophical polyvalence, myth is invaluable in the meeting of cultures and the cross-fertilization that can result from it. Concepts are valid in the contexts where they have been conceived, but you cannot purely and simply extrapolate them (without finding laws, etc., to justify extrapolation). Myths, on the contrary, stem from a deeper, and so more universal, human stratum than do the philosophies.

This first section is intended to make the setting of our study explicit.

a) 1.1 Mythic Facts and Historical Facts

What we currently understand by fact is an incontestable given, a reality which presents itself incontestably. Now this incontestability is not a purely objective property; it also includes the subject who considers the fact incontestable. There are no pure facts,

facts 'in themselves'; they are always facts for someone. At the very least, every fact implies someone--a person, or even human consciousness in general--for whom the fact is a fact.

A myth seen and lived from within is an ensemble of facts which forms the basic fabric where what is given stands out ~~from~~ ~~a particular domain of reality~~ as if against a horizon. Myth thus serves as the ultimate reference point, the touchstone of truth by which facts are recognized as truths. Myth, when it is believed and lived from inside, does not ask to be plumbed more deeply, i.e., to be transcended in the search for some ulterior ground; it asks only to be made more and more explicit, for it expresses the very foundation of our conviction of truth. Seen from outside, however, the mythical appears a mass of legends, of 'myths' in which others believe, but which have nothing to do with 'factual' truth. Myth ^{then} ₁ (in its ^{own} way) recounts the ultimate ground of a particular belief: ~~e~~ither of others' belief (myth seen from outside), or of our own belief (myth lived from inside). In the latter case we believe the myth without believing in the myth, since it is transparent for us, self-evident, integrated into that ensemble of facts in which we believe and which constitute the real. (1)

One of the myths of the modern West is history. (2) History is the landmark to which we refer the incontestability of facts, and in terms of which we criticize other myths. (3) For western Man, historical facts are the ^{hard} ~~only~~ and inescapable ~~hard~~ reality.

The current theological interpretation of Jesus' Resurrection is a striking example of what we are getting at: because history is the modern myth which gives meaning to reality, we transmythicize physical fact into historical fact. We demythicize the myth of the physical or physiological miracle and substitute the myth of the

historical miracle. The modern interpretation claims to render the Resurrection comprehensible to us; today the Resurrection is the historical--read: real--fact of the transformation which occurred among the first christians who believed in this Resurrection. So, the reality of the Resurrection does not lie in a biological, material or spiritual event, but in a historical fact.

Obviously everything depends on how we interpret these two adjectives, historical and mythic. From the contemporary perspective, historical means real, and therefore true; while mythic signifies non-historical, thus fantastic, imaginary, unreal. From ^a ~~the~~ myth's a-historical point of view, historical facts are only transitory examples--often deceptive and always partial--of a reality which is always trans-historical. ^{In} ~~On~~ the one ^{case} ~~hand~~, the true Kṛṣṇa, the living and real Kṛṣṇa, is not a historical fact for most of those who believe in him, but a religious fact. ^{In} ~~On~~ the other ^{case} ~~hand~~, the true Christ, equally living and real, is not the mystical Christ for most christians, but the historical fact of Jesus and his continuing presence in history. Christian missionaries who preach this historical Christ in India, for example, must realize that in so doing they preach a docetism and relativism which is exactly contrary to what they intend to proclaim. Except for those who live in the myth of history, historical facts are merely events which have not reached their full reality.

Man cannot live without myths, without indeed a plurality of myths which intertwine and follow upon one another in a way that allows the continual passage from mythos to logos, and the constant 're-sourcing' of the logos in new mythoi. Strictly speaking, there is no isolated myth. Each myth lives in a community of myths.

Even in the judeo-christian-islamic tradition where the myth of history predominates, especially during the last few centuries, there have always been other myths. But in order for these other myths to be intelligible and acceptable within the mythic world of history, they must assume historical guise. And so sacred history emerges. For those who believe in it, it is true and therefore 'history', but in a very special sense because it is also sacred, and it is this sacredness which grounds and inspires history, which invests historical facts with their paradigmatic office, and even serves as the key to their deeper meaning. The historical character of sacred history constitutes its aspect of truth: it is 'history', so it is true. The sacred character of sacred history is its aspect of mystery, i.e., its trans-historical truth: it is 'sacred', so it transcends history. The myth becomes a fact, but every fact is equally a myth; spiritual realities are historical facts, but historical facts are also spiritual realities. So too we discover the myth of history when we pursue the history of myth. And today this latter provides the transition from sacred myth to historical myth.

To recapitulate our terminology: by mythos, I mean that human organ of apprehension on the same level as the logos and in constant relation with it. Mythos and logos are two human modes of awareness, irreducible one to the other, but equally inseparable.

By myth, I understand the horizon of intelligibility, or the ¹sense ~~meaning~~ of reality, disclosed by a certain mythologumenon. The mythologumenon is the legein of the myth, the living voice, the telling of the myth. If the myth is the truth, the reality, then the mythologumenon is the expression, the speaking, the language.

Finally, a myth expressed by a mythologumenon, i.e., by a mythic ~~narrative~~, can contain different mythemes, which are the themes (mythic and not necessarily conceptual), which the myth elucidates.

5) 1.2 The Pluralism of Ideologies and Myths

Modern Man, bombarded as he is by ~~the~~ mass-media supplying more and more examples of human plurality, can no longer believe that a world, a religion, a philosophy, a life-style, is the world, or the exemplar for religion, philosophy or life. He is less and less inclined to ignore, scorn or consider unenlightened those who do not think as he does; 'primitives' arouse new interest, 'natives' are appreciated, 'non-christians' or 'aliens' are respected, even courted, and (in spite of the shortcomings of grammar), women are no longer considered inferior. Minorities of every sort are assured that they too deserve their place in the sun and their rights in society. But this same openness--even if it is only theoretical--tends to encourage a deceptive belief in my own 'tolerance' and in the superiority of my world-wide and even universal mission. All this leads us to want to go beyond the mere awareness of plurality to an acceptance of pluralism. One of the most positive movements of our day is the dynamism, visible almost everywhere, ~~which~~ ^{is} seeks to pass from de facto plurality to de iure ^{world} pluralism. But true pluralism does not belong to the order of the logos; pluralism cannot be accepted within an ideology. On the ideological level you cannot compromise with error. Just so, two contradictory conceptual ^{statements} ~~systems~~ cannot both be true at the same level, or according to a single perspective. A pluralistic ideology would always place itself above

non-pluralistic ideologies. The result would be merely a super-ideology and the worst of paternalisms...I designate myself know-it-all and even tolerate others, provided they remain in the places I have assigned them. Even if we accept a certain perspectivism and the existence of other levels of life and awareness, we can scarcely avoid hierarchizing perspectives and levels according to some third point of view, which still amounts to an ideology, albeit a super-ideology. But true pluralism outstrips both the conceptual and the ideological domains. A purely dialectical solution to the conflict of ideologies cannot call itself pluralist, for it uses only a single criterion which does not allow for true pluralist autonomy. Pluralism is not merely respect for plurality, as a make-shift, or as a pragmatic necessity. Rather pluralism bears witness that one has transcended the logos as sole and final arbiter of the real, though without belittling its sway. Pluralism testifies that one has passed beyond absolutism, without thereby tumbling into agnostic relativism. Pluralism presupposes only a radical relativity underlying all human constructs and at the bottom of reality itself⁽⁴⁾.

In brief, pluralism does not stem from the logos, but from the mythos. Pluralism is grounded in the belief^e that no single group embraces the totality of human experience. It is based on trust in the other, even though I may not understand him and, from my point of view ^{will have to say he is)} ~~he may be~~ quite wrong. Pluralism does not absolutize error because it does not absolutize truth either.

This brings us to a methodic consideration which both introduces our subject and justifies our enterprise. It is just this: dialogue between cultures, and the mutual fecundation which can result from it, must be enacted first of all on a mythic level rather than in the

confrontation between logoi. This is not in any way to minimize the importance of dialectics. The dialectical method is fruitful in a discussion within a single culture and/or homogeneous civilization, but it operates differently in an encounter between cultures which may have arisen from fundamentally different presuppositions. To assume a priori that a given conceptual form can serve as the framework for an encounter of cultures represents, from the philosophical point of view, an unacceptable uncritical extrapolation. Sociologically speaking, it represents yet another vestige of a cultural colonialism which supposes that a single culture can formulate the rules of the game for an authentic encounter between cultures. If the logos has priority in intra-cultural confrontation, the mythos takes primacy in inter-cultural encounters. This implies that a purely philosophical methodo-logy based on the logos is certainly necessary, but not sufficient. We must complete it with a methodic in which the various mythologumena also have their decisive role to play.

Instead of elaborating a working hypothesis, I would like to present a concrete example.

The Challenge to Philosophy and Theology

To better situate our example let us briefly consider the double challenge which confronts humanist and 'religious' thought in the West. The challenge is the same in both cases, since western thinking, even ^{when} it denies its tie with the abrahamic traditions, remains grounded in them. (5) Nevertheless, we ought to distinguish between the philosophical and the theological domains, though without separating them.

i) 1.3.1 The challenge to philosophy amounts to wondering whether Man can have a pattern of intelligibility other than that created by the encounter and embrace between rational evidence and historical verification. The interface between the sky of rational evidence and the earth of historical verification seems to form the horizon under which western humanity has lived its intellectual, and hence its human, life for at least several centuries and even, perhaps, for some millennia. (6) Is some other mode of intelligibility possible outside this horizon? Can we arrive at profound, human convictions which are not focused on this skyline where reason encounters the exterior (historical) world? Are there no other pillars of truth? Must everything be grounded in history, aided only by reason? For the moment it is enough to pose the problem as a challenge to philosophy.

ii) 1.3.2 The challenge to theology could be posed as a question: Must I become, intellectually and spiritually, a semite if I want to be religiously a jew, a christian or a muslim? Must I be converted to the ways of thinking, and consequently to the life-styles, of these three historical traditions if I recognize and accept Yahweh, Christ or Muhammed as living and valid religious symbols? The problem takes on a keen edge and worrisome dimensions in Islam, the majority of whose adepts are found among peoples having no bond with arab culture. It has also been posed for a long time in the christian world, beginning with the efforts of christianity to distinguish and even separate itself from christendom. The problem arises even more urgently, and often tragically, for those jews who do not want to identify themselves with the state of Israel. And, if we are not too touchy about names like 'theology' and 'religion', we will see the same problem posed for the fourth branch of western culture called marxism, humanism or simply modernity. Is it necessary to take your categories of intelligibility from the Bible, the Gospel, the Koran or Das Kapital;

must you enter the Weltanschauungen of these great traditions, and even their marxist appendix, in order to call ^{your} ~~your~~ self a servant of Yahweh, a brother of Christ, someone who believes in the Seal of the Prophets, or a ^M man who works for the temporal happiness of humanity? Must an african, an indian, a chinese be uprooted from the fertile soil of an age-old culture, its thinking, its myths and its deep human truths, if he or she feels attracted to these three so-called monotheistic religions, or to modern humanist ideology? To know whether modernization implies westernization is a burning question for two-thirds of today's world. Must we convert to marxist thought, must we circumcise the african and asiatic spirit with the blade of technology in order not to miss the appointed communion, assembly, ^C Church to which Man today is called? Is there only the one (helleno-semitic) path to Christ? These questions are far from rhetorical; they constitute a challenge to theology.

This study does not claim to directly answer questions of such moment. Neither do we wish merely to substitute one myth for another. We would like, first, to introduce to the western world an indian myth quite as fundamental as the more familiar semitic, hellenic and other myths which recount the human condition. For this it is enough to tell the story. But we would also like to implant it in the open field of occidental myth, today undergoing a radical transformation. Further, we would like to make explicit the importance of this myth in the very heart of the indian tradition. And finally we would wish to contribute to the modern symbiosis, which is not simply an artificial and superficial eclecticism, and which becomes the more urgent if we want to step beyond the provincialisms

of which we are perhaps aware on a planetary scale for the first time. Human destiny is at stake. Either we acquire our global awareness in the cosmotheandric dimensions of this destiny, or we become simple cogs in the wheels of the megamachine. The ^{schizophrenia} ~~disparity~~ between a sincere, even deep (but provincial and sectarian) ^{religious} belief, and a ^{profane} universal technology (which in one sense liberates, but also ^{e/}stupidifies and obliterates any variety) is in the long run unbearable.

2 The Sacred History of Śunahśepa

The golden rule of all hermeneutic is simply that the interpreted thing can be recognized in the interpretation. This implies that inter-pretation must not be extra-pretation, but a mediation between the ^{auto} ~~self~~-understanding of the interpreted thing and the hetero-understanding realized by the interpreter. (7) The guarantee of a valid interpretation is much like the proofs in elementary mathematical operations: subtraction to prove addition, multiplication to check division. Only if we can retranslate, i.e., reinterpret our interpretation following the original, can we be sure that we are interpreting correctly and not allegorizing.

In order to interpret a myth, we must consider, first, what the myth says literally (the text), and secondly, what it wants to say, i.e., we must know the context of the myth in order to know what it means, and finally we must also consider what the myth has been made to say over the ages, for past interpretations belong equally to the encompassing context of whatever we interpret.

In short, we must be familiar with 1) the original story, its mythologumenon, its legein; 2) the context of this telling, its myth; and 3) the commentaries, its logos.

2.1. The Narrative (the Legein of the Myth)

In the myth of Śunaḥśepa we are dealing with one of the most complete, and probably most ancient, sacred histories of the entire śruti or vedic revelation. (8) It is an exceptional myth from several points of view. (9) The tale alternates simple prose with verse. The verses consist of original strophes (gāthā) and quotations from the Ṛg Veda (ṛc). They have an epic character and are more grammatically elaborate than the prose texts, which are in more elementary, even rudimentary, sanskrit. The legend is found in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, which was edited between 800 and 600 B.C.; internal evidence and external scholarly criticism, however, indicate that the myth may be very ancient indeed. (10) The legend is inserted into the description of the royal consecration (the rājasūya), which leads us to suspect an earlier date for it, and if we take into consideration the reference to human sacrifice, we might even look for a prehistoric origin. (11)

The well-known text has had various publications, (12) and complete (13) or partial (14) translations. After struggling to present a suitable version myself, I have found an excellent french translation by Jean Varenne, from which the following is largely adapted. (15)

Here then is the sacred history of Śunaḥśepa:

Food is breath, clothing a protection,
 gold is for ornament, cattle for dowry,
 a wife is a friend, a daughter a misery,
 and a son a light in the highest heaven.

The father enters his wife,
 as an embryo he dwells in the mother,
 in her is he renewed,
 and born in the tenth month.

A wife is called wife
 since in her he is born again;
 he is seminal, she fruitful,
 from here the hidden seed goes forth.

Together ^G gods and seers
 have brought her bright grandeur;
 the ^G gods said to mortals

"This is your mother again".

"A sonless one cannot attain heaven",

even the beasts know this;

therefore among them a son mounts

his mother or his sister.

This is the wide happy path

on which men with sons fare without sorrow;

the birds and the beasts desire this

enough to unite even with a mother.'

So Nārada told Hariścandra. Then he added, 'Have recourse to Varuṇa the king, saying "Let a son be born to me; with him let me sacrifice to you."'

'So be it,' Hariścandra replied. And he went up to Varuṇa the king, saying 'Let a son be born to me; with him let me sacrifice to you.'

'So be it,' Varuṇa replied. And a son was born to him, Rohita by name.

Then Varuṇa said to Hariścandra, 'A son has been born to you; sacrifice to me with him.' Hariścandra replied, 'Only when a victim is over ten days old is it fit for sacrifice; let my son become over ten days old; then will I sacrifice him to you.'

'So be it,' Varuṇa said. No^w when the child was over ten days old, he said to Hariścandra, 'He is over ten days old; sacrifice him to me.' Hariścandra replied, 'Only when the teeth of a victim appear is it fit for sacrifice. Let his teeth appear; then will I sacrifice him to you.'

'So be it,' Varuṇa said. Now when the child's teeth appeared, he said to Hariścandra, 'His teeth have appeared; sacrifice him to me.' Hariścandra replied, 'Only when the teeth of a victim fall is it fit for sacrifice. Let his teeth fall; then will I sacrifice him to you.'

'So be it,' Varuṇa said. Now when the child's teeth fell, he said to Hariścandra, 'His teeth have fallen; sacrifice him to me.' Hariścandra replied, 'Only when the teeth of a victim appear again is it fit for sacrifice. Let his teeth appear again; then will I sacrifice him to you.'

'So be it,' Varuṇa said. Now when the boy's teeth appeared again, he said to Hariścandra, 'His teeth have appeared again; sacrifice him to me.' Hariścandra replied, 'Only when the kṣatriya has won his arms is he fit for sacrifice. Let him win his arms; then will I sacrifice him to you.'

'So be it,' Varuṇa said. Now when Rohita had won his arms, he said to Hariścandra, 'He has won his arms; sacrifice him to me.' 'So be it,' Hariścandra replied and addressed his son, 'It is this one, my dear child, who has given you to me. Now let us go; let me sacrifice you to him.'

'No!' cried Rohita, and taking up his bow he went into the wild. For a year he wandered in the wild and Varuṇa seized Hariścandra so that his belly swelled up.

Rohita heard talk of this; he left the forest and returned toward the village. But Indra came to him in human form, saying

'Manifold is the splendor of the ascetic,
 so Revelation ~~the~~ tells us, Rohita;
 who chooses to live among men does wrong,
 Indra is friend to the wanderer. (19)

'So move on.' And Rohita said to himself, 'This brahman bids me wander,' so he wandered for a second year in the wild. Then he left the forest and returned toward the village. But again Indra came to him in human form, saying

'The wanderer's legs are the stems of flowers,
 and his tough body bears fruit.
 His difficult journey
 delivers him from every sin.

'So move on .' And Rohita said to himself, 'This brahman bids me wander,' so he wandered for a third year in the wild. Then he left the forest and returned toward the village. But Indra again came to him in human form, saying

'The fortunes of a sitting man also sit,
if he stands still, so will his fate.
If he lies down, his luck will fall asleep,
but if he bestirs himself, his fortunes shall rise indeed.

'So move on.' And Rohita said to himself, 'This brahman bids me wander,' so he wandered for a fourth year in the wild. Then he left the forest and returned toward the village. But Indra came again to him in human form, saying

'Who remains reclining becomes Kali,
who arises becomes Dvāpara.
Erect, you are Tretā,
moving, you are Kṛta. (20)

'So move on.' And Rohita said to himself, 'This brahman bids me wander,' so he wandered for a fifth year in the wild. Then he left the forest and returned toward the village. But Indra came to him again in human form, saying

'Journeying you find honey,
and the delicious Udumbara fruit.
Consider the sun, happiest of beings,
who never ceases to journey.

'So move on.' And Rohita said to himself, 'This brahman bids me wander,' so he wandered for a sixth year in the wild.

He found in the forest on ^eAjīgarta Sauyavasi, a seer overcome with hunger. This Ajīgarta had three sons, Śunaḥpuṣṭha, Śunaḥśēpa and Śunolāṅgula.

Rohita said to him, 'I will give you a hundred cows, O Seer, if you let me redeem myself with one of these.' Keeping back the eldest, Ajīgarta said, 'Not this one'; 'Nor this one,' cried the mother, keeping back the youngest. So they settled on the middle son, Śunaḥśēpa.

Rohita gave the hundred cows, took Śunaḥśēpa with him, left the forest and returned to the village. He went to his father and said, 'O my father, let me redeem myself with this one.' Then Hariścandra went to Varuṇa the king, saying 'Let me sacrifice this one to you.' 'So be it,' Varuṇa replied, 'A brahman is better than a kṣatriya.'

Then Hariścandra proclaimed his intention to celebrate the rājāsuya, the royal consecration, and on the day of anointing chose the boy as victim.

That day, Viśvāmitra was the Oblate, Jamadagni the Acolyte, Vasiṣṭha took the role of Brahman, and Ayāśya that of Cantor.

But when Śunaḥśēpa had been brought up they could find no one willing to bind him. Ajīgarta then said, 'Give me another hundred cows and I shall bind him.' They gave him another hundred and he bound his son. When he had been brought up and bound, and the Apriverse had been recited, and the fire readied around him, they could find no one willing to slaughter him.

Then Ajīgarta said, 'Give me another hundred cows and I shall slaughter him.' They gave him another hundred and he, whetting his knife, advanced toward his son.

Then Śunaḥśēpa said to himself, 'They are going to kill me as if I were not a human being. I must have recourse to the ^Gods!'

He first had recourse to Prājapati, since he is first among the ^Gods, with this verse:

'Which God then? Which immortal's
pleasing name shall we invoke?

Who will restore us to majestic Freedom, (21)
that I may see father and mother again?' (22)

Prajāpati replied, 'Agni is the nearest of the ^Gods; have recourse to him.' He had recourse to Agni with this verse:

'Agni the God, first of immortals,
let us invoke his pleasing name!

He will restore us to majestic Freedom (23)
that I may see father and mother again!' (24)

Agni advised him, 'Savitṛ is the great Inciter, have recourse to him.' He had recourse to Savitṛ with this triplet:

'From you, O God Savitṛ, ever our aid,
Lord of every precious thing,
we beseech good fortune.

Since fortune--good or bad--
is for you free from desire,
it remains friendly in your two hands.

May we attain it! With your help
may we reach the summit of prosperity,
our portion from you, O Bhaga!' (25)

Savitṛ explained, 'It is for Varuṇa the king that you are bound; have recourse to him.' He had recourse to Varuṇa with the following thirty-one verses:

'Your dominion, your strength and your passion,
O Varuṇa, no birds have attained in their flight,
nor waters in their ceaseless flowing,
nor hills resisting wind's might.

King Varuṇa of clear understanding
in bottomless space holds the tree's crown,
branches sunk below, roots on high,
deep in us may his radiance grow!

A broad path above has Varuṇa cleared
for the sun without feet to traverse.
May he that found a way for the sun,
keep this blade from our heart!

A hundred solaces are yours, O King!
May your benevolence be equally vast!
Drive this Destruction out of our world,
free us from whatever sin we have committed!

These stars we see set overhead at night,
where do they go by day? Nothing
transgresses Varuṇa's laws; the radiant moon
wanders on, seeing us through the night.

to be pray to death
 I salute you, I beg with prayer;
 with his offerings, the ^{high priest} ~~sacrificer~~ begs:

Do not be angry, O Varuṇa!

Do not plunder our lives, O renowned one!

As the charioteer

What they tell me night and day,

what my own heart's light reveals to me:

May he to whom Śunaḥśepa calls in his bonds,

Varuṇa, King, set us free!

My desires fly away

Tied to the triple pillar he calls,

Śunaḥśepa calls to the son of Freedom: (26)

Gracious Varuṇa, King, untie this victim!

Let the unerring sage undo these bonds!

When shall we move

We would appease your wrath, O Varuṇa,
 with homage, with prayer and offerings.

Wise God reigning over us, attentive
 master, free us from our sins!

Common to both Mitra and Varuṇa

Loosen, O Varuṇa, the bonds that bind us

above and below and from every side.

Make us sinless before your holy law,

unbound for the boundless, O Aditya! (27)

He knows the path

Whatever law of yours, O God Varuṇa,

we men, being but mortal,

may violate day after day--

do not consign us, we beg

to be prey to death
 or to your own fierce anger,
 to be destroyed
 by your displeasure.

As the charioteer
 tethers his steed,
 so shall my songs
 bind your heart, O Varuṇa.

My desires fly away
 in search of happiness,
 just as birds
 fly to their nest.

When shall we move
 Varuṇa to mercy,
 the Lord of glorious might
 whose eye is far-reaching?

Common to both Mitra and Varuṇa
 is the might. Their love
 forsakes no worshipper
 faithful to Law.

He knows the path
 of birds in the heaven;
 as Lord of the sea
 he knows each ship.

True to his Law,
he knows the twelve months
(and the extra month too)
with their offspring the days.

The path of the wind--
high, sweeping, powerful--
he knows, and the ^Gods
who reside in the heavens.

He sits among his people,
consistent to Law.

Most wise, he presides
and governs all things.

From there, surveying,
he beholds earth's marvels,
both that which has been
and that which shall be.

May the wise Aditya
prepare for us always
fair paths to tread,
and prolong our lives!

Varuṇa, wearing
a golden mantle
is clothed in bright garments.
His watchmen sit round him.

No men of ill-will,
 nor evil-doers,
 nor those of wrong intent
 can harm this our God--

the One who gives
 consummate glory to ^Mmen,
 imparting this glory
 to these our bodies.

And Yearning for him,
 wide-seeing Varuṇa,
 my thoughts move onward
 as cows to their pasture.

Again let us converse!
 The nectar has been brought.

You eat, as a priest,
 the food that you love.

I have seen the One
 whom all may behold
 and his car passing high!
 My songs are accepted!

Hear, O Varuṇa!
 Show us your favor.
 Longing for help
 I have cried to you.

Supreme Lord,
 ruling the spheres,
 hear, O wise God,
 as you pass on your way.

Free us from fetters
 of every sort.

Loosen our bonds
 that we may live!' (28)

And Varuṇa said to him, 'Agni is first among the immortals,
 the best friend. Sing his praises, then shall we deliver you.'
 Śunaḥśepa praised Agni with the next twenty-two verses:

'Put on your cloak of light,
 Lord of might, worthy of honors,
 O Agni, offer this our sacrifice!

Be seated, O chosen one, our priest,
 youngest of the Gods! With hymns
 and luminous words we invoke you, Agni!

Father sacrifices for son,
 friend for friend,
 and comrade for chosen comrade.

Let the mighty lords Varuṇa,
 Mitra and Aryaman sit as men
 on this our sacred grass.

Agni, first priest,
 rejoice in our friendship!
 Attend well our songs!

Whatever we unceasingly sacrifice
 to God after God, to you alone,
 O Agni, is the offering given!

May he be our dear clan lord,
 sweet voiced, our chosen priest!
 And may we be dear to good Agni!

For the gods, too, have this bright fire,
 and have given us this treasure.
 And so our trust is in Agni.

Let us both, mortals and immortals,
 exchange songs of praise,
 O deathless Agni!

With all your fires, O Agni,
 bless this sacrifice and these words,
 O youngest son of Strength!' (29)

'I will praise you
 like a costly horse, O Agni,
 Lord of all our sacrifices!

The far-striding son of Strength,
 benevolent, friendly, mighty Agni;
 may he be with us!

Protect us, O Agni, both far and near,
 protect us ever from ruthless mortals,
 protect us all our days!

Announce to the ^Gods
 our newest gift, O Agni--
 this song of praise!

Grant us a share in the highest stakes,
 and the lowest, and those in between.

Award me the nearest good!

You are the portioner, the silver flame
 on the river's flux, (30) nearest of the near;
 you heap wealth upon the giver!

The mortal you protect in battle,
 the ^Man you inspire, O Agni,
 his joy will be forever fresh!

None will overcome him,
 no man vanquish him, O conqueror,
 the victor's portion shall be his!

Renowned in all lands, he shall carry off
 the victor's prize on his steeds,
 and win the day with the singers!

O early watcher, shape us a song
 to the glory of Rudra,
 whom every clan adores!

Majestic without measure,
 with smoke for an ensign, brilliant Agni;
 may he spur us to inspiration, and victory!

Like an opulent chieftain,
 banner of the divine, brightly gleaming,
 may Agni hear our songs!' (31)

And Agni said to him, 'Sing the praises of The-All-Gods, (32)
 then shall we deliver you.' Śunaḥśepa praised The-All-Gods with
 this verse:

'Homage to the great and to the small,
 to the young and to the old!
 Let us honor The-All-Gods, if we can!' (33)

The-All-Gods answered, 'Indra is the mightiest, most powerful,
 strongest, most real and most effective of the ^Gods. Sing his
 praises, then shall we deliver you.' Śunaḥśepa praised Indra with
 this hymn:

'Since we seem to be without hope,
 O soma drinker, truthful Indra,
 give us hope, O generous one,
 hope of handsome cattle and horses by the thousand!

You who wear helmet and armor,
 master of stakes, lord of strength,
 give us hope, O generous one,
 hope of handsome cattle and horses by the thousand!

Put to sleep these two evil-doers who eye each other
turn by turn; so that they do not awaken!

And grant us, O gracious one,
hope of handsome cattle and horses by the thousand!

Put the greedy to sleep, O hero,
but rouse the generous!

And grant us, O gracious one,
hope of handsome cattle and horses by the thousand!

Crush this ass who brays your praises!

But grant us, O generous Indra,
hope of handsome cattle
and horses by the thousand!

Spare us the cyclone, let it buffet the forest
far from us, and keep the lizards company!

But grant us, O generous Indra,
hope of handsome cattle and horses by the thousand!

Strike down the wailers, O Indra!

Strangle the Kṛkādāśu! (34)

But grant us, gracious Indra,
hope of handsome cattle and horses by the thousand!' (35)

'We urge Indra, God of flowing insight,
to come on in glory: Course through us,
O juice of the soma!

Who drinks draughts of pure soma by the hundred,
 and by the thousand mixed with milk,
 In whom the soma flows like a river in the abyss!

When we surge toward him, joy upon us,
 in our rapture the vat becomes his belly
 and the soma seems to us ocean!

This soma is yours! You race to it
 as the dove wings to his mate;
 and you care equally for our song!

Lord of gifts, we give you this song,
 this garland of praises, O hero,
 that in return your strong joy may be ours!

Gird yourself to help us fight this fight,
 O God rich in flowing insight, O Indra,
 more than all the others, may we two agree!

O Indra, strongest of the strong,
 in every battle, in every way,
 we your friends call for your help!

If he can but hear our cry,
 O Indra, let him come now to our aid,
 let him bring the prize of victory!

I call on Indra,
 hero of our ancient home, irresistible,
 the first our fathers would call!

O soma drinker, friend to your friends,
 who bears the awakening thunderbolt,
 we too drink soma with our helmets on!

What each ^Mman hopes, O soma-friend,
 let it be; bring your thunderbolt
 and bring to each his own!

O Indra, may we your table-mates
 win wealth and prizes, so that
 rich in cattle we too shall rejoice!

O bold God, so honored in song,
 it fits such a hero to welcome our prayer
 like a wheel its axle!

And as your singers had hoped,
 O God of intelligence, your welcome
 matches their homage in zeal!' (36)

Delighted at heart with Śunaḥśepa's praise, Indra gave
 to him a chariot of gold. And Śunaḥśepa sang another verse:

'Forever has Indra celebrated his trophies
 With horses who prance and whinny and snort,
 Triumphant horses, barded with his armor;
 He has given us the victor's chariot of gold!' (37)

Then Indra said to him, 'Sing now the praises of the Aśvins, (38)
 then shall we deliver you.' Śunaḥśepa praised the Aśvins with the
 following triplet:

'Come Ásvins, with your marvel treasure of horses!

Grant us a hoard of cattle and gold,

O you of wondrous deeds!

Your immortal chariot

plies the waves without equal,

O Ásvins of wondrous deeds!

One of its wheels, O Ásvins,

you have fixed in the sun-bull's eye,

while the other covers heaven!' (31)

Then the two Ásvins declared, 'Sing now the praises of Uṣas (40) the dawn, then shall we deliver you.' Śunaḥśepa praised Uṣas with the following triplet:

'What mortal can enjoy you, immortal Uṣas?

Who is it your pleasure to love?

Who among us will you choose, O radiance?

From far, from near,

you brighten our thoughts

like a ruddy mare, O Uṣas!

Come to us, O daughter of heaven!

Bring us the prize we seek!

Grant us life!' (41)

And at each verse Śunaḥśepa sang, one of his bonds was loosed and the swollen belly of Hariścandra shrank a little; at the very last verse, the last bond fell away and Hariścandra was cured.

Then the priests said, 'Devise for us the performance of the day.' Śunaḥśepa saw the immediate soma pressing; this he pressed with these four verses:

'Although at work in every house,
mortar my friend, here you must echo best,
like a drum in the victor's camp!

Master of the Forest, mortar,
the wind breathes through your crown;
now press the soma for Indra to drink!

Yield your treasure for the sacrifice,
mortar, devour the stalks
like Indra's bay steeds!

Press now, Forest Master mortars,
upright with your upright helpers,
press for Indra juice sweet as honey!' (42)

Then he carried it to the wooden receiving vat with the verse:

'Take up in bowls whatever remains,
and pour the soma through the seive;
on the cowhide set the dregs!' (43)

Then, taking hold of the high-priest from behind, he offered the following four verses with cries of Svāhā! (Hail!):

'Where the broad-based mortar sets,
 where the pestle rises to press the soma,
 come there, O Indra!

Drink what we have crushed! Svāhā!

Where mortar and pestle squeeze together
 as if to make love,

come there, O Indra!

Drink what we have crushed! Svāhā!

Where women pound true,

forwards and back,

come there, O Indra!

Drink what we have crushed! Svāhā!

Where they bind up the pestle

as we rein in a horse,

come there, O Indra!

Drink what we have crushed! Svāhā! (44)

Then he led the high-priest to the final bath with the
 two verses:

'O Agni, knowing one, we pray you
 ward off the wrath of Varuṇa!
 Shining one, best of priests and guides;
 drive far from us every evil-doer!

Draw close, O Agni, and help us,
 be very near to us as this day dawns!
 Sacrifice for us, make offering to Varuṇa,
 gain us his favor and we shall bless you!' (45)

Next he had the *high-priest* pay reverence to the hearth
 with the verse:

'Śunaḥśepa was bound, from these thousand stakes
 you have freed him when he was in pain!
 We also will you free from our bonds,
 O wise Agni who put us here!' (46)

Then, the sacrifice concluded, Śunaḥśepa sat on Viśvāmitra's
 lap. Ajīgarta Sauyavasi demanded, 'O seer, give back to me my son!'
 'No,' said Viśvāmitra, 'the Gods have given him again to life, and
 to me.' And so Śunaḥśepa came to be called Devarāta Viśvāmitrasuta,⁽⁴⁷⁾
 and his descendants are the Kāpileya and the Bābhraṇa.

Ajīgarta Sauyavasi tried again, 'Come now, let us both (48)
 invite him,' he said:

'You are an Āṅgiras by birth,
 famed as a sage, son of Ajīgarta;
 O seer, do not abandon your ancestors;
 return to me!'

To which Śunaḥśepa replied:

'They have seen you knife in hand,
 a thing not found even among śūdras.
 Three hundred cattle, O Āṅgiras,
 You preferred to my life!'

And Ajīgarta Sauyavasi answered:

'This evil deed I have done
 causes me great remorse, dear one. (49)
 I would obliterate it in your eyes;
 the three hundred cattle are yours!'

But Śunaḥśepa said:

'He who once does evil
 will do that evil again;
 you have not abandoned your śūdra ways;
 what you have done is irreparable!' (50)

At the word 'irreparable' Viśvāmitra joined in, saying:

'Dread indeed was Sauyavasi
 when he stood knife in hand,
 ready to kill; give him up!
 Become a son of mine, Śunaḥśepa!'

Śunaḥśepa asked:

'I wish what you have said,
 O king's son, but say how,
 being an Āṅgiras,
 I can become a son of yours.'

Viśvāmitra replied:

'You would be the eldest of my sons,
your children would hold the highest place.
Accept my divine inheritance,
to this I invite you!'

And Śunaḥśepa said:

'Bid your sons agree
to friendship and prosperity for me,
then may I become your son,
O bull of the Bharatas!'

So Viśvāmitra addressed his sons:

'Listen Madhuchandas,
Ṛṣabha, Reṇu, Aṣṭaka
and all your brothers;
do you accept his precedence?'

Viśvāmitra had a hundred and one sons, fifty older than Madhuchandas, fifty younger. The older ones did not think this right. These Viśvāmitra cursed, saying 'Your offspring shall inherit the outlands of the earth!' These are the Andhra, the Puṇḍra, the Sabara, the Fulinda and the Mūtiba who live in large numbers beyond the borders; most of the Dasyu are descendants of Viśvāmitra.

Madhuchandas with the other fifty said:

'What our father has decided, we accept;
we place you at our head
and we all will follow you.'

At which the delighted Viśvāmitra praised his sons:

'O my children, who by your obedience
have given me a hero for a son,
you shall be rich in cattle
and in your turn have heroes for sons!'

With Devarāta, a hero,
to lead you, O Gāthina,
you shall all prosper, my sons;
he shall see truth for you!

Here is your chief, O Kuśika!

Follow Devarāta!

You yourselves shall be his patrimony,
and all the knowledge we know!'

And for this it is said:

'Thus the sons of Viśvāmitra, the Gāthina,
all together with pleasure
accepted Devarāta
as their chief and eldest.

So Devarāta, the seer,
had two patrimonies:
the lordship of the Jahnus,
and the sacred lore of the Gāthina.'

This is the tale of Śunaḥśepa, with a hundred Ṛc verses as well as Gāthās. This the Oblate tells to the king after the ritual Anointing. He tells it seated on a golden cushion and his Acolyte, also seated on a golden cushion, responds: gold is glory, thus the Oblate makes the king prosper by glory.

'Om' is the response to a Ṛc, 'So be it' to a Gāthā.

'Om' is divine, 'So be it' human. (51) Thus with what is divine and what is human are we freed from all evil and every sin.

Therefore a victorious king, even when not sacrificing, should have this tale of Śunaḥśepa narrated; not the faintest shadow of sin will remain in him.

A thousand he should give to the Narrator, a hundred to the Respondent; the golden cushion and a white mule chariot should also be given to the Oblate who tells the tale.

Those who wish sons can also ask for this legend to be recited. They will have sons. (52)

3.2.1 The Sacrifice (Past)

One of the central intuitions of the entire vedic tradition

3.2.2 The Context (the Myth of the Legein)

To situate the context of Śunaḥśepa, we will mention (a) the myth's immediate past, its milieu, which centers on the notion of sacrifice; b) its present state, its Sitz im Leben; and c) its future, its continuation within the tradition, its vectorial tension, so to speak. We shall not, however, pursue details (interesting as they may be) which belong to a more specialized investigation. (53)

The study of a myth's context is important from a double point of view. First, it is only by situating the myth in its proper context that we can interpret it correctly. Secondly, knowing the context also makes it possible to justify extrapolation, i.e., to apply the myth to situations which differ from the original. We do not transplant a plant with its roots awash in potassium permanganate; we transplant it with an optimum of native soil, so that it can take root together with its own ground in a new milieu.

We might express the essence of sacrifice as that action which effectively creates, i.e., which is effective, potent, which attains the end it sets itself. Sacrifice is that action which directly links the activity and its result in the selfsame act. It is not a merely external action which, once accomplished, would disappear as if no longer needed; it is rather an action which is an integral element in every activity. It is the act sustaining the action of whatever act.

Sacrifice then is communication, and communication constitutes the very structure of the universe. Reality is neither self-subsistent nor purely contingent. It is not necessary that beings, or even Being

2.2.1 The Sacrifice (Past)

One of the central intuitions of the entire vedic tradition consists in seeing all life, divine as well as cosmic, in terms of a dynamism rooted in the sacrificial character of reality itself. Sacrifice is the primordial energy, prior to everything. It was by sacrificing himself, by offering himself as victim, that Prajāpati created the world. (54) And, when exhausted by his creative act, it is again through the sacrifice (offered in turn by his creatures) that he regains his power. (55) By sacrifice the ^Gods win immortality. (56) From the sacrifice of the cosmic ^Man (puruṣa) by the ^Gods, ^Men ^{and} animals and the cosmos are born. (57) By sacrifice ^Men obtain heaven. (58) Sacrifice is the fundamental law which regulates absolutely everything: cosmic, divine, human life. 'The sacrifice is ^Man.' (59) Sacrifice is the total oblation of all we have and all we are; by this offering, life unfolds and we are redeemed from death. (60)

Although the notion of sacrifice may have been modified, refined and interiorized down the ages, the underlying vedic intuition remains vital. We might express the essence of sacrifice as that action which effectively creates, i.e., which is effective, potent, which attains the end it sets itself. Sacrifice is that action which directly links the activity and its result in the selfsame act. It is not a merely ephemeral action which, once accomplished, would disappear as if no longer needed; it is rather an action which is an integral element in every activity. It is the act sustaining the action of whatever acts.

Sacrifice then is communication, and communication constitutes the very structure of the universe. Reality is neither self-subsistent nor purely contingent. It is not necessary that beings, or even Being

exist; beings, because they are certainly contingent; Being, because nothing guarantees its existence except itself and it can, if it so please, destroy itself. This is out of our hands, we know nothing about it. Absolutely nothing can prevent a slip back into pure nothingness. We have no guarantee, no certainty, that time will always continue, that the world will not destroy itself one day, or even that Being will not cease to be. (61) The whole of reality maintains itself, it does not lean for support on something else. It is so to speak a divine contingency, a contingency of the second degree. There is no other, ulterior reason for existence, it is its own raison d'être. Hence it is for no other reason than itself that Being continues to be. This rationale suffices for an immutable and static notion of Being, but for a dynamic conception, the problem of the ontological continuity of Being becomes crucial. The fundamental question is not: why is there being rather than nothing, since there is being; but rather: why will there always be being, why must Being endure being? We must realize that time on the one hand, and freedom on the other, are at the root of Being.

This universe has no other structure than its own, and here we discover the place and the function of sacrifice. Sacrifice is what conserves and perpetuates life, what gives life and gives it hope. It is what lets Being be. Sacrifice is that act which makes and sustains the universe--not via an external intermediary, because there is nothing outside the universe, but rather by the ontological cooperation of the universe with its own subsistence, that is, by the energy and the love upholding the Being there is. (62) Man alone cannot accomplish this, and the ^Gods left to themselves are equally impotent. Alone, the Supreme Being is also incapable of accomplishing

this act, since it is not God for itself, but for the 'creatures'. To offer sacrifice is not to take part in a profitable exchange, or to please the ^Gods, or humanity, or oneself; to sacrifice means to live, to contribute to one's own survival and to that of the entire universe. It is the act par excellence by which the universe continues to exist.

Our myth does not stop for such considerations, but sacrifice plays a central role in it. The God Varuṇa demands a sacrifice, Śunaḥśepa is about to be sacrificed, afterwards the priests offer the soma sacrifice, and the myth is realized in the setting of the rājasūya, another ritual based on sacrifice. Although these sacrifices are more concrete and of lesser scope than the primordial sacrifice we have been discussing, they actualize it and celebrate it in part.

2.2.2 The Royal Consecration (Present)

This mythologumenon is found in the part of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa dedicated to the royal consecration (rājasūya). It introduces the consecration (63) and thus plays an integral role in a vedic ceremony, ^{and} even, perhaps, in one of mankind's most ancient rites. (64) In any case, the rājasūya is the rite of Varuṇa, who is also the God of our myth. (65)

Within the indian tradition, this sacred history has a paradigmatic value: it must be recited during the royal consecration so that all the world might hear. It thus fits thematically into the very heart of human life. (66) The setting of the rājasūya gives the myth its social significance. Although it is recited before the general assembly, it underscores the superiority of the priest--the brahmins--over the royalty--the kṣatriyas--by the fact that the hero is a brahman who, by being offered as a substitute, saves the life of the king's son. So the context is eminently sacerdotal. On the other hand,

the priestly group is not blameless: the unpardonable sin of betraying one's own son is committed by a brahman.

In short, the solemn ambience in which this sacred history unfolds seems to justify speaking of it as a central myth in classical indian culture. We are thus led to wonder whether this sacred history is not a myth which reveals an important awakening of human consciousness.

We have here a very striking example of the old dispute about the priority of myth over rite, or vice-versa. We need not take sides for or against the 'myth and ritual theory', (67) but only note the interesting contribution this sacred history could bring to the question. (68) Our myth clearly shows the interdependence of rite and myth; but interdependence does not mean subordination. From one angle, myth and rite seem autonomous. In fact, the rite of the rājasūya has no need of our myth; it could very well take place without it. (69) Moreover, even if the myth may have been a later interpolation--simply added by the compiler of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa with a view to setting the rājasūya in further relief--the sacred history of Śunaḥśepa is complete in itself and has no need of the rājasūya. (70)

From another angle, myth and rite belong together. The rājasūya, as a rite unfolding within the cosmic order of history (it is the consecration of a ^Mman, the king, with historical duties and cosmic repercussions), cannot content itself with the aśvamedha celebration, i.e., the horse sacrifice. (71) It must one way or another integrate the purusamedha, the human sacrifice. (72) Without the cosmic sacrifice of man, the royal consecration is not complete and the king cannot attain the summits of cosmic and universal sovereignty, for 'the human sacrifice is everything'. (73) But if man kills and eats man,

it is no longer the cosmic sacrifice of the puruṣa, but a debauch. (74)
 This is why one text tells us that a voice cried out not to kill
 the man, but to free the victim. (75) Here is a link with our myth.
 On the one hand, we ought to offer a sacrifice worthy of ^Mman, and
 therefore human. On the other, we feel we must not do it. Śunaḥśepa
 is the ideal solution. Man recognizes his total dependence, he im-
 molates himself without compromise, but also without homicide or sui-
 cide. The myth and the rite need each other. Without the puruṣamedha
 solemnly celebrated in the rājasūya, our story could quickly degenerate
 into pious legend. (76) A myth without its rite is only a cold orthodoxy.
 But a rite without its myth is pure superstition.

There is therefore a radical interdependence between myth and
 rite. Every myth is related to a rite, and vice-versa, but often in
 an existentielle and extrinsic fashion. The myth ^wneed not narrate
 the rite, nor the rite enact the myth. There is a sui generis ontomy
 between the two. Myth and rite are both constitutives of human cul-
 ture.

There is no subordination of action to contemplation, of
 orthopraxis to orthodoxy, of rite to myth. This would be mythology.
 Neither is there subordination of practice to theory, of life to
 principles, of mythos to logos. This would be rationalism.

But there is even more: independ^{ent}ly of the rājasūya, our myth
 still centers on sacrifice, and contains in itself all the elements
 of a rite. Here an interesting tension comes to light. Everything
 revolves around the theme of human sacrifice, but events unfold in
 such a way that each in its fashion shows why the human sacrifice
 does not after all take place. The rite is essential to our myth,
 but it is the myth which leads to an interiorization and spiritual-

ization of the rite. And when all is said and done, no one is sacrificed.

This leads us to consider this myth as the vestige of a primordial initiation rite, probably pre-vedic and tribal, as we shall yet have occasion to see. Here we need only stress the myth-rite unity that our story reveals.

(22)
2.2.3 The Sacredness of the Theme (Future)

Subsequent tradition has not forgotten this sacred history, and we find an almost uninterrupted series of tales about the different characters of our mythologumenon.⁽⁷⁷⁾ (Already in the Rāmāyaṇa, we have another version of the myth: (78) Ambarīṣa, the king of Ayodhyā was in the midst of offering the royal sacrifice of the āsvamedha when, there too, Indra intervened and carried off the victim. Now such a crucial sacrifice cannot be left unfinished; this would entail a major catastrophe. The celebrant priest declared that only a human victim would save the situation. They began searching and finally discovered a brahman who had three sons. The father wanted to preserve the eldest and the mother wanted the youngest; the one in the middle, Śunaḥśepa, agreed to serve as the victim for a great sum of gold, jewels and cows. (79) Then he went off to find his maternal uncle Viśvāmitra, to whom he said: 'I have neither father nor mother. Arrange it so that the king may be able to offer the sacrifice, but save my life'. (80) So the great sage taught him two verses which Śunaḥśepa uttered when the occasion arrived and was delivered. (81)

Here one should underscore the fact that Śunaḥśepa offers himself as the victim voluntarily; the sin of paternal betrayal is thereby evaded. On the other hand, Śunaḥśepa allows himself to be led to the

sacrifice knowing he will be spared. The entire sacrificial mytheme is thus enfeebled.

The Purāṇas and the Mahābhārata also give us different versions. (82) In Chapters VII and VIII of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa (one of the oldest and most important purāṇas (83)), we read the savory and quixotic narrative of Hariścandra, the famous king lauded in the Mahābhārata for the generosity with which he celebrated the royal consecration, and for which he afterwards pays dearly. His rival is the brahman, Viśvāmitra, whose supremacy Hariścandra bemoans as the downfall of the 'sciences' (śāstras). The priest is victorious however, and after reducing Hariścandra to a poverty bordering on misery, still requires from him the ritual honoraria due a brahman at the rājasūya. Hariścandra must sell his kingdom and dispose of all his riches in order to satisfy the debt. Then, with the queen Saibyā and their son, he leaves for Varanasi. But Viśvāmitra has preceeded the family to that city and now demands that Hariścandra pay the remainder of his debt at once. The king must sell his wife and child, and then sells himself to a candāla who assigns him the most humiliating tasks, even to the point of making him steal the garments of the dead which people bring to be burned. One night, after a year of this abject work, he recognizes a child brought to be cremated, and the woman who brings him, as his son and his wife. And the king, a model of patience and non-violence, decides to die with his wife on the pyre of their only son. But he is not free to do so, he must first ask permission of his master the outcaste. He obtains permission, places his son on the pyre and then, before lying there together with his queen, collects his thoughts by meditating on the Supreme Ātman, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahman and Kṛṣṇa. At this point,

the assembled celestial court intervenes and declares him to be a truly righteous ^M man who has won heaven by his good works. Even the caṇḍāla reveals himself to be none other than the God Dharma. But Hariścandra, the perfect king, refuses to go to heaven unless all his subjects can accompany him. Because of his poverty he had deserted them in suffering, but he cannot abandon them now. He wishes them to share his happiness. So Indra descends from heaven with ten thousand celestial chariots to transport all the king's people. And Hariścandra, having made the necessary arrangements for his resurrected son to succeed him, ascends to heaven with the queen and all his servants and people.

The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa ends the story by praising the patience and generosity of Hariścandra, striking but one melancholy note by alluding to the catastrophic results of the unfinished rājasūya. Subsequent legends introduce more complications into the narrative, as if to emphasize the human character of our hero. Thus, for example, the later literature paints for us a Hariścandra who is induced to vaunt his virtues by the brahman Nārada. As a result, he and his subjects fall from the celestial paradise. Mid-way, however, he repents and the ^G gods check his fall and create for the king and his subjects saubha, the aerial city between heaven and earth which, following popular belief, can still be seen on special occasions. Even today, this story is a living part of north indian culture.

2.3 The Commentaries (the Logos of the Myth)

Our concern here is not to study the numerous commentaries of indian and occidental authors on this text. Besides the classical commentary of Sāyana, there are other, earlier commentaries. (88) To the extent I was able to consult these, I noticed that they supply precious hints on details and allegorical interpretation, (89) but offer no general interpretation. There is no need--for these commentators the meaning of the myth goes without saying, it is self-evident. The majority of commentaries made by indologists, on the other hand, are preoccupied with technical questions or historical problems like human sacrifice, but I have found no study along the line^s of the present interpretation. (90) This silence bears me out in believing that this is a living myth and so, for some, it has never been interpreted as a myth while, for others, it has been offered as a simple legend. To the former, you give the straightforward account, i.e., the legein, not the logos, of the myth (you tell the story, but make no hermeneutic of it). For the latter group, you analyze the logos of the story and not the legein of the myth (you reduce it to its literary content, but again make no hermeneutic of it). Here you are substituting the logos, the interpretation, for the myth.

Is it possible to make a hermeneutic of a myth as myth? Do we not condemn our own effort, since we are trying precisely to interpret this myth? Do we kill the myth by interpreting it? My reply here must be as carefully nuanced as it is sincere. The moment someone feels the need to interpret a myth he cannot, by this very fact, accept it without his interpretation. But then the myth has crossed over from the invisible horizon to the visible object, from the background canvas to the figure in relief, from the context to the text. When we cease

to believe the myth, when it no longer 'goes without saying', we try to believe in it by means of our interpretation. But in so doing we distance ourselves from it, the myth is no longer connatural to us, transparent. Its inter-pretation inter-poses itself between the myth and us. Was Socrates not condemned to death for daring to interpret myth? (91)

Clearly, there is a whole ^{le}/methodic latent here, quite different from any traditional methodology. I have already hinted at it but, as I have said, I prefer giving an example to elaborating a theory. Therefore I shall mention only a few of the problems raised by indologists, in order to round out the setting of our myth.

4) 2.3.1 The Elements of the Sacred History

An analysis of this sacred history leads us to think that it arises from the conjunction of three motifs and three stories. (92)

The first motif, probably the oldest, goes back to the R̥g Vedic texts which recount Śunaḥśepa's liberation from affliction and death due to the bounty and generosity of the ^G/~~#~~ods. There is here an element of piety, of bhakti, and trust in God--one of the rare vedic examples of such devotion tinged with love. From this angle it seems to be a purely religious text, ripe for any spiritual or spiritualist interpretation: it is divine grace which frees ^M/~~m~~en from anguish and danger. The sacred history becomes a theology which recounts the relations between ^M/~~m~~an and the ^G/~~#~~ods. The hero is Śunaḥśepa: ^M/~~m~~an in distress, or simply homo religiosus (the brahman).

The second element centers on the story of Hariścandra and his son Rohita. (93) Śunaḥśepa appears only as the substitute. The theme here is confronting one's destiny, and fleeing it. The sacred history becomes a cosmology which underscores the solidarity of the

entire universe. The hero is Rohita: ^Mman in the world, or simply homo saecularis (the kṣatriya).

The latest text furnishes the third element; here the accent is on Śunaḥśepa (94), above all on his relationship with Viśvāmitra, since this affects the whole skein of relations between the gotra (clans) of different families. The theme is more ritualistic and sociologically important for India. The sacred history becomes an anthropology--or a sociology--which shows the ethico-historical dimension of these human ties. The hero is Devarāta: ^Mman in his historical role, or simply homo politicus.

One thing seems clear: this sacred history, conveyed to us over nearly three millenia, reveals older and in a sense deeper strata of human awareness than we find in the historical era of the written document. It has been composed with extreme care, placed in an appropriate setting, and worded in such a detailed way that it seems written for posterity--for us.

Whatever our mythologumenon's gestation period may have been, we ought to stress the myth's functional unity. A myth is not an historical narrative. We must see it whole in order to understand it. Besides his importance in the brāhmaṇic tradition, Śunaḥśepa is also a seer, a vedic ṛṣi. (95) In the Ṛg Veda we find the hymns which he composed at the sacrificial stake together with others attributed to him as well. (96)

2.3.2 The Human Sacrifice

Our story is a locus classicus of discussion on human sacrifice in vedic India, (97) a required study among indologists of the last century. (98) Those who subscribed to an interpretation favoring the existence of human sacrifice alleged, above all, that such a story

could not have been told if human sacrifice had not been a practice current, or at least familiar, during that epoch. (99) Others, in our century as well, lean heavily on parallels within the overall Indian tradition. (100)

On the other hand some ^{au} authors, probably the most numerous, tell us that human sacrifice is certainly not vedic. (101) Indeed, our text in general seems to hold human sacrifice in disfavor--the general narrative tone, the denouement of the plot, the four priests who refuse to sacrifice a human victim, the fact that Ajīgarta, Śunaḥśepa's father, is punished to the point of losing his paternity for having consented to bind his son for the sacrifice, Śunaḥśepa's cry of surprise and anguish when he discovers they want to kill him like an animal; a great deal supports the negative thesis concerning human sacrifice.

Other authors see in the tale an end to this custom and, according to these scholars, the legend was composed with this in mind. Still another sort of interpretation which favors the existence of human sacrifice makes the strong and crucial point that if the danger were not real, the story would be meaningless. (102)

Parenthetically perhaps, one might also wonder why a king who lacks an heir would pray for a son only to sacrifice him. (103) Are we to conclude that the customs of the time demanded sacrifice of the first-born? (104)

However these matters may stand, the central problem is not merely a problem for historico-religious research, but also and above all a truly human question, with which we must now come to grips.

3 The Myth of the Human Condition

Can we present this myth in such a way as to express the deep convictions, the horizon, of the culture which gave it birth, and at the same time discover it as a sacred history able to offer to other cultures a guidepost to where they may find a thinking deeper, or even fresher, than their own? Has this myth a trans-cultural value, and consequently a role to play in the encounter and eventual enrichment of human traditions?

This is not only, nor principally, a question of appropriate translation into another idiom, i.e., it is not just transposing one system of signs into another system of signs in order to express in a different way what one already knows. Here it is a question of language, not merely of idiom. Our problem is not translation. We can only translate what can be translated into another system. All true translation presupposes, first, that the elements we are going to transpose retain their identity in the transaction, and secondly, that there are meaningful signs for these elements already present in the idiom into which we are translating.

Here we see the fundamental difference in method between translating concepts and interpreting myths. The hermeneutic of myths resembles a liturgical act, a sacred action; which is the true office of Hermes--not an intermediary, a simple go-between, but a priest, a mediator between worlds.

Our own function is consequently that of priest, celebrant, even prophet. What concerns us is whether this myth can be ~~celebrated~~ celebrated on soil not its own, whether it can realize in another culture

a function similar to the one it has fulfilled in its original culture. Can we sing the psalm of Śunahśepa on foreign soil? (105) Can this mythologumenon be truly revealing, as every genuine myth is? Any myth, to be sure, offers us an horizon over against which we can voice whatever we discover; but at the same time, every myth sets us a course, opens certain doors, unveils dimensions of the real which without this contact might not be discovered (myth as revelation) or even heard (myth as śruti). No revelation manifests something utterly new, which we would find incomprehensible. Every revelation unveils what we have already glimpsed, foreseen, and even in a way believed.

The thrust of our interpretation comes down to what I could call an anthropological theory of myth. This theory does not deny any other approach to ~~my~~th: psychological, morphological, structuralist, historical or theological. The contributions of contemporary scholarship are too abundant to ignore. (106) Rather it emphasizes a trait common to most of these theories: In myth man discovers himself, myth expresses what man is.

Myth entices and intimates, it gives pause, it excites and fascinates, because in myth ^Mman discovers his roots, his origins, as integral parts of his own being. He discovers in myth his true memory, which is not only the conscious reminiscence of events in his individual lifetime, but a memory that extends over thousands of years, back at least to the origins of ^{his} language. Whatever the question--^Mman's psychological, personal or social dimension, his historical agency, his reflection on being human, or his response to the sacred--in every case, we discover in myth what ^Mman is. In this perspective we will situate ourselves.

The method we will use is not directly comparative; i.e., we shall not compare the indian myth of Śunaḥśepa with, say, the biblical myth of Adam or Abraham or even Job. We will pursue a more simple, although more difficult, course: to clarify the myth by itself, to place it in a larger context which will render it intelligible given the horizon of understanding provided by contemporary western language. In obliquo, we will find here points of contact as well as disparities, but these depend on our personal contexts. Strictly speaking, the mythologumenon needs a rsi, a bard, in order to be sung, recited; and a hotr, a priest, in order to be performed, consummated.

We have called this sacred history a myth of the human condition for two reasons. First, from the phenomenological point of view, it depicts the factual situation of ^Mman on earth. We hope to show this by analyzing respectively 1) the characters of the mythologumenon, and 2) several mythemes, present and absent. Secondly, from the philosophical point of view, the myth presents the human condition by bringing it to a climax in the deconditioning of human liberation itself, i.e., by really freeing freedom from the compulsion to be.

2) 3.1 The Characters

Before us parade the representatives of the three worlds: ^GGods, ^MMen and ^CCosmos. It is worth recalling that the cosmotheandric vision of reality is an almost universal cultural invariant. I know of no culture where heaven-earth-hell; past-present-future; ^GGods-^MMen-^WWorld; the pronouns I-you-it; and even the intellectual triad of yes, no and their embrace, is not found in one form or another.

Here I can only capsulize this cosmotheandric principle, which I have developed at length elsewhere, by noting that the divine, the human and the earthly--however we prefer to call them--are three real and different dimensions which constitute the real, i.e., any reality inasmuch as it is real. We can, we sometimes even must, make distinctions, but we cannot close communication between spheres of the real. What this principle emphasizes is that the three dimensions of reality are neither three modes of a monolithic indistinguishable reality, nor are they three elements of a pluralistic system. They are rather one, though intrinsically threefold relation which expresses the ultimate constitution of reality.

The central theme of our myth is the human condition, not the divine situation or the destiny of cosmos. But it depicts an all-embracing, and not a solipsistic, human condition. The humans here occupy the foreground, but they are not alone. The myth is centered on a complete Man, not closed in on an abstraction 'man' lacking any constitutive relation to the entire reality.

c) 3.1.1 The Humans

x) 3.1.1.1 Śunaḥśepa is without doubt the central figure, the hero of our myth. He is flanked right and left by two pairs of characters whose roles change according to circumstances. First, on his right are the king Hariścandra and his son Rohita, the dual cause of his trial; on his left are Ajīgarta and the priest Viśvāmitra, the two fathers who claim him. Next, at his right are the ailing Hariścandra and Viśvāmitra who refuses to sacrifice Śunaḥśepa, both together being the secondary cause of his deliverance; and at his left, Rohita, egoist or anguished son, and Ajīgarta, miser or coward, both being the secondary cause of his ordeal. Throughout the drama we find this ambivalence of roles.

His name is just revolting: Śunaḥśepa, 'the penis of a dog', (107) the most shameful part of an accursed animal. (His brothers have similar names, (108)) But neither the name nor the form (which, as nāmarūpa, generally go together in indian literature) represents the thing or its function, even less its essence. The notion is mid-way between realism and nominalism: the nāma is exterior, but it must be interiorized until it is completely transformed. But change cannot come before initiation, conversion, purification. And the process must be total. The name will not change until the very end, until the victory in the trial-by-fire with death. Śunaḥśepa's name (only) changes when Viśvāmitra explains what has happened: the ^G gods have given him back to life, and to Viśvāmitra--Devarāta, God-given (Deodatus, Theodorus). Man must live his life with a humble, even humiliating name until he is free.

All India recalls the teaching of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (109) that name and form are not the essence, not the being, and of no importance in arriving at wisdom, which is not to know all things, but to understand that by which all things are known. (110)

Śunaḥśepa is a brahman, son of a brahman of the Āṅgiras line. (111) It befits a brahman to be poor, but not to be miserable in this poverty or harried by hunger. Śunaḥśepa's only worth, his wealth, is his life, most of which is still to be lived. (112) And this life they would strip from him in the most inhuman way. He is not the hero who fights, who risks life and limb for a noble cause, nor the one who abandons this world's goods to seek better. He is not an exceptional, extraordinary fellow. To the contrary, he incarnates the most banal, the most common, human condition: the son of a poor family who yet retains the dignity of knowing himself to be a person.

Śunaḥśepa is alone, without ties; pure victim. His father looks out for the eldest son, and his mother watches over the youngest; but he belongs to no one. He has neither father nor mother nor possessions. He has only himself. (114)

Śunaḥśepa does nothing; bad luck finds him. He approaches the pyre and allows himself to be tied to the triple stake. (115) Is this not the human destiny of the common ^Mman; Śunaḥśepa, the ^Mman whose life is controlled by circumstance, the ^Mman brought to bay at death's door? Śunaḥśepa is seized unawares. Nothing has prepared him for the role he is to play. Only at the last moment, when he realizes they are about to sacrifice him like an animal, when there is no other way out, does he have recourse to prayer as a final entreaty.

Śunaḥśepa's mission is not the fruit of a choice or an option; it is a given, or rather an unexpected and seemingly paradoxical gift which takes ^{po}tean form, now as a menace, now as a curse. In any case, it is not a mission chosen nor a conflict sought. There is no willfulness here. The ordinary ^Mman does not choose his vocation, he has neither the luxury, nor the occasion, to torment himself by asking whether he could not be more useful elsewhere, or whether he could do something else. Destiny hits us like a thunderbolt; it corners us and leaves no door open, no alternative but a leap into transcendence. ~~But~~ the moment of salto morale comes only when existence is menaced, when life itself is at stake. Here is where prayer is most authentic.

The prayer of Śunaḥśepa is not primarily an intellectual elucubration, nor is it an outpouring of the heart. It is sincere, but neither directly willed nor reflexively reasoned out. It is the final attempt, the supreme request, by groping, searching--.

He knows neither whom to address nor how. He tries again and again, he perseveres without being discouraged. His patience, his endurance, will save him.

Śunaḥśepa's prayer is not a superfluity. It is neither the effusion of a loving heart, nor the profusion of a spirit in quest of supreme knowledge. It is much more elementary, terrestrial, urgent. It is the simple cry of a ^Mman who is 'without hope', as Śunaḥśepa himself puts it. (116) This prayer is the cry of a ^Mman in misery, the human spirit's spontaneous impulse toward something more powerful than itself or the whims of ^Mmen. When you have recourse to other, more direct means for obtaining what you want, prayer is not authentic, above all if you make it an excuse for not using these other means. You only really pray in a 'limit situation'. Prayer is the very frontier of life, not a simple human activity alongside all the others, but the final and most fundamental human act, by which Man recovers life when all else fails. Prayer wells up spontaneously from the very fount of our being, almost in spite of us: it hollows us out through and through, as if issuing from a hidden immanence we did not suspect and flowing into an infinite transcendence we cannot even imagine.

We tend to forget that the very word 'prayer' does not mean only a request, but a precarious supplication^{...} uncertain, unassured, impoverished, lacking any basis or support other than that which it invokes. (117) Magic, not prayer, claims to be effective by itself.

Once free, Śunaḥśepa remains within the ritual world. He re-enters the realm of the sacred and must perform his new office. The true high-priest is always also the victim. (118) Since the sacrifice cannot remain unfinished, he must complete it. He becomes the rsi,

the seer, the poet, the priest. Now he is the whole sacrifice, 'Man is the sacrifice'. (119)

Śunaḥśepa is Man, the victim of destiny--of the ^G gods, of society, of human privilege and power. He is the average ^M man, the ^M man of this exploited, starving, enslaved, alienated majority present since the world began, the victim of the sacrifice. He is the poor ^M man called 'a dog's penis'. But he is also--and here we find all the ambivalence of the sacred--the victim who by his sacrifice gives life. He is the savior, the pure one, the one who pays, because he is the only one who has the wherewithal, something to pay with--namely his life. Śunaḥśepa is the one who atones for and redeems the powerful, the nobles, warriors, rich ^M men, ^M men of action, and all the Rohitas of the world. He is the true brahman, the real priest--the 'royal' priest, not a class or a caste, but the common human being with an ^{unembellished} ~~impo~~ ^W humanness which truly mediates between the ^G gods and the rest of the ^W world.

Some have wanted to see in Śunaḥśepa a fettered solar divinity. (120) He thus becomes a cosmic figure fastened to the triple-rooted (121) cosmic tree. (122) It is not for us to interpret Śunaḥśepa by way of a full-blown hypothesis on vedic divinities. Our human interpretation is valuable for the myth in itself, even if the cosmic and solar hypothesis should prove accurate.

(3)

3.1.1.2 Rohita, after Śunaḥśepa, is the richest character in the myth.

His name too is significant. It means: the reddish one, a double reference to the sun (often called by this name), and to the earth ('the red'). Rohita, like adamah means the reddish inhabitant of earth; the active ^M man par excellence. (123) He incarnates historical ^M man, the one who makes history, homo activus.

If Śunaḥśepa is the ^Mman marked by destiny, who bears his burden by sacred calling, Rohita is preeminently the secular ^Mman, the one who chooses, who finds himself confronted by life-or-death options. He is the ^Mman of will, above all of a will to life. The passivity and non-violence of the brahman Śunaḥśepa contrasts with the activity and aggression of the kṣatriya Rohita.

Rohita is born of an impossibility. He is exceptional. Even a hundred wives could not engender him. Just so, human life is the exception in nature, it realizes the minimum probability. Life is indeed a gift, but we hoard it, we resist giving it back; it is too precious, too exceptional. There is a Rohita in everyone.

The life of Rohita is an obstacle course run around death. He flees death, he runs in the opposite direction. In childhood, his father decides for him; later, he himself says no! and leaves for the forest. He cannot live among ^Mmen because he fears they may recognize him, trap him. But his fear does not paralyze him, he is ready to take up his bow and assume his responsibilities; he slinks only from death. When he hears talk of his father's affliction, he is prepared to go to him; but each time he seems about to yield to filial piety, Indra appears in the form of a brahman and counsels him not to bury himself in his kingdom, not to go home to his village. He must wander like the sun: Homo viator! Has he succumbed to temptation or followed good advice? We cannot answer this question without denying its validity (as we shall see a little later).

Rohita's first act once he reaches the age of reason is to say no, and leave for the wild. This no is not a mere figure of speech. Rohita does not justify himself, he argues against nobody. He says no, picks up his bow and escapes. This no is repeated

successively throughout his wandering life; the five times he seems ready to give in, his no is reinforced by Indra's arguments. What is ^Mman? The ascetic of life, the animal who says no? (124) Is he the rebel in the universe, the one who collapses under the burden of his humanity? (125) Is he the itinerant, not yet mature enough or wise enough to accept human contingency? (126)

In any case, Rohita's life gravitates around this no. It is a no to death, but also to obedience and submission. Does he say no to dharma and ultimately to ṛta? Or does he ^{only} repudiate tradition's burden and ultimately injustice?

In the first instance Rohita would be a blasphemer: in order to save his own skin he defies the cosmic order, tries to avoid it, and finally coerces Ajīgarta to sell his son. But the narrative gives no clue that would permit this interpretation. Not a single line pronounces judgment against Rohita. His actions appear irreproachable. Such a hermeneutic is also impossible given the indian context of our story. The kṣatriya (as we read in the Gītā) must ^{set} ~~save~~ his own life to protect others. (127)

In the second instance Roh^hita would be the hero of our myth, he would represent ^Mman, the reddish one, the earthly, the secular one who, bow in hand, confronts the fixed, petrified tradition and tries to free himself from the ^{G-}gods' crushing grip. It is then hardly surprising that he should choose a brahman, the living incarnation of tradition, as his substitute. From this angle, Rohita represents a mankind come of age which, freed from paternal tutelage, seeks to protect itself by taking in hand its own destiny.

But it is important to keep from seeing Rohita's attempts at emancipation as a revolution in the modern sense of the word. Rohita

does not revolt against his father, nor does he rebel against the ^Gods. He is not a Prometheus struggling against Zeus. Rohita denounces nothing and nobody. Throughout the narrative there is an atmosphere of serenity which keeps Rohita from being turned into a western-style prophet like Jonah, for instance. He says no, and afterwards keeps silent, flees and tries to defend himself.

Rohita is spared death, but he also misses true life. The silence of the text is freighted with meaning. There is nothing more to say about Rohita; he lived to escape death and in this he succeeded, but is this evasion authentic life? In any case, emancipation remains a central consideration to which we shall return.

2)
 3.1.1.3 Hariścandra, of whom later legend will speak so abundantly, is in this myth a peculiar, rather eclipsed character. Here we shall only note the essential traits which characterize his role. Hariścandra has but a single desire: to have a son and keep him alive. He symbolizes the wish for immortality, represented in this case by the desire for a male descendant. He wants to live on, he knows he himself cannot exhaust all the vitality he possesses. He still has projects to realize, dreams to dream, pleasures to try, powers to exercise. Hariścandra is the ^Mman for whom life is too short, or too full. He cannot live by halves, nor leave any desire unsated. He needs to prolong his life. It is the son who continues the life of the father, and so saves him. Hariścandra has feelings common to everyone. He embarks on an affair without knowing how he will ever get out of it; and when he finds himself driven into a corner, he continually puts off any decision. He wants only to avoid the humiliation of not having an heir.

Hariścandra cannot escape the destiny he has forged for himself. He falls ill because he does not keep his promise to offer his son in sacrifice to Varuṇa. He has power, but not freedom; he is a king, possesses a kingdom, but he is sick and impotent.

It is significant that later tradition has focused the myth more and more on Hariścandra, nearly forgetting the other characters. Does this indicate merely a change in the social climate favoring the monarchy, to which the court scribes bear witness? We might instead venture two hypotheses. The first is the tendency to convert tragedy into drama. Although the myth may not have the literary form of a tragedy, it presents certain tragic elements. Śunaḥśepa and Rohita are seized by destiny, they represent Man, they incarnate us, each in his fashion. On the other hand, the legends of Hariścandra are dramas. Hariścandra is a king; we can look at him, even pity him, but from a distance. He is not us, we cannot identify with him.

Our second hypothesis would be that while the mythic strength of Śunaḥśepa and Rohita has remained buried over the centuries, only to flower in our own day, the evocative strength of the drama surrounding Hariścandra, the nobleman with his faith in ^Men and the ^Gods, harmonized more readily with the atmosphere of times past. Hariścandra would then be the hero of a bygone social order.

§3.1.1.4 Ajīgarta, so the text tells us, was starving. Hunger is a poor counsellor, but also a valid excuse. He should nevertheless have been content with selling his son, but he seems to have caught a taste for silver. He comes forward a second, then a third time, to bind and to sacrifice Śunaḥśepa, in return for which he adds to his riches. If Hariścandra wants a son at any price, Ajīgarta is hardly anxious to keep his. Certainly, he has two other sons, but,

as Śunaḥśepa himself reproaches him, to prefer three hundred cows to the life of his son is unthinkable, even among people of the lowest class. Ajīgarta the brahman behaves worse than a śūdra. The value of the person is measured here by his acts, not by his birth. Rather a revolutionary vision for a society on the way to petrifying its caste system.

It is noteworthy that the myth speaks of the sin of Ajīgarta, and even of an unforgivable act. His own son indicts him. But in later tradition the great code of Manu justifies acts committed in order to save life which is menaced by starvation and even cites Ajīgarta as a pertinent example:

'Ajīgarta, suffering from hunger, comes close to sacrificing his son, but he committed no sin, since he sought to cure hunger.' (128)

We note here the radical change of valuation when passing from the ontological regime we have been considering to the juridical regime of the śāstras. In this latter world Ajīgarta's action is not considered sinful--and many a court of justice would probably agree with Manu (at least regarding the first hundred cows). In the realm of ontological sacrifice, on the other hand, which is the context of our myth, Ajīgarta is the villain indispensable for the sacrifice, the traitor necessary to complete the sacrifice; he is in a way the true high-priest of the sacrifice: the 'hangman'. And in another sense he is the 'victim' who makes it possible. Śunaḥśepa is the victim immolated for ^Mmen, which is why he is spared and does not die. Rohita is in a certain sense the victim chosen by the ^Gods and the victim of circumstance, who is also saved by Śunaḥśepa. But Ajīgarta is the true victim, the one who is not spared. He is the victim of cosmic destiny, pta, and is condemned without pardon.

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And yet it is Ajīgarta who, as Śunaḥśepa's father, but above all by his triple acceptance, renders the sacrifice possible. Is there not in every sacrifice an irreducible, unpardonable element, which cannot be integrated into the sacrifice and which is precisely what makes the sacrifice possible? It seems there must be a sin, hence a sinner, a fall, a disorder at the origin of any sacrifice. Even more, it seems there is an originating fault at the origin of the universe itself. (129) Unhappy the one through whom the scandal comes, accursed he who commits the crime, or causes it, but through his sin, by his crime, deliverance comes and the sacrifice is effective. Ajīgarta represents the ontological condition for sacrifice, that act for which no reparation is possible. He is both the stumbling block, and the starting block. Thanks to his sin, virtue triumphs.

3.1.1.5 Viśvāmitra is among the most famous ṛsis of the Vedas, and the author of the Gāyatrī; this ksatriya (or even, according to some, this śūdra) who merits the rank of brahman (130) by his austerities and by his life, here plays a double role. On the one hand, he represents the liturgical and sacred element, the complete sacerdotal order in its dimension of charisma and institution. He is the ^MMan of rite, of sacred history. Despite the abomination of the human sacrifice, he and his fellow priests cannot ignore the vitality of sacrifice and implore Śunaḥśepa to continue the ceremony after he is no longer its victim. One can neither interrupt the sacrifice, nor leave it unfinished, as the 'rubrics' of practically all religious traditions tell us. (131)

On the other hand, Viśvāmitra is the ^MMan of the Establishment, of History. He not only adopts Śunaḥśepa, but installs him as the eldest of his sons, as the chief of the gotras, the clans which

make up the elite of the aryan race. We can speak of the unity between sacred and profane, or of the continuum between sacred history and secular history, or of the institutional and charismatic character of the priesthood; in any case, Viśvāmitra stands for sacred and historical continuity, as the whole tradition surrounding this vedic seer confirms.

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3.1.1.6 The People

Although these five characters may be the myth's central figures, all of humanity is represented as well.

The women have a role best described as subdued; the hundred wives of Hariścandra and the mother of Śunaḥśepa are mentioned, but Rohita's mother is not identified. (133)

The two brahmans Parvata and Nārada are the voice of purest orthodoxy. It is Nārada who expounds the traditional doctrine of immortality and who advises the king to have recourse to Varuṇa by promising to offer his son in sacrifice. It is Nārada who tells us of the incest between animals in order to obtain descendants and of the traditional notion of human debts.

The names of the three other priests officiating at the sacrifice are also mentioned. Viśvāmitra is the Oblate, Vasiṣṭha, his traditional enemy, plays the role of Brahman, (134) and Jamadagni is the Acolyte. The liturgical, sacramental and sacred setting is thus complete.

Śunaḥśepa's two brothers are mentioned as well. Their presence underscores both Śunaḥśepa's solitude and his ties with the community. Solitude, because he is alone, he is not the favorite, saved by his parents like his brother; his communal ties, since he is one among the sons of Ajigarta, a 'young man of good family'.

n) Vasiṣṭha

Vasiṣṭha, the great brahmin and foe of Viśvamitra, hardly appears in our history. Important as he is in other contexts, here he would only figure in a 'historical' and 'naturalistic' interpretation. According to this exegesis, everything is reduced to a political plot of Vasiṣṭha in order to inherit Hariścandra's kingdom: as the royal priest, he first suggested the vow to the king and then, clothed as Indra, tried to dissuade Rohita from going back, (132).

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3.1.2.1 The Gods

The human condition is not complete if it does not include the mysterious forces which envelop human life. In this myth we find three very significant patterns of divine intervention.

3.1.2.1 Varuṇa, the great God of the Rig Veda, is the supreme lord of life and death. He watches over all that lives. For every human birth modifies the universal disturbance. Man must re-establish the equilibrium his existence has disrupted. In vedic terms, human life carries with it a four-fold obligation on the part of the new being towards all reality, a debt which accompanies him throughout life. (133). These obligations are not the results of chance, but constitutives of human life: the debt to the gods, to the rain, to the ancestors and to humanity. Accordingly, one offers sacrifice (to cooperate with the gods in sustaining the world), studies the Vedas (to acquire wisdom and so live a full life), prolongs the life

Finally, history is represented by the hundred and one sons of Viśvāmitra. Here, as in any historical realm, we have a division into two groups, the elders ~~group~~ who are cursed by their father for not accepting Śunaḥśepa, and the younger ones who are blessed and from whom the pure clans of the aryan race will descend. It is very clear here that the origin of castes 'beyond the pale' lies in a disobedience and a curse; the dasyu, slaves, or non-aryans are also descendants of Viśvāmitra. The myth seems to want to justify history and sociology, so it emphasizes the fact that both arians and non-aryans are sons of the same father. Here is myth seeking to vindicate history.

ii)
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one has received, i.e., has children (each of us is the link between our ancestors and our descendants), and finally welcomes one's contemporaries, practices hospitality and the other civic virtues (without which life would be a failure). ¹³⁵ (135)

It is within this context that we must understand the role of Varuṇa. Rohita's birth, like any human birth, is the fruit of a longing and a natural improbability. Man does not belong to the gods like some sort of private property of which they may dispose at will. Rta, cosmic order, governs the dynamism of all reality. ¹³⁶ (136) Man belongs to the entire universe. The ^Gods also have their role-- a divine role--to play. Varuṇa, the guardian of rta, enters our tale not as a capricious and powerful sovereign; he does not take the initiative, he simply agrees to Hariścandra's proposition. He does not accept Hariścandra's promise in order to test him, tempt him, or toy with him by putting him in an impossible situation. Varuṇa is not an anthropomorphic God. In spite of Śunaḥśepa's prayer, it is not Varuṇa who delivers him. He need not justify himself before ^Men, nor explain death and evil to them. As Lord of the cosmic order, he knows very well that human life is transitory and that one must offer it in sacrifice. The mystery of life is the mystery of solidarity, the law of karma stands always in the background. Each of us has to face his own karma. Rohita must die like any ^Man. So must Śunaḥśepa. Only the manner of death differs. In this common destiny, the real state of things, which is normally unseen, becomes visible. Varuṇa is but its living symbol.

3.1.2.2 Indra is always a God who strikes; but this time he does not strike with his vajra, his thunderbolt, but by his unexpected intervention, which brings to light an important facet of this sacred history. Rohita refuses five consecutive times to return home so that Hariścandra might keep his promise to Varuṇa and be cured. The temptation, if we can call it that, does not come from demons, but from God. Rohita never feels compelled. Indra takes human form precisely in order to let Rohita choose for himself. Rohita does not have to decide between filial duty and divine command. He must decide by virtue of his own convictions. Nevertheless, Indra seems opposed to the justice which is due to Varuṇa. A monolithic conception of divinity would have temptation come only from the devil; but then where does the devil come from? In a pluralistic conception of divinity (not to be confounded with so-called polytheistic plurality), temptation comes from the very core of the divinity. But temptation is certainly not an evil per se, and ^Man must recognize in it an immense potential to be developed. Temptation is not a trap, neither is it a sort of low blow from an enemy. Temptation is intrinsic to life, it belongs to the very nature of things and to the divinity; it is at once the test and the proof, it proffers different courses of action and confronts us with the full constitutive ambivalence of the human situation. It thus creates a space where human will can unfold. This is not the function of an evil spirit, but of God himself. Such is Indra's role in our story.

The temptation instigated by Indra is the ordeal all adults must undergo in making decisions. Death lurks everywhere. Can we escape it? In the village, at home, death is certain; but in the wild, life is not a human life. Clearly, the true sannyāsin must

forsake the village, even if his father is dying, and even if he, the son, has caused it. The exigency of the absolute is absolute. Indra offers Rohita the opportunity to convert his evasion into a sublimation. Let us examine this more closely.

Although the Sūtra narrative, which post-dates the Brāhmaṇa version, speaks of yet a sixth encounter with Indra, the five temptations of our text offer an interesting typology of human ordeals, and consequently of what ^Mman is. (137).

The key theme is always pilgrimage, movement: 'Move on, move on!' The leitmotif of all Indra's interventions is to emphasize that action, the life of wandering, of continual pilgrimage, in a word, dynamism, is superior to all static conformity. We should recall the situation: Rohita has pangs of conscience and decides to return to his father and face his destiny. Indra, disguised as a brahman, goes to meet him and convinces him otherwise...he must continue to live, to wander, to follow his path. (138)

The reasons comprising the five temptations are drawn from different depths: the first is grounded in the superiority of the saṃnyāsin, of asceticism over the townsman's life, since 'he who chooses to live among ^Mmen does wrong'. This is the traditional rationale and Indra mentions śruti, Revelation, in order to lend weight to his argument. He does not propose disobedience, but fidelity to tradition.

The second temptation goes a step further. Deliverance is not easy, ^Mman is a sinner and must be redeemed. All his efforts must be directed to this end. Personal salvation is the supreme law.

The third temptation alleges a reason which appears more egoistic, but at bottom may also be deeper. Life is not merely a struggle

to purify yourself of sin, but a matter of realizing yourself fully, of making your fortune, of not letting your talents go to waste without bringing them to fruition. For this it is necessary to 'traffic' with them, by 'pressing on'. Human plenitude does not come to us without effort, by 'sitting down on it'. We must move along, we must go to meet our salvation.

The fourth temptation may be explained by either a cosmic or a social rationale. (139) From the former point of view, there are four cosmic ages. Our conduct can reflect each of these ages or it can condition them. If Rohita wants to model himself on the age of kālī, the worst of all, he can relax, do just as he likes; if, on the contrary, he wants to express the best of times, he must keep active. In other words, the reason here is that in order to collaborate with cosmic history, each of us must step beyond individualistic problems and awaken to our cosmic vocation. If, on the other hand, ^{if} it ~~refers~~ ^{refers} ~~to~~ ^{only to} a game of dice, this reason seems much like the preceding one, and could be interpreted as symbolizing the different qualities of human life.

The fifth temptation seems to combine human, personal, even egoistical, elements with the dynamism of the universe, represented by the sun, ever active, ever journeying, the happiest of beings. Man goes on his way together with the seasons and the stars.

Must we call these temptations? Has Rohita done well to listen to them? Has he acted according to dharma or not? Should he not have gone back to the village immediately to keep the promise made to Varuṇa and save his father from affliction?

Here again the myth is original and, indeed, scarcely intelligible outside the Indian context.

In order to understand, we must consider the symbolism ~~under~~ of ~~lying-the-gods~~ Varuṇa and Indra. They stand for two poles of the divine. Varuṇa is called the ethical God, the one who sees, scrutinizes, judges and pardons the actions of ^Mmen, the one whom nothing escapes. Varuṇa represents justice and truth, the internal correlation of things (rta) and at the same time forgiveness, i.e., the power of redressing the broken order. Indra, on the contrary, stands for power, warlike strength and victorious force, the one who liberates and delivers from enemies. If Varuṇa is the moral God par excellence, Indra is the prototype of the one 'beyond good and evil'. Varuṇa is King ⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ by virtue of his intimate relation with the cosmic order, because of his fidelity and his pardon. Indra is King because he is the victor in celestial and earthly battles.

What is ^MMan? The nexus, the ksetra or battlefield between the two most powerful symbols of the divine in the R̥g Veda: Indra and Varuṇa. Without going into indological details, we can sum up this way: there is in ^MMan a constitutive tension between the development of his personality, his own life, and his integration with the cosmos, with society. Man is made from this tension between fidelity to the social and cosmic order and authenticity toward himself. Which must he obey? What must Rohita do? The conflict takes place within him; the ^Ggods are interiorized in this case, since he sees only his father's life in danger and his own menaced. So Rohita moves on until he finds a substitute. Has he done well? Can we reconcile Indra with Varuṇa? Rohita is powerless, but there is Śunaḥśepa, the mediator, and there is prayer, the trans-human dimension in life. It is from the ensemble of characters that the web of life is spun.

3.1.2.3 The Vedic Pantheon plays an important role in this

myth. Varuṇa has agreed to accept Śunaḥśepa as the substitute for Rohita and the boy is to be sacrificed during the rājasūya. But now, as the rite is being celebrated, the victim cries out for deliverance. Who can save him? Should he not resign himself to a higher order of things? Should someone not die in order to save the king, the kingdom and the world? Is there any justifiable escape? Here too our myth is revealing. Śunaḥśepa's oration is neither a prayer of resignation, nor an acceptance of superior divine will. He is unaware of his redemptive mission, he does not consciously reflect on the value of his act. His hands are bound; prayer is all that is left him. The accent here is not on Śunaḥśepa's personal power as a savior, but on the supra-human power of prayer. Prayer is presented here as the art of the impossible. ^{If you} ~~Why bother~~ ^{which} praying for something ^{for you} ~~it~~ is possible ^{to obtain} ~~when you could~~ ^{then should you not rather} be busy obtaining it? Nor is prayer a matter of projecting a psychological anthropomorphism into the super-human world; having recourse to one particular God, or one saint in order to thwart the influence of another 'super-natural' being. Śunaḥśepa does not dream of winning the favor of one God against another. True prayer is not an instrument of power, or a weapon. ^{He} ~~It~~ does not even ask that justice be done, as if it were unjust to die for others or to be sacrificed; prayer does not judge. The whole situation takes place on another plane altogether; it concerns freedom. True freedom does not mean a choice between alternatives which, once made, would deprive us of ~~every~~ other freedom. The realm of choice is the world of karma. Karma is subject to human decision, but once this decision is exercised it is inexorable and follows ^{a sui generis} ~~its own~~ law of causality. (171) The sphere of true freedom lies outside the causal, rational or karmic structure of

the world; it does not contradict these earthly structures, but it oversteps them by far. The sphere of freedom is the sphere of hope against all hope, the sphere of impossibility, of the incomprehensible and non-manipulable. Śunaḥśepa wants to know if he has any chance of being freed because freedom is the supreme value. His liberation is from every point of view impossible. Here is where prayer intervenes, here and only here is its proper place.

We see now why Śunaḥśepa has recourse to the ^Gods one after the other. He begins by invoking Prajāpati, Lord of all the ^Gods. He asks to be delivered to Aditi, the personification of freedom, the limitless; he prays for release from his bonds, and to see heaven and earth, father and mother once again. (142) Prajāpati sends him to Agni, the God nearest to the ^{e/}celestial inhabitants and to mortals, the high-priest of sacrifice, and the boy repeats his prayer for freedom. The entire celestial world hears Śunaḥśepa's oration, but there is no favoritism here. Prayer is not a privilege, but a higher activity of the spirit which unlocks a new degree of freedom, and which makes possible what is ordinarily impossible. Obviously this is not an ontological impossibility which prayer surpasses. Prayer is not a power hidden in the ^Man of prayer which he can utilize, like a weapon, when the moment comes. This would be magic or at least some other power which has nothing to do with prayer. True prayer is uncertain, and unaware of its power. We don't know, the ^Gods themselves don't know. Nothing is fixed, there are no rules in the world of prayer. Its reality is always new; the mandate of prayer is pure spontaneity, to congeal it leads to idolatry. Śunaḥśepa is so to speak carried away by the spirit of prayer, he tirelessly implores the ^Gods one after another, each time according to the directions he receives. Agni quite naturally redirects

him to Savitr, the great inciter, who alone might impart him the necessary inspiration. And Savitr counsels him to address Varuṇa, since it is Varuṇa who had him bound (something which Śunaḥśepa did not know). A first circle closes. Śunaḥśepa sings one of the most beautiful prayers of the R̥g Veda to Varuṇa, who sends him again to the God of sacrifice, Agni. But Agni can do nothing all alone (we are beyond any voluntarism), and must this time induce Śunaḥśepa to call on The-All-Gods, viśve-devāh.

One particular diety has been involved in the adventure all along, and has not yet been specially invoked as he ought to be.

This is why The-All-Gods tell Śunaḥśepa to address himself to Indra. ^A₁ and circle closes.)

(Indra offers a chariot of gold to poor Śunaḥśepa, but he wants his freedom. So he entreats Indra once more, who answers by telling him to sing the praises of the twin precursors of light, the Aśvins. Indra directs him to where cosmic novelty sees daylight: Uṣas, Aurora, the dawn, ever new and unforeseeable, an innovation never repeated, for today is never the simple repetition of yesterday... God is not sheer inactivity. Each day the creation is new, and runs the absolutely incalculable risk of whatever will come of it. And with each strophe Śunaḥśepa sings to the breaking day, to Uṣas, one of his three bonds falls away. The new day's new light sets him free.

3.1.3 The Cosmos

Hariścandra is a king, and consequently has a kingdom. He is not an isolated individual but a point of convergence, so to speak, the summit of one order of the real. His entire kingdom is engaged in the adventure, as we learn in the later tradition which speaks of the aerial city of saubha. But the cosmos of the original myth is

not a fantastic world, it is neither anthropomorphized nor divinized. Things are as they are. Nature is neither spiritualized or allegorized. The forest is the for^est, and hunger is hunger. The cows are real and have their full value: one hundred cows are well worth a human life. (143) The cosmos here does not overwhelm the other domains of reality. The cosmotheandric equilibrium is carefully maintained. Things are in their proper place; there is no need to make them play an unfamiliar role, which would in any case be secondary. As we have said, this myth of the human condition is centered first and foremost on Man. So it naturally presents a cosmos seen by man. It tells us of honey and the delicious Udumbara fruit, and mentions the village as well, always alluring for its rich human intercourse.

The vision of the cosmos is rather detailed: human generation is described with care--even the ten lunar months of gestation are mentioned--as well as food, dress and riches. The sacrificial altar, knife and fire are also noted, each in its place and ^{its} role.

The verses abound in the pictorial richness typical of the Rg Veda--the Soma with mortar, pestle and seive, the containers and the cowhide, the abundance of livestock, the chariot of gold given to Śunahṣepa and Varuṇa's golden cloak, as also the songs, the stars, the moon and the sun. The cosmos is real, it shares in the human adventure.

It is interesting to note in passing the tension between nature and culture, symbolized by the pair forest-village. Contrary to what might at first glance be supposed, neither is unequivocal: the village represents culture, but equally the danger of death; and while the forest represents nature, it also offers the only hope of life. For Rohita, the village means ^M men, civic duties and death, whereas the

forest means continual pilgrimage, adventure, the unknown, the flight from ^Mmen and escape from death.

In this section I have sought to describe the characters of the myth by trying to render them comprehensible without uprooting them from their context. It remains for us now to penetrate the myth itself.

B)
3.2 The Mythemes

To analyze a myth means to reduce it to its basic mythic elements, much as in chemical analysis we seek the simplest elements which make up a substance. The process with regard to myth is difficult since we do not know the appropriate reagents, nor how the myth will react to different reagents. We do not yet have a critical method for mythical research. The process is also delicate, for we risk being unable to reconstruct the myth once it is analyzed. The living elements of a myth are not merely the concepts it may contain, just as a compound is more than the simple juxtaposition of its elements. Any mythologumenon is composed of symbols which combine to form more or less complex mythemes. Each mytheme, although complete in itself insofar as it expresses a definite problematic, is also a fragment of the larger horizon illuminated by the myth.

To better understand the meaning and also the limits of this myth, we shall mention three mythemes which are not found in the myth in addition to discussing three fundamental mythemes which are present.

2)

3.2.1 The Present Mythemes

The mythemes we may discover in a mythologumenon must always be understood in terms of the myth's context. The three we shall point out represent what the myth had to say to ^Mmen of its time and, moreover, what it may still say to us today, for they convey three invariants of human existence.

c)

3.2.1.1 Presence of Death

We have said that a mytheme is not a thesis. Consequently, this first mytheme does not speculate on the nature of death. It is content to show how life on earth is a constant confrontation with death, and this at every level: the biological, where Ajigarta wants to elude death from starvation; the social, where Hariścandra wants to continue his life through his son; the psychological, where Rohita wants to escape death at any cost; and at the personal level of Śunaḥśepa, from whom life is about to be snatched prematurely. (144)

To face death is inherent to the human condition. Death is on all sides, it lies in wait for Man wherever he is, whatever he does. But does this mean that Man must face death, or merely seek escape from it? Our mytheme does more than simply state the problematic; it suggests a certain typology for death. We have already hinted at this. The presence of death is a universal fact in nature as in culture. Is culture in general not a sort of sophistication of natural law, of the law of the jungle? Culture regulates how ^Mman ought to face death, and yet these rules always derive from the law of the strongest. Culture ^{by and large} suppresses only total anarchy and the tyranny of naked force, so that the survival of the strongest comes about a little less brutally.

This mytheme shows us the different ways in which ^Mmen seek to escape death. Each in his own way wants to evade death; the difference lies in the price one is willing to pay. Ajīgarta sells his son; Hariścandra is willing to pay with the life of his son; Rohita seeks another's life to save his own. And finally there is Śunaḥśepa; he also wants to live, but he is cornered, despite himself, in a dead-end. He can neither retreat nor look for a substitute. Samsāra, the cycle of inauthentic lives, ends with him. Life here is victory over death, not merely a reprieve.

So we find here two types of life: a horizontal life which can be lived solely by passing it on, so to speak, to another; and a vertical life which leaps over the first and re-engages itself in the temporal. Both types confront death, and both wish to overcome it.

The first type is dominated by competition, another form of the law of the jungle; the survival of the strongest is paid for by eliminating everyone else. This is samsāra, existence exclusively in time and space. (145)

The second type of life is no longer conditioned by flight or substitution, nor obtained at the expense of others (although it may become a bone of contention, as the revolt of Viśvāmitra's elder sons illustrates). It is a life which in ^a~~an~~_{in} sense recapitulates the life of all ^Mmen, and that of the world. It is not an 'other' life beside, or above, or even after, this temporal life. On the contrary, it dwells in the very heart of the temporal and material realms, but without confining itself to spatio-temporal coordinates.

Strictly speaking, the issue here is not two discrete types, but two dimensions of human life in tension and constant exchange. But our mytheme does not speculate; it recounts the complexity and richness of human life.

(3)
 3.2.1.2 Solidarity of Life

Following ^{on} this, a second mytheme emerges at once. The death one flees is nothing but the danger inherent to life. Life is precarious, it can end at any time. Now this life is not any individual's private property, rather it is a bond between the living, a link stronger than the individuals it connects. We live only because we bear and express this supra-individual life. Life takes primacy ^{over any} living individual. What matters is the quality of life, not the quantity, because life as such is a qualitative value and consequently inquantifiable, ontologically in solidum, 'for the whole', interdependent.

It is precisely this solidarity which permits substitution, which allows an inauthentic life to be replaced by another's life. We can become unworthy bearers of life only when we do not live it, .i.e., when at bottom we do not bear it. So then we get rid of it by giving it to others. On the other hand, authentic life is neither conserved nor passed on to others, but burned off, lived out, which means constantly renewed, at the risk of death and new birth.

Now this solidarity of life makes itself known at different levels. The father's life is continued in the son; the brahman Śunaḥśepa's life is well worth that of the kṣatriya Rohita. The promised sacrifice of Rohita to Varuṇa rests on substitution, a law which corresponds to the most intimate nature of reality and must not be understood in quantitative categories. The solidarity of life which permits substitution for an inauthentic life does not mean that all life is interchangeable, or that the important thing is to conserve the quantity of life on earth, whoever its bearer might be. 'I will offer him in sacrifice', Hariścandra said, meaning that in pledging his son's life, he offers his own. When the son flees, the father falls ill (probably dropsy). Life is the bond which unites us, but this bond is placed in our hands. We can hold it back, release it, or even break it.

With Śunaḥśepa this mytheme attains its apex. He is sold for a goodly sum but derives no advantage from the exchange. On the contrary, the transaction nearly costs him his life, and his father is the beneficiary. But Śunaḥśepa, the substitute victim accepted by Varuṇa, redeems Rohita, who was not ready to give up his life. (146) And the redemption is genuine, since once Śunaḥśepa is saved, Varuṇa does not demand that Rohita be sacrificed. Śunaḥśepa continues the traditional vedic sacrifice without human victim. Rohita is thus saved from a premature death.

Here the originality of this mytheme appears most clearly. The solidarity of life is not a physical, ^{or} even ^a material, notion of life like the [law of conservation of energy] It is neither a question of an eye for an eye, nor of jīva for jīva (soul for soul).

In contrast to other heroes and saviors, Śunaḥśepa does not die biologically, he does not pay as it were a physical debt. In fact, nobody dies in this myth--which is remarkable. The solidarity of life is of an order higher than and irreducible to quantitative standards. There is something above the realm of causality and necessity. The second mytheme, then, does not just say that all life is equal; you cannot play with life. Ajigarta is charged with having committed a hideous crime. Rather, the mytheme affirms that this law of solidarity is vital, governed by freedom and not by determinism. Here we are rather far from juridical notions of compensation and material substitution. To be sure, Śunaḥśepa has been legally purchased, but his redemptive action is effective not because he has been sacrificed, or because of any decision on his part. The relation is neither juridical nor material; nor, moreover, does the redemptive value of his act stem from the individual will. The relation is sui generis, embracing all

humanity and the ^Gods as well. (147) Śunaḥśepa is neither a chosen hero, nor a ^Man of superior willpower; he is but an ordinary ^Man grappling with existence and ready to play his last card in the game of human interdependence. Śunaḥśepa is anyone who finds his back to the wall because this solidarity of life has made him the last link in the chain of human lives. Basically he cannot do like the others and postpone the true confrontation of human existence with reality by leaving the responsibility to another and ~~letting~~ letting the circle of samsāra revolve again. He must face death by accepting the solidarity of life and preparing to leap into transcendence.

This mytheme tells us that the real human condition is one of such dependence upon others that we can be completely cornered and have no other recourse but to leap into a brand new sphere which transcends the spatio-temporal individual. In more popular language, the just must pay for the sinners since they are the only ones who can pay. They are called just precisely for this, that they do not mutter out of a misplaced sense of individualistic propriety, and so do not find their fate unjust (or else they would no longer be just).

This solidarity of life--which was self-evident for the myth's contemporaries, but which we need to recall--is a solidarity of all life, involving even the ^Gods. Man is not a solitary in the universe, not an individual cut from his roots and stripped of his purest fruits. Man could perhaps be defined as the nexus, as the visible intersection where the domains of reality cross one another. He is the crossroads of a reality which traverses every being, embracing ^Gods as well as material things.

Once again, we would do well to recall that this is not a mono-dimensional myth, not a strictly 'humanist' tale, but a myth in three

dimensions, for the puruṣa is not only what we call 'man', and still less the individual, but the total cosmotheandric person reflected to different degrees in each human being. (148)

c)
3.2.1.3 Transcendental Desire

Hariścandra desires a son; Rohita desires to preserve his life; Ajīgarta desires to live without hunger; Śunaḥśepa desires his freedom; Viśvāmitra desires to continue the sacrifice and to place Deva-rāta (Śunaḥśepa) at the head of his descendants. Desire is present throughout. In every case it appears not as a superficial whim or autonomous will, but rather as the manifestation of each being's deepest dynamism. Desire in these cases is neither caprice nor the consequence of a reasoning intellect, but the result of an integral situation. Each one desires that which engages his entire being. It would be perhaps more proper to speak of the ontological tendency of every being. Or we might recall Śunaḥśepa's hard words to his father: 'He who once does evil will do that evil again!'. This is not true of an action born of covetousness, of psychological desire, but only of an action springing from that ontological desire which expresses the very core of our being. (149)

Where the first two mythemes in a sense go beyond the individual ^Mman, where they attune him to what limits him from below (death), and from on high (life), this third mytheme places us at the very heart of the human condition; ^Mman is not described here as intelligence or will, but as this desire to be, as the very desire for being. Clearly, this is no matter of mere piece-meal appetites, but a deep-seated desire for existence. I can conquer my appetite for possession or for vengeance by mastering it with a deeper conviction; e.g., that

possession will not enrich me, ~~perhaps~~, or vengeance give me peace. I can purify my appetites, sublimate them, but I cannot eliminate the constitutive desire of my being which enables me to overcome them. Every sublimation depends upon a deeper desire which takes up and transforms the particular appetites. (150) In this realm of transcendental desire there can be no ontological pretense. The myth situates us at a depth where we cannot be deceived by acts that can be retracted, or by more or less superficial appetites, or by whatever notions we might have of ourselves. Here we cannot pretend; simplicity will not countenance a two-faced attitude.

In the depths of this ontological desire true human freedom dwells, ~~not~~ not merely in the psychological domain of possible choice. What good is it for you to put on a mask, upheld by the will or by the reason, which lets you act contrary to your own nature? Either freedom is rooted in our very being, or it is just so much superstructure. Freedom comes to light in being able to free itself from exterior constraint. This is why you must be aware, be yourself, master yourself, in order to be free.

Human being, this mytheme tells us, has a profound desire which belongs to its very constitution, and which is always a desire for transcendence. (In a sense this is a tautology--but, like any true principle, a qualified tautology.) The transcendence of this ontological desire goes well beyond the death of the individual.

We should properly call this a transcendental desire, one constitutive of being. And, if we concentrate on human being as the myth does, we could see in it an expression of desire as a fundamental existenzial, since it expresses the ontological structure of human existence.

Whatever our philosophical categories may be, this mytheme seems to voice a deep-seated invariant found in practically every religious tradition: the desire to open oneself to a more authentic life, a life which escapes the banal, a life where we go beyond the limits of time and space that seem to so imprison human existence. This desire is generally linked with the conviction that we need a sacred act, a sacrifice, in order to realize it. We are thinking here of what historians of religion are accustomed to call initiation, a rite by which one passes from appearance to reality, from illusion to truth, from adolescent life to life in its fullness; initiation as the true or second birth. (151)

In fact we find in this sacred history all the elements of an initiatory rite, which may incidentally be its likeliest historical origin. The myth presents several characteristics appropriate to initiation.

As we have time and again observed, this is above all a myth centered on ^Man. It tells the tale of ^Man's life on earth, not a story about the ^Gods or a cosmic narrative. Initiation is a human experience par excellence.

The myth is also focused on overcoming death and entering a higher life. For this one has to vanquish death, to be sacrificed and reborn to new life. Śunaḥśepa has earned a new life. It is symbolized in his new name, his new father, his new role, and above all by his second birth on the altar. The mytheme does not theorize on the dvijātva, the state of being re-born; it tells us the facts.

This new birth, in the third place, does not come about automatically. It is not a physical birth but an anthropological one. For this some action is needed, the sacred action of a rite, which the myth unfolds before us.

The myth, in the fourth place, recounts a rite which runs the risk of life and death, and where substitution takes place only after a withdrawal to the wild--traits we find in most initiatory rites.

But this is clearly not an initiation practiced in the epoch when the myth was composed. The myth does not deal with traditional indian initiation; besides, both the brahman and the ^hksatriya are already initiates, dvijās. Nor is it a matter of explicating or justifying the social situation of the time. The castes are ^{accepted} ~~admissible~~ here; in fact, the caste system is taken for granted. Even sūdras are talked about in the most conventional manner.

We are not concerned with a social initiation already crystallized in a ritual structure, but with a third birth if you will: (152) the true personal birth, which is unlike either biological or sociological birth and located on another plane altogether. We would like to emphasize this important nuance. True life is immortal; only what is mortal ever dies, only the husk of life as it were, like the skin shed by a serpent. (153) This means that the tension here is not so much between death and resurrection as between inauthentic life and real life. Thus the victim need not really be killed, since death is never real. Śunaḥśepa is not resuscitated, he is suscitated to a new life. This means, further, that we must not await an 'other' life or a 'beyond' to this life, but that we can realize it here and now, once we have been liberated like Śunaḥśepa on the altar of sacrifice. We awaken to true life.

So this mytheme means that there is a life hidden in Man, a new life which we can awaken by a rite centered on prayer, on the existential cry of Man faced with death. Man is then raised up, awakened, suscitated to a new life which will not be in another existence, but which is in this very life, once we have crossed the threshold of our egocentrism.

3.2.2 The Absent Mythemes

A myth is a living myth if it still depicts an horizon where we can fit in our experience of reality. No doubt our myth describes an essential part of the human condition as it is still lived and suffered by contemporary humanity. Nevertheless we find important absences in it which might lead us to suspect that our sacred history is perhaps too limited to serve as a myth for today. In this case, it might serve to accentuate several aspects of human life and then to integrate them into a new myth which has yet to unfold. But by paying special attention to the mythemes we feel are lacking, we may perhaps find a deeper meaning in their absence.

Our course here, our enterprise, delicate as any argument ex silentio, seems justified in that we are trying to understand this sacred history over against the background of contemporary mythic thought. Three mythemes are symptomatically missing, but once again we should try to understand them before criticizing or drawing conclusions for our era.

3.2.2.1 Sexuality

The story tells us of the hundred wives of Hariścandra, and the introductory verses speak of procreation, (154) but the myth as such remains unacquainted with any anthropological notion of sex. Man is presented as complete from a monosexual, or rather a masculine, point of view. Where the woman's role is concerned, and even the man's insofar as he is male, it is an asexual myth. The values of intimacy and love are also lacking, and it is difficult to find in the myth motivations, and likewise perhaps interpretations, which go back to human sexuality.

The importance of this absence is remarkable as much for the myth itself as for our theories on human nature, particularly after Freud and Jung.

But our myth does not completely ignore sex; in fact, it specifically notes the sexual ~~mean~~^{ing}s of the names of Ajīgarta's three sons. And we remember that the entire myth unfolds because Hariścandra desires a son. On the other hand, the children's names seem to be mentioned only to show more clearly the family's painful and degraded situation (155), and Hariścandra's desire is explicitly interpreted as the great human desire for immortality. (156)

Neither is there any trace of sexual complexes. Uṣas, the dawn, the divinity who grants Śunaḥśepa's prayer is indeed a gracious ^G goddess, but we would introduce foreign elements into the myth, and so constrain it, by trying to see in the dawn a symptom of the sexual problematic.

To be sure, we can hardly expect to find ^{the} notion of sexual equality, or women taking an active part in social life, in the sociological context of the myth. Nonetheless, India has never disregarded the function of sex, nor the indispensable role of the feminine (even if sociologically she remains subordinate to the male). Nor has India ignored a metaphysic, even a cosmology, of sex. (157)

Consequently this absence is more striking than it would be in another culture, and one suspects that it is not casual. (158)

So here is a myth which identifies man with the male, but which does not deal with the male as such, but only insofar as he is human. Someone could certainly retort that the myth ^{has} only speaks to a truncated human condition, that it does not claim to give us a complete likeness of human life or society but restricts itself to one aspect.

The absence of sexuality is nevertheless not without significance, especially given a certain modern tendency toward pansexuality. The themes of death, life and desire are treated here without reference to sexuality.

Sexuality is the synchronic complement, it is desire for the time being. Freud was perhaps right to think of pathological troubles when this synchrony cannot be realized; which is when you kill your father, etc. ...

To desire a son, on the contrary, is the diachronic supplement; you desire a child for the future, for the continuation of life when you are no longer there. The child will fill this unhappy absence. Obviously kāma, love, is at the root of both synchronic attraction (sexual love) and diachronic desire (paternal and maternal love), as we see in Paṛīścandra and Ajīgarta.

Here is the proper place to consider celibacy, which is not founded on the pragmatic argument of having more time, or detachment, or interest in things spiritual. Neither is it based on the ascetic argument of renunciation, purity, the greater unity which should not be dispersed. In brief, the rationale for celibacy is not directly linked to sexuality, curious as this might sound. The orthodox rationale for hindu celibacy is based on the socio-anthropological argument of the law of karma. Only the saṁnyāsin, the monk who has already burned away all his karmas, who has nothing left to continue, to achieve, to undergo, is celibate. Because he has lived his life totally, because he has used up the quantity of temporal life he has inherited, because he does not desire 'horizontal' immortality (and therefore has no need of sons to continue his unfinished life and his unrealized dreams) --only such a one, a saint who has lived his final life on this spatio-temporal earth, is celibate. (157)

But our myth does not talk about saints. So why this silence where sex is concerned? Can we speak of death, life and desire without including sexuality? We would like to suggest a hypothesis which is perhaps subtle from the exegetical point of view, but plausible given the indian context, and which will perhaps enrich the western perspective.

Hariścandra has a hundred wives and we can suppose that Viśvāmitra's situation is similar since he has a hundred and one sons. We might say that their sexual needs were filled to overflowing. Consequently sex is not a problem, at least not an urgent one. But sex is not only an elementary genital desire. The indian context would retort here that a hundred wives are not solely for the pleasure of the body and that to confound the sexual impulse with ontological desire is simply an error. The great human problems, the three we have disclosed in our myth, are only sexual problems for those who have not yet quietened or sublimated their primary instincts and so let them overrun all other domains. Our hypothesis suggests that sex does not belong to the human order in its ultimacy. Sex is an element, and even a condition, but not the substance of human being in its plenitude. We could cite an analogy with hunger. Unless it is mastered, you become Ajīgarta; if you are starving, everything is tainted by this problem, everything is food. We cannot minimize the anguishing problems of hunger, nor ignore the driving force it has in the lives of men and civilization; but to suppose that everything can or should be reduced to satisfying the fundamental need for food surely would oversimplify the question. If you have not sublimated sexuality, you find it everywhere. To be sure, we neither can nor should ignore the importance of the sexual impulse, but from there to ^{pan)}sexual reductionism is a considerable distance.

There is then in this myth an element of novelty even for India, a culture still highly exuberant in conceiving sexuality. The exceptional character of our myth comes through once again.

In sum we can only seek to understand this notion within the horizon afforded by contemporary experience and so note the cathartic effect it could have for our era. What this negative mytheme in effect tells us is that the great problems of human existence and the meaning of ^Mman's life on earth are not necessarily connected with sexuality. Could we even say that our myth demythicizes the modern sexual myth?

β)

3.2.2.2 Political Perspective

In our myth Man hardly seems engrossed in establishing a better or more equitable society. Rather, society seems to be an unalterable given, like a fact of nature we do not worry about changing. We find no rebellion. Hariścandra does not question Varuṇa's decree, Rohita does not revolt against his father, he simply flees, and always with some remorse. Ajigarta does not appear a non-conformist, and even Śunahṣepa seems unconscious of any injustice. It is true we are dealing with a situation in which the ^Ggods play a part, but divine mandate does not mean immutability, as many another myth demonstrates. (160)

This absence should not be interpreted in the modern terms of a class struggle or a revolutionary Geist. We must veto any such ^kata-chronic interpretation, i.e., projecting today's categories of understanding in order to grasp events which belong to another order of things. Just as the problematic of sexuality was not unknown to the India of that time, there could also be a certain social consciousness within the cultural milieu of our myth. Still, it does not deal with war, political struggles or economic problems. The social is

(katachronic)

absent from it, and surprisingly so. Excepting the final reference to Viśvāmitra's descēdants, there is in fact no reference to a con-
sciousness of ^Mman in the world; of ^Mman who, by the very fact of being human, is susceptible to change, growth, improvement. The myth seems to imply that the purpose of life lies in each one playing his or her role, but not in changing either society or the people who compose it.

We could say that given the social order of the time, one could not do otherwise than conform to it or escape from it. Now although this may not be totally accurate, (161) we find no indication of social concern or rebellion against the established social order. Further, Indra himself in counselling Rohita, seems almost to scorn everything social. And Rohita takes the God's advice to live his life spiting every divine and human convention.

Nevertheless, the myth is not asocial; it does not focus solely on the isolated individual. All society is in a way reflected in it; the kingdom, the castes, the poor, commerce, patrimonies... So we can hardly say it pertains to another species. And yet not a word betrays historical perspective.

Here, as for the mytheme of sexuality, we must try to understand before we criticize.

This myth deals with salvation, the salvation of the ^Mman who escapes death, who lives his life and seeks above all to surpass it. Not surprisingly, this salvation is depicted in the sociological terms common to its era, while at the same time remaining utterly indifferent to them. The fact of salvation, the presence of death, the reality of life, the possibility of authentic life, seem to be autonomous values with respect to the social situation in which ^Mman finds himself immersed.

Along with the modern bent toward sexual reductionism, we could cite here the trend of other contemporary currents toward politicization and socialization. Man is reduced to a sociological animal who has no other substance; his salvation is political liberation, his felicity economic independence, his good fortune to participate in the democratic process.

But the myth does not say whether the social order of its day is just or unjust. It tells us only that human salvation is to some extent independent, autonomous--I prefer ontonomous--and consequently that human plenitude, the initiation to authentic life, is not reducible to its socio-political parameters. The issue is not ignoring the dangers of social escapism, the abuse of established religions, the inertia of history and human exploitation; it is rather a question of bearing in mind that human liberation also has a dimension which is more fundamentally constitutive than the social factors involved. (162)

We have here then another absence full of meaning, and another challenge to contemporary Man.

3.2.2.3 Eschatology

Our third absent mytheme, all the more astonishing in an indian myth, is a double one: that of ^Mman's beginning and final end. In this myth there is no attempt to elucidate the eschatological problem, neither from the temporal nor the metaphysical points of view. (163)

It looks like a fragment of human film, clipped in mid-reel, not fully unravelled. It seems to say that whatever ^Mman's origins may be, and independent of his end, human life unfolds according to a design in which eschatological opinions on the matter seem irrelevant.

A very intriguing silence, which once again marks this myth as exceptional and strikingly original. It recounts a human situation and even how to go beyond it without, however, having recourse to a cosmology of origins or a metaphysic of ends. Doubtless we can always retrace the cosmosgonic and meta^{physical} presuppositions in any human narrative. But it is remarkable that our myth does not depend on these presuppositions to say what it has to say.

Death, life and authentic existence can be faced independently of our particular cosmological and metaphysical persuasions. So here is a myth of Man which does not philosophize (although philosophy may underpin it as it does any other human construct).

And here again, this absence is meaningful especially today when we tend to couch everything in ideological terms. This sacred history seems to make the extraordinary claim to speak to us of human deliverance without being bound to a formal doctrinal system. This is the advantage of myth, to be sure, but in this case we have, further, the fact that the very language of the story does not rely on any preconceived philosophical notions.

It deals with the ^Gods and with sacrifice; we find the whole vedic ambience reflected in it. But the sacred history itself can easily be disengaged from these concrete images on which it rests or by which it expresses itself. The interpretation we have suggested is valuable for an atheist, as well as for a theist or a pantheist (and equally valid whether one acknowledges or rejects the notions of creation and a heaven 'to come').

It may perhaps be said that if one refutes transcendence and invocation, for example, the myth loses all meaning. Far be it from ^{me} to be non-critically irenic, or even to claim to have a myth of

universal value, free from any presupposition. We should not analyze a mytheme, and still less an absent mytheme, as we do philosophical theses or concepts. Nor am I asserting that our mytheme is free from all conceptual baggage; I am simply pointing out that the absence of eschatology entitles the myth to claim to be acceptable to several metaphysics and cosmologies; the absence itself symbolizes this possibility.

3.3 Deconditioning Man

Until this point, our interpretation has been primarily phenomenological and in line with the history and science of religions. It has disclosed three mythemes present and three absent which have enabled us to propose a hermeneutic of the myth for our epoch. The present mythemes we have seen like colors over against the backdrop that our myth itself forms. Accustomed as we are to see other tints as well as these 'primary' colors, we have remarked their absence and sought to explicate it. We have presented the absent mythemes as a default and a challenge. A default, since their absence makes it difficult to consider this as a myth of today's human condition. A challenge, since the myth situates Man on a plane which seems able to dispense with the mythemes modern ^Mman considers so important. We must in any case admit that a myth which does not speak to Man qua ^MMan is not a myth but only a peculiar, perhaps pedagogical, legend.

In voicing the absent mythemes, I have tried to represent a certain contemporary mentality. This should be kept in mind, and I should apologize for my role of devil's advocate in stressing the absence of certain mythemes. If this absence were total and these themes central to being human per se, our myth would not qualify as a real myth.

The fact is, however, that what is absent in our myth is a certain--modern--interpretation of the topics represented in the three supposedly absent mythemes. As for a more contextual interpretation, we could say that the three absent mythemes are not really absent; quite the contrary, they are clearly present in the three mythemes we have revealed. What is sexuality if not an expression of transcendental desire? Is death not the substructure of any eschatology? And again, does the solidarity of life not represent social and political awareness in its deepest stratum? Modern ^Man may have a different understanding of sex, politics and eschatology, and he may be right or wrong. But in any case, these three topics, together with another--perhaps deeper, though undifferentiated--understanding are also present in the story of Śunaḥśepa.

Let us simply say that a deepened meditation on the myth reveals still another fundamental trait which permits us to list it among the myths of mankind which have not yet lost their validity. In seeking the meaning of the human condition depicted in this myth we have tried to fathom the depths of its simplicity. ^{And} it seems that the myth describes the human condition in order to present the deconditioning of Man as its quintessential message.

This puts our myth in rather a special light. Man is this being who knows himself to be conditioned, by birth, by habit, by circumstance and position; in short, by nature and culture. Precisely because he is conscious ^{of} ~~of~~ this, he must learn to live in the gaps left by his conditioning. Is education, modern education in particular, not centered mainly on the effort to teach the new generation how to manage within the conditionings we call society, civilization, technology, scientific knowledge, etc.? (164)

The proper sense of the human condition is certainly to be conditioned. Hariścandra is conditioned by his desire and his promise. Rohita is conditioned by his fate (Indra, it is true, tries to decondition him--and the temptation he instigates rescues Rohita, but this deconditioning succeeds only partially). Ajīgarta is so conditioned by his famished predicament that he is hardly free to choose. Śunahṣepa is the very expression of conditioning carried to the extreme, since this conditioning is not due to limitations of his own making, from which he could extricate himself; no, he is conditioned by external agencies, and in the most brutal manner. He no longer has any freedom of choice or movement and he finds himself in imminent danger of losing his life.

This then is the center of the myth: the deconditioningⁿ of Man, his liberation, his freedom. Our hermeneutic now takes a new course, a second approach, more philosophical and anthropological than the first, which will allow us to see the core of the myth in the protomytheme of deconditioning. For this it should be enough to read the hundred rcs Śunahṣepa recites, (165) to hear his prayers and to listen to the myth in its entirety. We often leave aside the central aspect of a myth in the rush to decipher the threads of the sacred history, the rubrics, so to speak, thus neglecting the content, the prayers, the nigrics as I have called them. (166) The central prayers of the myth are all freedom hymns, variations on the theme of deconditioning the very human condition imposed on us by other people, by the Gods, or by ourselves.

From this angle, our myth is complete and simple: it is necessary to decondition Man from every conditioning. It matters little whether what binds us is life, or death. Man is conditioned by fear of death,

by attachment to life, and by his desires, which bind rather than release him. This myth reveals the essence of religion as an unbinding rather than a 'religatio'. (167)

By deconditioning, we mean this freedom from every conditioning which enables each of us to acquire the liberty to realize without bound or limit whatever we are capable of being. Now this liberation is at once a freedom from (our bonds) and a freedom to (realize ourselves in our plenitude). The example of Śunaḥśepa is clear. He is freed from death to realize his being (symbolized here by the performance of the vedic sacrifice, and by his engagement in a new life as Viśvāmitra's son).

Here again we discover a human invariant found under different names in every culture: moksa, or literally, liberation according to the entire indian tradition. ⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ Soteria, salus, liberty, emancipation, independence, deliverance, and so on, are so many words for it in various traditions.

Man finds himself conditioned, mediatized, annexed, exploited and abused by the ^Gods, fate, nature, society, others and himself. He feels in him the desire, even the capacity to be free, but he suffers from his lack of freedom, he desires liberation. This is the protomytheme of our sacred history. It tells us that the desire for liberation is the fundamental human impulse. It adds that this liberation is possible in any circumstance, since Śunaḥśepa realizes it in the most desperate predicament. It emphasizes that this emancipation belongs to the deepest stratum of the human person. ^{And} ~~It~~ ^{It} mutely stresses that the need for freedom is plainly more basic than sexual desires, political opinions, economic situations or human ideologies. Our protomytheme further reveals that the price of this true freedom is our own life, which must be redeemed, reconquered after death is vanquished.

Modern ^Mman, ^Mman of the moment, of the modus, ^Mman of the current and so fugitive instant, does he not live more ^{d/}conditioned than ever by the forces of alienation? Civilized life, and above all modern 'developed' life--still obsessed by development--does it not mean conditioned life?...conditioned by others, by society, by the innumerable webs we weave and which bind us not only to others, but also to the megamachine ^Mman has constructed and without which, or outside of which, he can no longer live? Contemporary ^Mman does not know how to live without his technological diving suit, and very soon he will no longer know how to breathe without it.

Every myth does more than offer a horizon where we may insert our thoughts by giving them a backdrop and furnishing them a context; it also orients our thinking and incites us to follow one approach instead of another; it invites us to think in a certain direction. And in this way our mythologumenon offers an invitation to modern ^Mman. A double invitation: not to allow himself to be crushed by culture and nature, by ^Mmen, society and the ^Ggods, and also not to dream of a de- nouement in a horizontal future that nobody will ever see, but rather to envision a transhistorical present which neither denies the temporal nor drowns in it. Our sacred history is assuredly a challenge to the myth of history. Human freedom is possible and real, not merely for our successors, or in an other life; but now, in the tempiternal present, the deepest core of the humanum.(169)

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Notes

1. Cf. the distinction made by the christian patristics and scholastics between credere in Deum, Deum and Deo.
2. Cf. W. T. Stevenson, History as Myth (New York, Seabury Press, 1969), and his article: 'History as Myth: Some Implications for History and Theology', Cross Currents (Winter, 1970), XX, 1:15-28, as an example of the blossoming of this idea in the West.
3. Cf. the assertions made by C. Lévi-Strauss in the final chapter of La Pensée sauvage (Paris, Plon, 1962): '...dans le système de Sartre, l'histoire joue très précisément le rôle du mythe' (336). 'Peut-être cet âge d'or de la conscience historique est-il déjà révolu' (337). 'Par conséquent le fait historique n'est pas plus donné que les autres' (340). 'L'histoire n'est donc jamais l'histoire, mais l'histoire-pour' (341). And he makes note of 'une sorte de cannibalisme intellectuel de la "raison historique"' (341 n.).

- chapter
4. Cf. ~~§~~ II, pp.
5. Cf. the well-known overstatement: 'Wir Abendländer alle sind Christen'. K. Jaspers, Der philosophische Glaube angesichts der Offenbarung (München, R. Piper, 1962), p. 52
6. Is it perhaps this which P. Ricoeur names 'le geste philosophique de base' in describing 'le geste herméneutique' as 'l'aveu des conditions historiques auxquelles toute compréhension humaine est soumise sous le régime de la finitude'? and in characterizing 'le geste de la critique des idéologies' as 'un geste critique indéfiniment repris et indéfiniment tourné contre la "fausse conscience", contre les distortions de la communication humaine derrière lesquelles se dissimule l'exercice permanent ~~de la domination et de la violence~~ de la domination et de la violence'? 'Herméneutique et critique des idéologies', in Demythisation et Idéologie (ed. by E. Castelli, Paris, Aubier, 1973), pp. 25 and 46. Ricoeur remarks quite correctly that the problematic cannot be put in terms of an alternative: hermeneutic or critical consciousness, even though he himself is unwilling to leave the terrain of hermeneutics in the process of enriching it. We would like to locate the problem we are going to examine along the same line^s, but taking a step forward, i.e., can we study the universal conditions of human understanding without limiting ourselves to our understanding of the question itself? Cf. also J. Habermas, 'Der Universalitätsanspruch der Hermeneutik', in Hermeneutik und Dialektik (ed. by R. Eubner, K. Cramer and R. Wiehl, Tübingen, J.B.C. Mohr, 1970 I:73-103.

7. It is interesting to note that the pres. pretis of interpretation comes from the sanskrit root prath (the verb: prathati or prathate): stretch, spread, scatter, extend, increase, enlarge (cf. prthivī, the extended one, i.e., the earth). Interpretation, then, would be the act of extending, spreading, lengthening, distending, enlarging the meaning, not only diachronically (through time) but also diatopically (in different places and cultures). This study hopes to present such a diatopical interpretation.
8. Our text is AB VII, 13-18 (XXXIII, 1-6) which is practically the same as SSS XV, 17-27. ASS IX, 3 repeats the ending of AB VII, 18 where it speaks of ritual instructions.
9. 'La seule exception', says Jean Varenne (Mythes et legendes extraits des Brāhmaṇas, Paris, Gallimard, 1967; 11) referring to the fact that, unlike other myths, here the entire text is given and not shortened or reduced to a schematic form. 'Là encore, l'histoire de Sunahṣepa, déjà insolite quant à sa forme, fait figure d'exception' (ibid., p. 13) he adds, with respect to bhakti spirituality which, except in this myth, is at least 'quasi-clandestine' in the Brāhmaṇas.
10. Cf. A.B. Keith, Rigveda Brahmanas: The Aitāreya and Kausitaki Brāhmaṇas of the Rigveda, Harvard Oriental Series, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, Vol. 25, 1920; reprinted, Delhi and Varanasi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1971, pp. 42-50.
11. Cf. M. Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature, Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1962 (revised english edition), I, 1: 184-188

12. The editions of M. Haug (Bombay, 1863), of Kāśinātha Śāstry Āgāṣe (Poona, Anandāsrama Series, No. 32, 1896), of Vāsudevaśarman Paṅśīkara and Kṛṣṇambhaṭṭa Gore (Bombay, Nirṇaya Sāgara Press, 1911); that of Satyavrata Sāmaśramī in Bibliotheca Indica; that of Aufrecht, etc. The second edition of O. Bōhtlingk's Chrestomathie also gives the original text in a revised version; we find it likewise in the appendix of Max Müller's classic A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature (Varanasi, The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1968, a new edition revised by S.N. Sāstrī which incorporates the SSS variations)
13. The first english translation of the entire AB is that of Haug, which ought to be read in the light of the important critical review of A. Weber, Indische Studien IX (1865). Cf. also the translation of H.H. Wilson, JRAS, XIII (1851), pp. 96 sq. There is a german translation by R. Roth, IS I:457 sq. and II:112 sq., etc.
14. For example, Max Müller, op. cit., pp. 370-376; J. Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts (London, Trubner & Co., 1868-1874, 5 Vols.; new revised edition: Amsterdam, Oriental Press, 1967), I: 355-360. S. Lévi, La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brāhmanas (Paris, E. Leroux, 1898; 2nd edition: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), pp. 134-136, etc.
15. The text of the AB here is adapted from the versions of Keith, op. cit., pp. 299-309 and Varenne, op. cit. In his translation, Varenne had the excellent idea of also translating the hundred RV verses which the original text only mentions. The reader can thus follow the complete story. Varenne's version was quoted with permission in the original french of this chapter. Having checked the original sanskrit at that time, no new translation has been made here except in a few passages.

16. putram icchanti. Cf. also Plato, Symp. 206-207.
17. Important and common idea. Cf. RV V, 4, 10; TB I, 5; 5, 6; MB I, 74, 111; VisnP IV, 19, 3; etc. Cf. also Sir. 30:4, 'The father may die, and yet he is not dead, for he has left behind him one like himself'. Debt ^{here} is the translation of the capital vedic notion of r̥na. (Cf. note 134). We may give the following as an example of the entire text:

r̥nam asmin samnayaty
am̐rtatvam ca gachati /
 pitā putrasya jātasya
 paśyec cej jīvato mukham //

The conviction that the father lives on in the son is older than the idea of transmigration. Cf. SB XI, 6, 2, 10 and the entire ritual of the father's blessing before dying in BU I, 5, 17-20.

18. Literally: 'the ātman is born from the ātman', or equally, 'he himself (the father) is born again'. Cf. Keith, Winternitz, etc., locc. citt.

19. nānā śrāntāya śrīr asti
 iti Rohita śusūruma /
 pāpo nr̥ṣadvaro jana
 Indra ic carataḥ sakhā //

Some read with Sāyana: na-anāśrantāya. Revelation: śusūruma, what we have heard or are hearing, Tradition. Indra is here the representative of tradition and friend of the ascetic wander-monk. Cf. AV XX, 127, 11. The hero figure is often a wayfarer.

20. Cf. Keith, h. l. on the interpretation of this passage. He asserts that in this context, the throws of dice--not the four Yugas (i.e., the cosmic ages) are meant (pace Sāyana with whom Müller and Weber agree): the notion of ages is not vedic, nor can Manu IX, 302 stand as evidence for the AB. Muir

seems to follow Müller and Weber in thinking that the names refer to the Yugas, although he notes that it is but a brief allusion and doubts that the system was fully developed (see op. cit. I:46-49).

21. Literally: Aditi, the great mother ^G goddess who often personifies freedom. Cf. note 142.

22. RV I, 24, 1. Father and Mother: heaven and earth.

23. Aditi.

24. RV I, 24, 2.

25. RV I, 24, 3-5.

26. As above, Aditi here personifies freedom.

27. 'Aditya', i.e. Varuṇa, one of the sons of Aditi. Up to here RV I, 24, 6-25.

28. RV I, 25, 1-21.

29. RV I, 26, 1-10.
30. Literally: Sindhu, i.e., the Indus River, which stands for any river.
31. RV I, 27, 1-12.
32. Literally: Viśvedevas, a term used to designate the 'all ^Gods', a particular class of ^Gods forming one of the nine Gaṇas, enumerated under gaṇadevatā.
33. RV I, 27, 13.
34. A kind of evil spirit.
35. RV I, 29, 1-7.
36. RV I, 30, 1-15.
37. RV I, 30, 16.
38. Aśvins, the twin gods, literally 'the two charioteers' who drive their golden chariot across the sky at dawn; friendly to men, they bring wealth and avert illness.
39. RV I, 30, 17-19.
40. Uṣas, goddess of the dawn and daughter of Prajāpati (the lord of creatures). For the myth of the divine incest of Uṣas and Prajāpati, see above, § IV, pp.
41. RV I, 30, 20-22. The word we have translated here as 'life' is rayi, goods, wealth, riches.

42. RV I, 28, 5-8.

43. RV I, 28, 9.

44. RV I, 28, 1-4.

45. RV IV, 1, 4-5. This hymn is not by the ṛṣi Śunaḥśepa.

46. RV V, 2, 7. Another ṛc not attributed to the ṛṣi.

47. i.e., God-given ('Deo-datus'), son of Viśvāmitra.

48. i.e., Ajīgarta and Viśvāmitra--both claim paternity over Śunaḥśepa.

49. The text reads:

tad vai mā tāta tapati

pāpaṃ karma mayā kṛtam /

Tapas here connotes not only passive remorse but the will to do penance and the ways towards purification.

50. Because of my interpretation I give here the entire stanza:

yaḥ sakṛt pāpakam kuryāt

kuryād enat tato 'param /

nāpāgāḥ saudrān nyāyād

asamdheyam tvayā kṛtam //

51.

Om ity ṛcaḥ pratigara

evam tatheti gāthāyāḥ /

om iti vai daivam

tatheti mānuṣam //

Some authors see here the clear differentiation between the sacred (and sacred language) and the profane (secular language). The almost identical sentence occurs in ASS IX, 3; SSS XV, 27. Cf. also SB I, 1, 1, 4; I, 1, 2, 17; III, 3, 2, 2.

52. Thus far AB VII, 13-18.

53. The various footnotes of this chapter may serve as an introduction to a more specifically indological study.

54. Cf. SB XIII, 7, 1.

55. Cf. TB II, 3, 6, 1.

56. Cf. SB II, 2, 2, 8-14.

57. Cf. RV X, 90; cf. also RV X, 130; AV VII, 5; SB X, 2, 2, 1.

58. Cf. SB VIII, 6, 1, 10; VIII, 7, 4, 6; IX, 2, 3, 27; IX, 4, 4, 15.

59. Cf. SB I, 3, 2, 1; SB I, 7, 2, 1-5.

60. Cf. SB III, 6, 2, 16.

61. In anthropological terms, not only do ^Men have to face death, Man also is mortal. Personal meditation on death is today re-acquiring its ecological dimension.
62. Cf. RV X, 129, 3-4; AV IX, 2; XIX, 52, 1.
63. The conclusion of the AB (VII and VIII) is devoted to the rājasūya or royal consecration. It begins by explaining how to divide the sacrificial victim, followed by a long list of expiations for errors committed during the sacrificial oblations (VII, 1-12). The story of Śunahṣepa (VII, 13-18) follows immediately. Then a description is given of the preparations for the royal consecration (VII, 19-26); next a description of the royal food and drink (in lieu of soma) (VII, 27-34). In VIII the different rites of anointing are described. The final section deals with the priest ('The ^Gods eat not the food of a king without a purohita (priest)', VIII, 24) and his duties.
64. It is quite probably an example of an annual rite of cosmic regeneration. Cf. A. Weber, "Über die Königsweihe, den Rājasūya", AFAW (Berlin, 1893); J.C. Heesterman, The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration. The Rājasūya described according to the Yajus texts and annotated ('S-Gravenhage, Mouton, 1957), pp. 158-161.
65. Cf. SB V, 4, 3, 2 and the importance of this notion in linking our myth with the rājasūya.
66. Although the myth is complete in itself, it is difficult to consider it isolated from the rājasūya, an opinion shared by J. Gonda, Die Religionen Indiens (Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1960), I:167 and F. Weller, 'Die Legende von Śunahṣepa', VSAW (Phil.-Hist. Klasse, Berlin, 1956) for example. (im Aitareyabrāhmaṇa und Śāṅkhāyanashāuta)

'Die Legeende von Sunahšepa im Aitareyabrāhmana und Sāṅkhāyanaśrautasūtra'

Sunahšepa that: 'Grappling with death' was begun with the...
'nichts zu tun'. Die vedische...
p. 236.

67. Cf. a good collection of texts in Journal of Indological Research (ed. by E. A. Latta and E. C. Smith, New York, American...
New, 2nd edition, 1965), pp. 182-234.

68. As far as I know, this myth has never been studied from such a perspective.

69. IV IX and I also contain formulas and prayers for the... without...
referring to the myth of Sunahšepa.

70. Even today it forms part of a living rite performed in some... of...

71. Cf. AB VIII, 21-23. For the śrautasūtra, cf. SB XIII, 1-6.

72. Cf. IV XIX-XXI, with all the references in this text to the...
RV I, 90 and AV XIX, 6; SB XIII, 6.

73. SB XIII, 6, 2, 29 (cf. XIII, 6, 1, 11).

74. Cf. P. Horsch, op. cit., 236 sq. for further discussion of the...
problem of human sacrifice.

75. Cf. SB XIII, 6, 2, 13.

76. This could shed light on the problem of human sacrifice as the...
prototype for the horse-sacrifice. Cf. the paper of E. Kistler, 'Der Aitareya...
und der Puruṣasūtra' in F. Schönbauer, Religion und Kultur Indiens...

Altindische Studien (Rombach, Bonn, De Gruyter, 1911), pp. 21-22, mentions that...
human sacrifice in the... and...

77. Cf. SB XIII, 186 besides the texts mentioned in the...
text.

78. Man I, 61 and 82.

79. The agreement speaks of one hundred thousand cows (Man I, 61, 14), but in...
dition the king gives 'tons of millions of gold and silver pieces and...
precious stones' (I, 61, 21) - a clear indication of the... the...

- cont.) On the other hand P. Horsch is right in affirming in his beautiful chapter on Śunahśepa that: 'Ursprünglich hatte sie' our legend with the rājasūya 'nichts zu tun', Die vedische Gāthā-und Sloka-Literatur (Bern, Franke, 1966), p. 286.
67. Cf. a good collection of texts in Reader in Comparative Religion, An Anthropological Approach (ed. by W. A. Lessa and E. Z. Vogt, New York, Harper and Row, 2nd edition, 1965), pp. 142-202.
68. As far as I know, this myth has never been studied from this perspective.
69. YV IX and X also contain formulae and prayers for the rājasūya, but without referring to the myth of Śunahśepa.
70. Even today it forms part of a living rite performed in order to obtain children.
71. Cf. AB VIII, 21-23. For the aśvamedha, cf. SB XIII, 1-5.
72. Cf. YV XXX-XXXI, with all the references in this text to the puruṣasūkta:
RV X, 90 and AV XIX, 6; SB XIII, 6.
73. SB XIII, 6, 2, 20 (cf. XIII, 6, 1, 11).
74. Cf. P. Horsch, op. cit., 286 sq. for further discussion and literature on the problem of human sacrifice.
75. Cf. SB XIII, 6, 2, 13.
76. This could shed light on the problem of ^{the} (human-sacrifice as the paradigm and prototype for the Norse-sacrifice. Cf. the paper of W. Kirfel, 'Der Aśvamedha und der Puruṣamedha' in W. Schubring, Beiträge zur indischen Philologie und Altertumskunde (Hamburg, Cram, De Gruyter, 1951), pp. 39-50. showing that the human sacrifice is the 'sinnvollere und verständlichere' (p. 46).
77. Cf. MB XIII, 186 besides the texts on which we are going to comment.
78. Ram I, 61 and 62.
79. The agreement speaks of one hundred thousand cows (Ram I, 61, 12), but in addition the king gives 'tens of millions of gold and silver pieces and heaps of precious stones' (I, 61, 22)--a clear indication of the hyperbolic character

82. Cf. e.g., MB II, 489 sq.

of the gift...and of monetary and religious inflation.

80. Ram I, 62, 4. *Śrī Rāmāyaṇa Purāna*, translated by F. Eden Parkiter (Calcutta,

81. The episode with the sons of Viśvāmītra is also mentioned here (I, 62, 13-17).
Howe, 1969).

83. Cf. MarkP VIII, 270.

85. Cf. vgr. BBSP IX, 2 and also 16; VistP IV, 2 (mentioned only).
Trāyopaniṣad, Pañcāgama, Śrīmadbhagavadgītā and Upaniṣads (1969)

86. Concerning the story of Harīścandra, cf. also: E. Bergler, *JRAS* (1917), pp. 37 sq.; J. Muir, *op. cit.* 1-379; S.H. Warthan, *JRAS* (1881), pp. 355 sq. Harīścandra is often compared to the Biblical Job.

87. Bhārtendu Harīścandra, a writer from Varanasi who at the beginning of this century struggled for the renaissance and independence of hindī literature, wrote a popular play based on the Purānic narrative, *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*. It was a classic, still performed in Varanasi and contains extremely realistic descriptions of the ghāt where the dead are burned. (Introduction, subject to *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*).

88. Cf. the introduction to Kāth's translation, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.

89. Cf., for example, Śrīyoga's, regarding the four *gṛhya* mentioned in the fourth verse recited by Indra in AB III, 15.

90. Cf. among others, the classic studies of Z. Strzykowski, *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā in Śunahsepa* (Berlin, 1861); A. Weber, *Essai* (1891), pp. 276 sq.

91. *JRMS*, 18, pp. 262 sq.; W.F. Robinson, *The Golden Legend of India* (London, 1911); A.F. Keith, *JRAS* (1911), pp. 256 sq.; G. Dunlop, *Flamen-Brahman* (Paris, Gauthier, 1934), pp. 11-12; P. 11; R. Keth,

82. Cf. e.g., MB II, 489 sq.

83. Cf. Markandeya Purāna, translated by F. Eden Pargiter (Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, 1904; reprinted: Varanasi, Indological Book House, 1969).

84. Cf. MarkP VIII, 270.

85. Cf. vgr. BhagP IX, 7 and also 16; VisnP IV, 7²² (mentioned only).

"Viśvāmitra, Vasiṣṭha, Hariścandra and Sunahsepa" (viii)

86. Concerning the story of Hariścandra, cf. also: ^{F.} E. Pargiter, JRAS (1917), pp. 37 sq.; J. Muir, op. cit., I:379; B.H. Wortham, JRAS (1881), pp. 355 sq. Hariścandra is often compared to the Biblical Job.

87. Bhārtendu Hariścandra, a writer from Varanasi who at the beginning of this century struggled for the renaissance and independence of hindi literature, wrote a popular play based on the Purānic narrative, Satya Hariścandra, by now a classic, still performed in Varanasi and containing strikingly realistic descriptions of the ghat where the dead are burned. (Hariścandra ghat,ⁿ adjacent to Hanuman ghat).

88. Cf. the introduction to Keith's translation, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

89. Cf., for example, Sāyaṇa's, regarding the four yugas mentioned in the fourth verse recited by Indra in AB VII, 15.

90. Cf. among others, the classic studies of F. Streiter, Dissertatio de Sunahsepo (Berlin, 1861); A. Weber, SBAW (1891), pp. 776 sq., Id., ZDMG, 18, pp. 262 sq.; W.H. Robinson, The Golden Legend of India (London, 1911); A.B. Keith, JRAS (1911), pp. 988 sq.; G. Dumézil, Flamen-Brahman (Paris, Geuthner, 1935), pp. 13-42; 97-113; R. Roth,

91. Cf. Socrates saying that he believes in the ^G gods 'more ^{in a sense higher} than any of my accusers' (Apology 35d).
92. Cf. A.B. Keith, op. cit., pp. 63-67, who describes these three levels. In this study I have inverted the order between the second and third elements following the text of AB ~~and~~ ^{and/} seeking a leitmotif in each case. Cf. also the study of R. Roth, IS II: 112-123, commented on by J. Muir, op. cit., I:359 sq.
93. This is found in AB VII, 13-16.
94. This will be found in AB VII, 17-18.
95. Eight hymns in the RV are attributed to the ṛṣi Śunahṣepa: RV I, 24-30; IX, 3. The story in AB cites RV I, 24-30 and also RV IV, 1, 4-5; V, 2, 7; the latter two are not by the ṛṣi. At the closing of the ṛc RV V, 2, 7, the name of Śunahṣepa is recalled to Agni in order to obtain deliverance.
96. Cf. C. Kunhan Raja, Poet-Philosophers of the Rgveda. Vedic and Prevedic (Madras, Ganesh, 1963), pp. 80-96 for a study of the ṛṣi.
97. As for the other passages, cf. YV XXX-XXXI; SB XIII, 6; SSS XVI, 10-16; VSS XXVII, sq.; etc.
98. Other than the studies cited, cf. H. Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda (Berlin, 3rd edition, 1923), p. 365; R. Mitra, 'On Human Sacrifice in Ancient India', JAS XLV (Bengal, 1876); A. Weber, Indische Streifen (Berlin, 1868-1879), I:54 sq.; J. Eggeling, The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, SBE (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1900, reprinted Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1966 second edition), Vol. XLIV, which offers a very useful study on the śrautic problem (pp. xxxiii-
vli).

99. Cf. the concurring opinion of A. Hillebrandt, Ritual-literatur (Strassburg, 1897, 2nd edition, Breslau, 1927), p. 145. Cf. also id., Vedische Mythologie, 111, p. 32, criticized by A. B. Keith, JRAS (1908), p. 846.
100. Cf. vgr. E. A. Gait, 'Human Sacrifice (Indian)', ERE, sub hac voce.
101. Cf. vgr. A. B. Keith, Rigveda Brahmanas, op. cit., p. 62; id., JRAS (1907), pp. 844 sq.; J. Eggeling, loc. cit.
102. Cf. H. Lommel, 'Die Śunahśepa-Legende', ZDMG, 114, 1 (1964), p. 157 sq., which examines the relation between Hariścandra's vow and Jephthah's vow: 'If thou wilt deliver the Ammonites into my hands, then the first creature that comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return from them in peace shall be the Lord's; I will offer that as a whole-offering' Jg. 11:30 (NEB). In fact, in the Bible (^{Jephthah's} daughter, his only child was sacrificed! Cf. also 2 Kg. 3:27, etc.
103. Cf. J. Eggeling, op. cit., p. xxxvi. One could answer that the humiliation of a father--let alone a king--without children suffices to explain the conduct of Hariścandra.
104. And must we also conclude that the command of Yahweh to Abraham requiring the sacrifice of his son proves that human sacrifice was practiced at that time? Eggeling himself notes the parallelism. Cf. also P. Horsch, op. cit., pp. 287 sq.
105. Cf. Ps. 137:4.
106. Cf. as the most recent example, M. Meslin, Pour une science des religions (Paris, Seuil, 1973) where, contrary to other older works, the problem of myths and symbols becomes the central problem of religious studies.

107. Or even, 'one who has a dog's penis (or tail)'. Cf. Pāṇini VI, iii, 21 for the grammatical sense. Utilizing the word-play which sanskrit permits, C.K. Raja writes that the word implies 'one who cannot be altered in his views' or 'one who is always crooked in his ways', op. cit., p. 94.

108. Śunahṣuccha, 'the tail end of a dog' and Śunalāṅgūla,

'dog's tail (penis)'. Cf. the german Hundsfott (old nordic: fudh-hundr properly meaning cunus canis. The german root fu (cf. faul,) comes from the indoeuropean root pu (cf. sanskrit puṣyati, he stinks, latin puteo 109. Cf. CU VI, 1, 4; etc. (pus), πύσι, to stink) and means cunus, vulva.

110. Cf. CU VI, 1, 3.

111. He is also the renowned poet of the same name; here we are dealing with a juxtaposition--or even more simply we could say that Śunahṣepa becomes a ṛṣi later on.

112. Tradition considers Śunahṣepa still a boy.

113. Cf. Ram I, 62, 4.

114. Cf. the intriguing figure of Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18; Hebr. 7:1) and my study on him in Kairos, No. 1 (1959), pp. 5-12.

115. Indologists argue about the meaning of dru-pada (tripod) and yūpa (the sacrificial stake); one could equally elaborate on the underlying trinitarian symbolism.

116. RV I, 29, 1.

117. Prayer, cf. latin precāri (poscere, to demand), sanskrit prechati (praśna, a question), means certainly to ask, request, entreat (cf. also german fragen from prāgēn) which already implies the penury (cf. greek penēs, poor, latin pēnūrias, poverty) of not

having, not knowing the answer. Precārius, strictly speaking, means that which is not assured (not certain) because it is obtainable only by prayer and thus does not depend on oneself or on automatic laws (of nature or culture). The extremely rich indo-european root is perk-, (prek- and prk-), to ask. Cf. postulō and templum.

118.. Cf. Hebr. 9:11-28 for the christian interpretation of this general fact in the History of Religions.

119.. SB I, 3, 2, 1 (the citation which opens this essay).

120.. Cf. L. Silburn, Instant et cause (Paris, Vrin, 1955) pp. 23, n.4; 29-30.

121.. Id., p. 23.

122.. Id., p. 401.

123. Both the semitic and sanskrit roots have the same meaning: 'red', and refer to both man and earth.

124.. Cf. Max Scheler, Wesen und Formen der Sympathie (Bonn, F. Cohen, 2nd ed. 1923); etc.

125.. Cf. Albert Camus, L'homme revolté (Paris, Gallimard, 1951).

126.. Cf. Gabriel Marcel, Homo viator (Paris, Aubier, 1944) and the essay on Camus' L'homme revolté in the appendix of the 1963 edition.

(132) Cf. F.E. Pargiter, 'विश्वामित्रा...' art. cit.

who despite his customary scholarship betrays here the spirit of his time by refusing to accept any truth found in myth unless it is

127.. BG II, 31-38; 'Hold pleasure and pain, profit and loss, historic

victory and defeat to be the same: then brace yourself for the

fight. So you will bring no evil upon yourself.' (R.C. Zaehner trans., The Bhagavad-Gita (London, Oxford, 1969) &

128.. Manu X, 105.

129.. Cf. the creative sacrifice of Prajapati in ^{chapter} IV, pp. . (ed)

130.. Cf. Manu VII, 42.

131.. With this in mind, cf. the rather revolutionary injunction of Mt. 5:23-24.

132..)

133. Given this silence, I am not ~~bold enough to conclude~~^{ing} -- as is so often done in similar circumstances -- that Rohita's birth is somehow 'supernatural'. The text does not mention whether Hariscandra had daughters. We might suppose he did have, however, since nothing in the story implies either the impotence of the king or the sterility of his wives. The myth takes place in the realm of the normal.

134. These two traditional enemies are here in full accord, a fact of interest with regard to both chronology and the location of the myth in the complex of vedic relationships.

135. Cf. the notion of ṛṇa, debt, duty, obligation (cf. the latin reus). The root ṛṇ (going, movement) denotes that dynamism called forth by an omission or 'privation'.

136.. Cf. for example SB I, 7, 2, 1-5; III, 6, 2, 16.

~~136. Cf. for example RV I, 23, 5; II, 28, 4-5; V, 62, 1;~~

~~137. Cf. for example RV I, 23, 5; II, 28, 4-5; V, 62, 1;~~

137.. In SSS the order is also different (1, 3, 4, 2, 5 and a 6th verse). I am well aware that one cannot construct theories on texts which are more or less contingent. On the other hand, neither need we have recourse to a collective unconscious in order to justify this interpretation. I am basing it on the contents of the texts, without insisting on the order of the five temptations.

138.. Cf. the arguments used by Kṛṣṇa to convince Arjuna he ought to fight in BG II and III.

139.. That is, we are talking about the four ages of the world (Max Müller, A. Weber) or a simple dice game (A.B. Keith)? An argument in favor of the latter view is that the four yugas or cosmic cycles are not vedic. Cf. Keith, h.l., etc.

140. MaitS I, 6, 11; II, 2, 1; TB II, 5, 7, 6; etc.

141. Sui generis since we cannot summarily reduce the karmic process to aristotelian categories and still less to modern scientific chains of causality.

142. Cf. RV I, 24, 1: Aditi, translated by freedom, also means infinite, without boundaries or limits, the integrality of all being. In the RV she is usually personified and divinized.

143. Cf. the rather different implication of the gift of one hundred thousand cows in the Ram.

144. Cf. the vedic conception of āyus (greek ^{αἰών} / eon). After a life lived fully (dīrghāyus), death is not a death properly speaking. Real death is premature death (akālanṛtyu); in one's youth, by accident, etc.

145. We could perhaps translate it by exo-sistence, i.e., no longer ek-sistence (the tension existing between fullness and nothingness; the tensional dynamic ~~being~~ stretched over nothing and subsisting below infinity), but the outward extension, the 'sistence' in two dimensions, viz. in a corporal space and in a time, which imprisons movement itself. 'Quid est enim existere, nisi ex aliquo sistere', says Richard of St. Victor, De Trinitate IV, 12 (FL, 196, 937).

146. In the text already cited of Ram I, 61, 21, Śunahśeṣa declares that he, unlike his elder and younger brothers (the two preferred by his parents) is ready to die.

147. Rta, generally translated as cosmic order, is not a physical or natural law, but the very expression of the factual behavior of all reality, the sheer freedom of the real, or of divine spontaneity if you wish--doubtless something different from divine caprice.

Cf. RV I, 23, 5; V, 68, 3; X, 190, 1; AV IV, 1, 4; X, 7, 11; XII, 1, 1; etc. (II, 28, 4-5; V, 62, 1; V, 63, 1&7;)

148. Cf. RV X, 90, the famous puruṣa-sūkta.

149. Cf. RV X, 129, 4 where kāma, desire or love, is described as the original force which initiates the dynamism of creation and being. Together with tapas, heat or energy, it forms one of the two elements of ^{existence} ~~life~~. Cf. TB III, 11, 86; AB IV, 23, 1; V, 32, 1; SB VI, 1, 1, 8; X, 5, 3, 3; XI, 5, 8, 1; etc.

150. Modern european languages have significantly enough lost the desiderative form of the verb (and in english even the future). Future and desiderative are not extrinsic modes or simple constructions of the human mind which can be expressed with mere auxillary

forms or verbs. They belong to the very structure of our being.

151. It was common at the beginning of this ~~century~~^{century} to consider initiation as a simple rite de passage. We use the word in a deeper and broader sense. Unfortunately, the narrow conception of initiation as a phenomenon typifying 'primitive' religion has not yet entirely disappeared from modern writing. Cf. sub hac voce ERE and, in comparison, the progress of RGG.

152. Cf. SB XI, 2, 1, 1: 'Verily, man is born thrice, namely in this way:--first he is born from his mother and father; and when he to whom the sacrifice inclines performs offering he is born a second time; and when he dies, and they place him on the fire, and when he thereupon comes into existence again, he is born a third time;--wherefore they say, "Man is born thrice."' (Eggeling trans.)

153. Cf. BU IV, 4, 17. Cf. also with regard to this Hegel's words: 'Das Individuum ist Sohn seines Volkes, seiner Welt; der Einzelne mag sich ausspreizen, wie er will, er geht nicht über sie hinaus. Denn er gehört dem einen allgemeinen Geiste an, der seine Substanz und Wesen ist; wie sollte er aus diesem herauskommen?' Vorlesungen über die Geschichte^t der Philosophie (Stuttgart, Frommann, 1928, p. 75).

'Jumping out of one's skin' is precisely what concerns us here. Cf. incidentally the thrust of this metaphor in most western languages as the expression of an impossibility.

154. Cf. Manu IX, 8 which seems to refer to Nārada's introductory verses in AB VII, 13.

155. Even if these names have a 'phallic connotation' (J.C. Heesterman op. cit., p. 159), here they hardly play what could be called a significant role.

156. I agree with P. Horsch (op. cit., p. 290) who notes that 'trotz der Vorliebe der alten Inder für Namens^uetzung, die Etymologie von Śunahśepa nirgend eine Rolle spielt'.

158. Could this be another factor favoring an interpretation of the myth as a myth of initiation?

159. Cf. BU IV, 4, 23 where it is said that because sages grow the ātman to be the true realm of salvation, they do not desire children or wealth, which are only aids to salvation. For the western and christian tradition, cf. T. S. Eliot, 'Marriage and virginity, Death and Immortality', *Essays*, trans. J. Danforth (Paris, Beauchesne, 1922), pp. 209-235.

160. Cf. SB II, 2, 2, 5-14.

161. It is enough to cite the verses 10 and 12 in order to note the difference.

162. I can't help thinking here that someone like Leibniz, who described the 'glimmering light' at the center of a person even in a prison camp, in the 'first circle' of conscience or in a cancer ward, understands very well what this myth says.

163. Cf. e.g., the famous cosmogonic hymn BU I, 1, 1-10, 1-10.

164. I am tempted to quote here from another tradition and from Frau Sze's first thesis (I, 1) in the *Chung T'ung*. The source of the *Four Classics of Chinese thought*, which Frau Sze regards as the *Chung T'ung* itself, and whose version I reproduce:

'What heaven has decreed and what earth has created is called the *Chung T'ung*. The realization of this nature is called the *Chung T'ung*. The *Chung T'ung* is the *Chung T'ung* of the *Chung T'ung* (one who understands the nature of heaven and earth)'

157. It is not a question of ignorance or naiveté or even innocence. Cf. the myths of Prajāpati (SB I, 7, 4); of Yama and Yamī (RV X, 10); of Purūravas and Urvasī (RV X, 95; SB XI, 5, 1); etc.

158. Could this be another factor favoring an interpretation of the myth as a myth of initiation?

159. Cf. BU IV, 4, 22 where it is said that because sages know the ātman to be the true realm of salvation, they do not desire children or wealth, which are only aids to salvation. For the western and christian tradition, cf. Ton H.C. Van Ejk, 'Marriage and Virginity, Death and Immortality', Epektasis, Mélanges J. Daniélou (Paris, Beauchesne, 1972), pp. 209-235.

160. Sf. SB II, 2, 2, 8-14.

161. It is enough to cite the entire MB and BG in order to note the difference.

162. I can't help thinking here that someone like Solzhenitsyn, who describes the 'glimmering light' at the center of a person even in a prison camp, in the 'first circle' of condemned men or in a cancer ward, understands very well what this myth says.

163. Cf. e.g., the famous cosmogonic hymns: RV X, 90; 121; 129; 190.

164. I am tempted to quote here from another tradition and cite Tsze Sze's first thesis (I,1) in the Chung Yung, the second of the Four Classics of chinese wisdom, which Ezra Pound rendered as The Unwobbling Pivot (and whose version I reproduce):

'What heaven has disposed and sealed is called the inborn nature. The realization of this nature is called the process. The clarification of this process (the understanding or making intelligible of

The translation can be found in Pound's Confucius (New York, New Directions, 1969).

165. There are exactly 97 rcs and 31 gāthās.

166. If rubrics, printed in rubrum, red, explain the ceremonies, what I call nigrics, generally printed in nigrum, black, constitute the very substance of the rites. Cf. R. Panikkar, Worship and Secular Man (London, Darton, Longman & Todd and Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1973), pp. 69 sq.

167. Cf. ~~§ XXI~~ ^{chapter ~~XXX~~ XVI}, (pp.)

168. From the root muc (moks-) meaning liberate, set free.

169. Cf. R. Panikkar, "El presente tempiterno. Una apostilla a la historia de la ~~###~~ salvación y a la teología de la liberación" the Homenaje a K. Rahner edited by A. Vargas-Machuca, Teología y mundo contemporaneo (Madrid, Cristiandad) 1975, pp. 153-175, where these ideas are further developed.