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VII (II)

Witness and Dialogue

Ἀναστάντες μάρτυρες ἄδικοι,
ἃ οὐκ ἐγίνωσκον
ἐπηρώτων με.

Surrexerunt testes violenti:
quorum non eram conscius,
a me quaerebant.

Violent witnesses did rise up:
on matters of which I am not conscious,
they question me.

Ps. 35:11 (+)

+. LXX and Vulgata: Ps. 34. The latin version is that of the New Psalter.

Mythos, Faith & Hermeneutics

1 Prologue

(testimony)
Witness has been considered the purest, the most sublime expression of faith. Almost all religions (in the ~~full~~ widest sense of this word) commemorate their witnesses, their martyrs, and very often cite them as motives for credibility. In the christian tradition the martyr is the perfect Man, the perfect imitator of the Lord.

Dialogue--the exchange of views, the encounter of beliefs on equal grounds with mutual confidence, complete frankness and without ulterior motives--is today considered an indispensible element in the search for truth and the realization of justice. Our contemporary world feels the need to base itself on dialogue. Only dialogue makes pluralism, coexistence, democracy, even justice and peace possible. Dialogue is the essence of freedom of speech. Politically it incarnates in parlimentarianism, ecclesially it manifests in the dialogue with the 'world', with 'non-christians', and even so-called 'non-believers' (as the Vatican, Geneva and Phanar testify). Contemporary ecumenism is founded on dialogue and even evangelization cannot ignore it. (1) One could summarize the last twenty centuries of western church history in the following kairological moments: Witness (until Arius), Conversion (until the impact of islam), Crusade (until the discovery of America), Mission (until the end of the colonial era) and Dialogue (today). (2)

What is the relation between witness (testimony) and dialogue? Is ~~witness~~ testimony possible when we admit dialogue? At a certain point, does the witness not refuse dialogue? Don't communist and inquisitorial methods, while claiming to engage in dialogue--albeit as interrogation--represent a refusal of dialogue? ~~Doesn't the prisoner's confession terminate dialogue, both as its goal and as its end?~~ *Both the goal and the end of the dialogue seem to be the defendant's confession.*

2 A Double Dialogue: 'Early Christian' and 'Modern Political'

Before analyzing the relationship between witness (testimony) and dialogue in order to discover its underlying myth, we would like to show a double dialogue, 'early christian' and 'modern political', presented side-by-side to make the differences and analogies plainly visible. We do not dramatize here, nor do we suppose the interrogators are in bad faith. The acts of martyrs, contemporary literature--need we do more than mention A. I. Solzhenitsyn?--and the history of every period furnish sufficient examples to allow this concentrated presentation.

A

Judge: Are you an enemy of the State?

Christian: No.

J: Well then, why don't you obey its laws?

C: I obey my conscience.

J: You must bow down and offer incense to the Emperor.

C: That would mean I recognize him as God.

J: So?

C: I recognize only one God, the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

J: Yes or no: will you obey the State?

C: Of course, but this act of adoration is not part of that obedience.

J: Who is the judge here, the State or you?

B

Judge: Are you an enemy of the State?

Citizen: No.

J: Well then, why don't you obey its laws?

C: I obey my conscience.

J: Then collaborate with the State.

C: That would mean I recognize it as omnipotent and infallible.

J: So?

C: I recognize no absolute power.

J: Yes or no: will you obey the State?

C: Of course, but not through a servile, blind, unconditional fear which only yields injustice.

J: Who is the judge here, the State or you?

(more)

C: I cannot not obey God...

J: According to your personal interpretation?

C: According to my faith.

J: Then you divinize yourself.

C: I obey Caesar in his own domain.

J: And you decide what that is.

C: I follow Jesus Christ and his teachings do not permit idolatry.

J: We don't ask much, not even what you believe. Just submit to the law: sacrifice at the altar in honor of the Emperor.

C: In whose name?

J: The Emperor's.

C: I obey God before Caesar.

J: Don't you see this is sheer obstinancy?

C: I pray only to have the strength to remain truthful.

C: I cannot not obey my conscience...

J: According to your personal interpretation?

C: According to my convictions.

J: Then you consider yourself above the State?

C: I obey the State in its own domain.

J: And you decide what that is.

C: I stand by the human--or humanist if you prefer--tradition of personal dignity.

J: No one wants to strip you of your dignity. We only want to re-educate you, destroy this ill-fated individualism and pride in thinking yourself truthful.

C: In whose name?

J: The Party's. That means the People, men like me. You know very well that the will of the people and truth manifest themselves in the process which the Party incarnates.

C: No, I don't believe that.

J: Don't you see this is sheer obstinancy?

C: I'm tempted to say the same thing to you.

J: Don't you realize your behavior is irrational?

C: Why?

J: As a result of this small act, you will suffer greatly and then die.

C: True life is not on earth.

J: Can't you understand we seek your own good? We just want to make you see your mistake.

C: Mistake?

J: Just this: if you want to realize your ideal, you need to live in order to convince others you have the truth.

C: Merely existing is not the supreme value. Besides, arguments cannot persuade any one to believe; this is the work of grace.

J: But dead you can do nothing.

C: You cannot kill real life.

J: You're just a fanatic.

J: Don't you see that such individual behavior is an aberration?

C: Why?

J: Because it means chaos, because the group must determine what is truth; only the group counts.

C: So?

J: So realistically speaking, the group wants to rehabilitate you, it invites you to collaborate with its goals and admit your mistakes. We want only your good.

C: You want only the group's good, chopping off the true fulfillment of the human [redacted] personal [redacted].

J: But you're part of this collectivity. This is what gives you all your rights.

C: But the group is not necessarily uniform...

J: No, but it is united...

C: To accomplish goals which are not convincing and stifle the [redacted] human being.

J: Then your selfishness condemns yourself and ex[redacted]communicates you[redacted] from the community. You are a blind fanatic.

C: Not at all.

J: Yes! You refuse dialogue.

C: We're obviously not talking about the same thing.

J: Have you anything to add?

C: God is my witness (*testimony*): I follow my conscience and Jesus Christ.

J: History will prove you wrong.

C: You're not the judge of history.

J: In any case history is on our side.

C: Small victory: there is a Providence which will judge even you, since you ignore truth.

J: What is truth?

C: Our Master did not answer this question.

J: And you?

C: The disciple is not above his Master.

C: I should like to speak with this community.

J: All your life it has listened to you and now has handed you over to us. No one would listen to you: they might put you in an asylum.

C: I would still like to explain my point of view.

J: What good is it to listen to a madman? Would you like to answer once again?

C: Let me be heard by witnesses.

J: History will witness (*testify*) against you.

C: You're not the judge of history.

J: More than you are in any case.

C: Only because you are in power.

J: Because we are right and know the truth.

C: What is truth?

J: The Will and Welfare of the People.

C: But who determines this?

J: Let's leave these speculations. Give witness of your submission to Caesar.

C: I bear witness (testimony) to my faith which is action, a way of life more than a doctrine or an interpretation.

J: That's just sectarian fanaticism talking.

C: I believe in Jesus Christ.

J: But this Christ did not forbid you to obey Caesar.

C: I witness to truth...

J: Abstract...

C: Concrete...

J: Which?

C: Christ.

J: He, it seems, would prevent you from being an ordinary citizen.

C: He taught us to reject idolatry.

J: One last effort: interpret this any way you wish, but render public witness (testimony) to the Emperor.

C: It would be false witness (testimony).

J: To refuse means death.

C: No, it means real witness (testimony).

J: to whom?

C: to God.

J: Where is that?

J: The People themselves.

C: I believe in something less volatile, more stable and solid.

J: That's just religious fanaticism talking.

C: I don't believe in God.

J: But you do believe in something that goes above and beyond the group.

C: I witness to truth...

J: Abstract...

C: Concrete...

J: Which?

C: My conscience.

J: We'll have to re-educate it.

C: By force?

J: One last effort: help us to re-educate you.

C: That would betray my convictions.

J: Very well. To refuse means death.

C: No, it means real witness (testimony).

J: to whom?

C: to Man.

J: Where is that?

3 Thesis: ~~Witness~~ Testimony is Possible Only in a Mythic Communion

These two colloquies which, in a certain sense represent the beginning and the end of a historical era, illustrate my thesis concerning witness in our time of dialogue: ~~witness~~ testimony is possible only in a mythic communion. ~~This~~ Only this mythic communion--participation in a common myth--makes ~~witness~~ testimony possible. Outside the horizon provided by ~~the myth, witness is~~ a common myth, testimony becomes meaningless. Further, we perceive this pre-existent mythic communion only when dialogue is ruptured or when ~~witness~~ testimony produces dialogue.

To illuminate our thesis, we will divide it into three parts:

~~Witness~~ Testimony is only possible if there is an audience (i.e. somebody to witness to (the witnessed)) distinct from the witness. So ~~witness~~ testimony is essentially a relation, but not a dialectical one. Neither is it mere dialogue in the traditional sense of the word. It is one element of the dialogical dialogue, but even this does not exhaust it.

~~Witness~~ Testimony belongs to the order of myth, not of logos. Strictly speaking, you bear witness to a loyalty, not to a truth.

~~The will~~ direct intention to witness destroys the force of the testimony. Further, any hermeneutic of the testimony by the witness makes it vanish. One cannot be a witness and an exegete at the same time. Should the witness try, however, and should a semblance of his testimony still remain, this would rather be confession. A witness does not bear witness to himself; whereas a confessor confesses his belief.

4 Semantic Reflections

Before developing these three points, we shall situate the problem with a few semantic reflections. 'Testimony' and words from the same root come from the latin testimonium, which derives from testis, i.e., tri-stans, literally he who 'stands for the third', he who can really witness, attest, give evidence because

he is an impartial third party outside the litigations. (3)

On the other hand, the greek μάρτυς gives primacy to the anthropological, as opposed to the juridical, dimension. Μάρτυς comes from mrtu, whence μέριμνα, anguish, care, anxiety and μεριμνίζω, preoccupied, concerned, anxious, μέριμερος, requiring much deliberation; μεριμνάω to think, meditate, be anxious for, whence μέριμνα, anxiety, thought and μεριμάω, to consider, reflect, deliberate, etc.

The underlying indo-european root is smer (mer) which means to reflect, think, remember, take care of, be anxious, recollect (cf. in sanskrit smṛti: that which one entrusts to memory, i.e., tradition). (4) The root is also connected with men (cf. μένω), to think, remain (cf. in sanskrit manas, in latin mens and manere). (5) The anglo-saxon word witness also springs from the order of knowledge (wit, wisdom). (6)

Following its etymology and history, we reach the following description: (7)
Μαρτυρία (testimony), witness is the act or result of witnessing, of attesting, giving evidence of a conviction one holds, about which one cares, which one recollects and for which one is concerned. The witness knows, understands, recollects, is anxious for, concerned about; he thinks, considers, is preoccupied with what he will manifest to another in his testimony.

To testify then would be the act of 'recollecting' in one's own 'thought' through 'concern' for that very reality to which one bears witness. Contrary to what one might think, neither the word 'witness' nor 'testimony' denotes an existential or volitional attitude, but both are clearly rooted in the order of the intellect, the memory, thought. Nor do the words suggest action, intuition or will; rather they belongs to the realm of consciousness. Now consciousness has at times been hastily identified with the logos; myth also belongs here and with full rights. We want to show that the character of testimony is to reveal myth. Myth reveals itself in dialogue

just as the logos liberates itself in dialectics.

We end these considerations now to study the problematic of witness (testimony) in the particular and precise viewpoint of our thesis. (8)

5 Testimony ~~Witness~~ as a Relation

The fact that ~~witness arises from~~ testimony implies a mythic communion between the witness~~ing~~ and the (witnessed audience) means, in the first place, that ~~witness implies~~ testimony entails a special relationship between the act of witnessing and the (witnessed audience). By witnessing we mean the witness in the act of testifying; ~~by~~ witnessed or audience the one to whom the witness testifies, the one who recognizes, in order to accept or reject, the witness and his testimony. We must distinguish witness, the audience and the testimony; the last being the contents or meaning, i.e., what the witness testifies. The audience is the one for whom the witness discloses himself as such. ~~Witness is ambiguous, it may~~ The audience means a person, a fact, the object on whose behalf one testifies (God, truth, an event, a friend, etc.); even what or who receives and recognizes the testimony of the witness (the judge, society, humanity, a group, the future, etc.). We shall try to be as precise as possible in order to avoid confusion and so use witness to mean almost exclusively the one who gives the testimony; exceptions to this usage will be clearly indicated.

Above all, testimony is a relation. It occurs whenever a witness is recognized as testifying to something by an audience. In the final analysis, the audience must recognize the witness or there is no witnessing; at the very least the witness must believe in the existence of an audience. Without this recognition (between the witness and the audience)--be it mutual or only unilateral--witnessing is not possible. The testis, 'the third', is essential to testimony, even when removed from the juridical sphere: a third part is also necessary in the anthropological order of knowledge for testimony to exist as such. The witness is not someone

who knows something, but one who communicates this something to another. Witnessing is a phenomenon of the third power (witnessing, audience, testimony), reflexive consciousness of the second (knowing and known), and immediate pereeption a phenomenon of the first (the perceived).

a) Now this relation between witnessing and the audience is not dialectical, that is, it does not derive from the order of the logos. By the order of the logos we understand that epistemologically verifiable domain of consciousness, the critical realm. (9) Could the witness testify via the logos, he would be an expert, a lawyer, a savant, a sophist or a sage, but not a witness. If you can prove with reason or furnish evidence, you are not, strictly speaking, testifying, you are not witnessing but demonstrating. You do not testify to a geometric theorem, you prove it. You do not testify to a mathematical axiom, you postulate it. You do not testify to some fact accessible to others; you point it out. You do not testify to acquired knowledge, you indicate it. You testify only to what is inaccessible to the audience outside the testimony itself. The witness has an inherent authority which is at once his strength and his weakness. You cannot criticize the witness by attacking his testimony as such, i.e., by an internal principle of verification--except, of course, self-contradiction. You must be content with extrinsic criteria: the witness is honest, loyal, intelligent; he has reasons (or motives) for his testimony, etc.

Testimony does not present the structure of A is B or A is not B. Its form is rather M says that A is B or M is in favor of A is B (or their respective negatives). There is an element which escapes dialectics, an element which is not of the order of the logos, the logic-al realm. There is no need to testify when the other can experience or confirm the testimony by himself--although very often the higher human experiences are inaccessible except through the mediation of a witness. The tutor or the teacher demonstrates, proves, communicates learning;

he makes one aware of new facts or helps uncover previously hidden relations; but he does not bear witness, or rather he witnesses only insofar as the students are not able to realize by themselves what he is instructing. The instructor is a dialectician, not a witness. On the other hand, the true master is one who testifies to something the disciple cannot yet obtain by himself. One can only testify to transcendence, vertical as well as horizontal: The ultimate place of testimony is not dialectics. In this realm testimony is only provisional and must give way to reasons verifiable by the intellect.

Strictly speaking, the interface between dialectics (that acquired through critical knowledge) and testimony (that requiring the mediation of a witness in order to be accepted) cannot be defined a priori. Without the witness of the ancestors, elders, scholars, wise men and saints, human life would remain banal. It is through authentic martyrs--through witnesses--in every field that humanity does not wander aimlessly but journeys toward a positive eschatology. The master testifies to the invisible in the hope that eventually his testimony will become superfluous, that one day we shall see face to face.

In any case, ~~it remains true that~~ testimony does not belong to dialectics.

b) ~~5.2~~ Witnessing certainly implies a relation but not one of mere dialogue in the ~~traditional~~ sense of dialogue as a dialectical tool. As long as dialogue is dialectical, i.e., an intellectual arena where one contends by means of reason to ~~defeat~~ confront the adversary, testimony has no place in it. As long as the dialectical dialogue remains ~~unfinished and~~ ~~still~~ open, as long as one continues to inquire, to question oneself but to admit only reason, dialogue does not allow any witness to testify, for the witness testifies precisely to something which escapes the grasp of dialectics. Otherwise witnessing is out of place. This is why testimony always takes the form of an apodictic affirmation (or negation): ~~'~~this

is what happened', 'these are the facts', 'I state or swear this', 'I attest this', non possumus, etc. The witness ends, shatters, dialectical dialogue by placing himself on what he believes to be ~~a higher~~ *another* level. His testimony uncovers depths which de facto pure dialectics or simple dialectical dialogue do not achieve. To every dialectical argument, he responds that things are a certain way because this is how he has heard, seen, experienced or believed them. The witness also ultimately takes exception to dialectical dialogue: he does not remain indefinitely involved in dialogue, but declares that he has a ~~higher~~ *different* source of knowledge which forces him to give testimony to what he believes to be true.

Testimony ends dialectical dialogue and in turn, such dialogue ~~makes~~ *allows no room for* witnessing. ~~impossible~~. As long as the process is open, as long as the dialogue goes on, no testimony is possible because there is no witnessing nor any audience, but only partners in dialogue, equally open to each other in a confrontation which accepts only the constraint of logic. Each one is seeking; there is no room here for the apodictic affirmation of testimony which, when it comes, can only *either be dismissed or* end such dialogue. The place of testimony is at the end of the dialogue and so finishes any dialogue. But when do we know that there is no longer place for dialogue or ~~room~~ *that there is the time* for accepting the witness?

Now the dialectical dialogue is not the only, nor even the most important, form of dialogue. Discovering the capital importance of dialogical dialogue represents an important cultural mutation in our times. (10) Until recently dialogue has been mainly a dialectical tool; now, disengaged from dialectics, it has its own justification. This ~~true~~ dialogue is neither a tool nor a pis-aller, that is, a purely extrinsic aid which acts as a catalyst to invigorate my introspection. Dialogical dialogue is not the external reinforcement of a monologue in the belief that 'two heads are better than one'. Dialogue here is not like procedure of the "great executive's" subordinates whose critical collaboration enables their

boss to deploy his best dialectical skills. *In its critical form it* is a novelty of contemporary culture and it befits the kairos of our times to have liberated dialogue from the tutelege of dialectics. No longer does dialogue necessarily belong to dialectics; hence it does not exist to convert another, to evangelize; it is not merely a method to know the other and his point of view, nor is it a better test of his dialectical skill. Dialogue is, fundamentally, opening myself to another so that he might speak and reveal my myth which I cannot know by myself because it is transparent to me, self-evident. Dialogue is a way of knowing myself and of disentangling my own point of view from other view-points and from me, because it is grounded so deeply in my own roots as to be utterly hidden from me. It is the other who through our encounter awakens this human depth latent in me in an endeavor which surpasses both of us. In authentic dialogue this process is reciprocal. Dialogue sees the other not as an extrinsic, accidental aid, but as the indispensable, personal element in our search for truth, because I am not a self-sufficient, autonomous individual. In this sense, dialogue is a religious act par excellence because it recognizes my religatio to another, my individual poverty, the need to get out of myself, transcend myself, in order to save myself.

Dialogue seeks truth by trusting the other, just as dialectics pursues truth by trusting the order of things, the value of reason and weighty arguments. Dialectics is the optimism of reason. Dialogue is the optimism of the heart. Dialectics believes it can approach truth by relying on the objective consistency of ideas. Dialogue believes it can advance along the way to truth by relying on the subjective consistency of the dialogical partners. Dialogue does not seek to be primarily duo-logue, a duet of two logoi which could still be dialectical; but a dia-logos, a piercing of the logos to attain a truth which transcends it.

We call this dialogical dialogue and we add that the relational nature of all witnessing belongs to this dialogue.

Now the problematic is more complex since this mutation in the ~~nature~~ *concept* of dialogue corresponds to a certain mutation in the concept of the ~~witness~~ *testimony*. If dialogue is more than a dialectical technique, it cannot dispense with a certain testimony, i.e., with the non-apodictic testimony of the other which communicates his experience and does not merely criticize my views. Without this testimony we cannot establish the true dialogue we have described. If I can learn some new truth on my own, even if eventually helped by another, I do not *yet* leave the territory of dialectics and my partner is only a critic. But if I cannot know my own myth, cannot discover my own prejudices and above all cannot recognize my presuppositions by myself, then I need the arguments and criticisms of my partner as well as his ~~witness~~ *testimony*. His testimony says to me (without proof until we share a common language and homogeneous categories) that there are other points of view, other possibilites, that what is self-evident to me may not be for another. This new sort of dialogue can only proceed by mutually integrating our testimonies within a larger horizon, a new myth. (12) What the other bears is not a critique of my ideas but witness to his own experience, which then enters our dialogue, flows with it and awaits a new fecundation.

Where this dialogue today is perhaps most plausible, most delicate and also difficult--but most necessary--is between religious traditions, between world-views and between ideologies. The working attitude of this dialogue is fundamentally different from that of dialectical dialogue. The christian will speak with the buddhist, for example, not to convert or merely to know <u>him</u> but to better understand himself in the radical sense of an understanding which goes far beyond a simple development or a broadened outlook on oneself or one's religion. He approaches the buddhist to integrate on a new horizon human experiences which until the dialogue were irreconcilable, inscribed on different skylines and which permitted the game of dialectics only as a second instance. (13)

There are then different kinds of dialogue, just as there are different kinds of ~~witness~~ testimony. There is dialectical dialogue and the 'monological' witness who refuses all dialogue. But there is also dialogical dialogue and the dialogical witness who welcomes dialogue, both barely experienced on the global scale in which they present themselves today as one of the greatest challenges of our times. (14) Dialogical dialogue accepts the witness of the other and together with him seeks to integrate this testimony in a new experience no less concrete but more universal than the original starting point.

c) ~~553~~ Nevertheless, witnessing cannot be reduced to a component of dialogue. It presents its own consistency over and above any dialogue. We have no guarantee that the witness accepts the rules of the game of dialogue--even of dialogical dialogue. There is a 'divine madness', a foolishness of the Cross in most religions.

Doubtless there are pathological forms of witnessing just as there are diabolical and fanatical forms which refuse all dialogue and any analysis; but history and experience show--no need to cite the Phaedrus--(15) that there are authentic forms of witnessing which do not spring from dialogue and which cannot be inscribed in the dialogical process. We might call them revelatory forms: they reveal a transcendent message and ~~contain~~ bear their own authority. One hears, loves and accepts them or one ignores, hates and refuses them. They have nothing to do with dialogue; wanting to 'co-opt' them dialogically would vulgarize, deform and finally destroy them. Francis of Assisi could not give reasons for his message any more than Camus' stranger could testify to his innocence. Jesus spoke with the roman and gentile Pilate, but was silent before his compatriot and fellow-believer Herod, with whom he shared not only the same idioms but the same language.

Wanting to master the witness, to reduce his testimony to dialectics or even to dialogue suffocates the Spirit, straitjackets the freedom of God and Man. Wanting to dictate the rules of witnessing, to manipulate its reality may succeed for

~~for a~~ a while...until asses (16) and even stones (17) begin to testify!

To be sure, testimony enables dialogue to be ~~authentic and not~~ more than a mere dialectical strategy; on the other hand, it is no less true that the witness constantly challenges dialogue and only in certain cases does he allow dialogue to continue without destroying it. But testimony is not a simple provisional working hypothesis. Even in the most perfect form of dialogue, the witness will not be accepted if his testimony does not present a certain homogeneity indispensible to dialogue, a mythic homogeneity. This needs to be analyzed more precisely.

6 The Relation Between the Witness and the Audience

We have said that the relation ~~which characterizes~~ between the witness and the audience, is a relation ~~is~~ sui generis. It is neither dialogical nor dialectical; but rather mythical. It arises from a mythic communion: testimony makes sense only to those who share a common myth. And it is precisely this myth to which the witness testifies. The crisis which today confronts ~~the witness~~ testimony from every side is not due to a lack of convinced people or a lack of heroism, but more properly to the crumbling of traditional communal myths. The ~~witness's~~ testimony's very foundation--the myth held in common by the witness and his audience--is disappearing. For example, the christian priest used to witness to the on-going process of redemption ~~within the Church~~. The witnesses are still there, but their testimony is scarcely visible; they have ceased to ~~proclaim their testimony~~ witness because that particular myth of the Church which ~~nourished them and~~ made their witnessing ~~authentic~~ possible no longer holds. The anti-clericalists of last century arose precisely in countries of traditional beliefs because ~~they~~ people thought that priests were bad or even a false ~~witnesses~~ testimony of what they still believed the Church to be. Today people no longer discuss what kind of witnesses priests are, because they no longer recognize the context--the myth--of the Church within which the testimony of priests was inscribed. The context having changed, anti-clericalism today makes no sense.

To give another example: today we are undergoing not a crisis of patriotism, but the dissolution of the myth of the fatherland which heretofore made a certain patriotism positively or negatively meaningful.

Indeed, for the ~~witness~~ *testimony* to exist, ~~he~~ *the witness* must be able to testify to someone and have this ~~person~~ *receiver*, the audience, receive his testimony. This person need not be a judge or someone actually present in favor of the witness ~~of~~ *or* not; the audience can be God, Society, History, the future, etc. But someone must be there to receive the ~~witness~~ *testimony*; the witness proclaims his textimony to him. To live in the presence of God, for example, means to ~~testify to~~ *take as witness* him of our actions and to be able to say: 'I do not receive glory from men'. (J 5)

In any case there must be a certain communication, even a certain communion, between the witness and the audience. Authentic witnessing begins when the audience recognizes that the witness is actually testifying, affirming, revealing, uncovering, manifesting something not given in either a dialectical relation (in argument) or a dialogical one (in trusting the other).

In certain cases, it may be that the audience ~~would~~ exists in the mind of the witness alone, but this does not contradict our thesis. There ~~would~~ *will* be no actual witnessing until an audience appears; yet the witness can be an authentic witness because he believes in the existence of an audience.

One accepts (or rejects) the witness when one enters into a mythic communion with him and accepts (or rejects) his testimony to the degree of this communion. The first christian martyrs, for instance, testified to the truth of christianity for christians of subsequent generations; they testified to the strength of their convictions or their faith for historians of religion; they testified to their fanaticism or their blindness for marxist or maoist adepts. Testimony only appears at the level of the audience's communion of myth with the witness; the latter only testifies to something we ourselves can accept as attestable. Witnesses testify to miracles to the extent that the audience believes in miracles; otherwise they testify

to their superstition and gullibility. (19/20) Christ's resurrection was pondered, proven, attested to by the primitive Church in exact proportion to one's belief in the possibility of resurrection. ~~These~~ *Christian* witnesses ~~have said~~ *repeat* the same thing for twenty centuries, but we accept them only to the extent that we share a common myth ~~and its categories~~ *with them*. (20/21) Contemporary theological reflection of Jesus' resurrection provides a striking instance. We accept as authentic the witnessing of the early christians insofar as we believe in what they testified to and this belief is provided by the mythical horizon we still hold in common with them. (21/22)

Be this as it may, you witness to a loyalty, not a truth. The witness does not reveal a hitherto unknown truth--which ~~will~~ *would* always ~~be~~ *remain* foreign and incomprehensible--but a loyalty to a certain situation we already know. In the example we gave earlier, the christian martyr witness*es* to the christian 'truth' to christians, to the 'truth' of he*r*oic courage to ~~religious~~ historians *of religion* and to the 'truth' that religion is the opium of the people and the enemy of progress to marxist and maoist ideological adepts. In each case we admit witnessing to a loyalty--to something which we believe to be ~~true~~ *the case*.

In general, the witness has been studied within the framework of a specific context--precisely because *a witness* only makes sense within one context. As long as ~~you~~ *we* live in a given culture, in a particular mythical context or a particular horizon of intelligibility and experience, ~~you~~ *we* are not aware that your witness makes absolutely no sense outside this given horizon. (22/23) The task of our epoch is to expand this horizon to include a transcultural perspective as well. Only then shall we become aware that each concrete witnessing does not have universal meaning.

It is in fact the notable *silence* of witnesses today which *leads* prompts us to ~~[illegible]~~ discover ~~global~~ *our broken* myths and ~~[illegible]~~ *us to reconsider* the true unity of humanity on a broader *basis*.

We have said that the place of the witness is within a mythic communion. Witnessing belongs indeed to the realm of consciousness, but not at the level of the

logos. One could almost assume, by process of elimination, that what remains in consciousness and is not logos, is myth. But here we are not concerned to argue semantics. We could call myth that invisible common horizon which allows communication.

To recapitulate, we might say that there is no ~~witness~~ *testimony* without a hermeneutic of his testimony by an audience. This hermeneutic implies a common horizon which we have called the mythic communion between the witness and the audience.

7 Interpreting the Witness

One characteristic of a genuine witness already discovered in the light of what we have said is that the hermeneutic necessary to ~~understand~~ *accept* his testimony comes from the audience and not from the witness.

To clarify our thesis, we would add that voluntary manipulation of the *testimony by the* witness ~~is impossible. His~~ *would invalidate the* testimony ~~would cease to be authentic.~~ The true witness bears testimony in spite of himself, without intending to, strictly speaking. He bears witness knowingly, but he does not testify for the purpose of witnessing. He witnesses because he is compelled to do so, impelled to give witness, so to speak, by his conviction and the power of the truth in which he believes. It is the audience which discovers the testimony of the witness. The *reflective consciousness* ~~will to~~ *may elicit in me the will to testify would destroy the value of the* ~~testify destroys the~~ testimony, for then it would no longer represent the irruption of something higher, the rupture of endless dialogue or the overstepping of a dialectical argument incapable of reaching *any conclusion.* ~~the witnessed fiat~~. It would no longer represent the epiphany of a testis, a third, but the deliberate influence on a second, i.e., a proof presented to an audience. In this way, testimony becomes dialectics or dialogue, or worse yet, didactic; but it disappears as testimony.

~~If I love my neighbor, I do not become a witness in order to testify to him or anyone else--my friends or my brothers--of~~ *not really testify of any authentic love for my neighbor if I love him in order to witness of this love to him or anyone else--my friends or my brothers.*

~~this love.~~ I do not testify to a true love, if I love someone, in order to bear witness of my obedience or my loyalty to God. I do not bear witness to the truth of my faith if I proclaim it in order to be a witness. In other words, the witness cannot intend to witness without becoming inauthentic. Of course falsehood is also possible here. As long as the audience believes the testimony of the witness, he bears true witness--ex opere operantis--but he ceases to do so when the audience discovers that he--rather than the testimony itself--intends to speak, to bear witness.

In fact, the will to bear witness implies wanting to show, to prove the truth of my witness to another, to convince him, to convert him because I myself am convinced that the contents of my testimony are proper for him too. By this very fact I cease to be a witness, because my testimony ceases to be the testimonial of a third, the affirmation of a conviction, the expression of a concern, the manifestation of something within, which one cherishes in itself and for oneself, the spontaneous epiphany of an experience. Instead it becomes a conscious act which intends to make the other share my convictions; the purpose is no longer the passive blossoming of a grace which the audience freely discovers, but the active communication of a value ... I consider proper for others. The motive is no longer in the 'thing' testified (the testimony itself), but in the reason one wishes to testify.(214/365)

So we can shift the emphasis of witnessing and this displacement changes its nature and transforms it into a duty, a charitable act and the like, depending upon how we interpret it. The intention to bear witness implies that you are convinced not only of your 'truth', but also of its value for another. Moreover, this value does not consist in the truth of the testimony per se, but in its utility for the audience to whom one intends to testify. It is justified, then, in pragmatic terms and not by virtue of the demands which genuine witnessing itself makes; you

have the audience in mind. A good doctor--one who is a living witness to medical knowledge--prescribes a remedy or a treatment not to testify to its efficacy but to cure the patient. An honest lawyer argues a case not to testify to his debating skill but to obtain justice for his client. True social service does its job not to testify to the superiority of the society which commissions it or the techniques it uses, but to assist in a concrete human situation. The businessman does not testify to the excellence of his enterprise, he seeks to convince the buyer of the utility of his merchandise or services. (25)

A simple example serves to reinforce what we have been developing: as is evident in any courtroom, testimony which considers the effects it will have on others by this very fact loses value. A witness who testifies only when his testimony is agreeable to his ideas or friends loses credibility as a witness. (26)

We might go further still and assert that any hermeneutic by the witness himself destroys his testimony. If the left hand knows what the right hand is doing.... (27) Indeed, many passages from the Gospel fit here; (28) the parable of the pharisee and the publican is another example. (29) If, having understood the parable, the pharisee no longer boasts of his fasting nor proclaims how good he considers himself to be nor judges the publican because he fears the parable's condemnation, he is twice cursed. If, in turn, the publican proclaims himself a sinner knowing he will thereby be justified, he shall be twice cast out. As the text adds, (30) this means that whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. But if you accuse and abase yourself in order to be pardonned and raised up, you will find neither pardon nor honor. (31) We cannot escape this impasse by dint of reflection or will power. We cannot manipulate faith, nor dispose of myth at will or by thought.

We bear witness to something we cannot indicate in any other way or prove by reason; that is why witnessing engages the entire life of the witness. You bear

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Ultimately we can only bear witness with our life. Now,

not by reason or sentiment, but through our life.

witness ~~through your life, not by reason or sentiment.~~ ~~And~~ life is given to be

i, i.e. to be given up--and

~~lived~~--as we pass on this gift we also give life, transmit, continue, immortalize it. (32) Do we mean by all this that reflecting on one's life is inherently inauthentic? an instance of original sin in Man? (33) Are we not saying that interpreting one's life as witness destroys its authenticity? What shall we think then of Christ who said: 'For this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth'? (34).

Certainly I can know . . my life bears witness in the sense that I am aware that I communicate what I have seen, experienced or realized, and which can be expressed only in lived testimony. (35) But when I lose sight of the third party testifying in and through me, when I fall back on myself as a witness, I destroy my testimony. In this sense Christ said: 'If I bear witness to myself, my testimony is not true; there is another who bears witness to me, and I know that the testimony which he bears me is true.' (36)

Does this constant prayer, in one form or another, 'Thy will be done', (37) 'not as I will, but as thou wilt', (38) not characterize an authentic life? Is liberation not primarily liberation from the ego? ~~You~~ We do not witness in or by our life except as an expression of loyalty to a 'third', to the Spirit, however we may call it, which alone enables us to say that a higher power guides us. (39) Or again, to express this with profound wisdom:

> 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. (40)

This is not paradox but literal truth: the mystery of life is not understood by those who understand it or think they understand it. Just as understanding the

the mystery destroys it, understanding reality renders it inauthentic; it is not longer incomprehensible but understood only in a limited way. What is understood is not reality at all, but the object of understanding. Nor is the mystery of life truly understood by those who understand they cannot understand it; not by the pharisees of the intellect (even if they call themselves philosophers); nor by those aware of their ignorance, who understand their ignorance or understand that they do not understand. Rather, it is understood by those who really do not understand--and in not understanding, do not understand that they do not understand. Only infinite ignorance is a blessing. This is why it was later proclaimed: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit'. (41)

In brief, the hermeneutic belongs to the audience, not to the witness. Some will then discover that this hermeneutic is itself a testimony which the audience has given without being aware of it. Thus life continues in the encounter of witnesses. Our thesis says that the witness exists only in the framework of a mythic communion with the audience and so it goes on. It is history as dialogue. A witness arises and the acceptance or refusal of his testimony penetrates as if by osmosis into human experience to the extent that the witness lives in communion with Man.

8 Witness and Myth

The place of the witness is in myth. When we live in the same myth, we are open and receptive to the witness. The logos does not need witnessing: at the very least this would be an insult. Truth must be proven or demonstrated according to its intrinsic evidence. Witnessing to anything belonging to the order of the logos is out of place, although such 'déplacement' constitutes one of life's tensions. Intellectual authority is only for those who have not yet discovered the logical character of the truth proclaimed by authority. The logos properly functions

in dialectics.

Today dialogue distinguishes itself from dialectics and seeks to accept the witness. In thus accepting the witness in dialogue, we seek to re-introduce testimony into the realm of the logos. If we do not succeed, dialogue will not proceed further; but if we succeed, we shall continue to search dialectically and dialogically, the more enriched by the various witnesses. In this process there are martyrs and conversions, bungled dialogues and successful syntheses; ancient myths crumble and are demythicized; others, more meaningful, arise and penetrate humanity. We pass from myth to logos; we enrich the second, we change the first...but we do not exhaust it.

So testimony itself stands in a dialectical relation with dialogue. On the one hand, it nourishes dialogue by contributing the witnesses; on the other hand, testimony represents the end of dialogue, because as long as it offers testimony and only that, it remaining impenetrable to the logos.

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Notes

1. Cf. the International Congress of Theology on Evangelization held in October, 1971 at Nagpur, India, where the major items discussed were dialogue and development. The most recent Roman Synod (October-November 1974) convened under the general title of Evangelization in the Modern World has dedicated many of its sessions to the question of Dialogue.

2. Cf. my chapter, 'Christianity and World Religions', in Christianity (Patiala, Punjabi University, 1969), pp. 78-127, esp. 85-98.

3. Cf. also testamentum, testament, testificari, to give evidence, to certify, testari, to attest, etc. Cf. C. D. Buck, A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1949), sub voce witness (§ 21.23), pp. 1435-36. The riches of this root include giving meaning to context, detest, protest, testament, etc. as well as testicle (witness to virility). Cf. v.g. E. Partridge's english etymological dictionary Origins (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966, 4th ed.). ~~sub hac voce~~.

4. Cf. etiam the latin memor, memoria, mora; the old german mornen and the english mourn.

5. Cf. J. B. Hofmann, Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Griechischen (München, Oldenbourg, 1966), sub hac voce. H. Grassmann, Wörterbuch zum Rig-veda (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1964), col. 1614 for smr and smar in the sense of remember, memory, think, recollect. It also appears with the prefixes anu and prati, although the root appears only rarely in the Rg Veda, etc.

6. Cf. C. T. Onions, The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966, rep. 1967), sub voce. Cf. the latin videre, to see and the sanskrit veda, see, understand, know, vidyā, knowledge, etc. The witness is he who knows (cf. the german wissen).

7. Cf. also H. Strathmann, in Kittel, Theologishes Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart, Kolhammer), sub hac voce. J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1930, rep. 1963), sub his vocibus. G. W. H. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1961), for the use of these words by the Patristic Fathers, pp. 838 sq., etc.

8. For some information supplementary to the bibliography given in Strathmann, op. cit., in the RGG and in Sacramentum Mundi, see also B. Trepanier, 'Contribution à une recherche sur l'idée de témoin dans les écrits johanniques', Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, 15 (1945), pp. 5-63. I. de la Potterie, 'La notion de témoignage dans saint Jean', Sacra Pagina (Gembloux, Ed. J. Duculot, 1959), II:193-208. A. Vanhoye, 'Témoignage et vie en Dieu selon le quatrième évangile', Cristus (avril 1965), 16, pp. 155-71.

9. Cf. [illegible]

10. *Cf. the dialogue between Heidegger and a japanese: 'Ein Sprechen von der Sprache könnte nur ein Gespräch sein.' M. Heidegger, Unterwegs zur Sprache (Pfullingen, Neske, 1959) p. 150.*

Cf. also: 'Dialectik weist zurück auf den Dialog und kennzeichnet die Methode des dialogische Denkens', RGG (Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr (P. Siebeck), 1958), II:167.

11. 'We reject the idea that dialogue is by itself a means to evangelization', is found in the final declaration of the Nagpur Conference cited above, although the editing Committee took the liberty (!) of eliminating this sentence, perhaps because of the ambiguity of 'evangelization'. *approved by the entire Congress--*

12. We could compare this with what H.-G. Gadamer says about Horizontverschmelzung as the process of understanding, in Wahrheit und Methode (Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr (P. Siebeck), 1972), pp. 289-90, 375, etc.

chapter III of my Interreligious Dialogue

13. Cf. ~~§ IX pp.~~

14. When I initially wrote these lines (1972), Josef Cardinal Mindszenty was just arriving in Rome after twenty-three years of seclusion. Was he to be considered a martyr for having refused dialectical dialogue or will history judge him a failed witness who refused dialogical dialogue? Cf. his subsequent (and foreseeable) conflicts with the Roman milieu.

15. 244a sq.

16. Cf. Num. 22:28 sq.

17. Cf. Lk. 19:40.

18. Cf. Jn. 5:41 (after acknowledging that the Scriptures bore witness to him).

19. Cf. Lk. 16:31: 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.' Cf. also Jn. 5:46-47 for a similar problematic.

20. Cf. § ~~XVII~~ XI for the problematic of fundamental theology today.

21. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:13: 'But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised.'

22. These days we have striking--often tragic--examples of congregations and other religious groups which, sincerely tired of propaganda and activism, feel themselves called to a humble, silent testimony, unaware that their testimony does not exist and is even revolting outside the mythical boundaries of a culture where the concrete values of testimony are still accepted...

23. Cf. 1 Cor. 9:16-17: 'For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! ...I am entrusted with a commission.'

24. A principal text of christian ~~witness~~ testimony (Acts 1:8) does not only say the disciples of Jesus ought to witness to the ends of the earth; it explicitly underlines that this witness results from the disciples' having received the power

of the Holy Spirit--that is, from a third--which makes them witnesses.

25. We do not enter here into the important and delicate problem of christian missions which have too often ~~mixed witness,~~ *confused testimony with* proclamation, evangelization and conversion.

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26. Paradoxically, one could say that the christian missionary who testifies to Christ while convinced that this makes the situation more precarious or even renders salvation more difficult, is a more authentic witness than the missionary who testifies to Christ in order to save 'souls' or assist persons to lead more human lives. Here, of course, we are limiting ourselves to the problem of witnessing.

27. Cf. Mt. 6:3. Cf. etiam 6:5: 'ut videantur ab hominibus'.

28. Cf. vgr., Mt. 6:1-6; 17-20; Mk. 13:9-13; or also Lk. 21:12-15: '...you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be a time for you to bear testimony. Settle it therefore in your minds, not to meditate beforehand how to answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.'

29. Cf. Lk. 18:9-14.

30. Cf. Lk. 18:14; Mt. 23:12; Lk. 14:11.

31. Cf. ~~my thoughts~~ on this problem ~~in~~ § III ~~ppm~~.

32. ~~Doesn't~~ This phrase ~~sum up what the~~ *would like to express what the* historian would call heaven, grace, liberation, salvation, immortality.

33. This is an idea current in the history of religions, most recently revived by the late R. C. Zaehner, The Convergent Spirit (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963); etc.

34. Jn. 18:37. Cf. etiam 3:11.

35. In the same sense one could cite A. Gide: 'Chaque être est né pour témoigner...' (Attendu que..., Paris, Charlot, 1943, p. 109) (apud P. Robert, Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française, Paris, Nouveau Littré-Le Robert, 1969, VI:494).

36. Jn. 5:31-32. Cf. etiam 5:33-34.

37. Mt. 6:10; etc.

38. Mt. 26:39; etc.

39. Cf. Jn. 4:34; 6:38; etc.

40. KU II, 2-3.

41. Mt. 5:3. One could also translate: 'Blessed those who are poor through the Spirit.' Cf. etiam: 'for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect'(οὐ δοκεῖτε), Lk. 12:40.

###

VIII

Silence and the Word.

The Smile of the Buddha

When you are gathered together, monks,
There are two things to be done:
either talk about dhamma or the
aryan silence.

Majjhima-nikāya I, 161 (†)

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† I. B. Horner's translation of the famous Ariyapariyenasutta or Discourse on the Aryan Quest. Cf. the common buddhist expression of noble silence: ariyo tunhībhāvo; love of quiet: appasadda-kāmo (vg. Digha-nikāya I, 208; etc.). Cf. Candrakīrti's beautiful saying: pāsamartho hy āryānām tusnīm bhāvah, 'The most noble truth is silence' Prasannapada LVII, 8.

1 Introduction: the Spirit, the Word and the Name of God

There have been many attempts to express the awareness of the Absolute. Two of the main attitudes could be summed up in the expression transcendent transcendence, symbolizing the semitic trend proper to the jewish-christian-islamic and modern post-christian tradition, and immanent transcendence proper to the bundle of religions we call hinduism.

The buddhist approach is startling. It does not fit into this typology. It would rather say the true awareness of the Absolute is to have none.

Let us quote a passage which dates probably from pre-buddhist times:

1--Now once there was a dispute between the Spirit (manas) and the Word (vāc). 'I am excellent', said the Spirit and the Word said: 'I am excellent'.

2--The Spirit said: 'I am certainly better than you, because you do not utter anything which is not previously understood by me. So, as you just imitate what I am doing and simply follow me, I am certainly better than you.'

3--The Word said: 'I am certainly better than you, because whatever you know, I make it known, I communicate it.'

4--They went to Prajāpati, asking for his decision. Prajāpati spoke in favor of the Spirit, saying (to the Word): 'The Spirit is certainly better, because you only imitate and follow what the Spirit is doing; and he who is imitating and following what another does is undoubtedly inferior.'

5--As the Word was thus refuted, she became ashamed and miscarried. The Word spoke to Prajāpati: 'I shall never become the carrier of your oblation, I whom you have thus refuted!'

Therefore, whatever in the sacrifice is performed for Prajāpati is done in a low voice, because the Word refused to carry the oblation to Prajāpati.' (|)

This was a fundamental option. By and large, I would daresay India decided in favor of the Spirit while the West opted for the Word. The consequences are far-reaching. The Word is powerful, is articulate, leads to clarity and distinction, to science and technology, is sure of itself once it has assumed a critical stance; the word organizes, commands, expresses and even cries. The Spirit is helpless outside its inner realm, it is unstructured and insecure for it blows now one way now another in a total freedom which often amounts to disorientation and anarchy; the spirit feels, is concerned, contemplates and is easily satisfied at the price of being blind to externals; it is joyful and happy. Perhaps the time has come when the twins will have to meet if our world is to survive, but I am not now writing a full commentary on this passage of Scripture. I would like to exemplify a single consequence, and would beg that what follows be understood in the light of the just-quoted text.

Most traditional religions are concerned with God to such an extent that to speak of an atheistic religion seems a contradiction in terms. Yet around the sixth century before Christ, at a time when humanity seemed to be awakening to reflexive self-consciousness, when men began to develop a critical attitude, there appeared religious reforms--jainism and buddhism--which claimed to establish an entire way of life with no reference to God. These reforms, although excluding the existence, essence, name and reality of God, soon became authentic religions. It could even be said that, for the Buddha, eliminating the name of God is the supreme religious taking.

Much has been written about so-called buddhist atheism and many hypotheses seeking to explain the silence of the Buddha have been proposed. (24) I would like simply to indicate here what seems to me the fundamental attitude of the Buddha on the problem of the name of God, an attitude at the origin of the whole buddhist tradition, one which could well have exceptional importance for our time.

To be brief, I shall introduce the problem without referring to the brahmanism, the religious ferment and the multiplicity of gods at the time of the Buddha. I would only cite one verse of the Bible that will situate us *in media res*: 'You shall not utter the name of Yahweh your God to misuse it'. (3)

Why?

Because one cannot speak of God but may only invoke him, because talk about God does not belong to current language, because his name is justified only in the vocative, because he is not an object like others, his name cannot be linked to other names, and because respect and adoration are due him. This is the traditional answer of nearly every religion.

Now the Buddha goes further. He tells us that any speaking of the name of God, any talk and even any thought about God is just so much blasphemy. According to the spirit of the Buddha it would be pure hypocrisy to forbid making images of God or speaking his name if we are ——— at the same time permitted to think of him. The purification must reach to the very heart of the matter. What use is it to cast God from the imagination, from the pen, the lips or the walls, if one retains the thought of him? The Buddha tells us that God can only be named in vain, that every name of God is a vain name (a false name, if we follow the modern translation), that no name attains to God, who is beyond all possible naming.

Now all that is, can be named--in one way or another--and being is the final object (or the ultimate subject if one prefers) of all that is named. God cannot be named, nor can he even be called 'being'; this would kill him, destroy him as God by situating him among the things of this world. God does not *have* a name because he *is* not. Buddhism will defend this in all its consequences.

'Why do you ask my name?' (4) says the Man, the angel or the God who wrestles with Jacob. We should perhaps emphasize the importance of this text and others like it throughout the christian tradition. (5)

We cannot ask the name of God either because we do not have the right to do so, for God has a hidden name, a secret name which he reveals only to the initiate, etc. (this seems to have been the line followed by the christian and islamic traditions), or else because he has no name. The Buddha chose the second alternative. We shall now attempt to examine it.

2 The Double Silence of the Buddha

The Buddha's attitude is familiar. He does not answer questions on the ultimate nature of things. He refuses to be dragged into purely speculative discussions, for they do not lead to deliverance from suffering and so distract us from the existential and concrete meaning of life. The famous parable is well-known: when a man is pierced by an arrow, to concern himself with conjectures on the direction whence it came, its nature, the possible motives for which it was shot, the identity of the guilty man, whether he was right, etc. will cause the wounded man's death long before there is time to answer the questions which were raised.

To understand the Buddha's attitude we may distinguish a double level in his silence.

2.1 First Degree Silence: The Silence of the Answer

There is no possible answer

~~No answer~~ to the question on the nature of the absolute ~~can possibly give the desired information~~ since the question itself cannot be absolute--for we are relative, limited, contingent. *--and so it cannot give the desired information.* If it is said that nirvāna does not exist, one falls into the existential contradiction of trying to show and follow a path to something that does not exist. If one says nirvāna exists, one falls into a whole series of *insurmountable difficulties* ~~inevitable contradictions~~. Basically this would deal a fatal blow to transcendence, it would render transcendence accessible to our thought or to our speech. At the same time one falls into a speculative contradiction, for the existence of an absolute should explain the burning questions Man raises, resolve

his difficulties and save him from contradiction. (6) Yet life and philosophy, experience as well as thought, bear witness that this is not the case. So we must remain silent if we do not want to fall into a contradiction. Silence is the sole response.

Neverthless, it is not out of fear of committing himself or of falling into logical contradiction that the Buddha remains silent. Quite the contrary, his silence is irksome to people and, given the spirit of his time, it can well be said that his failure to elaborate a new theory amounted to casting himself from the company of cultivated and spiritual men. His silence is an even greater commitment and more eloquent than any theory.

The Buddha wishes to teach us to know silence, to love it and to grasp its message. He speaks of noble silence and says the monk is a lover of silence. He thereby indicates that the reality of speech, the world of signs and expressions, can be surpassed. Concerning God total silence must be kept. Neither affirming nor negating him can lead us to attain the threshold where divinity is found (or where it is also not found). His message invites us to go beyond the world of signs, words, speech, the realm of the logos. You will come to divinize the logos, he would have said, if you persist in trying to penetrate everything with the logos and go everywhere by the power of your discourse. This is what has happened in the West where, in reaction, man has gone to the other extreme: antitheism. Without myth, the logos becomes absolute, it divinizes itself, and a divinized logos destroys itself.

As for the excuse that the logos speaks only of the existence and not the essence of God, the 'back' of God and not his 'face', an indication and not a localization, an analogy and not a univocal concept, an image and not a notion, a name and not a reality; or that we can grasp the name of God as an ersatz, since we cannot understand his being, etc.: this the Buddha would refute as the worst example of spiritual and intellectual hypocrisy, as a religious farce which speaks

of something affirmed to be unknown. The game must be played cleanly, the Buddha would say, and he was to attract crowds who were tired of complicated religiosities.

To say that for God everything is clear, to affirm that the contradictions, the ruptures of human life, its injustices, its sufferings and its scandals are only appearances that have been deformed by our ignorance or by our sin (since all goes well, all is just and good for God in his happiness), to try to convince ourselves we must blindly accept that, in God, all the contradictions are resolved, that we must content ourselves with knowing only his existence--all this is for the Buddha a striking example of the weakness of the established religions which perpetuate a state of things (organization, cult, castes, etc.) for very mixed motives. Buddhism would add that defending the possibility of knowing the existence of God while closing off the content of his essence amounts to postulating his existence from motives that have nothing to do with God, but which stem from the human desire to find a crutch outside reality. Buddhism says it can well do without the God hypothesis and does so without falling into the contradiction which affirms the most important thing about God--his existence--and yet denies knowledge of his essence. What is the meaning of an existence whose essence cannot be known?--and whose essence, in a way, cannot be different from his existence?

But the Buddha does not stop here. He does not pretend that his silence is the adequate answer. He does not fall into the trap--as has so often happened in the history of human thought--of believing that everybody up to his time has been wrong and that he brings the true solution. In a word, silence is not the Buddha's answer. He does not answer with silence. To think this would be to misunderstand him and to follow him only out of intellectual curiosity as if he were a simple philosopher.

To ask the name of God means to ask his identity, to enclose him in our categories, even if one says his name is secret and unknowable. According to the Buddha he has no name because there is nothing that has this name. There is not even any meaning in saying that God is identical to himself: because he has no identity, he cannot be identified by a name. The principle of identity would destroy him. There can be no God identical to God--to himself. But the Buddha is not an agnostic; he is an Enlightened One. It is here that the modern age and contemporary scholarly studies generally fail to grasp his spirit, reducing him to a thinker, a philosopher or a great humanist, and forget (ting that) he was above all a prophet, a mystic, a saint. I would propose to call his silence a silence of the second degree.

2) ~~2.2~~ Second Degree Silence: The Silence of the Question

The Buddha's silence is neither a methodology, nor an answer; it is not a new theological or philosophical system. The Buddha does not answer by silence: he does not answer. He remains silent and gives no hermeneutic of his silence but only of his refusal to answer. He explains why he does not rally to the views of this party or that, he gives reasons why he does not share the belief of those who say the soul exists after death, and also why he is not of the contrary opinion. He gives reasons for his refusal, but he does not expand upon his silence. He says categorically that he is not of the opinion of those who say A, nor of those who say non-A, nor of those who at once affirm both A and non-A or deny both A and non-A. (7) He does not give a positive opinion, he goes over every possible opinion and denies holding any of them. But he does not give his own (any of his) opinion. He is silent, but his silence is not an answer to the question.

What the Buddha does is to silence the question, to pacify the questioner by showing him that his question has no meaning, or rather that he does not have the power--hence the right--to put such a question. In a way he puts the question,

and thereby the questioner, in crisis. He puts the question in question, and thereby also the questioner who had unduly identified himself with his question. The question becomes anguishing only when Man identifies himself with his reason and loses the global perspective of his human situation. The entire message of Gautama is to make Men understand that torturing oneself over the so-called major questions of life is the great human fallacy, the source of misery and the price paid for the utopia of believing one has the right, or worse yet the duty, to pierce the mystery of existence. An ideal like this is the fruit of human pride. What the Buddha requires is a realistic sense of acceptance of reality just as it presents itself, a total confidence in life, in what is given to us, without seeking to replace reality with our own ideas. His faith is a cosmological faith, his hope is the elimination of any future, and his love is a compassion for Men of flesh and bone, our contemporaries, not an ideal entelechy that exists nowhere.

When Man discovers by himself that he has nothing to ask, that a question about ultimate reality has no meaning, and yet in spite of this finds himself neither a rebel nor discouraged nor despairing, then will he begin to understand the liberating message of primitive buddhism: the total acceptance of our human condition, of the real contingency in which we find ourselves. It is not a matter of resigning oneself to never surpassing the human condition; it is rather understanding that what we must do is better it. If it must be surpassed, this does not depend absolutely on us, and if it must not be surpassed, every effort to do so will lead us to alienation and only increase our misery. The whole message of the Buddha tends to render us silent, to silence our desires. It is often said (but easily forgotten), that the most intense desire or, as the Buddha himself says, thirst is to transgress reality, to evade the human situation: to attach oneself to life is just as unreal and deadly as to long for death, no matter

what the motive. The thirst for non-existence is to be eliminated as well as the desire for existence.

'Blessed are the poor in spirit', ~~is what the Buddha wanted to say~~ not the poor who seek and beg, but the poor in spirit, those who do not want to jump beyond themselves spiritually nor believe they can become as gods. The Buddha does not discourage human and secular initiatives, but he does not recognize evading the human condition by whatever means as a true religious undertaking.

We might sum up the Buddha's message thus: if there is a transcendence, it will take care of itself. And if it does not exist, it is useless to deceive oneself. But there is more to ~~this~~ it. If it exists, transcendence is so transcendent that it surpasses both our thought and our being, and thus also any attempt to name it. For the Buddha, to name the absolute would be the great blasphemy. The buddhist apophasis is at once ontic and ontological. Silence is taken seriously, and not as another form of expression or speech. In the last part of this ~~study~~ chapter I ~~will~~ try to explain this with a dialectic borrowed from the buddhist tradition.

3 The Dialectical Game

'Is the principle of sufficient reason insufficient to name God?' Castelli asks us in his introduction to the Colloquium on The Name of God. (8) Here then is the Buddha's genial answer according to the buddhist tradition. (9)

Without hesitation buddhism tells us that by virtue of this very principle we must renounce naming God, and also asking anything whatsoever about him. He cannot even be named without sinning against this basic principle of all rationality. How can we postulate a sufficient reason ~~(God)~~ that is other than and superior or exterior (God) to that very principle of sufficient reason, without presupposing an infinite series of such principles? Before trying to grasp the buddhist dialectic, I would like to make a brief excursus to situate the problem in the history of religions.

a)
~~3.1~~ The Dialectic of the Name of God

I shall summarize my point. (10) We can discover a sort of dialectical play regarding human relations with this superior principle we agree to call God.

I would like to highlight the following moments. I would request that they not be considered chronological milestones but, if I may use the more accurate expression, kairological moments.

č) ~~3.1.1~~ Before the cultural and religious complexity of the so-called great religions, each God is a local God with a local name, his proper name. To know the God is to know his name, and vice-versa. The act of faith is the act of invoking the name. This name has usually been revealed in myth.

čč) ~~3.1.2~~ There is an early realization, either through encountering different traditions or by deepening the mystery of God, that God has several names. The first reaction is to postulate a plurality of gods corresponding to the plurality of names. Thus the harmony between the name and the thing is not ruptured. To each name corresponds (one) God. But we should not confuse real(istic) polynomy with the so-called 'polytheism'.

čč) ~~3.1.3~~ True polytheism, however, cannot be maintained for very long. A plurality of gods guaranteed by a plurality of names leads to the discovery that there is a basic unity among the gods, that they are, in one way or another, only different manifestations of a single and unique supreme power. The innocence of the name begins to waver. Each name of God does not exhaust the divinity, since there are other names that also refer to the divinity. Men begin to suspect that the name of God is not God, or rather than his name is not the name of God, but a name of one God. The name of God does not express God, so to speak. A break, a hiatus appears between the name and the thing. Truth bridges the gap.

čv) ~~3.1.4~~ At the same moment the divine name suffers its first crisis, i.e., when the plurality of names suggests a plurality of gods, the tradition of the hidden name of God appears. The names of God are not his true name. His true name is

hidden, secret, and reveals itself only to him to whom God wants to reveal it. The divinity uncovers his true name to his devotees. The revelation is the revelation of this name. ~~One hears it said even today in christian theology that Christ is nothing but the revelation of God, inasmuch as he is the true name of God, a universal God outside of which there is no salvation.~~

v) ~~3.1.5~~ The essence of the secret name is that it is unknown. In the beginning Man could ~~not~~ be content to say that it is unknown to the uninitiated, but soon he becomes aware that the secret name represents something more than the divine whim to remain hidden or the selection of a small group (by the divinity) to whom the name would be revealed. Man is aware that God has a name which is in itself intrinsically hidden, as it were. One thus arrives at the highly suggestive formulation that the name of God is simply an interrogation. God is the question that is always open, his name is the simple question about him, to find him means to seek him; to know him means not to know him (to name him means to invoke him as an unknown God with an unknown name), for his name is the question, pure and simple. God is not a substance and has no name, but he is a question, a simple pronoun, an interrogative: Who?

vi) ~~3.1.6~~ The next moment of the kairological dialectic is of more than historico-religious interest. A good deal of mankind's contemporary reflection revolves around this point. If God is the transcendent, the non-anthropomorphic, the ever Other, the interrogative pronoun, the question, the search, the road ever open and beyond, a suspicion enters the mind of Man: at bottom is he not really questioning himself rather than interrogating God? Is the question about God in its depth not the question about Man? Is anthropology not the true theology? Is the question about God not the anguished quest or the hope-filled question of Man concerning himself, the meaning of his life and destiny? Is it not ~~really~~ really the Self that is sought?

vii) ~~3.1.7~~ The dialectical process does not end here. At this point buddhism brings us its contribution. Since there is no appeasing answer to the question about God or Man, no explanation of the meaning of life or the mystery of existence, will silence not then be the true response? Does he alone who knows how to be silent understand the mystery of the real? We have already reached this point in our presentation and even the following point.

viii) ~~3.1.8~~ As an answer silence remains nonetheless suspect, since every question requires a decision and a choice. Silence can appear cowardly, a lack of courage to take a position and rid oneself of atavisms. If silence is a sign, it is a very weak and vague one. It is acceptable as a transition inasmuch as ~~one~~ we dare not destroy all the idols at once, but it does not satisfy the human mind. It is here that our last point appears: silence as a question and not an answer. Man comes to silence the question; it lacks meaning. He no longer asks, he lives and has regained innocence on a higher plane.

ix) ~~3.1.9~~ This would be the last moment of this sort of dialectical circle. One returns to daily living, as the tenth Zen painting, the seventh mansion of Saint Teresa or any affirmation of nearly every mysticism shows. God is immanent and transcendent, existent and non-existent; and at the same time he is not. There is nothing more to be said. God is that about which there can be no talk. Discourse on God is basically inauthentic; only in the interior cell where the logos is silent can the Father be adored in spirit and truth.

This is not irrationalism, fideism or religious romanticism: the Buddha leads us by the hand. I would like very briefly to develop his dialectic further.

B) ~~3.2~~ Reduction to the Sublime

In many instances the Buddha does not impose silence, but wins over his adversaries, converting them to his way not by reducing their reasoning to absurdity, but by what I would like to call a reduction to the sublime. It is for this reason

that those who come to question him are not only won over but converted, and very often enter the order of the mendicant brothers (bhikkhu, in sanskrit bhiksu). Nevertheless, on rare occasions he reveals the dialectic of his thought by directing the attention of his interrogator to the meaning of the question itself.

'When a bhiksu, Sirs, knows thus and sees thus, would that make him ready to take up this question as intelligent (and intelligible)?' he often asks after a long discourse on the absurdity of holding any opinion whatever on the ultimate problems of the human condition. (11)

I would like to analyze just one text. To the question repeated a thousand times in the dialogues of the Buddha concerning the meaning of life, the Buddha answers the monk Rādha in this way:

'Rādha, you can grasp no limit to this question.' (12) 'That question is beyond the compass of an answer.' (13)

But it is worth translating the text in full.

'Thus have I heard:--The Exalted One was once staying near Savatthi, in the Deer Park.

'Then the venerable Rādha came to the Exalted One. Having done so, he saluted the Exalted One and sat down to one side.

'So seated, the venerable Rādha thus addressed the Exalted One:--

"They say, 'Māra! Māra! lord. Pray, lord, how far is there Māra?'" (14)

"Where a body is, Rādha, there would be Māra or things like Māra, or at any rate what is perishing. Therefore, Rādha, regard the body as Māra; regard it as of the nature of Māra; regard it as perishing, as an imposthume, as a dart, as pain, as a source of pain. They who regard it thus rightly regard it.

"And the same is to be said of feeling, perception, the activities and consciousness."

"But rightly regarding, lord,--for what purpose?"

"Rightly regarding, Rādha, for the sake of disgust."

"But disgust, lord--for what purpose is it?"

"Disgust, Rādhaṣ is to bring about dispassion."

"But dispassion, lord--for what purpose is it?"

"Dispassion, Rādha, is to get release."

"But release, lord--what is it for?"

"Release, Rādha, means Nibbāṇa."

"But Nibbāṇa, lord--what is the aim of that?"

"This question, Rādha, goes too far. You can grasp no limit to this question. (15) Rooted in Nibbāṇa, Rādha, the holy life is lived. (16) Nibbāṇa is its goal, Nibbāṇa is its end."' (17)

This is reduction to the sublime. He does not say the question has no meaning. How could he say this when it is the most anguishing question for a good part of mankind and the very torture from which, according to the Buddha himself, he has come to liberate us, the torment of useless anguish and suffering without reasoning? It is not an absurd question.

It is not a false question either. There are no false questions, properly speaking. It could be contradictory and in that sense false: a question which negates itself in the asking because it is founded on a contradiction. But here this is not the case.

Those who ask this question are not considered weakminded by the Buddha nor do they sin against logic. The most profound parallel I can find--and I hope it will not be taken amiss--is between the Buddha's attitude and the cry of Jesus: 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!' When ~~he finds himself~~ confronting the Absolute, man truly does not know what he is saying or doing.

Let us imagine the question: 'What is God?' for this is basically the question

at issue although nirvāna is the problem in the dialogue quoted above. The Buddha answers that the question itself cannot grasp its proper limits, that the question does not know what it is asking. We must be careful in our exegesis. The Buddha does not say the man who raises the question does not have something very definite in mind when he asks. He believes he knows it. He is asking about the Absolute, about God, about the last things, eternity, nirvāna, etc. And he who asks will never be mistaken in his asking. He knows very well what he wishes to know. What is truth? Pilate asked this question of him whom he called 'Man' and he too obtained only silence.

What the Buddha is saying is that the question itself is not capable of defining its limits, that the question asks nothing, for it does not know where the request leads or what it asks for. Suppose I answer the question 'what is God?' by saying 'Mu!' How would I know this answer is not satisfactory if the question itself does not know, and cannot know, what it takes in and what it leaves out? If I ask the color of the stone hidden in Sakyamuni's pocket, I have some idea of the question's limits. I do not know the color of the stone, nor even all the colors, but I do know what a color is and I can distinguish a color from a sound or anything else. And I know that stones have colors. The question, in a word, already contains the answer ontically; the question determines the very level at which the answer is an answer and through which the answer must pass, so to speak. The question fixes the limits of the answer and also gives the conditions of its intelligibility. Only what is possible to ask is asked because the limits of the answer are already known.

For this reason many religious traditions admit that to seek God implies having already found him, to ask about him means, in a way, to know him already. The unquestionable cannot be questioned, and if the Absolute is questionable it is no longer absolute. In other words, a real question about the nature of the

Absolute cannot grasp its limits, can offer no criteria by which the answer might be verified, as modern parlance would put it. The question does not know what it is asking; it is not a question.

This comes down to saying that I am asking nothing, and not just nothingness. This in effect destroys the question, for in asking nothing there is no question. All the meaning I find in the question is the meaning I inject into it, a meaning the questioner gives, but certainly not the meaning of the question itself.

And now we near the end of the Buddha's catharsis. The meaning of the question is not the question's meaning, but the meaning the questioner gives it, his anguish, his insecurity, his doubts. He projects into a question a problem the question does not contain and cannot contain or support. So what is to be done?

What the Buddha does is very clear. He makes us understand that the real question destroys itself and in so doing ceases to be a question and frees us to go directly onto the path of deliverance. To be sure, by destroying the question he has also destroyed the questioner, the little ego who had identified himself with his question. What *is to be done then? To make Man* ~~to do? Make man~~ aware of his limits, *to* center him on what he can do, not *to* distract him from his human task, not *to* allow him to become dissipated by and in his speculation, *to* make him lose the ego which would have him believe himself a little God. The Tathāgata repeats his theme constantly: *to* show *M* man the path to deliverance. He removes ~~the~~ *Man's* obsession with orthodoxy ~~from man~~ in order to return him to orthopraxis, to the eightfold path which leads him to liberation because it eliminates the obstacles--the contingency--and is not preoccupied with the rest.

Must we then renounce all intelligibility? Neither the Buddha nor buddhism would say that. I have just sought the dialectic of the matter: the very question destroys itself as a question. But this is an existential operation in which reason by itself can do very little. How does one silence the logos? Certainly the

logos does not silence itself. The logos must not be silenced outright, it must simply recognize that there is a gate it must not cross, that it can eat of all the fruits of paradise save one: God cannot be named. Much more: Man must recognize that there is no need to name God, that the question is not even raised and that, if raised, ~~this~~ it shows I am falling into the hybris of believing myself to be a little God who can question God and ask him to justify or explain himself.

These are all metaphors. The question is raised as well at the altogether deeper level of being and ~~of~~ Being. God certainly is not in any sense we can give this concept. But the Buddha does not say it in this way for he never loses sight of the existential and personal levels on which he speaks. He sets forth no theory. The problem of God does not ~~escape~~ lie in the realm of theory. It does not belong to the realm of the ~~world~~ word, but to the kingdom of silence.

I would answer our philosophical query in this way on behalf of the Buddha: the principle of sufficient reason forbids us to name God in any way whatsoever.

The new question would be: Is the Man who no longer questions still a Man, or has he become an angel? or a beast? Is pure quest not the quintessence of the humanum?

The Buddha does not reduce the word to silence, nor does he speak of a word of silence; rather he helps us discover the silence of the word: the Buddha smiles!

4 ~~Appendix:~~ Three Remaining Problems and One Hypothesis

Is it still meaningful to speak of God when one has understood what the Buddha says? Can we consider the name of God a stage in the awakening of human consciousness? Can there be faith without an object?

Can we regain lost innocence? Is salvation possible without thought of God? Can Man cease to raise the ultimate and definite question?

Would the Buddha agree with someone who does not speak of God, but who adds

that the word (logos), the image (icon) is the pole required for dialogue and is called 'Man'? Can there be a cross-fertilization between silence and the word? Would it be the smile?

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The lurking hypothesis is the following.

Since that extraordinary affirmation of Aristotle (18), transformed by Augustine (19), commented in his own way by Lessing (20) and underscored by Heidegger (21), the West seems to see the human condition as the constant search asking what Being is:Man is a questioning being (22). Since the non less extraordinary affirmation of the Buddha, matched by the Upanishads, the Tao and later traditions, the East seems to see the human condition as the ontological confidence in ~~kxxk~~ a Reality that has No-way of approach: Man is real when he shares in that Reality which does not allow for the alienation that the mere questioning would create. Man realizes his proper status only when all words have been spoken and he re-enters in the Silence.

Notes

1. SB I, 4, 5, 8-12. ~~Cf. the use we make of this text in § XIV~~.

2. Cf. R. Panikkar, El Silencio del Dios (Madrid, Guadiana, 1970). The reader will find the appropriate scholarly notes and historico-religious apparatus in this work.

3. Ex. 20:7. The translation of the Jerusalem Bible is very significant: 'You shall not utter the name of Yahweh your God to misuse it, for Yahweh will not leave unpunished the man who utters his name to misuse it.' The Vulgate gives: 'Non assumes nomen Domini Dei tui in vanum: nec enim (habebit) insontem Dominus eum, qui assumpserit nomen Domini Dei sui frustra.' (Emphasis added). The Septuagint uses the same expression in both cases. Cf. as points of reference: Lev. 19:12; 24:16; Dt. 5:11; Sir. 23:9; Mt. 5:33-35; Jas. 5:12.

4. Gen. 32:29: 'Cur quaeris nomen meum?' cf. M. Eckhart's commentary in I Expos. Genes. era Omnia: Lat. Werke, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1938, vol. I, pp. 95-96, nn. 298-300.

5. Cf. Jg. 13:18: 'Cur quaeris nomen meum, quod est mirabile', and the relation that christian thought has found between these two texts and those of Ps. 8:1 and 9, and Is. 9:6; etc. The Jerusalem Bible translates 'mirabile' (θαυμαστόν) as 'mysterious', the OAB 'wonderful'.

6. I can't resist the temptation to quote the 'buddhist' answer of Jesus in refusing to say by what authority he acted, when even the 'chief priests and the elders of the people' did not know if the Baptism of John was by heaven or by Man. Cf. Mt. 21:23-27.

7. The fourteen propositions which the tradition attributes to the Buddha and which he refuses to uphold are the following:

   1-4: the world is/ is not/ is and is not/ neither is nor is not/finite in time;

   5-8: the world is/ is not/ is and is not/ neither is nor is not/finite in space;

9-12: the Tathāgata exists/ does not exist/ exists and does not exist/ neither exists nor does not exist/after death;

13-14: the soul is/ is not/identical with the body.

8. Cf. L'Analyse du langage théologique. Le nom de Dieu, edited by E. Castelli (Paris, Aubier, 1969), p. 22.

9. Even if these texts were not spoken by Gautama himself, they are ancient texts of the purest buddhist tradition.

10. Cf. the contributions of Bettina Bäumer, 'Le nom secret dans l'hindouisme', and Marina Vesci, 'Ka, le nom de Dieu comme pronom interrogatif dans les Véda. La démythisation du nom de Dieu' in the above mentioned volume edited by E. Castelli (pp. 135-144, 145-154 respectively), which furnish the details of what is here condensed in a dialectic of nine points. *Cf. also my chapter "Betrachtungen über die monotheistischen und polytheistischen Religionen" in Die vielen Götter und der eine Herr, Wilhelm, Vbb. (O.W. Barth) 1963 pp. 43-51.*

11. Cf. for example, Mahali-sutta 16, 19, i.e., Dīgha-nikāya VI (16 and 19)

12. Saṁyutta-nikāya III, 189. F. L. Woodward (tr.), The Book of Kindred Sayings, The Pali Text Society (ed. Mrs. Rhys Davids, London, 1954), Vol. II, p. 156.

13. Saṁyutta-nikāya V, 218: Mahā-vagga IV, 5. Jaravaggo 42, 2-Unnabho Brahmano. Cf. the translation of F. L. Woodward, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 193:

> 'Nibbāṇa, brahmin, is the resort of release.'
>
> 'But, Master Gotama, what is the resort of Nibbāṇa?'
>
> 'The question goes too far, brahmin. That question is beyond the compass of an answer. The aim of living the holy life, brahmin, is to plunge into Nibbāṇa. It has Nibbāṇa for its goal, Nibbāṇa for its ending.'

Here the pali text says: ajjha-parām, brāhmana, panham, na-sakkhi parayantam gahetum. Other texts say: accasarām (i.e., transcendental), instead of ajjhaparam. The Nalanda edition in devanāgarī says: accayāsi. Cf. the analysis of the text in the following notes.

14. *Māra is a mythical personage in the life of the Buddha, the evil one, the tempter and also death.*

15. Cf. the pali: accayāsi, rādha, panham, nāsakkhi panhassa pariyantam gahetum. Nalanda edition. The Pali Text Society gives assa instead of accayāsi.

16. Nibbāna gadham hi, rādha, brahmacariyam vussati. It is interesting to note that what translations render as the 'holy life' (pure life, in the text) is brahmacariyā.

17. Saṁyutta-nikāya III, 187/189. (Khandhasvagga II, 1) I have relied on the translation of F. L. Woodward in the Volumes of the Pali Text Society, op. cit., III, pp. 155-156.

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(18) Cf. Arist. Metaph., VII, 2 (1028 b 2-4): καὶ δὴ καὶ τὸ πάλαι τε καὶ νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ ζητούμενον καὶ ἀεὶ ἀπορούμενον, τί τὸ ὄν, τοῦτό ἐστι τίς ἡ οὐσία.

"Et quod olim et nunc et semper quaesitum est et semper dubitandum, quid est ens, hoc est quae substantia." ~~Or in English:~~ "And indeed, that which was searched for since antiquity, but which is also now and always will be, which is at the same time always without a way out (an aporia, in doubt): that is, what is being? viz. what is substance?

Heidegger's translation is interesting (and significantly enough he does not quote the second interrogation): "Und so bleibt also von altersher und so auch jetzt und immerfort ein Gesuchtes und damit ein solches, das keine Auswege bietet (dies): was ist das Seiende ...?

I may give two standards translations of this "längst vergessenen Satz" (Heidegger): "And indeed the question which was raised of old and is raised now and always, and is always the subject of doubt, viz. what being is, is just the question, what is substance?" (R. McKeon).
"Y en efecto, lo que antiguamente y ahora y siempre se ha buscado y siempre ha sido objeto de duda: ¿qué es el Ente?, equivale a : ¿qué es la Substancia?" (V. García Yebra).

(19) cf. the famous "Quaestio mihi factus sum". cf. note of chapter p.

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(20) ~~Cf.~~ note of chapter p.

(21) (~~22~~) Cf. M. Heidegger, Was heisst Denken?, Tübingen , Niemeyer, 1954, p. 128, where he quotes Aristotle and refers to his previous comments on the passage in his previous work Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik.

(22) (~~21~~) Cf. Heidegger's Einführung in die Metaphysik (1953), Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1966: "Die Leidenschaft des Wissens ist das Fragen" (p. 122), and again: "Das Fragen ist die echte und einzige Weise der Würdigung dessen, was aus höchstem Rang unser Dasein in der Macht hält" (p. 63; my italics). I may copy here, my own marginal notes on those two pages: "Leidenschaft des Wissens oder des Noch-nicht-wissens? Es gibt keine letzte Frage (es wäre ein Widerspruch), es gibt aber eine sancta ignorantia." And " Warum nicht

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e possible
undhaltungen'

from 383 → (20) cf. his often quoted passage ~~of~~ (~~B~~ Eine Duplik hat if God would hold in ~~his~~ hand his right all truth and in his left the constant struggling for it he would chose the latter.

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die Anbetung? oder die Stille? oder die nichts- und nicht-fragende Beschauung? oder sogar liebender Gehorsam?" To smile is not the same as to laugh!

Heidegger would probably agree that the "Leidenschaft des Fragens" and "das Fragen als ein Grundgeschehnis des geschichtlichen Seins (p. 109) belongs to the "Grundstellungen des Geistes des Abendlandes" (p.89) and cannot be called a human invariant.Or had he second thoughts when he coined that famous phrase at the very end of his lecture "Die Frage nach der Technik": "Denn das Fragen ist die Frömmigkeit des Denkens"? (Vorträge und Aufsätze, Pfullingen, Neske, 1954, vol. I, p. 36).

Or again would Heidegger say that Besinnung is the wisdom I have been speaking about when he concedes that such contemplation "den Charakter des Fragens verliert und zum einfachen Sagen wird."? (op. cit. 62). That Heidegger was almost obsessed with the question of the question is patent since the first pages of Sein und Zeit. Cf. also the last sentences of Der Satz vom Grund, Pfullingen, Neske, 1957, both the course (p. 188) and the lecture (p. 211) referring to "die Frage". And yet later on (December 1957) he quotes again the same sentence "Questioning is the piety of thinking" and adds that this phrase is already in the wake of what I would consider his more 'oriental' attitude, namely, "Dass das Fragen nicht die eigentliche Gebärde des Denkens ist, sondern das Hören der Zusage dessen, was in die Frage kommen soll." Unterwegs zur Sprache, Pfullingen, Neske (5th. ed.),1975 p. 175. Is this totally compatible with the by now totally 'indian' assertion: "Das Denken ist kein Mittel für das Erkennen."? (p. 173). I am saying this because he did not put a fullstop after 'Zusage'. And this is what he really says a few pages below (180 sq.). The later Heidegger seems to subscribe to the metaphor: "Das Denken zieht Furchen in den Acker des Seins." (173).

IX. Advaita and Bhakti

A Hindu-Christian Dialogue

priyo hi jñānino 'tyartham aham,

sa ca mama priyah

I am much loved by the sage

and he is loved by me.

BG VII, 17

1 Introduction

A dialogue between hinduism and christianity very often gets stuck and cannot proceed further, with the consequent sense of frustration, because of fundamental misunderstandings based sometimes on mutual prejudices or lack of proper knowledge. To mention only a few points: hinduism is supposed neither to believe in a personal God nor to consider charity the first of religious duties. The concept of Person, which seems essential and indispensable for any exposition of christian faith, is apparently unknown to the hindu mind, and so on. From the other side, the more 'realized' hindu who mostly professes advaita (1) considers christianity an inferior religion because it takes God to be essentially the 'other', allowing no union or identification with Him. For the advaitin the concept of person would seem secondary, and so applying it to the Absolute is tantamount to idolatry.

These problems are certainly more than semantic--although fundamental terminological clarifications are urgently needed before a real dialogue can take place. The following letter hopes simply to show some implications of such a dialogue, which I have called an 'intra-religious dialogue', as distinguished from an inter-religious one. (2) 'Dialogue' is not just an external meeting with somebody who has other ideas than I have. Dialogue in the real sense arises precisely where I (or we) discover the same currents and problems within the religion of the 'other' as I (or we) find in my (or our) own religious world. In this article I do not intend to talk about the hindu's opinions or the christian's ideas, but rather to enter straight into the problem at hand--love and identity, certainly one of the major issues in a hindu-christian dialogue. In this way, we can help each other face our own, sometimes hidden problems from a new perspective, ~~namely from the viewpoint of the specific religious experience of our partner in dialogue.~~

For example, the authentic non-dualistic experience of the advaitin represents a challenge to the christian's doctrine or experience of the Trinity and may very well lead us to discover important new aspects of the same mystery. (3)

In this case I have chosen the opposite example, namely the challenge the notion that God is Love, with all its implications, represents to an advaitin who claims to be beyond all dualisms and therefore--since love seems to presuppose dualism--also beyond love. This problem is primarily an internal matter for hinduism, which in its main devotional trends is a religion of love (bhakti), and in its more contemplative and philosophical aspects a religion of knowledge (jñāna) (the latter claiming superiority over the former). At the same time it is a question central to the hindu-christian dialogue.

2 A Letter from Vrndāvan

In a long conversation in Vrndāvan, the birth place of Krsna (4) and the town 'consecrated' to bhakti, I had a heart-to-heart dialogue with a fellow pilgrim in which we examined the question whether bhakti was justified in an advaitin. The following are some of the ideas suggested by our discussion.

The common answer to the problem, which we quickly dealt with and dismissed, is that bhakti is only a first step to jñāna: until the ultimate intuition dawns, one can do no better than follow the path of devotion. This is a typical advaitic answer; bhakti is no more than a preparation for jñāna, to be given up as soon as the latter is attained.

A second, equally traditional answer, is that the true jñānin (5) does not believe in bhakti for himself, but fulfills its requirements for others, as Śaṅkara is said to have performed the funeral rites for his mother, or as the

priest functions at ceremonies which are for the people. But this is not quite satisfactory, particularly for that type of advaita which does not wish to ignore the radical claim of love. Is there a place then for love in a true advaitin's heart?

Here my partner in the dialogue told me of a sādhu (6) who had come to Vṛndāvan because he had realized that the very structure of the only One is love, and that it is charged with a dynamic life; that love is indeed only another name for the experience of the Absolute. It is known that the advaitic experience is one of the void, but can it not also take the form of love? The same sādhu explained that he had given everything away, and told how overwhelmed he was with love and joy--so much so that once, when bathing in the Yamuna, he was even tempted to put an end to his life, letting it go, as it were, in the current of the river. Afterwards he did not know why he had not done so; he felt it was because he was not ready for it, not mature enough. The contrast was obvious: while the advaitin has by his very experience overcome time and also death, the bhakta wants to throw his life away as an act of complete surrender.

A third point suggested itself here. If love is not to be an empty word, it implies a certain tension between the lover and the beloved, or at least a certain distance between them. In fact, bhakti etymologically means either separation (from bhanj) or dependence (from bhaj). But there is yet more for us to consider.

The apperception of Being as crystallized love seems to lead to the experience of its structure as universal love, an outpouring of love without regard for the objects on which it is lavished: in other words, an all embracing love for everything that has even a spark of Being in it. But is love only an inherent harmony, or is there not in it still another element? Can it exist without a certain affective dynamism? Does it not demand a special I-thou relationship in which the particular thou cannot be exchanged for any other? And is there really room

for such particularized and personal love in advaita?

It seems that the genuine experience of human love is not satisfied with involvement with the other as other in a general sense--in which the other is ultimately reduced to the self--but ~~with~~ *that it needs* the other as a particular other, personal and ~~ir~~ *un*repeatable. Every real love is unique: where then is the place for universality? Can advaita admit the particular? Has the love of a mother for her child, for instance, or that of a man for his beloved, an ultimate value? Can any advaitin feel such love? Will friendship find a place in heaven, that is, in God?

An advaitin can love everything: his affection, unconditioned by nāma-rūpa (name and form) (7) can embrace everything; for everything, insofar as it is, is the Self, and thus lovable. But is this love real? Can we apply the term 'love' to something which makes an abstraction of all that I have, and which in a way eliminates my person--so that my ego possesses nothing which can attract the lover, be given as a gift, or earn the devotion of the beloved. What lover or beloved would be satisfied with a love without eyes and face? Or are these merely anthropomorphic images with no ultimate significance?

The classic advaitic answer is well-known: one does not love someone--say friend, wife or husband--for his or her own sake but for the sake of ātman. (8) Love is all there is; no lover or beloved--all distinction between them is blotted out. I feel that there is in this a deep truth--insofar as it answers the need to overcome dualism, but I am convinced that it is not the deepest truth of advaita, but rather a pitfall inherent in pure monism. I should think that advaita would oppose such pure monism as it opposes all dualism. In what follows I shall try to remain faithful to an intuition of advaita which transcends these extremes of monism and dualism.

My doubts, however, were not resolved by any of these traditional answers, and led me to attempt a solution which is perhaps not fully in accord with the at-

mosphere of Vṛndāvan's holy gardens. And yet it is closer to genuine bhakti than the words of Yuddhisthira, who in the Mahābhārata is the very king of Dharma: 'There can be no liberation for the Man who knows the bond of love (snehena yukta)'.

And so we came to a fourth point, which alone, like the fourth quarter of Brahman, (9) allows a full vision of the ultimate--and the ultimate mystery is what we are touching upon here.

If the structure of the ultimate is love, then it is loving Love, or love of love, self-love; in other words, it is like an 'eye' which sees itself, a 'will' which loves itself, a 'being' which pours itself out as 'Being', a 'source' which reproduces itself fully as an identical image, and which later emerges into Being as that which receives the source. The 'image' is the Being. The source of Being, because it is the source, is not Being--but precisely its source. Furthermore, if this dynamism and tension are not to jeopardize the Absolute's total Oneness, the 'mirrored' eye, the generated Being, the identical image does not stop the lavish flow of divine love but returns it again, loving with the same love, answering in the same measure, so that seen from the 'outside', it looks as if nothing had happened in the 'inner life' of the Absolute. Only one who shares in this dynamism can witness the unceasing flow of divine Life: a Love that gives itself up fully and is rescued, as it were, by the total answer of the beloved, returning the love of the Beloved by responding with love.

Now an advaitin is one who has realized the absolute non-duality of Being, Reality, the Ultimate, the Absolute--whatever the name we choose to indicate the Ineffable. There is no place for dualism, but there is none for monism either. Dualism cannot be ultimate, because where there are two, there is a relation between them which stands above and is more final than both. Monism cannot be ultimate either because it denies the problem's very assumption; in a pure monism there is no room even for factors like illusion, falsehood, time, a lower level

of truth and speech.[10] Here I am not concerned with expounding advaita but only with finding out whether it has a place for love.

b) 2.2 Advaita and Love

Let me put it in this way: an advaitin is established in the supreme and unique I (aham-brahman). Yet this I, by the very fact of being the I, implies, brings forth a Thou as its necessary counterpart (alius, non aliud, the partner--of the I--not another). In simpler terms, the I must somehow be reflected in a Thou, although this Thou is only the production of the I itself and not an external 'other'. In this Thou the I discovers itself, and really is (it, i.e., I). In other words; the Thou is the consciousness which the I not only has but is. In fact, this I knows Himself, but His Knowledge is none other than the Knower. However, the Knowledge has come to be because the Knower has come out of Himself, as it were, has 'loved' that which by loving, He knows to be His (own) knowledge, Himself as known by Himself. He could not know even Himself were He not driven out, or did He not 'despoil' Himself, only to recover Himself immediately in the 'subject' (person), in which He has fully invested Himself. This total gift of Himself, is Love. Now we are better equipped to deepen our problematic.

The advaitin installed in that I--in the Absolute, who we may say knows and loves Himself--recognizes and loves the sparks of being (which float out of nothing) for what they 'are': 'parts' or 'objects' (though this is an improper use of the words) of that divine Knowledge and Love. He knows and loves 'things' (to use theistic terms) as God knows and loves them, in that unique act by which He knows and loves Himself and in which He associates all that we call beings on earth, whatever nature they may possess. The advaitin not only sees everything in the one, he has an intuition of everything as non-dual, thus as not forming any kind of second vis-à-vis the only and unique one: ekam eva advitīyam, 'one only without a second'[11] because no dvandva, no pair, no duality can be ultimate.

He loves everything in the same way as the unique and universal Love. In extension and degree, the true advaitin loves as does the Absolute.

Now a thing, whatever it may be, is insofar as it is known and loved by the absolute Knowledge and Love. As already said, things are nothing if not crystallizations of Divine Love. A thing is not only insofar as it is loved; it is that very love itself. *In itself it is nothing.* If a thing were not sheer nothingness it could not ~~but~~ be the *pure* 'recipient' of that unique loving act of the Absolute I. Now because *this* ~~the~~ act constitutes that very thing, the integral thing, i.e., the thing *including* ~~perceived with reference to~~ its origin, ~~or rather seen from it~~, is the whole I, the total and indivisible Love. Seen with respect to itself alone, i.e., as the 'thing' in 'itself', it is a limited image of a boundless love, just as the whole sun is reflected, although not completely, in each piece of a broken mirror.

Now if this were to be expressed in theistic terms, it would be meaningless to say that God loves one thing more than another not only because the 'more' makes no sense with reference to God, but also because it is equally senseless with respect to the 'things' themselves. If God loved a thing a little more than He actually does, that 'thing'--as the crystallization of divine love--would cease to be what it is and instead be another 'thing'--*the other thing with that plus.*

Let us now consider the concrete question of the place of common human love in the heart of an advaitin. First of all, whimsical affection due to psychological or aesthetic causes must be eliminated; only that which has an ultimate ontological justification is admissible. In other words, we must either link human love with the very center of the Absolute or admit that bhakti is not on the same footing as jñana.

I love my mother, friend, wife or son with a love which is not inter-changeable. I do not love my beloved just because she is 'mother' or 'friend', but because it is her. No other mother would do, only the beloved can quench the thirst of

the lover; there can be no substitute. Love does not admit indifference. Everything in the beloved is different and unique. Further, I do not love my 'mother' or 'friend' because it is my 'mother' or 'friend', but because of herself (in that she also is Brahman). The Upanisad is right: it is for the sake of the ātman, the Self, but this ātman is neither her soul nor mine, nor different from us both.

Now the difficulty lies here. In the love of a dvaitin the problem does not even arise: he loves the other as other, the thou as that particular thou, experienced like an ultimate, with the consequent danger of idolatry. That is why in a dualistic context there is a certain antagonism between the love of God and the love of a creature, and dualistic religion stresses the necessity of loving the creature for God's sake. Advaitic love is incompatible with this dichotomy. If I love my beloved I cannot love him or her because of himself or herself, nor because of God. I must love her with the identical love with which I love the Ultimate; to be more precise, that same current of Love which sweeps me into the love of the Absolute makes me love my beloved as that spark of the Absolute which she truly is. Even more: putting it in theistic terms, the love of the advaitin for his beloved is indeed the Love of God for both the beloved and the lover.

Person in the context of advaita is nothing but the concrete descent--or revelation--of (divine) love. The uniqueness of every person is based in this ever-different, and so unique, love-relation. Advaitic-love does not love the individual, but the personal, not the 'property' of the beloved, but the divine gift bestowed upon her: that which the beloved does not possess, but is.

c) 2.3 Advaitic Love

Let me try to describe this love. I love you, my beloved, without any 'why' beyond or any 'because' behind my love; I love you, simply, for in you I discover the Absolute--though not as an object, of course, but as the very subject

loving in me. I love you with an inclusive and unique love, which is the current of universal love that passes through you, as it were, for in my love of you universal love is kindled and finds its expression. I love you as you are--i.e., insofar as you really are--the Absolute. I do not love you because of myself. This is important: any egoistic love is incompatible with advaita; any kind of concupiscence, be it desire of pleasure, fulfillment, self-assurance, comfort or the like, is excluded. To love you for my own sake would amount to the worst kind of idolatry: egolatry. Any love that aims at enriching me, at complementing me, which, in a word, aims at me, may perhaps be a human and even a good love but it is in no sense advaitic love. The latter is neither for God's sake, as a foreign motivation for my love nor--much less--for the ego's sake.

The only love consistent with advaita is God's love--in both senses of the expression all in one: 'my' love for Him and 'His' love in me--passing through the creature I love. It is a passionate and true love which is sensitive to the finest, smallest details of true human love, yet it is passive because it is not ego-centered. From the outside it may even appear almost fatalistic. Every lover is taken up, wrapped in his love, overpowered by love. There is love in me and it happens to be directed to this particular person. It is a love which does not kindle in me my love for the Absolute, because it is that love itself which is not different from the Absolute ~~self~~. It is a personal and direct love which passes through me to the beloved, in a way, making the beloved to be. It is a creative love, because--in theistic terms--it is the very love of God towards a person which makes that person to be. An advaitin can love only if the Absolute loves; his love cannot be different.

This description may become a little more complete if we express this love in ontological terms. I love my beloved because my person is installed in the only I, and this I is Love and loves my beloved. In this sense, I 'share' in the love of God for that person. God loves that person personally, i.e., as she is, and so do I. She finds in my love the love of God, she 'feels' somehow that through this love of mine she is loved. And now we can perhaps solve the difficulty we mentioned

at the beginning: if this is so, and God loves every being, that personal touch inherent in every human love is fully preserved, because though the lover is an 'associate' in God's universal love, he 'shares' the constitutive relation of God's love to his beloved; or, in other words, there is an ontological neighborhood between the lover and the beloved. They are like two moments, or two poles in the infinite love of God. ~~They have, to use christian terms, a peculiar relationship in the Mystical Body of the Lord~~. I love my beloved because I am that love of God which makes my beloved to be. There cannot be a more personal love.

No doubt I have been employing terms that can easily be construed as dualistic. I have spoken of the lover and the beloved as two people here on earth and I have taken as example the love . . between a man and a woman. Yet I have also emphasized that these two subjects cannot be considered as if they were ultimate realities, two poles facing one another. The problem, then, is this: Can I as I am, a human person, love you as you are, another person, or shall I have to give up this notion of personal relationship and simply try to develop a universal and indiscriminate love because any kind of self-assertiveness is incompatible with advaita? Precisely here the purifying character of this highest type of love appears more clearly.

Advaitic love must be divine and cosmic, full of 'personality' but devoid of individuality, selfishness, caprice and concupiscence. It is the deepest and strongest love and also the most human because it reaches the core of the human being, its personality, its ontic relationship with God and with another being like itself. It is not a love of an individual's qualities, but of the heart of a person, love of the integral person: body, soul and spirit. It is loving you really as you, a love which both discovers and effects the identity of lover and beloved. Real human love does not consist in gazing at one another but in looking in the same direction, in worshipping together in a unitive adoration. It is not

authentic and ultimate unless it is a sacrament--~~a sign,~~ a real symbol of the divine identity discovered in two pilgrim sparks fusing themselves in order to reach the single divine Fire.

At this point, we cannot proceed farther without solving one of advaita's main problems: the status of the person. It may well be that the concept of person needs revising and perhaps deepening, but we must resist attempting even an outline of this here. I wish to mention only one point relevant ~~et~~ to our topic, viz., the implication of the Trinity. If God, the Father, is the ultimate I ~~(according to the Revelation in Genesis and the voice of the Baptism of Jesus),~~ at/ who calls--generates--the Son as His Thou, manifesting and reflecting Him, then the Spirit is not only the personified Love of the Father and the reciprocal self-gift of the Son, but the non-duality (advaita) of Father and Son. In other words, advaita applied to the Trinity would mean that there are not three distinct beings (as if this would ever be possible ultimately!) but that the only I loves himself and discovers his non-duality (which is the Spirit) in the (him)self which is the Thou (the Son). The Trinity, on the other hand, applied to advaita, would show that non-dualism can have room for Love--understood precisely as the inner movement of this 'One without a second' (ekam eva advitīyam).

The essence of the person is relationship; my person is nothing but a relation with the I. Properly speaking, the place of my personality is within the single Thou of the unique I. But my person is also related to others, it touches, so to speak, the shores of the reality of other people. My person is also related to my beloved whom I call thou, and this I-thou relationship makes us emerge from nothingness by the power of the life-giving Spirit who is Love. Thus we enter more and more into the Thou of ~~God~~ ultimate I (who is not different from God Himself. This is the ultimate level of human love and likewise the very condition of its possibility: when the Spirit responds through us to God. Here

the personality reaches maturity, which is pure transparency.

Perhaps the last words of the book of Revelation may help express the same idea: 'The Spirit and the Bride say, Come!'[12], the Bride assuming and symbolizing the Universal transformed into and transparent to Love, which is precisely the Spirit. 'Come' is the call to the Ultimate through Love, to advaita through bhakti. *Tat tvam asi (13). A Thou you are, Svetaketu! (14) We are in as far as we are the Thou, the tvam of the One.*

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Notes

1. Advaita Vedānta, based mainly on Śaṅkaracārya's interpretation of the Upaniṣads and the Brahma Sūtras, is one of the hindu philosophical schools which predominates in many spiritual circles today. It understands itself as the culmination of all religions and philosophies insofar as it leads to and interprets the 'ultimate experience' of non-duality, i.e., the essential oneness of the Self (ātman) and 'God' (brahman). Among the three classical 'ways' of salvation in hinduism, karma (works), bhakti (adoration and surrender) and jñāna (meditative knowledge), this school represents the last. In fact, 'realization' or 'liberation' is said to be reached only by an intuitive consciousness. Advaita (as differentiated from Advaita Vedānta) would be the fundamental principle of non-dualism (a-dvaita: non-duality), devoid of its connections with the rest of the Vedāntic philosophical garb.
2. Cf. ~~§ IV pp.~~ III of my book Intrareligious Dialogue.
3. Cf. R. Panikkar, The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man (London, Darton, Longman & Todd and Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1973).
4. Kṛṣṇa, the Divine shepherd, is one of the main earthly manifestations of God (Viṣṇu). He is especially worshipped in ~~Vrindaban~~ Vṛndāvan (Vrindaban), where is said to have performed his play of love with men.
5. Jñānin is a follower of the path of knowledge (jñāna).
6. Hindu monk.
7. Nāma-rūpa stands for the limitation of the relative existence. For advaita, the Ultimate is beyond any name and form, but for bhakti, both are manifestations of the Divine (~~esp.~~ especially as the name of God and his image).
8. Cf. BU II, 4, 5.
9. According to MandU (esp. 3-7), there are four states in the Absolute, symbolized by the waking, dreaming and the deep sleep state (these three

being conditioned), whereas the 'fourth' (turīya) is beyond any conditioning.

10. *Cf. the pāramārthika and the vyāhavārika of the school.*

11. Cf. CU 6, 2, 1.

12. Rev. 22:17.

13. *CU VI,8.7 sq.*

14. *Cf. R. Panikkar, The Vedic Experience (Berkeley, University of California Press)1977, pp. 747-753.*

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follows page 470

X. The Supreme Experience:
The Ways of East and West

na saṁsārasya nirvāṇāt kiṁcid
asti viśeṣaṇam

There is no difference whatever between temporality and eternity.

Nāgārjuna

Mādhyamika-kārikā XXV, 19 (+)

+ Saṁsāra is nirvāṇa and nirvāṇa saṁsāra because there can be no place for any difference, which would appertain to either the one or the other. Cf. the ~~christian scholastic~~ meditation on Being and beings and on the famous relatio rationis *of the vedāntic and christian scholastics.*

In order to expose with a certain order the core, and obviously only the core, of the question, we shall consider first the meaning of experience, second what supreme can possibly mean in this case and third, some of the different ways to express it. Were I to follow a more congenial way of putting the problem I would simply say: The Myth, the Logos and the Spirit.

rthermore, an experience cannot be erienced again: it would be another erience.

1 The Problem of Experience

a) Prolegomena

The question about the nature and value of experience arises the very moment we begin to think about our experience. But then we no longer experience: we think. Or more generally expressed, the awareness of an experience is not the experience. Experiencing, unlike thinking, does not allow for self-reflexion. This is both its strength and its weakness. By experience we understand any immediate contact with reality. The perfect experience would mean no difference, no distinction whatsoever between the experiencing subject and the experienced object.

To situate the place of experience in human life, without claiming to state a full-fledged anthropological theory, we may assume that Man has three organs or groups of organs relating him with reality. Sensory consciousness relates us by means of our sense organs to what we could call the material part of reality. Intellectual consciousness opens us up to the intelligible world, to that web of relations which gives consistency to the material world and which we cannot equate with mere matter. Mystical consciousness identifies us in a special way with the very reality it opens up to us; it involves the total subject. Whatever name we may use to describe them, and no matter what interpretation we may give to the 'reality' opened up in each case, there seems little doubt about the existence of these three levels of consciousness.

Further, there would not seem to be much disagreement in saying that these three orders of consciousness are ultimately not independent windows but three dimensions, different forms--the sensory, intellectual and mystical--of one and the same primordial consciousness.

The senses are not only 'knowing' instruments, they are also acting tools, part of the very reality they disclose. Neither is the intellect only a knowing mind; it is also an acting will. The intellectual web of reality is not just an individual's private property, but a commonality in which men participate. Mystical consciousness is not mainly a source of knowledge but an aspect of reality itself, which discloses itself when it ~~becomes patent to~~ *hits, as it were,* a particular subject.

There is no need to interpret what has been said so far in an epistemic ~~and~~ realistic sense. It also has meaning and validity within other epistemologies and within more than *one* metaphysical system. We do not affirm here what reality is or whether these human experiences are 'objectively' true or not. We only offer a general pattern which can be interpreted in many different ways. What has been stressed however is the unitary character of this trinity, i.e., the fact that any conscious human act has to a greater or lesser degree these three dimensions. When we call a human act a sensory activity or an intellectual action or a mystical awareness we are actually reducing, i.e., considering only one aspect of a more complex and unitary fact, which includes the sensual, intellectual and mystical all in one. *Abstraction is needed, but we should not forget that we have been abstracting.*

We could thus call consciousness that bridge, following the upanisadic metaphor (or that light, following the biblical one), which connects the two shores of reality or the two poles of the real: the subject and the object, the inside and the outside. The link established by the bridge (or made possible by the light), namely consciousness, is of three kinds: the sensory, the intellectual and the mystical--or as I call them elsewhere the cosmic, the human and the divine. In

point of fact these three dimensions of consciousness are also the three dimensions of reality: the first dimension is the condition for acting, the second allows understanding and the third being. So much for consciousness.

Now if the concept of consciousness may be used to stress the overall character of this process and its supraindividual aspect, the concept of experience stands for the distinctive feature of the individual having or sharing in that consciousness. If consciousness is something in which we share, experience is something peculiar to each of us. We may almost say that by definition experience is the particular way one shares in a given state of consciousness. With these clarifications we may proceed to describe what can be understood by supreme experience.

6/ The Empirical, the Experiment and the Experience

The entire history of human civilization could be envisioned as the playing of a single (musical) theme in three variations (the empirical, the experiment and the experience). The theme is personal realization, or playing on the common etymology of the variations themselves, the 'attempt' to integrate ourselves into reality by taking the 'risk' of 'undergoing' the 'trial' of 'passing through' whatever process is required. (1) It is obvious that this expertise which is only gained in the 'crossing' the 'ferry' of temporal reality, cannot be measured in chronological periods, either individually or societally. We call them kairological moments.

There is a first period in the history of mankind (one is tempted to say there is equally a first period in the development of human consciousness) in which (given) data are uncritically assumed and taken as bare facts. What is given, especially what is given to our senses, is taken as real. The empirical here does not only mean sense-knowledge. The philosophically uncritical mind also takes for granted what appears to it as given. And the spiritual vision is equally unreflective.

This is the ecstatic vision, the overwhelming presence of the object in which the subject is utterly forgotten. It is the awareness of presence without the slightest cloud of self-awareness. In religion, philosophy and art we could substantiate this period by recalling the beginnings of almost any culture. → 474.1

474.1 → The second moment is represented by the predominance of the experiment. A certain doubt about the value of objectivity has crept in; Man has become more self-conscious of himself and realizes that he cannot leave the acting subject untouched and unreflected upon. The doubt has to be checked by abandoning the passive attitude of the contemplator and taking a more active and aggressive approach: the experiment, the trial, the test, intervention in the object itself. This is the period of critical awareness, and it reverberates on all three levels of consciousness. The experimental sciences make their appearance. In order to know what a thing is, mere observation is not considered enough. The experiment is not limited to the object alone; it is also performed on the subject itself: Man begins to analyze the human mind and the whole spiritual organism. To the physical experiments in the natural sciences correspond the internal experiments of critical philosophy and the psychological introspection of the mystics. The European Renaissance offers a typical example: a flourishing of experimentation on all levels of consciousness. Not only are human and celestial bodies examined, but the human mind and spirit are also submitted to the scrutiny of experimentation. One and the same wind blows through Leonardo da Vinci, Luther, Servet, St. Teresa, Galileo and Descartes, to mention only a few names from very different fields.

The third moment is the result of this continuing process. Man has lost confidence in empirical data; he asks for the criteria of truth and verification and is ready to accept only what he sees for himself. But the experiment is still too impersonal, too objective, it relies too much on the methods of the experimentor, it still requires a certain confidence in the skill, awareness and judg-

from 474 → *This primacy of ~~the~~ data is still visible in the last of human activities to handle the real. The natural sciences, in fact, are still almost in ecstasies under the spell of the data, ~~called~~ here called scientific facts.* → 474

ment of others. But by now Man is not satisfied with anything unless he experiences it himself. Only ~~individual~~ personal experience cannot err, only if he has the experience himself will he be convinced it is the case. The empirical is pure objectivity, the experiment blends the object with subjectivity, and the experience abolishes any kind of objectivity not assumed and integrated into subjectivity. Anyone today who seeks an experience of whatever kind--biological, psychological, scientific or religious--is saying he simply does not care for objectivity or for how others see, judge or sense things. He has to be ~~individually~~ personally involved, i.e., experienced. And one cannot experience by proxy.

~~1.~~ The Myth

Experience implies as a consequence not only an intransferable and ~~individual~~ personal contact with the experienced object, but it also excludes any intermediary, any third party which would render the experience impossible by turning it into an experiment through its instrumency. This implies, further, that any authentic experience excludes any consciousness of distance between the object and the subject, so that the object is no longer seen as such, but is totally united with or plunged into the subject.

The difference between knowing about pain or God or love and experiencing pain, God or love is obvious. My ideas about any object can be corrected, checked, changed and eventually abandoned as inaccurate or wrong. There is a distance between the subject and the object which permits modifying the object without endangering the subject. Not so with experience, as long as it is my experience. When I experience pain there is no possible doubt that I am in pain, even if I am convinced that there is no organic or external or intellectual reason for it. I can doubt whether to make this or that choice as long as I am guided by anything short of experience. I may have to ponder and decide according to common sense, instinct, reason or the like as long as I do not have an experience which renders

any further doubt or hesitation impossible. When experience dawns, it is incontrovertible.

What we must underscore here is not the analysis of the experience but its mythical character, which amounts to recognizing its primordial irreducibility. Any experience--sensory, intellectual or spiritual--~~is~~ *functions as* in fact a myth. To begin with, it performs the same role and presents the same structure. Myth, like experience, enables us to stop somewhere, to rest in our quest for the foundations of everything. Otherwise there would be a regressus in infinitum. You cannot go beyond a myth, just as you cannot go beyond experience. If you could, you would lose both the myth and the experience. Neither allows for further explanation. The moment you explain a myth it ceases to be myth; just as explaining an experience is no longer the experience. Neither allows for 'be-causes' and 'therefores'. They are ultimate. Any demythologication destroys the myth as any explanation destroys the experience. Both myth and experience are taken for granted when they are actually taken as myth and experience. They go without saying. If you feel the need for some justification they have ceased to be what they were. Neither mythical consciousness nor experiential consciousness allows room for critical self-awareness. It is their opposite pole. If metaphysics implies self-awareness and if philosophy is critical knowledge, then myth and experience are neither metaphysics nor philosophy. But perhaps the latter rely and are based on the former.

Both myth and experience present the same structure. In myth as in experience there is no distance between the subject and the object. You are in the myth as you are in the experience, you live in them, or rather you live then. You believe in the myth as you believe in the experience, without being aware that you do. Similarly, both present a kind of receding structure, i.e., they do not disappear altogether when challenged or endangered. When visited by the logos probing their validity or justification, they simply retrocede, they recede to a deeper level, to

another region still untouched by the invading light of critical reason or the rational mind. The relations between science and religion offer constant examples of such strategic retreats.

Our main concern, however, is not to sketch their resemblances, but to point out that ~~among the many myths,~~ experience ~~is one of the most important and invariant~~ is a very peculiar form of myth. No myth can be explained without being explained away. Mythology, understood as the analytical approach of the logos to the myth, is a contradiction in terms, because it destroys the very myth it wants to explain. The telling of the myth is another thing altogether, mythos legein over against mytho-logy. Here the original connection between word and myth is again brought to light and the mythical roots of language appear in the telling of myths.

What we would like to do now ~~What we can do in our particular case then,~~ is to tell the myth of the experience, i.e., the story of the human being believing that he has direct contact with reality, that he can participate not only in the ontic celebration of beings, but also in the ultimate worship of Being, that he has an immediacy which vouches for a direct contact with the real, so that once he has reached the experiential level he can stop and rest. The myth of the experience is another more subtle form of the myth of heaven and the celestial paradise. It is a *sublimated* ~~sophisticated~~ form of the myth of the ultimate.

It should be stressed here that myths do not need to be overcome. When we overcome one myth, another creeps into its place, though perhaps on a deeper level. The process of demythologization so popular nowadays is really the dynamic of transmythicization, a kind of mythical metamorphosis where obsolete and anachronistic myths yield to more modern and up-to-date myths.(2) Obviously, these new myths, like the old myths for those who believed in them, are not seen as myths by the new believers.

We may summarize this first section by saying that any experience is to be

considered ultimate because experience means immediate contact with the real and hence, that there is no possibility of going beyond it without (destroying) the experience.

2 [redacted] The Quest for the Supreme Experience

Human history, both collective and personal, proves that what was once considered to be ultimate or immediate, is later discovered to be mediated and thus neither final nor ultimate. Innocence is lost the moment one is deceived. What then is the value of experience when you can no longer believe that the experience is going to be the last one, final and definitive? In other words, what happens to experience once it is demythologized? The process is worth analyzing. No genuine experience can have extrinsic criterion of its validity or authenticity. An experience is self-validating or it is no experience at all.

How then can an experience be the foundation of anything? What happens if I do not share your experience? Or again, what is the value of the experiences mankind has had which, so history shows, have triggered movements of all sorts, religious, philosophical, social, political...? What about the experiences of the Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad? What is the value of our personal experiences when they are gone or have changed? *How can we rely on experiences?*

We cannot here answer all these interrogations; but keeping them in mind, we will concentrate on our concrete issue: the value of the ultimate experience.

Now we have two logical possibilities. Either we say that the experience remains the same, even when we see it changing, or appeal to the historical dimension of Man. In the first hypothesis the change is said to have taken place in the interpretation of the experience, not in the experience itself. In the second hypothesis we must renounce any possible objective criterion. *In other words,* either we say that the experience is atemporal (and thus everlasting), though our interpretation depends on the cultural level, the historical moment, etc., or we affirm

that the experience is intrinsically temporal, which amounts to saying that Man, and eventually reality itself, is essentially temporal.

The first hypothesis, affirming that the experience remains the same, has the obvious difficulty of stating a fact for which there is no direct evidence whatsoever; it is an a priori derived from a certain world-view. The second hypothesis, stating that all is inserted in a temporal flux, has the inconvenience of seeming to fall into total anarchy, for there seems to be no guarantee that human experience will offer any coherence and continuity along the temporal line. There is no reason why what is experienced today as positive, valuable and immediately evident will not appear tomorrow as utterly untenable.

Is there any way out of the dilemma? Must we choose either the timeless rigidity of everlasting values or the chaotic revolution of sheer relativism? The quest for the supreme experience seems to be relevant here; it could serve as an example of how the apparently most abstract and theoretical speculation can have practical and concrete relevance. Among other questions, are we not asking whether there is a middle way between the maoist constant revolution and the liberal or capitalistic solution of unchanging abstract principles which take care of themselves if only allowed to develop unhindered? Are we not asking if this middle way exists without being either a betrayal (of one of them) or a compromise (between the two)? But before tackling problems of such moment, we should go back to our philosophical analysis of human experience.

a) 2.1 The Experience, its Expression and Interpretation

We should not too hastily assume that an experience is totally independent of its expression, or that its interpretation is irrelevant to the experience itself. Even if this were the case, it is not an evident case.

One of the most common affirmations regarding this sort of problem is to repeat time and again that the authentic experience is ineffable, that those who

know do not speak and those who speak do not know. It may be that no words can communicate what it is, but not all communication needs be verbal. To affirm that some reality is unthinkable amounts to implicitly recognizing that thinking does not exhaust the realm of being. To assert that the ultimate experience ~~reaches into non-being because it~~ leaves all beings behind amounts to confessing that beings are a relative reality, and that the spatial metaphor of the 'beyond' points toward something real ~~non-being~~, if the word real can still be used in this context.

Secondly, we have to become aware of the implications of the dichotomy between the experience and its expression. We understand by expression the manifestation of the experience, its first emanation ad extra, its first result as it were, so that the act of the experience cannot be said to be a solipsistic act with no repercussion or irradiation outside itself. Finally we must also distinguish the expression from its interpretation, this latter being the intellectual explanation of the experience as it is understood by our intellect.

If we accept the three levels of consciousness mentioned earlier, we can see an interesting correlation with these three facets of experience. On the one side there is a correlation between the interpretation and intellectual consciousness. The expression or manifestation of the experience would correspond to sensory consciousness. By this latter, we may understand not only the conventional sense organs but our whole body complex, so that the manifestation of the experience does not need to be a word or even a sound but may be its more primordial expression in our whole body, in our terrestrial and temporal life. The experience itself would correspond to what we called mystical consciousness. If this is the case, then we have also met the difficulty of the so-called ineffability of the real experience. The experience would be inexpressible in terms of our sensory and intellectual consciousness, but would correspond to pure consciousness, which evidently does not translate itself into another form or take any other name, being

itself the act which gives name and form to everything.

Be this as it may, we ought ~~not~~ to distinguish only so much as not to ~~that we~~ break or disrupt the ultimate unity of reality. We should not lose sight of the underlying unity of the three stages of consciousness and the three modes of realization: the experience, its manifestation and its interpretation. It is here that we should introduce what alone seems adequate to carry the full burden of the three worlds: the symbol.

By way of summary, we may state that the symbol stands for the whole of reality as it appears and manifests itself through its own manifold structure. A symbol is precisely the thing; not the 'thing in itself', which is a mental abstraction, but the thing as it appears, as it expresses and manifests itself. The symbol of a thing is neither another thing nor the thing in itself but the very thing as it manifests itself, as it is in the world of beings, in the epiphany of the 'is'. Contemporary philosophy speaks of the ontologic or transcendental difference (that between beings and their entity), including even the widely so-called ontological or 'transcendentable' difference (that between beings along with their entity and Being). We could, analogously, introduce here the symbolic difference as the sui generis difference between the symbol and its reality. The symbol is not another reality, it is not another thing, nor the thing as we may imagine it in some non-existent ideal realm. It is the thing as it really appears, as it really 'is', in the realm of beings. The symbol is nothing but the symbol of the thing, that is (subjective genitive), the peculiar mode of being of that very thing which outside its symbolic form is not and cannot be, because ultimately being is nothing but symbol. To be able to discover the symbolic difference, i.e., to discover me as symbol of myself or, in other words, to realize that my own being is one of the real symbols of the I (certainly not of my little ego), could perhaps be called one of the ways to reach the supreme experience.

the theological or transcendent difference (that of God and beings),

The symbolic difference, which overcomes the epistemic dichotomy between subject and object, and the metaphysical one between thing and appearance,

leads us to consider the relationship between the three levels of consciousness: the experience, its expression and its interpretation. The mystic runs the danger of clinging to the experience while neglecting the other two elements; the philosopher is tempted to identify the interpretation with the real 'thing', and the man of action risks the pitfall of mistaking the expression or manifestation for the whole of reality. Only a balanced and harmonic interplay of the three levels can help us to gain an integral awareness of the real. The symbolic difference stands for this attitude which does not reduce reality to only one of its many sides. It chooses neither the subject nor the object, but mediates via the symbol. But we must not now pursue this tangent farther, important as it is; we take up again the main thread of our story.

2.2 The Loss of the Subject

Let me ask a simple question: when do I begin to doubt the validity of my experience? If our description of experience is correct, there can only be one answer: I doubt the validity of my experience only when I cease to have that experience. As long as I have an experience I cannot doubt it. I begin to doubt when I begin to wonder whether what I am having is an experience or not. This occurs in the first place when I realize the experience as experience: when experience becomes aware of itself as experience, it ceases to be pure experience and becomes the reflexive consciousness of that experience. The experience of prayer, like the experience of pain, like the experience of love, is incompatible with the awareness that I am having that experience. In other words, when the logos enters into the experience, empowering that sort of self-awareness peculiar to the intellect, then the experience is no longer pure experience. Pure light dazzles, pure pain is numbing, pure prayer is mute, pure attention is unguarded, pure ecstasis is unconscious.

Let us imagine we are having an aesthetic experience contemplating the beauty

of a landscape. The moment I become aware that I am having such an experience or that it is through the eye that I am seeing and having the experience, the real experience is lost to me. I have become aware of an intermediary which I did not consider before. Or rather, there was no intermediary until I became conscious of one. The intermediary peephole through which I see ' . at the same time separates what it unites. In a word, no critical awareness is capable of being an experience because it belongs to criticism to be conscious of itself.

We could prolong and deepen this analysis, but our thrust is already clear. The main question now is familiar to most cultures and religions: Is there any possible experience which excludes this destructive self-awareness? Might there be an experience in which the self that experiences is the same as the experience itself? We have already seen that in any real experience the object is lost. The ultimate experience would then be that experience in which the subject is equally lost. We should not, at this stage, commit the methodological mistake of trying to describe such an experience by relying on a particular interpretation of its contents, say in a theistic world-view. We have to remain on purely formalistic grounds. Nevertheless we might describe it by leaning on a particular tradition for our terminology but without implying any allegiance to that particular way.

If I see the landscape or smell the flower or think the thought or will the action or understand the situation, I may have an experience of these objects when they merge into me so that there is no longer any distinction. But there is always the possibility of 'coming back', as a certain mysticism would say. This is so because although in the experience the object is lost in the subject, this latter is not lost, nor is the identification total in either direction (the object is not totally subsumed in the subject and vice-versa). How can I see (understand, discover) that by seeing (understanding, discovering) which all the

rest becomes seen (understood, discovered)?

By what would one know the knower? The difficulty is clear: you cannot see the seer of seeing, you cannot think the thinker of thinking. How could you know the knower? The knower you might eventually know would by this very fact no longer be the knower but what is 'known' by you. To be sure, there is one way the question might be answered. Not by knowing the knower or understanding the understander, but by being oneself the knower and understander. This is the only way in which the experience does not cancel itself; not merely by reaching identification with the object experienced but by becoming the experience itself, the knower, the understander.

In this sense, the supreme experience is neither supreme nor experience. It is not supreme because it is not superior or the first among many. It is not experience either because there is no subject experiencing an object.

c) 2.3 The ~~Supreme~~ Ultimate Experience

If all that has been said so far makes some sense, the supreme experience will be synonymous with pure consciousness, and pure consciousness will stand for the core of reality inasmuch as only consciousness makes room for plurality of the sense-experience, and the multiplicity of the intellectual-experience, without tainting the oneness of the mystical-experience. Consciousness and consciousness alone allows the many and the one to blend harmoniously: the many states of consciousness and the fact of being conscious of the multiplicity does not make consciousness multiple; on the contrary, it reinforces its primordial oneness.

The supreme experience then, would be that experience which is so identified with reality itself that it is nothing but that reality. It is not the highest among the experiences; it does not experience anything. It recovers lost innocence in a way which is not even comparable to the original. The original innocence had no knowledge of good and evil, nor any experience of the manifold in its

excruciating diversity, division and tension. It was a kind of blessed ignorance, what we still today call innocence. The recovery of innocence is properly speaking not a recovery, but a creation, a re-creation, a new state which is not 'brand-new' because it is not a substitute for a former decrepitude. It is really just reality, ~~always as fresh as it is refreshing.~~

The supreme experience is not an experience either, not in the sense we may use the word in any other case. Not only is the object lost, the subject is also no longer there as substratum or basis for the experience. No one can <u>have</u> pure consciousness. It would no longer be pure if it had a foundation in any subject. Neither can it be self-conscious, if we understand by this any type of reflexive self-consciousness. We could rather call it un-self-consciousness precisely because it is mere consciousness: an awareness that it is not aware that it is aware, an infinite ignorance.

One way of describing the supreme experience with the minimum of philosophical assumptions could perhaps take the following form.

Let us begin with any experience, with perhaps the simplest of all: I am touching an object. I have the branch of a tree in my hand, I am pressing and caressing it, I may like to bite it and to smell and taste it eventually. My thinking is absent for the moment and my spiritual awareness as well. I am lost in contact with a bit of nature. This is a sensual experience, but it does not last forever. Perhaps an impertinent fly disturbs my 'distraction', or a fleeting thought crosses my mind or my body reminds me of the hour. I still want to remain in communion with that branch, but I have discovered, first, that neither the object nor the subject was pure, complete or exhaustive. The branch is not the whole tree and much less the whole of nature; my hands and all my senses are not the whole of my being and much less the whole of all other possible subjects. I would like to cling to my branch. I may begin to meditate on it, to concentrate

not only my senses but also my mind and even my will on the branch. If I succeed, I may reach another type of experience in which the identification is at once much deeper and much wider. For a moment I may be identified with the branch and if I am lost deeply enough in the branch, my identification might not stop at the branch, but might go on to include the great part of nature, and eventually the whole of vegetal life. For a moment there may be identification between me and all nature. I do not touch a branch, I embrace the entire natural world.

But my experience need not stop here. It may grow in both directions, losing the object until it reaches the totality and losing the subject until it in its turn reaches so to speak the other pole of the totality. Perhaps with the branch it may be (a little difficult), but surely not impossible. I may leave the woods and throw the branch away. But I may equally go back to the branch, although it is no longer just a branch but the whole tree, the entire wood and the universe in its totality, something I cannot touch with my hands nor feel with my sentiments, but a concrete mirror and reflection of the whole which I can somehow enter with all my being. I may lose myself in such an experience and perhaps more than one expert will tell me that I have had an experience of nature mysticism. But this is not all. One might assume that I believe in a personal God. This would allow for another type of experience, which some may call the vision of God. For a general description, however, I need not assume that I am a theist or an atheist. I am convinced that the experience may be the same even if the interpretations differ.

Now the contact with the branch may be so intense and profound that I am in contact, not with a bundle of electrons configured as a branch, but with that primordial matter (in which) all material things share. Entering into immediate contact with this primordial matter I am also in immediate contact with the very ground of being which gives consistency and existence to that primal matter. Some may call it God, some may not. In any case I am in direct contact with the ul-

timate reality of that branch which has to do ultimately with the same reality underlying everything. We may differ in the use of the word reality, we may disagree inasmuch as I may think that the crucial reality is the distinctive and not the uniting factor. But there is an experience here which as such, i.e., without any claim to metaphysical interpretations, reaches the very boundaries of reality.

This is not yet the supreme experience because it still has to grow into the total universalization of the subject having that experience. Until now I have been carried away, as it were, I am lost in the object or the object is lost for me. But I have not yet been carried above me so that there is no longer a 'me'. To concentrate on the branch (disregarding for now other possible requirements according to the different schools) and totally lose myself in the entire universe, I also need the action of the ultimate reality of the branch upon me. I need the opposite thrust in order to totally lose myself, my ego, and realize that the subject of the experience is no longer my senses or my mind or my mystical awareness, but something which overwhelms and overcomes me and about which I can only speak later on. It is something which does not leave any room for saying that the experience is in any way mine. In theistic terms I no longer 'see' the branch or the universe, but 'create' it, call it into existence, because it is no longer my ego doing this but the divine I in which my person is merged and with which my person is united, however we may prefer to express this process. This would be the beginning, the threshold of the supreme experience. The explanations, the interpretations, may come afterwards. One thing might still be added: the manifestation of this experience can be detected; it totally transforms my life. The manifestation will not be my words or a recital of my experience; its real expression will be incarnated in my life, it will crystallize in my existence and be visible to any who may care to look.

We have called this the threshold of the supreme experience. In other words,

it has been the supreme experience for the time being. Someone who has had such an experience will 'come back' to what mortals call ordinary life. But once it has taken hold of a Man, the supreme experience transforms that Man totally; he cannot be the same as before. It is a death and a resurrection. That person will perform the ordinary acts of human life like any other mortal; but he will not feel distracted by his ordinary life because there is no incompatibility of domains. The supreme experience is not psychological. Nevertheless it is understandable that most mystical schools dealing with these problems distinguish a double level even at this point: the supreme experience compatible with mortal life in the visible structures of space and time, and that other supreme experience in which time and space have been completely integrated into the experience itself. We cannot say much more (we have perhaps already said too much) about the supreme experience before proceeding to a certain typology of its manifestations.

Cont. to 485, 1

3 The Ways of West and East

3.1 Eastern and Western Values

East and West have been separated for so long, misunderstanding each other and living worlds apart, that a certain inertia in our ways of looking at things may obscure the fact that East and West are no longer what were traditionally described under these two almost magical names. To begin with, East and West cannot be considered purely or mainly geographical features. And this not only because we discovered long ago that the earth is round and that 'east' and 'west' are relative to one's perspective, but because today even these differences are minimal and to be found in any fair-sized nation state. Nor can East and West be called historical concepts. The history of the peoples of the world is no longer a patchwork of isolated fragments. The destiny of the West may well be settled by battles taking place in the East, while the future of the East may well depend

If I were to describe the supreme experience in my own personal, advaitic and trinitarian words, I would say nothing. Yet, if press to translate, I would say something like this: It is the experience of the thou, the realization of my-self as a thou: tat tvam asi, or again: filius meus es tu, or ecce ego quia vocasti me, or ἔσθε σύ (to use the language of four traditions and to which one could add the experience underlying the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ nairātmyavāda).

It means to realize (myself as) the entire reality but capzized as it were, upside down, like the cosmic tree of the Upanisad, or the required metanoia (con-version, changing of nous, of mind) of the New Testament. That is, it means to discover me, image of the entire reality, at the meeting place of the real, at the cross roads of Being, at the very center. But the center would be unreal if there were not the sphere (or what not) for which it is center. The image would be mere hallucination if the original were not real. The cross-roads is where beings cross. And yet the one would not be without the other.

The supreme experience is pure consciousness, but this is not self-consciousness in the sense of experience of the self. Pure consciousness, is thou consciousness and it is in this thou-consciousness where we all meet, including the I which can be only experienced as in and through the thou. There is no I-consciousness. There is only consciousness, and this is precisely the thou: the very consciousness of the I. The I has and is no consciousness, it is the source of it —if we won't stretch the metaphor too far.

To... 488,2

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(from 488,1)

of the supreme experience (for lack of a better word)

One could venture also a purely philosophical formulation and affirm that the true and complete principle of identity, the metaphysical one and not merely logical, takes not the form of 'I am I', ~~xxxxxxxx~~ (which amounts to a barren tautology imprisoning the I in an inescapable solipsism), but the form of 'I am thou'. "Who are you", says an extraordinary verse of one Upanishad, speaking about ultimate liberation, "I am you", says the answer and the text continues: "then he releases him" (3).

(back to 488)

on the policy of the West. Western and eastern histories are no longer closed systems. For the first time human history is also the history of mankind.

Cultural distinctions also fade away or merely express oversimplifications and ignorances not yet totally overcome. Not only is the typically western spirit to be found outside the West, but the traditional eastern way of looking at things is also gaining ground in western latitudes. Indeed, there is not a single cultural difference which could be called specifically eastern or western. Surely neither logic nor mysticism, nor for that matter technology, science or metaphysics. Even philosophical idiosyncracies cannot be divided into exclusively eastern or western ways of thinking or philosophizing. Both the East and the West are too vast and variegated to allow overstating special features in their philosophical outlook on life. The times when a certain feature could be called peculiarly eastern or western are long gone.

Or again, religious divisions can no longer be credited to East and West. In spite of the continuing burden of the past, hardly any religion today fits into an East-West dichotomy. Most of the religions of the world were born in one place and flourished in another. To identify a religion with one particular continent seems almost fatuous today. It is hard to say whether christianity is more jewish than greek or roman, whether buddhism is more indian than chinese, whether judaism is more palestinian than babylonian, eastern european, spanish or whatever.

It is then meaningless to speak of the ways of the East and those of the West? I don't think so. They still retain a deep significance, perhaps the deepest of all: only if East and West are understood as anthropological categories will they find their place, justification and value in today's world.

In every human being there is an East and a West, just as any human being is in a certain way androgynous, but normally one of the two aspects of the human

predominates. With the world on the way to becoming geographically and culturally one it would be monstrous if its people were still to remain isolated, unconcerned and at a loss for that symbiosis, which is the only hope for more than one world problem today. But this cross-fertilization is possible because the human being already has within himself the seeds of both values. In each of us there is a West and an East. Every human person has an orient, a horizon which he never reaches, always beyond and behind, where the sun rises, a dimension of hope, a dim sense of transcendence, a matutinal knowledge (cognitio matutina). Every human being has likewise a dimension of West, of maturity, where the sun sets, where the values materialise and concreteness is valued, where faith is felt as a necessity, where the shapes and forms become relevant and the evening knowledge (cognitio vespertina), which discovers the immanence in the things themselves, is most prized.

We could go on indefinitely, but this may suffice for our problem. The burden of our tale is this: any inter-religious and inter-human dialogue, any exchange among cultures has to be preceded by an intra-religious and intra-human dialogue, an internal conversion within the person. The gulf between so many abysses--between East and West in this case--can be bridged only if we realize the synthesis and the harmony within the microcosm of ourselves. We are the chasm and we are likewise the bridge.

4/ 3.2 Four Archetypes of the Ultimate

We cannot go on forever avoiding the problem of content and overlooking the different ways in which the supreme experience has been described by different schools and traditions. But then we must be aware of the limitations of any particular description. Here a study from the perspective of the History of Religions should prove fruitful and enlightening. Only very tentatively do I submit the following typology, based not so much on the textbook divisions between religions and

cultures as along the lines of what has just been said of East and West as anthropological categories. If examples are drawn from the great religious traditions of mankind this should not contradict what we have been saying but simply bear witness to the fact that certain emphases are easier to find among certain peoples than others.

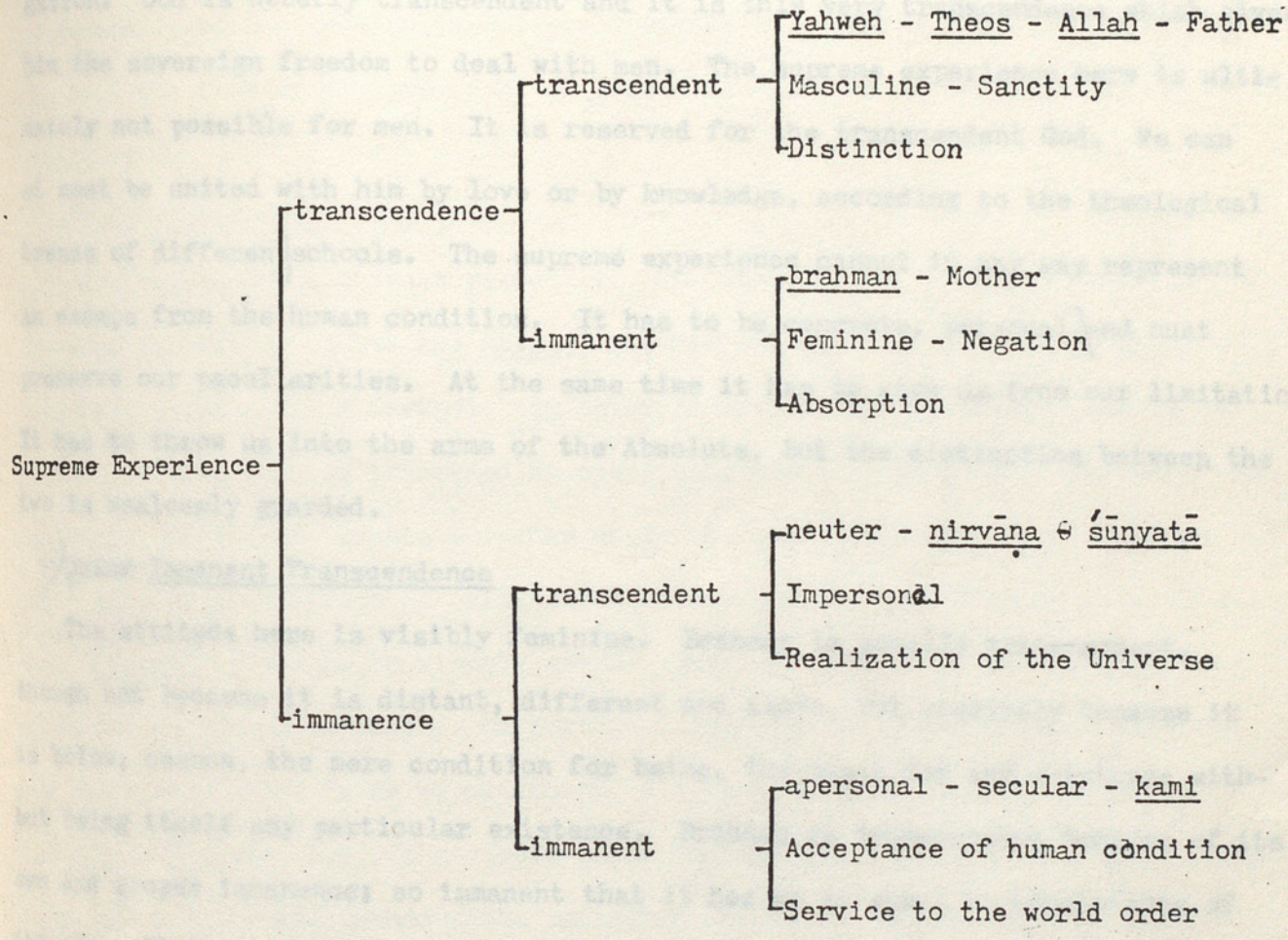
I repeat once and for all that I do not intend to describe any religious spirituality in particular or to deny that within a given religion there are not other trends of thought or even to affirm that this typology is a typology of religions. I speak of four archtypes of the human being, although they may be more visible in one place or time than in another. Moreover, it is distinctly characteristic of our times to begin to find all these four archetypes within the fold of one and the same religion.

It seems that the human spirit in its effort to understand and express the supreme experience has stressed either its transcendence or its immanence.

Within the first group we find two definite tendencies: the tendency to stress transcendence and the tendency to stress immanence. The former is typical of the semitic religions: judaism, christianity and islam. The latter could be said to form the hindu type and is represented by the bundle of religious traditions which circulate under the name hinduism.

The group more inclined to emphasize immanence could equally be subdivided: one underscoring the transcendent character of the immanence, and we think here of buddhism; the other accenting the immanent aspect of this immanence, and here we would see the chinese religious tradition and curiously enough the modern secular spirit as well.

The following scheme sums up what we would like to sketch very briefly:



3.2.1 Transcendent Transcendence

Its attitude is markedly masculine. Force, Power, Glory are some of its attributes. Be it Yahweh, the christian Theos or Allah, this God is eminently Father and thus creator and evidently outside the world. He is transcendent in such an absolute way that he mainly creates, looks after and judges the world. He does not mix with the world, as it were. The supreme experience is to see this glaring light face to face. Of course there is the softening effect of the christian incarnation, like the more mellow tones of the kabbala, of hasidic spirituality and of sufism (but we have already said that we are trying more to

describe anthropological archetypes than to elaborate a typology of religions). God is preeminently the saint and holiness here means separateness, lofty segregation. God is utterly transcendent and it is this very transcendence which gives him the sovereign freedom to deal with men. The supreme experience here is ultimately not possible for men. It is reserved for the transcendent God. We can at most be united with him by love or by knowledge, according to the theological trends of different schools. The supreme experience cannot in any way represent an escape from the human condition. It has to be concrete, personal, and must preserve our peculiarities. At the same time it has to save us from our limitations. It has to throw us into the arms of the Absolute, but the distinction between the two is zealously guarded.

c) ~~3.2.2~~ Immanent Transcendence

The attitude here is visibly feminine. Brahman is equally transcendent, though not because it is distant, different and above, but precisely because it is below, common, the mere condition for being, the basis for any existence without being itself any particular existence. Brahman is transcendent because of its own and proper immanence; so immanent that it has so to speak no consistency of its own. It does not even know it is brahman. This would jeopardize its immanent transcendence, for it would then have the distance necessary for knowledge and could not be so radically immanent to the world. It is the matrix, the yoni, more like a mother nurturing from below than a command from above. It does not lead but sustains. The supreme experience would accordingly consist in being immersed in brahman, not perhaps to become brahman, which would posit a certain activity alien to the utter passivity necessary for its immanent transcendence, but to discover the brahman that is in me or that I am. The supreme experience is not so much to stay within one's own human condition, sticking to a name and form which are only passing and provisional, but to experience the totality, to be the totality

from a 360 degree angle embracing all that is. This way is a negative path, it denies all individuality and all differences. One of the criteria for the authenticity of the genuine experience consists in checking whether the candidate has lost the fear of disappearing, of losing himself, or if he still clings to his little ego.

iii) ~~3.2.3~~ Transcendent Immanence

Here the panorama changes radically. The attitude is no longer masculine or feminine but rather neuter (ne utrum), neither male nor female and yet somehow personal, although in a markedly non-anthropomorphic sense. Immanence here is so radical that only by transcending everything built up on it can one reach the ultimate. One has to reduce to ashes everything one can conceive of or think; every idea or imagination of being has to disappear in order that pure nothingness (śūnyatā) (~~śūnya~~) may emerge, obviously not as some-thing and much less as something else, but as the non-emergence of anything. Nirvāṇa is the supreme experience, the experience which is no experience at all, and which at once realizes that saṁsāra is nirvāṇa, i.e., that there is no transcendence other than immanence, and thus that only by transcending the immanence itself can Man somehow fulfil his life.

The supreme experience here is obviously not the experience of an Other and not even an experience different from any other human experience. It underlies all of them and can be reached only by quenching every desire to transcend the human condition. Yet precisely because this human condition is a negative experience, its negation--without wanting to transcend it--is the only way to salvation, to nirvāṇa. The supreme experience is reached neither by seeing God in all things (first way) nor by seeing all things in God (second way, though expressed in terms rather foreign to this way), but by refusing to divinize anything within the range of our experience. You are not having the supreme experience if you

affirm or even doubt that you are. The supreme experience is that there is no such thing as supreme experience. Realizing this awakens us to real liberation.

3.2.4 Immanent Immanence

The attitude here is radically terrestrial. Immanence is not to be transcended. If the other three attitudes still recognize, in a personal or impersonal way, that the sphere of immanence has to be somehow corrected, transcended, this fourth attitude does not recognize any escape from the factual human condition. There is no way out. There is no other world than this, and there is no use sublimating our longings and desires or projecting our dreams outside the realm of sober verification. Kami in japanese means God for the shinto, but also above, up, or anything for that matter superior to man in any way, no matter how trivial. Traditional chinese religiousness will not allow introducing any other factor into the human situation in order to handle it. Religion is ultimate unconcern. The supreme experience is that of the sage who fully knows the trickeries and depths of the human heart. The supreme experience is to renounce any extrapolation and to plunge into the real world situation without transcending it, not even negatively. Modern secular spirituality, by pragmatically refusing to speculate about any experience outside the range of the world, could also be adduced as an example of this attitude. In the concrete it finds the universal and the immanent; in the given, all that is needed....

3.3 The Spirit

Is there any way to find a certain equivalence for such variegated views and opinions? Are we to conclude that mankind has no unanimity whatsoever? Is the unity of the human family only a biological trait or a utopian dream? Am I so right that the others must be wrong? Nations are at war one with another, religions consider themselves incompatible, philosophies contradict one another and now in human experience itself--in the very attempt to overcome all the pettiness

of system and ideologies--divergencies appear cutting as deeply as into any other human reality. Was the thrust toward experience not mainly to overcome the discrepancies of sentiment and the divergencies of opinion? If there is no judge ulterior to our personal experience, must we give up all hope of peacefully understanding one another, and so prepare the way for new forms of imperialism and world domination (apparently the only other way to bring a certain coherence and harmony to mankind)? After two world wars and with several minor, but no less horrible, wars still ravaging humankind today, we cannot put much trust in pure reason and particular ideologies. Does human experience--supreme or not--offer any better starting point?

All these questions are far from rhetorical. They constitute a real challenge to any authentic theology and philosophy if these disciplines are to be more than barren and devitalized brain-juice for the dumbfounding of anyone still sensitive and sensible. We should not expect everything from philosophy or theology and we must beware of false messianisms, but the one extreme does not justify the other.

Is there any way of understanding and somehow accepting the manifold human experience, of integrating the variety of expressions of the supreme experience? If we can give a positive answer to this tantilizing query we shall not have solved the problems of the world, but shall have contributed in a very positive and efficacious way to their solution. At least we shall have removed one of the subtle obstacles: lack of mutual confidence due to lack of understanding. Misunderstanding the other we think him wrong, even in bad faith; we cannot trust him...and this is but one consequence. On the other hand, it would be a negative, even lethal, service to philosophy and a betrayal of mankind if led by a well-intentioned desire for mutual understanding we were to blur the issues and preach harmony and convergence when there is none.

To put it quite bluntly: if there is a God and if this is considered to be the only possible hypothesis for a fully human and meaningful life, even if we respect the right of others or acknowledge their good faith, we shall not be able to consider full citizens of academia, culture, religion or mankind all those who deny such a personal God. Or, the other way round: if we believe that there is no God and if the idea of God is still the 'hang up' of an obscurantist epoch totally incompatible with an enlightened, non-sectarian and non-fanatical existence, all those who still cling to such superstitions are, to say the least, parasites on society and the greatest obstacles to a better world. We should not minimize or banalize the issue under the guise of academic etiquette. An investigation into ultimate experience cannot bypass this challenge.

Briefly but pointedly I would like to elaborate the direction of my answer. First of all, as the previous analyses may have already suggested, the shift in emphasis from objective values to the experiential truth can only be judged as a positive step toward a more mature conception of the whole and complex human situation. Orthodoxy cannot be the supreme value. Secondly, the distinction between agnostic or skeptical relativism and a realistic relativity seems important. The former is a dogmatic attitude emerging in reaction to another monolithic dogmatism. The latter is the recognition that nothing is absolute in this relative world of ours, that it all depends on the intrinsic and constitutive relationship of everything to everything else; isolation and solipsism are but the byproducts of a particularly human hybris. The brotherhood of Man is not only an ethical imperative. Thirdly, and this is what we should draw from the foregoing analyses, human experience is not reducible to a single denominator. To be sure, the logos element in experience is important, it holds the veto (nothing contradicting reason can be accepted), but it is not Man's only power nor his highest endowment. Not only can everything not be words or concepts, but even here on earth (not everything

is logos.

The real philosophical and theological task today is to integrate not only the exigencies of the logos, but also the realities of the myth and, last but not least, the freedom of the spirit. *This is the thrust of many of the chapters of this book.*

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Notes

1. The greek perao and peiran, both at the base of our three words, come from the root per (in sanskrit par [cf. pi-parmi]) meaning to conduct, to pass through, to test, trial, attempt (thus risk, danger). Cf. the latin porta, peritus, periculum, pirata; the german fahren (whence erfahren...); the english peril, fare, ferry; the french périlleux, etc. The empirical is the proven reality, because it has passed through our senses; the experiment is the same reality submitted to our testing (and trying) capacities; experience is the same reality which has already passed through--*as the vedic soma through the pressing stones.*
2. Cf. R. Panikkar, 'La demitologizzazione nell'incontro tra cristianesimo e Induismo', Il problema della Demitizzazione, edited by E. Castelli (Padova, Cedam, 1961).
3. KausU I,2.

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500

Part III 565

(Ch. ~~XIV~~ - ~~XVI~~
XL - XVI)

III Hermeneutics

is qui invenerit interpretationem
(ἑρμενεία) horum verborum non gustabit
mortem.

He who discovers the interpretation
of these words will not taste death.

Evangelium Thomae 1

follows 546

XI

Metatheology as Fundamental Theology

ἀλλὰ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ
οὐ δέδεται

Sed verbum Dei non est alligatum.

Theo-logy is not in bondage.

2 Tim. 2:9 (†)

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† 'But the word of God is not shut up' (NEB) or 'but the word of God is not bound' (AV and RV) and the like are the contextually obvious correct translations.

1 A Parable

A teacher who was a westerner or trained along western lines was almost in despair: after a carefully built-up scientific explanation of malaria, its processes, causes, etc., the boys in a Ugandan primary school did not seem to have understood anything. 'Why does a Man catch malaia?' one boy asked timidly. 'Because a mosquito, the carrier of the parasite, bites him,' replied the teacher, who went on to give the whole explanation again. At this the class, still unconvinced and solidly behind the daring boy shouted, 'But who sent the mosquito to bite the Man?'

For those Ugandan boys, the schoolmaster had neither understood nor explained anything. They were not concerned with facts, scientific 'hows' or efficient causes, but with the living world (and perhaps the final cause), with the existentially relevant issue--for the real issue here (imagine you or one of your family having malaria) is why that particular individual has been bitten by that particular mosquito. Fundamental theology is like that teacher, and two-thirds or perhaps even three-fourths of our present generation resemble the schoolboys. Theoretical explanations about malaria or religion are all very well, but unless I can explain why the mosquito has bitten me....

2 The Two Meanings of Fundamental Theology

As commonly understood, fundamental theology is a pre-theological or philosophical reflection on the foundations of theology. ~~This~~ Its reflections ~~is~~ are directed either to justify the assertions of christian dodtrine--a discipline traditionally called apologetics--or to find out the sources and foundations of theology. The former purports to be a rational or at least reasonable justification of the ele-

ments elaborated by theology; the latter claims to disclose the very basis of theological self-understanding. I shall discuss only the second meaning.

3 Assumptions and Presuppositions

Two distinct groups, assumptions and presuppositions, underlie ~~this new tra-~~ ditional fundamental theology. Among the assumptions, we ~~will consider~~ have first the notion that theology needs a foundation which is in some way outside it, and second, that this basis can be known.

Both of these assumptions are to be found at the very start of fundamental theology; they were present even before the discipline received it current name. ~~We might question these assumptions, however,~~ we could discuss what this foundation is and to what extent we can know it. But ~~our point is this:~~ we have to point out that as soon as the discipline acquired consistency, that is, as soon as christian theologians felt the need for a foundation for theology outside theology, they by and large assumed that this was the right way to proceed. One of the most striking examples of this kind of thinking is the First Vatican Council, so many of whose pronouncements tend in the direction of just such a fundamental theology.

A dualisitic conception of reality is ~~central~~ proper to this type of thinking: God and the world, uncreated and created, Being and the beings, the ground and the structure built upon it. In this two-story construction of nature and supernature, grace is built on nature, faith on reason, theology on philosophy and so on. Their relation of dependence is neither an exigency from below nor a lack of freedom from above. Rather, the second level presupposes the first and the first is not de facto complete without the second. To be sure, the lower levels are called preambula not fundamenta, so as to maintain the freedom and 'gratuity' of the upper story. But it amounts to the same thing. If, for instance, you do not admit there is a God and a soul, how can christian teaching

make sense to you?

Among the presuppositions, one is that these foundations which sustain theology are universally valid. Since they allegedly serve all human beings without distinction, if somebody cannot grasp them this supposedly means that he has not yet reached the level of mental development which would enable him to understand these basic 'truths'. Consequently, a certain degree of 'civilization' was believed necessary before one could understand and then adhere to the message of the Church: methods like the so-called pre-catechetical instruction or évangelisation de base--a certain philosophical indoctrination on the concepts of 'person', 'nature', 'substance', 'individual', 'private property'; the preaching of monogamy, or the effort to convince people to prefer other manners of eating and dress, etc.--were all considered tools of the christian kerygma, necessary pre-conditions for proclaiming the Gospel.

4 The Crisis of the Presuppositions

The distinction between presuppositions and assumptions seems to me of capital importance. An assumption is something I may assume for many possible reasons: traditional, heuristic, axiomatic, pragmatic, hypothetical and so on. It is a principle which I set at the base of my thinking process in a more or less explicit way. A presupposition, on the other hand, is something I uncritically and unreflectively take for granted. It belongs to the myth in which I live and out of which I draw raw material to feed my thinking. The moment a presupposition is known as the basis of thought or the starting-point of an intellectual process, it ceases to be a pre-supposition. Now only another person--or myself in a second reflexive moment--can make me aware of my presuppositions; when that happens I cannot just hold them as I had earlier. I either reject them or keep them as 'suppositions', assumptions. This is also why the moment theology becomes aware of

its presuppositions--either by criticism from the outside or by a critical perspective from within--theologians begin to question the hitherto unquestioned basis of their science. The crisis thus produced is the sort that any living consciousness must pass through in order to grow.

Now both theology and fundamental theology were at home in one particular culture and world-view; they took for granted the presuppositions of the western world. The two sciences were grounded in the same myth and shared many presuppositions, some of which have recently been laid bare and now provoke theological confusion in an era of global encounter among religions.

Indeed, these uncovered presuppositions have even been questioned as assumptions. The current generation finds the traditional scheme insufficient. In fact, the ground on which theology rests has become more problematic than the christian content itself.

5 The Challenge of Universality

The real challenge of christian faith today comes from within, i.e., from an inner dynamic toward universality, from its own claim to 'catholicity'. And now that the horizon of universality has outgrown the boundaries of western civilization and its colonies, what was once considered 'catholic' becomes 'provincial'. Today any message directed to the whole of mankind which takes a part for the whole or ignores the variety of peoples, cultures and religions is bound to be suspicious from the outset. Christian faith has either to accept this challenge or declare its allegiance to a single culture and thereby renounce its claim to possess a universally acceptable message.

This problem facing fundamental theology cannot be solved by merely extrapolating, without previously justifying, a set of propositions which may be meaningful *within a certain religious or cultural context, but irrelevant, meaningless* or even unacceptable outside it. If fundamental theology is to have any rele-

to address itself to a radical cross-cultural problematic. It has to strive at formulating propositions intelligible

vance in our time of worldwide communication, it has to ~~make sense~~ to people outside western culture (just as ~~it must have meaning~~ also for those in the West who no longer think, imagine or act according to the paradigms which still guide fundamental theology). A simple glance at history will convince us that the differences between cultures are not minor. A principle we consider incontrovertible may be dubious in another culture. For the most part, people today are no longer prone to mistakenly imagine that everybody thinks and feels alike simply because they outwardly behave similarly. The encounter of peoples, cultures and religions is a major problem for fundamental theology, a challenge to its very anthropological and philosophical foundations. In this connection I would like to offer some general considerations.

6 Foundations, A Priori and A Posteriori

The basic need for more universal foundations for christian theology cannot be ignored or explained away by assuming that the 'other' will sooner or later understand or be converted to 'our' point of view. Those days are gone. *The* ~~Our~~ problem is to seek foundations for christian theology which at least make sense to peoples outside the ~~West, i.e., to those outside~~ fundamental theology's traditional milieu.

The only possible method for finding the foundations of theology must be *a posteriori*. That is, fundamental theology is not at the beginning of theological reflection but at its end. Christian faith is not based on certain foundations which fundamental theology lays bare (discloses). Rather the effort to understand the christian fact leads us to discover some conditions of its intelligibility in given circumstances. Let us recall here that the primordial meaning of 'catholicity' is not geographical universality, but internal completion.

Here history is also a wise master. Not too long ago all sorts of ideas were considered fundamental to christian theology, notions which today are dismissed as accidental or non-essential, because other interpretations--perhaps more plausible--

have been found. These interpretations claim to save the real message precisely by purifying it of obsolete world views.

The real difficulty is to find the criterion for this operation. How am I to know whether something is essential to my faith or not? Where will the process end once I begin to demythicize?

7 The Unity Between Theology and Fundamental Theology

The thesis I am proposing tries to re-establish the unity--and so the harmony--between theology and fundamental theology. It asserts that fundamental theology is neither a necessary epistemological condition for nor the ontological basis of theology. Were theology to depend for its acceptability on an extra-theological base, it would lose not only its character of wisdom but also its intellectual cogency. Theology would be utterly at the mercy of whatever philosophy offered the better backing; it would depend wholly on an auction in the philosophical (or even the public) marketplace.

What I propose is the recovery of fundamental theology as a fundamentally theological endeavor, i.e., as being fundamentally theology. Reincorporating fundamental theology into theology as a whole will by this very process explode the only too narrow cage in which theology has sometimes been confined. It will liberate theology from the tutelage of philosophy so that theology will no longer depend on a foundation (one particular philosophy, world-view or whatever) outside itself.

Accordingly, fundamental theology would be that theological activity (for which there is so often no room in certain theologies) which critically examines its assumptions and is always ready to question its presuppositions. But it does this not from a separate platform which is independent from faith and on which 'theology' would subsequently build up its 'own' system. Rather, fundamental

theology is the effort to understand the actual theological situation in any given context. There is a difference, indeed, between the content of the christian belief and the conditions of its intelligibility; but there is not a separation, since the content of faith is nothing but an intelligible crystallization of faith itself. Content means intelligible content, and it cannot be intelligible if it rests on premises which are explicitly not understood.

I am saying that the anthropological conditions necessary to understand and accept the christian message cannot and so must not be severed from the interpretation of its content. Let me elaborate this point by means of an example.

8 One Example: the Buddhist, the Hindu and the Secularist

The existence of God has traditionally been considered a philosophical truth independent of any theology; hence it was supposed to be one of the foundations of christian doctrine. The resurrection of Christ, on the other hand, belongs to the purely theological order. It is usually said that if you do not accept the existence of God you cannot understand what the christian faith is about; it is also generally affirmed that if you do not accept the resurrection of Christ you cannot be called a christian. The difference between these statements is that while you do not need a specifically christian belief to admit the existence of God, you do need it to accept the resurrection of Christ. The affirmation 'Christ is risen', then, can be taken as one of the shortest and most accurate expressions of this christian belief.

The situation today is more complex. Let us abruptly confront this example with a triple fact: a buddhist who does not believe in any God whatsoever and yet has a highly developed and refined religion; a hindu who does not object at all to the resurrection of Christ; and a secularist theologian or ~~the~~ a modern westerner who calls himself a christian and yet ~~neither~~ accepts neither God nor the resurrection as traditionally understood.

The buddhist would like to believe the message of Christ and sincerely thinks he could accept and even understand it better if it were purified from what he considers its theistic superstructure. The hindu would wonder why he must join a physical and cultural community only because he is ready to believe in the divinity and resurrection of Christ. The 'death of God' theologian, or whatever name we may choose for him, would say that precisely because Christ is the savior, he can dispense with any conception of a transcendent God and the miracle of a physical resurrection.

Whether or not these three people can be called christian will depend on the interpretation of what they say, i.e., on what they really mean to say. I shall not enter here into the merits of these arguments, But I will say that the three statements present the same pattern and it would be artificial and confusing to lodge the first in fundamental theology, the second in theology and the third in philosophy. Everything depends on what we understand by God and how we picture Christ's resurrection, on our assumptions, our context and our understanding of how the christian belief can be maintained within such religious, epistemological and metaphysical patterns. Is it, for example, necessary to have a theistic and substantivized conception of the divinity to be loyal to christian faith? Does one need a literal and fundamentalist image of the resurrection to be an orthodox believer? Is it essential to hold the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophical shheme in order to accept the christian message? Must I really admit some *preambula fidei* as part of faith itself, or does it depend on how I interpret what my faith tells me, so that faith may have different *preambula*?

The existential catholic answer to the individual is very clear: your interpretation, your understanding of the christian fact, must be personally intelligible, but it must also harmonize with tradition--hence with the *magisterium*--because dogma is also an historical reality and has a communal character.

We are not, however, dealing with the problem of discipline or with a specific case. My question would be whether, or on what grounds, tradition and the magisterium have the right to prevent the entry into the Church of people whose lives are guided by different patterns of intelligibility. Or again, is the present historical crystallization of the christian faith the only possible one? Theoretically the Church has never said this, but the difficulty lies in discovering whether and which formulations are equivalent. So the problem remains: can several patterns sustain and convey the christian kerygma? To what extent can they do so? Here only history will have the last word, for the Church itself is inscribed in the historical process.

9 The Function of Fundamental Theology

If we are aware of the problem we are already on the way to overcoming it. The extraordinary fact is that this awareness is only now dawning on the great majority of christian theologians. I mean this not as an accusation but as a statement of fact. Given the historical development of christian theology, it could not be otherwise. To pour today's wine into old wineskins is reprehensible, but it was not when they were brand new.

The role of fundamental theology is therefore to make theological affirmations also intelligible outside the culture and even the religion where they had until then grown and prospered. I would say that if fundamental theology is to fulfill its role, it must not only clarify its own traditions, but paradoxically leave kith and kin to wander into terra incognita--although a promised land. And herein lies the immense difficulty. Fundamental theology is an Exodus theology. Thus it is not only a question of courage, but also of feasibility. Is it possible to take root in an alien, or even a non-existent, soil? Can we jump over our own shadow? Can fundamental theology make theological statements intelligible outside

their proper context?

We must take the differences between people, cultures and religions very seriously, ~~if we are to bridge the gulfs between them~~. Two-thirds of the world's population today does not live in the myth of history; half the people on this earth (believers and non-believers) do not share the abrahamic conception of God; one-third of mankind is unconscious of separated individuality. These are only some of the many major differences we could name. Fundamental theology cannot ignore such questions and its function may well be to justify a theological as well as a religious pluralism. Fundamental theology is concerned with finding a common language through which to express theological insights, while being well aware that language is more than just a tool, that it is, rather, the first expression of these very insights.

10 Metatheology

Fundamental theology then becomes a kind of diacritical theology in the sense that diacrisis was understood in Plato's Sophist or viveka in Śaṅkara's Vedānta. I feel, however, that the simple term metatheology is more apposite, for it suggests a total human attitude which, on the one hand, transcends merely intellectual elaborations of the message of different religions (theologies) and, on the other, goes beyond the theos as the subject-matter of these theologies and the logos as the instrument for dealing with it. I am not arguing against this conception of the theos or this use of the logos. I am only pleading that the theos not be taken for granted nor the logos divinized. Metatheology could also be described as the religious endeavor to understand that primordial human relatedness which we perceive in dealing with ultimate problems. This is not derived from a particular concept of human nature, but is the fruit of pluri-theological investigation. I am not assuming a kind of objectifiable common ground or certain universally for-

mulable statements held in common. I am only asking for truly open dialogue. The meeting ground itself may have to be created, but a brighter stream of light, service and understanding will emerge in the intermingling of religious currents, ideas and beliefs. I only foresee (and in a way prophesy) an earnest religious struggle, an authentic human commerce and intercourse at the deepest level of humanity, the fruit of love, not lust or ambition, pregnant with the good news of a new creature. Surely the christian should not fear to be born again, nor for that matter should the adherent of any other religion. Nor should any faith shun the genuine search for truth. Confidence in truth is already a fundamental religious category.

ii Understahding the Christian Kerygma

Two important ideas follow from what has been said so far. The first is the need for a radical change in the orientation of fundamental theology itself; in other words, its conversion, its metanoia. From within a christian perspective I would put it in a way practically opposite to the customary one, although in this divergent formulation I am most traditional, for tradition is often paradoxical and has even taken this turn several times before today. I would say, then, that the rôle of fundamental theology is not to find some extra-theological principles on which to base theological speculation, but to search for the intelligibility of the christian fact in any authentic human attitude and genuine philosophical position; to examine how far is the christian kerygma tied to any particular religious tradition. It would explain, for instance, not that accepting the christian belief, but that the christian proclamation could perhaps find justification and meaning also under the hypothesis that there is no God. These last two words mean to suggest the possibility that if there is (or were) a truly atheistic society, the christian kerygma should not first

the existence of God is a necessary prerequisite for understanding and accepting

need to clear the ground by proving the existence of God and only then proceed further, but that it could find a meaningful kerygma by transmythicizing the God-talk. I am not saying that this effort should always succeed, but that it should always be tried--for its very failure may bear fruit.

Metatheology is not just another system of theology any more than metaphysics is simply a more refined physical science. A theological system may be theistic; metatheology need not be. Metatheology may, for instance, be at the origin of a non-theistic 'theological' reflection, it does not encroach upon the different systems or jeopardize the theological schools of the most disparate systems and religions. And yet it belongs to all theological investigation. In fact, as a result of its activity, metatheology modifies both the underlying system and the christian self-understanding (albeit not according to any preconceived pattern).

I may clarify this idea from a double perspective. From the speculative angle I could say that fundamental theology tries to understand the fundamental theological issue (for the christian: Christ) in a given philosophical, religious and cultural situation. From a pastoral and christian angle I would add that it tries to do and say in another context what Christ did and said in the place and time in which he lived. ~~But this is not possible if you do not make yourself understood. And again this can happen only insofar as you share the assumptions of the people with whom and for whom you speak.~~

12 The Ecclesial and Dialogical Character of Fundamental Theology

The second idea has already announced itself. It is the communitarian or ecclesial character of this enterprise. This cannot be the work of christians alone or of 'religious' people exclusively, but must result from the common effort of all those interested enough (or dondemned, as Fichte would have put it, although I prefer called upon) to perform this major work of dialogue, communication and

communion, in spite of and even through the conflicts which may arise.

Here is where theology and religion meet, where life and speculation encounter each other, where the wiser the scholar, the simpler he is as a man. Neither side or party can unilaterally lay down the rules of the game, or fix the conditions or the outcome of the experience. Fundamental theology becomes lived religion, a mystical faith prior to or beyond any formulation. It is the religious quest for a ground of understanding, for a common concern still to be lived, delimited, verbalized. ~~It is a dialogue which transcends the logos, which begins by being a dia-logos, a 'going through the logos', piercing the logos as it were, in order to decide which logos we shall use and if indeed the ground of our search belongs to the logos or to the Spirit.~~

~~It is methodologically wrong, for example, to start by saying that the stumbling-block for a christian-hindu dialogue is the so-called hindu denial of the personal character of the divine; it is equally inaccurate to say at the outset that unless one reaches the level of an all-pervading attributeless Brahman (considered the highest possible religious awareness), there is no encounter possible between hinduism and the other world religions.~~

What I am aiming at is this: dialogue is not simply a device for discussing or clarifying different opinions, but is itself a religious category. Dialogue becomes a religious act, an act of faith (which comes from hearing), a mutual recognition of our human condition and its constitutive relativity.

If the aim of fundamental theology is to elaborate the assumptions on which a theology may be based, it requires dialogue on an equal footing, the collaboration and positive contribution of the 'others'. Only they can help me discover my presuppositions and the underlying principles of my science. In brief, das Ungedachte, the unthought, can be disclosed only by one who does not 'think' like me and who helps me discover the unthought magma out of which my thinking crys-

tallizes. For my part, I can do him the same service.

This procedure throws us all into the arms of one another. The amount of risk and good faith required is patent. It is truly a religious act, full of faith, hope and love. But it also fulfills a methodological need. If I must dig out a foundation on which the other can also stand, I need his help so that he may at least be able to tell me if the ground I find is also a ground for him.

I need his interpretation of myself and my theology in order to umderstand myself and my theology; he needs the same from me. Fundamental theology is not an esoteric science or a discipline ad usum delphini; it is the forum of a world-wide ecclesia, of all people for whom care for the other is as sacred a concern for one's own household. I shall never be able to love my neighbor as myself if I do not know him as my self. This sentence obviously goes both ways. The place in between, where we meet, is the basis for fundamental theology and also the ground for human encounter. The Kingdom of God is between us[redacted].

###

The Philosophical Tradition

ὀρθῶς δ'ἔχει καὶ τὸ
καλεῖσθαι τὴν φιλοσοφίαν
ἐπιστήμην τῆς ἀληθείας

It is certainly also proper that philosophy is called the science of truth.

Aristotle

Metaphysics II, 1

(993 b 20-21) (+)

+ Cf. Thomas Aquinas' commentary: 'Nam ille videtur sapientiae amator qui sapientiam non propter aliud sed propter seipsam quaerit. Qui enim aliquid propter alterum quaerit, magis hoc amat propter quod quaerit, quam quod quaerit.' In Metaphys. lect. 3, n. 56.

1. Introduction

The modern world presents among other features two antithetical characters. On the one hand the apogee of science and technology. The prestige of these two cultural products has been enhanced by their success in technically a 'unifying' great part of the world. On the other hand this very success has brought into closer contact the different 'philosophies' of the peoples of the earth. And is this very contact that makes almost necessary to call into question the very foundations of the technological civilization. This fact, among others, makes imperative for our times a fundamental reflection on the nature and function of philosophy throughout human history (1). Just to give some examples: Seen from a cross-cultural perspective the Cartesian conception of philosophy is likely to appear onesided, the Marxist corrective biassed and the Vedântic idea insufficient.

The following pages do not intend a phenomenological diagnosis on the state of philosophy today. They attempt a rather philosophical prognosis based on the analysis of the different coneceptions of philosophy throughout the long history of that human activity which is generally covered by this name.

---

(1) Cf. the chapter "Necesidad de una nueva orientación de la filosofía india" in R.Panikkar Misterio y Revelación, Madrid, Marova, 1971, pp. 51-82.

'How do you do?' And philosophy is also a very personal human activity:

~~we pose when we~~ *two persons* encounter one another ~~here to a simple one:~~ How fares philosophy today? ~~Very well, thanks. Satisfied?~~ Oh, philosophy makes its way through congresses and books and, yes, naturally, it has its complexes and its complaints. Primarily it has an inferiority complex; we philosophers endlessly defend it because no one is willing to concede that today philosophy is almost useless, impotent, without influence in the contemporary world. Here, however, I do not want to make a phenomenological diagnosis but a philosophical prognosis. The standpoint I shall assume is that of a philosopher who himself strives to understand the various philosophical traditions. ~~speaking from this viewpoint gives me at least the possibility of saying something meaningful.~~

2 The Four Kairological Moments of Philosophy

First of all, I would like to consider ~~the possibility of~~ dividing philosophy (and not just the history of philosophy) into four periods. ~~By~~ These four periods ~~are~~ not meant strictly as chronological ages, since they are not unequivocally fixed in linear time; ~~therefore~~, they mutually permeate one another, and yet each is borne by its predecessor. We are speaking rather of kairological moments in the self-understanding of philosophy itself.

a) ~~2.1~~ The Religious

We may call the first philosophical period the religious epoch: in both East and West philosophy began as the intellectual dimension of religion. Philosophy was not the servant of religion, but neither was it a thing apart. Philosophy was not religion, 'philosophically' seen, *i.e. intellectually presented and eventually evaluated.* In this context, philosophy is sacred: it brings peace and joy; it is wisdom and preparation for death, the recognition of a gracious divinity, the blessed life. Philosophy is not the handmaiden of religion, but she belongs, as it were, to the household of religion. Philosophy is part of religion; it is religion insofar as it perceives itself and attempts to express itself intellectually. At the beginning of every tradition, philosophy stood in this intimacy with religion. Philosophy ~~is the model~~ in this first era, *understands itself as working out the right model which people should have; it is seen as* itself

the principle, the linguistic expression of religion. Philosophy is religion as it finds expression in propositions, for it is born the moment ~~t~~eligious Man begins to reflect on his experiences and ~~grasp it in principle.~~ *tries to formulate them.*

1) 2.2 The Metaphysical

From this first period in philosophy ~~(which philosophers are sometimes inclined to forget)~~, a second era followed, which could be called the metaphysical. Man becomes the spectator of reality, he wants to gaze upon the whole. For this however he needs an objective distance, he must take a step backwards in order to distance the thing from religion. He wants to see reality, regard it: vision, contemplation, greek clarity, objectivity--all these ideas characterize the attitude of this period. Philosophy is metaphysics, it does not want to be the model, but the mirror of reality. It 'speculates', its task is not to bring salvation directly, but to see and show objective reality.

Since Plato and Aristotle we are accustomed to *repeat* ~~say~~ *that* in the West the beginning of philosophy lies in astonishment: thaumazein. It is significant that in indian philosophy, disillusion *and* not astonishment, ~~stands at~~ *is said to be* the beginning *of the* philosophical activity. Man is disillusioned by reality as it appears to him; sorrow and death, ~~the~~ two fundamental phenomena of human experience, do not let him deceive himself about ultimate reality. But in the final analysis, the fundamental attitude--the spectator's objectivity--is the same *in both traditions*, whether one is disappointed or astonished that things ~~are~~ *are not what we think* ~~as~~ they are. ~~One had rather~~ *Our thinking had led us to* different expectations. ~~And so~~ The tension and the rupture ~~fundamental to metaphysical thought~~ *between thinking and being* appears. ~~This is the second philosophical phase, in which philosophy is not the model but the mirror, and reality, not salvation, is the chief category.~~ Objectivity is philosophy's focal concern, and this presupposes a tension, a rupture. The tension arises precisely because one expected something other than what is, to ~~his~~ astonishment or ~~his~~ *one's* disillusion. This rupture, this original dissension, on the one hand, is caused

by philosophy and on the other, philosophy also claims to mend it. It is philosophy's fate to alienate Man from his environment--for it makes him aware of his distance from it--and at the same time philosophy offers Man the possibility of overcoming this alienation. Philosophical awareness simultaneously makes us conscious of reality at the price of differentiating us from it, and it offers us to reunite us with the real.

Philosophy here is not the principle or the expression of religion, but its surrogate, ~~the ersatz religion~~. (Religion is for the common folk; philosophy true religiousness. The metaphysicians who know the causes no longer need religion because they have 'sublimed' it in their knowledge. Philosophy qua philosophy has saving or liberating power. The mirror reveals the real.

2.3 The Epistemological

The third era of philosophy, which in the modern West certainly attained its first unequivocal expression with Descartes, but whose beginnings we find already with Socrates in Greece and Yājñavalkya in India, represents the epistemological phase of philosophy. It is certainly necessary to know the objective world; further, as the second period illustrates, infuition and contemplation are doubtless essential to intellectual life. Yet, the metaphysical view contained an assumption which it did not consider: Man's knowledge of his knowledge. In this period Man discovers himself as knower, he becomes aware of both the strength and weakness of his ability to know. Here only such a critical philosophy is considered genuine; everything else is dogmatic slumber. Philosophy no longer mirrors reality, but discovers itself as the inner soul of reality. In the preceding period either being or reality is the chief category, here truth stands at the center. This era discovers hitherto unexpected dimensions of subjectivity: the individual is born. One feels constrained to analyze everything, to penetrate everything with reflection. Consciousness becomes self-consciousness, philosophy becomes aware of its assumptions, it wants more than merely to know the objective thing, it wants to catch the knowing subject in the act of reflection.

if during the second era, philosophy is the mirror of reality and a surrogate for religion; in this third era, it opposes itself to religion, and claims that it is itself the ~~imagination~~ *inner soul* of reality. It discovers truth as at once the bridge to reality and a part of that same reality.

2.4 The Pragmatic or Historical

The fourth era, or dimension--I repeat, they all constantly interpenetrate and each period bears within itself the preceding one--is what we can call the pragmatic or perhaps the historical period. Here the matter at hand is not so much to know the world but to control it, to rule over it, remodel and transform it, *to recreate it or, at least, to make it better.* The ideal is action, mankind is understood as a historical collective. Philosophy is not only a discovery but a creation and a formation in which the historical factor plays an important role. ~~So~~ Reality must be re-shaped as philosophy dictates: it is *reality that imitates* ~~the imitation of~~ philosophy, so to speak. This era claims totally to overcome religion as a guiding principle.

Summing up

~~Here, then, are~~ the four fundamental attitudes of philosophy:

1. the ecstatic dimension: ~~homo religiosus~~ *the ideal is the holy Man,* reality is itself sacred, the religious dimension prevails;
2. the gnostic dimension: reality must be looked at, discovered and contemplated, the philosopher is the Man who takes a step backward and is aware of the thing;
3. philosophy as subjectivity: Man as individual, knowledge as self-knowledge, pure philosophy is the self-grounding of philosophy;
4. ~~and the fourth dimension~~: action stands at the center; reality, even being, is historical, unfolds itself, is changeable, dynamic.

A glance at *any contemporary philosophical congress* ~~this Congress~~ shows clearly that all four attitudes are represented and even clash. ~~(2) A few citations from the various resolutions distributed today might illustrate this collision. For instance: 'Philosophy cannot liberate itself~~

by ignoring its weakness', and philosophy must understand itself 'as part of the process of society's life'. Philosophy 'should bring about the destruction of global antagonisms', but 'philosophy proclaims its weakness and thereby renounces praxis'. 'This Congress must eschew all political overtones', and yet must affirm the principle that 'philosophies can change the world'.

To summarize this first part I would like to tell a little story: a young man holds a letter in his hand, lamenting, tears in his eyes: 'for ten years I have written faithfully every day to my fiancé. Now, she writes that she is going to marry the postman!'

Just this has often befallen philosophy in the course of its history. When it found itself no longer in immediate contact with reality, it delivered itself constantly to the intermediary (the postman), and finally married the logos. Philosophy, which began with such sublime claims--seeking to bring salvation and to save humanity--has directed its attention so exclusively to the intermediary that it is no wonder that after millenia of daily trafficking in letters, it has finally married the *bearer of the news about reality* ~~postman~~, the logos. Today philosophy is concerned almost exclusively with the logos (which to be sure includes not only reason but intellect as well).

~~We see the effects at this very Congress: in spite of all the protest against the weakness and barrenness of philosophy, scarcely a voice has been raised to say that the cults,~~ *In other words, we have deified the logos, and have forgotten the cult,* the game, the dance, the myth and the rite, ~~have been banished from our midst.~~ Apparently all these have nothing to do with philosophy. ~~In other words, we have deified the logos.~~ Theologians have spoken of the verbum dei and regarded this verbum dei as God (although they add in parenthesis that this verbum is the Son of God). Metaphysicians have constructed the verbum entis and this verbum entis understood as being (which was not infrequently also deified). The epistemologists were concerned with the verbum mentis; this verbum mentis is philosophy's final criterion for determining truth. Later philosophers made the verbum mundi

the starting point and the philosophers of science, along with the modern language philosophers, avow the verbum hominis as the ultimate. But we have not only forgotten being, we have ignored myths as well, and this carelessness has also affected the pneuma. Needless to say, we are summarizing all this in a very concentrated way.

To introduce the second part of my talk, I quote from the Śatapatha Brāhmana:

8. Now once there was a dispute between the Spirit and the Word--manas and vāc, pneuma and logos. 'I am excellent,' said the Spirit and the Word said, 'I am excellent'.
9. The Spirit said: 'I am certainly better than you, because you do not utter anything which is not previously understood by me. So, as you just imitate what I am doing and simply follow me, I am certain better than you.'
10. The Word said: 'I am certainly better than you; because whatever you know, I make it known, I communicate it.'
11. They went to Prajāpati, asking for his decision. Prajāpati spoke in favor of the Spirit, saying (to the Word): 'The Spirit is certainly better, because you only imitate and follow what the Spirit is doing; and he who is imitating and following what another does is undoubtedly inferior.'
12. As the Word was thus refused, she became ashamed and miscarried. The Word spoke to Prajāpati: 'I shall never become the carrier of your oblation, I whom you have thus refuted!'
Therefore, whatever in the sacrifice is performed for Prajāpati is done in a low voice, because the Word refused to carry the oblation to Prajāpati. (1)

It seems to me Prajāpati's decision symbolizes the fateful hour when philosophy separated into two traditions: for India, Prajāpati decided in favor of the Spirit. The West decided for the Word. Small wonder then that India cannot fully express itself, and that indian culture has preserved the primacy of the unspeakable at the price of techno-logy (understood as the logos of technē). Without the tool of the logos, it can develop no power. Equally little wonder that the West has expressed itself fully and thereby forfeited depth. To be sure, western culture has wrested power from the logos, but it lacks an apophatic capacity for renewal and is in danger of being sterile.

The content of this first part of ~~my talk~~ *this chapter* may be schematized in the

square below:

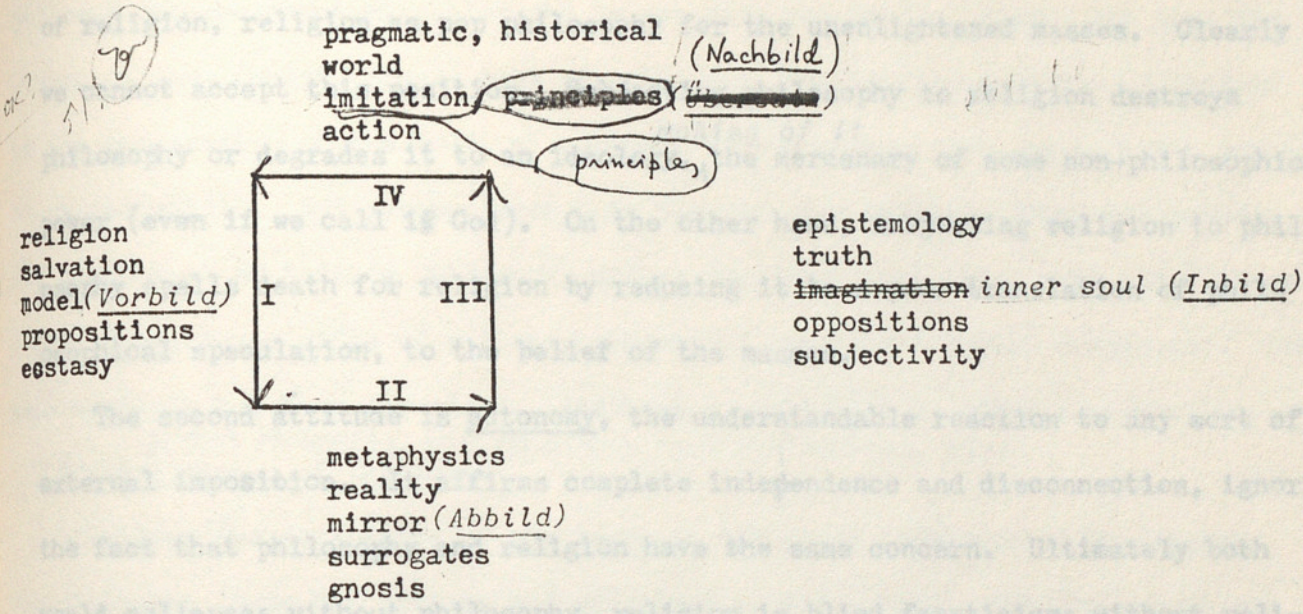


Illustration 1

the first dimension: religion, salvation, model, propositions, ecstasy;

the second dimension: metaphysics, reality, mirror, surrogates, gnosis;

the third dimension: truth, ~~imagination~~ *inner soul*, oppositions, subjectivity;

the fourth dimension: pragmatic historicity, world, imitation, principles; action.

If this schema does nothing but focus the anguishing contemporary rupture between philosophy and religion, it is sufficient. It shows that we presently lack a ~~total~~ *global* philosophy and impels us to leap directly into the heart of the question by asking what relationship between philosophy and religion is possible today. This relation can neither be uncritically assumed as self-evident, nor adopted as a compromise. It can only follow from an analysis of religion and philosophy as they understand themselves. Here the concept of ontonomy may prove useful. (2)

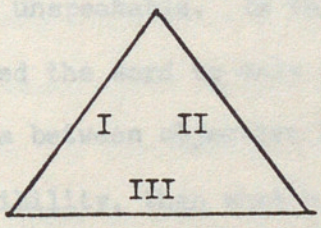
We could perhaps see the relation between philosophy and religion in three ways. Heteronomy refers to domination; one is assumed superior to the other. The higher, superior one establishes the laws the lower one must obey. The history

of religions and philosophy provide numerous examples: philosophy as the handmaiden of religion, religion as pop philosophy for the unenlightened masses. Clearly we cannot accept this position. Subjecting philosophy to religion destroys philosophy or degrades it to an ideology, *making of it* the mercenary of some non-philosophical power (even if we call it God). On the other hand, subjecting religion to philosophy spells death for religion by reducing it to a poor translation of philosophical speculation, to the belief of the masses.

The second attitude is autonomy, the understandable reaction to any sort of external imposition. It affirms complete independence and disconnection, ignoring the fact that philosophy and religion have the same concern. Ultimately both would collapse: without philosophy, religion is blind fanaticism; without religion, philosophy examines merely a corpse, not a living *being* ~~man~~. Their relation cannot be to maintain peaceful 'frontiers' because there is only one 'territory'.

Ontonomy expresses this peculiar relationship, neither dominance nor sullen independence. The disciplines are intrinsically connected and this relationship is constitutive: they are interrelated in such a way that the laws of one have repercussions for the other. Philosophy is not a substitute for religion, nor is religion an excuse to dispense with philosophy. Philosophy is itself a religious problem, and religion is also philosophical inquiry. Is an authentic Philosophy of Religion possible today? I think it suffices in *this* ~~the~~ confext ~~of this Congress~~ to pose the question and outline some of its ramifications for philosophy.

The *sign* ~~symbol~~ for what follows is a triangle, the threefold gift and so also the *threefold* task of philosophy in the intellectual situation of our times:



logos: the thought, faith

pneuma: the unthinkable, hope

mythos: the unthought, love

Illustration 2

3 The Threefold Gift and Task of Philosophy

(temptations?)

Nowadays there are indeed indications of a ~~total~~ *global* philosophy; ~~there are philosophers who say that~~ philosophy is not only the love of wisdom but also the wisdom of love (which perhaps does etymological justice to the word): philosophy as the integration of the body, of society, of the cosmos with the infinite or *with* the human spirit. But perhaps even this has not been radical enough and perhaps the discomfort of today's philosophy arises precisely from this: that these three tasks, these three gifts of philosophy have not been sufficiently considered. The main emphasis has been one-sided. And here I would like to offer a suggestion, *not for a global philosophy, but for a common philosophical task.*

a) ~~3.1~~ Acceptance of the Logos

~~Doubtless~~ The acceptance of the logos is the first business of philosophy. Certainly the logos has primacy and privilege in philosophy. The logos must not be abolished, superceded or given up in favor of irrationalism, emotionalism, fideism or some other rebellion; ~~these are equally~~ *all* one-sided. In philosophy the logos plays an irreplaceable double role: that of illumin~~ation~~*ing*, clarif~~ication~~*ying*, and that of critiq*ue*, test*ing*, control*ling*. If anything contradicts the logos, it cannot be ~~assumed~~ *accepted*: the logos has the veto *power* in philosophy. The logos, however, must recognize its lower and upper limits and remain aware of them. It dare not suppress either mythos or pneuma, the other constituents of philosophy. To cite the Kāṭha Upaniṣad:

> Neither by the word nor by the spirit
> nor by sight can he ever be reached.
> How, then, can he be realized
> except by exclaiming: 'He is!'? [4] (5)

The perspective of other philosophical traditions perhaps permits us to grasp in words what is properly unspeakable. Is the word the only medium of philosophy? Furthermore, *have we not* ~~Have we not in fact~~ reduced the word to only a single ~~one~~ *facet* of its many dimensions? Is not the word this realm between objective being and subjective thought which is richer than mere intelligibility, than what has merely been thought?

In the plain words of the Rg Veda says:

> The Word is measured in four quarters,
> The Wise who possess insight know these four divisions.
> Three quarters, concealed in secret, cause no movement.
> The fourth is the quarter which is spoken by men.

Perhaps then every speaking is already a hermeneutic, an expression; but is there no other way to communicate than spoken expression? Logos is vāc, śabda, brahman, sound, contents; but it is also icon, eidos, gesture, expression, form, way. ~~I will not dwell any longer on this aspect since it has already (and probably more profoundly) been described.~~

3.2 Taking up the Mythos

There is however a second side to philosophy, which has a right not only to be philosophy, to participate in philosophy, but also to co-exist with it: not only does the acceptance of the logos belong to philosophy, but taking up the mythos as well. Philosophy is not only entry into the thought, but also into the unthought. Man knows through the logos that he unearths from myth and that he still remains in myth. Myth is the second dimension of speech itself, the silence between the words, the matrix that bears the words. The mythical always runs its course above time and space. It is not quite enough to say it is always present, nor that to live myth is to live in the past. Only from the perspective of the logos does the myth occur in the past; myth itself does not know these temporal coordinates of past, present and future. If I try to explain myth with the logos, I can only represent it in illo tempore which is interpreted as past. No living myth--and we all live in myths--can be interpreted through the strainer of mythology. ~~Mythology as commonly understood is a contradiction in terms; myth and logos cannot co-exist simultaneously:~~ The light of the logos dispels the darkness of myth and myth measured by the standard of the logos cannot withstand it. Logos finds mythos ridiculous, just as myth is not disconcerted by mythology. No ~~man~~ body

living mythically would acknowledge as valid the interpretation of ~~mythology~~ given by rational ~~gers, that is, of~~ philosophers. ~~And after all, the golden rule of hermeneutics is that we must interpret so that the fellow interpreted can at least recognize himself in the interpretation.~~ To assume, for instance, that a sunworshipper appeals to a heavenly body defined by Newtonian categories would be to deceive oneself utterly. The sunworshipper will feel not only misunderstood but astonished at the naiveté of the interpreter—as if Newton were not also drawing from another myth.

We cannot possibly understand myth by logical illumination--an effort which contradicts itself--but by mythos-legein. Legein means telling, ~~narration~~, and in this telling sense, we can bring mythology into harmony with logo-myth. For logos has also a mythical element, the logos is also myth, otherwise it could not exist. Myth is ~~the~~ organ of philosophy, but as reflexive consciousness, not as a second-class organ somehow subordinate to the logos. Myth is not ancillary to logos. The mythical dimension does not mean that I think the unthought--for then it would obviously cease to be unthought. It is an important task of philosophy to admit myth as an organ of ~~apprehension~~, a contact with reality.

Now we cannot perceive our own myths; we can only recognize the myths of others or those of our own past. We can only take up living myths and allow them to unfold. Our prejudices (pre-judgments), our presuppositions, our unreflective convictions, these all have a mythical character. Demythicization ~~may be~~ necessary ~~if~~ one is unhappy with his 'myth' because the logos has replaced it; but each demythicization brings with it a re-mythicizing. We destroy one myth--and rightly so if that myth no longer fulfills its purpose--but somehow a new myth always arises simultaneously. Man cannot live without myths. You know you have a stomach, but if it is functioning healthily, you do not think about it. This attitude of confidence is absolutely necessary for a healthy development of philosophy. ~~Symbol as the expression of myth is not an epistemolog~~

~~ical remedy, nor a sign that might be conveyed to me in some other way; the symbol is the reality itself as symbol.~~

~~These days~~ The meaning of dialogue comes into the picture here. ~~repeatedly arises in discussion—there is perhaps more talk about dialogue than actual dialogue—but it seems to me~~ that the necessity for dialogue in philosophy is ~~most deeply~~ grounded in the fact that no one is aware of his own myths, his mute presuppositions, and that we must reciprocally disclose and make these myths conscious. A presupposition I recognize as presupposition is no longer pre-supposed; it is a supposition, an assumption, a rule agreed upon, a principle. I can, however, discover the other's presuppositions, and vice-versa; a mutual critique and fertilization then becomes possible. Solipsism is not only methodologically barren, it is also unphilosophical ~~and leads nowhere~~. Dialogue is necessary, not as something we welcome in our vast tolerance, but precisely because only the other is able to recognize and criticize my myths, my silent presuppositions. The procession from mythos to logos is inexhaustible. But we should not want to stick willingly to one particular myth but 'bad faith'. ~~become fully aware of~~ myth, for then it would be ~~discovered, i.e. exploited~~. Although myth ceases to be myth each time it is discovered, detached, made logos, it still remains the inexhaustible source of renewal. no longer

This process is not an isolated event, not a monologue; it demands dialogue for two reasons. Dialogue first of all is dia-logue, i.e. two logoi meet and mutually unearth their mythical presuppositions. Dialogue presupposes that neither partner is self-sufficient, perfected, complete. But secondly, dialogue means dia-logos, i.e. it is not just a pair of speeches, but a transcending of the logos, a going-through the logos by means of the logos. The way leads from myth through logos to the pneuma.

In sum, ~~So~~ the task of philosophy is to let the unthought be, but also to allow thought to emerge from it, and in this operation the unthought is never exhausted.

3.3 Reception of the Pneuma

The third task with which philosophy is gifted I would call the reception

of the pneuma. I use pneuma because neither Spirit nor Geist really express what is meant. Not only does the unthought (mythos) together with the thought (logos) belong to philosophy, but also the unthinkable (pneuma). This I can neither think nor leave intact as unthought, but I must receive it as the never quite thinkable. The unthinkable does not exist in itself as a fixed dimension; at any given moment it is the provisional, the historical which accomplishes itself in the future, in hope. As the Alpha is always more original, so the Omega is always more ultimate. Receiving the pneuma is a permanent passage, a pascha, a pilgrimage; the procession from myth through logos to pneuma is endless. Precisely this pneumatic dimension guarantees the constant openness into which we may take a step forward. This philosophy-on-the-way cannot allow itself to stop. If it stops it risks making the pneuma into an object, and thereby falls into idolatry, or again, by reflecting on the pneuma it thereby tumbles backward onto the plane of the logos. We can only say ~~with Paul~~: We should not trouble the pneuma. (6)

To summarize: logos, mythos and pneuma correspond to the thought, the unthought and the unthinkable. Further, if I may speak theologically, faith corresponds to the logos, for we must keep faith with the word; love to mythos, for only love reveals myth ~~and poetry~~; and hope to pneuma, for only hope opens itself to the unthinkable. These three interpenetrate, there is a perichoresis, they dwell within one another.

4 The One Mystery

The following tetrahedron can symbolize ~~my whole talk~~ This presentation:

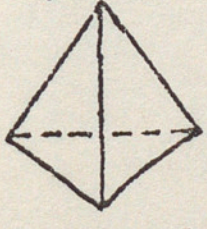


Illustration 3

The four faces contain the four dimensions of philosophy of which I spoke at first. That they are triangles represents the threefold gift and task of philosophy as integral integrity. The point in which all converge, and from which the whole tetrahedron issues, I would call the mysterion. I have said nothing about this because there is nothing to say.

~~In conclusion I would propose again that it is not the question 'What place~~ has philosophy in the intellectual situation of our times?' which is at stake, but rather the recognition that this intellectual situation is precisely the place for philosophy today. Philosophy should no longer claim only to clarify or reform the world, but should understand itself as a part of human life. It does not oppose the world; its task is not to dictate but to listen, to obey, and ~~to serve him.~~

###

× × ×

Nowhere better than here can we detect the precariousness of our words. This is almost always the case when we try to speak in a cross-cultural perspective. To have written, for instance, mâyâ or brahman for mysterion, vâc or buddhi for logos, cit or manas for pneuma (and worst kathâ or dharma for mythos) would not have helped our analysis because the entire problematic should have then taken a basically different turn. Yet, to have climbed by one particular way up to the heights of reality does not prove that there is only one peak, but from one summit we may have a better view...

1. → at bottom of page 562

Notes

2. ~~7, 4, 5, 8 12. Cf. the use we make of this text in §XI.~~

3. Cf. R. Panikkar, 'Le concept d'ontonomie', Actes du XIè Congrès International de Philosophie. Bruxelles 2-26/Aug. 1953. (Louvain, Nauwelaerts, 1953), Vol. III, pp. 182-88.

4. VI, 12. KathU

5. I, 164, 45. RV

6. 4:30. Cf. Eph.

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A few citations from the various resolutions distributed during the XIV International Congress held in Vienna in 1968 might illustrate this collision. For instance: 'Philosophy cannot liberate itself by ignoring its weakness', and philosophy must understand itself 'as part of the process of society's life'. Philosophy 'should bring about the destruction of global antagonisms', but 'philosophy proclaims its weakness and thereby renounces praxis'. 'This Congress must eschew all political overtones', and yet must affirm the principle that 'philosophies can change the world'.

XIII

~~XVI.~~ The God of Being and the 'being' of God

Religion and Atheism

kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema

What God shall we adore with
our oblation?

RV X, 121, 1

1 Introduction

The modern western world has been astonished by the unexpected fulfilment of a peculiar prophecy: the coming of atheism. Atheism had generally been considered an aberration, a revolt against the true order of things. Yet today it has been defended not only by men of both intellectual and moral integrity who confess no 'religious' beliefs, but also by christians who claim the real christian message in a world 'come of age' is fundamentally connected to this new godless outlook on life and to an atheistic insight into Christ.

~~Before taking up this problem we would do well to enlarge and deepen our perspective lest we reduce the question to discussing only recent decades or considering only western culture.~~ The purpose of these reflections is to help focus the place of atheism in western thought from the double perspective of eastern and western religious traditions.(1)

Taking a broad view of human history, we discover, as we have already indicated, a threefold thread running throughout. One thread is mythical: Man cannot live without myths. God is here present in all the gods. On the other hand, neither can Man subsist on myth alone: the passage from myth to logos--the distinctive feature of the last five or six thousand years of civilization--is the second thread. The result has been the absolutization of the logos in one of its many forms: trinitarian, ontological, epistemological, cosmic; verbum dei, entis, mentis, mundi, hominum.(2) Here God is (synonymous) with the Absolute. Today Man tries to overcome this stage, an attempt befitting our present stage of anthropological mutation. Yet killing the logos in Man is tantamount to suicide. Myth and logos always and only coexist in the spirit, the third thread. Now the spirit is freedom--even from Being. Here God

is not so much the free Being as the very freedom of Being itself. In this we are neither telling a myth nor just playing with words--logoi--because the statement makes sense only coming from myth and transcending the logos in the spirit. We cannot regain a lost ~~mythical~~ innocence. Myth, Logos and Pneuma or, if we prefer, māyā, cit and ānanda, or Tradition, ~~Reason~~ Intellect and Love, form the triple braid which may become a rope of salvation or a noose with which to hang ourselves. Willy-nilly, human destiny is in our hands.

Here I shall deal with only one question among the many arising from a serious study of modern atheism.

The identification of God with Being cannot be considered a universally recognized axiom. Not only does a certain contemporary atheism deny God (because it does not recognize his monopoly on Being) but from an opposite point of view, a large number of religions have existed and still flourish which accept God without argument and yet do not identify him with Being. The problem appears from either angle:

1. the divinization of Being (the God of Being);
2. the de-ontologization of God (the 'being' of God).

A great part of the destiny of philosophy and the future of religion depend on working out the relationship between these two perspectives. Christianity, for example, has so deeply committed itself to identifying God and Being that denying the equation seems to question the very essence of christianity.

Indeed, Being can be understood as a noun (substance), an adjective (quality), a verb (relation); in other words, as an existence, an essence or a relationship (Being, being, be-ing). These distinctions call for important qualifications which we cannot expound here. Nevertheless all three assume God is.

The history of many a culture human ~~thought~~ seems to show that Man must either divinize Being or ontologize the Divinity. At this level there cannot be two: both God and Being

claim superiority in the same sphere. There seems to be no other solution than a fight to the bitter end: either God and Being are identified or the one kills the other. In the latter case, we are left with only Being-without-God or God-without-Being. How Being can survive without (being) God is indeed a serious question, but the naked existence of God without (being) Being is still more so.

Simply stated: If 'philosophically' we start with beings and Being, very soon we shall come across gods and God, and shall have to assign them a place in metaphysics. Now God does not resign himself to playing second fiddle; he is not one among others in the scale of beings. So he must break through to reach Being. The beginnings of greek philosophy offer a paradigm for this problem. God may come later and from outside philosophy, but inevitably he tends to conquer the summit of the ladder of beings or die in the escalade.

Similarly, if 'theologically' we start with God, the problem of Being appears as soon as God has to be concerned with the world and must clarify his connection with it. In the first case, identification *between God and Being is here* as necessary, but somehow God must rule over beings and will not admit any higher court of appeal. A private God may avoid having it out with Being, but when the divine hierarchy and the scale of beings is established, the connections between them will perforce be so close that they soon become one and the same.

This seems to be the destiny of human thought, including the western trends, up to our times. Ontology and theology, carried to extremes, cannot but concur. Today our age doubts precisely this concurrence, the result of centuries of speculation and 'progress'.

Our problem is this: What happens to God and Being if we disentangle them? Can we return to the 'primitivism' of a God who wants nothing to do with thought

(for thought is what discloses Being to us), a God who does not suffer philosophical scrutiny? Or must we plunge forward and peremptorily abandon a God who has usurped the throne of Being for centuries? Here we need a multicultural and pluri-religious outlook to find a solution. First we must ask whether it is possible to de-divinize Being without doing damage to God and second, whether it is possible to de-ontologize God without harming Being. If this is not feasible, the only alternative is to identify God and Being or accept nihilistic atheism.

The problem is far from theoretical. Isn't the strong reaction of many young people in the West a new form of anti-ontological and aphilosophical religiousness? Isn't the equally sincere and spontaneous reaction of many eastern young people a new form of anti-ritualistic, 'areligious' humanism?

2 The God of Being (Divinization of Being)

Not only do the primordial religions not envisage God as Being, but in almost every religion it is considered far from necessary to make them identical. The exciting history of the divinization of Being has still to be written. I would suggest three attitudes: anthropomorphism, ontomorphism and personalism.

Needless to say, these attitudes should be considered neither consecutive periods in a linear sequence of time and history, nor necessary moments in a dialectical process. Rather they should be seen as the triple dimension of a single problem, which we can solve only if we do not throw overboard any of its positive components. We need to find a fusion temperature high enough to allow their combination without either contradiction or syncretism. A history of humanity would perhaps speak of kairological moments.

I am well aware that given the spiritual situation of our times, we are still far from a solution. The tensions and differences among these three points of view are strong, but they seem recently to have lessened. What follows is

the framework for these attitudes.

a) 2.1 Anthropomorphism

God may indeed have created Man in his image and likeness, but undoubtedly Man has conceived God according to his own picture and resemblance. It could hardly be otherwise: If God is to make sense to men, he has to be, in one way or another, homologous to Man. Anthropomorphism is necessary for men to think of God and for God to reveal himself to men. If we 'refine' and 'purify' God too much from the human, he fades away. In fact, ever since Man's religious beginnings, God or the gods have always had anthropomorphic features. Without them, there is no prayer, no cult, no possibility of human relationship with the divine. The karma-mārga (the way of action), the sacrifice, the rite and the like are fundamental elements of any religion. God is the Lord, the Other, the Superbeing, but above all he is like Man. The very superiority of God needs Man as a point of reference, and is consequently an anthropomorphic feature.

b) 2.2 Ontomorphism

Yet regardless of this anthropomorphism, Man is a thinking being with the power to abstract from himself and he cannot help desiring to know more and more. Philosophy and theology are the ways open to him for relating the divine to the exigencies of the thinking mind. Indeed, the believer says that the intellect itself is the effect, or grace, or creation of the Lord. Nevertheless the human effort to understand demands that God no longer be an unpredictable Will or a whimsical Power beyond any possible apprehension (awe and fear are perhaps the earliest religious categories); but that he be Truth, Goodness--in a word, Being. In this way he conforms to the rules of the ontic play, allowing men to discover God's will and his nature not only by asking him directly but by scrutinizing the mystery of reality and human existence. Truth is the will of God and Goodness his nature. This being the case, to call God Being means there need no longer be an

irreconcilable conflict between faith and reason, theology and philosophy, the world and religion. Jñāna-mārga (the path of knowledge) is the way to salvation. Real tragedy in the classical sense is no longer possible because there is no destiny outside or above the realm of God,

c) 2.3 Personalism

But Man is a religious person, he cannot help but desire an authentic personal life. This amounts to aspiring to an integrating relationship with the divine, which too philosophical a notion of God only blurs. Man is a living being, and his awareness of suffering and evil puts the concept of God in unavoidable crisis. If God is Being, he is also responsible for the dark side of the world. If he is not, he must give up his claim to be supreme and almighty. Further, if God is absolute Being, he is incapable of love and man can scarcely enter a relation of prayer, entreaty, joy or thanksgiving with such a God. Man needs bhakti-mārga (the way of love) as much as he needs action and knowledge. This is why the third attitude tries to synthesize both not by saying that God is anthropomorphic, or that he is just immutable and static Being, but by asserting that Being itself is personal, that the absolute itself has a personal nature.

Now a personal supreme being cannot be alone, for person implies society. Christians may welcome this idea by pointing out that this is precisely what the Trinity means. But the relationship should neither be substantialized (there would then be either three supreme Beings or none at all), nor considered exclusively ad intra (this God is not only person for himself). Further, God's relation to the non-personal world should also be re-thought.

None of these fundamental attitudes satisfies the great part of humanity today, yet they cannot be dismissed altogether. God has climbed onto the throne of Being and now begins to feel uncomfortable there. The dominion of the God of

Being over the people seems to have ceased. Either he abdicates or he is overthrown.

No need now to voice all the criticisms against these views; they are in the air almost everywhere. Nor need we elaborate further that an eclectic 'solution'--drawing now from one attitude, now from another, according to the doubts or queries of the so wrongly called 'unbelievers'--will not satisfy anybody. Moreover, the weakness of a pastoral approach is that it keeps the pastor from being approachable--it assumes he knows the answers, whereas here the question itself is put in question.

The insufficiency of these attitudes raises the second major problem: What happens to God if he is disentangled from Being. Can he survive?

3 The 'being' of God (De-ontologization of God)

Following Aristotle in Europe and the Upanisads in India, Being is primarily substance. Being is what subsists and supports and rest of reality. As the basis of everything, it is hidden; but hidden does not mean unreal. Being is the subject, the ousia, the ātman.

Accordingly, if God exists he cannot but identify himself with Being: He is the ultimate Subject, the Substance--the basis of everything--the brahman identical to the ātman, hence the primary Cause, the unmoved mover, the ultimate Creator, infinite Goodness, the perfect Idea, the utmost Justice, the supreme Being. Nowadays such an identification collapses from both sides, that of Being and that of God.

On the part of Being, it breaks down because substantialistic thinking is no longer dominant and decisive; consequently substance has lost its privileged ontic position. Calling God a 'super-being' or a 'super-substance' (!) may solve the problem of pantheism or monism but it avoids the more fundamental issue, because the 'super' always remains a qualification of the 'being'. The so-called 'ontological dif-

--and thus, if it is to be real, already belongs to the realm of 'being'.

ference', as well as the classical distinction between essence and existence, and many currents in modern philosophical thought arise from premises other than those which uphold the primacy of substance. But if Being is simply a function, can God be reduced to playing such a role? We could formulate the question negatively or positively.

The negative way would read: How does God escape from ontology? That is, how does he escape the nets of ontology so that we may justify both? The peaceful symbiosis between God and Being which since Aristotle has constituted the spine of western culture is no longer possible. In fact, whenever ontology ran up a blind alley, it appealed to God for backing. Descartes, for example, needed divine truthfulness to maintain his system. On the other hand, when the concept of God is confronted with insurmountable difficulties men turn to ontology with a concept of Being with which to overcome the apologetic obstacles. For example, the problem of evil: God the Father can permit evil because he is the Being which includes everything.

Can we disentangle God and Being so that there can be a place for God near or below the Being of ontology? Here the problem refers to God more than Being; he would have to emancipate himself from the tutelage and refuge metaphysics has so far provided him. How can God get rid of the rank of Being?

The positive formulation of the same problem will simply refer to God's connection with Being, for it could hardly consent to refer to what kind of 'being' God is, or what God's place is in the universality of Being.

Can a religious attitude escape the exigencies of thought, avoid the spider-web spun by thought? We could discuss the exact connection between Being and thought running from Parmenides and the Upanisads until today, but one thing seems evident: if being is, thought will discover it for us, at least partially. This is the minimum in common between thinking and being, although the connection may be much

more intimate. Thinking is not being as such but the organ of being, it discloses being to us.

Now, is a post-critical attitude possible, an attitude which is reflective, not merely instinctive, vital or preconscious, one which gives rise to a real connection with God without encroaching on the field of thought, i.e., without touching the sphere of being? There can be a thinking that does not refer to God, but can there be a God that does not refer to our thought? Can thought hide and keep itself respectfully outside the ambit of God? The unsolved problem is to decide who limits thought. If the limits are self-imposed, they are not real limits. If on the other hand they are forced, nothing can prevent thought from disregarding the prohibition and approaching the tree of knowledge of good and evil in its own attempt to become like God. Can God be or become apparent, meaningful or even real to us if we leave our faculty of thought aside?

We can not ~~I do not intend to~~ reply now to such questions. If the history of the God of Being is still to be written, the history of the 'being' of God is still to be lived and experienced. This history would represent the kairos of our present world. For the most part, the contemporary post-critical attitude has been trying to de-ontologize God, an understandable if not always well-balanced reaction. As a result we have hurriedly denied God, instead of reforming the concept. The denial of God belongs to the process of remythicizing 'him'.

Just as the three attitudes described earlier represent constitutive dimensions of human religiousness, so the factors I am going to sketch constitute three acts in the drama of the human being ~~facing his ultimate concern~~ *trying to de-ontologize God.*

a) 3.1 Atheism

The serious challenge of atheism lies not in its anti-theism, which negates the personal character of God, but in its denial of God's existence or essence;

in other words, in its refusal to consider God as Being or as any kind of absolute. Atheism criticizes whatever idea of God we may put forward. From this point of view, it seems irrefutable. It is weak, on the other hand, when it tries to offer a positive substitute for the theistic vision. Atheism is necessary as a constant corrective to any belief in God, but it always betrays its mission when it becomes a substitute for God, religion or whatever. Atheism is a constant reminder that Man cannot transfer the burden and joy of his own existence onto Another, that there is no Presence somewhere, ready to excuse Man for being just man. For atheism, God is the great absence, just the echo of man's voice which should not frighten its author.

b) 342 Apophatism

More than one religious tradition would say that God is not only Being but corresponds to Non-Being as well. If atheism negates God as Being, apophatism denies God as Non-Being. It is as inappropriate to say he exists as to affirm he does not exist. Human silence may indeed be the epistemic category that reaches God and ontic silence his own first attribute. The Logos, the Speech, the Word is not God, but his Son, Image, Manifestation. So that Being is not God but God's epiphany. The only way to guarantee divine transcendence is simply not to play with or manipulate that concept, not even by sham analogy. This attitude will say that the only way to make room for God is to not try to squeeze him into the frame of our thinking. Faith in God demands such total confidence that we do not bother about his being or existence. God utterly transcends our being and our thinking powers. It is not that his ontic density, as it were, dazzles and overwhelms us; it is rather that he has no ontic density at all because he is not. Modern and ancient descriptions of God as love or pardon and the like have sometimes tried to verbalize what others have preferred to keep silent.

While atheism is inclined to declare itself incompatible with any theistic affirmation (contradicting itself in the process, for then atheism becomes a substitute for theism), this second attitude declares itself compatible with any type of theistic formulation. If atheism is cataphatic, this second moment is purely apophatic; it sinks into an utter silence, and raises its voice only to quieten our impulse to ask self-contradictory questions. How can I question the unquestionable?

c) 3.3 Radical Relativity

If the two preceding acts are correctives to the corresponding affirming attitudes, this third act of our drama is pure affirmation and does not claim to rise above its own limits. It says not that everything on earth is prey to an all-destructive 'relativism', but ~~that~~, on the contrary, that without transcendent, immanent or sceptical escapism, we can envision God as the totality never exhausted in itself. Because reality is the radical relativity of all things, it shows the divine neither as one aspect of things, nor as a pure totality or otherness, but as the pure and really infinite mutual relatedness of all things. Reality is nothing else. The whole is but an inexhaustible bundle of relations. In other words: the genuine experience of contingency leads Man to discover, not that he leans on 'another' being in order to subsist, but that his own being is nothing but an in, a from, a part, a tension, a pole, an element of the whole, and that this whole is the sum of the existing infinite factors as the relationship of everything. Here God is neither being nor non-being; he neither exists nor does not exist; he is neither one with the world or Man, nor different and other; he is the very relationship, the radical relativity, the non-dualistic dimension, ground, or summit or whatever name we might choose.

In summary, we have tried to explore only one issue and do not claim to have

reached any conclusion, except perhaps to say that the aspects of human religiousness we mentioned are constitutive and yet insufficient dimensions of Man's inexhaustible quest for reality. We could perhaps gloss the answer of the Buddha when asked about the purpose of nirvāna: 'This question, O Rādha! cannot catch its limit.' It is not really not a question. Any attempt to answer it will only entangle us more and more in unnecessary complications. Perhaps the query about God has an answer only when it quiets the very question. But then it is not a quiet question, nor is silence an answer to it. Rather, the question does not arise because the question is quieted: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit!'

Meanwhile we go on inquiring, loving, believing...

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Notes

1. This essay presents in a condensed way some of the ideas developed in the author's book El Silencio del Dios (Madrid, Guadiana, 1970).

2. Cf. § ~~XII~~ p. ~~551~~. XII.

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follows 604

XIV

XIV. The Law of Karma and the Historical Dimension of Man

Iyam karmagatir vicitrā

durvijñānā ca.

This course of karman is mysterious

and difficult to discern.

YSB II, 13 (+)

+ Vicitra may also mean variegated, manifold, strange, wonderful, etc., durvijñāna, understanding with difficulty. ~~For buddhism, see the fundamental passages in R. Panikkar, El Silencio del Dios (Madrid, Guadiana, 1970).~~

Formulating the rules for a meeting of cultures is ~~one of the most~~ an urgent needs of our times. (2) No particular culture has the right to set the pattern, and no pattern can be set without a certain pre-understanding of the other culture. A pattern can be established only if some people succeed in undergoing a genuine internal experience of both cultures. Extrapolation will not do here. Only living 'rosettas' will help the mutual decipherment.

The ideal is to discover the growing points in one culture which are sensitive to the problems of another culture. In this way a natural growth becomes possible, through a cultural metabolism which combines endogenous and exogenous elements in assimilable portions.

I stress that this is relevant not only theoretically but also at the most practical and concrete political level. Today the world is impelled toward a common destiny. Oriental ways of life are emigrating west, marxist ideologies of many types are taking root in asian fields. Social or rather socialistic consciousness is emerging violently in this--eastern--part of the world. Allergies, schizophrenias, repressions and obsessions are maladies that afflict not only individuals but also societies. I consider the topic of this study vitally important and plead for insight and collaboration; repentence and true revolution go together. Otherwise we have only chaos, repression and counter-repression. ~~Only if the karma of the asian peoples is understood can and will these peoples enter the stream of history.~~ creatively

2 Some Indological Notes

Karman is a noun meaning action and comes from the root kr, 'doing, acting, performing, etc.' The concept and even the sanskrit word are found in most asian religious traditions from ancient brahmanism to modern japanese buddhism. Beginning about three millenia ago, it has a long history, from Iran to Japan, from

1 The Problem

Contemporary Man reflects critically on his historical situation and asks himself whether historicity is not a constitutive dimension of his being. Westerners tend to consider historicity a characteristic almost peculiar to semitic-christian culture and are somewhat proud of this monopoly. Starting with the assumption that nowadays any problem which is not stated in universal terms contains a methodological flaw from the very outset, the aim of this study is to offer some considerations on the historical nature of Man, taking into account the concept of karma. (1) It should be said from the very beginning that the purpose of this paper is not to compare the indian concept of karma with the western concept of historicity, because in neither camp do these concepts appear clear-cut. There is a multitude of opinions on the matter both in India and the West. Further, I ~~do~~ not wish to compare the two concepts in any strict sense, ~~What I would defend as the genuine and positive function of comparative philosophy (and comparative religion for that matter) is not to compare philosophies (or religions),~~ but ~~to try~~ to understand and deepen a philosophical (or religious) problem with the aid of more than one philosophical (or religious) tradition. What I would like to attempt is a clarification of an authentic philosophical problem with all the tools at my disposal, that is, with the insights and ideas I may have learned from both traditions. By tools I do not mean only external instruments for expressing an idea but also internal means for grasping the particular problem. A real culture does not only provide tools; it also offers the very field in which these tools are effective.

Mongolia to Borneo. There is hardly a more widespread concept. In general one could say that a trait common to almost all asian religions is the acceptance of the central intuition underlying karma.

Little wonder, then, that the meaning of karma varies from one extreme to the other on the scale of possible interpretations, and yet it seems that one fundamental intuition underlies all the meanings. This basic concept I would like to examine in one of its aspects only, namely, what in modern western languages could be rendered by 'historicity', understood as an anthropocosmic dimension.

From among the many asian traditions, I have chosen the sanskritic indian one for reasons of expediency. I could equally have chosen the buddhist line which is also of indian origin and, in fact, the acme and the most penetrating analysis of karman is to be found there. Buddhism affirms pure karma because there is no ātman to offer any resistance to it or to condense or condition karma. There are only the acts themselves (karman) and their fruits (which again produce new acts), without any actor or agent (kartr). As a matter of fact the buddhist intuition may be nearer to the ideas developed here, but it is more challenging ~~and more convincing~~ *to make this interpretation more convincing* to take up the ātmavādic line of indian thought. Similar studies of other sources may qualify some of my statements, but I would venture to say that on the whole they would substantiate from another angle what I am propounding. (3)

2.1 Vedas and Brāhmanas

In the Rg Veda, karman in its many forms appears a number of times with the meaning of action, especially sacred action, sacrifice. (4) Scholars discuss whether or not the idea of rebirth is present in the Rg Veda. (5) The texts are not clear and certainly do not use karman to express what could be interpreted as reaping in another life the fruits of a previous one. (6) The only text traditionally given in support of the rebirth theory says:

Your eye will have to go to the Sun;
your spirit (ātmā) will have to go to the Wind;
Go to heaven or earth according to your merit (dharmanā),
or go to the waters if this is your lot;
settle down among the plants with all your bones. (8)

This text could be read against the background of many others. (9) The meaning is that the life of the individual has neither an absolute beginning nor an absolute end and that the many constituents of life continue their existence in other realms of the world. Significantly, the word karman does not appear. Dharma is used instead.

What is stressed again and again in the Rg Veda is the fact that human fullness and cosmic salvation is reached only through the sacred action, the sacrifice which completes the creative action by which the world came into being and continues to exist. (10)

The Atharva Veda has some passages stressing the importance of karman, (11) and in one text it seems to correct or complement the Rg-vedic vision of a famous hymn which says that ardor or energy was the origin of cosmic order and of truth, (12) affirming that this energy or ardor (tapas) was born from karman. (13) This universe is the fruit of a divine action and through another set of integral or theandric actions it is conserved and saved. (14)

This is the main idea which the Brāhmanas will develop, that the sacrifice or sacred action is the ultimate cause and dynamic of this world. (15) Now if sacred action has such power, the human being is responsible for using it properly. Moreover, the world itself depends on the performance of such acts. And here we have in a nutshell all the future motifs of karma. In the Śatapatha Brāhmana we find that 'a man is born into the world he has made', (16) and that the idea of judgment according to one's deeds is already common. (17)

2.2 The Upanisads

Perhaps the earliest text concerning what is called transmigration is found

in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, (17) which sums up a long development of thought. Later in that Upaniṣad we find:

> Now this Self (ātman) is brahman indeed. It consists of understanding (vijñāna), mind (manas), life-breath (prāṇa), sight (cakṣuḥ) and hearing (śrotra), of earth (pṛthivī), water (āpaḥ), wind (vāyu) and space (ether, ākāśa), light (tejas) and darkness (atejas), (18) loving desire (kāma) and indifference (akāma), anger (krodha) and non-anger (akrodha), righteousness (dharma) and the absence of it (adharma); it consists of all things. This is the meaning of the saying: it consists of this, it consists of that.
>
> As one acts (karman), as one behaves, so does one become (yathākārī yathācārī tathā bhavati). Acting well something becomes good, acting ill it becomes evil. By meritorious acts one becomes meritorious (puṇyaḥ puṇyena karmaṇā bhavati), by sinful acts, sinful (pāpaḥ).
>
> Some have said: this person (puruṣa) consists of loving desire (kāma) alone. As his loving desire, so his will (kratu), as his will, so will he act (karman); as he acts so will he attain. (19)

The operant ideas are clearly visible if we take into account the whole context. Man is an aggregate or a principle of activities which have a wider repercussion than he imagines; his actions as well as his constitutive elements are not his private monopoly, they belong to the wide world and to the wide world they return; Man has an ontological and not merely an ethical stewardship. Man's actions receive not only reward and punishment, they also carry an ontological weight which does not depend only on the private endowment of their ac-

tual performer.

The passage from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad which answers the one just quoted is worthwhile summarizing, for it opens up the actual meaning of the text. Jāratkārava Ārthabhāga is questioning the great Yājñavalkya regarding several problems; they come to discuss the meaning of life and its connection with death. What happens at death?

> 'When a person dies, what is it that does not leave him?' (3/1)

After having answered that it is the name which is infinite and immortal, Yājñavalkya goes on to disclose the cosmic law of the conservation of all the elements in the universe:

> ...the voice enters into the fire, the breath into the air (or, goes with the wind), the eye into the sun, the mind into the moon, the hearing into the regions, the body into the earth, the self into the space...

What then becomes of this person?

> Ārthabhāga, my friend, said he, take my hand. We two alone shall know about this. It is not for us to unfold this in public. Away they went together and together they spoke with one another. What they were discussing was karman and what they were praising was karman. Indeed one becomes meritorious by meritorious action and sinful by sinful action. Then Jāratkārava Ārthabhāga kept his peace in silence. (3/2)

Here karman no longer appears as the sacrificial act or, as in the Gītā, the truly moral and thus ontologically real action, but as that core which remains of the person and yet transcends all individuality.

There are many other places in the Upaniṣads stressing the peculiar nature of karma, (3/3) the cosmic destiny of Man's actions, (3/4) the importance of a man's last acts, (3/5) the continuation of Man's attributes (3/6) and the inherent justice of this procedure, (3/7) the details of the transmission, (3/8) the end of the deeds retaining one on earth, (3/9) the nature of release (3/10) and its release to the sacrifice, (3/11) etc. (3/12)

I may sum it all up with a short sentence from a relatively late Upanisad: 'The doer of the acts ... he is the enjoyer'. (32)

c) 2.3 Tradition

It may suffice to adduce some recognized texts. The Bhagavad Gītā could be said to be the consecration of the way of karma to such an extent that for the Gītā, karma is the constitutive element of our creatureliness. (33) A substantial part of it is dedicated to this theme, chapters II and III deal thematically with the question of action and inaction, works and not works. (34) The law of karma is fully recognized.

The Brahmasūtra contributes two important passages which also supply a leading thread to the development of the idea in the traditional commentaries throughout the centuries. (35)

The Yogasūtras also offer some basic references to the understanding of karma. Īsvara, the Lord, is a special kind of Self precisely because he is untouched by karmas. (36) Release amounts to the cessation of all karmas, (37) obtained by eliminating all latent deposits of karma, (38) a process which entails alternate advance and recession in the development of karma, (39) neither of which need be conscious. (40) Only he who witnesses to his own self (ātmasāksātkāra) over against the individualistic 'I-am-ness' (asmitā) reaches salvation. (41)

The discussion of the relation between the theology of works and that of knowledge, or between the way of sacred or secular action and the way of traditional or modern scientific knowledge, may be said to be one of the pivots of all indian culture from its beginning until our own days. (42) There is a striking continuity discernible only to a sociologist: today's temples may be new constructions, but the rites are ancient. (43)

As a representative example of the traditional indian thinking I would like

to quote one passage from the Prince of the Advaitins:

> But, to raise a new objection, there exists no transmigrating soul different from the Lord and obstructed by impediments of knowledge; for Sruti expressly declares that 'there is no other seer but he; there is no other knower but he' (BU III.7.23). How then can it be said that the origination of knowledge in the transmigrating soul depends on a body, while it does not so in the case of the Lord? --True, we reply. <u>There is in reality no transmigrating soul different from the Lord</u>. (44)
>
> Still the connection (of the Lord) with limiting adjuncts, consisting of bodies and so on, is assumed, just as we assume the ether to enter into connection with diverse limiting adjuncts such as jars, pots, caves, and the like. And just as in consequence of connections of the latter kind such conceptions and terms as 'the hollow (space) of the jar', etc. are generally current, although the space inside a jar is not really different from universal space, and just as in consequence thereof there generally prevails the false notion that there are different spaces such as the space of a jar and so on; so there prevails likewise the false notion that the Lord and the transmigrating soul are different; a notion due to the non-discrimination of the (unreal) connection of the soul with the limiting conditions, consisting of the body and so on. That the Self, although in reality the only existence, imparts the quality of Selfhood to bodies and the like which are Not-Self is a matter of observation, and is due to mere wrong conception, which depends in its turn upon an antecedent wrong conception. And the consequence of the soul thus involving itself in the transmigratory state is that its thought depends on a body and the like. (45)

No need to comment; the texts show that the locus of the karma theory is not merely the ethical realm, but that it is intrinsic to a whole conception of reality.

As for the rest of indian tradition, we are here assuming that it, together with its western counterpart, is sufficiently known. (46)

d) Summary

In attempting to bring together the many threads of indian tradition we can detect three operant ideas:

1) Karma as the saving sacrificial action; sacrifice understood as the truly theandric action by which the human and the divine collaborate to maintain the universe and cause it to reach its goal. This aspect, which is the original idea, is expressed in the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas.

(b) Karma as karmamārga, that is, the path of action, of good works, as the way to human salvation and fulfillment. Action in inevitable and so not entangling if performed in the right way, with the right spirit. Not detachment from action is required, but detachment in action from its expected fruits. The Bhagavad Gītā still remains the highest example of this attitude.

(c) Karma as the subtle structure of temporal reality which remains once the prima facie elements have faded away or been transformed, as that which all existing beings have in common. Here the concept of historicity, in the human and cosmic sense, finds its place. The lasting message of the Upaniṣads accentuates this aspect which also underlies all the philosophical schools. Yoga, for instance, has developed all the psychical and spiritual implications of this experience.

§ The Karmic Conception of the Universe

To explain the karmic conception of the world I will now break up this unitary vision into a few particular rays, each of which may give us in prismatic refraction one of the colors of the spectrum. There are three fundamental options regarding the nature of the human person, all of them well represented throughout the history of thought.

First, the core of the human being has never been born, therefore neither does it die. Birth and death are only 'epiphenomena', superficial appearances. Only the body is born and dies, not the real person. The Self that has to be realized was always there and remains untouched by the temporal flow of external events. Real human freedom is a direct consequence of this vision: Man is above the superficial events of history. This is the option indian culture has stressed.

Second, the core of the human being is certainly born, but it does not die; it is immortal. Man has a soul which has originated either in this world or in-

another stage of existence, but which will never cease to exist. Each person is sacred and an end in itself because of the immortal soul it embodies. Human dignity is linked with this idea. This is the option greek and post-hellenic culture have emphasized.

Third, the core of the human being is both born and mortal. It comes into existence as a really new and fresh beginning. Man is real, but he also has a real end, a human annihilation: Man is mortal. The direct consequence of this attitude is an urge to better the human condition and to work for this world as long as there is still time. This is the option modern secularism underscores.

My contention is that the insight of karma, like many other fundamental human intuitions, has a cross-cultural value because, though wrapped in a certain cultural garb, it is intended to explain a basic human attitude. Thus, although traditionally linked with the first option, it can serve equally well as a fruitful hypothesis for the other two. The nature of karma will of course be interpreted differently, but its quintessence, so to speak, will be the same in all three cases.

In the first option, karma stands for what has to be burned away, the obstacle to realization. It is the coefficient of <u>illusion</u> and unreality.

In the second, karma represents the raw material, as it were, that the immortal soul must elaborate (or assimilate) in order to disentangle itself (or grow to the point of liberation) from the temporal and mortal world. Karma here is the coefficient of <u>creatureliness</u>.

In the third, karma is identified with Man himself. The <u>humanum</u> consists of the karmic contents of the universe which bridge the gulf between the individual and the world. Karma is the anthropological coefficient of reality, of <u>humanness</u>.

In all three conceptions, however, there remains an underlying unity which may be brought to light by simple semantics. Karma has been translated as <u>work</u>, but

in modern languages this word does not convey all the aspects of karma. It should rather be rendered as action in the scholastic sense of actio, taken both actively and passively (active et passive sumpta), i.e., it is at once the metamorphic power which turns the wheel of existence and the passive material to be metamorphosed, burnt, annihilated. It is that action by which the world comes into being and perdures, the action whose echoes ring in every nook and cranny of being, the action which every deed and activity only mirrors, gives back, individualizes, channels, expresses and lays bare. *It is the act and the acted (thing), the action and the effect of the act.* Karma stands for the undivided, nondualistic view of reality where the act is not severed from its effect. The act is act precisely because it has its own effect, because it acts. The karmic view of reality is thus the integrated insight which links all things together, allowing for differentiation and discrimination, but not for separation or ontological dichotomies.

3.1 The Mythical and the Mythological

Popular belief, East and West, usually holds that the theory of karma means what the names 'transmigration' and 'rebirth' encompass. According to this belief, you, individual E, are going to be born in an individual K according to your karma, i.e., according to your deeds, good or bad, so that as a reward or punishment you are reborn in a higher or lower being. When E was born he inherited the past karma of individual D and so the karmic line has neither beginning nor end, except for the released person, the saint, who has burnt all his karmas and leaves behind no remnant with which to be born again. This interpretation, first of all, gives every individual a chance to win eternal life, if not at one stroke, then after a number of births. Secondly, it *gives a prima facie account of two* ~~accounts for two rather revolting~~ and scandalous human facts: the inequalities of nature and society on the one hand, and the problem of evil and suffering on the other. As to how these past karma came into existence, different schools propound different theories, including human free will.

I submit that this picture is a simple caricature of something which gets

fundamentally distorted in passing from the mythical to the mythological. A parallel example in christian thought would be to consider heaven a big air-conditioned hall where for all eternity the christian God amuses and entertains his worshippers who behaved bravely on earth, or as a paradise where all the desires repressed in earthly existence find their fulfillment.

I do not mean to suggest that popular beliefs are wrong. I am only insisting that the passage from the mythical to the mythological represents a metábasis eís állo génos, a passage to another genre, which disfigures the original image. Those who live in a particular myth express their beliefs in terms and images which lose their message and truth the moment they are uprooted from their original soil. The words may be the same, but their meaning has completely shifted. Our problem is the more aggravated in that it involves not only the passage from one particular kind of understanding to another, but also from one particular culture and world-view to a completely foreign one. To begin with, even the terms we use--'metempsychosis', 'transmigration', 'rebirth', et al.--are either misnomers or mistranslations.

Here mythical refers to all those symbols and contents we take for granted, the horizon over against which our conceptions of reality are intelligible. Mythological is intended to express that conscious awareness which results when the logos enters into the myth and partially transposes mythical contents into a logical context. Mythological reduction more or less conserves the 'letter' or formal aspects of the myths without conserving belief in them. By this very fact mythology changes the object of mythical consciousness; that is, mythical intentionality points to something altogether different from its mythological contents. The God of my belief--Śiva, Zeus, Yahweh or any other--is my myth; the concept of God you may make of it without believing in him is the mythology you draw from my myth. Similarly, Democracy, Justice, Patriotism or whatever ideal I may believe in,

without knowing in <u>what</u> I believe, and which directs my course of action, constitutes my myth; while your concepts of my values, in which you yourself do not believe, constitute the mythology you discover in my beliefs. We all live in myths and at times we all discover the mythological contents of some of them and so discard and replace them by means of the logos, that is, by the self-aware and critical faculty of human knowledge. The passage from myth to logos makes for human culture and civilization, but the recession from forgotten <u>logoi</u> into the magma of new and emerging myths is what accounts for the inexhaustibility of human progress--without ever reaching the heavens as at Babel...

My task here is to discover whether it is possible to explain the mythical without mythological distortion. The key to the procedure is a belief in truth, which must accompany us throughout our enquiry.

Our quest is the more important because the theory of karma is probably the result of an historical process of secularization from the vedic and brahmanic conception of sacrifice to the general understanding of life itself as a kind of sacrifice. The idea could perhaps be summarized in this way: Sacrifice is the sacred action par excellence which brings salvation and various kinds of well-being (according to the type of sacrifice offered). It is not difficult to see that the danger of magic and priestly exploitation is all too near. So salvation and well-being needed to be rescued from the danger of dependence on the priestly class or on external ritual observances. The idea of karma offers the desired solution. The whole of life resembles a rite conducive to salvation and happiness; sacred actions are not a few acts performable only by experts or through them, but *comprise* ~~compromise~~ the whole of human activities. The sacred has shifted from the altar to the sphere of life. In this way the theory of karma was experienced as a *liberating* process ~~which~~ ~~sucked~~ action from a certain conception of the sacred. As a man sows so will he reap might be a simple formulation of it; or as the acts, so the results. *We should be very prudent and careful with words, but a certain wind of secularization could be detected in this process.*

b)

3.2 Karma and Cosmos

The first general idea of karma is that it expresses cosmic solidarity and ontological relationship.

It has been said time and again that the idea of karma denotes universality, that it is the causal link at work in the universe. Everything has a cause and produces an effect because the universe is a kosmos, an order, and not a chaos. (47/48) The idea of karma gives expression, first of all, to this inter-relatedness of everything in the world: nothing gets lost, nothing is isolated or disconnected, any action reverberates to the very limits of universe; there are no hidden or secret actions on the karmic level.

Whatever its ontological constitution may be, the law of karma is universal; it pervades the whole universe and is coextensive with it almost by definition, so that if anything escaped the law of karma it would also escape the realm of world-reality. Not only are all transformations in some way the fruit of karma, but the underlying structure which makes the transformations possible and intelligible is also related to karma.

~~I would venture to say that~~ The greek intuition 'the world is kosmos and not chaos' finds its counterpart in the asian insight 'the world is karman and not brahman', meaning: this world or (as many texts of the Scriptures say) 'all this' (idam sarvam), i.e., all that falls or can fall within the range of experience (of any kind) is karman. This is to say, it is all ordered and causally connected; it all builds a net of relationships between actions and reactions in which some confergences have the power to direct the threads in one or another direction, thus building up or reducing the karmic structure of the universe.

At this point one can determine that the two main areas of study for defining the nature of karma are: (1) its relation with the Absolute, and (2) its relation with the individual.

3.3 Karma and the Absolute

Karma is this cosmos. It is the peculiar causal structure of this universe and phenomenologically it shows itself as a pattern of pure relationship. In other words, karma is not the Absolute but rather the very symbol of the non-absolute. It stands for that factor, that aspect (real or unreal, according to one's school), which distinguishes earthly existence from Absolute Being. Just as it is redundant to speak of an ordered cosmos, it is redundant to speak of a karmic cosmos. The whole universe is karma; indeed, it is nothing but a concentration of karma, a crystallizing of karmic lines crossing one another to give the impression (again, true or false according to various schools) of this earthly reality.

The law of karma governs the entire 'contingent' world, the whole 'created' universe, all 'nonreal' Being, all 'provisional' existence, the whole of 'temporal' reality. Whatever karman may be it is not brahman, not nirvāna, not moksa, not sat (when considered an absolute being), etc. On the contrary, karman has to do with samsāra (the world), kāla (time), duhkha (suffering), and the whole human and cosmic pilgrimage toward realization. Karma is the symbol of the relative, the changing, the provisional and temporal. The locus of karma is the temporal existence of reality, the temporal existence of this world and, above all, of Man.

Karma means the non-absolute in a logical, epistemological and ontological sense.

Logically, karma is essentially relationship, mutual relatedness and so mutual dependence; it is the relative par excellence and not the absolute, the unrelated.

From an epistemological slant, karmic knowledge is knowledge about the 'working' of the universe, 'know-how' about the mutual relationship among things. It is phenomenal knowledge or scientific knowledge. The knowledge of karma will not tell us what things are, but how they 'work', behave, act and react. It will tell us nothing about the ultimate nature of things, only about their pragmatic inter-

actions.

From the ontological point of view, karma is what claims to be non-absolute, passing, provisional, not ultimate and definitive. Practically every ontology that deals with the notion of karma will distinguish a double level: the real, absolute, metaphysical and eternal level (called pāramārthika, nitya, sat, ātman, etc.); and the unreal, relative, phenomenonal and temporal one (called vyāvahārika, anitya, asat, anātman, etc.). One of the thorniest problems of indian philosophies is how to relate these two levels.

So karma is the earthly realm of intra-worldly causality. It represents the mutual cause-effect relation between all beings of the universe and their mutual repercussions. Karma is thus the non-metaphysical structure of reality. To know what is beyond karma or how to transcend it constitutes the goal of most indian philosophical systems.

d) 3,4 Karma and the Individual

The karmic world-view is a phenomenal and non-absolute world-view. Further, it is a non-individualistic conception of the factual structure of the universe which in fact cannot be individualized. When everything is seen as a net of causal gross and subtle relationship, there is no possible criterion for an ontologically dividing line between individuals. The individual can only be a pragmatic device for naming things or for manipulating phenomena. The net of relationships constituting the karmic structure of reality (real or unreal according to the several systems) has no loose threads, no limits, no points of privilege which might indicate the beginning or end of any one individual. (48/441)

Moreover, we lack ~~not only~~ a criterion for individualization: if there were such a thing as a pure individual, *i.e. sheer unrelatedness,* it would for this very reason be outside the karmic realm. It would not be karmically detectable, it would exist outside the realm of mutual causality. It would be unconditioned and this can only be God,

the Absolute, the purūsa of Sāṁkhya, or an avatāra, a descent of the Divine, a mutation or rather a discontinuity in the karmic structure of the world. In buddhism it can only be nirvāna. If there is something outside time and causality, outside the reach of mutual relations and influences, it can by definition only be the realm of the absolute. With this in mind many a system of indian philosophy becomes understandable. If ~~they are obliged to~~ we postulate the existence of a jīva, purusa, ātman, a soul above the karmic realm, it can only be uncreated and so divine, belonging to another world.

We could put the same idea the other way round. There are no privileged individuals because each thing is unique. Each point, each karmic crossing, as it were, is unique. This is the well-known theory of momentariness so thoroughly developed in buddhist philosophy. All that exists is only a succession of moments of existence (or of consciousness, according to how one stresses the relation between existence and consciousness).

It needs to be added that this conception only makes sense if accompanied by a spiritual quest for perfection, that is, for salvation. The fact that you discover the karmic nature of the universe indicates that there is 'something' which belongs to another realm :or, more accurately, that there is nothing within the karmic structure that can appease the existential urge for 'salvation'. A fundamental distinction seems relevant here if we are to understand the deep intuition underlying karma: the distinction between individual and person.

Without embarking on specific philosophical considerations, we may readily agree that the notion of individuality is based on a numerical distinction and so that it needs some material basis for its expression. An individual is ~~something~~ a singularity somehow complete in itself and separable from others; it is an indivisible ontic ~~logical~~ unit (in its own field) different from others precisely because of its singularity ~~individuality~~. The traditional image of atoms is perhaps the best example. A

person, in contrast, is a center of relationships based in the qualitative distinction of uniqueness. A person is unique and incomparable, and so in some way a mystery, for uniqueness is the phenomenological expression of any ontological mystery: *it cannot be com-pared, there is no point of reference, it remains a mystery.*

In the karmic view of reality, the human being can in no way be considered a single individual--there is nothing in him which could be isolated or considered separable from the rest. All the elements of which the human being is said to consist are constitutively related to others and depend on such relations: physical elements, body, mind, will, the psychic reality of ego-consciousness, etc.; it is all nothing but a bundle of relations.

In such a view, can the human being be considered a person? In other words, is there any place for the ontological uniqueness of the human being as person? (49)

To be sure, the answer depends on the meaning we give 'person'. If we say 'person' but mean 'individual', then it definitely has no place here. If ego means individual consciousness and the conviction that I myself am a kind of monad or spiritual atom (that is, something with unique ontological reality in this world), then we shall have to say there is no place for the ego in the karmic conception of the world. More accurately, we shall have to say that the whole karmic dynamism tends to treat this illusion of ego-ness as the main evil, both ontological and moral, and tries to eliminate it.

If by 'person' we understand the incidence of a non-karmic factor upon the karmic structure of reality which makes a particular crossing of karmas a center of freedom and decision, then we can say there is place for the person as an incidence of a superior order, which cannot be confused with the karmic one. The only condition a karmic vision of reality would make is that the person should respect the rules of the karmic game, which are the rules of the entire cosmic order. (50)

From this perspective I would offer the following definition of person: the person is that point of convergence of karmas which has the power (purusakāra) to burn karmas. The person is the one reality which has power over the whole karmic structure of the universe, which is capable of directing the karmic threads in one direction or another. To use a more congenial metaphor, the person is that power which has the capacity to destroy karma or to engross it. The person is the great māyin, *artist or* the cosmic magician able to create or annihilate karma. In a word, the person is the center of freedom. *How could he modify and steer karma if there were not a super-karmic agent?*

Anybody versed in indian philosophy will recognize here the echoes and the quintessence of one of the underlying motives of most indian systems: the play between prakrti and purusa, the intercourse between Brahman and Īśvara in and through māyā. ⟶ 623.1

From this poiht of view, *a non-egocentric* ~~an egoless~~ understanding of karmic human existence would stress, among others, the following points.

'My' ego is not the owner of 'my' life. This life does not begin with me, but was given to 'me'. I found it; I met it at a certain point endowed with positive and negative values. *Or rather, it found me.* It is up to me to pass it on increased and embellished, or diminished and damaged. A series of elements, of karmic lines, have crossed and are constantly crossing within me, and I have to manage this truly human condition to the best of my abilities for my personal enjoyment and that of the whole world, without a sense of tragedy, however, for nothing on this level is ultimate and absolute. This allows detachment and perspective, love and play, gives a sense of relativity to all joys and softens the cruel face of all sorrows. My ego does not take itself too seriously or too tragically, as if it were the center of the universe or an absolute value. At the same time, I feel a cosmic responsibility because the entire universe depends on the positive handling of the karma at my disposal. I am the connecting link between the past and future,

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And here also the last and most important of all the <u>*mahāvākyāni*</u> *acquires its liberating meaning:* <u>*tat tvam asi*</u>*. 'That thou art', i.e. this (you) are:* <u>*thou*</u>*, a thou of Brahman and thus above karma because* <u>*thou*</u> *can handle karma.(51)*

to → 623

between myself and others, and this on a cosmic and universal level from which not a single being is excluded. It is obvious that the motivation for doing, for work, and for good actions will have to be something more than a crude or even reformed and refined eudaemonism for enjoying myself on any level. I shall act ethically only when the motives for my actions have reached an egoless motivation which is rooted in maintaining the whole universe: lokasaṁgraha. (52)

As for 'me', I shall find my enjoyment in having been called to play my role in the drama of this cosmos. As for 'me', I shall be given the opportunity to discover the vertical meaning of existence, to transcend the spatio-temporal structure of reality and overcome karma altogether. There is no frustration for the realized person, for his or her success is not measured by an objective yardstick which gauges objective achievement, but rather by living in such a way that, while giving life away, living it out, he or she reaches the other shore, the shore of fulness--or nothingness.

At this point I shall endeavor to clarify a widely held and harmful misunderstanding and also to explain why it became so popular. I am referring to the incorrect identification of the theory of karma with so-called 'reincarnation'.

If there is something the law of karma does not say and which in fact contradicts all that it stands for, it is this popular misinterpretation. The law of karma insists that all a Man is--his energies, thoughts, merits and vices, his corporal elements, all that he had or was able to handle during his life--that all the karmas, in a word, are not lost, rather they enter into the cosmic net of causality and solidarity. The exception is the psychological ego, which is either an illusion with no consistency whatsoever or a mere pragmatic label or a totally mortal thing, for it is the conglomerate of those qualities which fall asunder at the death of a particular human being. What transmigrates is all but the individual--if transmigration is to have any meaning at all.

The popular belief springs from an inability to get rid of what the whole karmic conception of the world intends to eradicate: selfish ego-centricity. It may also be said to originate when individual consciousness emerges without a corresponding change in the cosmological world-view; then the mythical becomes mythological, at least in the eyes of those who try to interpret the beliefs of others.

May I be allowed to be ~~historical~~ *anecdotal* for one paragraph? I have witnessed more than once a simple indian peasant, believing *in* the law of karma, being driven to say what he does not, in fact, believe because of the exigencies of dialogue and the limitations of his own vocabulary when faced with an enlightened questioner. Certainly he feels that he bears a treasure greater than himself, he is convinced that what he has in his hands, his life, is something over which he has no property rights. He senses that his existence did not begin with him nor will it end with him. But he is not saying, much less meaning, that he will ~~survive~~ *be reborn*, that his personality comes from someplace else and goes to another. He does not have the impression that what a modern would call the 'individual' goes on transmigrating. He is much closer to the already quoted saying of Śaṅkara that the Lord is the only transmigrator, that Life is what goes on, and that all the qualities he has cultivated will not be lost, nor will the vices he has accumulated. It is only when confronted with the idea that it might be he himself who will survive that his eyes may kindle at the temptation and he may yield, saying it may be so.

I might offer yet another hypothesis for what it is worth. Individual consciousness has for the last few centuries been so deeply rooted in the occidental mentality that western *Man* can hardly imagine another type of thinking. We are now perhaps witnessing in the West a sharp reaction to this, but whatever the present trend, the fact is that the encounter between western and asian minds these last centuries was so entangled in the myth of the reality of the individual that

no dialogue was possible without presupposing this view, indeed, taking it for granted. In this way, words like the transmigration of souls, reincarnation, etc., came into existence and with them a deformation of the original meaning of the asian doctrines.

All this said, it must be added that this process of individualization is not only a western phenomenon but seems inherent to the development of human consciousness.

4 Karma and Historicity

All that follows should be understood within the limits of a formal philosophical investigation, not a material one. I am attempting to speak a language which will make sense for the follower of more than one philosophical tradition: a risky task perhaps, but *necessary if one is to do justice to a cross-cultural investigation.*

4.1 Karma and Time

The Karmic conception of reality relativizes time and turns it into the very expression of the law of karma. This is the law of the temporal flux. The degree of reality time has corresponds to the degree of reality karma has. For those who consider karma real, time is real; for those for whom karma is unreal or partly so, time suffers the same fate. In fact, time is nothing but the flow of karma. Karma is a kind of condensation of time. Time past means past karma, and future time means karma to come.

The so-called 'circular' time *is nothing but a transference of* the beginninglessness of the karmic world to the sphere of time. Time is supposed to be circular simply because karma is considered to be inexhaustible *without being absolute*. To transcend karma, to burn it, to extinguish all karmas means to escape time, to go beyond it and enter the timeless. ~~Time has been called circular in the indian conception because it is identified with karma.~~ Now the beginninglessness of karma has quite often been misunder-

stood and construed as an ontological theory, when the original intuition was only phenomenological. Karma has no beginning and no end because it is not an entity in itself nor has it an end in itself. ~~it has neither ontological consistency (according to the law of contingent beings) nor ontological aim or goal in itself.~~ The only beginning of karma is the beginning which is taking place every moment; the only end (aim, goal) of karma is the end (extinction) of it. But to affirm that all karmas will one day disappear is a sentence which has no meaning within the karmic context in which alone it can be formulated. (54) 53

~~4.2 Karma and History~~

~~The only discernible difference between~~ Both time and karma ~~is that time~~ allow for more formal treatment, that is, for a consideration of ~~its~~ their nature independent of temporal things ~~whereas karma is more intimately linked to~~ or the things themselves. Yet ~~Certainly~~ this is only a thinking abstraction because in the last analysis there cannot be time without things temporal, just as there can be no karma without the actions and the results of different agents. ~~But~~ Both karma ~~is~~ and time are indissolubly tied to the things themselves.

4.2 Karma and History

~~However, this may be,~~ The law of karma expresses what modern western language might call the historical dynamism of beings. It is clear that if the center of gravity resides in and the attention of history is directed toward events easily datable externally, the law of karma does not pay them much attention. What the law of karma describes and registers are the inner modifications, the happenings internal to the beings themselves; karmic law centers its attention not on what ~~they~~ beings did, but on what happened to them as they did it.

We may define historicity as the capacity to accumulate the past, as it were, and assume it into the present, or as that quality of human existence by which the past emerges into the present and configures it. This is not by a simple process ~~simply to~~ remembrance or by a gathering up of ~~remember or to gather up~~ physical or spiritual bits and pieces of the past, but by ~~to integrate~~ assimilating or integrating them into the present in a special way. Again, if we define

this same concept as that peculiar character by which the future too, somewhat similarly, becomes active and present in ~~the~~ *in* hope and reality ~~of~~ *in* the here and now, so that one cannot define a person without including his past and future, then we may say that all those human peculiarities which today we sum up under the name of 'historicity' are practically all present and effective in the conception of karma.

Karma is the crystallization of actions past, as well as of the results of acts which are no longer in the past, but which emerge and are present in the contemporary situation of whoever bears that particular karma. In a way I am as much ~~and more~~ what I 'was' and equally what I 'shall be'; both *past and future* are already present in ~~contemporary~~ *my present real* situation. *as what at present I 'am'.*

We could use the familiar distinction between having and being. Properly speaking, karma is not what I <u>am</u>, but what I have. What I <u>am</u> belongs to the mystery of the person, and ultimately one can only say 'I am' (<u>aham asmi</u>). What I have is my karma, and with it I have to deal with my earthly existence. But if we overlook that 'I' for which the 'am' is ultimately meaningful, then all actions of the human being, including psychological consciousness, 'are' its karma: a condensation of acts past, a dynamism of tendencies to be realized in the future: all that composes the present.

In this sense ~~the~~ *a* greater part of indian philosophy could be considered a philosophy of history; not a philosophical reflection on external events but a philosophical meditation on the historicity of being, on the peculiar temporal character of the human being and all cosmos, which is so configured that nothing is lost, Everything accumulates and emerges in a present which condenses all past actions and realities. And this to such an extent that to consider a being as only what it is now, neglecting what it was and ignoring what it shall be, could be called a 'philosophical sin.

This awareness of historicity in the karmic sense is built into the asian mentality. It is almost taken for granted that I am a condensed result of the past, that all I have is simply (karma historicity), that there is no original newness, no genuine beginning, that revolutions are childish, politically speaking, if it is supposed that they can begin with a tabula rasa.

The traditional concept of avatāra or descent of the divine is intimately connected with the theory of karma. And this gives to the avatāra what christian theology would term its docetic character. The avatāra is justified precisely because cosmic history shows experientially a kind of negative inertia: by itself, the world tends to go downhill and requires again and again the intervention of the divine, of the non-karmic order, to reverse the trend. So we have an option between two fundamental views of historicity: history as a declining process or an an uphill path. Indian thought tends to accept the idea of a redeeming power which saves the karmic world from getting more and more involved in such a density of relations that it would bring about a kind of ontic asphyxia.

c) 4.3 Karma and Man

I am reading from, rather than into, indian scripture and tradition when I assert that the theory of karma does two things: it elevates the entire world to the human sphere and abolishes human privileges, putting Man on a level with the rest of the universe. In other words, there is a universal law which governs both Man and the World without distinction. The karmic structure is common to all beings. Some see this as degrading Man to the level of a mere thing. Others may prefer to say it entails enhancing the whole contingent world up to the level of human dignity.

One thing is certain, the entire realm of being is under one and the same law, and this law is temporal, or rather historical. It is this law of karma that says that the structure of reality is such that it allows mutual interactions in space

and, especially, in time, though differently than described by Newton's physical laws of action and reaction. This law, by contrast, is built on the pattern of reality itself. Being is karmic; being is temporal and historical. Being has a dimension to which the separation in space (which makes individuals) or in time (which makes things and multiplicity) is no longer sufficient or valid. An isolated being is an abstraction, an artificial and anti-natural separation from the existing and given reality. *All is stitched together in the warp and woof of karma.*

The law of karma gives expression to the fundamental human condition, yet at the same time allows us to overcome it, not by postulating a 'better' idealized human condition, but by transcending it altogether. Man is more than 'Man', but as long as he is 'Man', not only must he play the human game, but there is no escaping his human condition. He will cease to be 'Man' and this just may be his hope: not to prolong his human donditionings indefinitely, but to abandon them totally and without regret. Even in Man's earthly life he has glimpsed that other shore ~~which does not exist but~~ which allows him to pierce through space and time and, abandoning all human values, reach that ~~other~~ life which is neither separable nor distinguishable from his everyday karmic existence. Only an irresistible joy bubbles up. The end of 'Man' is Man, but when that end is reached, Man ceased to be 'Man', and this is salvation: neither a jump outside history nor its negation, but the realization that 'Man' is history and that history, like 'Man', is only for the time being.

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Notes

1. The proper form for this neuter noun is karman. English literature often uses karma and in this form it has passed into common usage. Although the latter is, strictly speaking, the less correct form, we shall use it since it is more familiar to the western reader. We shall also use the adjectival form 'karmic', an acceptible and almost unavoidable neologism.

2. Cf. § II of The quoted Intrareligious Dialogue.

3. Cf. a single and typical example of the Sikh Scriptures (fifteenth century): 'Karma determines how you are born, but it is through grace (nadar) that the door of salvation is found.' Japji, 4.

4. For example: I, 22, 19; I, 31, 8; I, 55, 3; I, 61, 13; I, 62, 6; I, 101, 4; I, 102, 6; I, 112, 12; I, 121, 11; II, 21, 1; II, 24, 14; III, 33, 7; VI, 37, 2; VIII, 21, 2; VIII, 36, 7; VIII, 37, 7; VIII, 38, 1; IX, 46, 3; IX, 88, 4; IX, 96, 11; X, 28, 7; X, 66, 9; X, 55, 8; etc.

5. Cf. R. Panikkar, 'Algunos aspectos de la espiritualidad hindú', Historia de la Espiritualidad, edited by L. Sala Balús and B. Jiménez Duque (Barcelona, Flors, 1969), pp. 466-474, for further development of this idea.

6. Cf. RV IX, 59, 2 where the word dhisaṇā is used to denote the priestly work, the sacred work, the action of the gods. From the root dhā, put. See also I, 22, 1; I, 102, 1; I, 96, 1; I, 109, 4; III, 2, 1; IV, 34, 1; X, 17, 12; X, 30, 6; etc.

7. RV X, 16, 3.

8. Cf. RV X, 90, 13; AV V, 9, 7; V, 10, 8; VIII, 2, 3; XI, 8, 31; XXIV, 9; SB I, 5, 3, 4; VI, 2, 2, 27; X, 3, 3, 7; XI, 8, 4, 6; TB III, 10, 8, 5; BU III, 2, 13.

9. Cf. R. Panikkar, Le mystère du culte dans l'hindousime et le christianisme (Paris, Cerf, 1970), pp. 53-58; also § IV pp. and § V pp.

and also the pertinent vedic texts in my book The Vedic Experience (Berkeley-Los Angeles, U C Press, 1977) passim. Cf.

10. AV IV, 2; VI, 23, 3.

11. RV X, 190, 1.

12. AV XI, 8, 6.

13. We could adduce here that half verse of the YV III, 47: akram karma karmakrtah ('having worked their work the workers of work'), having performed their work; a text which, though the context may be different, has also been utilized for the theory of karma.

14. Cf. SB X, 5, 9-10.

15. SB VI, 2, 2, 27.

16. Cf. SB X, 3, 1; XI, 2, 7, 33.

17. Cf. BU III, 2, 12-13.

18. Tejas-atejas could also be translated as heat and cold, energy and inertia.

19. BU IV, 4, 5.

20. BU III, 2, 12.

21. BU III, 2, 13.

22. Cf. MaitU III, 2, 1-3.

23. Cf. CU V, 10, 7.

24. Cf. MaitU VI, 34, 2-3.

25. Cf. KausU I, 2; SU VI, 7 & 11.

26. Cf. BU IV, 4, 23; IV, 3, 8-9; KathU V, 7; MundU I, 2, 7.

27. Cf. KausU II, 15.

28. MundU II, 2, 8; IsU 2.

29. MundU III, 2, 7.

30. Cf. KausU II, 6.

31. Cf. besides MaitU II, 6-7; CU V, 3; BU I, 3, 10; KathU I, 1, 5-6.

32. SU V, 7.

33. BG VIII, 3.

34. Cf. some fundamental references: BG II, 42-43; II, 47-57; III, 4-9; III, 14-15, III, 19-20; III, 22-25; IV, 14-24; IV, 32-33; V, 1-14; XVIII, 2-25.

35. BS III, 1, 17; IV, 1, 15 and the bhāsyas on them.

36. YS I, 24.

37. YS IV, 30.

38. YS II, 12.

39. YS III, 22.

40. YS IV, 7.

41. YS II, 6.

42. India stresses the the threefold ways of works (karma), knowledge (jñāna) and loving faith (bhakti) just as the theologies of James, John and Paul, respectively, emphasized these three kāndas.

43. Cf. as an example, the passionate plea for modernity by A. D. Moddie, The Brahmanical Culture and Modernity (London, Asia Publishing House, 1968).

44. Italics mine. The text says literally: satyam nesvarād anyah samsārī, 'In truth no other than the Lord wanders through.' As a noun, samsāra means a going or wandering through, and is a compound of sam and the root sr, which, like the root sru, means flow. Sam-sr is thus the verbal form meaning flow together with, go about, wander or walk or roam through. Cf. its usages in Monier-Williams' Sanskrit-English Dictionary. One could equally have translated: 'In truth no other (or no different) than the Lord transmigrates.'

45. Śaṅkara, Brahmasūtrabhāsya I, 1, 5, according to the english translation of G. Thibaut, The Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary by Śaṅkarācārya, The Sacred Books of the East, edited by F. Max Müller, Vol. 34 (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1962), pp. 51-52.

46. The following literature may be useful, in addition to general works on indian philosophy: E. Benz (ed.), 'Reinkarnation. Die Lehre von der Seelenwanderung in der philosophischen und religiösen Diskussion heute', Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte, IX, 2 (Köln, Brill); E. S. Deutsch, 'Karma as "Convenient Fiction" in the Advaita Vedānta', Philosophy East and West, XV, 1 (Jan. 1965), pp. 3-12; R. De Smet, 'The Law of Karma', Indian Phil. Annal, II (1966), pp. 328-335; M. Falk, 'Nairātmya and Karman', Indian Historical Quarterly, 16 (1940), pp. 429-464, 647-682; J. N. Farquhar, 'Karma: its Value as a Doctrine of Life', Hibbert Journal, 20 (1921-22), pp. 2-34; H. von Glasenapp, Doctrine of Karman in Jaina Philosophy (Bombay, 1942); E. W. Hopkins, 'Modifications of the Karma Doctrine', JRAS (1906), pp. 581-592; (1907), pp. 665-672; C. Humphreys, Karma and Rebirth (London, 1943); C. G. Jung, 'Die verschiedenen Aspeckte der Wiedergeburt', Eranos Jahrbuch (Zürich, Rhein, 1939), pp. 399-447; Umesh Mishra, 'The Annihilation of Karman', Proceedings of the All India Oriental Conference, 7 (1935), pp. 467-480; K. H. Potter, 'Naturalism and Karma: A Reply (D. Walhout, A Critical Note on Potter's Interpretation of Karma), Philosophy East and West, XVIII (1968), pp. 82-84; *R. De Smet, 'A Copernican reversal: The Gitakara's reformulation of karma' Philosophy East and West XXVIII,1 (January 1977) pp. 53-63.*

47. The greek word kosmos originally meant order and good order, both in the material and moral sense. Then it came to mean ornament, organization, constitution, glory, etc., and then the world, the inhabited world, etc. It is probably connected with the latin censeō and the sanskrit samsati. Cf. the root sās (sis), order. Cf. P. Chantraine, Dictionnaire etymologique de la langue greque (Paris, Klincksieck, 1970), i. h. l., though he does not give the sanskrit root.

48. YSB II, 13, where individuals are said to be like knots in a fisher's net.

50. 49. Cf. the behavior of a jīvanmukta, a realized soul, who has transcended

49. Cf. R. Panikkar, 'Singularity and Individuality: The Double Principle of Individuation' Revue internationale de philosophie XXIX Nr. 111-112 (1975) pp. 141-166.

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time and space and yet still lives among mortals.

51. Cf. CU &§ p. 488,1

52. 50. Cf. BG III, 20; etc.

53 ~~Cf. §~~ VI, 8, 7

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53. Cf. R. Panikkar, 'Temps et histoire dans la tradition de l'Inde' in the UNESCO book, Les cultures et le temps, (Paris, Payot/Unesco 1975) pp. 73-101 and 'El presente tempiterno' in A. Vargas-Machuca (ed.) Teología y mundo contemporaneo, (Madrid, Cristiandad, 1975) pp. 100-178 which relieves us here to be more explicit.

XV

The Subject of Infallibility

Solipsism and Verification

ὁ λόγος ...
καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν

Et Verbum . . . ~~et~~ habitavit in nobis

And the Word . . . ~~and~~ dwelt among us

Jn. 1:14

1 Thesis

The thesis of this ~~study~~ chapter is the following: the notion of infallibility is coherent only within a closed system; in other words: the rational affirmation of infallibility leads to solipsism; or simply: infallibility is incommunicable. This amounts to saying that infallibility is unverifiable, that infallibility has no other basis than its own self-affirmation. Or, again: infallibility belongs to the order of myth. The moment it enters the realm of the logos and is formulated in a logical statement it cannot have any verification which does not already assume an equal degree of infallibility. The reason why somebody is infallible has to be equally infallible if his infallibility is to have any meaning. The upshot of our thesis is plain: in the sublunary world, humanity is the ultimate subject of infallibility. Once the Logos ~~...the Logos of God~~ has come to 'dwell among us', there is no higher instance than our incarnated, earthly Logos.

2 The Notion of Infallibility (1)

The notion of infallibility, unlike those of truth and error, implies a ~~certain amount~~ element of volition. An infallible statement cannot be reduced to the simple formula, 'A is B', it always implies a third element: 'when p affirms that A is B, so it is.' If we let U_m = 'A is B', we can express infallibility by the formula: 'p posits m'. So public judgments, not private truths, are infallible. P is not infallible when thinking but when proclaiming, declaring. Infallibility does not mean inerrancy, i.e., the absence of error, it means the impossibility of erring, of committing a mistake when making a particular declaration. For this reason infallibility applies first of all to God, who is by definition infallible. (2)

The very etymology of the word (3) suggests this moral character of not erring, deceiving, betraying or failing.... (4) Strictly speaking, a proposition

> (m = 'A is B')

can be infallible only *in relation to a* ~~for the~~ subject who affirms or receives it. ~~Above all,~~ In-
fallibility expresses a relation between the one who affirms some judgment as
infallible and the one who receives it as such. Thus even as a charism, in the
most traditional sense, infallibility ~~does~~ *is* not *bestowed for the private profit of the* ~~profit some private~~ beneficiary,
but is for ... : 'edification', for the benefit of others. A proposition *can be said to be* ~~is~~ in-
fallible only ~~because~~ *if* it has been endowed with the property of infallibility by
the peculiar act of ~~a~~ *the* infallible declaration of the proposition *declaring it such.* Furthermore,
infallibility does not belong *only* to the pure intellect or to reason alone. Infalli-
bility implies that a person does not err in the act which is considered
infallible. Infallibility then is a character proper to action, and is not only a
logical feature of a proposition. Whence the remark, or rather the hermeneutical
advice, that in order to understand the affirmations of Vatican I on infallibility,
we must bear in mind that the Council's perspective was that of a court of law
issuing specific decrees, not an academy spinning theories. (5) Infallibility
does not belong to the realm of mere speculation; it is practical, it belongs to
the realm of orthopraxis, as we shall see.

In other words, we cannot separate the subject who pronounces the infallible
judgment from the concept of infallibility itself. When someone says that the
'canons' defined as dogmas by the Church are infallible, this means that the
authority which has defined them as infallible has not erred, and that anyone who
adheres to them is not mistaken. (6) Otherwise, i.e., if the infallible pronounce-
ment were only a statement of fact and not a judgment, then it would suffice to
say that the dogmas are true. In this case, reason or common sense--not the defin-
ing authority--would compel the listener's adherence to those pronouncements.

~~Affirming~~ An infallible judgment can be an active or a passive act, but it
must at least be passive. For instance, the statement 'p *affirms* m' expresses
the act whereby I take p to be infallible when it ~~says~~ *affirms* m so that I accept m because

p affirms it. Without this trust in p there would be no infallibility. Those who have personally experienced or have studied certain types of charismatic movements will readily substantiate this with innumerable cases in which the saint, the leader, the guru or the like is taken to be infallible without his having made this claim at all. (The others make him infallible.) Magister dixit.

Passive infallibility is the ultimate one, for even when p claims infallibility, it does not mean that it is p which makes m to be the case, but that p sees and discovers m--that is, 'A is B'--where others perhaps can or could not see it. Infallibility does not make truth, but proclaims it. When Pius XII proclaimed the dogma of the Assumption, for example, he claimed infallibility not because he thought he ~~personally~~ individually could not be mistaken, but because he believed he was interpreting the faith of the Church infallibly, i.e., without the possibility of erring. In the final analysis, papal infallibility is also passive, for the Pope is considered to be only the vessel of that infallibility which Christ promised his Church. So too, when a ~~believer~~ Christian affirms that Mary was assumed into heaven body and soul, he is convinced that he cannot err, because he is simply confirming this very infallibility given by Christ. When a believer affirms that Man is composed of body and soul, however, he admits that he could be mistaken. The first affirmation would be infallible, the second would not. The first rests on an external infallible authority (the Pope or the Church), while the second rests on a personal judgment which could perhaps change since it cannot refer to such an external court of appeal.

3 The Sociological and the Psychological Context

We shall take as an example the dogma of the Assumption of Mary. To affirm infallibility in this case implies that the Pope's act is infallible, i.e., that the Pope did not err in making his solemn declaration. (7)

That he did not err means he proclaimed an objective, i.e. public, truth, not just a subjective or private truth. He did not necessarily express his intimate conviction, but he proclaimed that something has to be believed as truly belonging to the deposit of revelation. Proceeding with scholastic casuistry we could very well assume that the Pope does not personally believe in what he proclaims, and nevertheless he would remain infallible as Vatican I understood him to be.

The distinctive character of any infallible declaration lies in its claim to add an extrinsic criterion of truth to the affirmation 'A is B'. In the case of the roman Church, infallibility does not even purport to state new 'truths', but only declares that a certain 'truth' is (or was) contained in the deposit of Revelation.

This extrinsic criterion--something not inherent in the proposition itself--must be understood first of all ~~as a~~ in function of its particular sociological and (psychological contexts within a historical period. Let us explain. To explicitly declare a judgment infallible represents a first step in the process of demythicization. Prior to this pronouncement, the surrounding myth vouched for the truth of that judgment. It is only when the myth begins to break down that you feel the need to be reassured by some external authority. You demand this reinforcement of your belief because you have seen in obliquo the necessity of grounding it in something other than the proposition itself. You feel the need to declare infallible only those formulas or judgments which you fear could be 'fallible'. We are here clearly dealing with convictions, and so we are on sociological and psychological terrain. Reason was proclaimed infallible in the european XVIII century by virtue of the same process by which the Pope was declared infallible a century later. 1814

A sociological law could be formulated here: The importance and the need for an infallible pronouncement increases in inverse proportion to the conviction that supports that pronouncement, or, the other way round, in inverse pro-

portion to the belief in the truth of the proposition. If I can depend on a p which affirms infallibly that Man has landed on the moon (and so, for example, be rid of the doubt that it might all have been a trick concocted by the mass-media to enable the United States to dominate world politics), this reassures me more than if p infallibly affirms that 2 + 2 = 4, a proposition which does not stand in need of being reinforced by an infallible authority. And if someone tells me infallibly that there is a possible hell for Man, this disturbs me much more than the infallible affirmation that there is also death lurking on my horizon.

For the person who has doubts about the moral value of liberalism (or communism), an infallible declaration which reaffirms its morality is more desireable than, for instance, an infallible statement condemning slavery, which is seen today without any doubt as a condemnable institution.

If the proposition 'A is B' is considered self-evident, an infallible declaration of its truth would be superfluous since infallibility adds nothing to the proposition as such. The proposition is not made true by the infallible declaration, but only recognized as true and thus (infallibly) proclaimed as such. At the other extreme, if the proposition 'A is B' is considered contradictory, an infallible declaration of its truth would not be able to change my conviction either, since infallibility does not add anything to the truth of the proposition. These two extreme cases do not contradict our sociological law, for in both cases evidence 1 or evidence 0 would satisfy our formulation. The need for and importance of the infallible declaration in one case equals my conviction (1) and in the other becomes meaningless (0) when my conviction is nil. Between these extremes lies the whole gamut of real situations. It might be interesting for a sociology of religion to note that the tendency to desire the certitude of infallibility stems from a crisis of conviction (or of belief, a theologian might say). As long as you do not feel the need for epistemological certainty, you do not

ask for infallible declarations. There is an obvious link between the post-Cartesian attitude which requires the security of rational knowledge and the felt need for infallibility; a need which culminated in the First Vatican Council. (8) In a pre-Cartesian world, the infallibility proclaimed by the Council would scarcely make sense. Thus the Orthodox Church, which has not suffered the Cartesian impact does not feel the need to declare its dogmas infallible because the need for an additional certainty is not felt.

Now in order for the infallible affirmation to reinforce my conviction, I must obviously accept it as infallible. It is all the more desired if the affirmation helps to convince. (9) A psychology of religion will say here that I will all the more readily accept the infallibility of 'A is B' if I am already inclined to accept that A is B. In this case, the relation is a direct proportion: the more I believe A is B, the more easily I will accept 'A is B' as an infallible statement. This is just the opposite of the sociological relation proposed above: the more a social consciousness is convinced that A is B, the less it feels the need for an infallible statement to that effect, whereas the less I am convinced that A is B, the more I need the certitude of infallibility.

Combining the sociological and the psychological aspects, we could say that the need for infallible pronouncements increases the stronger the desire to believe (in 'A is B') and the weaker the internal coherence of that in which one believe (in the 'B' which is 'A'). From the perspective of the history of religions, it would be worthwhile to examine how different forms of infallibility have emerged the very moment a crisis existed in those structures which had until then expressed a reliable order of truth.

All this explains why infallibility presents a particular ambivalence, which makes explain how this theme remains extremely delicate to handle, even today. On the one hand, infallibility seems to save the beliefs of the majority

from collapse; this leads many to emphasize the value of authority, of definitions, of precise and concrete directives, etc. More than one historian would tell us that without the rock of infallibility, much of christianity would have long since been engulfed by superficial innovations and extremist reactions. On the other hand, infallibility seems to impede and even prohibit any effort at understanding positions which are not ~~strictly orthodox~~ *majoritarian*; it seems to cripple the impetus of progress and evolution, *freezing the gamut of interpretations* and also to undermine the foundations of true spirituality, since the christian edifice does not rest on arguments which affirm authority, but on free conviction and personal experience. So we can well understand the anguished appeals of ~~perhaps the most~~ conscientious people when faced with the danger of stagnation which every form of infallibility carries with it, *and for this reason, it seems that some philosophical clarification* ~~would be~~ useful and even important.

of sheer anarchy when we are left without limits of interpretation

It is in this context that we should recall what has been said in previous chapters concerning myth and transmythicization. When, perhaps because formulated in obsolete concepts, the belief in particular dogmas seems to cease being mythical and thus it asks for reasons, then a new myth of infallibility dawns, which will give the requisite additional security to these particular dogmas. Now when infallibility itself is questioned, i.e., ceases to be a mythical belief, then we must jump into another order altogether. And precisely here the vital circle of myth is most conspicuous: the christian community or the Church is infallible because it continues the life of an infallible Christ on earth and it continues the life of Christ--i.e. it remains loyal to Christ's spirit--because it is infallible. Infallibility is the very expression of the christian myth; but to spell it out weakens the myth. The myth of infallibility is undermined by the logos of infallibility. This is what we are going to examine.

4 Can There be a Hermeneutic of Infallibility?

'p posits m' is an infallible act when 'p' cannot err in affirming 'm'. If 'p' does not err in affirming 'm', this means that m is a true proposition. Now as we have said, infallibility adds nothing to the truth inherent to the proposition 'A is B', but only gives the security, to those who believe in infallibility, that A is certainly B.

The problem appears as soon as we analyze this something more (security, certainty, belief) which belongs to an infallible declaration. I may believe that 'p' cannot err when it affirms 'A is B', but what guarantees that I will adhere to 'p''s 'A is B' and not instead to 'A is B_1' (which I cannot distinguish from 'A is B')? The Pope has declared that Mary was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and I can affirm this as an infallible judgment. But am I sure my understanding of body and soul is the same as the Pope's? Which body? what we call the glorious body? or rather what the biologist or biochemist studies? Which soul? etc. Or again: do I have an adequate understanding of heavenly glory? do I even have the same understanding as the Pope?

What can we do? We cannot wait for yet another infallible pronouncement to give the precise meaning of each word, because the process would be interminable. In order to clarify these concepts we would have to use others, et sic in infinitum.

In order for this affirmation 'p posits m' to be infallible for me, I must recognize it as infallible. It follows, then, that the act by which I accept the affirmation as infallible must also be infallible. Otherwise, if I could be mistaken when I say that 'p' is infallible, its infallibility would be meaningless as far as I am concerned.

We may answer this difficulty by saying that the believer adheres to the infallible proposition as it is defined by the authority proposing it. This is

the classical solution. Ecclesiastical theology has long since admitted that (active) infallibility in docendo, in teaching, would make no sense were there not (passive) infallibility in discendo to receive, to understand, and to effect it. (10) An infallible authority could affirm and proclaim any number of infallible propositions; but they would remain ineffective and dead letter if those who ought to receive and benefit from them did not possess a reciprocal passive infallibility. This notion of passive infallibility is indeed much older and more widespread than the idea of active infallibility. (11) We know, for instance, that the orthodox Church follows the ancient tradition whereby the ecclesia discens must ratify all synodal decisions or declarations. And, while the concept of a single infallible authority is only rarely found in history, the notion of passive infallibility frequently appears. We can think not only of religious examples drawn from a religion, a community, etc., but also of the contemporary examples of the infallibility of reason, of human conscience, of nature and even of basic social structures. Even in christianity, the notions of sensus ecclesiae, of lex orandi lex credendi, of council, of mystical body and of Church itself are closely related to the gift of the Spirit whose continuing presence is necessary in order to discern and then follow the right path, and this points to a passive infallibility. (12)

This leads us to say that no hermeneutic of infallibility is possible, because in order to understand infallibility as it asks to be understood, we must participate in the infallible act itself. Without doubt we can analyze the concept of infallibility, but we cannot interpret the infallible act outside the hermeneutic which it gives to itself. Contemporary theology has glimpsed this and generally maintains that the subject of infallibility in the Church must be a single one. (13) A dual subject of infallibility would be contradictory and, from every point of view, superfluous. (14)

But the problem is even more subtle. Certainly the Pope and the Council are not two independent infallible authorities, but two organs of one and the same authority. We can also say that reason and faith cannot contradict each other because their source of infallibility is the same. This is quite true, and yet the problem remains, not only regarding the de facto conflicts which do arise (between reason and faith or Pope and Council, for example), but also regarding their day-to-day coordination or subordination.

To pursue the example of the infallibility in docendo of the Church's hierarchy and that in discendo of the ecclesial people, let us imagine that the entire Church magisterium is unanimous in proclaiming the dogma of the Assumption. In order for this declaration to have its full meaning, the 'learning' Church, i.e., the ecclesial people, must understand the dogma in the same way as the teaching authority which propounds it. Now if we must postulate a special assistance for the infallible teaching, we must do the same for those taught. We may agree that understanding is by means of concepts, but then we will also have to recognize that the ecclesial people live on diverse cultural levels, and that each context bears a different understanding. The assistance required, then, would have to be more than extraordinary. It would have to be almost personal, a thesis which no theologian has ever defended. Moreover, such assistance represents a kind of supernaturalism which would render ecclesiastical infallibility superfluous, since it amounts to affirming that individual conscience is infallible. ~~If by myself I am infallible I hardly need the Church's infallibility.~~

It seems we must look for an explanation on a different level. Here christian theology could profit from the knowledge and experience of other cultures and religions. (15) In terms of the history of religions, we might say that the passive subject of infallibility adheres to the proposition 'A is B' mythically, i.e., not analytically or conceptually, not as a proposition intelligible in or by itself, but as part of a mythic whole. You adhere to 'A is B' by participating in the infallibility of 'p', and without analysing

the content of 'A is B'. This is the case when there is no critical distance between the proclaiming authority and the listening people. It amounts to saying that the two 'infallibilities' coalesce when the people really believe that the 'authority' speaks for them, is their ~~vrais parole~~ *speaker*, their true representative, so that the current of communication, in a way, does not descend from the 'heights' but ascends from the people upward to its hierarchical symbol. ~~Real authority always comes from on high which means the 'high' members of the same mystical body and not the distant inaccessible heights, the cold peaks of another world.~~ This is obviously not to denigrate the existence of the notion of an infallible authority as myth. History, past and present, shows us the reality and even the vitality of such adherence to myths.[16] (16)

Now myth as myth is incommunicable because it is the very foundation of all communication; it is the horizon you accept without question and which makes possible a certain communion, the condition for any subsequent communication. Myth is never the object of thought (i.e., of the logos), nor is it objectifiable; rather myth is what allows thought to conceptualize itself, and faith to express itself. Myth is what enters every thought, every idea and even every formulation of faith without being identified with any of them, and yet it does not exist separately from them (this sui generis relationship of mythos and logos is occasionally glimpsed in the process of demythicization--the logos is 'disengaged' from one myth only to be remythicized, embedded in another myth (17)).

Ultimately this is what traditional theology says when it affirms that the infallible authority only explicates and formulates the faith of the Church in a clear and distinct way. The notion of infallibility thus presents an uncomfortable ambiguity. On the one hand it still upholds the myth. It expresses the fact that the authority articulates and formulates in terms of the logos what the people believe. It is not a dictatorial act, not the imposition of a new decree. It is the articulate ~~logos~~ *(logos)* organ of expression of what the Church believes. On the other hand, it also begins to abolish the myth by making it so

explicit that in explaining it, it explains it away. Infallibility wants to make a certain and secure crystallization (in the form of logos) of the undifferentiated magma of myth. It wants to 'speak' the unspoken. It is important to note that the dynamism here goes from the people to the authority, not vice-versa. It is not an individual charisma, but ex officio--and for the public function of that office. This is why infallibility is not inspiration or revelation, but a special assistance bestowed according to a hierarchical order to guide the people of God on their way to the heavenly city. It is not an automatic dynamism, nor is it bestowed 'democratically', but it is a work of the divine Logos. (18) But does such reasoning not empty infallibility of whatever rational sense it might contain on its own? Is infallibility at all necessary on the level of conceptual explanation? Does infallibility represent just an effort to demythicize what cannot be demythicized, namely belief? (19) By wanting to affirm infallibility with reason, don't we end up contradicting it? In short, any hermeneutic of infallibility seems to destroy it. Without a hermeneutic, however, we cannot talk about it, we cannot communicate it. You accept infallibility when you accept it in toto along with your faith, without analyzing or interpreting it. Divorced from this holistic attitude of the believer, it makes no sense. The proper functioning of democracy needs the belief in the people's infallibility.

5 The Internal Logic of Infallibility

In trying to understand infallibility we have until now assumed that ~~you~~ we accept it without examining the concept as such. We must now test the value of our hypothesis by analyzing the subject of infallibility in its most elementary philosophical sense.

We have already seen that a proposition per se cannot claim to be infallible; there must always be someone who declares it infallible: either one who affirms 'A is B' or one who accepts this proposition. But who can say 'p is infallible'?

Here it seems evident that only an affirmation in the first person can have any meaning. If someone says 'you are infallible', this infallibility equally implies the infallibility of the one who affirms it. Likewise for the third person. If someone says 'p is infallible', it means two things: recognizing p's infallibility (if not indeed conferring it), and acknowledging the authority of the speaker who affirms (or confers) that infallibility. For example, if a Council defines the infallibility of the Pope, it seems obvious that papal infallibility would then depend on the infallibility of the council which conferred or acknowledged it.

'You are infallible' or 'he is infallible' are not final propositions since they rest on the infallibility of another, namely the speaker who affirms that 'you are infallible' or 'he is infallible'.

We cannot escape this logical exigency by saying that the first person does not confer but only recognizes the infallibility of the second or third person. In our example, the Council ~~could~~ would then ~~logically~~ say that it is not infallible, that it only recognizes a papal infallibility which exists in and of itself, and not by the power or delegation of the Council. So the Council would only explicate what already existed. ~~A clearer~~ Another example might be that of a group which recognizes, through whatever external criteria, that the little shepherd is really the king and proclaims him as such. This group has not ~~made~~ appointed him king, just as the Council has not given infallibility to the Pope; both have merely recognized prerogatives, kingship or infallibility.

To this we must reply that recognition by another is essential. The shepherd-king will reign only if he is acknowledged by the people. The Pope will be effectively infallible only if recognized as such. Subtle casuistry cannot weaken this argument. If we say the process is irreversible, and that once the Council has recognized pontifical infallibility, it opens up a new awareness which cannot then be closed, we must also suppose either that the Council

no longer recognizes papal infallibility or that it continues to acknowledge it. In the latter case, the whole force of papal infallibility still comes from its recognition by the Council. In the former instance, infallibility cannot be maintained unless the Pope himself maintains it or a third party affirms it. Then this third party becomes the final criterion, since infallibility recognized by no one is meaningless. Where the Pope sees himself (and proclaims himself) as infallible, we are no longer within the limits of our hypothesis and have come to the only intelligible form the concept has: first person infallibility.

In sum: to say 'p is infallible' without adding 'and I, when I affirm this, am also infallible', amounts to making infallibility totally irrelevant.

'I am infallible' would thus be the only proposition which holds. But this proposition is incommunicable. The only communication possible would be to convince another to accept my statement 'I am infallible' without his becoming aware that he too must be infallible in order to affirm my infallible proposition. If he perceives his own infallibility--in the first person: 'when I affirm this, I too am infallible'--he becomes the conscious criterion and judge of infallibility.

In order to be communicable, the proposition 'I am infallible' must be able to elicit the assent of another: 'yes, you are infallible', which also implies, 'and ~~from the moment I~~ my recognizing your infallibility, ~~I too am~~ is also infallible'. Both expressions must be equally infallible; otherwise they are meaningless. If I can err when I affirm 'You are infallible', in response to your declaration 'I am infallible', your affirmation of infallibility is no longer infallible for me.

Or again, this infallibility cannot be proven by arguments stronger than those which ~~depend~~ are rooted upon an infallibility held in common by the one who affirms his own infallibility and by whoever confirms it. To say 'I am infallible because God, who is infallible, has promised it to me', implies, if it is to be communicated to others (even over and above any other presuppositions), that whoever ~~listens~~ accepts my

my statement cannot be mistaken. So my infallibility depends on the infallibility of his understanding and agreement, and not on my 'divine credentials'. I can appeal to natural reason and its evidence to make the other understand my argument, and then this rational evidence becomes the touchstone of my infallibility as far as he is concerned. But I cannot give him more infallibility than he already has. If I depend on the infallibility of his reason, then that guarantees my own infallibility. My 'higher' infallibility, if in fact it exists, is incommunicable.

This means that infallibility is unverifiable because it is its own principle of verification. If it were to seek another, this principle would have to be infallible as well. To say: 'this act is infallible' amounts to saying: 'this act has in itself its own principle of verification'.

Obviously there is still a way out of this solipsistic impasse and, indeed, history shows us that infallibility takes the form of a collectivity which claims the privilege of infallibility. In the first person to be sure; but in the first person plural: 'we are infallible'.

Without doubt, we can go much further with the plural: the Church, the Council and the Pope, all three of us, we are infallible since Christ promised the assistance of the Spirit until the end of time (even if the form in which this infallibility expresses itself differs in every case). But we are still at a dead end and out of communication with--may I say even excommunicated from?--the outside world. We lack communication not only with an external world, but also with that part of ourselves which collectively or personally remains outside our group and which questions the reason, or the function, or the justification or even the suitability of our infallibility. If someone in the bosom of the Church--i.e., if one within the us--asks for 'proof' or reasons for his own infallibility, we cannot answer him, since he cannot jump over his own shadow. You cannot be infallible and demand reasons for this infallibility at the same time. In other words: papal infalli-

bility is the same as my own (i.e., the Council's, the bishop's, the simple christian's, the person's), even though it manifests itself differently. Still, we are infallible, although the others ar another (a Council, the Pope) may explain my own faith in an explicit fashion, using words and concepts I would not normally use. Infallibility has meaning as long as it constitutes us, a unified and homogeneous whole. But as soon as any sense of separation, alienation or estrangement comes between us, our common infallibility breaks down. Infallibility becomes their infallibility and is no longer my own. The moment I stop believing that the others (or another) are expressing my own faith, they no longer express it, and their infallibility is only their own, in which I cannot participate. Infallibility is only ad usum nostrorum, and thus a true sign of discernment.

But isn't this what tradition has always said when it insists that infallibility has no sense except within the faith? Of what use is it to want to prove it or submit it to philosophical analysis? It would simply become a tautology if we did. Infallibility is quite tenable as a truism, but becomes meaningless when we try to separate it from the circle of faith and defend it as a truth in itself or as a separate dogma.

What is relevant here is not so much this internal crisis of infallibility which currently troubles so many christians, as the philosophical solipsism inherent in any infallibility. Whatever entity believes itself infallible, individual, collective or moral, excommunicates itself from everything else. Moreover, even on the very level where a person believes himself infallible, he cannot establish communion with others. And there is no human or natural remedy for this; my infallibility is without appeal.

Modern Man believes himself infallible by virtue of his humanity and so has excommunicated himself from other animals at this level. (20) When philosophers appeal to a reason which they uncritically consider infallible, they alienate

themselves both from one another and from that part of mankind which does not share this pattern of intelligibility. Insofar as they believe themselves infallible, christians remain united among themselves to be sure, but they distance themselves from the rest of humanity, and no amount of dialogue can re-establish communication; insofar as bishops, priests and the Pope believe that they possess the personal privilege of infallibility (albeit in different degrees), they separate themselves from and remain 'incommunicado' for those who do not have the same privilege. (21) The snare of solipsism is at hand! We could multiply these examples within the realm of religion (the saint is always one 'set apart') as well as in the secular sphere. All privilege confers some power, but at the same time it isolates, makes different.

Here a philosopher would speak of solipsism, a historian of religions of spiritual totemism, (22) a sociologist of esotericism, etc. Whatever the name, it follows from the same principle: realizing identity through differentiation and affirming difference by separation. (23)

I, the Pope, the Party, the State, the Nation...we, the bishops, the christians, the democrats, the socialists...we cannot err. To be sure, we can be mistaken about a good many specific things and ideas, but in the general thrust of our life, our orientation, our ideals, etc., we are infallible. Such affirmations make no sense for those outside my group, outside the <u>us</u> which speaks in each instance, because my infallibility is meaningful only for me and for those who participate in it with me. For you it would have only the sense which <u>you</u> give it by (fallibly) interpreting me.

We could express it thus: in each case, infallibility bears its own hermeneutic and is only as infallible as that hermeneutic. The 'weight' of infallibility, then, lies on the hermeneutic and not on the infallibility affirmed. So the infallibility depends completely on the validity of its hermeneutic. On the other

hand, infallibility without a hermeneutic is closed in on itself and shirks its genuine duty, to communicate the truth. History simply confirms this point.

But, at bottom, doesn't an infallible declaration serve as a concrete hermeneutic of the intellectual content of the act of faith? Doesn't declaring a proposition infallible, or more precisely declaring a judgment infallible, really amount to declaring how the proposition or judgment in question ought to be interpreted?

~~6. Dialogue Between Philosophy and Theology~~

All this is not to say that the concept of infallibility ought to be completely rejected. The notion of infallibility opens up a hope of going beyond the rationalist and even intellectualist framework of much of contemporary culture, provided it is re-thought, re-formed and, I daresay, converted.

A more rigorous examination of the statement 'we are infallible' leads us to the conclusion of our thesis. Indeed, if it is to be intelligible, the phrase cannot be verified except by a principle of verification which 'we' all recognize. Now if I am not within this group, this <u>us</u> which is infallible, I cannot verify this affirmation. ~~Imagine the following dialogue.~~

~~--We christians are infallible~~, because Christ who is the Son of God has promised to remain with us until the end of time.

--...?

--This means that in the general trend of christian life and thought, which some might call the Church, we cannot err.

--...?

--What appear throughout history as errors or faults must be understood in terms of specific circumstances, and we must recognize that, in spite of everything, the christian substance has been maintained.

The Roman Church's doctrine of infallibility, recognizing that there is only one single subject of infallibility (the Church, despite the many voices), implicitly takes the stand that the Church is the representative of the entire humankind, that the Church is the sacramentum mundi, the humanitas perfecta, a leaven on behalf of the whole. If the underlying ecclesiology is disputed, the doctrine of a vicarious infallibility loses its ground.

6. Human Infallibility

If infallibility sets its own limits and the only given human limits are those of humankind itself, does not affirming that humanity taken as a whole is infallible amount to a tautology? and not only ——→

(to 582)

in a godless universe, but also in a theistic world? Yet what is wisdom if not the discovery of tautologies? What is evidence if not a qualified tautology? But let us return to our immediate concern.

There is nonetheless a fundamental difference between a purely epistemological infallibility which admits no 'point' (center, being, principle--whatever ~~you~~ one may call it) outside or above itself, and a more ontological infallibility on the order of grace, which acknowledges a transcendent reference point usually called God. In the first hypothesis, infallibility without an alpha or omega point would be a truism, since there would be nothing outside humanity to judge the fallibility or infallibility of anything; whereas in the second case infallibility becomes the expression of ~~good news or of~~ a hope, since it is quite conceivable that humanity could 'fall', 'fail' and not accomplish its destiny, not fulfill itself.

But is there a criterion outside humanity which determines if we have erred? Even if ~~you~~ we admit some revelation of the truth, we must be able to perceive and understand it. If suddenly, mankind saw clearly that 2 + 2 = 5, ~~you~~ we could no longer call this proposition false. ~~You~~ We would say that historical documents prove that once men believed 2 + 2 = 4, and the most learned would say that what was once called 4 is today called 5, so that it is all a question of semantics; but no one could now say that 5 is the wrong answer. ~~You can and must deny such a possibility.~~ But this amounts to saying that we all in denying the meaningful possibility of 2+2≠4. And this confirms our thesis, namely that we believe, and we cannot but not believe, in human infallibility. But in what areas?

Theology smiles a bit here and reminds us that infallibility does not deal with speculative propositions, but with the existential facts of faith and morals. So the is not to brood over whether 2 and2 shall ever be 4, but whether torture, for instance, some According to a certain theistic hypothesis, it is possible that all mankind could practically go astray, and that only a prophet or a very small 'remnant' would be left as a reminder that it has erred, that its ways are not the ways of truth, justice or love. Any deep reflection on infallibility deals with questions that far surpass

the limited problematic of infallible judgments and specific propositions.

Yet we cannot play games with history: for centuries hardly anyone found slavery immoral, or [illegible] punishment according to the lex talonis unjust. Nor is there the slightest doubt that ~~the christian~~ human self-understanding has sensibly changed in its ~~twenty centuries~~ long millennia of history.

We are not, however, concerned with mere doctrinal speculation on the nature of change. Infallibility need not be challenged because doctrines have changed with the times. The realm of infallibility, as we have said before, is not that of general ideas or abstract formulations. Infallibility belongs to the existential domain of my personal decision, the realm of orthopraxis. To return to our example of the Assumption: what is infallible ~~is~~ would be the decision to believe in the dogma, i.e., the human act which commits itself to a particular belief ~~source guided by a reliable teaching.~~ *following a particular guidance.*

These considerations place us in a proper perspective for a final philosophical reflection. ~~Given the~~ Within the hypothesis of a complete negation of transcendence (admitting that this were possible), infallibility would amount to a truism, even if we make mankind its subject. Here, if everyone is infallible, no one is, because there is no criterion except personal perspective. *we follow the other hypothesis, i.e. if we* If, however, we admit transcendence, infallibility could be an external and gratuitous promise of that very transcendence (this is its mythical aspect) of it could become a fertile tautology which helps us to better grasp the nature of transeendence and at the same time responds with hope to the deepest human faith. We can consider infallibility (starting at the bottom) as the epistemological condition for human reason. We can also view it (starting at the top) as a grace bestowed upon a particular group. The first and purely philosophical notion of a universal infallibility is insufficient; the second and exclusively theological *notion of an elitistic infallibility* is not satisfying. We are looking for a certain synthesis in our analysis of infallibility, perhaps as a conquest, as an omega point if we prefer, which becomes real to the extent

that we recognize it. Grace is not excluded, but neither is nature. This is our final point.

Infallibility and Orthopraxis

The ~~function~~ *aim* of any religion is to save ~~(~~or to free~~)~~ Man. No matter how we interpret this salvation *or* ~~(~~liberation~~)~~, religion is always the means by which Man arrives at his destination, reaches the other shore. Now in order to save *or* ~~(~~free~~)~~ *my* ~~[illegible]~~self, *I* ~~[illegible]~~ must do something, even if this act is only an interior act of faith or a mere ritual affair. This leads us to say that what constitutes the core of religion is not a doctrine but an act, even if this act is considered to be adherenee to a doctrine. In other words, orthopraxis, not orthodoxy, is the constitutive element of religion. Thus as a religious phenomenon infallibility is grounded in orthopraxis. Having considered it to stem exclusively from the sphere of orthodoxy has been the cause of more than one misunderstanding and many an insurmountable difficulty. (24)

As we have said, strictly speaking there are no infallible truths or propositions, only infallible 'definitions', i.e., affirmations, infallible acts. In certain 'educated' milieus, laughter greeted those who naively thought the catholic dogma of infallibility was a sort of insurance against sinning. Nevertheless these 'ignorant' people, who doubtless misunderstood the dogma, at least perceived that infallibility concern*s* action not speculation, orthopraxis not orthodoxy; they saw that infallibility belong*s* not to theory but to life as it is lived.

This is not to say that orthodoxy does not have its rights, and a raison d'être in its proper domain. But, within ~~these~~ *its* limits, there is scarcely room for pluralism, except for a very restricted pluralism which accepts ~~only~~ *different* formulations ~~which~~ *provided they* say the same thing or *diverse* concepts ~~which~~ *provided they* are equivalent. On the contrary, pluralism is connatural to orthopraxis because every act is unique. Orthopraxis is characterized by a trans-conceptual intentionality of the action

itself, rather than by an (orthodox) identity of content. We could say that 'all roads lead to Rome': indeed, provided they are genuine roads and not dead-ends, that is, provided we don't stop--even at Rome! (25)

In this light, infallibility appears ~~like a proclamation of~~ as good news. It is tantamount to that confidence in life, or in Providence if ~~you~~ we wish, or in the presence of the Holy Spirit if ~~you~~ we prefer, which ~~encourages~~ sustains a realistic optimism about existence and about the ~~purpose~~ sense of ~~creation~~ the meaning of human existence and the universe. It also leads to the profound conviction that our life is not a meaningless passion, that it is not a mistake, that to have lived and suffered are values which cannot be effaced, which remain even if forgotten. *But let us proceed step by step.*

~~This radical infallibility is not the privilege of one person or any particular group.~~ It is given with existence itself, it is linked to the creation and, in christian terms, to the redemption of the universe. This does not prevent the Church from being one organ of this infallibility, nor does it rule out that this infallibility can manifest itself hierarchically through the Church, and in a very special way through her head. But the important message here is not its bearer, but the message itself, viz. the consciousness that there is a leverage point which allows us to see mankind as a whole and its pilgrimage as a free enterprise which implies both the risk of failure and the responsibility for success. The news of infallibility would vouch for the latter--yet not as a fatalistic promise of something bound to come, but as a challenge: Man is free, he is able to take up ~~his own destiny and that of the entire universe. But let us proceed step by step.~~

I cannot meaningfully say that I am infallible if you do not accept my statement; we cannot declare ourselves infallible if we exclude the very people to whom we declare this, because the affirmation would make no sense to them. A real proclamation of infallibility must embrace the entire world and include in 'us' all who

some 'high places' of the world religions

do not excommunicate themselves from it.

A pioneering and particularizing effort was needed to achieve this reflective ~~non-conscious~~ awareness that humanity is infallible; the roman Church provides one striking example. But now an osmosis is also necessary in order to spread this awareness, this awakening of consciousness, to all humanity, in order to promote throughout the world what some would call a process of 'consciencialization', and what others perhaps a step toward authentic evangelization. We are unraveling here a universal dynamism active in almost every sphere: what was once the privilege of a minority has passed to an ever increasing majority, if not yet in fact then at least by right. We need not think only of technology, which has placed in the hands of the many --*for good or ill*-- what had once been the privilege of the few. We can and must also consider the change in the notion God, that classic archetype which has dominated the ~~western~~ material and spiritual economy for ~~three or~~ four thousand years. Ever since polytheism was swallowed by monotheism, the positive value of any object has been seen as a function of its scarcity. God is the greatest value, so there can be only one, and he must have only one name. Religion is the depository of ultimate values, hence it must be one. Gold is the most beautiful and the rarest metal, so it must also be the dearest--most costly as well as most precious (a link which confirms what we have been saying). Love between a man and a woman is the greatest love, it must not therefore be portioned out. We could go on like this and give examples from the most diverse fields. Heaven or salvation is what everyone wants most, therefore it must be rare, i.e., the destiny of very few. We find this sensus and consensus fidelium--the belief that the number of the elect is always very small--in practically all religions up to and including those of recent times. (26) It is still widespread among the traditional 'faithful' of nearly every religion and is found even in modern secular religions. In spite of all modern democratization, we still think in modified oligarchic categories.

Today it is no longer blood, race or religion, but money, power, knowledge, education and even the passport, which make the difference.

Given this context we can understand why infallibility was considered a privilege and we might add that now the privilege of the 'privileged' is to share what had before been 'concentrated' in one segment of humanity. *Could not the salvation* ~~Is not the sal-~~ ~~vific~~ histories of Israel and of the Church lend themselves to just this interpretation? what about the parables of the salt, the leaven and the light? (27)

~~But we cannot proclaim~~ *But* this ~~good news~~ *cannot be proclaimed* by saying: 'I am infallible, and you will be too if you believe me.' We have already seen that it is impossible to communicate infallibility. Nor can we say: 'we christians are infallible, but you non-christians are not', since this declaration--assuming it is not blasphemous--is incomprehensible as well as incommunicable. Communication is possible only within a pre-existing communion. Communication only makes explicit or reveals this underlying communion. The christian does not just transmit the news: 'Christ is risen'. He adds immediately, 'and we--you also--are risen with him'.

This does not mean that salvation is automatic or that infallibility guarantees an insipid or facile optimism *that mankind cannot go wrong.* It is not a question of eliminating the mystery of existence or of preaching a happy ending, come what may. On the contrary, the awareness of infallibility means assuming a new responsibility.

In the language of modern philosophy, we could say that what is involved is discovering the passage from infallibility as an existentielle, as a character peculiar to a group or even to a person, to infallibility as an existenzial, as a category of human existence. But this is not just a mechanical shift of gears, it is a pascha marked by strife, rupture, death, resurrection... *And certainly it is not an individual privilege but something bestowed upon mankind ex officio.*

8 Infallibility: Cosmic Hope and Eschatological Vision

We can and even should ask ourselves what infallibility *may* mean, given this

universal perspective. Does it not become self-defeating? ~~not to say a betrayal?~~ What does it mean to say that humanity as a whole cannot err if the individual can, or that there is no criterion to distinguish the fallible from the infallible? If everyone is infallible, then no one is.

We can look for an answer on two levels, the personal and the cosmic.

At the level of the person, ~~you~~ we could say that we are infallible in what we believe and to the extent we believe in it. For this reason, our faith will save us. Good faith does not save because it is 'subjectively' true even if it is 'objectively' false; good faith saves because it is infallible (and here the word 'infallible' has its proper orthopractical character). Bad faith condemns not because it is false, but because it is bad, because it wants to err. Nevertheless, nothing prevents us at this level from believing that this saving faith is expressed through the Church ~~of the Pope~~ or any other agency. I am merely situating these beliefs in a context which is more universal and, it seems to me, more true.

At the cosmic level, infallibility is of kairological and capital importance, precisely today when we run the risk of panic and collective hysteria on a world-wide scale. To be sure, Man(kind) can commit suicide, ~~he~~ Man has the power to annihilate the human race and eliminate all planetary life. Modern pessimism cannot be construed as a fruit of the somber humors of a few people; it results from a profound analysis of the current situation. Human infallibility does not present itself as a sort of intellectual utopia or as an automatic destiny so universal that it lacks content. It presents itself by contrast as a challenge, as a message which is like a real 'sign raised among the nations' (as the First Vatican Council had ~~foreseen~~ quoted (28)), as a hope which saves. ~~But, the existence of a Pope who claims the privilege of infallibility for himself alone mattens little to humanity, which continues to follow its own path as it has done until now without bothering much~~

~~about pontifical admonitions or calls to order.~~ The important thing is this good news which the ~~entire Church, together with the Pope,~~ peoples of good will ~~and other unlikely agents~~ must proclaim to the four corners of the earth: (29) humanity is infallible. And this amounts to an authentic kerygma of salvation. In fact, one of the most urgent ~~proclamations~~ tasks for our times is to ~~say~~ proclaim that humanity is on the road to a new heaven and a new earth, ~~in other words, progressing toward an omega point. The meaning of the earth and of human existence is precisely the kingdom of heaven, which does not impose itself, which forces nothing, and which is already among us and even within us.~~ walking toward a center (be they called alpha, omega, or nothing).

That someone sees a personal power directing this human tumult from on high, where another envisions a cosmic dynamism (theories which differ on the doctrinal level) does not touch the heart of what we have been saying. Christians ~~do~~ should not claim a monopoly here; quite the contrary, they proclaim from the rooftops a message which belongs to and affects all creation. (30) ~~Without this optimism, there is neither commitment nor hope. (31)~~

This human infallibility is not actu, in actuality, but potentia, in potency we might say, reviving old categories; it is not automatic or fated, but becomes real only thanks to a principle, a divine seed--a Church one could add-- which sustains The hope of mankind toward this infallible end, despite numerous failings. Human infallibility has an eschatological character--not that of a 'happy end' according to our dreams.

~~This is not the place to make an exegesis of these ideas or to defend their orthodoxy, although we are convinced of the latter. After all, papal infallibility does not exist for the personal benefit of the Pope, it is for the people of God. So it is not inappropriate to apply it to the entire human family.~~ Just as belief in the redemption convinced christians that the creation was good, so now accepting the Church's infallibility can make them confident that humanity ~~cannot fall. (32)~~ The belief in this cosmic The theological virtues are also cosmological. ~~Infallibility restores our~~ bility restores confidence in ourselves. It is already eschatological, it belongs to the Spirit, as such is bearer of infallible values. (31)

to the divine immanence permeating the universe. (33) Infallibility is ~~the first complete~~ an expression of a truly secular spirituality: Man is infallible! But he must accept the risk this entails. It is not that he cannot fail, but that he does not need to; that he can survive (also in the Teilhardian sense of survie).

'In theological language, does infallibility mean eliminating risk?' we are asked. (34) I would answer plainly: authentic infallibility entails the most complete assumption of risk, for the greatest risk is to accept the infallibility of each moment of our life, (fully aware) that the next moment may well bring another insight because a new reality dawns upon us and not because, pleading fallibility, we refrained from exhausting the present. As long as we leave loopholes in our affirmations, as long as we do not commit ourselves totally to what we say and believe, with all the risk that this implies; as long as we are not identified with ourselves, that is, as long as we do not truly express who we are; in short, as long as we do not take infallibility seriously, we have not attained that human maturity which also entails belief in and respect for the infallibility of others. This means at the same time recognizing our own insufficiency, acknowledging that I do not exhaust the totality of human experience. It impels us toward dialogue. And like a mediaeval tourney or the roman games, authentic dialogue is an experience of death...but also of resurrection.

I see in *the phenomenon of infallibility existing in so many human traditions,* ~~papal infallibility~~ a memorable gesture in the awakening of human awareness. This should not be interpreted as in any way wanting to rescue a dogma, or as a strategic shifting of perspective. It entails what I still consider a christian belief, namely a catholic concern for the entire cosmos, humankind in particular, and a vision which sees the act of Christ in a universal perspective.

Infallibility *may thus be seen as* ~~is thus~~ an unhappy formulation of a grand awareness, not that a little group has a divine privilege but that Man now has the burden of this dignity. The danger now lies in not daring to announce it to the entire universe,

not daring to share this privilege, not daring to assume responsibility for it. We are all thrown together in this adventure which propels us closer and closer to the perfect Man-- εἰς ἄνδρα τελειον --(35) or, if ~~you~~ we prefer, to the free reception of the Spirit: to be a Man, a fallible being who must believe himself infallible in order to survive.

###

In spite of the theological furor over this problem, I have not found a philosophical analysis of the question as suggested in this ~~study. For once philosophical sobriety may be useful to theological enthusiasms.~~ chapter.

Notes

1. Of the many important works concerning this problematic, we might single out the following: E. Castelli (ed.), L'Infaillibilité. Son aspect philosophique et théologique. (Paris, Aubier, 1970); H. Küng, Unfehlbar? - Eine Anfrage (Zürich-Einsiedeln-Köln, Benziger, 1970; English translation: Infallible? An Enquiry. London, Collins, 1971); the Küng-Rahner correspondence in Stimmen der Zeit, 186-187 (1970-1971), passim; K. Rahner (ed.), Zum Problem Unfehlbarkeit, Antworten auf die Anfrage von Hans Küng (Freiburg-Basel-Wien, Herder, 1972); the fine bibliographic articles of A. Antón, 'Infalibilidad: problema ecuménico', Gregorianum, 53/4, pp. 759-770, and L. Vischer, 'The Infallibility Debate. Some Recent Publications', The Ecumenical Review, 24/2 (April 1972), pp. 225-234. Cf. also the rehewed discussion occasioned by the promulgation of Mysterium Ecclesiae (1973), esp. H. Küng and K. Rahner, 'Authority in the Church; an exchange of letters', Tablet, 227 (June 23, 1973), pp. 597-599; K. Rahner, 'Mysterium Ecclesiae', Cross Currents, 23 (Summer 1973), pp. 183-198; H. Küng, 'Mysterium Ecclesiae' (interview by Herder Korrespondenz), Tablet, 227 (Sept. 1, 1973), pp. 835-839; K. Rahner, (reply), ibid. (Oct. 6, 1973), pp. 956-958; (Oct. 13, 1973), pp. 981-983; (Oct. 20, 1973), pp. 1005-1007. ~~A more complete bibliography can be found at the end of the essay.~~

2. Cf. the concise expression of the First Vatican Council which speaks of faith propter auctoritatem ipsius Dei revelantis, qui nec falli nec fallere potest (Denz. Schön. 3008).

3. Fallo (fallere) means to err, also in the sense of deceiving someone, breaking a promise, betraying one's word, etc. Cf. σφάλλω which, in addition, means falling (and also this in the figurative sense of falling into disgrace, having difficulties, having an accident).

4. For this reason Hans Küng suggests the word be rendered by Untrüglichkeit (indefectibility) rather than by Unfehlbarkeit (infallibility) (Die Kirche, Freiburg, Herder, 1967, p. 406; English translation: The Church, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1967, pp. 342-343). Cf. the more detailed discussion in the same author's Unfehlbar? Eine Anfrage, op. cit., pp. 147 sq. (English: Infallible? An Enquiry, op. cit., pp. 149 sq.). → 593.1 668

5. 'It was no accident that in the Vatican Council of 1870 and in the Roman Catholic Church outside that imposing assembly the conflict resolves itself into a bitter opposition between the scholarly and the administrative genius of the Church, the former as hostile to the definition of papal infallibility as the latter was urgent in its favour. The Curia is a court, not an adademy. Its utterances are decrees, not theories. Its language is not theological so much as legal, and is to be interpreted and judged as such.' W. A. Curtis, 'Infallibility', ERE ~~(Edinburgh, Clark, 1964 repr.)~~, VII, p. 257.

6. Cf. M. Schmaus, Katholische Dogmatik, Vol. III: Die Lehre von der Kirche (München, Hueber, 1958) and in particular pp. 177 and 793 sq.

7. To situate our example, we quote the Apostolic Constitution Munificentissimus Deus (1 November 1950): 'Quapropter...ad Omnipotentis Dei gloriam...auctoritate Domini Nostri Iesu Christi, Beatorum Apostolorum Petri et Pauli ac Nostra pronuntiamus, declaramus et definimus divinitus revelatum dogma esse: Immaculatam Deiparam ~~Deiparum~~ semper Virginem Mariam, expleto terrestris vitae cursu, fuisse corpore et anima ad caelestem gloriam assumptam.' (Denz. Schön 3903)

8. '...it is clear that not infallibility but ordinary certainty is the basis of our faith, at least as far as the necessary knowledge of the fact of revelation and most of all its essential parts is concerned. We have mistaken the need for certainty for the need of infallibility. Actually we are certain without it, and infallibility itself is less certain than the fact and major

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(4, continued)

Cf. as a curiosum Pascal writing in a letter of November 5, 1656 to Mlle. de Roannez: ..."je ne puis m'empêcher de vous dire que je voudrais être infaillible dans mes jugements".... Oeuvres completes *ed. I. Chevalier (Paris, Gallimard (Pléiade) 1954, p. 511).*

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components of the revelation.' Thus affirms the catholic bishop F. Simons in explaining the post-cartesian mentality in his book: Infallibility and the Evidence (Springfield, Illinois, Templegate, 1968), p. 65. He seeks to go beyond the dogma of the roman Church, not by enlarging the interpretation of infallibility but by humbly and sincerely recognizing that there is no such dogma, and consequently true catholic orthodoxy has nothing to do with it.

9. The formula of Augustinian origin (cf. P. L., 38, 734): Roma locusta causa finita could give rise to a most interesting psychological analysis. Cf. on the other hand, Pythia locuta, causa finita in K. Kerényi's 'Problème sur la Pythia', in the volume edited by E. Castelli *L'infaillibilite*, *op. cit.* ~~(already cited)~~, pp. 323-327.

10. The expression is attributed to Franzelin. Cf. Chapter III in Y. Congar's Jalons pour une théologie de laïcat, Part II (Paris, Cerf, 1953; English translation: Lay People in the Church, Westminster, Md., Newman Press, 1965, Ch. VI, pp. 271-323, esp. 289-294) where infallibility is considered as a prophetic function of the Church. Cf. also G. Thils, 'L'infaillibilité de l'Eglise "in credendo" et "in docendo"', in Le premier symposium internationale de théologie dogmatique fondamentale (Torino, 1962), pp. 83-122.

11. Cf. Y. Congar, 'Konzil als Versammlung und grundsätzliche Konziliarität der Kirche', in the Karl Rahner Festgabe, Gott in Welt (Freiburg, Herder, 1964), Vol. II, pp. 135-165.

12. Cf. ~~the fine work of~~ H. Rahner, Symbole der Kirche, Die Ekklesiologie der Väter (Salzburg, Müller, 1964), passim, but esp. pp. 473 sq.

13. Cf. vgr. K. Rahner in K. Rahner and J. Ratzinger, Episkopat und Primat (Freiburg, Herder, 1961), pp. 86 sq. (English translation: The Episcopate and the Primacy, New York, Herder & Herder, 1962, pp. 64 sq.); H. Küng, Strukturen der Kirche (Freiburg, Herder, 1962), pp. 335 sq. (English translation: Structures of the Church, London, Burns & Oates, 1964, pp. 305 sq.); M. Löhrer in J. Feiner

footnote (8), continued:

Seeing the indian context from where he writes and the unspoiled or naïve faith of the bishop, our sociological law is reinforced: he does not need 'infallibility' for his christians of Indore (it sounds superfluous and redundant), but Rome does . . .

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& M. Löhrer, Mysterium Salutis (Einsiedeln, Benziger, 1965), Vol. I, pp. 577 sq.

14. The theological discussion would center more on the question of whether the subject primo et per se were the Pope, the Council or the Church.

15. Personally I know of no such comparative study devoted to this problematic. I am thinking for example of a cross-cultural theological encounter between this christian doctrine and the hindu mīmāṁsā. Cf. vgr. R. Panikkar, 'La demitologizzazione nell'incontro tra Cristianesimo e Induismo', in Il problema della Demitizzazione, edited by E. Castelli (Padova, Cedam, 1961).

16. Cf. G. Lanczkowski, 'Neuere Forschungen zur Mythologie', Saeculum, XIX, 2/3 (1968), pp. 282-309 for the current state of the question.

17. Cf. my chapter 'La transmythisation', in Le Mystère du culte dans l'hindouisme et le christianisme (Paris, Cerf, 1970), pp. 171 sq.

18. In this sense one could understand the decree Lamentabili (3 July 1907) in condemning the proposition: 'In definiendis veritatibus ita collaborant discens et docens Ecclesia, ut docenti Ecclesiae nihil supersit, nisi communes discentis opiniationes sancire.' (Denz. Schön. 3406). The authority sanctions--and proclaims--the belief of the people, not new beliefs.

19. Cf. the entire volume Mythe et Foi (Paris, Aubier, 1966), and especially the Introduction by the editor, E. Castelli, pp. 11 sq.

20. This prompts me to note that precisely this modern excommunication is the reason so-called civilized Man ~~does not~~ finds it difficult to understand the seemingly bizarre attitude of the so-called primitive in his relations with animals, taboos, totems, regulations, etc. The problem of sacrifice is also intimately connected to this problematic. Cf., to cite a classic work: W. Robertson Smith, Lectures on the Religion of the Semites (New York, Appleton, 1889), pp. 251 sq.: 'The life of his clansman was sacred to him [early man], not because he was a man, but

because he was a kinsman; and, in like manner, the life of an animal of his totem kind is sacred to the savage, not because it is animate, but because he and it are sprung from the same stock and are cousins to one another.' (p. 267).

21. Need I quote the remark of a friend who said: 'Heaven for the temperature, but hell for the company!' The community of sinners would seem much more animated, intense and human than the communion of the 'perfect'.

22. Cf. a statement which is valid outside its immediate context: 'among primitive peoples there are no binding precepts of conduct except those that rest on the principles of kinship.' W. Robertson Smith, op. cit., p. 269.

23. Elsewhere I have tried to show that the primacy of the principle of non-contradiction broadly characterizes western (semitic) culture and that the primacy of the principle of identity can explain the character of oriental (indian) thought. Cf. my Mystère du culte, op. cit., p. 37 sq.

24. Cf. Ch. Journet, L'Eglise du Verbe Incarné (Paris, Desclée, 1955, 2nd edition), Vol. I, Ch. VIII, where the author has generally succeeded in salvaging papal infallibility once one accepts its context.

25. ~~The~~ Roman catholic position, for example, ~~can easily~~ *could easier* find agreement with the protestant intuitions ~~were~~ *if* the discussion ~~center of gravity~~ *would* shift from the realm of orthodoxy to orthopraxis.

26. Membership in the Communist Party is a privilege to which all are not called. Who then is the good humanist? the good atheist? Where do we find the real christian? the perfect buddhist? Here scarcity is the criterion of authenticity.

27. This idea ~~could~~ *should* prove fruitful in the important contemporary problem of the encounter of religions. ~~We have sought to apply it on many occasions.~~ It is not a question of universalizing at the price of a superficiality which neglects the concrete. On the contrary, it is a matter of sharing, participating, grow-

ing together.

28. Cf. Is. 11:12. In the context cited, cf. Denz. Schön. 3014.

29. Cf. Mk. 16:15; etc. Moreover, this is the only valid exegesis from the pastoral point of view.

30. 'To some extent, all culture is a gigantic effort to mask this [death, want, destruction,...], to give the future the simulacrum of safety by making activity repetitive, expective--"to make the future predictable by making it conform to the past" [Burke].' C. Kluckholn, 'Myths and Rituals', in W. A. Lessa and E. Z. Vogt, Reader in Comparative Religion, An Anthropological Approach (New York, Harper and Row, 1965, 2nd edition), p. 152.

31. We ought not to underestimate the importance of the ecclesial hapax which the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes, represents.

32. Cf. R. Panikkar, 'The Relation of Christians to their Non-Christian Surroundings', in J. Neuner (ed.), Christian Revelation and World Religions (London, Burns & Oates, 1967), pp. 148 sq., reprinted in Cross Currents: 'Christians and So-called "Non-Christians"', XXI, 3 (Summer-Fall, 1972), pp. 281-308.

33. Cf. the words of Teilhard de Chardin in 1948 (Psyche): 'Pour un chrétien... le succès biologique final de l'Homme sur Terre est, non seulement une probabilité, mais une certitude: puisque le Christ (et en Lui virtuellement le Monde) est déjà ressuscité.' L'Avenir de l'Homme, Oeuvres (Paris, Seuil, 1959), Vol. V, pp. 304-305.

34. Cf. E. Castelli in his introduction to Debats sur le langage théologique (Paris, Aubier, 1969), p. 13 and his opening remarks to the volume, L'Infaillibilité, op. cit., pp. 17-26.

35. Cf. Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:28; 2 Tim. 3:17; Jas. 3:2.

###

XVI

XVI. Hermeneutic of Religious Freedom :

Religion as Freedom

Ὑμεῖς γὰρ ἐπ' ἐλευθερίᾳ
ἐκλήθητε

In libertatem vocati estís.

Gal. 5:13

Freedom claimed you when you were called. (+)

(+) *Knox translation, trying to bring together the ecclesia with the call, precisely, to freedom.*

1 Freedom of Religion

καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει ὑμᾶς

et veritas liberavit vos. (1)

It is undeniable that our epoch is presently undergoing an important, even disruptive, change in the notion and above all the experience of human freedom. We may ascertain this more clearly by studying the different ways of dealing with the age-old problem of the relations between freedom and religion.

First I shall try to depict this change, one of the most striking turnabouts of our day. Since the sociological phenomena of freedom and liberation are well known, I shall confine myself to underscoring their philosophical problematic regarding religious freedom.

Secondly, I shall attempt to show that this change runs much deeper than might appear at first glance. It implies a new awareness of human religiousness --I wonder if it could be called transmythicization? It is in fact Man's religious dimension that undergoes today this profound, and I hope purifying transformation.

In short, the hermeneutic of the freedom of religion brings me to consider religion as freedom. To recognize the 'freedom of religion' amounts to disclosing the religiousness of freedom and consequently religion as freedom. This is the thesis I shall develop.

* * * * *

a

Freedom as a Duty

Traditional western thinking has repeatedly proclaimed the freedom of religion and thus even of the religious act, but has somehow neglected the concrete Man himself, the ultimate subject of this free act. The reasoning went like this: Man has a duty to follow the true religion because he is made for truth, the true religion incarnates the truth, and truth is the good. To 'help' the individual to perform that duty is a supremely moral act. If Man finds himself faced with the choice between good and evil, this comes from a weakness of his freedom. God is perfectly free and yet he is not confronted with the choice between good and evil. Certainly, the free act, by definition, has to allow for its own negation. But strictly speaking, Man is not free to choose evil, he merely has the possibility of doing so by being carried away by the attraction of evil, and if he takes this road, he sins. If, then, a higher authority, in spite of the individual's will, steers him clear of evil by constraining him to follow the good and the true path, his freedom is not violated. ~~Now~~ Here evil is considered error, and goodness truth. Hence if the Church or the Emperor, for instance, does someone violence by wresting the individual from error, the latter is only being helped to become free. In all these traditional considerations freedom has from the start an ambivalent character, but its negative taint is stressed: it is the abuse of the freedom to sin, to refuse God's gift, to choose evil. Significantly enough, the first act of freedom of which the Bible tells us is Adam's sin, and the first creaturely act it describes is another abuse of freedom, the sin of the angels: in both instances, a misuse of freedom to disobey. In order to avoid making God responsible for the world's ills, evil was imputed to freedom. Evil is then the result of freedom. No wonder that freedom has

not had a very good reputation. "Libertas perditionis" (1) ~~(Denz.-Shön. 3178)~~ and "libertas erroris" (2) ~~(Denz.-Shön. 2731)~~ are two quotations from St. Augustine that the Popes of the past century were fond of quoting.

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(1) Denz.-Schön. 3178

(2) Denz. – Schön. 2731

Following this *mood*, freedom has been allied with contingency, with human limitations and imperfections. Man is free because he can say 'no', even--mainly?--to God. Faced with a free choice it is Man's duty to choose the good and thus the truth. Freedom is the price Man must pay to become like God, and for this, freedom is ambivalent, at once a good and an imperfection. Perfect freedom would make Man God. The fissure between the objective and the subjective order of things is the gauge of Man's creatureliness. Every Man, precisely because he is free, chooses 'his' good. Further, since Aristotle it is recognized this good can only be defined as that to which the will is directed. Freedom always makes a choice sub specie boni, but the fissure appears when this subjective good to which the will is directed is not at the same time an objective truth. *Objective truth is obscured by passions and selfishness.* Error and evil are possible in the human sphere precisely because the objective and the subjective do not coincide. Freedom is the guarantor, so to speak, of Man's responsibility, his merit and his dignity, but it is also answerable for error and evil. The vision of Man 'condemned to be free' is but ~~the most~~ a recent expression of a traditional western notion. [redacted]

In *the social life of Church and State,* the argument was pursued in the most logical [redacted] fashion. The heretic *is he who* voluntarily chooses error; *hence* he sins against human nature, for Man is a rational animal and the heretic refuses to accept truth. One is not humanly, i.e., rationally, free to opt for truth or error, since true freedom is to choose the truth. It alone will set us free. Man is only potentially free; he acquires more and more freedom in the extent to which he chooses, and lives in, the truth. But the Church being the 'depository' of truth, there is no question of a free choice between

belonging or not belonging to it (only ignorance in good faith can save the infidel). You are not morally free facing the truth; even ignorance can be culpable. So it is not a matter of a free choice, but rather of a free--spontaneous and reasonable--adherence to truth, since you have acknowledged the right of truth and man's duty to adhere to it. Truth is liberating, but you must first acknowledge the duty to embrace it; only then does liberation ensue. You cannot even recognize truth if you are not rooted in it. Only if we 'believe in it', if we are its 'disciples', if we 'know' the truth, will it free us. Morality in the broadest sense is a sine qua non for adherence to truth. Even to devote oneself to philosophy, and thus to searching out the truth, one was obliged in several cultures to evince a practical and moral engagement. If our works are not good we will not even be able to recognize truth, and if we do not recognize truth wherever it is, wherever it shows itself, we may very well doubt we are on the way to the good. → 688.1

→ It is noteworthy that the very word 'religion', whether in its etymology or its numerous classical usages, always indicates a bond, a decision, an obligation, a reversal (when it is not a scruple, a superstition, etc.). In other words, religion usually indicates a duty, a dependence, an obedience, an acknowledgment of our contingency, and it is this same set of ideas concerning dependence and obligation that seems so opposed to any notion centering on autonomy and freedom.

The famous pontifical condemnations, in the last century and the beginning of our own, of so-called freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, freethinkers, liberalism, etc., show just how far the conviction was kept alive that freedom is a duty (and equally

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The same was traditional in the socio-political sphere for thousands of years: if you escape your tribe you shall be killed, you have to realize your being within your caste, guild, class, nation. The slave, the outcast, the rebel will have to pay with his life for his excommunication. In many countries the passport is still a privilege and not a right. If the count, the duke, the king, the emperor, but ~~especially~~ equally so if the president, the parliament, the party or the country calls you, you have to obey and cannot object. From the days of [redacted] Arjuna, the first conscientious objector who was convinced, or at least defeated by Lord Krishna, until our recent times you could not even argue against the idea not only that the common good has the primacy, but that it is the hierarchical status quo which determines the common good.

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a danger) and how the connotation of the word was always rather pejorative. To recognize the dangers of freedom, and the ravages of libertinage, to accept our ties and our limits, to be on guard against a spirit of independence, and our own judgments; christian spirituality vigorously emphasized these many negative characteristics of its day in order to foster obedience and humility, and to bolster the unflagging effort towards perfection. Freedom was considered the stronghold of Man's self-assertive will standing against the rights of God or against the objective rights of truth. Plato amicus, sed magis amica veritas; Pereat mundus, sed iustitia adimpleatur; oboedentia tutior, etc., were so many maxims with the alternative of self-assertion either stubborn abusing of our freedom poorly understood, or of submission to God (cui servire regnare est), to reality, or to one's superiors. From Plato and the Stoics up to and including the majority of christian writers, freedom was found pejoratively associated with autarchy, independence, self-mastery and so with pride, self-sufficiency, the rejection of the bonds which bind us and which 'make' Man: ἐλεύθερον τὸ ἄρχον ἑαυτοῦ. (2) But Man, so they said, is neither his own ἀρχή nor his own ἄρχον.

Certainly, it was said, there is a natural law, all authority comes from God, who is a God of freedom; one must resist an unjust law, etc. But all these arguments could not be used against the authority which, they said, comes from God. Individual conscience is doubtless the final arbiter--here one knowingly quotes St. Thomas--but the individual cannot constantly be questioning everything; he lacks the necessary training or data. Once you have so to speak examined the Church's credentials as the vehicle of Revelation, once you have critically acknowledged that she possesses the authority of

Plato amicus, sed magis amica veritas; pereat mundus, sed iustitia adimpleatur; oboedentia tutior; etc. [1] were so many maxims with the ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~of~~ only possible alternative of either stuborn self-assertion, by an abuse of our freedom, or of submission to God (cui servire regnare est, we were told [2]) through one's superiors.

(1) I am a good friend of Plato, but still more friend with truth; may the world perish, but let justice be fulfilled; obedience is ~~xx~~ the surest thing.

(2) serving him means to reign.

God and the promise of the Holy Spirit's assistance, you regard yourself justified in signing a blank affidavit and believing everything she ~~teaches~~ with no further need to question or take other steps. It would be interesting in this regard to study what tradition has said on the famous problem of regicide. *Mariana was condemned by Church and State.* → 680.1

objectivity here carries the day over subjectivity, essential truth over existential truth (authenticity), the community over the person, and, by an interesting transference from the epistemological to the ontological sphere, a certain super-naturalism prevails over the natural. And it is to this (inferior) realm of the natural that the so-called 'rights of Man' specifically belong. That there be no misunderstanding here, it would be premature, even false, to reject utterly this hierarchical and objective conception of the universe. We have only tried to describe it as briefly as possible. Intelligenti pauca. (3)

b) ~~1.2~~ Freedom as a Right

Today's situation *begins to be* ~~is very~~ different. The same words previously charged with negative intonations now convey positive values. The climate *is changing* ~~is changing~~, not only in *some parts of* the so-called secular world, but in the religious world as well. The ecumenical Council of Churches speaks of tolerance and understanding, the Second Vatican Council of religious freedom, *hinduism of a new interpretation of caste, eurocommunism strikes a humanistic and democratic note, etc.*

The great modern myths--suspect not long ago in ecclesiastical circles--*such as* ~~are~~ tolerance, dialogue, pluralism, democracy, justice, progress, etc., have as their common denominator the more or less explioit idea that freedom is a supreme and inalienable right of the human person and so that freedom excels any other value whatsoever. We begin these days to speak of the rights of Man, we even proclaim them in a 'charter'. *Although many of us remember the criticisms*

We should ponder the fact that Giordano Bruno could escape the jurisdiction of the Church as little as a citizen of a modern nation can escape the power of the State by renouncing his nationality. A certificate of birth may today bind an individual more than a certificate of baptism.

Historically speaking one could put forward the hypothesis that the communist ideology seems to be the successor of this mentality, which now ~~most~~ many of the traditional religions want to overcome. I am not saying that there are no differences between the 'people of Israel', the 'church of God' and the 'Party', or that 'corporate destiny' is the same as 'collective mission'. I am signaling a common horizon.

Whatever this may be,

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voiced against
of the Declaration of San Francisco in 1945: "the duties of Man" should rather have been proclaimed . . . !" Let us not forget that when victorious Japan in the Versailles treaty, in 1919, proposed, when drafting the Covenant of the League of Nations, that race or nationality should not be discriminating factors, in law or in fact, it was defeated, mainly because of the opposition of Britain and the United States of America.

The change cuts deep. We only now begin to take account of it. In fact we are still submerged, so to speak, in the transition and most of these words still retain a disquieting ambivalence. This is easily verified by reading Kierkegaard or modern existentialism or the christian literary output since the Second World War, on the tension between the Church and the Modern World, etc. Dictatorship was not a bad word only a couple of generations ago. Dictatorship of the proletariat could be a very positive slogan. Today, everywhere we have 'peoples' democracies'. It all may be a tactic, but this is irrelevant for our thesis. The important change is that this is the general language employed by those of the right and those of the left. We are entering a new myth.

To be sure, for perhaps thousands of years there have been aristocrats of the spirit who would not be tied up by racial, social, religious and other differences, but such ideals had to remain esoteric. There were some who said we Men are all brethren, even the enemies should be loved, no degrading distinction should be made between male and female, greek and jew, rich and poor. Yet all this was taken not only cum grano salis, but also embedded in a larger horizon of a structured, hierarchical and immutable objective order: "slaves, obey your masters"!

But we may leave aside the study of historical facts to indicate certain philosophical features which seem to belong to the mythemes of our contemporary myth.

i) In the first place, there is clearly a shift in emphasis from the objective to the subjective, from objective truth to subjective truth, from

the category of essences to that of existences. What seems above all important today is the human person and his subjectivity, not the objective order of ideas or the exigencies of a theoretical objectivity deemed independent of Man and superior to him.

It is not only, nor basically, a moral consideration which leads us to recognize that we should not impose upon others something they do not readily accept. This would bring us to suppose that the first hypothesis is itself immoral, and we do not believe this is so. We should not commit the katachronism of judging a past era with ideas current today. Although the first world-view may lend itself to an abuse of authority, appropriate distinctions were in fact drawn to avoid, at least theoretically, the abuse of power and the constraint of conscience. In spite of all possible manipulations there was always a transcendent and supreme God. On the other hand, a certain liberal or liberalist notion might also led to a disregard for the individual--rendered incapable of shouldering his own responsibilities, overwhelmed as he is by the spiritual, intellectual or material powers that surround him. With habeas corpus and 'constitutional rights' there may be as much human exploitation as without them. We are speaking of a change in consciousness and not endorsing an idea of human linear progress--although this change is obviously not without practical consequences. Indifference toward the weak and non-interference in our neighbor's calamities may be sheer cowardice and callousness cloaked in 'respect' for their 'freedom'. ~~Although~~ The moral questions stem from another order altogether and they are extant in both modes of thought we are presently studying.

Our problem is equally independent of any psychological consideration of the subjective convictions of individuals. It goes without saying that we must respect the awareness of others, that there are different psychological types, that what carries conviction for some may not for others, that we can

approach reality by several paths and that there can be a healthy perspectivism. All this was well known before today. The rights of subjectivity are not purely a psychological affair.

The moral and psychological issues are two very important questions in which the modern era has taken a particular interest, but I believe that the transmythicization we are now studying oversteps these two spheres utterly. We should look for the roots at an ontological level and an anthropological stratum. This new awareness was not totally absent in the past but it was the privilege of the few, whereas now it begins to enter the universal human consciousness.

We are becoming more sensitive to the fact and open to the experience that any objectivity demands a subjectivity, or rather that we should never cut the umbilical cord uniting the two. Hardly anybody, of course, has defended sheer objectivity; nevertheless it was considered to be the decisive element. The tension between the two was not so great precisely because objectivity was based in the subjectivity of God, and God's existence was by and large unquestioned. The modern epoch shows itself more reserved, more respectful and skeptical, when it comes to ascribing ideas and concepts to God. The very objectivity of revelation, for instance, cannot be severed from the subjectivity of the one (to) who (it is) revealed.

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At bottom we find a relational awareness recovering importance not only in the realm of science but in other spheres of human life as well. We might mention here the fundamental distinction between an agnostic relativism, indifferent to truth, and a relativity, aware that truth is a relationship, that beings themselves are relational, quite as much as thoughts and the other products of human culture.

ii) b) *Related to the preceding consideration,* ~~In conjunction with this~~, we may add the primacy of the dignity of the person as a *theoretical* characteristic of our times. To be sure, people have talked about personal dignity before now, but they had situated man's dignity in exterior objectivities: insofar as he embodies transcendental values, participates in the divine nature, belongs to a particular religion, nation, class, race, civilization, etc. The dignity of the person, in the final analysis, was ~~always~~ located outside the person. Even today the sole justification for capital punishment (other than atavisms) relies on the dichotomy enforced between the person of the 'criminal' and the human dignity he has lost. Civil justice claims to kill the criminal in order to preserve his human dignity. The same anthropological justification goes for *traditional forms of* suicide: ~~to save the 'face' you kill the person~~. 'I commit *hara-kiri* in order to save my personal dignity--which is outside me--by eliminating 'me'. *Modern suicide would be almost the opposite: 'I kill myself because I am the last instance'.*

Our age begins dimly to glimpse that the *concrete* ~~particular~~ person embodies the highest possible value, over and above any social or objective category whatsoever. This amounts to discovering that the freedom of the person is an ontological freedom, superior to 'objective truth', even to *objective* religion; and that the person, in its ontological nudity and with all its constitutive ambivalence--for it is ever

in relation--always presents a core irreducible to 'categories' of (abstract truth or goodness. In other words, the particular existence takes precedence over essence or ideas, and so (personal) authenticity proves superior to (objective) truth.

The often ~~~~violent~~~~ and impassioned discussion throughout the 19th Century on freedom in its most varied facets, philosophical, theological, social, political, etc., cannot be explained away as a simple speculative disagreement or a difference in perspectives ~~on reality~~, but as a true crisis of growth in Man himself, appearing in and through a new awareness, although not always expressing itself with sufficient clarity or precision. We *may be* ~~are~~ in the presence of a genuine *transmythicization* ~~spiritual mutation of humanity~~ and it *will* ~~seems neither honest nor true~~ *not help* to attempt to shield today's positions--with apologetic intent--by saying they were already maintained in the traditional notion of Man and theology. *To say, for instance, that we learn non-*
se from the Bible is a beautiful confession of one's beliefs, but an exegetical
ble. Further, the christian 'fact' conceived as static, complete and potentially accomplished, needing only to expand and be actualized ~~in fact~~, is rather an aristotelian category than a christian exigency. Moreover, to recognize this *transmythicization* ~~mutation~~ furnishes ~~in our view, the best~~ *a* proof of the vitality of the christian faith, which has no need to continually justify itself by *an exclusive* ~~a~~ 'fidelity' to the past, but which can also present itself as a 'hope' for the One destined to come yet again. The christian 'fact' need not be understood exclusively as a seed in the process of growing, but it also asks to be seen as a ever new creation, ever approaching the creative act and leaving behind the creaturely state, Man being *as much* ~~more~~ a hope to be than a potency of being. Of course a mystical vision and a deep intuition leap *far beyond* ~~well over~~ these conceptual skeletons, and one has the impression that the great masters of antiquity have even

anticipated us. But whatever the outcome, we must also take into account the scandal this language and these theories represent for a traditional mentality, when they are upheld today by thinkers seriously concerned about orthodoxy and fidelity to tradition.

"How can religion be sustained with a thesis like this? Will the whole edifice, not only of christianity but of all religious life and even all order, not collapse?" Briefly, then, it may appear that we uphold the right to error, not as such, i.e., error in the abstract, but error as far as it is incarnated in a person who follows his or her own conscience, however twisted or erroneous. ~~We do not deny~~ (No need to discuss now) this latter possibility, ~~but we~~ (suffice to) affirm that in concreto there is no higher court of appeal than the conscience and consciousness of the person. Men all have the same rights and at this level we have renounced any (merely) objective criterion of truth, since although objective truth need not be denied, it scarcely has any meaning if the concrete subject, the person, does not make it his own. The person in the concretion of his living relationship with his world is a supreme value, permitting no possible recourse to anything (which might) transcend him. Is this not precisely what is understood by atheism? ~~And~~ But did Vatican (Council II) not defend just that? Dignitatis humanae personae is the title (and ~~the~~ first ~~opening~~ words) of the Declaratio on Religious Freedom (which ~~quoting~~ quotes) at the very outset John XXIII's Pacem in terris).

The experience of pluralism, in the air almost everywhere today, ~~is~~ (is a way) not foreign to the atmosphere of the Council. Pluralism has, so to speak, undermined ~~our~~ The hitherto unshakable confidence in the absolute character of ~~our~~ one's own convictions. It is not agnosticism to discover ~~a sense of~~ the relativity of our ideas, our formulations, even our beliefs. So we come to put confidence in the other, not only regarding his good faith but also regarding the truth—partial, limited, unilateral or what you will, but truth after all—of his viewpoint. The other thus becomes a source of knowledge--and not merely an object of knowledge--which consequently cannot be reduced to my judgement.

With reference to our particular point, the philosophical structure underpinning the Council's reasoning comes down to the following: "the human person has a right to religious freedom'. Now Man is not infallible, he can make mistakes: consequently religious freedom must also consider the fact that the person may objectively be in error. All the same, he has a right to religious freedom, for this freedom has its foundation in the dignity of the human person. (Jus ad libertatem religiosam esse fundatum in ipsa dignitate personae humanae--"the right to religious freedom is grounded in the very dignity of the human person.") This is to say that human freedom has a certain ontonomy vis-à-vis the adherence or non-adherence to objective truth. We have no right to encroach upon freedom, for it is this freedom in which ~~grounds~~ the dignity of the person is grounded. What has supreme value, what constitutes the dignity of Man, is his freedom, i.e. the fact that he is capable of acting freely. If we rob Man of this we degrade him to a sub-human condition. Now, the essential claim of all religions is to help Man acquire (or recover) his full dignity, which is another term for salvation liberation, fulness, final goal and the like. In other words, any religious act tends ultimately to let Man acquire his dignity, his salvation or liberation. Hence if an act is not free it cannot be religious. Here we come back to our thesis: to recognize the fact of religious freedom leads to the affirmation that the fundamental act of religion is the free act, and that the free act is the religious act par excellence. Thus the freedom of religion leads us to religion as freedom.

To sum up the transmythicization that has taken place regarding freedom and human dignity, we could quote the well-known Pauline phrase: 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom' but instead of reading it as only ~~saying: where there is freedom, there is the Spirit of the Lord~~ saying that the Church, being where the Spirit dwells, is the place of freedom, we read it as also saying: 'where there is freedom, there is the Spirit of the Lord'. The Kingdom of freedom is built by the Spirit of the

Lord. The Church, by definition, is the place of freedom. Freedom <u>*is*</u> *the Spirit of the Lord. The ecclesiastical calling, the vocation, the* <u>*congregatio*</u> *which constitutes the Church, is a call to freedom:* ἐπ' ἐλευθερίᾳ ἐκλήθητε.

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2 Religion as Freedom (4)

οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία

Ubi autem Spiritus Domini, ibi libertas. (5)

It seems that the antinomy between religion and freedom *appears the moment we begin to reflect on the problem.* →677.1 ~~has no solution if we try to resolve it within the old categories.~~ From the traditional point of view it is necessary to uphold the exclusively functional value of freedom; everything depends on how we use it; we cannot 'substantialize' freedom *(and convert it into a good 'thing')*, To canonize freedom above everything else would amount to libertinism, anarchy, the fiercest individualism and in the final analysis, to the most radical solipsism--each man his own king, a law unto himself. So we compromise, we limit exterior personal freedom by respect for the freedom of others, we trim the individual's freedom to the needs of society, etc. ~~In brief~~ Now, to institutionalize freedom spells its destruction, independently of possible abuses on the part of authority (which *still* has a brake *when it comes* ~~becoming~~ from God', but turns into tyranny when it becomes autonomous). To want to "instrumentalize" freedom is a contradiction in terms. ~~Everything leads one to suppose that~~ The impasse is real: you cannot leave freedom 'free' if you want to safeguard order and religion. Man can only live in a state of conditioned freedom. Freedom is at the most free will, and that is all. *Man's life on earth is on parole.*

We cannot ~~even theorize~~ elaborate *here* an analysis of the *assumptions on which such a vision is based,* ~~suppositions needing change,~~ or suggest the principles *for* ~~upon which~~ a new vision of man and reality. *Suffice it to say that the traditional* ~~could be based. We simply add that~~ if man is regarded as a substance, and substance as static being with no possible dynamism other than accidental change, and if being is considered *as a given at* ~~in~~ its beginning and not *at* ~~in~~ its end, if further, time is an accident and ideas have a so-called divine immutability, etc., then *freedom is a mere psychological feature of the human being--which will sooner or later open the door to an extreme skinnerian interpretation (6).*

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In a sense freedom stands in antinomy with everything else, since liberty, once put on the level of the norm, is the anti-nomos par excellence. Dialectically speaking freedom and law are certainly 'antinomic'; but what we are looking for is a non-dialectical relation between freedom and nomos, rta, ordo.

Whatever this may be, → 687

that
I am not suggesting the traditional notion is radically false. I am simply saying that as it presents itself to the contemporary spiritual situation it appears unsatisfactory. Rightly or wrongly a new myth seems to emerge and our intention has been one of trying to understand this transmythicization as far as possible.

Let us confine ourselves to this particular but central aspect of the relation between freedom and religion. If religion is fundamentally the link, the string or rather the rein that somewhat bridles the wild animal that is Man, leading him to a goal, which he somehow seems to want and to shun, then freedom can only be the result of acknowledging that the prescribed way is the right path and that within it he may run 'freely'. The way is somewhat fixed and determined.

Now, perhaps religion is not only this. A very traditional christian concept may help us here.

Metanoia is the constant challenge of faith to every epoch, in every culture and religion, and so also to contemporary christianity. Now this constant change of mind, this ongoing or rather 'in-going' conversion seems to indicate that the transformation faith requires of us is not to make freedom a religion (at which tradition would be justifiably outraged) but to transform the very concept of religion into real freedom. We shall try to explicate this.

It is certainly necessary to deepen the notion of freedom, but we must also rethink the concept of religion. This is not a matter of making freedom into a new form of religion, with its laws, duties, rites, etd., but of recognizing that what was formerly represented by Law, Worship, Duty, etc., and to which the name religion has been given, has freedom at its core or as its soul. I am not proposing a change of name; I propose simply a radical metanoia of religion itself, or rather, a metanoia of human religiousness, a metamorphosis of Man's deepest dimension, which until now has been called the religious dimension.

We can only give a few insights into the problem. I shall try to describe first what religion represents, then what freedom means for contemporary Man, and finally what christian faith has to say about this question.

a) 2.1 Religion, Way to Salvation, Means of Liberation

While the ~~traditional~~ *substantive* definitions of religion stress the dependence, obligation, creatureliness, duty, contingency, etc. of a being insufficient unto itself, it seems to ~~us~~ *me* that the following existential definition of religion may be able to assume the numerous descriptions already given and also include the new ~~spirit we are in the midst of describing~~ *problematic:* religion means way to salvation, or indeed ~~many~~ religion claims to be a way of ~~salvation~~ *liberation*. ~~We~~ *I* call this definition existential because it refers to religion as an existential reality--orthopraxis--without seeking to fix an essential boundary for the contents of the concepts employed. ~~We use the term 'salvation' rather than 'liberation' in order to emphasize its link with certain traditional viewpoint.~~

~~I~~ must stress once and for all that ~~we are~~ *this is an* attempt ~~to express ourselves in~~ *which should be* *use a* language valid, as far as possible, for a wide range of religious and philosophic ~~concepts~~ *persuasions*. We are consequently not concerned with settling the question whether a certain notion of the way or ways is in fact a 'means' effectively conducive to salvation or not. Nor is there any question here of deciding whether salvation, as ~~M~~an's perfection, can be reached by one way rather than another. By way ~~we~~ *I* understand whatever means--action, mind, love, will and so on--~~M~~an must employ, discover, believe, initiate, put into practice, etc., in order to attain his salvation, destiny, end, goal. We can as well ~~evaluate~~ *interpret* this salvation from the most varied perspectives: from perfect union with God to mere survival in society, in an otherworldly heaven, individual annihilation, death, the absurd, or whatever. Inter-cultural, inter-philosophical, and above all inter-religious dialogue must know how to pierce through words and reach that which probably does not exist without

concepts, but is not exhausted by them either.

We must say that the same goes for the word religion. This word is a particular expression of a much larger and deeper reality; the word religion stems from a rather circumscribed order of thinking, valid only in a certain civilization. We know very well it is not found with its current sense in either the Bible or classical latinity, nor can we find a ~~parallel~~ *strict translation* for it in the other religious traditions of mankind. For this reason, to avoid terminological argument, ~~we~~ I shall consider religion not only what circulates under this label, but everything which claims to perform the function that religion strictu sensu is said to perform. In this broader meaning, any ensemble of means which claim to convey man to his life's goal, however this goal might be conceived, can be considered religion.

~~Our point is this:~~ For the last few centuries it has become habit ~~in most western milieus~~ to accord the word religion a very specialized meaning. Some have even wanted to exclude buddhism from this definition since it does not recognize a supreme and personal God. On the other hand, religion had almost been identified with its conceptual expression, which was called orthodox doctrine; ~~even spoke of religion as~~ *the word also came to mean* a *particular* virtue alongside other more or less important virtues. It was not easy, nor is it today, to recognize the fundamentally religious character of communism, humanism and even secularism, since these movements do not fit the ~~accepted~~ *artificially restricted* definition of religion. This would also explain the repugnance these same ideologies, or whatever you call them, feel toward considering themselves religions--so thoroughly has religion been reduced to a certain notions of the way to salvation. For this very reason the proposal has lately been made to abandon the use of the word religion altogether; neverthe-

less, I believe that for want of a better word and also to underscore the basic continuity between what was once called religion and today's new forms of religiousness, we may still employ the same word, having broadened and deepened it along the lines just indicated.

It is not for us now in this context to judge the degree of truth or the moral value of any human attitude toward Man's ultimate problematic. We may question the value or the truth of contemporary modes of religiousness, call them aberrations, substitutes or even false religions, but our task does not consist now in ~~criticizing~~ judging these religions or so-called ideologies but to disengage from them ~~the~~ (functional ~~value in~~ their) claim to lead their <u>believers</u> to their goal.

It should be clear by now that the intention of this chapter is neither to defend nor to attack religion, but to understand that peculiar human dimension expressed by this word. Moreover the religious act does not necessarily need to be good. By the same token that the religious act claims to lead to salvation, its contrary act--equally religious--will lead to failure, damnation. A really free act has this power: it may lead us to our fulfillment, but equally to our bankruptcy. Religion is a double-edged sword.

We should like only to say one thing and from it to suggest another: to say that Man's religious dimension is not indispensably bound to a pre-determined concept of religion; and to suggest that the religious crisis of mankind today is not due to the disappearance of religion as a human dimension, but to the new reclamation of a sphere of the secular which in the last centuries of western history seemed to have been removed from religion. Whether this should take place at the price of burying the sacred, or of discovering the sacredness of the secular, is again quite another question. But certainly separation of Church and State should not be confused with divorce between religion and life.

This said, we can pursue our path by ~~saying~~ stating that Man's religious dimension is on the way to finding its most authentic expression in, precisely, freedom.

~~Even the most rigid totalitarian systems will avow freedom~~ as the supreme goal and will consider ~~the free~~ engagement of the individual in ~~the~~ task of (re)constructing society as the end for which ~~the State was organized.~~

One may have a more, or less, well-defined notion of freedom, but it is a fact that freedom is always deemed man's goal. Religion, then, is that which makes the fundamental claim to liberate man. That to which one adheres in order to acquire what one considers man's fundamental freedom, is a religion. In the cultural constellation of today's world, freedom remains the most deep-seated characteristic of salvation, however one envisions human perfection.

If religion has always promised to save man, then what mankind today eagerly awaits is precisely freedom, liberation from the sufferings, fears, doubts, anxieties and insecurities of life. Humanity today, especially in the West, feels imprisoned by its own inventions, enslaved by its own means of ~~liberation~~ *power*. Technology frees man from so many of his traditional and endemic nightmares that for the first time he can truly forge his own destiny in a spectrum of possibilities unsuspected just a century ago. But he finds himself trapped in his own snare. The freedom to which he aspires is a political freedom as well as an economic and social freedom, but it is above all a personal, even individual, freedom. When you attend vast human gatherings--religious in the broadest sense of the word--you feel a sort of wind, a liberating breath, pass through the head and heart of the crowd, but you also realize that these salutary effects are only transient, because after the liturgical catharsis we relapse into everyday life which clamps us like a vice and seems to

let slip away that cup of liberation for which we ever thirst, and and which modern Man seldom finds in the great traditional religions mere repetition of the past.

Man today thirsts for deliverance, that he would be free from everything, from every limitation, and for this reason from all religion as well, in the sense that the 'bond' of 'religion' seems to him incompatible with the freedom to which he aspires. The religious act par excellence is seen and lived in the act of liberation--from everything, even from religion and from oneself. All prophetic activity is basically the effort--always a failure--to rid oneself of religion in the name of religion. 'If you see the Buddha, kill him', as the great mahāyāna sages and mystics would say--with no need to quote zen.

We may recall Meister's intention to rid of God God's sake.

This then would be the first part of our thesis: the goal of Man is liberation, this being nothing other than deliverance from every constraint, from all limitation, for any limit stands like a wall, blocking us, preventing our flowering. If religion claims to save Man, it can only do so by putting him on the path to realizing his destiny. *We may recall the myth of Śunaḥśepa as the story of deconditioning Man.*

To sum up: the act of ontically exercising freedom is the religious act by which Man is saved (or doomed). The religious act is the act of freedom. The fact of becoming alive to the freedom of religion, that is to say, the fact of having recognized that the freedom of the religious act is this act's primordial element (in such a way that if an act were not free we could not call it religious), this fact leads us to define religion as freedom, and freedom as the fundamental religious category. Only thus do we circumvent the objections raised by those who even lately oppose religious freedom in the name of religion.

6) 2.2 Religion as the Free Act of Liberation

Man wants to be free. Religion wants to free Man. Present-day thought is deeply convinced that the way leading to freedom must itself be a free way, i.e., a way freely chosen or accepted. It is a road which opens out before the traveler, but which at the same time springs up from its own depths; a road which creates itself in the traveling. In traditional terms we could say that religion must be a free act so that Man may come into the entirety of his freedom.

An act which is not itself free cannot liberate. But what is a free act? When does a person act freely? We can answer from a double perspective: he is free who does what he wills, or else wills what he does. In the first case the will is given, in the second the action, but in both cases there is a certain harmony, even adequation, between the intimate depths of being and its expressions and manifestations. In this sense, freedom is truth. Only a free being can be true, for only then will it express what it is. For this reason, there is in any desire for freedom always an impetus to truth.

All the same, there is a vital and characteristic circle in freedom: If I do what I will, I am free but my willingness could always be predetermined, unfree; if on the other hand, I really will what I do, my psychological freedom is guaranteed, since I express what I believe in my action...but what assures me that my actions are not imposed on me, more or less unconsciously, by external circumstance? Do we not make virtue of necessity?

How can we jump out of this circle? (If I do what I will is it not because I will what I do? and vice-versa.) If freedom is only internal (wanting to do what I do) it can very easily turn

into passive acceptance of what is imposed from outside. If it is but to carry out external action (to do what ~~you want~~ *I will*), then apart from possible conflicts with the freedom of others (which will oblige me to limit my own), it can from this side turn into individualistic, anarchical caprice, which is at bottom only a new form of the slavery imposed by action. Only a synergy of these two modes of freedom can ~~not~~ about *authentic* (human freedom. ~~free.~~

The well-known distinction between <u>freedom-from and freedom-to</u> (which could moreover ~~symbolize~~ *express* the characteristic modes of eastern and western spirituality, respectively) may serve as well to express the two faces of freedom we have just mentioned. <u>Freedom-to do</u> what ~~you~~ *I* will (West) would thus be counterbalanced by <u>freedom-from willing</u> what ~~you~~ *I* do (East).

Now, is ~~M~~*m*an not <u>free to free</u> himself <u>from</u> everything that opposes his salvation, his liberation? *This is the crux. Most religions would qualify this freedom.* ~~The religions~~ *They* claim precisely to lead ~~M~~*m*an to his freedom; ~~but very often, by a simple sociological reversal they in fact encroach upon personal freedom in favor of a wider objectivity.~~ Grace could be what gives ~~M~~*m*an this <u>freedom-to</u> so that by it he may <u>free</u> himself <u>from</u> every obstacle to realizing his salvatio~~n~~; however, very often grace--by definition absolutely gratuitous--is in fact dependent upon regulations and institutions which seem to interpose themselves between personal freedom and the liberation of ~~M~~*m*an. We touch here on a complex of well-known and delicate problems *on human nature, sin, grace and free will* that we do not wish to pursue.

~~We~~ *I* repeat: it is not a matter of considering freedom a superior form of religion, or as religion and nothing more, but exactly the contrary; that is, to see that the essence of the religious act consists precisely in the realization of freedom.

The first attitude, the opinion that freedom is the true religion, represents ~~the~~ a traditional idea in most religions. But here we cannot escape one of two difficulties: either we institutionalize freedom in order to make it a religion in the traditional sense, or we fall into libertinage. One could write a whole history of ~~the Church~~ religions centered on the constant tension, creative or destructive, between these two tendencies: on one side we find a 'subjugated' freedom in the bosom of an institution accepted as 'mother', refuge, liberator or what have you, freedom as a recompense for the docile and obedient; and on the other side, unbridled anarchy, since a religion which seeks to be pure freedom should abjure not only every constraint but every norm and directive as well. The tension becomes tragic when the structures do not allow themselves to be overstepped, when rebellion and revolt lead to the same impasses as docility and submission. What makes the lives of certain saints so exciting is not their way of surmounting the conflict--which indeed they do not resolve--but their manner of sustaining defeat by projecting onto a true eschatology, which is not an evasion, the solution that will be possibly precisely after their failure. Sanctity is in fact the harmony between impossibles. If by night all cats are grey, in the future every aporia will have a loophole. Tragedy only rears its head when you kill time...when you can neither wait, nor hope.

What we are now analyzing is precisely the possibility of a new alternative; this constitutes the novelty of our era and what ~~is customarily called the signs of the times, although here the sign is truly a new symbol in human awareness.~~ I *have called a change of myth.* ~~We~~ I have already formulated our principle: the essence of the religious act, that which we find in the heart of what we call religion ~~in the West~~, is precisely freedom.

We shall now pursue a certain sequence in the ascent of our thinking.

i) First, an act which is not free cannot be called a religious act. A forced act would have no religious value. The more freely an act is performed, the more human and religious value it has.

ii) Secondly, the religious act is a free act. Free in the one who performs it, and free in its effects. Religion is distinguished from its counterfeit, magic, by the fact that freedom is essential to the religious act. Worship is distinguished from ritualism by the fact that the former may fall short, for it always runs a risk: it is ever a new act, a (re)creation.

We could try to clarify all this with a little help from the history of classical religions. A very brief resume would draw, it seems to me, the following picture. Religion is the set of means used by man to reach, or make, his salvation (whether the means are given by the divine or not). Now what saves is by definition sacrifice, that is, participation in the cosmic and primordial act through which the world is 're-made', comes to its final destination, remakes in inverse the act which gave birth to the universe, etc. Participation in this sacrifice may take innumerable forms, ranging from rites valid in themselves, which consequently save almost physically or automatically, to an interiorization of these rites by thought or intention; there is as well a spectrum of interpretation from individual morality to the realm of social or even political action. Every religion demands an orthopraxis by which man collaborates in this process. In every case we find a human act freely performed. Now participation in the saving act, performance of the sacrifice, assimilation of the sacramental structure, worship or rite which man

believes he must accomplish to reach or approach his salvation, has until today been dominated, in general, by the authority of the objective order, by the power of the divine factor, by ~~the opus operatum~~ *the efficacy of the knowledge of the Party, the might of nature, the resources of science, etc.* ~~of the sacraments, the efficacy of the rites, etc.~~ In other words, the essence of the religious act was seen as submission and obedience, even adoration, the acknowledgment of human dependence and divine power, the acceptance of creatureliness and ~~predilection~~ of the human condition *similar attitudes, which could perhaps be summed up in the word fidelity.* Religion furnished the 'objective' means of salvation and ~~his~~ duty *the person's* was to lay hold of them, assimilate them, make them his own. Of course with all this ~~they by no means~~ *nobody* claimed to encroach upon freedom. This freedom was said to be the acceptance, recognition and discovery of the real and existential situation. It was the necessary condition for attaining, in a way befitting ~~man~~ *the human being* and yet meritorious, the salvation that grace invited us to enter.

This procedure can be expressed in the most divergent ways, following one or another spirituality or religion, but with very few exceptions we would finally come to what we are in the midst of setting forth, that is, the concept of salvation as a 'favor' from God, a 'gift' of the Party, a 'gratuitous' discovery, an unmerited intuition, a predestination freely accepted, a 'package deal', and so forth. Even traditions like the buddhist, which strongly stresses man's self-redemptive character, do not fail to insist not only that it is the Buddha who has brought us the message of deliverance, but also that we must in some way or other undergo the experience of the Enlightened One in order to be saved. In short, one was obliged, even though freely, to accept, adhere, follow, obey, recognize....

In one way or another, although people have held very different notions of freedom, the religious act has always been considered a free act, free because fully human.

iii) Our third point is simply that the contemporary myth is different. It is not only that people profess themselves no longer satisfied with latin, literary arabic, pali or sanskrit, because they want to understand; nor is it merely a question of a somewhat pressured adaptation to procure more meaningful, and so truer, rituals. It is not enough to discover that we want to be aware of, and consciously collaborate in, the religious act. To be sure this is most traditional, but the difference lies in the fact that this saving free act is no longer seen either in or necessarily connected with the rites, doctrines or actions of established religious norms. A catholic may not feel he is betraying his faith by not going to Sunday Mass; a protestant may find no betrayal of his christian commitment by indulging in extra-marital sexual life, a muslim may not feel any longer guilty if he does not follow the quranic eating and drinking regulations, a hindu may drop all observations and still consider himself a good hindu, etc., etc. Still, in traditional terminology, it is the new sacrifice (identified with the primordial sacrifice), which Man himself freely makes because he feels it surge up from inside his very being. That gives him the requisite awareness of collaborating and participating in the act by which he comes to the fulfillment of his being.

Summarizing humanity's present situation in a single phrase, I would call it a <u>crisis of the intermediary</u>. Whether this intermediary is named king, concept, priest, sacrament, institution, even prayer or interpretation, there is nonetheless in every case a desire for immediacy, for direct experience. People have lost confidence in the intermediary. People are tired of anything interposing itself betwenn the free, spontaneous act of the person and the end of that act. They have lost confidence not only in the faith of others (theologians, doctors, parents, saints, sages, scientists or Church), but in the knowledge of elites, in the 'gifts' of authority exercised in whatever domain, in anything they do not personally see or experience. ——→

They want the thing, the reality, the experience, the intuition; yesterday's hierarchical order has collapsed. Supermarkets where the shopper can choose directly, universal suffrage by which you believe you have a direct participation, the royal priesthood of all believers, etc., are so many examples of this new situation, but its roots should be sought in the subsoil of Man himself, who more or less suddenly and deeply finds himself the maker of his own destiny, his own architect; in a word, free--with the terrifying awareness that freedom is no longer a sort of refuge or protection, but a freedom which leaves us totally exposed, a freedom which is itself free, so to speak, not tied to an established or pre-established order. Perhaps this will also explain why many people today, foreseeing or even tasting this freedom, have preferred the comfortable captivity of Egypt, offered these days by technology, anonymity, etc., to the perils of an authentic freedom.

This crisis of the intermediary should not be confused with the need for a mediator. A mediator is not a foreign or external agent. A mediator shares in both of the natures which it mediates, and so is involved in what we may still experience as a schism. A mediator is the medium, which is not just betwixt and between but the center which encompasses all sides without dominating any of them. A seed can be the mediator of roots and stems, a kernel of core and husk, a child of father and mother, a Christ of Man and God. An intermediary is a broker, a go-between, an independent agency, a 'disinterested party'. At most the intermediary is an impartial instrument or a catalyst, a leverage, but is not an involved participant.

It is this intermediary, on all levels, which is today in crisis. This is most visible in the rupture of the rapport between

means and ends that any sociological analysis of the state of contemporary western society would bring to light. The younger generation revolts at considering itself a means--a transitional period--to the end of adulthood; education as a means to subsequent ends has long been untenable; and asceticism as a means to an end is also disappearing. People want the now and have no patience to wait for a future in which they no longer hope. Equally, for our generation, either a vertical paradise in an 'other' world, or a horizontal 'utopian' future, seems almost laughable in the face of our double disappointment--by a promised heaven which does not prevent Man's inhumanity to Man, and by a perfect or classless society which never comes.

I have just *sketched* in sociological terms what happens in the depths of personal awareness to most people once they awaken to the contemporary problematic. The crisis is profound and acute: religion, formerly the bond of human solidarity, of individual and collective security, religion, once indissolubly linked with tradition, has become personal in a sense which far outgrows, say, nineteenth-century individualism in Europe. It is not now a question of *withdrawing* into the individual (in understandable reaction to a certain prior alienation), but of taking upon oneself the totality of responses and responsibilities normally expected from religion.

Passing now from the andecdotal to the categorical, we may reverse the classical proposition which says that the religious act must be a free act, by emphasizing that the free act is the religious act par excellence. So it is not enough to say that an act which is not free cannot be a religious act, because the religious act is basically free; but we must add that the religiousness of the act,

so to speak, comes from its freedom. Only a free act can be a religious act, precisely because what constitutes the essence of the religious act is the freedom of that act. The religious act is that which puts Man on the road to his salvation; it is the saving act. And by the same token, we repeat, it is the religious act that also entails the possibility of failure. Now Man cannot consider himself saved while he is still subject to limitations, while he is bound by entanglements that come to him from outside or from inside. If Man is able to perform a free act, an act by which he expresses, shows and makes himself, he is saved, or at least he has performed an act which carries him toward his liberation, his salvation or fulfillment. And this is the essence of the free act.

Let us now try to proceed a little further, open to the novelty of the new myth, without totally breaking continuity with the old: a real study in trans-mythicization.

c) 2.3.1 Religion as Creative Freedom

We may approach this question from a double perspective, that of the past or that of the future, or to take it further, from a perspective static on the one hand and dynamic on the other. These two points of view do not coincide completely but here we may consider them together.

From one side, then, we may envision Man's liberation as the simple recovery of a threatened freedom, the reconquest of a lost paradise, the rediscovery of a vanished reality. In this case everything is reduced to rediscovering Man's true nature, reverting to the point of departure, regaining the primitive, even primordial state, returning to God as the source of all there is. God is immutable for this notion: it is not for God to return to the past, not is it really for Man either; but as psychological orientation Man must return to the past to 're-source' himself, to reach back to his origin, which from God's viewpoint is atemporal. Man's task is to recover the undistorted image, to

polish the immaculate mirror, to reflect the true image, and so on.

Hinduism, buddhism, christianity and many other religions can furnish us several examples of spiritualities founded on this presupposition. To recognize reality amounts to a true birth into that reality, to dispel ignorance means salvation, for Man's ~~situation~~ true being is always there, has always been there, even if unnoticed. All gnosis, and a certain contemplation, is founded on this principle that reality is already there. Only knowledge, ~~here~~ in this case, can truly save. Every discovery presupposes that reality is merely covered, every revelation that the Savior is only veiled, every epiphany or salvific theophany that God is but hidden (unless by a twist characteristic of our time you assert the fact of discovering, revealing, etc., to be what <u>makes</u> reality). At bottom this is the religion of <u>homo sapiens</u>. He is free who con think, the Stoics said.

The other perspective situates salvation ontologically in the future, We say ontologically in order to make it clear that this is a future which no discovery can attain because it has yet to be traversed, arrived at, created. There is little room here for the priest who unveils mystery or keeps the treasure of the faith. There is place here for the prophet who forsees the future and guides into it. Liberation here is not simply discovering a latent situation already extant and real, or recovering a lost (paradisiacal) condition; on the contrary, it is the creation of a new reality, the invention of a situation which did not before exist. This is the religion of <u>homo faber</u>. He is free who knows how to act, we might say here.

It is clear, then, that this liberation which so to speak unleashes the unsuspected potentialities of the person is more than a simple purification, and much more than cleaning the dirty lenses that keep us from seeing Man's

true nature. From this perspective, Man would not yet possess his true nature, whatever we call it, and it would be precisely through his freedom that he creates it. So a freedom-to create his destiny is needed besides a freedom-from all the obstacles existing on the way.

Let us now try to describe that dimension of religion which is central in the experience of contemporary Man. In brief: the experience of freedom and the experience of creativity; or, better said: the belief that Man can make himself and fashion the world. Could this not be called a λειτουργία? And significantly enough the indoeuropean root for freedom (ἐλευθερία) means also belonging to the people (leudh-ero-s; cf. latin liber-tas and german Leute).

i) From an Anthropological Viewpoint

Our century has had massive experience of the vital need for tolerance. Without tolerance in every domain, human individuals and groups are irremediably doomed to disappear. In the religious sphere the phenomenon is parallel: we feel driven to concede a freedom of religion in order to co-exist. In one way or another this leads us to become more sensitive to the fact that not only has freedom an important role in human relations, but that it is essential to every religion, since withoug freedom these religions cannot exist. Even more, we are led to recognize that freedom is fundamental to religion per se, since the exercise of freedom is preeminintly a religious act.

This freedom, to which Man has forever aspired, but which in our day has become, under a thousand headings, the explicit ideal of almost every movement, means far more than instinctive spontaneity: for more than political, black, women's, sexual, educational, younger generations' or younger peoples' liberation and the like. It means rather a freedom of the whole being, an ontological spontaneity we might say. Man is free not when he does what he wills or wills what he does, but when his whole being is free, liberated, indeed when it is freedom.

But when is being free? What is it to be freedom? To answer and even to formulate this pivotal question we must choose some philosophy or other, if only as a frame of reference. What follows must be understood in this sense. Being is truly free as being when all its being is freedom. The free being is not someone who has one part, one limb free so to speak (the will, for example), but one who has the totality of his being free, who is freedom.

Now being freedom, being free, the freedom of being as being (three expressions we treat here as synonyms) can only come about if being is not determined by anything exterior or foreign to it. In this sense only a totally independent being could be fully free, but the ~~very~~ conscious affirmation of independence implies an affirmation of self-identity, and this, in a second moment, would already mean the weakening of this total freedom, for that being would no longer be fully self-determinate but dependent upon a prior moment. The identical image is not free to be different from its source. Strictly speaking, only an eternal being, above and outside time, can be free in the fullest sense. Man's historical character, his temporality, is a burden which renders complete freedom impossible. Man's present state is already conditioned by his own past. The historical being Man is can attain freedom only when his past, as it emerges in his present, is, so to speak, forgiven, destroyed, transformed, burnt, to give way to a new future, not conditioned by any prior circumstance. Man is free insofar as he destroys his karma, we might say, insofar as he launches himself into his future without the millstone of his past. Under this light one may perhaps understand the vedic conception of human existence as the absolving of all rnas or 'debts' Man has with reality, the insistence of the Buddha for the anātmavada, i.e., the ever-momentary nature of our existence because there is no ātman that we have to drag along in our temporal existence, and the christian emphasis on forgiveness, i.e., of being liberated from the negative factor of creatureliness in order to lead an authentic or divinized life.

The free act par excellence is the ~~externally~~ unconditioned action, which is to say that only the creative act is perfectly free. Every act, to the extent it is free, is creative; if it does not create it is not free but merely ~~manipulates~~ reshuffles given conditions. An action is free insofar as it is performed without constraint of any kind, without extrinsic determination. Now Man as artist or technician has all the initiative that his intelligence or his mastery over nature gives him, but he is always conditioned by the limits to his knowledge, and by conditions imposed by the materials he uses.

There is a domain where Man has a very special autonomy: himself. Man is more than an artisan who constructs himself as he fashions nature: he is his own artist, and this precisely when he acts freely, when he forges his own ~~future~~ destiny. Human creativity is to produce the future, not from mere previous conditions, but with a spontaneity which neither follows a path mapped out in advance, not simply discovers a hidden but already existing road. This production of the future is a true creation in as much as it is not conditioned by the past or influenced by anything prior. Non-free beings have no future, they have only a ~~destiny~~ fate. Man, as a free being, is a being with a future: his being ~~will~~ shall be; he has a 'future ~~t~~ense', he can attain being.

Human freedom is not only, or basically, the capacity to make decisions about things, events or people. Real freedom takes root in the core of Man, which possesses this power to become himself, in religious terms, to save himself ~~ultimately to become God~~. The prerogative of human freedom is not limited to the choice between given possibilities; it is not the power, either, to do or to make just anything, but to make oneself, to make oneself <u>oneself</u>. In theological terms we may say: the salvation to which Man aspires is not an extrinsic gift, something supererogatory, but a personal conquest--to realize oneself, to achieve one's being. To put it in christian terms: Christ does not save ~~him~~ by a heteronomic act, offering ~~him~~ an alien salvation foreign to ~~him~~ Man, but by becoming flesh and blood so that he may be eaten, assimilated, and by this divine metabolism →

transform Man also into Sons of God. ~~We emphasize here that~~ In the christian conception salvation comes neither by hetero-redemption (through an other) [monotheism], nor through auto-redemption (by oneself) [pelagianism], Christ being at once truly Man and truly God, an authentic Mediator. → 697.1

The free human act is the one by which Man wills what he does and does what he wills. Now this identification can be actualized only in ourselves; this constitutes the vital circle to which we have alluded. It is when Man makes himself that he is free, and at the same time he frees himself (from all that is not him, from all inauthenticity).

To make oneself means to mold one's future, to create what did not exist before; ~~which would~~ otherwise it would not be a real future. The ~~mental~~ paradigm ~~known~~ of artistic creation does not apply here, and consequently the categories of substance and accident and the theory of the four causes are also inappropriate. It is not a question of ~~manipulating~~ rearranging givens from my past into a more or less satisfying future; rather it is to live an authentically human life, and so to grow in my being human. Now human growth, different from any other growth, is much more than developing the power latent in the seed, and goes well beyond any progressive linear continuation of preliminary data. Human growth is free. Not only can it direct or develop itself in one or another direction, choosing between several possibilities, but it can flower in forms not given in advance, unsuspected: a true creation toward a ~~future~~ state which does not exist, a growth in being, which is more than simply conservation or evolution— this is what a new creation means. We may note in passing that the notion of pre-given possibilities presupposes a static vision of the universe, where reality is at least potentially already there. From the perspective we are indicating the future is future precisely because it is not. The potentiality of being is in this case / a mere mental abstraction. The

Christian salvation comes neither as from an outside rope, nor as from an inside power, but as from an in-spiration (of--and in--the entire Trinity), which binds these two extremes together.

Or in Buddhist terms: Buddha does not confer direct illumination to anyone, offering an objective method to overcome duhkha, but he simply points out the way, leaving to the concrete person the effort and diligence to work out his /her salvation. Nirvâna does not come from 'above' or as a result of an innerwordly causality. Nirvâna is so free and unconditioned that the very desire for 'the other shore' destroys it. The purity of being that is required cleanses us from all creatureliness.

(back to ~~697~~ 707)

true future of being does not stem from a final cause which contrives it.

All this does not block the possibility of interpreting liberation via the grace of God, because this grace, precisely because it is divine, cannot be considered merely an external boost of some sort, but a divine --transcendent as well as immanent--force that transforms human nature without doing it violence, and so makes it possible for Man to attain the fullness of his being. ~~But this is not our problem. We need only point out that~~ Our analysis makes sense given either hypothesis, that of self-liberation and that of salvation through divine grace. In other words, ~~that~~ that for this free act, ~~which constitutes the core of every religious act~~, one needs the grace of Christ, or the preaching of the Buddha, the teaching of Scripture, the task entrusted by the Party, the inspiration of Truth or Science, the mandate of History or of whatever Prophet, does not contradict what we have just said. As long as one has not personally appropriated the message, gift, grace or task which conveys salvation, as long as Man does not realize by himself the preeminently free act, he will gain none of the benefits religion might furnish him.

The moral, ecumenical and theological consequences of this vision seem to me important; I shall not develop them here, but simply mention one anthropological consequence. Freedom, in the sense we have just described, means thus Man's creativity. The human being ~~is~~ *is that* being ~~which~~ creates his own future. The *human* future does not exist; the models we entertain of it belong at most to epistemology, never to ontology. Human life on earth, inasmuch as it pursues its goal and does not relapse into tellurism, is a true creation, an expansion that has no other law but the freedom of Man, who as he gradually advances creates his own future, his own situation, his being. Freedom is human creativity. Man is free insofar as he creates, or better, to the extent that he creates himself.

It is not for me here to show how God is not necessarily denied in all we have said, although the conception of God emerges modified, and purified as well it seems to me.

Not only is the Kingdom of God the kingdom of freedom, but God himself is absolute Freedom. At heart, the least imperfect way Man can conceive the infinite is through his experience of freedom. By freedom we realize what it means to have no limits, no barriers, no constraints; we experience the non-finite, the infinite. The rupture of every bond, that is freedom. But the limitation of being finite is the bond which preeminently constitutes creatureliness. God is the absence of every limit and Man is called to rejoin him by conquering his freedom, by stepping up from his creatureliness. Man arrived, achieved, perfect, will have been a creature (and remains one), he no longer will be: he is.

b)

2.3.2 From a Cosmological Viewpoint

To further describe this ~~mutation in human awareness~~ *transmythicization* we could perhaps say that ~~the transcendent God of the religions, or better still~~ the function exercised by the transcendent God of ~~nearly every~~ so many religions is now fulfilled by the immanent divinity ~~in the world's heart~~ *in the world's heart* in secular ~~religiousness you might say~~ *religiousness*. ~~As a result~~ *All too often* the general concept of divine immanence was a sort of inverse transcendence and not a true immanence in things. The secular religiousness of our day, however, is in the midst of realizing the *genuine* experience of ~~total~~ divine immanence. People devote themselves to the service of the earth, humankind, culture, society, science and even technology with the same pathos, the same seriousness, with which they formerly consecrated themselves to the service of God. The ~~secular, which was for some time relegated to the profane~~ *has again become sacred*. Man having eliminated ~~other-worldliness~~ *other-worldly attitudes* as outmoded religiousness has projected into the

~~699.1~~
709.1

It seem superfluous to me, but it may help to dispel a possible misunderstanding, to underscore that the freedom we are speaking of here has nothing to do with its caricature or its abuse. Liberty is not libertinage, the breaking of all bonds does not mean the smashing of our constitutive structures. Overcoming limits does not mean giving free rein to passions, ambitions and ego-centered whims. Freedom does not mean a denial of our itinerant condition or contingent being, blurring all frontiers and overflooding all boundaries. All this does not set us free, but enslaves us ~~each time~~ to ever greater ~~bigger~~ powers--τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, St. Paul called them.

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almost all of the religious values of the sacred. The absolute, which for a time took refuge outside the universe, has re-entered the world--*even the Gods are coming back (if they ever deserted the world).*

In a certain traditional notion Man took refuge in the transcendent God to attain salvation, and in a certain sense abandoned the world. The spirituality of the immanent divinity makes modern Man fling himself into the arms of the world as into an absolute, as the immanent God he has seen discovered. Human salvation is as a liberation not of Man alone, but of the whole cosmos, as a liberation of the forces of nature, as freedom for the world as well. The world is no longer an enemy to vanquish, exploit or crush, neither is it any longer an 'other' to love; it is part of the whole to be freed from physical necessity by the sacerdotal act of its human liberator. We hasten to add that a purely transcendent God is as non-existent as an exclusively immanent God, or if we prefer, that an absolute, an ideal (whatever name we give it) located either outside the world or inside it cannot have the reality of this cosmotheandric mystery that many of the traditional religions still readily call God. But all this goes beyond the limits of these pages.

The experience of contemporary Man finding himself, and moreover believing himself, not master of the universe, but in a certain sense its builder, its responsible partner, is a fundamental religious experience. Man has suddenly felt himself bound to the earth, joined with it in a communal destiny, playing his part in a cosmic whole of which he is the awareness. Human religiousness cannot henceforward dissociate itself from the earth, this earth of Men, and every effort toward salvation now calls for a genuine integration with all universe.

Doubtless an optimistic vision of reality, this, but not idealized to the point of eliminating sin, error, fall, failure. Man makes himself when he acts freely, but he can run aground in this act, he can choose, he can take fright at his responsibility, fall back on the past, take refuge in security, instead of hurling himself into the risk of living, the adventure of faith, the realization of freedom, into what religions of all timew--but often outside time--have wanted to bring him: liberation, joy, the infinite, or in the language of most religions: God.

All this leads us to see religion as the dimension of Man in which his freedom dwells, or as the synergy of the ways leading Man to realize his own creative freedom. ~~It is not for us now to show how this new intuition can harmonize at the core with the most traditional conception of religion, but I do not believe them incompatible.~~

The religion of freedom, in this hermeneutic, is precisely that human act by which Man ~~wins~~ conquers his being, his freedom. This does not make established traditional religions obsolete. On the contrary, the call to freedom is a refreshing and purifying injunction. To be sure, it kills legalisms and servile attitudes and it makes the believing communities sharers in a new liberating myth, but it does not deny the need of religious structures.

~~Christian Freedom~~

~~Not to forestall well-intended criticism, or to prove intellectual honesty,~~ but because this seem constitutive of human religious awareness at this juncture in history, I shall have to confess in what follows to ~~begging the question.~~ falling into an aporia. I believe that I could formulate the same aporia in terms of many other religions, but ~~because of historical reasons (both cultural and personal)~~ I shall put it in christian terms.

I am convinced that what I say is a more or less accurate expression of the truth. ~~I am further convinced that christian faith is a vehicle of truth;~~

d) A Christian Hermeneutic

The mutation in human consciousness alluded to in the beginning of this chapter finds a striking example in the unprecedented move of the Second Vatican Council. The already quoted document

→ 714

We could then use the following terminology:

~~So to be more precise,~~ christianity is a religion like other religions of the world, ~~the~~ Church is the ontological place of salvation *thus not to be identified with any particular human group.* and Christ is the Pantocrator who appeared in 'the last days' as Jesus of ~~Nazareth to complete the work he had~~ begun at the world's ~~beginning~~ *foundation*.

~~What Vatican Council II~~ has come to recognize in the most explicit fashion ~~is~~ the primacy of the freedom of the person over any other value whatsoever. Now if ~~man~~ *the human being* has the right, and also the duty, to follow his own conscience, to act always in accord with his personal freedom, this means that ~~even~~ the Church *Roman* ~~has~~ recognizes that the free human act bears the greatest possible human dignity, to which everything else must be subordinated. *both acknowledges that mutation and establishes continuity with*

In this, the Council ~~simply follows~~ the most christian tradition. Few themes, *in fact,* have been more emphasized by Paul, and particularly by John, than the freedom Christ came to bring ~~to~~ *Man;* ~~us~~ liberating *him* from the Law, from sin, from ~~himself~~, etc.; ~~to~~ calling explicitly *him* to freedom. ~~and by pointing to Man's state as a child of God, distinct from the man who is not free and so has no right to the divine heritage.~~ *cannot share in* It is the Son who sets us free, John will repeat, putting these words on the very lips of Jesus.

In ~~our~~ *a time* of ecumenism and ~~the~~ encounter of religions as if by historical imperative, this new stage of awareness ~~seems to us to be~~ *acquires* a considerable importance. It is not christianity as a religion ~~that claims universality~~, but Christ ~~as the affirmation of Savior, of universal liberator, and the Church so that cosmotheandric reality may salvation is realized.~~ *as symbol that becomes central.* ~~How Christ is present and effective in~~ *a name for that mystery.* ~~every man and every religion, even if unknown and hidden, is one of the most imperative theological problems in the encounter of religions.~~

~~How to elaborate an ecclesiology as something more than the sociology of a particular religious group, is a problem of parallel importance. Meanwhile we should not get lost in mere semantics.~~

~~As to what concerns us, we may add this.~~ The message of Christ is a message of freedom ~~to be taken seriously~~; it carries the freedom requisite to perform the free act which saves. It is clear, moreover, that only an interior Christ (~~who~~ which does not deny a historical Christ ~~identified~~ with him) can ~~allow~~ *make possible* the realization of an act which is truly free, spontaneous and fully human; otherwise it would just be a new imposition from outside. For this reason, the free act as such, and not the act adapted on the surface to christian doctrine, is the real, religious and christian act. To carry out this free and saving act, there is no strict need of any 'religion', let alone christianity. Only the faith of the human person is required, We have here the foundation of true pluralism. What matters is freedom.

'Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?', (Τὶ δὲ καὶ ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν οὐ κρίνετε το δικαιον)(7) Christ once said. ~~You see where we are headed~~. Christian freedom is human freedom and Christ ~~is~~ the Liberator. ~~A pietistically inclined christian epoch used to emphasize, and even sing,~~ ~~An old christian song says~~ that 'where love reigns, there is Christ'. ~~We would like now to set forth not a slogan which would be misunderstood, but a deep truth.~~ *We should at least equally remember that it is written: 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom'. We would like to pursue it farther and say:* Where there is freedom, there is Christ. It is he who is the liberator from every chain, from all pain and all anguish; and for some he is today also the liberator from all religion in the ~~restrictive sense of the word. For centuries, christian Europe has made heroic efforts to convert whole peoples to christianity (as religion), so~~ ~~that~~ peoples have so thoroughly gotten the message that they have not been

illumining every Man coming into this world ;

~~converted to christianity (as religion), but they have become free, they have chosen freedom, i.e., Christ. We know very well that this freedom is not yet complete, that we all of us are still not christian...~~

Christ is the principle of freedom ~~dwelling in each of us~~, he came to tell us we must judge for ourselves, shoulder our reponsibilities, bring our given talents to fruition, and learn to forgive. What is at stake in freedom is not a galactic circulation of dead stars, but a perpetual creation and recreation; by our participation in the creative act of forgiving, we give life to ourselves and to others.

'All that does not proceed from faith is sin', St. Paul says. In this the Gospel is a good and joyful news, that it announces freedom, not an objective, dehumanized--not to say inhuman--freedom, but a concrete, real, ~~existentielle~~ *existential* freedom, to each Man's personal measure. A hermeneutic of the freedom of religion brings us to religious freedom and a hermeneutic of this, to religion as freedom (8).

~~It is written that Love is the fullness of the Law, and Love is Freedom.~~

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~~Summing up our thesis in several~~

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By way of conclusion we may sum up our thesis in several statements:

The religious act has to be a free act - ultimately because it is a human act and Man is a free being (in whatever sense freedom may be interpreted).

This implies that any routinarily 'religious' act is not truly religious if not freely performed - although there are several degrees of freedom.

The relation between religion and freedom is so intimate that it permits the inversion of the statement: Every truly free act is a religious act - that relates us with the Ultimate (in whatever sense we may interpret 'it').

This implies that religion is more than an objective set of doctrines, rituals and customs claiming to deal with the ultimate goals of human life; it is also and mainly a set of freely accepted and recognized symbols in which one freely believes: It is the realm of the myth.

It amounts to closing the vital circle: The human right of 'freedom of religion' appears as a tautology, for without such freedom there is no religion, no religious act.

But it is a qualified tautology, as all ultimate statements are bound to be, for they cannot have any instance beyond by the very fact that they are ultimate; they have to show from within themselves that such is the case. In this sense the self-revelatory character of religion appears once more as belonging to its proper nature.

3 Appendix

The following references situate us in the perspective we have tried to follow. Our thesis fits into tradition by continuing it.

1. 'Si ergo vos Filius liberavit, vere liberi eritis.' Jn. 8:36

2. 'Conscientia obligat non virtute propria sed virtute praecepti divini: non enim conscientia dictat aliquid esse faciendum hac ratione quod sibi videtur sed hac ratione quia a Deo praeceptum est.' D. Thom., In II Sent., d. 39, q. 3, a. 3 ad 3/ *(Conscience binds* ⟶ 717.1

3. 'Quicumque autem ex amore aliquid facit, quasi ex seipso operatur, quia ex propria inclinatione movetur ad operandum.' ('Now whoever does a thing through love, does it of himself so to speak, because it is by his own inclination that he is moved to act... .') D. Thom., Sum. Theol. II-II, q. 19, a. 4, c.

4. 'Unde quod liberum arbitrium diversa eligere possit, servato ordine finis, hoc pertinet ad perfectionem libertatis eius: sed quod eligat aliquid, divertendo ab ordine finis, quod est peccare, hoc pertinet ad defectum libertatis. Unde maior libertas arbitrii est in angelis qui peccare non possunt, quam in nobis qui peccare possumus.' ('Hence it pertains to the perfection of its liberty, for free choice to be able to choose between ~~opposite~~ *different* things, keeping the order of the end in view. But it pertains to the defect of liberty, for it to choose anything by turning away from the order of the end. And this is to sin. Hence there is a greater liberty of choice in the angels, who are not able to sin, than there is in ourselves, who are able *to sin*.') D. Thom., Sum. Theol., I, q. 62, a. 8 ad 3. (Cf. etiam II-II, q. 88, a. 4 ad 1)

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not by its own power, but by power of the divine precept; for conscience tells us what is to be done, not because it sees it so, but because it is prescribed by God.)

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5. 'Utrum voluntas discordans a ratione errante sit mala' ('Whether the will is evil when it is at variance with erring reason.') *Answer: yes.* 'Utrum voluntas concordans rationi erranti, sit bona.' ('Whether the will is good when it abides by erring reason.') D. Thom., Sum. Theol., I-II, q. 19, aa. 5 & 6. *Answer: no, it may be evil.*

6. 'E 'l duca a lui: Caron, non ti crucciare:

vuolsi così colà dove si puote

ciò che si vuole, e più non dimandare.' Dante, Inferno, III, 94-96. ('Then said my guide: 'Charon, why wilt thou roar/ And chafe in vain? Thus it is willed where power/And will are one; enough; ask thou no more.' tr. D. L. Sayers.) cf. also Inferno V, 23-24.

7. 'La liberté consiste à faire tout ce qui ne nuit pas à autrui: ainsi l'exercise des droits naturels de chaque homme n'a de bornes que celles qui assurent aux membres de la société la jouissance de ces mêmes droits.' Declaration des droits de l'homme de 1789, art. 4.

8. '...si la liberté de pensée ou de conscience était absolue ou illimitée, il s'ensuivrait que la raison humaine serait indépendante dans sa pensée et dans ses jugements et, conséquemment, dans son existence aussi bien que dans son essence. Or cela répugne absolument, car la raison humaine est la faculté d'un esprit créé qui, précisément parce qu'il est créé, ne peut pas être sa propre loi.' A. Vacant, E. Mangenot & E. Amann, 'Liberté', Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique (Paris, Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1926), p. 691.

9. 'La liberté est une catégorie spirituelle et religieuse et non pas naturaliste et métaphysique.' (*'Liberty is a spiritual and religious category, not a naturalistic or metaphysical one.'*) N. Berdiaef, Esprit et Liberté (Paris, 1933), p. 137.

'Je sers'

19. 'Dieu ne peut vouloir que la liberté, parce qu'elle constitue son Idée, son dessein du monde. Il ne peut désirer que l'on accomplisse sa volonté formellement en s'y soumettant aveuglement, parce qu'il ne peut y avoir une volonté separée de l'idée de Dieu...' ('God can only will freedom because it is His idea and His plan for the World. He cannot desire that Man should carry out His will in a formal ~~spirit of~~ way with blind submission, because ~~His will cannot be~~ there cannot be a will separated from the idea of God... .') Id., p. 167.

11. '...la liberté est toujours un acte créateur...' L. Lavelle, De l'acte (Paris, Aubier, 1946), p. 184.

12. 'Tout le problème de l'amour est de savoir comment une liberté peut devenir un objet pour une autre liberté. ...Alors, nous découvrons l'identité réelle de la liberté et de l'amour...L'amour est donc l'actualité de la liberté.' Id., pp. 352-533.

13. 'Nous somme seuls, sans excuses. C'est ce que j'exprimerai en disant que l'homme est dondamné à être libre.' J.P. Sartre, L'existentialisme est un humanisme (Paris, Nagel, 1946), p. 37. ('We are alone, without excuse. That is what I would express saying that Man is condemned to be free.')

14. 'Objektiv besteht die Freiheit darin, dass den Christusgläubigen nicht eine Summe von Vorschriften bindet, sondern, dass die Liebe zu jenem Du, dem er von Wesen her zugeordnet ist, ihn zu seinem Tun führt. Subjektiv empfindet er die Freiheit darin, dass er tun darf, wonach sein von Gott verwandeltes Herz begehrt, nämlich lieben; ...' M. Schmaus, Katholische Domatik (München, Hueber, 1938), p. 791.

15. '...dann is die menschliche Freiheit urspringlicher gegeben in der Übereinstimmung des wirklichen Selbstvollzugs eines Seienden mit

seinem konkreten Wesen, so, dass es durch diesen Selbstvollzug wirklich bei sich selbst und so in seiner Wahrheit is.' K. Rahner, 'Vorbemerkungen zum Problem der religiösen Freiheit', Theologische Fragen heute (München, Hueber, 1966), p. 9.

16. 'Die religiöse Wahrheit als solche ist grundsätzlich nur im Akt der Freiheit als ~~sochor~~ *solcher* gegeben.' Id., p. 11.

17. 'Immer dann wenn ein Mensch in Freiheit handelt, tut die Welt ihren letzten Schrift.' R. Guardini, 'Freiheit und Unabänderlichkeit', Unterscheidung des Christlichen (Mainz, Grünewald, 1963), p. 120.

18. *'Das Wesen der Wahrheit enthüllt sich als Freiheit.'* M. Heidegger, Vom Wesen der Wahrheit *(Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1954), p. 18.*

19. *'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.' United Nations* Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 18 *(Part A of Res. 217 (III), approved by the General Assembly Dec. 10, 1948).*

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(from ~~710.1~~)

20. "1. A sense of the dignity of the human person has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemprary man. And the demand is increasingly made that men should act on their own judgement, enjoying and making use of a responsible freedom, not driven by coercion but motivated by a sense of duty. ...

This sacred Synod likewise professes its belief that it is upon the human conscience that these obligations fall and exert their binding force. The truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth,...

2. This Vatican Synod declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power , in such wise that in matters religious no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs. ...

The Synod further declares that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person, as this dignity is known through the revealed Word of God and by reason itself. (Jus ad libertatem religiosam esse fundatum in ipsa dignitate personae humanae, qualis et verbo Dei revelato et ipsa ratione cognoscitur. Nr. 1045 of the original). Vatican Council II, Declaratio Dignitatis Humane Personae, The Documents of Vatican II (ed. W,M, Abbot, New York, Guild Press, 1966) p. 675 sq. → 710.52

21. For those who would like to check the mutation in the Roman Catholic Church they may compare the words of the previous document with the following statements of the last century Popes as in the Denzinger Nrs. 2730, 2731, 2858, 2979, 3250, 3251 etc. Significantly enough the new edition of the Denzinger has eliminated the old paragraphs: 1617, 1618, 1642, 1666, 1690 which dealt with the same problem and probably at the eyes of the new editors were not only obsolete, but almost offensive to present day mentality.

We may simply quote from Leo XIII encyclica of 1888, Libertas humana: "Itaque ex dictis consequitur, nequaquam licere petere, defendere, largiri cogitandi, scribendi, docendi, itemque promiscuam religionem libertatem, veluti iura totidem, quae homini natura dederit. Nam si vere natura dedisset, imperium Dei detrectari ius esset, nec ulla temperari lege libertas humana posset." (Denz.Schön. 3252). And so from what has been said it follows that it is by no means lawful to demand, to defend and to grant indiscriminate freedom of thought, writing, teaching and likewise of belief, as if so many rights which nature has given to Man. For if nature had truly given these, it would be right to reject God's power, and human liberty could be restrained by no law).

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Notes

1. Jn. 8:32.

2. Pseud. Plat., Def., 415 s.

3. Cf. 'Libertad de pensamiento', in my book Humanismo y Cruz (Madrid, Rialp, 1963), pp. 77-89, for the various pertinent references that I excuse myself from giving here, and for my understanding and defense of the traditional attitude.

4. Cf. R. Panikkar, 'Freiheit und Gewissen', Neues Abendland (München, 1955), I:25-32 for the theological basis of the second part of this study.

5. 2 Cor. 3:17. *'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.'*

7. Lk. 12:57.

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6. *'Almost all living things act to free themselves from harmful contacts', B. F. Skinner begins his chapter on Freedom in his book Beyond Freedom and Dignity (New York, Knopf, 1972) and ends the chapter writing that 'Man's struggle for freedom is not due to a will to be free, but to certain behavioral processes characteristic of the human organism, the chief effect of which is the avoidance of or escape from so-called "aversive" features of the environment.'*

8. Cf. bibliographical appendix on religious freedom and tolerance.

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XVII

~~XXII~~ - Bibliographies

1 - Bibliography on Infallibility

And now follow 711.2 to 711.7

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Note to the editor: There are two sets of lists (pp.76-83 and 712,1-723. They ~~have to be~~ are here converted into one, following the numerical order indicated in red before each name 1, 2, 3...

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Sit finis libri sed non quaerendi