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Dialogue between Christian Philosophy and Chinese Culture: Philosophical Perspectives for the Third Millennium

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Table of Contents

Foreword

Paschal Ting

This volume presents the English language papers of the conference organized by the Department of Philosophy and the Institute of Scholastic Philosophy of Fu Jen Catholic University under the theme, "Philosophical Perspective for the Third Millennium: Dialogue Between Philosophy and Chinese Culture." As the spirit of a university depends on the philosophy it upholds, Fu Jen Catholic University has explored Christian philosophy and commissioned the Institute of Scholastic Philosophy as a university research center. This volume is focused on the mission of Christian philosophy and its significance in the contemporary world.

Fu Jen originally was established in China with the goal of forming an "academic community of students and teachers closely associated in fostering the growth of the person on the basis of Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Holiness." It is "committed to academic research and the promotion of genuine knowledge for the development of society and the advancement of humankind." As the only university to teach Christian philosophy in the Chinese cultural context, it aims "to foster dialogue leading to the integration of Christianity and Chinese culture." As the science of speculative and practical reason philosophy constitutes a special bridge between the two.

A university's mission lies in the development of a common love of learning in its students through research, educational and professional training,1 and more broadly in the search for truth and wisdom.2 As a university, it "is an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion," and through research, teaching, and other services, assists in the promotion of human dignity and the preservation of the cultural heritage.3 In this mission of transmitting and applying the culture, universities have an important role to play with regards to the dialogue and integration of faith, reason, and cultures.

Over several hundred years of service, Christianity has gradually evolved long-standing presence on Chinese culture. Matteo Ricci, who first introduced Western science and technology, together with works on morality and on the Transcendent, did much to launch the progress of modernization in China. Others came to China with the purpose of bearing witness and spreading belief in a personal God. They have certainly paved the way for the encounter of Western and Eastern civilizations.

Today, as we enter the Third Millennium, we search for a new syntheses of Christianity and Chinese culture. This conference is a contribution to this process. Its proceedings are divided into two sections. The Center for the Study of Cultures and Values of the Catholic University of America is here publishing the papers presented in English in its series: "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change" which is distributed to 350 libraries across the world. The complete text of over 100 volumes in this series can be found on the web at www.crvp.org as well as being available through the usual book distribution channel. The Department of Philosophy and the Institute of Scholastic Philosophy of Fu Jen Catholic University is publishing the papers presented in Chinese.

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Notes

1. John Paul II, *Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities,* p. 9.
2. *Ibid*., p. 10
3. *Ibid*., p. 12

Introduction

George F. McLean

This work on Chinese Culture and Christian Philosophy comes at a most opportune time. For this is a point at which the massive effort at modernization which has fascinated China for the last two centuries is being relaunched on broader and deeper foundations.

After long disputes over what was form and what substance in 1919 a more radical approach was launched, that is, to remove Confucius and his legacy and to substitute it by Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy. It was not incidental that John Dewey and Bertrand Russell were present at the time; nor is it incidental that under this formula the promise of Marx to provide a scientific approach to transforming the history of China captivated much of the intellectual class.

Gradually, however, there has reemerged positive interest in dimensions of meaning and motivation much deeper than the level at which science works and also much more engaged in enabling and attracting the exercise of human freedom.

How can these levels be accessed? One of the key concerns of the Taiwanese has been to retain and develop the resources of classical Chinese culture. The work of Fu Jen University in Taipei has been integral to that search and hence brings an unbroken tradition of scholarship to the task of mining the classical Chinese heritage for context that can serve in our day and to adapting and transforming it to that end.

But this is not merely a matter of recuperating the foundations of Chinese culture. If the task includes inviting in Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy, of which the term "Mr" denotes their Western origin, then there is a certain symmetry. Just as it is necessary to repossess anew the Chinese foundations, it is necessary to integrate as well the foundations of Western culture. This means going back before the Enlightenment to rediscover and rearticulate the sense of democracy elaborated by the Greeks and the sense of person in which this was embedded in the Christian philosophies of the Middle Ages.

This is the unique significance of Fu Jen University as dedicated not only to the ancient heritage of China, but to relating this to the classical heritage of Christian philosophy. In this combination it is truly unique in our day; the papers of this conference on Chinese Culture and Christian Philosophy reflect this uniqueness.

This volume is organized in three parts: Part I "Philosophy and Culture," Part II "Christian Philosophy and Chinese Culture" and Part III "Chinese Culture and Ethics."

Part I "Philosophy and Cultures" takes up the more theoretical questions relating to the general enterprise of the nature and role of culture and of philosophy therein.

Chapter I by Jean Greisch, "The Manifold Meanings of Experience and the Idea of Truth," takes up the issue along closely but convergent pathways. "Both Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger have endeavored to develop a genealogical understanding of the historical unfolding of the idea of truth, from the beginning to the end of Western philosophy. In order to make possible an intercultural dialogue on a philosophical level, their understanding should not only be confronted with the concepts of truth developed by other cultural and spiritual traditions; we need as well to reflect upon the manifold meanings of the word "experience" itself. The object of this first chapter is to propose a genealogical understanding of this word, in critical discussion of some contemporary issues in hermeneutics, metaphysics and philosophy of religion." In this the tool used is an analysis of the notion of experience which he evolves from Wittgenstein's early

picturing to recognize not only an external given, but the inner world of the mental states of the psychic life and even the possibility of omitting the notion of an underlying ego. This paper counters the notion that Mr. Science could ever free us from culture or deal without it. The contribution of the heritage of Christian philosophy may be to ground the ego metaphysically in such wise that it is not closed, but a window, and not only on the externally experienced physical universe but on being itself at all its levels.

Chapter II by Carlo Huber, "Philosophy and Culture," is a Wittgensteinian approach, "looking into how the two terms ‘culture’ and ‘philosophy’ are used. The term ‘culture’ is used as a plural noun: there are multiple cultures whose differences are strongly underscored in a global society. It is not a general term, arrived by abstracting a general essence from various items, for there is no common essence, nor really common similar features which we find in all cultures. Culture is rather what Wittgenstein calls a term of ‘family resemblance’." The term ‘philosophy’ is generally used in the singular, but frequently with an added adjective such as ancient or contemporary. Philosophy has many different parts, e.g., philosophy of knowledge, logic, ontology, etc. Historically, there are various philosophical schools, or even different important philosophers. Philosophy is again rather a family term, like ‘culture’, but it has a stronger, even historical, unity and a different beginning. Philosophy itself belongs to culture and is always somehow culture determined, but by its very nature it is trans-historical and trans-cultural. Most important, philosophy is always critical." In this light it appears once again that, while trans-historical and trans-cultural, philosophy is culturally determined. For one who wishes to work by abstractions and univocous universals this will be sad and discouraging news. For others, however, who see cultures as unique manifestations of being, this will prove encouraging and enriching.

Chapter III by Ghislaine Florival, "Existential Rootedness of Culture and Worldwide Globalization: Teleology and Reconstruction." The work begins with an analysis of the technological reconstruction of the world of sense in a way that unveils the presence and role of a teleology. This provides insight into the notion of ‘teleology’ which makes it possible to articulate a lived process from the point view of phenomenology and hermeneutics. The analysis begins with the help of the later Husserl and Merleau-Ponty in order to find a double application of the word ‘teleology’ within our contemporary world. A second approach, in the fundamental area of teleology, is the mediation of such concepts as temporality and passive synthesis. These relate to the genesis of the existent and its cultural historicity. In the third part of this paper the structural, genetic and cultural analysis of existence enriches the dimension of sense with that of desire by which technocratic world of globalization can gain teleological direction. The dynamic of desire is found in the ethics of political institutions, and opens the cultural dimensions to its in-finite meaning. The contemporary cultural problem is thereby connected with technical globalization, which is now constituting the reality of the future world."

Chapter IV by William Sweet, "Philosophy, Culture and the Future of Tradition," applies this to cultures as traditions in order to identify the modern development of subjectivity and the implications of this for both their diversity while yet sharing in basic values. The effect is to suggest a balanced view in which tradition has authority which is not absolute or stiffing and diversity does not entail incommensurability or incommunicability. The integrating vision of this chapter is central to the work as a whole.

Part II, "Christian Philosophy and Chinese Culture," brings us to the heart of the work in relation to which Part I has laid the groundwork and Part III will draw implications. This is to examine the relation between philosophy as specified in a Christian context and culture as

specified in a Chinese manner. As noted by C. Huber in Chapter II neither is meant to suggest simply the addition of a specific difference to philosophy or culture. Rather each is a unique whole; their meeting is not the submersion of one by the other, but the union as it were of two loves each of which is integral and together generative.

Chapter V by Kim-Chink Vu, "Wittgenstein on the Religious Points of View: Its Relevance for Inter-religious Dialogue." "The question 'What is religion?' remains a fascinating one for research in the thought of Wittgenstein, especially in view of such enigmatic propositions as 'Not how the world is, is the mystical, but only that it is,' or 'I am not a religious man, but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view.' This chapter first describes the 'mysticism' in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and its notion of 'keeping silence'. Although Wittgenstein was well known as an analytical philosopher in this early period, he touched upon what positivism in general considered taboo or meaningless, i.e., the sphere of metaphysics. Next the chapter explores the role of religion in the later Wittgenstein, where he spoke of the meaning of 'grammar' in 'language-games' and 'forms of life' and distinguished between 'surface' and 'deep' grammar, considering 'theology as grammar'. Third it reconstructs his view of religion as a foundation of united fragmentary thoughts as expressed in his enigmatic expression: 'I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view.'" This can be helpful for the inter-religious dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity inasmuch as it makes it possible to approach religious awareness multiple modes beyond its ontological content.

Chapter VI by Jean-Ladrière, "Christian Thought and the Destiny of Philosophy," goes deeply into the nature of philosophy in an effort to comprehend human destiny. He notes the internal constraint which philosophy places upon itself due to the logic of its development in the present time marked by the expectations of science. Philosophy now shifts to a transcendental perspective attending to the development of both a technologically specified world without and an intensive awareness of human subjectivity within. In these terms philosophy is challenged to deal with issues of human destiny.

Turning to Christian theology and its Trinitarian mystery, the chapter notes its existential significance in understanding the source and goal of being. In this context one could engage philosophy in attaining greater technical clarity in theology. But conversely one could also envisage philosophy as the analogon of the life of faith as the progression of the spirit toward the ultimate. "Thinking on Thinking" as the object of universal desire and the eschaton of reason. In this, philosophy is drawn significantly ahead to reinterpret subsistence radically in terms of event, contingency and relation. This happens not by removing the absolute, but by appreciating afresh the relativity of all else when seen in this light.

Chapter VII by Peter Phan, "Inculturation of the Christian Faith in Asia through Philosophy: A Dialogue with John Paul II's *Fides et Ratio*," unfolds the implications of the reflections on Christian philosophy. Where considered not only in terms of Christian thought with its more cohesive Greek heritage, but in terms of the great difference between the Chinese and especially the Buddhist cultural context for philosophy and indeed for theology as well. This he sets in a study of the document of John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*. In this Peter Phan as it were shadows Ladrière's subtle and penetrating relation of philosophy and theology now broadened it to a global dialogue East-West.

Chapter VIII by George F. McLean "The Role of Christian Philosophy in the Present Transformation of Chinese Culture." This prepares an approach to the issue first by noting the evolving character of any culture as a way of cultivating the soul in the concrete and developing circumstances of life. In this context the terms value, virtue, culture, heritage and tradition are

reviewed. Second, a study of the entrance of Buddhism into China suggests ways in which it is possible for a philosophy evolved instead outside of Chinese culture to be found relevant and in time to be integrated therein. On these bases the chapter proceeds to analyze the new needs of Chinese civilization at the dawn of the present millennium and the ways in which a Christian philosophy can respond thereto.

Part III, "Chinese Culture and Ethics," moves beyond the theoretical and relational studies of Part I and Part II to a set of ethical issues which illustrate the overall theme of this work: Chinese Culture and Christian Philosophy.

Chapter IX by Francoise B. Todorowitch, "Worshiping the Divine in Spirit and in Truth," takes especially in global perspective in its concern with the relation between the response of different peoples to the call of the divine, to the Omega point. This attends to different notions of truth, different conceptions of the absolute, and above all to different notions of rationality itself in the West as predominantly analytical and disjunctive, whereas in the East it is more holistic.

Chapter X by Michel Renaud, "Human Dignity in Retrospect and Prospect," inquires into the essence of the human being though concrete issues in practical ethics though the consideration of four trilogies: conviction-tolerance-identity, authenticity-desistance-commitment, memory-forgetfulness becomes manifest.

Chapter XI by Eui-Chai Tjeng, "The Philosophy of Life in Oriental Philosophy and Thomas Aquinas: Immanence and Transcendence," looks for the way Chinese and Christian philosophy can mutually enrich each other. "Chinese civilization as one of the oldest and most profound human cultures has always absorbed foreign cultures to create dazzling syntheses; it has helped them develop further. It meets the challenge of an encounter with Christianity, which for the past 2000 years has been the spiritual foundation on which Western civilization was built. Christianity needs now to absorb the nutrients that the rich soil of Chinese civilization has to offer. Through mutual understanding and cooperation Christianity and Chinese civilization can contribute to the formation of a unified Asia and a unified humankind. The chapter suggests that in embarking on the process of building a unity of all humankind, Christian philosophy, Chinese culture, and the other religions and cultures of Asia must find a point which all can accept as being the most fundamental and common and on that point construct a common culture for mankind and sees this common point as the love of life. This chapter compares, contrasts and synthesizes the conceptions of life found in Asian philosophies and religions with that of Christian life and philosophy, especially of Thomas Aquinas with a view towards constructing a common culture of humankind based on the love of life."

Chapter XII by Isabel Renaud, "Ethics and Life," continues this effort by studying the experience of psychiatric counselors with young persons lacking in motivation. It suggests a hierarchical ordering of values and the work of ethical imagination in discovering a permanence and coherence of values behind the mutability of their forms of expression.

Chapter XIII by Edmund Ryden, "Just War: Chinese and Western Perspectives," studies the development of the rules of war through history, both East and West. He finds an extensive overlap on particular previsions while recognizing the difference in mode of articulation and conception in ancient Chinese and modern Western cultures.

From the above it can be seen that the issue of the relation between Chinese culture and Christian philosophy is deep and complex J. Ladrière made clear that the development of philosophy as a technical science has entailed its own limitations in which mode much of Christian theology has been elaborated in this mode. Peter Phan notes how the Asian vision is not thus

bound. This brings one to the point of concluding to an asymmetry, if not an incompatibility, of Christian philosophy and Chinese culture.

This urges, in turn, the question of whether it is possible to find a path that can open philosophy to a richer sense of human life, and of itself, which will enable it to relate the richness both of Chinese culture as outlined in Chapter VII by Peter Phan and of Christianity as well. In Chapter VI by Jean Ladrière suggests such a way. He shows how Christian philosophy as presenting the sense of creation of the finite by the infinite gives participation the character of 'event' with its radical uniqueness and novelty. The Incarnation plunges the Trinity into time, while the crucifixion and resurrection point beyond in an eschatological dynamic pointing toward reunion and fulfillment in the fullness of being. Together they suggest that Chinese culture and Christian philosophy are not so much opposites which contrast, but parallel efforts which break the confines of science and technical philosophy in terms of a love that inspires and attracts, mobilizes and fulfills.

With stunning beauty n. 23 of *Fides et Ratio* suggests this when it notes how philosophy done in the context of the Christian faith is liberated from the confines of any one tradition and launched upon the infinite expanse of truth: "The preaching of Christ crucified and risen is the reef upon which the link between faith and philosophy can break up, but it is also the reef beyond which the two can set forth upon the boundless ocean of truth. Here we see not only the border between reason and faith, but also the space where the two may meet."

Part I
Philosophy and Culture

1.

The Manifold Meanings of Experience and the Idea of Truth

Jean Greisch

A well-known anecdote of Heraclides of Pontus suggests that Pythagoras was the first Greek thinker who called himself a "philosopher." The main passage, whose authenticity has been a subject of controversy until today, is the following: "Few are those who have received the gift to contemplate the most beautiful things. These humans are called 'philosophers' (*philosophoi*) and not 'wise men' (*sophoi*), for nobody is wise besides God." Does Pythagoras speak here, as Robert Joly suggests,1 or an anonymous Platonist, as Werner Jaeger2 and Walter Burkert think?3 In fact, there exists a strange familiarity between this statement and similar passages in Platon, for instance the following: "Among the gods, no one endeavours to philosophize (*philosopheî*), no one wants to become wise (*sophos*), because he is already wise."4 This statement echoes the definition of the philosopher we read in the dialogue *Phaedron*: "To call him wise," says Socrates, "is, at least in my opinion, excessive which suits only a god. But to call him 'philosopher' (*philosophos*). . .would suit him better and be more in the right tone."5

Since these lines have been written, innumerable philosophical melodies have been composed in the same tone. I will let scholars decide who echoes whom. For my reflections, it is more interesting to take into account the far-off echo that resounds in the thesis by which Martin Heidegger opened his lecture *Introduction to Philosophy* during the winter semester 1928-1929 at the University of Freiburg-im-Breisgau:

Even if we do not yet explicitly know anything at all about philosophy, we are already within philosophy, because philosophy is within us and is a part of ourselves insofar as we philosophize from the beginning of our life. . .to be there (*Dasein*) as humans, means to philosophize. The animal cannot philosophize, God does not need to philosophize. A god who would philosophize would not be a god, because the essence of philosophy is to be a finite possibility of a finite being.6

If we take the verb in this fundamental and existential meaning, there can be no doubt that we find ways of "philosophizing" also outside of the realm of Greek culture, which gave birth to the technical meaning of the word "*philosophia*," and soon became the name for a specific theoretical discipline. A close analysis of Heidegger's lecture shows that he himself had not in mind a theoretical and conceptual construction, but a way of "philosophizing" that consisted in an "experience" and moreover in an "experience of truth."

In a similar way, Martha Nussbaum,7 Pierre Hadot,8 and André-Jean Voelke9 have recently endeavoured to rehabilitate the idea that philosophizing is a lifestyle to which one is initiated by means of a certain number of "spiritual exercises" (*askësis*). Following this line, Hellenistic philosophers have developed the idea that philosophy is a therapy of the soul. Of course, one can only attribute "therapeutic" virtues to the act of philosophizing if one takes it to be a specific "experience."

My contribution to this Third Millennium Conference is to ask whether this hypothesis helps us to go further in intercultural and inter-religious dialogue than if we take "thinking" to be just the conceptual framework of a world vision. "Experience" indeed the "magical formula" that everybody has on his or her tongues, expecting that it will open all doors of understanding. But is

this assumption correct? In my opinion, we have today good reasons to take a closer look at the language games we play with this word. Only thus will we have a chance to give a meaning to Hölderlin's beautiful verses in his hymn *Friedensfeie,r* which he composed in 1801 to celebrate the treaty of peace in Lunéville between the French and the Austrians:

Viel hat von Morgen an, erfahren der Mensch;
Der Himmlischen viele genannt
Seit ein Gespräch wir sind
und heren kennen voneinander,
"Many are the things which from morning on
Man has experienced,
many divine beings he has named
since we are a dialogue and we can listen to each other."

Our problem in our troubled times is no longer the peace of Lunéville, but the peace between humans all over the world. If we want to contribute to this peace, we have to ask ourselves what 'being a dialogue" and being "able to listen to each other" means, which implies also a reflection upon the many different experiences we can share. It is on this latter problem that I will focus here.

"The Varieties of Religious Experience": A Hundred Years Later: Do We Need to "Deconstruct" William James?

Let me start with a preparatory remark, dealing with a possible meaning of the words: *der Himmlischen viele genannt* ("naming many divine ones"). In 1901-1902, the American philosopher William James, one of the leading figures of American pragmatism, delivered in the city of Edinburgh the famous Gifford Lectures, dedicated to natural theology. In 1902, he published his lectures under the title, *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* which up to now belongs to the founding texts of the philosophy of religion. Do we still have good reason to read this book, although it seems to rely upon an old-fashioned psychology? In my opinion at least, there can be no doubt about this. One of the reasons is that these reflections upon the "existential conditions of religion," to which James intended first to give the title, "The religious appetites of man and their satisfaction through philosophy," focuses mainly on religious feelings and impulses that make some personalities exceptional, and even ex-centric or *détraqué*. This explains why James engages right from the start in a critical discussion with what he calls "medical materialism."

If we read Jean-Pierre Changeux's book, *L'homme neuronal,* and the positions he defends in his dialogue with Paul Ricoeur, we discover that a new breed of "medical materialism" begins to spread out under the banner of the so-called "neuro-sciences." It could be an exciting thought-experience to imagine a discussion between James and Changeux about their interpretation of the mystical ecstasies of Teresa of Avila. What would have been James' answer to Changeux's claim that the so-called "positone camera" enables the neurologist "to see 'more' than the psychiatrist or the psychologist."10 by deciphering directly in the brain our subjective states of mind, whether they are really felt or just illusionary? Changeux illustrates his thesis through the following example: "Until now, one could only understand these hallucinations through the individual's discourse about them. If one had put Saint Teresa of Avila's head in the positone camera during her mystic ecstasies, one would have been able to tell whether she had hallucinations or not, whether she was subject to epileptic crisis or not."11 James' answer to this kind of argument can

be found on the first pages of his book, where he makes a plea in favor of what I would call phenomenological *fairness*. "Let us play fair in this whole matter."12 This means that we must apply to religious experience the three fundamental criteria of spiritual judgment regarding spiritual matters, whether their psychological background is pathological or not: "*immediate luminousness, philosophical reasonableness, moral helpfulness*." Regarding the kind of reductionism we find in Changeux, we have indeed good reason to ponder anew upon James' words: even if Saint Teresa had a nervous system as solid as that of the most placid cow, this would not save the validity of her experience if it did not satisfy these three criteria!

In suggesting that we need, nevertheless, to "deconstruct" James' arguments, it seems as though I myself do not comply to the principle of *hermeneutical fairness* or to what others call "principle of charity." Nevertheless, if we understand the true meaning of the term "deconstruction," I would claim that we need indeed to have a close look at the concept of experience that underlies James' whole enterprise.

Significantly enough, in the year 1922, when Heidegger began to use the word "phenomenological destruction" in his lectures, William James, together with Natorp, Dilthey, and Münsterberg, is one of the four authors whom Heidegger claims to deconstruct.13 For reasons I have exposed in my book, *L'arbre de vie et l'arbre du savoir*, Heidegger did not have the time to fulfill his claim regarding James. The following reflections are an attempt to find out under which circumstances this gap can be filled.

The Manifold Meanings of the Word "Experience"

"We do not have a wrong idea of things: it is the truth of the things themselves all over the centuries, which is strangely featured. Far from being the plainest realistic experience, truth is the most historical of all experiences,"14 says Paul Veyne in his book, *Les Grecsont-ils cru à leurs mythes?* ("Did the Greek believe in their myths?"). Nietzsche as well as Heidegger would agree fully to this statement, because each one of them has told us their story of the history of truth. These stories, or better these "genealogies," do not consist of mere semantical inquiries, but they highlight the historical or epochal experiences of truth itself.

In one of my articles, I have compared Nietzsche's genealogical reading of the history of truth with Heidegger's interpretation (not forgetting Jacques Derrida's intervention related to the same topic).15 Both thinkers read the history of truth as that of a decline or a de-generation, an eclipse, or even a falsification.16 Without going back to this enormous question, I simply recall one point directly related to the problems we deal with during this conference.

The story (we might also speak of the *legend*) which Nietzsche tells in his *Götzendämmerung* has a provocative title, *History of an Error, How the True World Became a Legend*. Without discussing the legitimacy of Nietzsche's story (nor that of Heidegger's reading of the same story), my hypothesis is that this way of dealing with the problem of truth must have consequences regarding the different transformations that the concept of experience has undergone throughout the history of Western thinking.

By raising this question, I am, of course, not a lone rider. If we look at ßß 62-80 of Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, we discover that in his opinion the different stages of the forgetting of Being, which go together with new understandings of truth, find an echo in similar transformations of the concept of experience. If we accept the legitimitacy of an inquiry regarding the historical transformations of truth, we should have no difficulties in developing a similar inquiry regarding the transformations of the idea of experience. If, so to speak, truth is no longer

what it was – "unchangeable, eternal, impartial" or whatever – "experience," too, is no longer what it was.

Let me, therefore, take the risk of sketching in a kind of imaginery thought-experience the short story of the major transformations which the word experience has undergone in Western thinking, hoping that this may help the representatives of other intellectual and cultural traditions to ponder upon their uses of the same word. Before starting my story, I insist once more upon the fact that it is not just a semantic inquiry about the different possible meanings of the word experience and its equivalents in indo-germanic languages, but a reflection upon the ways human beings interpret their relation to Being itself, including the experience of their selfhood.

Let me begin with an introductory remark regarding the etymology of the term. Whether we speak of *empereia* in Greek, of *experiri* in Latin, of *Erfahrung* in German, of *expérience* in French, of *experience* in English, etc., we always are confronted with the manifold meanings of the indo-germanic radical *per-*. It alludes to the experience of hostility and danger (*periculum*), to that of crossing a difficult passage, consisting sometimes of a authentic breakthrough (*Durchbruch*: This German word plays an important role in Meister Eckhart's account of mystical experience). However diverse the concrete experiences underlying all these expressions, they seem to gravitate around the same focal meaning: the idea of a perilous and dangerous crossing. Especially in German, the same radical links the word *Erfahrung* that designates literally a crossing, to the word *Gefahr*: danger or peril.

Keeping in mind these etymological and lexical facts, I suggest distinguishing, especially in relation to the status of religious experience, five stages of evolution, through which the meaning of the word becomes so to speak more and more "tame," the last one taking shape only in the last decades of our century. With some irony, let me mock Nietzsche's account of the evolution of truth, by giving my story the following title, "The story of an error: how the experience of the world has been transformed in order to become the world of experimentation and inner feelings." The plot of my story will consist of five major theses that I will model as far as possible on Nietzsche's pattern.

1. "The primordial world of experience and its truth: a truth which means crossing a dangerous world, full of good or bad surprises, in which anything can happen at any moment, and where even the gods can visit us."

Being the children of a scientific and a technological civilization, we associate today spontaneously the notion of experience with that of experimentation. If it is understood in this way, an experience is a process that we control from the beginning to the end, which we conduct and manipulate, even if we are not sure of its results, which may consist in "explosions," we have not foreseen. The important fact is that we speak of "experimental settings." If however, we retrace the history of the concept of experience, we discover at the beginning quite an opposite meaning. The German language has a word which renders well this primordial meaning: An "experience" (*Erfahrung*) is first a *Widerfahrnis*, something that falls upon us like a stroke, something which hits us, taking us by surprise. Religious experience in the ancient Greek world is above all the experience of a visitation. The gods are always "visitors in the dark," at dawn, or at noon, and their manifestations cannot be foreseen, they are always to some extent startling and disquieting. Hermes, the god who gave his name to hermeneutics is a good example. If something unqualified happens, the Greeks say: "Hermes is passing by," even as we say in French: *"Un ange passe,"* "An angel is passing by."

Independently of this mythological context and an archaic theology (which is rather a "theogony"), the Greek tragic had an insight into the true meaning of the word experience. When, for example, Aeschylos says that one "learns through suffering" (*tô pathei mathos*),17 the ordeal of suffering becomes the key to an understanding that is inaccessible elsewhere. In his description of hermeneutical experience, Hans-Georg Gadamer quotes this maxim in order to show that Hegel's description of experience in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* focuses too exclusively on the capacity of human consciousness to return to itself in the act of reflection. The black spot in this teleological concept of experience is that it does not take into account the fact that every true experience deceives our previous expectations.18

2. "The world is experienced as the place of a perilous crossing of the river of time, until we reach the other border: Eternal Life."

In the second stage, the concept of experience is linked closely to the idea of a spatial and temporal crossing. *Einsicht durch Fahrt*: insight through mobility. An experience can only be understood if we accept the corresponding itinerary. Remember T.S. Eliot's famous verses in *The Waste Land*, describing the peregrinations of the pilgrims toward Jerusalem:

> We will not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our peregrinations
> Will be that we come back to where we started
> And then we will know the place for the first time.

It is exactly this point that Heidegger stressed in his early lectures when he spelled the verb *erfahren* with a hyphen: *er-fahren.* It is what one discovers through the itinerary of a whole life.19 Regarding the status of religious experience, this use could be illustrated by Saint Bonaventure's beautiful title: *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*. This is also what Stanislas Breton stressed in a public lecture he gave at the Faculté de Philosophie of the Institut Catholique de Paris, on the occasion of the 16th centenary of the conversion of Saint Augustin on the topic: "The subject of religious experience."20 Breton recalled that where the moderns speak of experience, Meister Eckhart, among many other medieval thinkers, prefers to speak of an *itinerarium*, an itinerary.

If we understand it in this way, an experience is the crossing of time as well as a breakthrough (the word *Durchbruch*, which plays an important role in Eckhart's mystical language). This could also explain why medieval thinkers who, like Thomas Aquinas, struggle with the problem of a rational demonstration of the existence of God, do not yet speak of *proofs* in the modern, scientific sense of the word, but of different "ways" or "paths" (the famous *quinque viae* in Aquinas), which help human reason to acknowledge God's existence.

3. "The world of modern science is a world of phenomena which constitute the realm of empirical observation and scientific experimentation. Its only truth consists in the fact that it is the world of representation."

Modern philosophy implies a new way of dealing with experiences in which "experimental" sciences and what A. Koyré calls "experimental dialogue with nature" play an ever more important role. Kant is, of course, one of the thinkers who have helped us best to understand the philosophical implications of this new concept of experience. In his book *La Fable mystique*, Michel de Certeau has shown that the modern mystics use the word experience also in a new way.21 As to the status of philosophical theology, it is at the same time that the former *viae* become*proofs* of the existence of God.

Besides Kant, Hegel has reflected upon the consequences of the empiricist concept of experience, which go far beyond modern science. His *Phenomenology of the Spirit* must be read as a *Wissenschaft der Erfahrung des Bewussteins*, a "science of the experience of consciousness." In my opinion, what Hegel says in ß 7 of his *Encyclopaedia* is especially interesting: "The principle of experience contains the infinitely important determination according to which in order to admit a content and to hold it for true, one must be there oneself; more precisely: one must find that such a content is unified and totally united to the certainty one has of oneself. One must be there oneself, either with one's exterior senses, or with one's deepest spirit, with the essential consciousness of oneself."22

4. "To the world we discover by means of exterior observation one can oppose the inner world of mental states, accessible through introspection. Its truth consists in nothing else than psychic life. Thus the *Erfahrung* is transformed into *Erlebnis*."

This fourth stage in our genealogical reconstruction of the notion of experience, which is now reduced to psychic or mental states of mind, has important consequences, to which Gadamer has drawn our attention in the first part of *Truth and Method.*23 Experimental or descriptive psychology, dealing with mental states, seems now to have become the queen of all sciences. Of course William James' study on the varieties of religious experience belongs to the same stage. At one moment, even the logicians were caught in the trap of "psychologism," despite Frege's and Husserl's warnings.

Even outside the context of science proper, we like to appeal to the "lively experience" of people, more than once in polemic contrast with the presumed sterility of reason, especially if we want to defend religious experience or "mysticism" as the "oceanic feeling" (Romain Rolland). The German word e*rlebnis*, or the French word *vécu* allude, of course, to the phenomenon of "life." No wonder that this notion of lived experience played a capital role in the development of life-philosophies at the beginning of the 20th century.

Today, we need a critical reflection upon the mystifying effects of this all too vague notion. Heidegger was one of the first philosophers to denounce what he called *Erlebnistrunken-boldigkeit*, literally "the drunkeness of lived experiences" of his time. In the passage of the *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, which I have quoted above, he suggests that this is the ultimate stage in the history of the degeneration of truth, a stage that he assimilates to the abandonment by Being (*Seinsverlassenheit*).

Under this respect, his most remarkable thesis is that there exists a paradoxical link between the rise of universal fabrication and manipulation, which he calls *Machenschaft*, and the rise of a pseudo-interiority, which needs ever more strong and exciting feelings, in order to ascertain that one is still alive. "Now that the beings have been abandoned by Being itself, anything serves as a pretext to the shallowest 'sentimentality.' "It is only now that everything must be an object of a "lived experience" and that all undertakings and manifestations are dripping with "lived experiences." It is this frantic quest of lived experiences that shows that in the present times the human being has lost his Being and that he has become the prey of his chase after lived experiences.24

5. "The lived experiences need no longer the substrata of an ego. The self is the last fiction we must get rid of. Thus the road will be free to a new concept of experience: pure 'vibration.'"

Even if it is difficult to have an objective judgement regarding one's own time, I wonder whether we are not making a new step in our understanding of the word experience. Let me express this through an anecdote. During a philosophical session which I had organized at the abbey of Ligugé, one of the monks told me that the Benedictine monasteries have to deal with a *New*

Age religious tourism, with people who are looking for experiences that can only be described in terms of "vibrations," which appear to be especially intense in dark places like crypts or in places of high symbolic meaning, like the labyrinth in the cathedral of Chartres. It is also a well-known fact that in Germany each day specialized tourist agencies organize bus trips, from Nurenberg to the Feldberg, which has thus become once more a magic mountain, looking for places where cosmic vibrations can be felt most strongly.

From *Erlebnis* to pure vibration: This could well be the new shape of the concept of experience in our times, well-fitted to an age one tends to qualify by the multiplication of the prefix *post*-: '*post*-modern, post-metaphysical, or post-Christian'.

A Plea for a Phenomenological and Hermeneutic Understanding of the Word 'Experience'

Mimicking Nietzsche and Heidegger, I have constructed my geneological story as one of irreversible degeneration. I am well aware that in Nietzsche as well as in Heidegger, its counterpart is the exigency of a totally new beginning. Being unable to subscribe to their exigency, let me explore another path that leads to the kind of hermeneutical phenomenology I have tried to work out in my recent books, following in the footsteps of Paul Ricoeur. I will try to clarify the hermeneutical status of the notion of experience through a critical discussion with Claude Romano, one of the most promising representatives of the youngest generation of French phenomenologists. In his two books, *L'événement et le monde, L' événement et le temps,*125 he asks himself under which conditions one can develop a truly phenomenological concept of experience. This question is not surprising if we remember that Husserl claimed in contrast to the empiricist's understanding of the word, that "We phenomenologists are the better empiricists!" He means that a "transcendental empiricism" is more faithful to the giveness of experience than the empiricist approach that focuses mainly on exterior observation.

Does this phenomenological understanding of the word help us to overcome the degenerations described above, without leading back to an archaic ways of thinking which we no longer can share? This is also Romano's question in the third part of his book, *L'événement et le monde*, where he endeavours to rediscover "the primary phenomenological meaning of experience."

Contrary to the empiricist concept of experience, which deals only with intramundane facts accessible to empirical observation, Romano develops what he calls a *"herméneutique événementiale"* (evenemential hermeneutics). He defines experience as "the necessarily unique and irrepeatable ordeal in which I myself am at stake and through which I am always deeply changed. The important thing here is not the idea of a habitus, but on the contrary that of undergoing an ordeal which is at the same time a transformation."26 This explains why Romano spells the word "ex-pér-ience" with two hyphens: This allows him to rediscover the idea of a perilous crossing. If we take the word experience in its primordial phenomenological meaning, "it is fundamentally the experience of an *event."*27 Classical empirism works with a concept of experience that takes its contents to be possessed by the subject and that can always be repeated. Under this presupposition, nobody "makes" an experience, because nothing happens to someone. The fundamental rule of all experimentation is that the experimentator must not interfere with the data of his experiment. Therefore, this kind of experience possesses no world of its own. Even if we take the word "event" in the weak meaning of an intra-mundane fact, we work with another understanding of experience.

If we follow Romano's suggestion, according to which under certain circumstances we need to cross the threshold between the evenemential in the weak sense ('l'événementiel') and the

evenemential taken in the strongest sense (‘l’événemential’), where we are confronted with unique events that change our understanding of the world as such, we quit empiricism altogether. Experiences of this kind are innameable or "mystical" in the Wittgensteinian sense of the word. Each time we are confronted with an "ex-per-ience" in the strong sense of the word, we expose ourselves to the "peril" of meaninglessness. Experiences of this kind not only resist all explanatory claims, they can become meaningful only through specific acts of understanding and interpretation.

Why do I speak of a hermeneutics of experience in this context? Because experience taken in this sense, is nothing else than the evenemential dimension of understanding itself. But in Romano’s opinion, neither Heidegger nor Gadamer have been able to give a full account of the fact that "‘ex-per-ience" in its primordial phenomenological meaning is the milieu of all understanding, insofar it has to deal with events.’28 Both thinkers did not pay enough attention to the fact that "to understand oneself in the evenemential sense of the word, means always understanding oneself as *another* whom I have *become."*29

This modifies profoundly Heidegger’s and Gadamer’s description of the "hermeneutical circle." Instead of defining the finitude of all understanding exclusively in reference to *Dasein’s* "being-toward-death" (*Sein zum Tode*), we should first reflect upon the facticity of our birth. This implies that *Dasein* (which Romano suggests baptizing "advenant") is characterized by a "primordial lateness," which explains why the background of all efforts of understanding "is a primordial and fundamental lack of understanding."30

The positive counterpart of this "lack of foundation" which "manifests itself as an inextinguishable source of misunder-standings"31 is that our existence is open to infinite possibilities of interpretation that even the experience of death can not close definitely: "Right from the inaugural event of our birth, the human adventure appears open to *an infinity of meanings of which I am not the origin* – an infinite which is not only inextinguishable in fact, but also in principle."32

Perhaps this thesis sheds also a new light on the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus about the impossible possibility of "being reborne" (a motif that plays an important role in James’ descriptions of religious experience) and on the theme of misunderstanding in the Gospel of John. If the disciples have such difficulties in grasping the meaning of the words of Jesus, it is not because they are too stupid or too short-sighted, it is because his words confront them with events and possibilities that transcend intramundane facts and that put into question (*krisis*!) their familiar understanding of the world. The hermeneutical maxim inviting us to a "better understanding" receives thus a meaning that goes far beyond all psychologism: "I can only understand ‘better’ if I accept that I will never understand everything."33 If "all understanding is conquered against a misunderstanding," instead of being rooted in a "preliminary understanding" (*Vorverständnis*), it is because every understanding and misunderstanding has its roots "in the fact that every meaning ultimately exceeds all appropriation through understanding."34

Taken in this primordial sense, experience means "becoming alien by and through the ordeal of an event."35 If we have reasons to speak of an "experience of truth," truth itself must be understood as an event. This implies rehabilitating a certain kind of transcendantalism, which brings us back to the original way in which Husserl broke with the empirism. Romano proposes an interesting hermeneutical equivalent of Husserl’s transcendantal empiricism: "In fact, as the ex-per-ience cannot be understood and determinated in reference to intramundane facts, its only reference is *the transcendantal itself*, which escapes in principle all possibilities of empirical experimentation and all the empirical in general, namely the event insofar it configures a world."36

If we look at his distinction between *speech-acts* in the sense of Austin or Searle and the *event of speech* (echoing Heidegger's and Gadamer's *Sprachereignis*), we understand even better the difference between the ordinary (empirical) concept of experience and the transcendental or hermeneutical concept: Instead of expressing a meaning we have already understood, "speaking means an ordeal of understanding, insofar all understanding cannot at all become actualized as such before its becoming an adventure and an event through speakin."37

One possible illustration could be taken from the speech-events that structure the psychoanalytical experience (which is also an ordeal of truth in a strong sense of the word). But we can also take our examples in the words of great poets, for instance Hölderlin, Rilke, or Paul Celan. Each one of them is a witness to the fact that the experience of poetic speech does not consist in shaping a given verbal material in a kind of demiurgic act, which would make the poet become a rival of the Creator. Poetry is, on the contrary, the experience of an extreme exposition to the primordial power of the Word, which exceeds our capacities. This is probably what Paul Celan had in mind when he wrote, contradicting Mallarmé and Blanchot: "La poésie ne s'impose plus, elle s'expose" ("Poetry no longer impose itself, it exposes itself").

This phenomenological and hermeneutic description of the event of language profoundly upsets the current representations and theories of 'communication." Taken in the strong sense of the word, the structuring events of human experience—suffering, dying, loving, maybe praying or believing—are "incommunicable," which does not at all mean that we lack the words to express them. This can be verified *a contrario* by the example of the events which the mass media present daily to us on our televisions or in the newspapers. Events are *scoops*: their meaning consists in nothing more than in their exciting novelty. But let us not forget that Heidegger's description of inauthentic modes of existing has nevertheless a positive, ontological meaning. In the same way, I would claim that even the caricature of meaningful events that journalism presents to us day by day (Romano describes them through such phenomenological hallmarks as: "new, actual, vanishing, far-away, spectacular, anonymous")38 reminds us paradoxically of the fact that there exist other events through which each life becomes an unique adventure.

If we take the word experience in this phenomenological and hermeneutical sense, we should also have a close look upon its temporal structure. This is the aim of Romano's second book entitled: *L'événement et le temps*. He characterizes the event as being "1/ absolutly new; 2/ having an immemorial self-evidence; 3/ whose ultimate meaning is not yet determinated once and for all."39 He tries to replace Heidegger's description of the "extatic and horizontal" structures of care by other "dimensional structures of time"40 better fitted to his understanding of events. In this context, he introduces the beautiful expression of "temporal escapings"41 that liberate us from the traps of the image of horizontality.

His analysis of these temporal dimensions can be read against the background of Saint Augustin's description of a "threefold present": that of the past (reminiscing), that of the future (expectation), and that of the present (attention). A hermeneutic understanding of events leads to a new understanding of each of these "presents." Regarding our relation to the past, Romano distinguishes sharply a phenomenology of reminiscence and a phenomenology of memories. Memories are images of former states of matter: The true reminiscence does not deal with the factual past, but only with "possibilities."42 Thus "memory is first of all the ordeal of events: they and they alone *open up the dimension of that which deserves being memorized as such*. Therefore memory is not the subjective ability to conserve and to select memories."43

This remarkable description has also consequences regarding our relationship to the future. Taken in the strong sense of the word, events cannot be foreseen. Each one takes us by surprise.

This is why Romano distinguishes between "expectation" and "readiness" ("disponibilité"). An expectation, however indeterminate it may be, neutralizes the surprise of the event, whereas openness is the originary experience of the future.44 I am not sure to what extent I can subscribe to this distinction. Did the Messianic expectations of the Jews neutralize the surprise constituted by the appearance and behaviour of Jesus Christ? The example of John the Baptist asking Jesus a question full of anxiety: "Are you the One who must come?" while he was in the prison of Herod, expecting his death, suggests the contrary.

Romano would probably reply to my objection that even in this case we still have to do with a weak meaning of the notion of surprise, a meaning he assimilates to a "deceived expectation."45 He himself postulates a hyperbolic concept of being surprised. This happens only when the human being (whom he calls consequently "advenant") ‘is confronted with the primordial ordeal of his inability to understand when his world is vacillating.46 It is precisely on such occasions that we discover an openness consisting of an "expectation," which is open to everything because it expects nothing and which can accept everything because it aims at nothing, at no fact whatever.47

Only in this attitude, which is neither expecting nor projecting, are we really open to the future as such and ready for all coming events.48 Although Romano stresses that there is a fundamental difference between his hermeneutics which focuses on events in this strong sense of the word and Heidegger’s *Daseinsanalytik,*49 we should not forget that in his later texts (for instance in *Gelassenheit)* Heidegger makes a similar distinction between *Warten* and *Erwarten.* Romano himself ends his inquiry with an apologia of the attitude of serenity! In my opinion, we should probably ask Romano the same question I addressed to Heidegger’s thinking 20 years ago, and which I had also in mind during the Cerisy la-Salle decade dedicated in 1995 to Professor Jean Ladrière: To what extent can a "hermeneutics of events" help us to answer Kant’s question: "What am I allowed to hope?"

This does not prevent me from agreeing totally with Romano’s critical remarks regarding Heidegger’s understanding of "resoluteness," to which he opposes his thesis that the Augustinian "present of the present" means being constantly open to the possibility of a transformation that has its roots in the possibility that constitutes the event as such.50

Understood in this way, the future, the present, and the past appear to constitute the fundamental conditions of appearance of each event and every "ex-per-ience" in the phenomenological sense of the word, an experience that cannot be understood as a mode of a constant presence.51

Those who feel a bit startled by Romano’s project of an "herméneutique événementiale" could ponder upon the categories of *space of experience* and *horizon of expectation* introduced by Reinhart Koselleck,52 which play an important role in Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of historicity. In his opinion, they are "meta-historical categories on the level of a philosophical anthropology,"53 "true transcendantals which help us to understand the essence of history."54

Perhaps they help us also to better understand the experience of truth by different cultures. Each culture relies upon its own space of experience and has its specific horizon of expectation. The important thing is their absence of symmetry: "Experiences aim at integration, expectations aim at opening perspectives."55 This is how Ricoeur glosses Koselleck’s thesis: "*Gehegte Erwartungen sind, berholbar, gemachte Erfahrungen werden gesammelt,"* which I suggest translating literally by: "The expectations we have nourished can be surmounted, the experiences we have made must be brought together."

Ricoeur draws the following "permanent ethical and political consequences."56 "Our task is to prevent the tension between these two opposite poles becoming a schism," which leads to two

complementary maxims: "resisting the seduction of purely *utopic* expectations,"57 and "resisting the narrowing of the space of experience."58 If we follow Ricoeur in rejecting the idea "that the future is totally open and contingent and that the past is definitely closed and necessary," we are invited to "make our expectations more determinate and our experiences more indeterminate."59 Does not this twofold maxim apply also to all intercultural dialogue dealing with the historical experiences of truth?

At the end of these exploratory reflections, some words taken from Paul Celan's discourse *The Meridian* come to mind. Echoing the exclamation of Büchner's Danton: "Oh, Art!," Celan says that these words can be understood with different accentuations: "the acute of today, the gravis of history. . .the circumflex—the sign of extension—of the Eternal."60 I would say something similar of the exclamation: "Oh, Truth!" According to the experiences we are involved in, it must be understood with the circumflex of Eternity, the gravis of historicity, and, above all, the acute accent of responsibility.

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Notes

1. Robert Joly, Platon ou Pythagore? Héraclide Pontique, fr. 87-88 Wehrli in *Hommage à Marie Delcourt*, Collection Latomus 114 (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1970), pp. 136-148.

2. Werner Jaeger, "Über Ursprung und Kreislauf des philosophischen Lebensideals," in *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philosophisch-historische Klasse (1928), pp. 390-421.

3. Walter Burkert, "Platon oder Pythagoras. Zum Ursprung des Wortes 'Philosophie,'" in *Hermes* 88 (1960), pp. 159-177.

4. *Banquet* 204 a.

5. *Phèdre* 278 d.

6. Martin Heidegger, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, Ga 27, p. 5.

7. Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire*. Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

8. Pierre Hadot, *Qu'est-ce que philosophie antique?* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), folio-essais; id, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (Paris: Bibliothèque des Etudes augustiniennes, 2 1992).

9. André-Jean Voelke, *La philosophie comme thérapie de l'âme.* Etudes de philosophie hellénistique (Paris-Fribourg: Ed. du Cerf, 1994).

10. Jean-Pierre Changeux/Paul Ricoeur, *Ce qui nous fait penser. La nature et la règle* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1998), p. 69.

11. *Ibid*., p. 71-72.

12. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience. A Study in Human Nature*, Longmans/Green, London, 102, p. 15.

13. Cf. Martin Heidegger, Ga 59, 96. Pour une analyse plus détaillée du programme heideggérien de "déconstruction phénoménologique," dans le contexte de son "herméneutique de la vie facticielle," je renvoie à mon *ouvrage L'arbre de vie et l'arbre du savoir*. Les racines phénoménologiques de l'herméneutique heideggérienne, Paris, Ed. du Cerf, 2000, p. 97-110.

14. Paul Veyne, *Les Grecs ont-ils cru à leurs mythes?*, Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1983, p. 11.

15. Jacques Derrida, *Eperons*. Styles de Nietzsche, Paris, Flammarion,

16. "La déesse Vérité. Histoire du plus long oubli" in Jean Greisch (éd.), *La Vérité*, Paris, Ed. Beauchêne,1983, p. 43-60.

17. *Agamemnon*, 177.

18. Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Warheit und Methode*, G.S. 1, p. 361-362, trad. fr. Vérité et Méthode, p. 378-379.

19. "er-fahren" - auf der Fahrt des Lebens erringen" (Ga 58, 67).

20. "L'itinéraire spirituel de Maître Eckhart" in *Revue de l'Institut Catholique* n° 28 (ocotbre-décembre 1988) 65-81.

21. Michel de Certeau, *La Fable mystique.* XVIe-XVIIe siècle, Paris, Gallimard, 1982.

22. G.W.F. Hegel, *Encyclopédie des sciences philosophiques*, § 7 Remarque cf. § 38, remarque.

23. *Wahrheit und Methode*, G.S. I, 66-76 pour le concept d'*Erlebnis*; G.S. I, 352-366 pour le concept d'*Erfahrung*.

24. Ga 65, p. 123-124.

25. Pour la détermination du concept d'expérience, voir notamment : *L'événement et le monde*, Paris, P.U.F., 1998, p. 193-288.

26. *L'événement et le monde*, op. cit. p. 194-195.

27. *Ibid*., p. 198.

28. *Ibid*., p. 218.

29. *Ibid*., p. 200.

30. *Ibid*., p. 208.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid*., p. 209.

33. *Ibid*., p. 210.

34. *Ibid*.

35. *Ibid*., p. 211.

36. *Ibid*., p. 219.

37. *Ibid*., p. 220.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

39. *L'événement et le temps,* p. 179.

40. *Ibid*., p. 185.

41. *Ibid*., p. 200.

42. *Ibid*., p. 205.

43. *Ibid*., p. 208.

44. *Ibid*., § 14, p. 221-238.

45. *Ibid*., p. 223.

46. *Ibid*., p. 225.

47. *Ibid*., p. 226.

48. *Ibid*., p. 234.

49. *Ibid*., p. 229.

50. *Ibid*., p. 247.

51. *Ibid*., p. 270.

52. Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979).

53. Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et Récit III* (Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 1983), p. 309.
54. *Ibid*., p. 310.
55. *Ibid*., p. 302.
56. *Ibid*., p. 310
57. *Ibid*., p. 312.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 313.
59. *Ibid*.
60. Paul Celan, *Le méridien*, trad. André du Bouchet, fata morgana (1995), p. 14.

2.

Philosophy and Culture

Carlo Huber, S.J.

Introduction

I shall begin with a Wittgensteienian approach, looking into how the two terms "culture" and "philosophy" are used. If ever one is at a loss about how to tackle the meaning of something, and especially, the relation of such complex things as philosophy and culture it is advisable to take this Wittgensteinian approach and look at how these terms are actually used. In the end we may have more questions than answers!

At a first glance it is evident that culture is used as a plural noun: there are different cultures, whose differences are strongly underscored in a "global" society, especially for their proper values against totalitarian "colonialistic" tendencies. Philosophy in contrast generally is used in the singular, but frequently with an added adjective such as ancient, modern, contemporary, Greek, German or Chinese, etc. But one should not forget Husserl's advice in his *Krisis der eurpäischen Wissenschaften*: that "philosophies can live only in the plural" 1

This is, of course, a remark on "surface grammar" (*Oberflächen-Grammatik*), but I think it important and we will return to it. But first we will have to look more deeply into what Wittgenstein calls "depth grammar."

For this analysis, we need the following and I suppose, well-known terms:

Universals—particulars-singulars;
Univocal—analogous:
Analogous in various ways: Naturally, systematically
Familyresemblance (Wittgenstein)
Inbegriff (Kant)

Culture

We will start with an analysis of culture because it is the more complex and, so to say, broader term; even philosophy generally is considered a part of culture, even if it develops only at a certain level of culture and after a certain time. But philosophy certainly is considered one realisation of culture, and we have to treat it first because of our overall interest in Chinese culture and philosophy. But my topic is, of course, of a wider and generally actual context, even in relation with faith and religion, or rather with their philosophical consequences and presuppositions. The so-called "inculturation of Christian faith" is a problem not only for Christian theology, but precisely for the various cultures. One now has to use the plural into which Christian faith must be inculturated, and, frequently, within the underlying philosophical background of a certain cultural tradition.

To point out that it is a general problem, I want to cite an example from Italy: In Italy one speaks since the *risorgimento* and the time of the reunification of Italy, but still of a *cultura laica* in opposition to a *cultura cattolica*. But then the question arises: Do Dante, Michelangelo, Mancini and The Vatican Museum belong to Italian culture or not, whereas Italian industry, the Italian

market certainly do! Or, enlarging the horizon to a universal level: Do the Gilgamesch, Confucius, the Greek tragedies, and Nietzsche belong to culture "toute courte," because they were not Christian? Some years ago, the title of a meeting of *Communione e Liberazione* at Rimini was: *La fede deve diventare cultura,* "Faith must become culture." I strongly disapproved.

The point is that culture is not a strictly particular concept nor is it of itself a religious term; its logic is very different from the logic of *religio* and even more from that of faith if understood as Christian faith.2 Nevertheless, religion certainly is considered part of a particular culture. We speak today of cultures in the plural, and we have problems with the diversity within various cultures.

But even it is, not only the historically or geographically distant cultural areas which create difficulties of common understanding. A sign of this difficulty is the extreme importance given today to "hermeneutics" in philosophy.3 Also, the cultural changes in European culture, of a long-standing Christian cultural tradition, for instance in Italy and the United States—bring home to us the inevitable philosophical problems of global understanding and communication.

Etymology. But we have to start with a short etymological memory of the term culture.

1.Culture (*cultura*) is a derivative from the Latin word *colere* (cure, *pflegen*, take care, etc.). Its original meaning is best seen in its composites: agriculture, horticulture, etc.

2. "Take care of the soil," "take care of a garden," etc. Taking care of something implies interest, dedication, knowledge, competency and even apprenticeship to be able to take care of something. This is especially manifest when we speak of medical "care" or "cure." Only intelligent, rational, provident, and free human beings are capable to take care, are capable of culture, with the possibility and necessity of developing its various fields or horizons.4

Enlargement and Further Specifications of the Term Culture. Not only according to Wittgenstein, but also since the time of Aristotle, it ha been noted that in order to grasp the meaning of a term one has to consider what the term is opposed to and by which manner of opposition.

1. In ancient times culture (cultured) was opposed to barbaric, which means people who cannot speak a "decent" language, namely Latin or Greek, who have no scripture and certainly no literature. Culture itself acquires thus a strongly linguistic meaning—the capacity to speak (and to write) correctly. the "common" languages that have a literature and a tradition: Latin and Greek against "barbaric." And so one uses culture in the context of such people in contrast to barbaric, wild, savage people. This certainly is in part. But the next question is whether culture is a value term.

2. This use of culture, by the Humanism of the Renaissance (not withstanding Rousseau and the romantic *bon savage*) has a long tradition. Even Heinrich Heine was proud that he had learned some Latin with the ex-Jesuits at Cologne (the order was suppressed from 1773-1815), noting that some Latin gives a sort of cultural flair even to a simple shoemaker.

3. European culture from the Renaissance onward, slowly, but especially during the later 18th and 19th centuries, came into closer contact with non-European people that undoubtedly had writing, art, literature and a well-organized society. At the same time, under the influence of Romanticism, the national languages in Europe gained greater esteem. All this changed the situation. The French fashion of *chinoiserie* also played a rather important part in convincing

people that not only through knowledge of Latin or of some classic European tradition became the criteria for the culture as a value-term.

4. From then on, a person who knows and lives consciously the culture and the good style of the life to which he belongs, and as far as possible also others, is a person of culture, a *Weltbürger*. This way the term culture becomes, again not withstanding Rousseau and some Romantic tendencies, clearly a value-term associated with the ideal of *Bildung*, especially during 19th century. But it still highlighted certain aspects of an evolved "high" culture, for example, literature, social organization and, later, sciences and technique. In this way culture also started to become more and more a plural term: cultures.

5. With the consequent contentual development towards a global term *Inbegriff*, culture becomes a general term with possible particular and singular applications.

Culture as a Global Term or "Family concept," on the One Hand, and as an Inbegriff General Term on the Other Hand. The term culture is an extremely comprehensive and complex term. It contains today much content in a global and often not, in a specific and clarified way; it is therefore not easy to delimit. In fact, it tends to comprehend everything that is human.

What follows is not a complete list of the contents of culture, but only an indication of its extreme breadth. The term culture includes the traditions and the patrimony of a certain historical and/or geographical human population together with its environment in a somewhat determined cultural area that has developed historically and has a certain unity; all arts with their specific style, all literature and, preceding it, a language with its vocabularistic, grammatical specifications and semantical relations, the juridical, political, social and economic system with their evolution, technology and the educational system, the scholastic and other; religion with its history, whether true or mythological, its rites, feasts and their structures; especially the moral and social values commonly accepted whether religious or secular; and, of course, it includes philosophy and perhaps even logic, mathematics, etc.

On the other hand, we speak of prehistoric cultures, of early Mesopotamian or Chinese culture, of modern global culture, of the various cultures of different peoples, and even of personal culture. This way culture (cultures) is clearly not a singular but a plural term. Under this aspect there is the study of various cultures in a comparative way, analogous to comparative studies of religion(s), as if culture (and religion) were normal, general, and distributive terms arrived at by abstraction and having generalizing common features in a Lockian mode. But culture is not a general term arrived at by abstracting a general essence from various items. If we consider what, according to the first list, is considered to belong to culture, there is no common essence, no really common features found in all cultures. Culture is rather what Ludwig Wittgenstein calls a term of "family resemblance": a word used for many things not because of a common essence but because of a similarity between the first and second item and another similarity between the second and third and so on, like the similarities one finds in a large family. The examples Wittgenstein himself gives are game, language, proposition, number, etc.5

As we have seen, the term culture becomes more and more comprehensive, even to becoming philosophically all-comprehensive for every typically human activity and manifestation is culturally determined: is culture—the typical consequence of this is "cultural ethics," but also a cultural worldview, cultural epistemology, and cultural metaphysics. Philosophy as a whole is cultural. It is clear that one is human only insofar as one possesses in some way cultural expressions and activities. But then the various parts or aspects of a culture, which is not the same in a single culture, are the same, are not single parts which could be called a culture. Culture becomes

an *Inbegriff* in a Kantian meaning6 and "culture" is again singular, but in a special and all-comprehensive way.

A Further Consequence. According to this double evolution of the term culture, we have a further consequence: cultures can no longer be graded; there are no simply higher or lower cultures. This, of course, means not that one cannot compare single aspects of a cultures among themselves, for instance technology, production, and so on, but that this must be done on the parameters of these single aspects and their corresponding special sciences. It is not done by a non-existing overall parameter for a culture. For aesthetics, literature, social organization even the first evaluation, the one for production, etc., is possible.

The consequence is that culture is not a value concept in itself. It can be judged only from outside; for instance, from morals, human rights, or from Christian faith, human dignity, and– maybe, philosophical rationality. These constitutes absolute values, which culture does not. This excludes, of course, any cultural elitism, whether European, American, or others.

Philosophy

In many ways the depth grammar for the term philosophy is similar to that of culture. Philosophy has many different parts: philosophy of knowledge, philosophical psychology, anthropology, ethics, logic, philosophy of language, ontology, metaphysics, and so on. But these parts do not differ in the way that various specific sciences—mathematics, physics, biology, etc.—differ among themselves. Philosophy has long been called a *scientia universalt* in opposition to the *scientiae particulares*. Since the time of Thales, it wants to give a rational explanation as against myth, religion, and faith, which do not interest us directly in this context. It concerns a whole as a unity which could be a totality of objects such as nature, world, and universe, a subjective totality such as self, soul, knowledge, will, and freedom, or one of origin, the transcendent, God.7 Every "part" of philosophy is always the whole and entire philosophy. Historically, too, the various philosophical schools, or even different important philosophers—Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Thomas, Descartes, Kant, and so on—are different, but nevertheless, one speaks about philosophy in the singular. There are strong connections and revivals of all important philosophical positions through the ages, such that one cannot study philosophy by just following and understanding one single author. One cannot understand Heidegger without knowing Plato, and knowing at least some Greek. The age-old problems turn up ever again, as do similarities in their solutions, too. This way too, philosophy remains a singular unitary concept. But, again, we do not arrive at it by abstraction and generalization of various philosophies, to a universal distributive term. Philosophy is again rather a family term like culture, but it has an even stronger, historical, unity and a different beginning.

Philosophy did not arise with the beginnings of humanity; it began at a certain moment inside history, at the time of the Presocratics in Greek Jonia and then with Socrates at Athens. Thus, it does not belong simply to human nature, and it is not absolutely necessary in order to be a human being, nor is it necessary for every single human being, as are culture and perhaps religion. It is probably a spontaneous and necessary evolution of the human mind, but not from the very beginning and necessarily for everybody. It is a historical family concept; I would call it an *Inbegriff*, but in a different way than culture.

Philosophy in its historical existence has a stronger unity of content and even historical continuity than culture. Single cultures have a beginning**,** but also an end. They may simply die

out, or are superseded or suppressed by another "stronger" culture; but if they live on they remain different in themselves. Philosophy has a beginning, but no end. The so often decried "death of philosophy" (Compte's three stages), or even the "end of metaphysics" (Nietzsche, Heidegger, Levinas, Vattimo, etc., as a *Telenovella*), first of all were themselves philosophies and always brought back metaphysics; e.g., the analytical ontology of Strawson, and the people interested in indexicales (Castaneda, Runggaldier, etc.).

Consequences and Conclusions

Philosophy is, then trans-historical not withstanding its historical origin and history. The history of philosophy is after all a part of philosophy itself, as Husserl, Heidegger and Gentile strongly insist but of which Plato and Aristotle with their references to earlier philosophers were strongly aware.8 That is the reason why the history of philosophy belongs to philosophy itself, and why one cannot do philosophy without a good knowledge of history of philosophy as a whole. This, of course, does not mean that one cannot specialize or has to do so. One cannot know everything equally well. But on the other hand, one cannot understand Heidegger without knowing Plato, Aristotle, and Kant; Husserl without Descartes, Stuart Mill and Hume; or Wittgenstein without Kant and Schopenhauer (at least not the *Tractatus*, or the *Investigations* without the*Tractatus*), and so on. It is the same with different schools: One cannot understand English Empiricism without knowing Descartes; French-German Rationalism and Leibniz without Locke; nor Linguistic Analysis without the English Hegelianism of Bradly and Green.

But in the same time, philosophy is transcultural. European philosophy has influenced Eastern and Chinese philosophy, but the converse is also true: Indian philosophy influenced Hegel, Schelling, Bradly and Schopenhauer, to give just a few examples. But what is more important, philosophy is always critical, first of itself and its own history. It is self-reflexive, which culture in its plurality cannot be; and it is its own measure because it is self-referential and self-foundational. It is one and in a very important way singular. In a certain way it alone is the sole measure of cultures, besides supernatural revelation. This presupposes that human beings are capable of trans-historical and trans-cultural communication. This is an epistemological question depending on our human capacity to know truth, notwithstanding the fact that we commit errors. Humans are even trans-historical and trans-cultural, which brings us to an anthropological and even a metaphysical foundation of communication, truth, humankind, and philosophy itself.

With all this the difficulties of trans-historical and trans or intercultural communication and understanding, especially in philosophy, are neither resolved nor denied, but rather highlighted for philosophy itself belongs to culture and always is somehow culturally determined. The actual importance given in philosophy to hermeneutics is proof of this. But one should not reduce all philosophy to hermeneutics, nor should one cherish a skeptical attitude in this respect like Kippling's: "East is East and West is West; and never the twain shall meet."

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Notes

1. Husserl, *Krisis* p.465 cit. from: Antimo Negri, *Interventi sulla fenomenologia*, Capone, 1988 p. 58: "Le filosofie possono vivere soltanto al plurale."

2. *Instructio Sacrae Congregationis Fidei "Dominus Jesus*" from 6.8.2000.

3. Cfr. Vatimo, but better Gadamer, Truth and Method and his Interpretations of Platonic texts

4. Kant, *Mutmaßlicher Anfangsgrund der Menschengeschichte* (1786) ed.Akk.pruss. Bd.IV, pp.325.

5. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M. Schriften I §§ 65-71 bes.§ 65: "Statt etwas anzugeben, was allem. was wir Sprache nennen, gemeinsam ist, sage ich, es ist diesen Erscheinungen garnicht Eines gemeinsam, weswegen wir für alle das gleiche Wort verwenden,—sondern sie sind mit einander in vielen verschiedenen Weisen verwandt. Und dieser Verwandtschaft, oder dieser Verwandtschaften wegen nennen wir sie alle ‘Sprache’."

6. Kant, KRV, Transc.Ästhetik §§ 2-6; in analgy to space and time.

7. Following the three "transcendental ideas" of Kant (KRV, Tarnsc. Dialektik, I,2; Akk.pruss. Bd.III.pp. 61ff. and 440ff.) with their long-standing antecedent history.

8. Platon. Phd. 96a5-99d4; Arist. Met. Specially in Book IV on the four causes.

3.

Existential Rootedness of Culture and Worldwide Globalisation: Teleology and Reconstruction

Ghislaine Florival

The contemporary cultural problem is connected with the technical globalisation which constitutes already now the reality of the future world. The qualitative and quantitative change of the world in its objective realisation is constructed by techno-scientific power on a universal scale. This calls philosophers to renew their mode of understanding and even of behaviour. They must engage a practical reflection, and not only a theoretical reflection, about the sense of the future world that is being predetermined by a technological globalisation. What is the impact of that future *Factum* upon the contemporary cultural experience, and how can we respond it?

In its first part, this presentation appeals to the phenomenological concept of "teleology" as defined by Husserl in his later works. That concept may help us to understand how the future world, constructed by technological globalisation, intersects with cultural life and how the cultural restructuring must integrate these instrumental forces. The second part concerns the historial process of culture, by taking up again, through the mediation of corporeity, with its originary existential rootedness. The third part concerns the tension of sense which desire introduces into the institutional ethico-political action, considered into its proper cultural values, in order to justify the ultimate call of Sense in its "in-finite" ontological source or "donation."

Phenomenological Analysis from the Point of View of "Teleology"

Teleology according to Husserl

In his later writings (from 1931 to 1936), Husserl called "teleology" the last form (*eidos*)—though in itself it is the first. It is the "form of all the forms," implicit in worldliness. The term teleology is associated with a process of development to which all transcendental subjectivity is subjected.1 Jacques English (in *Recherches husserliennes*, vol. 9, 1998) shows clearly the astonishing ambiguity of the text of 1933.2 On the one hand, phenomenology must maintain the essentially transcendental character of its task; yet, on the other hand, it must also try to rediscover a certain continuity inside the development of "the worlds of monads." The universal teleology has an all-enveloping character; it is the intersubjective drive that embraces all the subjects from a transcendental point of view. Yet in the relative worlds of monads, each one constitutes for itself a temporal objective world: at the summit the world of human monads and the temporal world of human beings. The being of the monadic totality, as flowing, comes to self-consciousness and is already in self-consciousness gradation of level "in infinitum."

But, whereas in the *Ideas I*, Husserl seemed to reject any facticity in the essential character of certain invariant structures, in his late writings he changed drastically his transcendental phenomenology, linking again to the primordial base (*Ur*). From that fact-like base "subjectivity has the means to assure a transcendental development." Husserl speaks of a *Faktum* by opposition to what belongs to the *Eidos*. This *Faktum* is not a simple anonymus facticity, devoid of any sense; it is at the origin of any orientation, including that of teleology: "A full ontology is teleology and presupposes the *Faktum*." "I am apodictically believe in the world. It is in the *Faktum* that

worldliness, that teleology, can be unveiled as transcendental." Husserl thus refers back to the sensible (*aisthesis*) *data*,—or *hylè* in its most general meaning,—without which no world and no transcendental all-embracing subjectivity would be possible. To understand the development between *Faktum* and *Eidos*? While maintaining the possibilities of eidetic development, Husserl gives it a genetic treatment, even if the teleology that derives from it is understandable but as transcendental.

The last texts of Husserl transform the transcendental process of intentionality found in his earlier texts. There is a re-articulation of the general phenomenological problematics between the two extremities of development: nature and history. That innovation,—as J. English points out,—consisted in the constitution of the other as *alter ego* in a community of monads, This transcends the dimensions of my individual life, particularly as in the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation*, where Husserl was concerned with the side and the beyond of the constitution of other monads by my own. Eventually he supports this by "the structured articulation of our primordial sphere of belonging" which constitutes "the totality of nature." But while linking the transcendental development of the communities of monads with genetic development, Husserl does not lose any of the transcendental reflection.

By the circularity of his analysis from nature to history, Husserl endows history, in its relations with the life world, situated between the two extremes of birth and death, the movement of a genetic teleology. But he sees this as intersected by multiple intentional lives which, while individualising themselves in facticity, are nevertheless all united "by the same set of invariant eidetic structures."3 Two teleologies thus wrap themselves up in each other. Joining the intergenerativity of the one and the axial thematic of the other, he adds "the functioning of the transcendental intentionality taken in the integrality of its dimension."

The Cultural Problem and Instrumental Teleology

The concept of teleology applied to the future concrete *Factum* of worldwide globalisation does not pertain directly to transcendental analysis. We can, however, recognise in it an meaning analogical to that of historical foundation. In the measure in which humankind recognises itself, for the first time, in its objective totality and confronts nature through the progress of the techno-sciences, people are included in the construct or framework which sustains him and composes their everyday world, without his knowledge or will. Cultural intersubjectivity reconstitutes itself daily in new objective forms as the world is transfigured materially by new technologies. It is no longer possible to confine oneself to the idea of a simply natural world; contemporary individuals have effectively transformed themselves into another world by new technocratic values. This can impose better modalities of existence, or inversely can alter radically its sense, in particular in the case of less integrated cultures. Practical reason is in some way anticipated by the instrumental possibilities of an artificial intelligence which judges new fields of experience, where it lacks control or even Cartesian good sense.

The cultural problem today is thus connected with the impact of a future technological *Factum* upon present decisions. From time immemorial, to be sure, cultural exchanges have occurred between peoples, ethnic groups and collectivities, bearing in their wake the dynamic renewal or the decline of collective or individual experiences. However, we now experience not continuity but a "revolution" in the conditions of life. This is due to the universalisation of artificial intelligence, as well as to the infiltration of technology into all modes of existence by the continuous progress of scientific research. As the inclusive field of socio-

economic and political interchange, the world of techno-science shapes our common habitat. In 1957, preceding the advent of the first sputnic, Hannah Arendt predicted a new era in which humankind for the first time would take the measure of the earth.4 Moreover, thanks to the interdependence and computerisation of communication networks all cultures operate collectively.This is supported by the anonymus totalitarian power of multinational firms, dependence on financial markets, the general computerisation of everyday life, control of the biosphere and the supply of goods, etc. This is so even as this process of technological transformation remains dependent upon such external factors as economic or political powers, or simply the resistance of natural phenomena, which slows down or modify effective achievement.

What is culture? It is a set of modes of life, a system of representations and activity proper to a particular people. It assumes and reenacts the heritage of the past in the present, directing future projects to its ends. Each culture expresses a certain existential style that is transposed in every generation by each of its members. Culture depends upon tradition as regards objects in the exchange of goods, or stories and rites in the communication of symbolic systems, or the creativity of aesthetic forms, or the transmission through education of ethical and religious values. It is not only a source of inspiration or models for gestures or language, new activities graft themselves upon that tradition, transforming its goals and orienting it toward new projects. Tradition leans upon the future that gives force to its will and desires. In brief, culture is not a static network of concrete or symbolic signifiers, but launches and reshapes at each step the common *Stimmung* of a people or of an ethnic group. Heidegger indicates as specific domains of cultural re-investments: monuments, archives, and stories.5

Today, however, cultural teleology is no longer only a matter of the temporal and historial circularity of the memory of the past, even if it is re-enacted in the present or future. We must recognise that teleological transcendental dimension, but we must admit the unilateral pressure of the future as constituted objectively by technologies. This exercises retrospective instrumental control of the present, at the risk of dominating the other possibilities of creativity proper to every culture. In the measure, indeed, in which the pressure of the technological world delineates a life conditioned by artifacts, it risks unilaterally to block the cultures in their natural destiny. The artificial *Factum* stemming from the instrumental operationality at all levels of experience determines the future globalised world. All cultures are constrained sooner or later to accept its control, be it only by the uniqueness of language, at the risk otherwise of extinction (of this the tragic case of the Amerindians is an example). For the first time also, the Earth as natural habitat is recognised as a common good shared by all cultures. This induces correlatively the awareness of a collective responsibility, in particular in view of future generations.

But what constitutes that mythical attractive force of a world of techno-science? Could it be that its absolute realisation manifests not only mastery over nature in its constitution, but also an ultimate scientific theory which would enable a perfect previsibility of events.That would give humankind mastery of space-time as an object of a cosmic desire. It would enable also a mastery of life with a remission if not abolition of death, pursuing thereby the myth of infinite temporality? This self-constituting rationality foreshadows a mode of life totally self-managed by an instrumentalisation of everything which would determine the identity of a future world. This would give the present a technocratic aura which, in return, would impose control over life choices. It would be the source of models not only of the goals of production, but also of the socio-economic plans of world policy, as well as of the media, education, and even daily behaviour.

The negative side effects of technology from its too rapid instauration put those who are culturally concerned on guard against the predefined dangers of the near future due to the risk of

losing control of the process of computerisation. But the self proliferation of artifacts raises the fear of a bland anonymous world. That situation entails a collective responsibility, not only of the experts which have to foresee its effects, but also of simple consumers who do not yet control or master its import. Examples of this are the greenhouse effect, the reduction of the ozone sphere, genetic manipulation and human cloning. From another point of view there is also the political-financial leaps, which turn upside down in the short- or long-term concrete research predictions, etc. The danger of that uncertain programming imposes a collective prudence, despite the obligatory mediation of the networks of virtual communication. Thus, the cultural process is intrinsically predetermined by the present impact of techno-science.

The future as thus present imposes de facto the unification of all cultures, all adjusted to the unity of the one sole, worldly and totalitarian network. This is made uniform not only by the most advanced technologies, but more immediately by the uniqueness of the language. (The conquest of space is presently engaged in that question: far from conflict, it is still the neutral space of collaboration between Earthlings). But that would be without taking account of the autonomy of the different traditions and of the linguistic and cultural differentiations.6 As with an assimilating totalitarian convergence, does the transcendental teleology not maintain a force like destiny? Does it not accompany cultural invention in all its creative dimensions, including those that integrate the arbitrary powers of the worldwide globalisation in a movement like the destiny of Life? To answer those questions we must recapture the differentiated modalities of cultures in their own creative, original and conquering values.

Phenomenology of Corporeity and of Desire

Husserlian teleological analysis gives access to the ambiguity of the interplay between the genetic movement and its transcendental import. Merleau-Ponty has taken up this same problem, but in his conception the phenomenological component is no longer linked to the framework of intentionality, but to that of existential transcendence. His posthumous notes, *La Nature*, contain an anthropological genetic study of the human being in the context of the evolution of living beings based on an analysis of corporeity as a chiasmic, sensible and expressive place in relation to the *Ineinander* with Nature.7 The human body is a constitutive part of the circular relation that makes it a living being among others, genetically stemming from natural ontogenesis and phylogenesis. In *La Nature*, Merleau-Ponty revives the ontological dimension of sense, which is the relational dimension oriented towards "life."

The concept of corporeity makes explicit the necessary mediation between the ontological and anthropological dimensions of the existing being, as the in-between structure of sense. The interpretation of nature in terms of corporeity is the "sense" or differentiating relation. Sensing is the pathic resonance of a perception of another or of things in seeing, listening and sensible grasp. In the living presence of desiring by the body present sensing stands out upstream, as it were, to its original affective anchorage lived at the edge of life (birth). It opens downstream in the very act of existing (ex-isting) in search of what is given since the origin in presentiment as "desire of the other." Thus the things around one are offered to the perceptive subject as promise of an existential response to come. Borne by the affective sense of imagination, present or distant things are always making signs in the perception of the world even before being named. Sensing keeps alive the oral play of the sense organs as primordial, symbolic "sayings," before any universalising linguistic expression.

Applied to our problem, sensing operates on the artificial world of our new habitat, the natural world (*Umwelt*), which is transfigured by techno-science. Thus the world of artifacts, material or virtual, exceeds in quantity and quality the productivity of the previous methods at the expense of the habitat itself. This dimension of space-time, the natural basis of corporeity, recreates the existential horizons on an undreamed of scale. Is there a real rupture of Stimmung? The anchorage of bodiliness and the mediation of common sense continue playing their primordial role while enlarging the field of existence toward creative possibilities that are still unknown. There is actually a sensing of the artificial object, induced according to conniving advertising or design by the affective initiation of sensitivity. The proper finalities of the artifact are not given directly in their modes of appearance, but we can recognise in them some analogy with the natural object. Or we may anticipate their modes of appearance by perceptive analogies which bring about a kind of naturalisation of the artificial world, even at a high degree of sophistication. In the same way that the artificial object is carried along by affective mediation, technological operativity as a whole, through its synthetic material or its virtual models, is able to supply the originary affect with a direction. The body thus inscribes itself analogically in that nature "in totality," enlarged to the new artifacts and new possibilities. These are actually new creative approaches for the aptitudes of the living body.

In the same way, we could make use analogically of the term institutional corporeity in order to establish at the level of the *Mitsein* a cultural interrelation or structure of mediation for cultures between themselves. The aesthesiological body, as corporeity, is linked intrinsically with the history of *Umwelt* in relation to reciprocity with the others and with Nature (*Ineinander*). That originary alterity is founded on the *Einfühlung*, a reciprocal sensing of the subject and the other, before any identification of the body proper. Thus the "I" learns of itself in a pathic mode as subjectivity from the interior of a reciprocity aiming at sense. That common resensing makes precisely the bodily "in-between" as the language of the bodies between themselves. By widening that way of inhabiting the world, there is more than one *Stimmung* that induces us to link with people and with things. In the measure in which they become familiar for us and are daily recognised, the places also constitutes the frameworks of our action horizons. They keep in memory the originary imaginary and structure of the sensing before any objective thematisation. That pathic sensing relocates them in the originary space-time that is the natural basis of corporeity. From that point of view, the cultural mode of life inscribes itself immediately in its originary affective places, linked with the memory of the subject and borne by desiring tension. Daily existence thus owes its cultural surroundings to all its factors. By the relations of communication the originary affective impact is borne in the most significant way (cf. the incredible passion for the GSM today throughout the planet).

Could we say that the institution also depends upon "aesthesiology" proper to each culture? Taking into consideration the originary negativity of affect, this is generated since the beginning of life by the existential crisis of the passage of the *infans* beyond toward weening and Freudian jealousies. This enables one to discover the other as one’s other, that is, as *socius*. Negative affectivity takes account of "the principle of reality" through the experience of its own subjectivity and of common sense. On the other hand, concrete affects result from successive learning by imitation, competition and rivalries and all the interlacing collective relations stemming from corporeity proper. This interrelation between existing beings is founded, however, in their participation in a cultural history (*Geschichte*). Levi-Strauss, by his interpretation of the elementaty structures of kinship based on exchange, underlines an evolution of the natural process toward ever greater cultural differentiation. The priorities of existence are determined by the

choice of values proper to each people (for example, the values attached to family in China, or to individual human rights in the West). There is also a pathic encounter of cultures between themselves in the sense that their institutions intersect by a kind of intercultural sympathy: analogous life conditions, though differentiated according to place, historic modalities, cultural levels, aesthetics, philosophical or religious forms. This would be associated with the *Stimmung* of a shared "institutional incorporation."

Desire and Ethico-Political Restoration

We have underlined the initial or initiator role of affectivity in the history of the subject. But we have to resort to "passive synthesis" in order to reunite at the starting point the true concrete awareness of oneself as the life of sense in a temporality of presence. The self-positing of subjectivity is the essence of living time, "the being affected of the self by itself, because the pressure of time is nothing other than the transition from a present to a present,. . .time which flows out, but still knows itself as relation from the self with itself, that is to say, as *ipseity*."8The retention and the protention of the temporal spaces proper to the self-reflecting subject come together in my present. At the same time, the present opens to the spacial depth of the successive horizons of the self, evoked by its encounter with things and nature in general (the *Mitsein*is inscribed in the *Umwelt*). The present "passive synthesis" of the "I" is the resonance of the whole history of the "ex-istence" of the subject and its transcendence, which articulates itself against the originary factual background of its *Lebenswelt*. The senses now setting in motion inscribe themselves in this *Lebenswelt* through an originary desiring, which orients the life of sense in the *infans*. Henceforth, the tension of desire articulates itself circularly in the teleological finality of life. That circular double play of the tensional transitivity of desire, between the opening at birth with word of sense and the future as horizon of death which is appeal of sense, imprints its mark on the whole existential activity. The passive synthesis makes it pathic in the present in which I am, but at the same time bears the dynamic of the originary desire of its effectivity for what is to come through the mediation of corporeity. In *De l'existence à l'existant*, Levinas sees the being which "I am" as the inhabiting of a "well-being," which can be broadened to the whole of lived temporality as relational and essentially desiring.

Up to now we have traced the history of the subject in the presence to itself of the passive synthesis, which bears the "knowing" (in the French sense of "*co-naître*": to be borne with) of the "I" as habitat of well-being. On that existential base we can work, now not only personal, but on cultural restruction. Ethical action is certainly the most appropriate means to defend the world of "persons" against any neutralising and mortiferous drift characterising the technological blindly totalitarian world. In *consensus* of ethical choices, one "decider" should live again, from the interior of one's adult practical subjectivity, the originary affective base which engages most profoundly one's ethical intuition. Further the vital diversity at the level of the existing individual, is also valid on the cultural plane. There is thus an ethical responsibility on the part of those who make choices, which must work at all the levels of life. It must respect not only the human dignity of one's own corporeity, but that of the communities in their cultural interchange. More radically and globally, ethical responsibility is relative to the ontological foundation of human experience: nature as the process of life with all features of existence in their circular interaction (*Ineinander*). We have, therefore, to found an ethic of nature as a whole both as a life process (the vital sense of the living being) and as an institution with both the personal and the cultural distinctiveness.

Differentiating the "sense" imparts to the ethical attitude its vital relational desire. However, while ethics remains in the field of practical rationality or "duty" (in the Kierkegaardian sense), it does not achieve its original purpose. Confined in rules, it risks stumbling on its own limits, and missing the unspeakable more encompassing experience which is irreducible to objective rationality. However, it can be affected by the "unwell-being" of a symbolic of evil, which makes it recognise its uncertainty or powerlessness. The fact of recognising oneself in the face of the limiting regulations contains its own self-overcoming. This is no longer of an ethical order, but enables one to glimpse "*the supplément d'âme*" of which Bergson spoke. How could this be expressed?

To search for the meaning of the ethical sense, that is the transcendental sense of the ethical, is to search for the original key of sense. Thusfar, the anthropological thesis of this paper concerned the implication of corporeity and its natural affective interrelation as necessary for cultural reconstruction. This is the deep root that conditions ethical action in all its aspects. An ethical debate does not necessarily return toward the affective originary *Einfülhung*, but from this draws its own existential conditioning, bringing this forward in the framework of ethical rationality. The structure of affectivity producing a sense of "well-being" is transposed in that framework beyond its existential aim. It enters into practical consciousness in such a way that by regulating its sense it gives affective existence a positive dimension. Thus, a reciprocal constitution of desire and ethical consciousness exists: one gives affective existence the ability to answer from its point of view to the formal universality of law; the other, the affective structure, induces the subject to enter into ethical life.

But the affective structure works also to overcome the ethical. It brings into play the "sense" of existence and its ultimate finality, the infinite aspiration which can be marked only by the beacons of ethics. The analysis of the structure of affectivity with respect to ethics thus brings to the fore a double perspective: the originary conditioning as a favorable field for ethical consciousness, and the ultimate source of sense. What is beyond the ethical limit foreshadows the moment of conversion by which ethical consciousness discovers itself as given to itself. This has repercussions on both the originary progression of affectivity and the ethical broadening of reasonable action. On the one hand, the transcendent source of sense give "well-being" as "transcendental sense" reverberating in the rational ethic. On the other hand, the source of desire and creation in the generation of the originary affective structure finds in the ultimate calling of sense the origin of its potentiality for giving, as well as the sense of its pathic role in the ethical consciousness.

Phenomenologically, the three dimensions (affectivity, ethic, and gift) intersect even if they do not interfere with one another. In the example of Chinese civilisation centered on the two foundations of family and city, the affective institution of family intersects in some way with the rights of the city and increases the values of distributive justice, collegial work and faithfulness to the ruling hierarchy proper to the city. In the example of human rights, which belong to the philosophy oriented on the notion of person coming from the Christian tradition, the experience of loving inscribes itself in existential experience as well as in the ethical intuition. As another example, actions that are heroic or linked to religious abnegation do not necessarily appeal to ethics, indeed the religious stage can be indifferent with respect to the ethical (Kierkegaard).In brief, the creative giving of sense, which founds the order of the "heart," overcomes the practical rationality of duty, that is, of simple ethical norms.

Ontological hermeneutics goes beyond the application of the phenomenological method to the study of affectivity by its teleological intention. This is aimed at the ultimate sense of desire, the

existential condition of the personalising act as in the "I am." To recognise the gift by which the "I" receives itself from the being is to grasp in the depths of oneself the intuition of an alterity,- this time not reciprocal-, which "gives Sense." It is by giving horizon that effective affectivity induces beyond ethics as the condition of truly personal relations. That horizon of sense enables everyone to recognise oneself in every authentic encounter as the "fellow person" of the other before the same cultural destiny. At that stage, it is possible to glimpse by analogy the required, if not assumed, intercultural recognition with respect to the future world that guides us. The exigency of an interrelational, as intercultural, ethical responsibility is not only at the temporal subjective level of passive synthesis, but at the historical level. This enables us to recognise genetically at its origin the exigency of desire intrinsic to the movement of life, and to recognise also the movement of sense. This is the becoming of the future already programmed in the facts which realise the proper destiny of every culture, even if that destiny already bears the objective mark of universal globalisation. Each culture responds to that invitation by entering into the field of exchange with other cultures, by the mediation of a kind of corporeity analogically instituted by the encounter. At the same time it actualises the whole of its creative possibilities in order to specify their style and effective imprint on the authoritarian texture of universal globalisation.

In conclusion, if cultural reconstruction becomes imperative today in view of the *Factum* of a universal instrumental globalisation, it must relate to the originary sense of existence. Phenomenologically, we can discover in it the retrospective foundation aiming at the knowing (in the sense of the French "*co-naître*"), which is the emergence of desire in everyone. Desire guides any action, by opening it to a teleological sense in everyone as in every culture. By a mediation analogous to corporeity, hermeneutics of the practical sense manifests also the mediation of an "institutional incorporation," an essential anchorage of mutual recognition among cultures. That interrelation is born of the originary force of desire which produces cultural recognition and differentiation. In the experience of encounter, it promotes the emergence of ethical-political responsibility which, despite the technological superstructure, is possible for personalised cultural institution in the hope of giving sense.

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Notes

1. E. Husserl, HUA XV, p.731.
2. J. English, 'Que signifie l'idée d'une téléologie universelle chez le dernier Husserl?' in *Recherches Husserliennes*, vol. 9, édit par le Centre de Recherches phénoménologiques des Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, à Bruxelles, 1998; pp. 3-36.
3. Ibid., p.19.
4. H. Arendt, *La condition de l'homme moderne*, trad.franç. (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1983), cf. Prologue.
5. M. Heidegger, *L'Etre et le temps*, trad.franç. (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), p. 461.
6. G. Orwell, 1984 (New York, 1949).
7. M. Merleau-Ponty, *La Nature*, Notes, Cours du College de France, établi et annoté par D. Séglard (Paris, Seuil,1995), pp. 263-380.
8. M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phéménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 487.

4.

Philosophy, Culture and the Future of Tradition

William Sweet

Can there be a genuine dialogue between Christian philosophy and Chinese culture? Some may be skeptical. In an earlier time, Christian philosophy—as an adjunct feature of Christian missionary work—generally had an apologetic function. It assumed that communication was possible between Christian philosophers and those in largely non-Western cultures (such as China). But the nature of the exchange was rather one-sided, and it is fair to say that, often, Christian philosophy aimed primarily at challenging and rejecting local traditions and, specifically, traditional morals and moral practices.

Today, as we enter a new millennium, apologetics has relatively little importance for many Christian philosophers, but this does not mean that the prospects for dialogue have significantly improved. For philosophy—particularly in what is called "the West"—continues to be seen as an activity that challenges and rejects tradition. And so one might think that the enquiries of philosophers are generally antithetical to the traditions characteristic of existing cultures, and that, for a culture to preserve itself and for its traditions to endure, it must resist entering into a dialogue with philosophers. Moreover, the work of many post-modern philosophers, such as Richard Rorty, suggest that dialogue and even communication between different traditions and cultures is ultimately problematic, because there is no single "final vocabulary" to which all can appeal for common standards of meaning, truth, and value.

One might conclude, then, that any proposed dialogue between philosophy (Christian or secular) and tradition (not only of Chinese but of any culture) must fail. Because philosophy has been, and is, radically opposed to or radically distinct from, tradition, there can be no real dialogue between philosophy and culture.

There is no doubt some basis for this perception and some justification for this reaction. But I will argue here that philosophical enquiry is not inherently opposed to tradition or traditional moral practices, that it can help us to see how traditional morality is important and how it might thrive and grow, and that the dialogue between philosophy and culture should be encouraged.

I will start with a few comments on tradition itself, and look at the significance it has had in relation to morals. Then I will review a few of the principal challenges to traditional morals—challenges from "modernity," "post-modernity," and from the existence of cultural diversity and pluralism. I will argue that these challenges do not show that traditional morals must be rejected, and, further, that one can maintain that there are legitimate and ethically binding moral principles that are present in, though not limited to, traditional beliefs and practices. (Here I will draw on examples from Christianity and from non-Christian views.) Finally, I will draw out some of the consequences of my view for the future of tradition in relation to moral beliefs and moral practices, and for the possibility of dialogue between philosophy and culture.

Tradition

Cultures and communities—be they political, cultural, or religious—are defined, in part, by their normative character, that is, by their values and morals or moral norms. By values and

"morals" here I mean not (just) the ethical theories or standards, but also the "moral practices" and "modes of conduct."

In "natural" communities (families, villages or neighborhoods, and ethnic groupings), and in communities with a history (such as nations), the morals, norms and values are in large part determined by the past or by "tradition." One common, noncontroversial, definition of tradition is "an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior (as a religious practice or a social custom)" that has a "continuity in social attitudes, customs, and institutions." The information, beliefs, and customs that are part of a tradition may be handed down "by word of mouth or by example from one generation to another without written instruction." In describing tradition as "a pattern of thought"—and not just a pattern of an individual's thinking—we see that it is something present in, but also "greater than," individuals that, arguably, both transcends and has a claim on them. It is because of these features and for these reasons that one can say that tradition is normative—that it expresses how people *ought* to act or behave, and so on.

For some, however, tradition leads to the restriction of individuality and the exercise of autonomy or freedom. And because traditional morals and morality have a reference to the past, they are often seen to be backward looking and conventional, rather than forward looking and dynamic. In general, tradition (e.g., religious or cultural tradition)—and especially traditional morals—are often seen as conservative, unimaginative (in a changing world), monolithic, inward looking, overly reluctant to and intolerant of change, ethnocentric or parochial, unworkable, and sometimes simply wrong.

Challenges to Tradition

As the preceding comments suggest, traditional morals, and tradition as a whole, have been the objects of a number of challenges. Some of these challenges are far from new, but at the present time there seems to be a rather large number of them, and they come from a wide variety of perspectives.

Modernity and Subjectivity. One source of the challenges to traditional morals is "modernity"—by which I mean the current of thought, beginning with (or at least typical of) the Enlightenment, that proposes that we dispense with all tradition, and build philosophical, cultural, scientific, and moral structures on reason alone. Reason, rather than inherited customs, or authority, or religious faith, then, becomes the basis and standard for morality and moral practice.

This challenge is present, first, in the "rationalist" natural law or social contract theories of Hugo Grotius, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke, and then in such rationalist ethical theories as those of Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill (and to some extent G.W.F. Hegel and Karl Marx). These theories propose a morality independent of religious tradition—and, in some cases, fundamentally opposed to it. In these moral systems, the authority of reason replaced the authority of God or the gods or those representing God. This view is well-summarized in a remark by Henry Sidgwick who, in 1865, predicted.

History will have in the future less and less influence on Politics in the most advanced countries. Principles will soon be everything, and tradition nothing, except as regards its influence on the form.1

The Enlightenment emphasis on reason (i.e., what I will call "rationalism"), then, was the first major challenge to traditional morals, in so far as it questioned the theory underlying traditional moral practices. But a second challenge to traditional morals comes from another feature of modernity—that is, the "turn to the subject." One sees it, for example, in Descartes' emphasis on epistemology over metaphysics, and on the priority of knowledge of the *self* over knowledge of other things. Anything that was not directly and indubitably knowable by the self needed evidence and justification. This standard for knowledge applied not only to metaphysical and epistemological questions, but was extended to moral theory and moral practice. This emphasis on the human subject ultimately had two consequences: First, that traditional *morals* need to be justified, and, second, that this must be a justification that is rooted in what can be known by the subject. Gradually, this second consequence has led to the view that it is the subject that sets the standard of truth and falsity; there is no standard apart from the subject.

Even today one sees the presence of the rationalist and subjectivist challenges to morality. For example, one moral practice that is a tradition in most, if not all, cultures is that children are to respect and obey their parents. And children who did not respect and obey their parents, or who behaved inappropriately, could be punished not only by their parents, but by other members of their family, and sometimes (if the parents or family neglected to do so) even by the community as a whole.

But today this practice is challenged in many countries. Parents are frequently called on by others, even their children, to justify their expectation to be respected and obeyed. Moreover, in some countries, any kind of physical punishment for disobedience (e.g., spanking) is illegal. At the very least, then, the tradition that children should obey their parents has to be justified; one has to give a reason for it.2 To say that it is a tradition—that it has gone on for centuries, and that it has stood the test of time—is considered to be no reason at all.

Post-modernity. There is a second source for some of the challenges to traditional morals, namely, from what is called "post-modernity" (These critiques have been posed by some feminists and by "green" ecological theorists and others as well.) The first target of post-modernity and its allies is "modernity," that is, "rationality" and the modern emphasis of the priority of reason (though one might see these movements as simply developing the "modern" critique of tradition and, thereby, turning that critique against modernity itself.) Post-moderns argue that modern emphasis on rationality—"rationalism"—suffers from the same flaw as the traditions that rationalism challenged—namely, rationalism is just another ideology that should be debated as well. At its origins, rationalism presented itself—and still presents itself—as being universal and as providing a neutral position from which to criticize and evaluate all traditions. But while rationalism has attempted to set itself above ideological debates, post-moderns and their allies say, that it is just another tradition—and, in fact, there can be no universal theory and no position or language that is neutral and can serve as the arbiter of conflicting ideologies.

Post-moderns, then, criticize modernity. But they also criticize tradition and traditional morals. Traditional morals are, they say, racist, or class or gender biased, or "speciesist," and so on, and traditional moral categories are corrupt, or flawed, and are certainly not universal. Because there are no universal, neutral, standards to which people can appeal, these critics advocate a view that they say is pluralist, or tolerant of diversity, but which is, in fact, a kind of ethical relativism or cultural subjectivism.

This is particularly evident in discussions of moral practices today. Although subjectivism within some cultures is not often tolerated, many people argue that there are no universal or

transhistorical binding moral practices, and there certainly are not any transhistorical moral norms. There are simply different practices that reflect different understandings of morality, and (it is often said) no one understanding or set of practices can be proven to be better than any other.

For example, consider the issue of the relations between men and women. Post-moderns tell us not only that the rules concerning the treatment of women at one time need not apply in another, and that there are no universal or general principles of equality and equal dignity of men and women. Because post-moderns say we cannot appeal to reason as providing a special standard by which to judge moral practices, there can be no rational critique of cultures where inequality exists. Some might think that this means that the traditional morals of these cultures are, therefore, protected. But this is not so, for there is no good *reason* for traditional practices to continue either. Reason cannot prevail over tradition, but this does not mean that tradition has any real value. Traditional morals are held in place, post-moderns say, by power. And there is no *reason* why they should not be replaced by whatever those who have or who can seize power might want.

Cultural Diversity. A third challenge to traditional morals takes its force from the simple *fact* of the existence of cultural diversity and pluralism. Given the apparent diversity in moral values and moral practices, there is no reason to believe that any particular set of values or practices are universal or are (or could be) binding. And this has led some to conclude that morality is not objective, but only a matter of personal preference. On an international level, there seems to be no established morality or set of moral principles that all respect. Moreover, appeals to traditional principles of morals—keeping agreements, showing respect for others, promoting autonomy and dignity—may have little or no real effect. Most, if not all, societies pay attention to such appeals only inconsistently. We see this in both domestic and foreign affairs.

Take the case of Yugoslavia or Rwanda. There, social solidarity disintegrated almost overnight, and appeals to past practices of cooperation were easily ignored. And so, some people come to torture, or kill, others with whom they had lived and worked just because they belonged to a different ethnic or tribal group—despite decades or centuries of peaceful coexistence. Moreover, while many of us in other countries may deplore these events, more and more people refrain from making moral condemnations. Some people simply say, "Who's to say who is right and who is wrong?" Or consider a more local example. At one time, in some countries, it was believed that one should show (the traditional moral virtue of) loyalty to one's family, friends, trade union, or community. But more and more people are placing their individual interests above the collective interest; even when they show an interest in the collectivity, it is only temporary and instrumental. And this reduction of morality to personal preference is apparent at the interpersonal level as well. Traditional morals and moral practices have less and less of a sway in personal behaviour. The traditional moral practice of life-long marriage has disappeared. Even though most people who marry stay married, the institution of marriage on the whole is seen as a contract that is dissolvable simply on the wishes of one of the contractants. Divorce has certainly little or no social disapproval, stigma, or sanction in many countries of the West—and this attitude is taking root in many non-Western countries as well.

Thus, in the contemporary world, one no longer has confidence that any tradition or set of traditional moral principles is capable of providing a secure basis for a moral evaluation or assessment of whether one is acting morally or not. The result is not just subjectivism or relativism; it is nihilism. It is the denial that there can be any norms or standards at all. Morals seem to be, at best, just a matter of subjective taste. And traditional morals are, at best, just what some people might voluntarily choose to adopt. But one might choose to adopt *other* morals, or simply abandon

morality. In fact, one of the characters in literature in the West in the last half-century is not the *immoral* person, but the *amoral* person—one for whom moral categories, whether they be based on reason or tradition, simply do not apply at all.

It is ironic, then, that although the world is, in many respects, globalized, and as economies and political, social, and cultural institutions become more and more integrated, the moral world is more and more fragmented. But perhaps this should be no surprise because (as a recent critic in *The New Statesman* wrote, "economic globalisation merely completes what has been driven forward intellectually by post-modernism and politically by individualism" [or subjectivism].3

In short, the challenges to traditional morals are many, and they are strong. If they succeed, then not only is there no traditional morality, there is no morality. And, as I have suggested, this will result in, at best, a radical subjectivism, if not instability and nihilism.

Legitimacy of Tradition

From what I have said, the present situation of tradition may appear to be bleak. But, I would argue that there is room for some optimism.

There is good reason to reject the excesses of modernity and rationalism, and even better reason not to adopt the critique of traditional morals and morality as a whole that one finds in post-modernism and its allies. I would argue that tradition and traditional morals do not have to be abandoned, that they are necessary—and that they will remain necessary in the future. I would also argue that one can show or prove how they are necessary in such a way that many of the contemporary modern and post-modern critiques lose much of their force. Finally, I would insist that this will also show us what the place or role of traditional morals can be in the future—that is, what will be the future of tradition.

First, let me say a few words on how tradition and traditional morals are necessary. As I stated earlier, tradition largely determines our moral practices, and is even involved in our fundamental moral knowledge. This is a fact. Tradition lies at the root of our morals; our morals and moral norms were originally determined by "tradition" (e.g., religious or cultural tradition).

In fact, tradition is inescapable.

Consider the example of the teachings of Christianity—of Jesus of Nazareth. In the New Testament Gospel of Matthew (5:17-18). Jesus says: (17) "Think not that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. (18) For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished."

Here, Jesus's claim is that his message is dependent upon the context and tradition of Judaism. It is this tradition that Jesus says he will fulfill, not replace. But, to go further, it would be difficult to understand anything of what Jesus did and proposed to be doing, if one did not already understand the context from which he came and in which he and his followers lived and taught. To understand the teachings of Christianity, then, we have to understand what is said by the law and the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures—the tradition out of which Jesus came and in which he taught.

A similar claim can be made in looking at political philosophy and ideology. Take, for example, the case of Karl Marx. Marx said that he had "turned Hegel on his head," that he had taken Hegel's dialectical idealism, and turned it into a dialectical materialism. Many Marxists have claimed that Marx's work was a "completion" of Hegelian philosophy. In the place of the Hegelian notion of Mind or Spirit, Marx substituted "the material world"—specifically, the economic

relations of human beings. Material conditions, and not "reason," Marx claimed, were the basis for development and change. Marx's account is a response to Hegelian philosophy and cannot adequately be understood without understanding the philosophy that was, in great measure, its source and inspiration.

Or again, in the "common law" of Anglo-American countries, the notion of tradition is present and essential in such fundamental notions as precedent, the burden of proof, and the rule of law. Judgements of innocence or guilt are also determined by a formal procedure that is a tradition, and the judicial system is itself the result of tradition.

The dependence upon tradition and context, illustrated in these examples, is not just incidental. In general, from the perspective of epistemology, it is clear that tradition is necessary for knowledge to be possible. For, to understand our present experience, we have to be able to put it into relation or harmony with our past experience: with our vocabularies, our stories, our patterns of thought or ways of thinking, our self-understanding, and our understanding of others. We must relate to them, not just as past events, but as a perspectives or forms of life. And this includes a reference to a social dimension and the experience of others. Conceptual and linguistic practices, like legal, philosophical, and religious practices, are either traditions or are embedded in traditions.

Shared Interests and Basic Values

Linguistic, cultural, religious, and other traditions, therefore, are present throughout our conscious lives. They are valuable for helping to put the present in a context, as a source of ideas and possible solutions to problems that we face, and they are necessary to our self-understanding and to determining how to live and how to act in the future.

Nevertheless, it does not follow from this that human consciousness and our mental life are *entirely fixed or determined* by our respective traditions, or that these traditions are so distinct from one another that those in one tradition cannot understand, and make appropriate normative judgements about, the activities of those in other traditions. There is, in other words, a way that we can both recognize the value and integrity of tradition and traditional morals and also "bridge" and extend traditions. By recognizing this, we not only avoid ethical relativism or nihilism or an ethical theory of "might is right," but we also have a means of addressing the challenges of philosophies of modernity and post-modernity. But this way requires first examining what underlies or is involved in tradition.

To begin, it is obvious that one who lives in a multicultural or multiethnic society, or who travels outside his or her own country, will encounter others who come from different traditions, and who do not necessarily share all one's values and one's cultural, religious, and moral practices. Yet, in these encounters, communication obviously occurs. Of course, there are breakdowns in communication, and sometimes discussion comes to an end without issues being settled. (There are many reasons why this may be so, and we should not forget that these may include being the result of individual fault or failings.) Still, on a large—very large—number of issues, differences in language, history, culture, and religion can be, and are, overcome.

One illustration of this, on a broad scale, is in the work of the United Nations and its agencies. A second illustration (that is more suggestive) is that of the 20th century movement of religious ecumenism. As I have argued elsewhere4 that religious ecumenism is a model of how one can come to agreement and unity despite differences in values, I will not repeat these arguments here.

How is it that international communication and the formulation of policy and political action (for example, in the UN) or religious ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue have had so much

success? The explanation of this is, I think, to be found in a basic presupposition of each of these activities which we may call "communicative practices." What the United Nations often does is to look not for *neutral* ground, but for *common* ground. What it does is look to see where there might be interests, values, and concerns that all share, and build on that. What ecumenism does is, again, look for a "ground," set of commitments, or "discourse" that is *common* to all of the interlocutors. It is important to note that, in these cases, the first stage is not to dictate or force people to adopt certain values, but simply to find shared values.

In these cases, and despite the different religious, political, and cultural differences among the interlocutors, all recognize (at least implicitly) that there are ideas, interests, values, and concerns that they all share. It seems plausible to say that this common ground is not just coincidental, but is in virtue of being the kinds of beings they are. In discerning and acting on these ideas, they may come to recognize that they share or have an interest also in other common ideas, values, and so on.

What are some of the interests, values, and ideas that these people may share?

At the most elementary level, there is the recognition of the nature and value of life itself. To have human life there must be certain objective and material conditions—for example, the presence of food, water, and related resources, shelter and security, as well as the possibility of satisfying not only fundamental physical, but also intellectual, moral, and spiritual, needs.

At an equally elementary level, for a people or any group of persons to live and thrive, they have to *recognize* that these are *common* needs, and to share or be capable of sharing a discourse or language and "practices" or activities with others that enable these interests to be pursued.

But there is another group of material or quasi-material conditions that must exist. First, there must be a *recognition of one another* as beings with whom they *can* live and act. Second, and not actually independent of the first, there is need for a recognition that they do *or can* share a number of beliefs, attitudes, and opinions about basic human needs how we might or must satisfy them. There is need also to share belief about communicating and cooperating with others, about how nature works, and much more. We might call these "dominant ideas,"5 and since dominant ideas in a culture are shared ideas, an idea becomes more dominant as it becomes more widely shared.

These basic "dominant ideas," then, are discovered, not invented. There is, then, a fundamental and non-arbitrary relation between these ideas and interests and human beings and the world they live in—reality. In fact, one can say that these ideas and interests are *objective*, because they reflect something basic about what it is to be a human person, e.g., the kind of being—physical, mental, moral, and spiritual—that humans are, and the kinds of needs such beings have. They must be discovered or thought to be discovered in order for any dialogue or cooperation—and for almost any relation—to be possible. If we did not share them at some basic level, we could scarcely deal with one another.

Before going further, however, we should note some other principles or features involved here.

First, it is clear from the above that the existence of basic dominant ideas is necessary not only for dialogue and cooperation with others, but for any self-consciousness or developed mental life in any individual. For these ideas are not just about what makes life with other human beings possible, but are necessary for us to think about and understand ourselves. In broad terms, these are ideas like "person," "need," "life," and "future," and, arguably, "like me" and "not like me" (which reflect one’s gender and ethnicity). In short, they are the kind of ideas that if given up, we would (as one might in conversation say) no longer be who we were before. Moreover, we can say

that these dominant ideas have a claim on us, because they constitute the way through which we understand both ourselves and the world around us.

Second, the dominant ideas that exist in a culture constitute or make possible its traditions. Many of these ideas are about the nature of reality and, specifically, about human needs and basic desires. Thus, they are not things that people can simply choose to have or not have. These basic dominant ideas, and the kinds of beliefs that human persons must share in order to interact with other persons, cannot be purely contingent or arbitrary or *casual*. There will be, of course, other dominant ideas present in a society or culture that are not "basic" in the preceding sense, but which also reflect features of the physical and social environment—and which, therefore, will affect how those in these societies and cultures think and understand. Altogether, the set of the dominant ideas in a culture defines, or at least provides ideas essential to the expression of that culture's tradition and its morals.

But there is a third important point: Dominant ideas are not static. For example, which ideas are dominant at a particular time depend in part on the kinds of activities and practices we are engaged in. Moreover, through new experience and contact with others, and as our ideas become more consistent or coherent with the other ideas that one has, our dominant ideas may change. Those that are basic may become richer and more coherent; others may cease to have an influence. Nevertheless, these ideas provide a stability and continuity in understanding oneself and in dealing with others.

This account of dominant ideas, then, asserts that there are basic ideas and values that are objective and cross- or inter-cultural. But it also allows that these values need not be fully articulated, and are, in some sense, incomplete. They must grow and evolve because the world in which we live and our understanding of it is incomplete and grow and evolve. This account also recognizes the legitimate diversity of many "nonbasic" dominant ideas that arise in response to features of the physical and social environment, and which are, therefore, not arbitrary, and which are also incomplete and will grow and evolve. Consequently, this account is pluralistic. It allows that there can be—and usually is—at least some "truth" in ideas dominant in a particular community.6 There can be intercreedal or intercultural discourse and debate about these ideas and values without calling into question the objectivity of values. One can come to a deeper and more enriched understanding of one's own values and can acquire a greater knowledge and appreciation of what is of value, through this interaction with others.

Thus, from the minimal set of basic dominant ideas noted above, there is a gradual tendency towards other ideas. The recognition of others as those with whom we can live and work is, then, simply the recognition that we share some basic dominant ideas and seeing that we are capable of sharing more. And it is the recognition of others as other persons like ourselves that has given rise to ideas such as human value, dignity, the importance of human flourishing—and (one might argue) human rights.

In short, dominant ideas are those ideas that make dialogue, communication, and recognition—and, thereby, activity together—possible. These activities, in turn, make it possible for other ideas to become dominant. This is an ongoing process; we come to see what we share, and we develop what we share, by working and communicating with one another. Altogether, these ideas form the basis for a cultural tradition and for the existence of the moral practices and norms of that tradition. While the present analysis accepts the fundamental role of human nature and needs, it, nevertheless, does not entail a static model of culture or tradition.

Implications for Tradition and Traditional Morals

The preceding analysis of what underlies the possibility of working together with others is, I would say, descriptive—and it shapes (though it does not determine) institutions, practices, and cultures. What, then, are some of the consequences of this analysis for tradition and traditional morals?

First, it enables us to *respond to some of modernity's challenges* to traditional morals. What this analysis shows is that morality cannot be rooted in the Enlightenment model of reason and rationality alone. Not only is the modern view inconsistent with the "natural" origin of morals (that is, as a product of the dominant ideas of each tradition), but even the principles characteristic of rationalism are themselves the product of a history and a tradition.

Nevertheless, this analysis is not compatible with, and arguably requires, a model of tradition and, specifically, of morality that emphasizes the role of reason. Reason or what counts as rationality is dependent upon facts about the world (for example, the nature of conscious thought) and on dominant ideas; therefore, it is or can be cross-cultural. One can also say that reason here is normative in so far as it represents a demand for coherence among beliefs and of beliefs with the world. But such a view of reason is not a rationalist one and does not establish or demand a *neutral* space or arena in which discussion or debate is to take place. All it requires is that there is a cognitive space or discourse that people share or are capable of sharing, in which such discussion and debate can occur and in which progress in understanding can be made. Hence, this "non-Enlightenment" model of reason demands an openness to dialogue.

Now, if we understand reason or rationality as an open-ended process that tends to coherence in ideas that draws on basic dominant ideas, and as a result of which other ideas become recognized as dominant and basic:

1. There is clearly a place for traditional morals:

This account of reason does not demand a radical critique or a "putting into question" of tradition, as does rationalism. Because traditional morals are the product of a rational process established and sustained over time, all things being equal, they have the benefit of the doubt.

2. Tradition has a fundamental value:

When confronted with a challenge to, or a problem with, existing moral values and practices, we have to express or articulate that challenge within the traditions in which we live. The central place of tradition requires that we have to return—though in a creative and thoughtful; *not* in a defensive or question-begging way—to that tradition, and draw on its resources in order to attempt to respond to such a challenge. I would add that, unless a tradition is inconsistent or genuinely unable to address certain "tensions" in a coherent way, one has no grounds for refusing to defer to it.

3. Tradition is *dynamic:*

Given the "open-endedness" of experience and of human life, individuals, cultures and societies will inevitably be "called out" from their past practices and from their established institutions. The account of tradition presented above not only acknowledges this open-endedness of experience, but enables one to maintain that tradition itself is open- ended. New experience may, for example, allow us to deepen our knowledge and understanding of the tradition of which

we are members; it may even force us to go back and "reinterpret" that tradition. The occurrence of novelty and change does not mean that traditions have to be abandoned.

A second consequence of the preceding analysis is that, while it does acknowledge the authority of tradition, it does not make this authority absolute, nor does it entail (as some post-moderns have suggested)7 that traditions are incommensurable with one another.

1. Although the recognition of the value of tradition reminds us that, in the discussion of tradition and traditional morals, one must be historically or contextually sensitive, the account of dominant ideas and of their role in moral practices and culture reminds us that traditions are not arbitrary constructions. The basic dominant ideas reflect objective aspects of the world and basic human needs—and this reminds us that the morals, interests, and values of a tradition are not entirely contextually determined. Moreover, because of this contact with "the world," and because all traditions—no matter how different—exist in the same world, features of these traditions may have an inter- or cross-cultural character. Because the response of traditions to the world is not arbitrary, we have a basis for rejecting the view that we must accept the moral norms and practices found in different cultures as *on a par* or equally valid or legitimate.

2. Because the question of which ideas become dominant, and which are most coherent, is not settled simply by the individual subject or even the community, traditions can be "corrected"—and corrected from "the outside." So, it is also reasonable to expect that, as those in a culture or tradition encounter new values and ideas, they may be forced to ask questions that they do not know exactly how to answer, and they may be challenged to answer *why* the questions they have always asked are, in fact, appropriate or useful. As one comes to put one's thought into coherence with this "larger" experience, one's ideas will inevitably change and develop. But, even if this is unsettling, such change is not something that we must fear. Acknowledging the existence of the ideas and values of others, and taking other persons seriously, are really nothing more than demands of the character of conscious life which no one can escape. For these reflects the influence of the culture, ideas, and material environment around it.

In short, then, since traditions must themselves respond to the world in which they exist, traditional moral practices and moral norms are not immune from criticism or change, and need not be retained at all costs.

Conclusion

Despite the widespread infatuation with the idea of "starting afresh" characteristic of the new millennium—and despite the challenges of modernity and post-modernity that have so much effect on contemporary opinion—it is not necessary to abandon tradition or traditional morals. In fact, tradition may provide us with a fruitful means of addressing current problems and of avoiding the relativism and the nihilism to which many modern and post-modern moral views appear to lead. The view of tradition presented here is not one that is static and fixed in the past. Rather, it allows for, and requires, an ongoing reinterpretation of the past in order to address present and future problems.

What philosophers—and, I would add (though I do not argue it here), Christian philosophers—can contribute is a reminder of the value and importance of tradition, and also a recognition that cultures can and must respond out of their traditions to other cultures, traditions, and experiences. If we acknowledge this, we can begin to see how tradition is not rooted in the past or restricted to the culture in which it arises, how local culture can "inform" philosophy, and

how the dialogue between philosophy and culture in general—and Christian philosophy and Chinese culture in particular—can be fruitfully engaged in at the beginning of the third millennium

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Notes

1. Cited in Andrew Pyle, ed., *Key Philosophers in Conversation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 79.

2. The place of the larger family or the community concerning the relation between parents and children is also being redefined. It is now generally considered unacceptable for a member of the family, or a member of the community, to tell a parent that he should *punish* his child at all.

3. Ulrich Beck, "Beyond the nation state," *The New Statesman*, Monday 6th December 1999.

4. See my "Globalization, Philosophy and the Model of Ecumenism," in *Philosophical Challenges and Opportunities of Globalization*, ed. Oliva Blanchette, Tomonobu Imamichi, George F. McLean (Washington, DC: Council for Research and Values in Philosophy, 2001); see also my "Value Inquiry, Cultural Diversity, and Ecumenism," in *The Future of Value Inquiry*, ed. Matti Häyry and Tuija Takala (Nordic Value Studies, Amsterdam: Rodopi Publishers, 2001).

5. I have borrowed this term from the idealist philosopher, Bernard Bosanquet. See his *The Philosophical Theory of the State and Related Essays*, ed. Gerald Gaus and William Sweet (South Bend, IN: St Augustin's Press, 2001). To speak of ideas as "dominant" is not, however, to suggest that they are "dominating," in the sense of oppressive or of being the instrument of an elite designed to marginalize or suppress other "voices."

6. As Aristotle writes, 'No one is able to attain the truth adequately, while, on the other hand, no one fails entirely, but every one says something true about the nature of things.' (*Metaphysics* II, 993a27-993b2)

7. See Hendrik Hart, in *Search for Community in a Withering Tradition* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), who claims to be following the view of Richard Rorty.

Part II
Christian Philosophy and Chinese Culture

5.

Wittgenstein on Religious Points of View: Its Relevance for Inter-Religious Dialogue

Kim-Chinh Vu

Introduction

What does "religion" mean for Wittgenstein? This question is fascinating, leading along divergent paths, and therefore to no one answer. Wittgenstein's writings contain many expressions that suggest enigmatic tensions, for example, "I am not a religious man, but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view." How could he see everything from a religious point, when he also affirmed: "God does not reveal himself in the world?" What could a "theology" would this suggest?

In this article, we first describe the views of religion found in the early Wittgenstein, that is, in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and also in the later Wittgenstein, especially in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Then, we try to identify patterns of continuity in these works and their basic "Grammar(s)." Last, we examine the relevance of a theology-after-Wittgenstein for inter-religious dialogue, especially between Christianity and Buddhism.

Wittgenstein's Religious Point of View

Is Wittgenstein a "Religious Man"?

According to N. Malcolm,1 Wittgenstein did not consider himself a religious man because by "a religious man" he meant "a saint," one who is in the world and yet does not belong to the world, who sees everything *"sub specie aeternitatis."* Thus, the religious man believes firmly that "nothing can happen to you in this world," except what "is God's Will," even in the most miserable situations, like that of Job.2 At times, Wittgenstein tried to decide whether he should become a priest or a schoolmaster, the main reason for such choices being the same: "to read the Gospel with children." Later, he advised his friend M.O'C. Drury not to become a priest because a priest must preach to people and be an apologist of Christianity. This would be contrary to his confession: "If something is good, it is also divine. . . .Only the supernatural can express the Supernatural." It is interesting to note his distinction between to preach and to "read with," that is, to think and about and live in problems from the Gospel's viewpoint. To preach, for Wittgenstein, is to bear witness. The statement "It is 'God's Will' may be similar to a command like 'Don't complain.'"3

In short, Malcolm found the reason why Wittgenstein considered that he was not a religious man: He adopted a rigorous, critical standard of religion in general and toward the religious man in particular: "His models of truly religious men were St. Augustin, John Bunyan, St. Francis, and George Fox. In comparison with those religious figures, he would regard his own religious life as mediocre." He felt that "he did not give enough space in his life to prayer and religious reflection. His thinking was concentrated on philosophical problems."4

Wittgenstein used the simile of the eyes and the fields that they see to describe the relationship between the thinking subject and the world (T.5.633).5 This simile can be used analogically to understand the relationship and the limits between metaphysical subjects, including religion and the natural world.

The *Tractatus* begins with an affirmation of the descriptive definition of the world: "The world is all that is the case,"6 (he made it clear that "the case" is not a thing, but a state of affairs); it is the fact that relates to the object (thing). This relation is simple (in affirmation or negation) or in more complex forms of logical possibilities, and expressed in language. These two fundamental elements—simple object and name—correspond in logical form. This symmetrical correspondence is described as a "picture": "We picture facts to ourselves" (T.2.1) (and T.4.01). The essence of language lies in depicting how things are and the right (or correct) proposition is "iso-morphic" and needs verification.7 The hierarchical criteria for verification stand in the following order: A state of affairs in the world provides the reality of a picture, which is represented by a name. Thus it becomes a meaningful constituent that the logical form asserts. "In a proposition a situation is, as it were, assembled by way of experiment" (T.4031). An experimental picture is equally a clear expression of language. Therefore, Wittgenstein provides a theory of the meaning of propositions. He writes: "Everything that can be put into words can be put clearly" (T.4.116b). Otherwise one should keep silent (T.7).

The limitations of the empirical reality become the limitations of the clear expression of the proposition. Beyond these limitations, there are thinking subjects, esthetical and ethical matters, and especially religion, which is our main concern here. We can see a certain affinity between Wittgenstein and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,* since Kant mentions that "soul," "world," and "God" are rather limited conceptions belonging to "the thing-in-itself." Yet, they are the necessary ground of the phenomenal world. Likewise, Wittgenstein wrote to Ludwig von Ficher, the editor of the publishing company Der Brenner: "The main argument in this book is an ethical one. What I meant to write, then, was this: my work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have not written, and it is precisely this second part that is the important one. My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were, and I am convinced that this is the only vigorous way of drawing those limits."8

Wittgenstein tries to draw clearly the contours of the phenomenal world and, in this respect, he is a true positivist, even though he expressed dissatisfaction with any interpretation of the *Tractatus* showing too little attention to the important passage on being silent. That is the very matter of human life that positivism leaves untouched: "We feel that even when all possible scientific questions have been answered, the problem of life remains completely untouched" by empirical reason.9 While a state of affairs is in the world, a matter of morals, that is, a good or bad exercise of the human will, can "alter" the world's limitation, that is, the relationship to the world: "The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man" (T.6.43).

Human will is based on free action and reaction toward the mystery that is manifested, but it is not a matter of logical connection in the usual sense: The difference between good and bad exercise is in the act itself: "There must indeed be some kind of ethical reward and ethical punishment, but they must reside in the action itself" (T.6.422). The action itself is the expression of life in the present, and "eternal life belongs to those who live in the present" (T.6.4311). In this way, facing "eternal life" is not the question of "life after death;" a religious person believes that everyday life is the important business of life. One cannot express an ethical act or religious belief

in "propositions" because "all propositions are equal" (T.6.4). They describe the "So-sein," not something that "should" be (ethical) or something that is "higher" (religious) (T.6.42). If these are expressed in "propositions," that is, clear sentences are necessarily "non-sense." Therefore, they are better kept in silence for two reasons: "One does not wish to talk non-sense, and one will be doing so if one talks nonsense about it."10

Thus, "to keep in silence" means for Wittgenstein to protect mystery from being trivialized, from talking nonsense. He once remarked: "Any doctrine uttered in words is the source of its own misconstruction by worshippers, disciples and supporters." What Wittgenstein sees as an important matter in "keeping in silence," is "wordless faith" and simply to act. "*Nicht wie die Welt ist, ist das Mystische, sondern dass sie ist"* (T.6.44): ("Not how the world is, is mystical, but only that it is"). It is not possible to see the world as the whole, unless it is a view "*sub specie aeternitatis.*" Therefore, "God does not reveal himself in the World" (T.6.432), and whenever somebody can come so near to God as to feel "The world as a limited whole. . .this is mystical" (T.6.45).

Religion in the Later Wittgenstein

Although Wittgenstein was always preoccupied with linguistic problems and tried hard to clarify the role of language, he gradually came to recognize the arbitrary limitations of language in the *Tractatus* and proposed new perspectives on language in *Philosophical Investigations* and his later works. The variety of language is recognized in the conception of the "Language game," which is a part of the "Life form." New notions and ordinary approaches to language had an impact on his view of religion.

"Wisdom is gray. Life on the other hand and religion are full of color," which shows clearly in language.11

Language Games. A language game is a result of analogical combinations between formal systems and their operative activities like games: that every use of language has its own meaning is true, also for religious language**.** As a game it has its discipline and rules; language has constitutive rules (grammar). Although an operation or game has meaning only in its determined characteristics, all games are meaningful: otherwise they are not games. But in order to be meaningful, languages must be learned and operated correctly. Thus, there is no limitation on games, and there is no hope to determine a catalogue of possible languages; they are countless and indefinitely many.12 In P.I., Nr.23. Wittgenstein gave some insightful examples,13 one of which is "giving orders and obeying them." This is illustrated in a concrete action in P.I. Nr.21: First, it is important to distinguish the "command" from other reports or statements. This is an easy task, for we start not with words alone, but with a concrete situation or given context and appropriate activities: "Language is meant to serve for communication between a builder A and an assistant B. . . .B has to pass the stones, and that in the order in which A needs them" (P.I., Nr.3). It is possible to ask, "Should I obey it?" The question does not break out of the game, but belongs to its framework "on which the working of our language is based (P. I., Nr.240). Reason for or against is not only embedded in the situation, human customs and institutions (P.I., Nr.337), but is at the bottom of human life: "Giving grounds and justifying the evidence comes to an end. But the end is not certain propositions which strike us immediately as true, that is, it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting, which lies at the bottom (*Grund*) of the language-game."14 The last and most important part of "obeying" is beforehand, when we reach "bedrock," that is the base on which all *Lebensforms* are built up.15

In short, the language-game highlights Wittgenstein's conviction that speaking of language is a part of human activities, of life-form.

Life-form. What is "life-form"? Wittgenstein did not give a clear-cut definition, but in different texts16 we can see that it was related to language, language-game, modified use of language as false or true, a superficial or deep dimension of certainty. Thus, it gives us rather a "stimulation" for thinking what it is about, and leads therefore to different interpretations, like "Behavior-package view," "Natural-historical understanding." "cultural-historical ways of living," or "fusion of world views."17 N. Gier understands "fusion" as integral Life-form developing and including four levels: "(1) a biological level from which (2) unique human activities such as pretending, grieving, etc., expressed in (3) various cultural styles, which in turn have their formal ground in a (4) general socio-linguistic framework (Wittgenstein's *Weltbild).*"18 Although integral interpretation can give us a global view of Wittgenstein's thought on Life-form, it is criticized as un-Wittgensteinian, for *Lebensformen* are connected with language games and human activities; yet they are not identified with them. On the other hand, *Lebensform* is not allowed to lock in certain formal issues, but is always recognized in living forms. It has its own depth and breadth of dimensions. A look at Wittgenstein's "grammar" will enable us to understand how *Lebensform* can also be religious belief.

Grammar. Grammar is inseparable from language, and plays an important, continuing role in the thoughts of Wittgenstein. By grammar, he means first a logic of language (*Sprachlogik*), in terms of "logical form."19

Grammar is, properly speaking, a standard for the correct usage of linguistic expressions; it encloses all kinds of grammatical rules, such as rules of definition, analytical operation, and constitutive structure. Therefore, Wittgenstein speaks of "the grammar" of particular words, expressions, phrases, propositions, and even of states and processes. In Wittgenstein's distinction between "surface" and "depth" grammar, the grammar *stricto sensu*, that aims merely at linguistic correction is surface grammar.20

In Wittgenstein's thought, grammar goes deeply into the essence of things and of praxis, of life. "One ought to ask, not what images are or what happens when one imagines anything, but how the world 'imagination' is used. This does not mean that I want to talk only about words." (P. I. Nr.370). Succinctly and "enigmatically," Wittgenstein stated that: "*Essence is expressed by grammar*" (P.I. Nr.371) and "Grammar tells what kind of object a thing is (theology as grammar)" (P. I., Nr.373). Grammar is related to the deeper dimensions of reality, like nature, culture, and religion. It does not belong to the isolated metaphysical level, but becomes a new mode of harmony between language-games and life-forms. It is not that important to give a theoretical justification of any reality because what really matters is how one practices and expresses it in his or her life. This is the notion of "speech-act" developed by J.L. Austin and J. Searle.21 In 1937, Wittgenstein noted: "Christianity is not a doctrine, not, I mean, a theory about what has happened and will happen to the human soul, but a description of something that actually takes place in human life. For 'consciousness of sin' is a real event and so are despair and salvation through faith."22

Consequently, although surface-grammar and depth-grammar cannot respectively be ascribed to a lower and higher rank as with traditional metaphysics, they cannot be separated because language and life-form are interrelated. Therefore, a religious believer and a nonbeliever may use the same proposition, but the latter's meaning varies according to the different contexts of one's life-form. Thus, the question of truth appears differently in different language games.

Relevance for interreligious Dialogue

The Religious Point of View as a Foundation for a Unity of Fragmentary Thoughts

Looking back at the survey of Wittgenstein's thoughts in the preceding pages, we can see clear discrepancies between earlier and later periods. Yet, would it not be more exact to speak of "transformations" or "shifting" points of views? Indeed, we may easily identify one thread that runs through his thought in view of Wittgenstein's statement to his friend M. O'C. Drury: "I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view."

(1) In the early period, in the world of the natural sciences surrounded with facts that corresponded to precise terms marking the limited world, his religious views reflected his gaze into the immense silence of the mystical realm. Such a view seems inconsistent with the explanation of the natural world by an empiricist. This indicates that religiosity belongs to a different *Weltanschuung* to which the method of verification cannot be applied. This indicates also that exact propositions cannot account for the meaning of life. In short, the theory of meaning in the *Tractatus* is based on the belief in the "picture-theory," that is to say it eliminates mystical language. In the second part of his work, he is led rather by his later formulation: "I have to swim so strongly against the tide." Thus, he revised or even "dismissed" the fundamental belief of the *Tractatus* in the optimistic goal of finding "All essential points of the final solution of **t**he problems of philosophy."23

A number of studies on the discontinuity in Wittgenstein's thought come to the same conclusion: Wittgenstein's shifted tracks when he dismissed the "picture theory." He began with a doubt about the foundation of "atomic logic," that is, whether names, which are the elements of language, correspond one-for-one to objects which are also the elements of reality. Wittgenstein pondered: "But, what are the simple constituent parts of a chair? The bits of wood of which it is made? Or the molecules, or the atoms?" (P. I., Nr.47). Thus, the question about "picture-theory" does not seem to be as sure as in the *Tractatus*; on the contrary, Wittgenstein came to see that a "word" could indicate different objects. Consequently, the doubtful "picture of theory" led him to consider the problem of a sharp limitation between "clearly speaking" and the sphere of silence. In other words, the *Tractatus* had assumed that a proposition has meaning only if it has a determinate sense that can be expressed exactly; this is doomed to failure if the picture-theory is abandoned. In his later philosophy, the "meaning" of a word or of a sentence is transformed from "protocol" to "used" language (P.I. Nr.43). Thus, in contrast to the scientific language that requires total "objectivity," language "being used" as refers to the subject who uses it and to the concrete circumstances in which it is used. In this way, understanding is formed in common sense and in context. "In this way the command 'N' might be said to be given a place in the language-game even when the tool no longer exists, and the sign 'N' to have meaning even when its bearer ceases to exists" (P.I., Nr.41).

(2) In the later Wittgenstein, when "language-game" and "life-form" dominate his thoughts, the religious viewpoint plays an important role as a grammar which gives an authentic meaning to language and further provides the deeper dimension of life-forms. As the meaning of language exists in its utterance, the meaning of religion exists in its praxis. Wittgenstein distinguished between "faith" and "superstition." He characterized superstition as "the false belief in supernatural

causal mechanisms" (TLP 5.1361). He also indicated the superstition in "scientific justifications" of religious belief, just as in B. Russell's attempt to use pure rational arguments against religious belief.24 In this line, Wittgenstein continued to protect "religion" from pseudo-religion, exactly as in the *Tractatus* he defended mysticism against the clearly defined realities of the natural world. A genuine religious belief is lived out in such praxis as rituals and ethical practices which integrate a chosen life according to certain religions, and forms of commitment that come from religious experiences rather than from the doctrines themselves. In this sense, the sentence in the *Tractatus*: "not how the world is, is the mystical, but that it is" could be transformed into a religious point: not how religion is justified is religious, but that it is authentically living.

Wittgenstein defined the language-game as the whole, "consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven" (P.I. Nr.7); he identified the language-game with the "speaking of language," which is a part of a form of life. How could the language-game and forms of life relate to religious belief? If speech and act could not find an authentic relationship or interlocking coordination, there could be danger of falling into either false "speech" or "fanatic" act. For example, if the God of Christianity is not explained and understood as the Trinitarian God taught by Jesus Christ as "Love," then how could a Christian justify his or her commitment of love as Christian praxis? If all praxis of Love was equal for everybody, then does one need to have a religion?

(3) Admittedly, Wittgenstein was not ready to answer each and every question, but he did stress that religion was a "*sui generis* form of life" that cannot be accounted for in a rationalistic framework. This is one reason why Wittgenstein criticized Frazer vehemently, reacting to the latter's famous work, *The Golden Bough*. Wittgenstein raised the following main critiques:25

a. Frazer's collection provided an overview of the Nemi rite and put it together with other rites with which we are familiar. Thus, Frazer gave an "explanation" already in letting us confront a ritual which seemed to be "horrifying." He owed the reader a genetic explanation of the Nemi rite.

b. Even if the genetic explanation seems to be very important to understand the unfamiliar phenomena, Wittgenstein is convinced that it should be abandoned in favor of a description of the rite. But, can we describe something that is totally unknown in our own culture? A rite can be fully understood only by the participants themselves. The authentic description should convey what is meaningful for the participants themselves. Here we can see the need for communication and dialogue, especially between "outsider" and "insider."

c. Frazer's "explanation" enumerates certain causal consequences which are based on proto-scientific explanations. In criticizing Frazer, Wittgenstein draws our attention to the characteristic of religious language: ritual acts are of a symbolic nature. Therefore, there is nothing "stupid," and the rituals seem to be nonsensical only in the eyes of outsiders, who are not religious participants.

(4) The religious viewpoint cannot be decided by "pointing," nor by the description of any religious process, but by its deeper dimension: "Essence is expressed by grammar." This latter quote is followed by an important reference which deserves due attention if we want to understand what "theology" may be for Wittgenstein "theology as grammar" (P.I. Nr.373). This enigmatic sentence might be read in the light of Wittgenstein's comment about Luther: "Luther said that theology is the grammar of the word 'God.' I interpret this to mean that an investigation of the word would be a grammatical one."26 It is first the description not of the content of word "God," as in a disputation about "how many arms God had," which leads only to ridicule and blasphemous

views, but of how the word has significance in our existence when we confess that "God is." "How do you know that you believe?" The answer to the question, according to Wittgenstein, needs to go deeper in lived life, in real introspection. Just like the question about love: "Do I love her, or am I only pretending to myself?" "The question of belief requests an authentic introspection, calling up of memories of imagined possible situations, and of feelings that one would have if. . ." (P.I., Nr.587). Imaginations, pictures, gestures, symbols, etc., are not merely isolated thoughts or feelings, but integral elements of one's belief. They are cultural expressions; yet, rooted in a deeper dimension. "A man says 'O God' and looks up to heaven. Now, it is this which can teach us the sense of the proposition that 'God lives on high'. We might say, very roughly of people whose nature it is to kneel down on certain occasions and fold their hands that in their language they have a personal God."27 In short, we are taught the word "God," in full grammatical description, but in examples that we collect personally or in the community. Here the question of the existence of God entails many more meanings than intellectual proofs can provide. Wittgenstein is convinced that the believer would never come to a religious belief as a result of such intellectual proofs. He can see, however, that such proofs may give people an intellectual analysis and foundations that help them live a happier life: "Perhaps one could convince someone that God exists by means of a certain kind of upbringing, by shaping his life in such and such a way."28

In short, drawing our attention to the grammatical relevance of God, Wittgenstein is convinced that the religious view is not an isolated area like other scientific standpoints, but shows up in language-games and unites them. "Life can educate one to a belief in God. And experiences too are what bring this about."29

(5) In sum, the religious point of view according to Wittgenstein does not extend philosophy into irrationality. In the earlier period, philosophy serves as a "ladder" helping to solve the linguistic problems in building clear propositions. When the task is done, the "ladder" can be put away. The task of philosophy is to utter a legitimate critique of language, and to reveal its "non-sense," that is, not to try to answer questions, but to show questions emerging because they violate the boundaries of sense. Theology belongs to life that is outside the scientific view. Thus, it is mystical and remains in an area of silence. In the later period, Wittgenstein's "linguistic turn" transforms philosophy from being a guard against metaphysics to becoming the guardian of a meaningful life. Philosophy is interested in language-games and their relationship to life-form: Used language can have its complete meaning in life (praxis). That is only a description, but not a justification for it should leave everything as it is!

Yet, Wittgenstein tried to reveal some things as "plain nonsense" and a "house of cards" (P.I. Nr.128, Nr.599).

Does he mean to indicate a basic dilemma regarding the nature of philosophy? Some commentators believe that Wittgenstein offered an approach unheard of in the philosophical tradition: Philosophy does not have to dominate, but rather to acknowledge its adequate role, and give up any pretence. However, in doing so, Wittgenstein seeks a kind of therapy of thinking where there are misconceived, misunderstood or misconstructed thoughts. The therapy does not offer a theoretical, but rather a practical answer. Here, philosophy and theology are, quite surprisingly, linked closely together: they both are bound to life and help people to achieve a more meaningful life. "The sickness of a time is cured by a change in people's way of life and the sickness of philosophical problems could be cured only through a changed way of thinking and of living, not through a medicine invented by an individual."30 "Once the new way of thinking has been established, the old problems vanish, indeed, they become hard to recapture."31

Helpful Contributions to Interreligious Dialogue

There are, indeed, several precious studies that compare Wittgenstein with a certain religious thinker (Augustin, Thomas, or Kierkegaard) or put Wittgenstein's thoughts and Buddhism together.32 Fewer works emphasize the relevance of his religious thought to interreligious dialogue. The following reflections outline Wittgenstein's contribution in this matter.

(1) Dialogue can be effective only when partners are well prepared. An important issue for interreligious dialogue lies in mutual trust and the shared conviction that they are truly religious partners. Truth can be submitted to any challenge. Thus, critical minds on religion, like K. Marx, S. Freud, F. Nietzsche, etc., are welcome; when they are taken seriously, they can help believers purify their own religion or clarify the religious phenomena in other religions. Such critical minds can be applied effectively only if we unmask their ideological motivations. Thus, a post-Freudian, post-Marxist religious view may bring believers together, for every partner is then fully aware of self-purification and self-critique. Wittgenstein in this respect could serve as a critical master who represents a natural scientist's attitude towards religious problems. The scientist is competent in the objective domain; for instance, he will verify a text found by archeologists and assert its authenticity, and so on. This may clarify one's own religion or enter directly into a dialogue on certain levels of "objective truth." We may regard this service as an analytical therapy in understanding religion—versus a pseudo-scientific explanation of religious issues. Like other "masters of suspicion," the early Wittgenstein may be put in a critical frame because he is aware of the limitations of the objective, verifiable world.

The later Wittgenstein will generously accept "language-games" and it is important to recognize the legacy of language-games and their rules. Living in the modern world, Christianity and Buddhism, like other world religions, cannot ignore the secular world and its challenges. Thus, while religion takes seriously natural sciences and profane cultures, it can learn from Wittgenstein to keep them in the right limits. Technology has power over natural forces and puts them at the service of humanity. But at the same time, technical advances may enslave human beings with materialism, secularism, consumerism, and pollution. Against a fatal confusion between scientific knowledge and spiritual wisdom, Wittgenstein reminds religious persons of their important duties to protect the sacred dimension, to avoid human alienation and to help people have happy lives. Christianity and Buddhism help each other through mutual understanding and cooperation with their spiritual tradition and wisdom. They can learn from each other to see different spiritual qualities; for instance, a Christian can learn from a Buddhist about a psychological method, and a Buddhist from a Christian about historical and sociological ways of thinking.33

(2) For the early Wittgenstein, religion belongs to the realm of mystery. This mystical element in the later Wittgenstein penetrates language-games as their depth grammar is, or involved in ethical engagements as a fundamental motivation. This reminds a religious man and woman of the important role of "mystery" in dialogue. Mystery is a creative, symbolic power in any religion. There is no ideal language that can catch the mystery totally and absolutely. Positively speaking: each religion has its own way to approach mystery; thus each is one way to learn about mystery. Consequently, religious persons experience what is not their own, but of "the other," and not an arbitrary accident. To take mystery seriously in interreligious dialogue means to be able to listen to the manifestation of mystery in the experience of one's partners, and through their experience to find out a "co-being-state of mind" and "co-being-with" in mystery. Thus, both the prophets in

the revelation religions and the sages in the wisdom religions share in the mystical dimension of the mystical religions in different ways and in various life-forms. This mystery can be called many names. For the mystics in general it is called "the totally other," as described by D. Tracy: "For the prophet, the other is acknowledged in the word of proclamation ("thus says the Lord") that disrupts the prophet's own consciousness. . . .For many Eastern mystical traditions, this prophetic discourse on God and the self is a symptom of the deeper problem, not an expression of the solution."34

Among the ways of doing theology, the negative way is often neglected. The way of "*docta ignorantia"* (Nicholas of Cusa) or "*reductio ad mysterium*" (K. Rahner) is helpful to interreligious dialogue. Christianity believes in a Trinitarian God based on the revelation of Jesus Christ who is the incarnate God. Through encounter with Him, we find the way to mystery: "To have seen me is to have seen the Father" (Jn. 14, 9). K. Rahner describes the fulfillment and emptiness of Jesus Christ as follows: "a fulfillment in which his (otherwise so empty) concept of the absolute is wholly fulfilled and his (otherwise so blind) gaze can 'see through' to the absolute God himself. Thus man is he who has to await God's free epiphany in his history; Jesus Christ is this Epiphany."35

That is a paradoxical mystery: Man waits for his fulfillment in Jesus Christ who is the real symbol of the emptiness of God (Philippians 2, 5-8). In other words, Jesus Christ is the self-surrender of God to the world to become Non-God, and Jesus of Nazareth is in total surrender to the "wholy-other" that he calls God. Thus the way to *mysterium* is the negative way both toward man and to God

On the side of Buddhism, we elect some thoughts of the Zen-Buddhist Kyoto school. For Nishitani to understand God and Nothingness in the same mystical consideration is to search for the ground of both in the "God Head": "The true God is not the usual idea of God, but rather *die Gottheit* as spoken of by the mystics in West; the true God is the 'emptiness' of the *Prajnaparamita Sustra*.36 How can a human being approach the "*Urgrund*"? Nishida helps us to come back to the tradition of "*docta ignorantia*" of Nicholas Cusa who describes God as Transcendence of both Being and Nothingness. At the same time, Nishida emphansizes that *"Urgrund"* is *"coincidentia oppositorum"*: "Nothingness separated from being is not true nothingness;. . .In the same way that if there is no God, there is no world, if there is no world, there is no God."37

In short, all mystics want to say, even through keeping silent, more than the prophet is willing to say through excellent rhetoric with which the human being can, with effort, express the word of the absolute. How can interreligious dialogue start? Could language with all its games help religion approach the common goal, the truth in which the mystery manifests itself to human beings!

(3) Speaking of religious experiences as mystical encounters with the "totally other" may mislead one to believe that mysticism means "unclear," or "indifferent experience." Firstly, mystical experience cannot be expressed in scientific, verifiable language, Wittgenstein proved in his*Tractatu*. Mystical experience does not mean totally different from "normal" religious life, as K. Rahner explained: "I mean only (most modestly and hesitatingly) that the first and original experience of the Spirit of which I seek to speak is also the innermost core of what one may call mysticism." He cited as an example that one can find God in immediately sharing himself, e.g., in giving one's own soup to a poor man and going hungry oneself, just as those who share God's presence in meditation, stillness, emptiness, absolute loss of self, etc. These are all experiences of the Holy Spirit signify that salvation and eternity taking place.38

Mystical experiences are also clear to consciousness. As D.T. Suzuki explained the "clarity" of Zen, "Mysticism taken as hidden is a defect. In truth it is apparent in its full grandeur, presenting

itself in all clarity right before us; it is unveiled, totally unbarred."39If mystical experience is an important constituent of religious life to which we can return again and again keeping it in memory, it should be full of awareness, that is, clear to one's own consciousness. If we cannot express it in common language, then the failure is not to be blamed on its lack of "clarity," but on the limitations of our language. Therefore, Wittgenstein proposes language-games, and believes in their effective function, but he emphasizes "praxis" when it comes to speaking about religious belief. It is important to ponder how interreligious dialogue can be integrated into interreligious cooperation? How can we build dialogue on the basis of authentic religious experience and avoid any explanation that causes misunderstanding rather than providing helpful information?

Conclusion

We have analyzed religious points of view from different angles: In Wittgenstein's early period he saw what is "shown" in natural phenomena like fields; at the same time he acknowledged that what is "hidden" is more important, like one's "eyes." Later he was still concerned about the nature of language and meaning, but in different contexts and horizons. Are they of the same or different orders? The answer can be found in a comparison of G.W.F. Hegel and L. Wittgenstein: Hegel seems always to want to show that what looks different is really the same. Whereas Wittgenstein is interested in finding that what looks the same is really different. From the religious point of view, experiences appear in different language-games and forms of life and have different meanings. In interreligious dialogue belief is experienced from different angles, especially from the appreciation of nonidentity and of a negative way of doing theology.

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Notes

1. See: N. Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: A Religious Point of View?*, ed. by P. Winch (London: Routledge, 1993). Hereafter N. Malcolm, *Wittgenstein*; see also: R. Rhees (ed.), *Ludwig Wittgenstein, Personal Collections* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), p.94, Hereafter R. Rhees, *L. Wittgenstein*; see also: N. Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), Hereafter N. Malcolm, *L. Wittgenstein: A Memoir*.

2. N. Malcolm, *Wittgenstein*, ibid., pp. 2f., "Wittgenstein once suggested that a way in which the notion of immortality can acquire a meaning is through one's feeling that one has duties from which one cannot be released, even by death. Wittgenstein himself possessed a stern sense of duty"; N. Malcolm, *L. Wittgenstein: A Memoir*, p. 59. This way of seeing religiosity is found again in the Memoir of P. Engelmann, the architect who had become friend with Wittgenstein since the World War I: "The notion of a last judgment was of profound concern to him"; P. Engelmann, *Letters from Wittgenstein with a Memoir* (New York: Horizon, 1967), p. 77, Hereafter P. Engelmann, *Letters from Wittgenstein.*

3. "Just think, Drury, what it would mean to have to preach a sermon every week; you couldn't do it. I would be afraid that you would try and give some sort of philosophical justification for Christian beliefs, as if some sort of proof was needed… The Symbolisms of Catholicism are

wonderful beyond words. But any attempt to make it into a philosophical system is offensive." R. Rhees, *L. Wittgenstein*, aaO. p. 123; see also: B. McGuinness, *Wittgenstein, A Life: Young Ludwig (1889-1921)* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1988), p. 274.

4. N. Malcolm, *Wittgenstein*, aaO. p.22. In the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* of 1946, we can find interesting notes on religion, for examples, "Religion is, as it were, the calm bottom of the sea at its deepest point, which remains calm however high the waves on the surface may be," or: "'I never believed in God before' – that I understand. But not 'I never really believed in Him before,'" L. Wittgenstein, *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, hg. v. G.H. von Wright (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1977) p. 3; Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value = Vermischte Bemerkungen*, eng. tr. by P. Winch (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), Hereafter L. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*.

5. L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicu: Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1971), eng. tr. by D. F. Pears & B. F. McGuiness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), Hereafter as T. and the number original given by Wittgenstein. B. Russell wrote to Lady Ottoline Morell about his meeting with Wittgenstein in the Hague in 1919 and spoke enthusiastically about *Tractatus*: "I leave here today, after a fortnight's stay, during a week of which Wittgenstein was here, and we discussed his book every day. I came to think even better of it than I had done; I feel sure it is a really great book, though I do not feel sure it is right. . . .I had felt in his book a flavor of mysticism, but was astonished when I found that he has become a complete mystic." L. Wittgenstein, *Letters to Russell, Keynes, and Moore*, ed. by G. H. von Wright (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), p. 82.

6. L. Wittgenstein, T.1 *Die Welt ist alles, was der Fall ist* and the conclusion of the *Tractatus* is the well-known catch-phrase: "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence." English translation, aaO., p. 151.

7. W.D. Hudson discovers origins of the picture theory, according to the record of conversation between Wittgenstein and G. H. von Wright, in theory "principles of mechanics" of Heinrich Hertz: "Hertz restricted the application of the theory to the language of mechanics, whereas Wittgenstein applied it to language as a whole." W.D. Hudson, *Wittgenstein and Religious Belief* (London: The McMillan Press, 1975), pp. 17f. Hereafter W.D. Hudson, *Wittgenstein and Religious Belief*.

8. P. Engelmann, *Letters from Wittgenstein*, aaO. p. 143; see also: M.K. Munitz, *Contemporary Analytic Philosophy* (New York: MacMillan, 1981), pp. 69-220.

9. See: W.D. Hudson, *Wittgenstein and Religious Belief*, aaO. pp.87f., P. Engelmann pointed out in his memory the clear contrast between positivism and Wittgenstein: "Positivism holds—and this is its essence—that what can speak about is all that matters in life. Whereas Wittgenstein passionately believes that all that really matters in human life is precisely what, in his view, we must be silent about," P. Engelmann, *Letters from Wittgenstein*, aaO. p.97.

10. W.D. Hudson, *Wittgenstein and Religious Belief*, aaO. p.85; see also: E. Zemach, "Wittgenstein's Philosophy of the Mystical," in I. M. Copi & R. W. Beard (eds.), *Essays on Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (New York : The MacMillan, 1966), pp. 359-375. E. Zemach interpreted the philosophy of the mystical in "God," "God Head," "Ethics," "Goad Life" and "Aesthetics." There are some important passages, f.e. interpretations of T.6.3631-6.374. "The world is given me. . . . The world which is independent of our will. . . .The "alien will" is just what is independent of my will, the factual character of reality. God, Fate, and World (*qua* the totality of facts) are synonyms" (p.361). Or the result of discussion on "God head" is: "Wittgenstein recognizes two transcendental theories: logic and ethic. . . .For logic, the sense of the world is its inalterable form: God. For ethics, it is the willing subject" (p.369).

11. L. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, aaO. P. 62, see also: L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. by G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), Hereafter L. Wittgenstein, P.I.

12. See: D.Z. Phillips, *Wittgenstein and Religion* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), esp. Religious Beliefs and Language-Games, pp. 56-78; Searle on Language-Games and Religion, pp. 22-32; see also: Lars Haikola, *Religion as Language-Game: A Critical Study with Special Regard to D.Z. Phillips* (Lund: Gleerup, 1971).

13. "But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question, and command?—There are countless kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call "symbols, "words," and "sentence." And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all, but new types of language, new language-games, as we many say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten," P.I., Nr.23, p. 11.

14. L. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, ed. by G.E.M. Anscombe & C.H. von Wright, tr. by D. Paul & G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), Nr. 204, cited number is given originally. Hereafter L. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty.*

15. See: G.D. Convey, *Wittgenstein on Foundations,* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1989), esp. pp. 9-30; N. Malcom, *Knowledge and Certainty: Essays and Lectures* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1963), p. 93; see also: J. Whittaker, "Language-Games and Forms of Life Unconfused," in *Philosophical Investigations* 1(1978) pp. 42ff

16. Five times in P.I.: Nr. 19, 23, 174, 226, 241; once in "On Certainty" Nr. 358~359 and once in the *Lecture on Religious Belief,* p. 58.

17. See: J.F.M. Hunter, *Understanding Wittgenstein: Studies of Philosophical Investigations* (Edinburg: University Press, 1985); see also: J. Shekelton, "Rules and Lebensformen," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 1(1976) pp. 125-132; see further: P. Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1977).

18. N. Gier, "Wittgenstein and Form of Life," in *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 10(1980) p. 245.

19. T.3.325: "Um diese Irrtümern zu entgehen, müssen wir eine Zeichensprache verwenden, welche sie ausschliesst, indem sie nicht das gleiche Zeichen in verschiedenen Symbolen, und Zeichen welche auf verschiedene Art bezeichnen, nicht äusserlich auf die gleich Art verwendet. Eine Zeichensprache also, die der logischen Grammatik – der logischen Syntax – gehorcht"; P. I. Nr.90: "We feel as if we had to penetrate phenomena: our investigations however, is directed not toward phenomena, but, as one might say, towards the 'possibilities' of phenomena. . . .Our investigation is therefore a grammatical one"; P. I. Nr.92: "This finds expression in questions as to the essence of language, of propositions, of thoughts. . . .'The essence is hidden from us.'"

20. P.I. Nr.664: "In the use of words one might distinguish 'surface grammar' from 'depth grammar'. . .And now compare the depth grammar, say of the word 'to mean', with what its surface grammar would lead us to suspect. No wonder we find it difficult to know our way about"; see also: A. Keightley, *Wittgenstein, Grammar and God* (London: Epworth Press, 1976), especially chapter two about "Grammar and the Scene of Religious Belief," pp. 41-60.

21. See: J.L. Austin, *How to do things with – Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1962); see also: J. Searle, *Speech Acts* (London, 1969); see further: K.O. Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, Bd. I (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1976), pp. 352-65; K.O. Apel, "Normatively Grounding 'Critical Theory' through Recourse to the Lifeworld?" in A. Honneth, a.o. (eds.), *Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment* (Cambridge a.O.: The MIT Press, 1992), p. 158f.

22. L. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 28; see: P. R. Shields, *Logic and Sin in the Writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), esp. chap. 3 "The Fearful Judge," pp. 31-51, Hereafter P. R. Shields, *Logic and Sin.*

23. See: W. Hudson, *Wittgenstein and Religious Belief*, aaO. p.13. in his preface to *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein wrote (dated 1945) "It suddenly seemed to me that I should publish those old thoughts and the new ones together: that the latter could be seen in the right light only by contrast with and against the background of my old way of thinking" (P.I., X).

24. See: L. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 72: "Religious faith and superstition are quite different. One of them results from fear and is a sort of false science. The other is a trusting"; see also: L. Wittgenstein, "Lectures & Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief," ed. by C. Barrett (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966). P. 58f: "We come to an island and we find beliefs there, and certain beliefs we are inclined to call religious. . . .They have sentences, and there are also religious statements. These statements would not just differ in respect to what they are about. . . .You may say they reason wrongly. . . .Whether a thing is a blunder or not—it is a blunder in a particular system. Just as something is a blunder in a particular game and not in another."

25. L. Wittgenstein, "Remarks on Franzer's 'The Golden Bough'," in J. Klagge and A. Nordmann (eds.), *Philosophical Occasions* (German–English parallel texts where appropriate) (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), pp. 118-133.

26. A. Ambrose (ed.), *Wittgenstein's Lectures Cambridge 1932-1935* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), p. 32.

27. Unpublished *Nachlass*, dated 1932-33, quoted in F. Kerr, *Theology after Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 150.

28. L. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 85.

29. *Ibid*., p. 86.

30. L. Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, ed. by G.H. von Wright, R. Rhees & G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), part II, p. 23.

31. L. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 48, see: F. Kerr, *Theology after Wittgenstein*, pp. 168-190.

32. See: M.F. Burnyeat, "Wittgenstein and Augustin 'De magistro'," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 61(1987), pp. 1-24; P. Bearsley, "Augustin and Wittgenstein on Language," in *Philosophy* 58 (1983), pp. 229-236; A. Kenny, *The Legacy of Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), esp. pp. 61-77; W.H. Bruening, "Aquinas and Wittgenstein on God-talk," in *Sophia (Australia)* 16 (1977) 1-7; R.B. Goodman, "How a thing is said and heard: Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard," in *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 3 (1986)335-53; D.Z. Phillips, *Wittgenstein and Religion*, "On Wanting to Compare Wittgenstein and Zen," pp. 193-200; J.V. Canfield, "Wittgenstein and Zen," in *Philosophy* 50 (1975), 383-408.

33. See: A. Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (New York: Oribs, 1988), pp. 75-81; see also: A. Pieris, *Feuer und Wasser: Frau, Gesellschaft, Spiritualität in Buddhismus und Christentum* (Freiburg u.a.: Herder, 1994), esp. pp.115-124; pp. 199-266.

34. D. Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other: The Inter-religious Dialogue* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 21f.

35. K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol. I (London: Darton, 1961), p. 187.

36. Keiji Nishitani, "Harmony as Guide," p. 5, cited after H. Waldenfels, *Absolute Nothingness. Foundations for a Buddhist-Christian Dialogue* (New York: Paulist, 1980) p. 138.

37. Kitaro Nishida, "Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness," cited after H. Waldenfels, *Absolute Nothingness*, *ibid*., p. 41.

38. K.P. Fischer, *Der Mensch als Geheimnis* (Freiburg : Herder, 1974), p. 406.

39. Cited after H. Waldenfels, *Absolute Nothingness*, *ibid*., p. 126.

6.

The Christian Thought and the Destiny of Philosophy

Jean Ladrière

Philosophy

Philosophy is not, like temporality, a constitutive structure of the human being, nor, like the faculty of understanding, is it a property of that being. Rather, it is historical: Its history is the very process of its progressive institution or realization, which, at the same time, is an act of intelligence and will. This has to do not only with knowledge and understanding, but also with a questioning, proper to the human being, concerning its being and engaging responsibility toward oneself. It is inspired and oriented by an aim, which philosophical thinking has assigned deliberately to itself and conceived as the attainment of wisdom. In a first phase, wisdom has been understood as an existential state of harmony with the world, such as it is really in itself, beyond all the illusions that prevent us from living our lives authentically. That aim is, of course, of great generality, and different ways have been proposed to attain it. The particular way of philosophy has been that of knowledge. The fundamental problem, in that perspective, is thus to discover the method that can lead to authentic knowledge. Philosophy began with the idea that the knowledge of the world such as it is really is not a simple description of what is given, in the appearance. Instead this knowledge starts from what is given and succeeds in finding, in the appearances, indications leading to an invisible realm from which the appearance has originated. This is the idea of principle: wisdom is a knowing of the principles and through the principles.

In a second phase, that undertaking itself has been submitted to critical examination and questions of the second order have arisen. The presumed authentic knowledge is expressed in discourses. What are the resources of discourse; what kind of relation do they have with reality; and what guarantee do we have that what is said in discourse is in agreement with reality? This last question gave way to the introduction of the concept of truth and to the problematic connected with that idea. Those questions inaugurated a moment of reflectivity in philosophical discourse. With that reflectivity the philosophical enterprise began to call into question the human being himself and, more precisely, his action. There is a concern about authentic knowledge, but also about authentic action; there is a search for truth, but also for justice. On both sides, what is at stake is the quality of life, what makes of life a "good life." There is, in the human being, a desire for the good life, which is constitutive, but remains obscure for itself. It is the duty of thought to clarify that desire and thereby the very idea of the good life. That reflection has the virtue of totalizing existence, that is to say, of apprehending it in the plenitude of its unfolding, and thus of understanding it as bearing in its present state a constitutive relation with its accomplishment. In each particular moment of its becoming, it decides what it will be and the measure in which it will be faithful to what it is called to be. In this perspective, existence understands itself as bearing in itself the promise of a fulfilment of itself, which involves the indication of a destination. What is at stake, finally, in philosophical discourse is existence as destiny.

This signifies that the constitutive project of philosophy is much more than the working out of an overall picture of the world, and much more also than a theoretical interpretation of human existence. It is a tentative answer to an existential preoccupation, the search for the path leading to

the authentic life. Such a life involves existence in its totality: it is a concrete way of existing. Philosophy can understand its task in two ways. It can be conceived as that enterprise of the spirit that opens access to the authentic life and sets existence on the way, which is only a preparatory endeavour. But it can be conceived also, more radically, as being itself the authentic form of life. It can even, in its more daring expressions, see itself as giving access to the highest object of desire, the blessed life. In both cases, philosophy is deeply concerned with existence, not only in its structure but also in its destiny. The destinal character of existence is reflected in the philosophical project, giving thus to philosophy a destinal character also. As inscribing itself in the fate of existence, philosophy has a strong affinity with religion, at least with that aspect of religious life that presents itself as an answer to the expectation of salvation.

In order to perceive more clearly the destinal character of philosophy, the most appropriate step is to make reference to the concept in which philosophy itself has tried to express its project, namely, that of reason. That concept comes from the Greek idea of *logos*, referring back first to discourse that is able to justify itself, but enlarged to an ontological meaning according to which it refers to the most intimate constitution of things. Today, we see primarily in reason that capacity of understanding and of judging which is able to give account of what is said (in terms of assertions or of estimations). But there is also an expansion of that concept, which comes to designate (a) that internal law which makes the world understandable, (b) the new artificial world which appears as the objectification of the reason in us, and (c) finally the whole of reality as containing that universal principle of which the reason in us participates. Seen in that perspective, reason as power of the mind appears as called to build an objective world, made up of concepts, expressive works and institutions, capable of reflecting, in the framework of human existence, that reason which is the internal texture of things. The term "reason" comes thus to designate primarily that constructed world. Authentic life is then understood as a life according to the demands inscribed in that world. Philosophy, in its turn, becomes the project of the self-understanding of reason, which besides itself is a part of the construction of reason.

In a sense, that construction is a re-effectuation : reason is in search of itself. But it is not given to itself as an object that it would have only to describe. Reason discovers itself in its manifestations, which lend themselves to be interpreted as partial moments in its total structure. Those manifestations are forms of practices which present themselves as partial figures of reason: there are the different kinds of science, technology, and political and juridical institutions. Philosophy takes as its own task to bring to light what is at stake in those figures and through that reflective inquiry becomes able to give its content of reality to the idea of reason.

That task of understanding comprises the reconstitution of a genesis and the evocation of teleology. The genesis refers back to what constitutes the originary ground of the enterprise, that is, experience. Reason is the elucidating unfolding of experience, but oriented toward the institution of an original world which has value by itself and not as a simple review of a given field of reality. Now experience is the flow of a life, which prolongs and overcomes the biological life and which is lived in an environment of sense. The self-understanding of experience is also a reflection on the institutions of sense, that is to say, on the different dimensions of culture. We could say that it is the reflective moment of the life of sense, or, in equivalent terms, of culture.

On the other hand, the teleological aspect of the task of understanding concerns the structure of the temporality of the progression of reason. That progression is sustained by an immanent tension that refers the present state of reflection to a horizon that gives it its sense. That horizon is the accomplishment of reason, that is to say the final term of the construction of the objectified reason. Its full manifestation has to be brought progressively to light by the work of reflection,

and, thus, also the complete self understanding of reason. That ultimate moment in the destiny of reason would be the attainment of the authentic life, the fulfillment of what was, since the beginning, the aim toward which philosophy was tending. But that moment is not given in a representation, nor is it homogeneous with the particular moments of a process. Rather, it is that immanent force of inspiration that gives to philosophy its spirit and calls its endeavour from the remoteness of its future. It is, to be sure, present already in the actuality of the effective work of reason, but only as horizon. As such, it remains indeterminate, but reason can understand itself only in the attractiveness of that constitutive horizon. As indicating a direction and implying a reference to an advent of reason which is always to come, it can be understood as the *telos* of the becoming of reason and of philosophy itself.

In the context indicated by the title of this paper, we have to question ourselves about the present situation of that enterprise. Two kinds of conditioning determine that situation: the internal constraints which philosophy imposes on itself due to the logic of its development, and the questions which come from the general evolution of the culture and which are new challenges. The constraints concern essentially the determination of the specific point of view of philosophy in the historical context created by the rise and successful development of modern science, and, correlatively, the kind of discourse corresponding to that point of view. As claiming to be the highest form of the authentic discourse, philosophy, until the advent of "modern times," presented itself as giving the most adequate understanding of the two components of the visible world, nature and human beings. Modern science has succeeded in building a method, completely different from the classical method of philosophy, which has revealed itself as a very powerful tool, capable of suscitating an extraordinarily accurate image of the world. That method proved its efficacy for the knowledge of nature and was rapidly recognized as fruitful also for the study of the human being. The method of interpretation and of conceptual analysis worked out by philosophy seemed, in contrast, to be henceforth devoid of relevance. It was apparently condemned or to disappear or at best to become a kind of super-science, proposing a synthesis of the results of scientific research or a simple epistemology of science. The answer to that challenge was the introduction of the transcendental point of view. That manoeuvre displaced the question: The specific task of philosophy was no longer to propose directly a knowledge of the world and its content, but to bring to the fore the conditions of possibility of an adequate knowledge of the world. In the philosophy of Kant, that point of view is introduced in the context of a theory of the "transcendental *Ego*." This is also the case in the first phase of phenomenology. In its radicalization phenomenology succeeded in separating the essential idea of the transcendental from its subjectivist version. The transcendental is now conceived as the field of constitution of experience, independent as such from the classical dichotomy between subject and object. It is thus a neutral field, understood as providing the speculative place where the philosophical project of a reconstruction of experience, in all its forms and modalities, can be carried off.

That field is the place where the life of sense is able to appear to itself. The analysis of the internal constitution of that field is the heart of an understanding that goes beyond any compartmentalisation. Thanks its description it becomes possible to give a systematic expression to the feeling according to which every particular figure of experience, every kind of practice, including science, every form of objectivity refers one back to something which is not objectifiable and which can be said only with the aid of a language making use of the power of suggestion of ordinary language. The traditional project of philosophy becomes able, as project of a transcendental doctrine, to discover the point of view at which it was aiming since the beginning, and in which it finds its own definition.

The understanding of experience becomes, thus, its reconstruction, undertaken from the point of view of the transcendental. This reconstruction is, in proper terms, a reflection which can be conceived in two different ways. In one it is able to reach an ultimate, a kind of saturation of the speculative task, a complete return of reflection to its point of departure, that is to experience. In the other it is a process of thought following the movement of transcendence which is the very unfolding of experience, but without being able to totalize it in the form of a reflective circle. In that second possibility reflection recognizes that there is a non-saturation in the self-reflection, not simply as a matter of fact, but for reasons of principle. As far as reflection can arrive, there are always nonthematised presuppositions. That recognition induces a style of philosophizing in which the thought is always making its way, following a path which it has to open itself. This style includes a pluralism of methods and even of objectives. Contemporary philosophy, in the line of the particular tradition coming from Greek culture, is divided in different trends: analytic philosophy (in its various versions), phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical rationalism, dialectics, and classical metaphysics. There is, thus, an ambiguity in the project of philosophy, of which Christian thought in its valuation of philosophical thinking, has to take account.

The present situation of philosophy is also partially determined by the questions coming from culture at large, which it recognizes as relevant from its own point of view. Without entering into a detailed analysis of those questions, we can limit ourselves to simply evoking them, because they are objects of a universal concern. A first question comes from scientific practice. There are, of course, epistemological problems, which belong not only to a metascientific inquiry, but also in part to a specific sector of philosophy. But the question which is taken into consideration pertains to the very meaning of the phenomenon "science" from the point of view of the tasks of existence, or, equivalently, of the life of meaning. The same is true for what concerns the universal phenomenon of the construction of a technological world. There also are specific methodological problems. But what is decisive from the point of view of the fundamental concern of philosophy is the meaning of that phenomenon, or more precisely its impact upon the destiny of existence. A third question concerns also a universal phenomenon, the encounter between cultural traditions. That question pertains not only to the concrete modes of expression of the different cultures, but also to the way in which they understand themselves and in which they contemplate their own fate in the context of the universalisation created by contemporary science and technology. The very important task of comparative philosophy belongs evidently to that questioning and is probably called to play a decisive role in its exploration, not only as a theoretical project but also as capable of inspiring practical attitudes and initiatives. A fourth question concerns ethics, not only as a part of a comparative program, but also as a field of creative research in its own right and as presenting challenges of fundamental meaning for all of us, independently of the particular traditions to which we belong. We think here especially to the possibilities that are now appearing of operating on the biological basis of human life, with all the potential consequences of such a practice for the future of human existence. A fifth question concerns the forms of political life, and mainly the form of the State. To that question are attached more specific problematics, which determine the meaning of the State today: democracy, human rights, citizenship, solidarity, justice.

Christian Thought

We come now to Christian thought to try to see how it questions philosophy from its own perspective. Christian thought is the intellectual expression of Christian faith. This one can be understood in two ways: either as the spiritual attitude by which a Christian believer adheres in his

thought and way of life to the person of Jesus Christ and to his teaching, or as the very content of that teaching as an object of that adhesion. That duality of meaning is reflected in the proclamation of the *Credo* in the context of a liturgical celebration. That proclamation is, in one sense, assent to the content of what is said; in another sense, connected to the first one, it is a real participation of the faithful in the reality described in what one is confessing, that is, to the process of edification of the *Kingdom of God,* or equivalently of the *Mystical Body of Christ.* The language of the *Credo* is the expression in human terms of the very language in which the *Kingdom of God* announces itself. It is the language of the *Good News,* which is the fundamental landmark of the Christian faith. But that faith, in its two meanings, contains a need for understanding, which in order to explain itself to itself appeals to the resources of human intelligence. The discourse that aims at giving an answer to that demand is theology as the self-understanding of the Christian experience, that is to say, of life in faith. Thus, theology takes into consideration faith as spiritual attitude, but only in function of faith as the content of what is said in the proclamation. This is the norm to which theology, in its endeavour of clarification, refers constantly.

The reality to which the language of proclamation refers is not accessible as an object of direct experience, but gives itself only through the signs in which it announces itself. That announcement contains in itself as its proper light, the light of faith. But, as St. Paul said, faith sees only "in enigmate," which aspect of faith is designated by the term "mystery." What is brought by theology is an element of relative clarity; this does not dissolve the mystery but provides its intelligibility as mystery. To do this it has recourse to the instrument of the concept. The concepts of philosophy appear as appropriate, because what theology is trying to say concerns an invisible reality; the philosophical concepts are able to refer to that domain of the nonvisible as the key to the visible. The Fathers of the Church have used concepts coming from the Greek philosophical tradition in order to give a precise expression to the most central dogmas of the Church, the dogma of the Holy Trinity and the dogma of the Incarnation of the eternal Word. Thus, the concepts of person and nature have been used to express the fact that Jesus Christ is, as unique person, at the same time God and man.

In such a context, the role of philosophy has been to help the theologians in their concern for the adequate formulation of the content of Christian faith. This was the role of an auxiliary as an instrument of clarification. But the real question concerning the relations between Christian faith and philosophy is about the kind of interaction that can occur between theology, as expression of the Christian faith, and philosophy considered in itself, with its proper constraints and strict criteria of rationality. That general question can be detailed in the form of three kinds of interrogation. (1) What, for theology, is the meaning of philosophy considered as one of the great dimensions of culture? (2) What are the questions which theology suggests to philosophy and which, nevertheless, fall within the scope of philosophy as such? (3) What are the questions which are treated by philosophy and which come across the theological problematic, suggesting some analogies between the intellectual processes on the two sides and a possible mutual enlightenment?

Meaning in Philosophy and Theology

The question of the meaning of philosophy from the point of view of theology evidently concerns philosophy in its highest pretensions. There are forms of philosophising that are apparently very modest; they intend only to clarify some concepts, to dissipate misunderstandings and illusions, and perhaps to collect some minor truths about the situation of man. This is the case of some of the trends of analytic philosophy. But behind those apparent self-limitations, we have

to do effectively, as in the case of the great philosophical systems, with the search for authentic life. The work of clarification of thought or of language must lead to a state of liberty of mind and of internal peace. By delivering the mind from the different kinds of parasites that deprive it of its self-possession, analysis has the value of a spiritual discipline, giving access to a form of life really worthy of the human vocation. But if philosophy, in all its forms, is in essence an endeavour to attain a fully authentic life, by its own resources, it seems that it is also in essence sustained by a claim of radical autonomy. In those conditions it must be considered by theology as incompatible with the Christian form of life, or at least as a possibility of the human spirit radically other than the realm of faith.

Such a judgment would, however, be much too superficial and would be based on a misunderstanding about the meaning of philosophy. To be sure philosophy being in all its forms directly or indirectly an endeavour of self-understanding of existence, is fundamentally preoccupied by the fate of existence; it considers its duty to contribute to the effort of existence itself in order to become faithful to the appeal inscribed in its very being. But it is one thing to describe the way in which a path can be followed and another thing to follow effectively a given path. Existence lives itself according to potentialities that belong to its proper being. The discovering and analysis of those potentialities are intellectual operations that can help existence in its march toward itself, but they are not yet that process itself.

Philosophy presents itself, in its history as well as in its present state, under a great variety of forms representing different traditions. But in those different forms there is the same project of understanding existence. That understanding is supposed capable of leading to a state of existence which would be an accomplishment, which would be the truth of existence, its access to its authentic being. We could express that project in a condensed way by saying that the philosophical research is borne by aiming at an existential stake. Starting from the question which existence is for itself, philosophy endeavours to assume it in a process of reflection whose sense is to enable existence to accede to its truth. In a sense, by opening that reflection philosophical thought places itself outside existence, in an order of discourse which apparently is not really affected by what happens to existence. In another sense, at the same time it inscribes itself inside the movement of existence, reduplicating, so to say, what is lived by a word in which a destiny is saying itself. Its status situates it thus in a kind of in-between, made of the bracketing of the lived and, at the same time, of that sort of magnification that the discourse gives to the lived. Reflection is not a simple description. It can be reflecting but by taking upon itself what is happening in the concreteness of existence, by inscribing itself in that stake, which for it is both risk and promise.

But in reflection there is, inevitably, the institution of a distance. The return to itself of existence is to be sure the search for a coincidence, but it necessarily creates a gap which is precisely the possibility of discourse. The necessary noncoincidence between the reflecting existence and existence as immediately present to itself gives reflection the autonomy that makes it capable of understanding. But this does not detach it thereby from what it gives itself to understand. Reflection, in the distance, remains adherent to the movement of existence and to its destiny. That ambiguity that inhabits reflection opens onto a double possibility, which could be designated by the terms "form" and "content." In as much as it is a question for itself, existence is a concrete occurrence: it is such or such existence, qualified by its modes of inrootedness and by the possibilities which open themselves for it. It is the search of its truth, but we have to do there not with a theory of itself, but with the singular way according to which it could really assume its being. What it is aiming at is a form of life. Now we can distinguish in a form of life a specifically

formal dimension and a dimension of effectivity. The dynamic of existence can be interrogated about its conditions of possibility, but also about its concrete substance.

The structure of reflection appeals to that double possibility. In the measure, indeed, in which it places itself at a distance with respect to existence as lived, it makes itself capable of bringing out its structure and thus to bring to the fore its constituent dimensions, like temporality, corporality, language and being-with. Because they are constitutive, those dimensions belong to existence as such, and they have the status of universal determinations. Their analysis does not yet involve the concrete modalities according to which this or that existence is going to decide about its destiny. As free with respect to those modalities, the reflective discourse concerning the structures of existence is of an aprioristic and thus formal nature, and it can be called the "logic of existence." That formal character involves a self-limitation which makes of reflection an intellectual process at the same time really illuminating and neutral with respect to the concrete stakes of existence. As any undertaking of thought, that process implies a commitment of a certain type. It is borne by aiming at truth and imposes on itself methodological criteria that must ensure its epistemic value.

But that type of commitment is not fundamentally different from the commitment of scientific discourse. From the point of view of a theological judgment, not only would it appear as quite compatible with the type of commitment proper to the life of faith, but the deep understanding which it provides about the status of human existence could be considered a basic datum which a theological anthropology would take into account with great benefit.

The situation is apparently quite different when the self-reflection of existence understands itself as an undertaking which, while developing authentic knowledge, constitutes a form of life in which existence is reaching its authentic figure. We could usefully make appeal here to the famous distinction between the point of view of the existential and the point of view of the existentiel, which, in a sense, brings a precision to the significance of the distinction between form and content. The point of view of the existential takes into consideration the constitutive structures of existence. In as much as those structures have an aprioristic character, they have, with respect to existence in its concrete reality, the status of a formal condition whose analysis can be called a "logic of existence." As, in such an analysis, existence calls itself into question, the logic of existence is actually a reflective return of existence upon itself. But the reflection is borne by an intention, which aims at exhaustivity, that is, to a state in which existence would have really come back to itself. The reflection may thus not come to a halt with an analysis of the forms. It aims, indeed, at existence in its concrete reality, that is to say, in its effectivity. As the concretization of the form, this is the content which existence gives to itself when an existing being brings itself resolutely into play in concrete determinations that have an impact on the destiny of that existing being. The point of view of the content is also the point of view of the existential, that is to say, of that commitment in which existence decides about its very being.

A discourse taking, as its objective, existence in its existential content cannot be itself but the reflective moment of that existential dimension of existence; thus it must be itself an existential discourse. As this implies a commitment of existence with respect to its very being, and thus a commitment that concerns it in totality, an existential discourse is also apparently exclusive. If existence aims at the authentic life then the existential discourse, which is the reflective moment of existence, by itself aims at the authentic life and is already its partial realization. According to such an understanding of the existential, there would thus be an incompatibility between an existential philosophy and an engagement in a life according to faith. A possible theological judgment would have to take note of that incompatibility.

However, we have to take account of the fact that there are two ways in which an existential philosophy can be conceived, according to the way in which the status of reflection is understood. It is true that the very idea of understanding, which is at the root of the project of a self-reflection of existence, implies aiming at exhaustivity. Reflection is a movement of return, and its significance is to come back effectively to existence in its concrete reality, thus to existence in its effective content. But, as already recalled, any reflective process entails presuppositions, and the return of existence on itself is a process that aims at bringing to the fore the presuppositions, of what, in existence, shows effectively itself and in particular its own presuppositions. There is a philosophical position that is guided by the idea that reflection can effectively come to an end, that is to say that the return of existence on itself can effectively lead back to its point of departure; in one word, that reflection is also a totalization of existence. But a totalization of existence is the retaking in the movement of reflection of all its presuppositions. It is thus a process that must close up in itself, in a moment which cannot but be the seizing of the ultimate, and which will have to understand itself as the seizing of the ultimate by itself. Totalization is necessarily circular. A philosophy of total reflection is a philosophy of the absolute.

But there is another philosophical position, which is guided by the idea that reflection, on principle, cannot come to an end, because it is not possible, for a finite mind, to put itself in the point of view of the absolute and to assume in a moment of full integration the totality of the presuppositions that are contained in the most elementary reflective step. But effective existence is always, under such or such figure, a commitment which calls itself into question and brings itself into play in its very being, thus in its totality. If reflection is considered as a process which, by essence, remains always in suspense, we must admit that between effective existence and the reflection which transposes it into a discourse, there is necessarily a distance which, on principle, cannot be overcome. In that perspective, the discourse will never be able to be, by itself, authentic life. It remains, however, that the existential dimension is not opaque for the endeavour of thought. If there is, in the effectivity of existence, an aspect of radical singularity in which what makes the unicity of a destiny entrenches itself, there are also in it concrete modalities in which we could recognize what could be called "styles of life." These have some character of generality that are liable to be brought to the fore and lend themselves to understanding. Thus, categories like those of authenticity and inauthenticity are qualifying not structural constitutive determinations, but the style according to which a concrete existing being brings effectively into play the quality of his/her being. As those determinations, relative to what existence makes of itself, still have a formal and thus aprioristic character with respect to the quite singular determinations which do not belong to philosophical discourse, they can be considered as belonging also, like the constitutive categories, to a logic of existence. This implies naturally that this logic covers not only what, in existence, comes under the existential point of view, but also what comes under the existential point of view. From the point of view of theological judgment, it will be possible to adopt, concerning the logic of existence in the enlarged sense, the same attitude as concerning the logic of existence in the narrow sense of the discourse of the existential.

But we could think that this interpretation would not be valid any more for a philosophy of integral reflection, constituting itself as a discourse of the absolute. Such a philosophy it seems, could not but be considered incompatible with the Christian faith. We cannot forget, however, that philosophy expresses itself in discourse and that there is always a distance between existence and the discourse which speaks of it. A philosophy of the absolute can present itself, to be sure, as a discourse ascending from presuppositions to presuppositions toward an ultimate which cannot but be the absolute itself. But what is thus presented is not the absolute in its reality, but a form of

thought in which reference is made to a reality which has the characters of the absolute, such as finite reflection is able to represent them for itself in an appropriate type of argumentation ascending from condition to condition up to an ultimate condition. Such a philosophy can effectively inspire a spiritual attitude that would consist in some way in projecting in the existential the discourse of the absolute, in making of the meditation of that discourse the effective realization of an authentic life. According to such an interpretation, there would be no more place, indeed, for a religious faith.

Philosophy as Analogon of the Life of Faith

But the discourse, by itself, does not appeal necessarily to such a transposition of what is said in a word into what is lived in an engagement. It is possible to give to the discourse of the absolute another interpretation, which makes it not only perfectly compatible with faith, but which is even positively inspiring. That other interpretation consists in understanding the discourse of the absolute as a symbolic representation of what is lived in the attitude of faith. We have to do here not with a kind of schematisation of the theological discourse, but with a presentation in a conceptual apparatus of the structure of process which can be considered as some *analogon* of the life of faith, contemplated in some of its aspects.

That *analogon* "represents," in a sense that we could tentatively clarify by following a suggestion that comes from the metaphysics of nature of Kant. What Kant calls "metaphysics" is a "knowledge by pure concepts," that is to say, by means of concepts which are entirely *a priori*. The objective which he assigns to the metaphysics of nature is to work out the purely conceptual framework in which nature can be *a priori* determined. That objective is achieved by the application of the principles of pure understanding (which are transcendental propositions) to the datum which characterizes nature the most radically, namely, movement. By that application the principles of pure understanding become metaphysical principles. In the conception of Kant, those metaphysical principles constitute the conceptual content of the science of nature, more exactly of the *a priori* part of that science, namely, theoretical physics. But in order to pass from the metaphysics of nature to theoretical physics, it is necessary to take a supplementary step which consists in "constructing the concept." The means of that construction are the transposition of the concepts in a mathematical representation. The virtue of that representation is to be, so to say, halfway between the pure concept and the empirical intuition. Mathematical objects have the character of purely intelligible determinations that can be found in the concepts, but at the same time, they are appearing under forms which have certain similarities to concrete objects which can be met in intuition. They establish a relation between the evidence which is provided by intuition and the potential of intelligibility which is brought by the concept. It could be said that the "construction of the concept" is the construction of a representation which gives to see what the concept expresses abstractly.

Evidently, that suggestion cannot be used literally. In the Kantian context, the representation connects a concept and a mediating object which is a mathematical entity. What is represented is a concept, what is representing is a pure object (in the Kantian sense). In the present case, according to the suggestion proposed, what is represented is a spiritual process, and what is representing is a logic of existence of a radical character, that is to say, a certain conceptual system that presents itself as a doctrine of the absolute. What can be retained from the suggestion is essentially the idea of the representation, understood as a mediation which enables understanding while making showing an *analogon*.

According to its content, Christian faith is entirely the participation in an immense spiritual process described in Christian preaching as the advent and progressive construction of the Kingdom of God, or, in quite equivalent terms, as the progressive constitution of the Mystical Body of Christ. That process is historic, but according to its own historicity, which is essentially of an eschatological character. The Kingdom of God is already present among us, but that presence is lived as expectation of the full realization of what is announced, that is to say, of the full manifestation of the salvation in Jesus Christ. The present is thus essentially related to an ultimate term, an *eschaton,* which is described in the *Credo* as the glorious return of Christ at the end of times. The time of salvation is thus the time of a progression toward a final state which is the object of the Christian hope, according to the words of the *Credo,* "I am expecting the world to come."

The life according to faith is also, for every believer in his/her individuality, a process whose sense is the progressive deepening of the meaning of the content of faith in an active understanding. This brings into play all the powers of the spirit, unifying them in the hope that is "expectation of eternal life." That spiritual process realizes the inscription of what is lived in the believing existence in the great process of the construction of the Kingdom of God. The hope which animates it is that very hope which is included in the process of the salvation. And the object of the expectation that inhabits it is what constitutes the very term of the work of salvation, the *eschaton* of the recapitulation of all things in Jesus Christ.

A philosophy which would have the form of a logic of existence of radical character, and thus would be a discourse of the absolute, can construct itself only while justifying itself by its very construction, in a progressive undertaking from a still confused preunderstanding of existence by itself toward a more and more radical explicitation of its conditions of possibility. Such an undertaking proceeds by successive steps, each new step calling for an ulterior deepening and preparing thus its own overcoming. The whole process is directional towards a final moment in which the movement of the reflection finds its completion. That ultimate moment must be able to reveal itself by itself as effectively ultimate. It is ultimate because it is the last condition of all the conditions, the universal conditioning, absolutely conditioning without depending from another condition, and in this sense the absolute condition. The reconstitution of the whole system of conditionings up to its last moment, which is also the description of the whole process in which the manifestation of the absolute as absolute event is progressively carried out, is not a simple description. It is the re-accomplishment of a fundamental process in which philosophical thinking engages itself, while recognizing itself as that singular place where that re-accomplishment can be performed. In this sense, the construction of such a philosophy receives the value for the one proposing it of a truly spiritual progression in which experience tries to seize itself again in all the profundity of what it implies. It has the value for the one receiving it, while re-accomplishing in turn the progression proposed, of an "itinerary of the spirit." Here the spirit reveals itself to itself and by the very virtue of that self-revelation collects itself in the truth of its being, while opening a path toward the supreme condition of thought.

It is a long way from the spiritual experience of thought which can be evoked by such a philosophy, to the spiritual experience of faith as it expresses itself in the words on which it is feeding itself. On the one hand, we have to do with a work of thought, leaning upon the force of concepts and in which the potentialities of thought, such as they are by virtue of its constitution, make themselves manifest. On the other hand, we have to do with an engagement of the person in his/her entirety, bringing his/her consent to what is proposed to him/her by a word in which the grace of salvation is announced, as a gift, which proceeds from a pure gratuity. Nevertheless, we cannot forget that the grace of salvation is offered to the human being, such as it is by essence, and

that the reception of grace brings into play the powers of the human being according to what they are by essence.

A philosophy of radical reflection reconstitutes the progression of the spirit towards its truth and brings into play such concepts as *logos*, reason, word, absolute, will, thought, or substance, in order to think that supreme condition which is, according to the terms of Aristotle, the object of universal desire. The thinking of that supreme condition is the *eschaton* of reason, and the reconstitution of the itinerary of the spirit is the evocation of the progression that must lead it unto that ultimate of thought. Understood in that way, the discourse of the absolute may be considered as a representation of the itinerary of the believing soul towards the object of its hope. It is representation, in this sense, that it duplicates the self-presentation by which the spiritual engagement is attesting itself simply in what it is, while suggesting an analogy between that engagement and the progression of the thought in search of its truth. That analogy is not a reproduction, but the presentation of a scheme which can guide the understanding. That scheme displays only a structure in which the life of the spirit shows itself in its effectivity, and thereby it enables seeing those powers that are like the supports of the spiritual experience proper to the life of faith. It is precisely because the life of faith is leaning on the powers of the spirit that the analogy is relevant. By showing the life of the spirit it makes manifest by analogy the life of faith. If the discourse of the absolute has that capacity of "giving to see," it is because it presents its content in a mode that shares in some measure the status of intuition, not as mathematical representation but as displaying a conceptual structure that the thought can discover step after step and, at the end of its progression, grasp at a glance, in the evidence of the conceptual linkage which makes up its armature.

Philosophy as Illuminating Theology

Those considerations allow us to recognize the compatibility between faith and philosophy, even if we consider it in its radical forms. More positively, they suggest a mode of understanding the philosophical discourse in such a way as to make it illuminating for theology itself, without, for all that, placing it under a theological judgment. We may take a step forward by leaning on that interpretation in order to try to answer the question raised concerning the sense that philosophical discourse may have from the point of view of theology, and thus in function of properly theological categories. The *Credo,* which expresses the essential content of faith, is articulated in three moments, corresponding to the three hypostases of the Trinitarian structure, the Father, the Son and the Spirit. The general meaning of the *Credo* is to proclaim the great work of salvation, while connecting it to the first institution which is presupposed by it, and announcing its accomplishment in the ultimate and definitive institution of the Kingdom of God. The *Credo* attributes to each of the divine Persons his proper role in that immense process. The first moment is the creation, which is the proper work of the Father. The second moment is the assumption by the eternal Word of the human condition and the proper redemptive mission of Christ. The third moment is the sanctification of the souls, which is also the constitution of the Body of Christ, and which is the proper work of the Holy Spirit. Those three moments define three perspectives.

The meaning of philosophy, considered in all its varieties, from the point of view of theology, is its mode of inscription in each one of those three perspectives. Considered from the point of view of the creation, philosophy, in as much as it is an endeavour to understand experience and through it the whole of reality, may itself be understood as a celebration of the creative act. Considered from the point of view of the Incarnation, philosophy, in as much as it brings into play

in a radical way the illuminating power that is in the human spirit, may be understood as a testimony offered to the eternal Word who "illuminates every man coming in this world." He himself has entered this world, in order to be among us the very presence of the Truth. Considered from the point of view of the sanctification and of the life of the Church, philosophy, in as much as it is animated by the aiming at the authentic life, may be understood as a parable of that transfiguring action which the gifts of the Holy Spirit exert in souls. Though all this could be said of science in all generality, philosophy is entitled to support the interpretation that has just been proposed in an eminent way, in as much as by its radicality, it is science on a fundamental account, but at the same time more than knowledge it is a quest of authenticity, engaging existence in a decisive way with respect to its being.

Philosophical Question from Theology

We come now to our second interrogation: What are the questions which theology suggests to philosophy and which are nevertheless properly philosophical questions? We could cite here a certain number of themes that are suggested to philosophical research by the conceptuality of theology, for example the themes of language, word, sign, symbol, presence, temporality, corporality, otherness, community, evil, salvation, universality, and even of faith considered as an attitude of the spirit distinct from the simple knowing or willing. Those concepts, used by theology, have in a way their harmonics in human experience as it appears to itself and gives way to philosophical questioning. The very possibility of those correspondences raises a fundamental problem of which the themes just mentioned are actually but particular aspects. If there is a correspondence, it is because life according to faith is supported by the powers which existence (understood here as the mode of reality proper to the human being) has at its disposal by virtue of its constitution. Faith, as a disposition of the spirit, does not belong to the structure of existence but is a gift, in theological terms a grace. The content to which it refers is not a moment of the manifestation of the created order, but an event-like reality founding a new historicity and instituting an "economy" which assumes in itself the created order, while inserting it in the dynamics of salvation which both transcends it and fulfils it. Concretely, that institution is the announcement and the presence already of the Kingdom of God among us, in the life, preaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is thus, in a sense, an exteriority of faith, as attitude as much as historical reality, with respect to existence. But on the other hand, while proposing itself, it addresses a liberty that it places before a decision, which brings into play existence in its most profound being. The word which is calling existence touches it in totality and according to the modality of a radical peripeteia, which theological language calls conversion.

The first question which is posed thereby to philosophical reflection concerns the possibility of conversion and of a life according to faith, to which it gives access and which it accompanies always. In order to make possible the reception of the gift of faith, existence itself must comprise, by virtue of its constitution, a receptivity capable of opening itself to what is proposed, capable of understanding the word in which the salvation in Jesus Christ is announced, and capable of coming to a decision with respect to what is thus announced. Existence must also possess in itself the necessary resources to support that form of life according to faith. It must in a way lend its proper life—what it is by essence—to the dynamics of salvation in order to become itself, in its being, not only witness but bearer, for its part, of what institutes itself in that dynamics. It could be said, in a word, that in order to be capable of the faith, existence must be itself already inhabited by a spiritual dynamism.

That question of the receptivity of existence with respect to faith has, to be sure, a motivation in a theological concern about the subjective conditions of faith, but it is a question addressed to philosophy, and this one may receive it as having value for itself, independently of its theological motivation. The question is to know if the philosophical endeavour to understand existence is able to show that existence is, in its very structure, expectation of a salvation, openness to alterity, and thus capable of being affected by an encounter and resonant to what reveals itself in the encounter. That it is capable of seizing through the signs proposed to it the nondirectly perceptible reality to which they refer; that it is borne by a desire which carries it along always beyond itself and in which a hope could be discovered. Would the philosophical analysis of existence be able to show that the very structure of existence implies the possibility of a destiny, without claiming to be able to determine the effective content of that destiny?

A second fundamental question for philosophy is suggested by the structure of the *Credo*, corresponding to the internal constitution of the Trinity, as the presentation in words of the whole dynamics of salvation. The reality of that dynamics derives in some way from the reality of the Trinitarian life. It consists in a double procession, the generation of the Son from the Father and the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. Those two processes determine four relations, which are going from the principle of the process toward what proceeds from it or inversely. The procession of the Word determines the relations of "fatherhood" and of "filiation," and the procession of the Spirit determines the relations of "spiration" and "procession." In his treatise on the Trinity, St. Thomas explains the status of the divine Persons from those relations, while starting from an argumentation according to which the person is the relation as subsisting. He demonstrates then that three only of the four relations, "fatherhood," "filiation," and "procession," subsist as persons, the relation of "spiration" which belongs simultaneously to the Father and to the Son not being constitutive of a distinct person. What is remarkable in that analysis is that it goes from the relations to the persons and not inversely. This gives the priority to the relation, which has only the task of expressing the structure of a twofold process. Theology thus presents for contemplation a reality which is an ultimate founding and which at the same time is in itself process-like order.

This addresses a properly metaphysical question to philosophy. The concept of foundation has played an essential role in metaphysical reflection, connoting primordially the ideas of support, of base, and of stability. That concept is narrowly linked to the concepts of substance and of subject, in which the same connotations are found again. Now the Trinitarian theology evokes a reality that has the role of giving ultimate foundation and which is of a processual nature. This suggests the following question: How could we think anew the concept of foundation, while connecting it not to a reality-support conceived after the metaphor of construction, but to a process-like reality which is essentially of the order of relation and which evokes the dynamics of an occurring always arriving and not the permanency of what is established?

That question immediately evokes another closely related one. The *Credo* speaks to us essentially about the salvation in Jesus-Christ, but begins by recalling as its first condition the institution of finite reality. The announcement of salvation is addressed to the human being as a created reality, inscribed in the universal created order. Now creation is presented as a first event, which has no other source than the power of God and which distinguishes itself radically thereby from the events which occur inside the created world and have their source in other events of that world. The event-creation is a transition between the total absence of all reality outside God and the existence of the created order. It is thus a pure sudden appearance, as the formula "*ex nihilo*," "from nothing," expresses. On the other hand, what follows in the *Credo* describes the advent of

the Kingdom of God as occurring in a world already there. It has the nature of a becoming consisting of events, all of which have at the same time a finite face and a meaning in the invisible order to whose institution they contribute. Those events are the life and the death of Jesus-Christ, the coming of the Holy Spirit and the historical development of the life of the Church. The *Credo* relates all that event-Iike reality to a terminal moment presented as an event to come. We could try to characterize the reality to which the *Credo* refers as a reality of an historical order, the historicity of salvation. But we have to make clear that it has a quite specific type of historicity, in that it is essentially constituted by events articulated with each other between the originary event of the incarnation of the Word, and the event to come and expected in hope, the glorious return of Christ. It must be made clear also that it constitutes itself while assuming in its proper historicity the historicity of what could be called "human history," which presupposes itself the historicity of the history of the cosmos.

Those theological data suggest three questions:

(1) How is it possible to think the status of event?

(2) How could we think the status of a reality which is essentially of an event-like order?

(3) How could we think the difference between what is of the order of the constituted and what is of the order of the instituted?

The first question brings into play radically the status of the classical concept of substance, and consequently it demands a complete re-interpretation of the concept of subsistence. An event is a transition from one state of affairs toward another. It introduces true discontinuity in the becoming, which occurs not in virtue of a law or of any necessity, but as a pure happening that institutes a new state of affairs and implies thus an emergence. It has its reality as relation: it links together a "before" and an "after." But itself it is neither the "before" nor the "after," but the "in-between." This introduces the break, but ensures at the same time the connection. In some way it is nothing as subsisting, but it is fully real precisely of the reality of the transition. To think the event in its radicality is thus to call into question radically the concept of substance. It is clear that this question is in close connection with the preceding one, inspired by Trinitarian theology.

The second question brings into play the classical concept of historicity, not by eliminating it but by specifying it. It refers, indeed, to a type of historicity marked by discontinuity, surprise, and contingency. Actually, what is at stake here is the status of a reality inhabited by contingency.

The third question is suggested by the distinction introduced by the structure of the *Credo* between, on the one hand, what is posed by the creative event or institution of the created order, with its constitutive laws, structural constraints, and apparent regularity, and, on the other hand, is what happens in human history, with the events in which the history of salvation is instituted. Those events do not modify human nature as constituted, but open it to another order of reality in the form of a calling addressed to the human being in his/her freedom and which induces to a conversion. From the theological point of view, that question rejoins the theme of the gratuitousness of the supernatural. From the philosophical point of view it invites a reflection on the plurality of the orders, in the Pascalian sense, as well as on the meaning in existentiel terms of what the language of faith calls "conversion" and on its conditions of possibility.

To Encounter of Philosophy and Theology

Theology

Those last questions are in a way on the borders of theology and philosophy. They lead us quite naturally to our third interrogation, which concerns the philosophical questions which encounter theological ones, and the analogies which they uncover. Three questions, which are a matter for that interrogation, will be retained here. The first concerns the conditions of the rootedness of theology in culture. Being an effort of understanding faith, theology must depend on the concrete forms in which the search for understanding has found its explicitation. Those forms are multiple; they appear in history and are modified continuously in the course of history. That general principle leads theology to look for its means of expression in the existing cultures. But there is a process of differentiation in the cultural field: does the cultural rootedness lead, inevitably, toward a generalized relativism? In the content of faith, which is normative for theology, there is as a matter of principle a transcendence with respect to the cultures. But, on the other hand, the rootedness must bring about a certain theological pluralism. What is the adequate balance between rootedness and its overcoming which must make possible that pluralism without jeopardizing the faithfulness to the word of faith? That question must be enlarged. The plurality of cultures is also the plurality of religions. The rootedness in culture implies, thus, for Christian theology, the question of its relation with the other religions. And that question itself reverts to a theological question of great import: What is the meaning of Incarnation with respect to cultural plurality and religious plurality? That question is theological, but it comes across a question which is purely philosophical in nature; this concerns the meaning of cultural pluralism and the concrete conditions of possibility of the encounter between cultures. This is the theme of alterity, of difference, of the sense of universality. Between those two registers of questioning there are analogies which can be illuminating for the one as for the other.

A second question of the same type alongside concerns the major challenge posed today to all the cultural traditions by the development of science and its corollaries in the domain of action. This is a form of practice which seems to be independent of the cultural rootedness and the diversity it implies, which institutes the concrete universality of an artificial world; this autonomous superstructure imposes a massive and rapid erosion of all cultural traditions. That form of practice entails a critical rigorously self-justified type of knowledge, claiming to be the obligatory model of reference whose criteria of validity are absolutely universal. Its diffusion and growth entail consequently a disqualification of religions and by reaction a deviation of the religious consciousness toward irrational forms of pseudo-religious expression.

There is finally a third question which includes the two preceding ones. Christian faith is linked to a particular historicity. It is supported by the powers of the human spirit, which constitute the conditions of possibility of faith on the subjective side. But as it is essentially event-like, to accept it demands a conversion: it announces a "kingdom which is not of this world." With respect to the great cultural traditions of humankind, and to the human culture as such, it is radically different. If we take that difference into consideration in a quite extreme and radical way, all expounded above completely loses its relevance. We are then simply in the presence of two spiritual powers, faith and culture, exterior to each other and without communication or even the possibility of encounter.

But there is another way of understanding the relation between faith and culture, which takes account also of the distinctiveness of faith and of its radicality, but understands this in a sense opposite to that of reciprocal exteriority. Christian faith expresses itself in its proper language, but it says something of this world. From the originary event of the Incarnation, it recognizes the positive meaning of the presence of Christ in the world and sees in Christian practice the visible

expression of that presence. In particular, it understands the sense of the Eucharist as the perceptible sign of that presence in the most eminent way and as participation in its efficacy. That presence has an eschatological meaning: it remains among us, but while going toward its accomplishment as the plenitude of its manifestation. The *telos* of the Christian experience is not the suppression of nature, of what the human being is by its very constitution, but is its integral unfolding. There is a continuity between the order of creation and the order of Redemption in this sense that "the spiritual dynamism posed by creation has, by destination, to be assumed in the dynamism of salvation. This obliterates neither the presence of sin in human achievements nor the necessity of conversion. But it belongs to the judgment of God to discriminate between what came from evil and what can be incorporated in the eternal life" [From "Philosophy and Existence," in *The Question of Christian Philosophy Today,* edited by Francis J. Ambrosio, Fordham University Press, 1999, p. 290].

That indicates that there must be a presence in the world as it evolves of the virtues of Redemption. The world is such as it constructs itself under the dynamism placed in it by the creating energy. The hidden reality of the new world is the presence, already, of the Kingdom of God within it. What is at work in the institutions of thought and action is the progression towards an advent: There is an *eschaton* (an ultimate moment of manifestation) of human reason. But the *Credo* suggests that the dynamics instituted by creation is absorbed in the dynamics instituted by Redemption. The meaning of the historical work is thus not only given by the *telos* (the term) inscribed in its constitution, but it is also to have to prepare the assumption of that *telos* in the one of Redemption. This is the Christic sense of the world. All that is positive, that is, all that can be integrated in the Kingdom, is already therein.

Philosophy

All that has just been said was theological. What could we say about philosophy? Its specific *telos* is to contribute to bringing about the construction of a world according to reason. It thinks that *telos* by searching for self-understanding, as can be seen explicitly for example in the great work of Husserl, *The crisis of the European sciences and the transcendental phenomenology*. Under what forms is it capable of contributing to the proper tasks of Christian thought? As Christian, this is the self-understanding of the Christian faith; as thought, it has a responsibility with respect to that faith. The question is thus: What can be the contribution of philosophy, as such, to that responsibility? Its proper sense is in the expectation of what is already present in it as bearing its effort of understanding, that is to say of the Kingdom of God. It would be also, at the same time, to help faith to say that its proper sense is, in part, to assume the sense that is brought out by philosophical reflection.

The world is searching for itself in uncertainty and violence. Does that process have a sense, that is to say, is it able to integrate itself in a perspective that would have the character of an "ultimate" (which does not mean an "all-including totality")? The ultimate is the inverse of the principle: the principle is the provenance, the ultimate is the destination. The task of philosophy is to enlighten that process about itself, while enlightening itself about itself. It is commanded by a teleology, which we can think only under a formal concept, not according to its potential content. Its *telos* itself is not yet the ultimate, but it must be integrated in an ultimate. Christian faith, on its side, is relative to an ultimate, and has thereby the amplitude and the instituting force to give the plenitude of its expression to the sense which is presently in suspense.

Between the teleology of the present world and the teleology of faith there is a correspondence that makes possible a reciprocal articulation. The becoming of the world is borne by a hope: Christian faith is itself hope. Hope is an active expectation, the setting in motion of existence. Philosophy, for its part, follows a path on which it has confidence. It is ready for any encounter, for it knows already that the path on which it is progressing does not lead nowhere.

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7.

Inculturation of the Christian Faith in Asia Through Philosophy: A Dialogue with *Fides Et Ratio* of John Paul II

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This study examines first what Fides et Ratio says about philosophy in general and about Asian philosophies in particular. Next, it expounds the principles which, according to Fides et Ratio, Christians must observe in inculturating the Christian faith into local cultures. The third part evaluates the applicability of these principles to the task of inculturating the Christian faith into East Asian cultures, with special reference to some central ideas of Confucianism.

Before his election to the see of Rome, Karol Wojtyla was already a celebrated philosopher in his own right, especially in the fields of philosophical anthropology and ethics, with a widely recognized expertise in Thomism and phenomenology.1 For helpful comprehensive introductions to John Paul II's thought in English, see George H. Williams, The Mind of John Paul II: Origins of His Thought and Action (New York: Seabury, 1981); Ronald Lawler, The Christian Personalism of Pope John Paul II (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982); Andrew Woznicki, A Christian Humanism: Karol Wojtyla's Existential Personalism (New Britain, CT: Mariel, 1980); Rocco Buttiglione, Karol Wojtyla: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II, trans. Paolo Guietti and Francesca Murphy (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans, 1997); and Kenneth Schmitz, At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II (Washington, DC: The Catholic University Press, 1993). As Pope, John Paul II has continued to demonstrate a deep concern, already pronounced in his philosophical writings, for the unity of human knowledge that is born out of the harmonious marriage between reason and faith. This concern is especially evident in the Pope's encyclicals on Christian ethics in which he insists both on the autonomy of human reason and on the necessity of divine revelation, and urges a close collaboration between these two epistemological orders for a full knowledge of ethical truths.2 In the encyclical the unity of reason and faith constitutes the central focus of John Paul II's reflections. No doubt the title *Fides et Ratio* (*FR*) with the *et*(and) rather than the *aut* (or) is emblematic of the Pope's fundamental stance in this matter.3

This essay will carry out a critical dialogue with John Paul II's teaching on the relationship between reason and faith as expressed in *FR*, especially with respect to the use of philosophy as a tool for the inculturation of the Christian faith in Asia.4 Again, the first part expounds the Pope's view of the relation between reason and faith; the second part evaluates his proposal to use philosophy as an instrument for inculturating the Christian faith in Asia; the concluding part assesses the usefulness of this proposal with regard to some aspects of Confucianism.

Reason and Faith according to *Fides Et Ratio*

The basic theme of the encyclical is beautifully expressed in its opening lines with a metaphor depicting faith and reason as "two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth." By this, says John Paul II, the human heart fulfills its God-given "desire to know the truth." Before examining how *FR* understands the relation between reason and faith, it would be helpful to delineate the context in which this relation is broached.5

Overview of the Encyclical

The encyclical begins with a preamble (nos. 1-6), entitled the Socratic injunction "Know Yourself," on the role of philosophy in asking about and answering questions concerning the meaning of human life. It states that the church regards philosophy as "the way to come to know fundamental truths about human life" and at the same time as "an indispensable help for a deep understanding of faith and for communicating the truth of the Gospel to those who do not yet know it" (no. 5). Unfortunately, according to *FR*, contemporary philosophy "has lost the capacity to lift its gaze to the heights, not daring to rise to the truth of being," and as a result, is wallowing in agnosticism and relativism (no. 5). This lamentable situation prompted the Pope to write his encyclical *FR* with a twofold purpose: first, "to restore to our contemporaries a genuine trust in their capacity to know and challenge philosophy to recover and develop its own full dignity" and, secondly, to concentrate "on the theme of truth itself and on its foundation in relation to faith" (no. 6).

The body of *FR* is composed of seven chapters, entitled successively as "The Revelation of God's Wisdom" (nos. 7-15), "*Credo ut intellegam*" (nos. 16-23), "*Intellego ut credam*" (nos. 24-35), "Relationship between Faith and Reason" (nos. 36-48), "Magisterium's Interventions in Philosophical Matters" (nos. 49-63), "Interaction between Philosophy and Theology" (nos. 64-79), and "Current Requirements and Tasks" (nos. 80-99). *FR* concludes (nos. 100-108) with appeals to philosophers, theologians, seminary professors, and scientists to "look more deeply at man, whom Christ has saved in the mystery of his love, and at the human being's unceasing search for truth and meaning" (no. 107). Just from the titles of the chapters, especially chapters 2, 3, 4, and 6, it is obvious that the central theme of the encyclical is the relationship between reason and faith, or correlatively, between philosophy and theology.

Faith and Reason: Basic Issues

The issue of the relationship between faith and reason is as old as Christianity, and, arguably, as old as revelation itself.6 Against biblical fundamentalism and fideism, it must be maintained that reason is unavoidably and inexplicably intertwined with revelation, at least in the sense that revelation, however supernatural and gratuitous a gift it may be, cannot but be received within the horizon of some particular human, even philosophical, understanding.7 In addition to this direct implication of reason within revelation, there is a further task that believers must perform, namely, to decide reflectively, on philosophical and theological grounds, which philosophical horizon, for example, Platonic, Aristotelian, or existential, is the most appropriate and valid (and not merely historically accepted) philosophy for an elaboration of the contents of the Christian faith. Finally, there are three other tasks that are incumbent upon believers in God's self-revelation in history as they address the issue of the relation between reason and faith: first, to justify philosophically the possibility of such a self-revelation; secondly, to vindicate historically the credibility of such a divine self-revelation if it has occurred at all; and thirdly, and more fundamentally, to demonstrate whether this philosophical and historical foundationalism is compatible with the nature of the Christian faith, that is, whether the Christian faith would not be emptied of its specific character were it to be subjected to the tribunal of secular reason, be it historical or philosophical.8 In particular, on the issue of foundationalism in theology, see the helpful introduction by John E. Thiel, *Nonfoundationalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994) with discussions on philosophers such

as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Wilfrid Sellars, Willard Van Orman Quine, and Richard Rorty and on theologians such as Karl Barth, George Lindbeck, Ronald Thiemann, Kathryn Tanner, Hans Frei, and Stanley Hauerwas. See also a good survey by Thomas Guarino, "Post-modernity and Five Fundamental Theological Issues," *Theological Studies* 57 (1996): 654-89. For a helpful collection of essays on post-modern theology, see *Theology After Liberalism*, ed. John Webster and George P. Schner (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000). Among Roman Catholic theologians who argue for a nonfoundationalist approach, besides Francis Schüssler Fiorenza mentioned above, see Frans Josef van Beeck, *God Encountered: A Contemporary Systematic Theology*, vol. 1; *Understanding the Christian Faith* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989); Nicholas Lash, *Easter in Ordinary: Reflections on Human Experience and the Knowledge of God* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990); and James J. Buckley, *Seeking the Humanity of God: Practices, Doctrines, and Catholic Theology* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992).

In his encyclical, John Paul II does not treat in any detail the above-mentioned issues, which are much debated in contemporary theology, though, of course, his answers to any of them can be inferred from his teaching on the relation between reason and faith. The Pope begins, on the one hand, by affirming the fact of God's utterly gratuitous and supernatural self-revelation in history and consequently rejects the rationalist critique of the possibility of such a divine self-revelation. On the other hand, he also affirms the capacity of human reason to know God. As to the relation between the knowledge of God through divine revelation and that of God through reason, John Paul II contents himself with repeating Vatican I's teaching that "the truth attained by philosophy and the truth of revelation are neither identical nor mutually exclusive" (no. 9).9 These two "orders of knowledge," are, according to Vatican I's *Dei Filius*, distinct from each other both in their "source" and in their "object."

This double distinctness does not, however, mean that reason, though autonomous (because of its distinct source and object), can and should function apart from, much less in ignorance of, Christian faith:

Revelation has set within history a point of reference which cannot be ignored if the mystery of human life is to be known. Yet this knowledge refers back constantly to the mystery of God, which the human mind cannot exhaust but can only receive and embrace in faith. Between these two poles, reason has its own specific field in which it can inquire and understand, restricted only by its finiteness before the infinite mystery of God (no. 14).

The basic issue to be elucidated then is the interplay between reason and faith. *FR* explicates this relationship in four parts. The first two (chapters 2 and 3) invoke the Augustinian-Anselmian formulas of "*intellego ut credam*" and "*credo ut intellegam*." The third (chapter 4), the heart of the encyclical, deals with the relationship between faith and reason; and the fourth (chapter 6) narrows this relation down to the "interaction between philosophy and theology."10

Faith in Search of Understanding: Credo ut intellegam

It is significant that in explicating the relationship between reason and faith, FR begins with the "*credo*" rather than the "*intellego*." While deeply convinced that "there is a profound and indissoluble unity between the knowledge of reason and the knowledge of faith" (no. 16), John Paul II clearly and repeatedly privileges the role of faith over reason as the path to the truth: ". . .Reason is valued without being overvalued. The results of reasoning may in fact be true, but these

results acquire their true meaning only if they are set within the larger horizon of faith. . . .Faith liberates reason insofar as it allows reason to attain correctly what it seeks to know and to place it within the ultimate order of things in which everything acquires true meaning" (no. 20). This need of faith is of course caused by human sin whereby "the eyes of the mind were no longer able to see clearly: Reason became more and more a prisoner to itself" (no. 22). This is why, says the Pope, "the Christian relationship to philosophy requires thoroughgoing discernment" (no. 23). Here he invokes the Pauline opposition between "the wisdom of this world" and "the foolishness of the cross," not in order to suppress the indispensable role of reason but to affirm the necessity of faith for the discovery of truth: "The preaching of Christ crucified and risen is the reef upon which the link between faith and philosophy can break up, but it is also the reef beyond which the two can set forth upon the boundless ocean of truth. Here we see not only the border between reason and faith, but also the space where the two may meet" (no. 23).11

Reason in Search of Faith: Intellego ut credam

"C*redo*," however, is not to be separated from "*intellego*." Human life is a "journeying in search of truth." The quest for truth and understanding, says John Paul II, echoing Augustin's memorable phrase, is native to humans: "In the far reaches of the human heart there is a seed of desire and nostalgia for God" (no. 24). This quest for truth has been carried out by humans, "through literature, music, painting, sculpture, architecture, and every other work of their creative intelligence," but "in a special way philosophy has made this search its own and, with its specific tools and scholarly methods, has articulated this universal human desire" (no. 24). This quest, however, is performed not only in theoretical reflection, but also in ethical decisions. Hence, the object of this quest is both truth and value.

This quest, the Pope points out, often begins with questions about the meaning and direction of one's life. But the decisive moment of the search, he maintains, comes when we determine "whether or not we think it possible to attain universal and absolute truth." The Pope goes on to affirm categorically: "Every truth–if it really is truth–presents itself as universal, even if it is not the whole truth. If something is true, then it must be true for all people and at all times" (no. 27). Ultimately, the Pope claims, the search for truth is nothing but the search for God: ". . .People seek an absolute which might give to all their searching a meaning and an answer–something ultimate which might serve as the ground of all things. In other words, they seek a final explanation, a supreme value, which refers to nothing beyond itself and which puts an end to all questioning" (no. 27).

Two further points made by *FR* concerning the "*intellego ut credam*" need to be mentioned. The encyclical notes that there are "different faces of human truth" or "modes of truth," or more simply, there are three ways of arriving at truth (no. 30): first, through immediate evidence or experimentation ("the mode of truth proper to everyday life and to scientific research"); secondly, through philosophical reflection ("philosophical truth"); and thirdly, by means of religious traditions ("religious truths"). In addition, *FR* emphasizes the social character of the quest for truth. Though recognizing the necessity of critical inquiry, the encyclical points out that "there are in the life of a human being many more truths which are simply believed than truths which are acquired by way of personal verification" (no. 31). Hence, the necessity of entrusting oneself to the knowledge acquired by others and of bearing personal witness, even by way of martyrdom, to the truth (no. 32).

Relationship between Faith and Reason

Having affirmed the necessity of both faith and reason in the search for truth and value, *FR* moves on to discuss the ways in which their relationship has been enacted throughout Christian history (chapter 4). The purpose is not to present an exhaustive overview of how reason and faith interacted with each other in the past, but to derive instructive lessons for a proper understanding of their relationship.12 The first encounter between Christianity and philosophy took place of course in the first centuries of the Christian era. Of this phase, *FR* summarizes the main features as follows: (1) The earliest Christians preferred to dialogue with philosophy rather than with the prevalent religions of their times because the latter were judged to be infected with myths and superstition, whereas the former made a serious attempt to provide a rational foundation for a belief in the divinity. (2) The first and most urgent task for the early Christians was not an intellectual engagement with philosophy for its own sake but "the proclamation of the risen Christ by way of a personal encounter which would bring the listener to conversion of heart and the request for baptism." Indeed, the Gospel offered them such a satisfying answer to the hitherto unresolved question concerning the meaning of life that "delving into the philosophers seemed to them something remote and in some ways outmoded" (no. 38). (3) The early Christians were quite cautious in approaching the surrounding cultures. While deeply appreciative of their true insights, the early Christian thinkers were critical in adopting the philosophies of their times. *FR* highlights "the critical consciousness with which Christian thinkers from the first confronted the problem of the relationship between faith and philosophy, viewing it comprehensively with both its positive aspects and its limitations" (no. 41). (4) The early Christian thinkers did more than perform "a meeting of cultures"; rather their originality consists in the fact that "they infused it [reason] with the richness drawn from revelation" (no. 41). *FR* summarizes its survey from the patristic era to Anselm: "The fundamental harmony between the knowledge of faith and the knowledge of philosophy is once again confirmed. Faith asks that its object be understood with the help of reason; and at the summit of its searching, reason acknowledges that it cannot do without what faith presents" (no. 42).

This harmony, which exists between faith and reason, was well established by Thomas Aquinas for whom "just as grace builds on nature and brings it to fulfillment, so faith builds upon and perfects reason" (no. 43). For this reason *FR* calls Thomas "a master of thought and a model of the right way to do theology" (no. 43). Thomas is also praised for his emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in the process by which knowledge matures into wisdom. This gift of wisdom "comes to know by way of connaturality; it presupposes faith and eventually formulates its right judgment on the basis of the truth of faith itself" (no. 44). Thomas's granting of primacy to the gift of wisdom did not, however, make him belittle the complementary roles of two other forms of wisdom, that is, philosophical wisdom and theological wisdom.

Unfortunately, the delicate balance between reason and faith that Thomas established and maintained, according to *FR*, fell apart toward the end of the Middle Ages: "From the late medieval period onward, however, the legitimate distinction between the two forms of learning became more and more a fateful separation. As a result of the exaggerated rationalism of certain thinkers, positions grew more radical and there emerged eventually a philosophy which was separate from, and absolutely independent of, the contents of faith" (no. 45).

This "fateful separation" between faith and reason brought in its wake disastrous consequences, not least for reason itself. *FR* enumerates some of these: a general mistrust of reason and fideism, idealism, atheistic humanism, positivism, nihilism, the instrumentalization of reason,

and pragmatic utilitarianism (nos. 46-47 and 86-90). Nevertheless, John Paul II discerns even in these errors "precious and seminal insights which, if pursued and developed with mind and heart rightly tuned, can lead to the discovery of truth's way" (no. 48). These insights include "penetrating analyses of perception and experience, of the imaginary and the unconscious, of personhood and intersubjectivity, of freedom and values, of time and history" (no. 48).

Interaction between Philosophy and Theology

After its overview of the history of the relationship between reason and faith, *FR* addresses the narrower question of how philosophy (as representative of reason) should interact with theology (as representative of faith). The Pope states that his purpose is not to impose a particular theological method, but to reflect on some specific tasks of theology that by their nature demand a recourse to philosophy. Following the time-honored tradition, John Paul II distinguishes two functions of theology, namely, the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei* and shows how philosophy contributes to the performance of each. With regard to the *auditus fidei*, philosophy helps theology with "its study of the structure of knowledge and personal communication, especially the various forms and functions of language" as well as its "contribution to a more coherent understanding of church tradition, the pronouncements of the magisterium and the great teaching of the great masters of theology" (no. 65).

With regard to the *intellectus fidei*, *FR* explains the indispensable contribution of philosophy to dogmatic theology, fundamental theology, moral theology, and the study of cultures. I will postpone the discussion of the study of cultures to the next section of the essay; here I will mention only how *FR* understands the role of philosophy in two theological disciplines. First, with regard to dogmatic theology, *FR* argues that "without philosophy's contribution, it would in fact be impossible to discuss theological issues such as, for example, the use of language to speak about God, the personal relations within the Trinity, God's creative activity in the world, the relationship between God and man, or Christ's identity as true God and true man" (no. 66). Secondly, with regard to fundamental theology, John Paul II argues that its task is to demonstrate the truths knowable by philosophical reason that "an acceptance of God's revelation necessarily presupposes" and show how "revelation endows these truths with their fullest meaning, directing them toward the richness of the revealed mystery in which they find their ultimate purpose" (no. 67). These truths include, for example, "the natural knowledge of God, the possibility of distinguishing divine revelation from other phenomena or the recognition of its credibility, the capacity of human language to speak in a true and meaningful way even of things which transcend all human experience" (no. 67)

To conclude his exposition on the relationship between theology and philosophy, John Paul II uses the image of a "circle" with two "poles" to describe it.13 On the one hand, is the Word of God that is the "source and starting point" of theology; on the other, is "a better understanding of it." Moving between these two poles is reason that "is offered guidance and is warned against paths which would lead it to stray from revealed truth and to stray in the end from the truth pure and simple. . . .This circular relationship with the word of God leaves philosophy enriched, because reason discovers new and unsuspected horizons" (no. 73).

Philosophy and Inculturation of the Christian Faith in Asia

For those familiar with the Roman Catholic traditional understanding of the relationship between reason and faith, especially as mediated by Thomas Aquinas and the two Vatican Councils, John Paul II's teaching offers no new or surprising insights, and rightly so, since his primary task is not to innovate but to stand in continuity with the Tradition.14 Thus, he continues to affirm the autonomy of reason and philosophy vis-à-vis faith and theology, as well as their necessary harmony and mutual collaboration, while at the same time categorically emphasizing the primacy of Christian revelation over philosophy as its guide and norm. Not surprisingly, to non-Catholic philosophers John Paul II seems to want to have his cake and eat it, too. Whether this charge is valid or not is an open question, but the blame should not be laid at the Pope's feet since he does nothing more than restate the traditional Catholic position on the relationship between faith and reason.

This does not mean that *FR* does not contain novel accents and perspectives. For one thing, in spite of his severe critique of contemporary Western philosophy, John Paul II, as we have seen above, recognizes several of its positive achievements. Moreover, his recommendation of Thomas Aquinas as the master and model for theologians is a far cry from Leo XIII's elevation of Thomas to the status of official philosopher of the Catholic Church and Pius X's imposition of 24 theses of Thomistic philosophy to be taught in all Catholic institutions. In addition, while reiterating the importance of philosophical inquiry, John Paul has not forgotten the power of personal witness, in particular martyrdom, in convincing others of the truth of one's faith. But there is no doubt that one of the most interesting and challenging elements of John Paul II's teaching on faith and reason is his proposal to use philosophy as a tool for the inculturation of the Christian faith, especially in Asia. And to this we now turn.

John Paul II and Asian Philosophies

It is well known that the relationship between the Christian faith and cultures, or to use a neologism, inculturation, has been a constant and deep preoccupation of John Paul II's pontificate.16 For helpful overviews of inculturation as a theological problem, see Marcello de C. Azevedo, "Inculturation," in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, ed. René Latourelle and Rino Fisichella (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 500-10 and Hervé Carrier, "Inculturation of the Gospel," *ibid*., 510-14. General works on inculturation have recently grown by leaps and bounds. Among the most helpful, from the Catholic perspective, are: Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988); Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985); idem, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997); Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992); Gerald Arbuckle, *Earthing the Gospel: An Inculturation Handbook for the Pastoral Worker* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990); Michael Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith & Culture* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998); Peter C. Phan, "Contemporary Theology and Inculturation in the United States," in *The Multicultural Church: A New Landscape in U.S. Theologies*, ed. William Cenkner (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 109-30; 176-92; idem, "Cultural Diversity: A Blessing or a Curse for Theology and Spirituality?" *Louvain Studies* 19 (1994): 195-211.

In this essay, we will focus on the Pope's proposal of philosophy as a tool for inculturation of the Christian faith in Asia.17 At the outset, it would useful to preface our discussion with a few remarks. First, it is important to recall that *FR*'s immediate objective is not to conduct a dialogue between the Christian faith and Asian philosophies and religions as such, but to defend the

necessity of philosophy, particularly metaphysics, for theology and to heal the rift between the two disciplines: "Metaphysics thus plays an essential role of mediation for theological research. A theology without a metaphysical horizon could not move beyond an analysis of religious experience nor would it allow the *intellectus fidei* to give a coherent account of the universal and transcendent value of revealed truth" (no. 83). It is within this context that John Paul II speaks of the encounter between faith and culture. For a more complete presentation of the Pope's view on inculturation, recourse must be made to his other writings.18

Secondly, in his discussion of inculturation of the Christian faith in Asia in *FR,* John Paul remains at a very general level. It is no disrespect to him to point out that he is no expert in Asian philosophies and religions. Among recent thinkers whom he mentions as exemplifying a "courageous research" into the "fruitful relationship between philosophy and the word of God," no Asians or non-Asian thinkers who have worked in Asia, and of course no Asian religious founders, are named.19 Even though *FR* mentions the Veda and the Avesta, Confucius and Lao Tzu, Tirthankara and Buddha (no. 2), and Indian, Chinese, and Japanese philosophies (no. 72), it is clear that John Paul II's knowledge of these is rudimentary.20

By my counting, there are six significant, direct or indirect, references in *FR* to Asian philosophies. The first reference occurs when *FR* claims that people in different parts of the world with diverse cultures have dealt with the same fundamental issues such as "Who am I?" (anthropology), "Where have I come from and where am I going?" (cosmology), "Why is there evil?" (Theodicy), and "What is there after this life?" (Eschatology). As evidence, *FR* invokes the sacred texts of Hinduism (the Veda) and of Zoroastrianism (the Avesta), the writings of Confucius and Lao Tzu, and the preaching of Tirkhankara and the Buddha (no. 1).

The second reference is found in *FR*'s remark that philosophy has exerted a powerful influence not only in the formation and development of the cultures of the West, but also on "the ways of understanding existence in the East" (no. 3).

The third reference takes place in the context of *FR*'s discussion of agnosticism and relativism. Lamenting the fact that a legitimate pluralism of philosophical positions has led to an undifferentiated pluralism that assumes that all positions are equally valid and, therefore, betrays "lack of confidence in truth," *FR* goes on to say that "[e] ven certain conceptions of life coming from the East betray this lack of confidence, denying truth its exclusive character and assuming that truth reveals itself equally in different doctrines even if they contradict one another" (no. 5).

The fourth reference occurs when *FR* explains the three stances of philosophy vis-à-vis Christian revelation, that is, a philosophy completely independent of the Gospel, Christian philosophy, and philosophy as *ancilla theologiae* (no. 75).21 Asian philosophies are said to belong to the first category because they were elaborated in "regions as yet untouched by the Gospel" and because they aspire to be "an autonomous enterprise, obeying its own rules and employing the powers of reason alone." This does not mean that they are cut off from grace, because "[a] s a search for truth within the natural order, the enterprise of philosophy is always open–at least implicitly–to the supernatural" (no. 75).

The fifth reference is made in *FR*'s recommendation that Christian philosophers develop "a reflection which will be both comprehensible and appealing to those who do not yet grasp the full truth which divine revelation declares" (no. 104). This philosophy is all the more necessary today since "the most pressing issues facing humanity–ecology, peace, and the coexistence of different races and cultures, for instance–may possibly find a solution if there is a clear and honest collaboration between Christians and the followers of other religions" (no. 104).

The last and by far the most important reference to Asian philosophies is given in the context of *FR*'s discussion of the encounter between the Gospel and cultures, or inculturation. Because the text touches the core of our theme, it is appropriate to cite it in full:

In preaching the Gospel, Christianity first encountered Greek philosophy; but this does not mean at all that other approaches are precluded. Today, as the Gospel gradually comes into contact with cultural worlds which once lay beyond Christian influence, there are new tasks of inculturation, which means that our generation faces problems not unlike those faced by the church in the first centuries.

My first thoughts turn immediately to the lands of the East, so rich in religious and philosophical traditions of great antiquity. Among these lands, India has a special place. A great spiritual impulse leads Indian thought to seek an experience which would liberate the spirit from the shackles of time and space and would therefore acquire absolute value. The dynamic of this quest for liberation provides the context for great metaphysical systems.

In India particularly, it is the duty of Christians to draw from this rich heritage the elements compatible with their faith in order to enrich Christian thought. In this work of discernment, which finds its inspiration from the council's declaration *Nostra Aetate*, certain criteria will have to be kept in mind. The first of these is the universality of the human spirit, whose basic needs are the same in the most disparate cultures.

The second, which derives from the first, is this: In engaging great cultures for the first time, the church cannot abandon what she has gained from her inculturation in the world of Greco-Latin thought. To reject this heritage would be to deny the providential plan of God, who guides the church down the paths of time and history. This criterion is valid for the church of every age, even for the church of the future, who will judge herself enriched by all that comes from today's engagement with Eastern cultures and will find in this inheritance fresh cues for fruitful dialogue with the cultures which will emerge as humanity moves into the future.

Third, care will need to be taken lest, contrary to the very nature of the human spirit, the legitimate defense of the uniqueness and originality of Indian thought be confused with the idea that a particular cultural tradition should remain closed in its difference and affirm itself by opposing other traditions.

What has been said here of India is no less true for the heritage of the great cultures of China, Japan and the other countries of Asia, as also for the riches of the traditional cultures of Africa, which are more the most part orally transmitted (no. 72).

Philosophy and Inculturation of the Christian Faith in Asia

It would be useful to highlight and comment briefly upon some of the more important points *FR* makes with regard to philosophy as a tool for inculturation in this lengthy excerpt. First of all, the interaction between philosophy and theology is here seen in the context of the inculturation of Christianity into the local cultures. There is recognized the necessity for Asian Christians to develop a philosophy by which their cultures may "open themselves to the newness of the Gospel's truth and to be stirred by this truth to develop in new ways" (no. 71).

Secondly, of the cultures of Asia "so rich in religious and philosophical traditions of great antiquity," *FR* singles out that of India which is said to be endowed with "a great spiritual impulse" and whose quest for the liberation of "the spirit from the shackles of time and space" provides the context for "great metaphysical systems."

Thirdly, it is incumbent upon Indian Christians to draw from their rich cultural resources elements compatible with Christian faith in order to enrich the Christian thought. It is interesting to note that *FR* sees inculturation as a reciprocal process, with Christian faith and theology not unilaterally enriching local cultures, but being enriched by them as well.

Fourthly, in order for inculturation to reach this goal, certain criteria and norms must be observed, and *FR* enumerates three:

(1) The first criterion is "the universality of the human spirit, whose basic needs are the same in the most disparate cultures." By "universality of the human spirit" *FR* presumably means not only that certain fundamental philosophical and theological themes have been addressed by all cultures such as the nature of the self, the origin of the world, the problem of evil, and the eternal destiny of the individual (no. 1), but also that humans, despite their cultural diversities, can and should communicate with each other. In other words, *FR* indirectly rejects the theory of incommensurability proposed by some pluralists according to which humans are so socially situated that genuine mutual understanding and judgment of another person's culture and values is logically impossible. As to the "basic needs" of the human spirit, *FR* does not elaborate on them, but in light of what *FR* has said elsewhere, these needs include the "need to reflect upon truth" (no. 6), and more specifically, the "truth of being" (no. 5).22 In addition, there is the need to formulate the certitudes arrived at in a rigorous and coherent way into a "systematic body of knowledge" (no. 4) and to proclaim them to others.

(2) The second criterion is that the church cannot "abandon what she has gained from its inculturation in the world of Greco-Latin thought." To reject this heritage, according to *FR*, is to "deny the providential plan of God, who guides the church down the paths of time and history." *FR*does not explain what it means when it says that Asian Christians cannot abandon what the church has gained from its encounter with the Greco-Latin heritage.23 Furthermore, because it is also part of the plan of divine providence that the Gospel be inculturated into the Asian soil, *FR*explicitly says that the fruits of this encounter will become in their turn "fresh cues for fruitful dialogue with the cultures which will emerge as humanity moves into the future" (no. 72).24

(3) The third criterion is a corollary of the first. *FR* cautions that given the universality of the human spirit, one culture cannot close itself off from other cultures in the name of its "uniqueness" and "originality." There is, however, an ironic twist to this warning. Whereas Western culture has long regarded itself so unique and original that it considered itself superior to and normative for all other cultures, now the cultures of Asia are seen more liable to fall to this chauvinistic temptation.

Critical Questions

No doubt there is much in John Paul II's proposal to use philosophy as a tool for the inculturation of the Christian faith into Asia that is valuable.25 His admiration for the riches of Asian philosophies and religions is genuine. His insistence on the possibility and necessity of dialogue across cultures and religions is well taken. His reminder that inculturation has been a practice of the church from its very beginning and that there are lessons to be learned from the past is helpful. His warning against the danger of cultural chauvinism and xenophobia is also salutary.

There are however certain affirmations in *FR* that are open to challenge or even seriously misleading. A word should be said first of all about *FR*'s charge that "certain conceptions of life

coming from the East" betray "a lack of confidence in truth, denying its exclusive character and assuming that truth reveals itself equally in different doctrines even if they contradict one another" (no. 5). Because the encyclical does not specify which "conceptions of life coming from the East" it refers to, it may be presumed that it has in mind the celebrated capacity of Asian religions to absorb various and apparently conflicting philosophies and practices and the Asian inclusive worldview that is embodied in Daivism, the Middle Way of Nagarjuna, and the concepts of *yin* and *yang*. Admittedly, this Weltanschauung tends to see complementarity in different and even *opposite* (not *contradictory*) views and practices, but it is a caricature to say that it lacks "confidence in truth" because it is precisely in order to reach the truth that such opposites are held together. Needless to say, no Asian "conception of life" can be accused of holding "different doctrines, even if they contradict one another," if by contradiction is meant logical self-contradictory negation and not simply opposites.26 Perhaps, this charge is not simply a misunderstanding of a minor point in Asian philosophies, but is symptomatic of the fundamental difference between two ways of seeing reality.

In addition, it is significant that *FR* emphasizes the "exclusive character" of truth, which certain Asian "conceptions of life" are alleged to deny. The encyclical consistently speaks of "truth" in the singular and in the abstract, especially when it affirms the universal and absolute character of truth. This is particularly evident in the already cited text: "Every truth–if it really is truth–presents itself as universal, even if it is not the whole truth" (no. 27). Asian philosophies will have no problem with the first part of the Pope's statement, namely, that every truth presents itself as universal. In terms of Bernard Lonergan's cognitional theory with its four transcendental precepts (that is, "be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible"), truth-claims are well-founded and so can be true when they are made as the result of due attention to relevant evidence (attention), careful consideration of a range of hypotheses (intelligence), reasoned affirmation of a particular hypothesis as best corroborated by the available evidence (judgment), and choice of the values implied in the affirmation (responsibility).27

Asian philosophies would however make three significant qualifications.28 First, truths are not the same as apprehension, understanding, and formulation of what is true. Truth, or better still, what is true (ontological truth) is by its very nature universal, and the judgment in which this truth is affirmed is true (truth as *adaequatio mentis ad rem*), but a particular apprehension, understanding, and formulation of the truths need not and indeed cannot be universal, given the intrinsically finite, incomplete, and historical character of human knowledge. Furthermore, truths do not and cannot exist independently from particular apprehensions, understandings, judgments, and formulations, floating as it were above time and space like a Platonic form. Truth, or better, truths always manifest themselves and are grasped in these particular epistemological acts (truth as *aletheia* or manifestation); and their universality is always mediated in and through these limited and historically evolving acts of apprehending, understanding, judging, and formulating.

Secondly, Asian philosophies maintain that reality itself or what is ontologically true is not or at least does not manifest itself as one but plural. This view of reality itself as plural, or of the necessarily plural manifestation of reality, is found, for example, in Indian philosophies, even though they privilege the concept of the unity of all things in the universal Self (*Brahman, atman*) over the particularity of individual realities.29 It is espoused especially by the Chinese philosophy of yin and yang and of the Five Elements (*wu-hsing*), according to which the movement of reality–humanity and nature–is governed by an alternating multiplicity of contrary but unifying forces.30 It follows then that no act of apprehending, understanding, judging, and expressing

reality at any given time can fully and totally express reality. The best that can be achieved is relative adequacy between the mind's affirmation and reality.

Thirdly, Asian philosophies will draw out the implications of the second part of John Paul II's statement, that is, "even if it is not the whole truth," with regard to the use of philosophy as a tool for the inculturation of the Christian faith in Asia. Asian philosophies would affirm that *all*apprehensions, understandings, judgments, and formulations of any truth, revealed or otherwise, cannot be anything but partial. Partiality in knowledge, which is not the same as falseness, is not just an occasional mishap that can in principle be overcome by dint of mental efforts, as might be implied by the Pope's qualification ("even if it is not the whole truth"), as though most of the times the "whole truth" is readily available, in philosophy as well as in revelation. Rather it is our inescapable lot to possess knowledge always in fragments, that is, partial and relatively adequate apprehensions, understandings, judgments, and formulations of reality. This fact does not of itself invalidate the claim that Jesus is the perfect and full revelation of God (which Christians may of course legitimately make), because the church's apprehensions, understandings, judgments, and formulations of this claim about Jesus and of the truths revealed by him will always remain partial and only relatively adequate, even in the case of infallible definitions.

It follows that in the inculturation of the Christian faith, it is not simply a matter of adaption (much less translation) of the Christian truths (most if not all of which have been formulated in Jewish-Greek-Latin-European categories) to an alien tongue and mode of thought. Rather inculturation is a two-way process in which the Christian faith is given a better and more adequate apprehension, understanding, judgment, and formulation of itself, almost always at the cost of abandoning its own categories, and in which other faiths are in turn enriched by a better and more adequate apprehension, understanding, judgment, and formulation of themselves. Genuine intercultural encounter between the Christian faith and cultures always involves mutual challenge, critique, correction, and enrichment so that a new tertium quid will emerge.

Fides Et Ratio and the Inculturation of the Christian Faith into Confucianist Asia

The concluding part of this essay will assess John Paul II's teaching on philosophy, and more specifically metaphysics, as a tool for inculturating the Christian faith into Asia by exploring its applicability to some aspects of Confucianism. The theme is no doubt extremely vast, and limited space will permit consideration of only two issues, the one methodological and the other substantive. The point here is neither to prescribe a method for the project of inculturating the Christian faith into cultures that are shaped by Confucianism, nor critically to review past efforts, both in theological reflection and church practices, to carry out this task.31 Rather attention will be drawn to some of the challenges and difficulties that the inculturation of the Christian faith into Confucianist Asia will encounter if the method recommended by *FR* is implemented in a simplistic manner.

Metaphysics and Ontological Categories in Inculturation

FR argues vigorously for the use of philosophy in general and metaphysics in particular not only in theology but also in the inculturation of the Christian faith. To cure the "crisis of meaning" which he discerns in contemporary culture infected with eclecticism, historicism, scientism, pragmatism, and nihilism (nos. 86-90), John Paul II prescribes a threefold therapy: a recovery of

philosophy's "sapiential dimension as a search for the ultimate and overarching meaning of life" (no. 81), a re-affirmation of human reason's "capacity to know the truth, to come to knowledge which can reach objective truth" (no. 82), and the use of "a philosophy of a genuinely metaphysical range, capable, that is, of transcending empirical data in order to attain something absolute, ultimate and foundational in its search for truth" (no. 83). John Paul II points out that by metaphysics he does not mean "a specific school or a particular current of thought" (no. 83), and he has already affirmed that "the church has no philosophy of her own nor does she canonize any one particular philosophy in preference to others" (no. 49).32

As to whether metaphysics is necessary for the inculturation of the Christian faith into Confucian Asia, the answer is straightforward if by metaphysics is meant simply the general affirmation of the human mind's capacity to know reality objectively. No Asian philosophers–indeed, no philosopher of any stripe–can deny this capacity without self-contradiction, because the very act of denying it necessarily affirms it. They would concur with John Paul II's affirmation of the "universality" of "truth," though with the three important qualifications elaborated above.33 In this context, Asian philosophers would no doubt consider unfounded and even offensive *FR*'s accusation that "certain conceptions of life coming from the East" betray a "lack of confidence in truth" because they allegedly assume that "truth reveals itself equally in different doctrines even if they contradict one another" (no. 5).

As to whether metaphysics can serve as an effective tool for inculturating the Christian faith into Confucians Asia, the answer depends on what is meant by metaphysics beyond the general meaning indicated above. Metaphysics may refer to a style of philosophizing or a way of thinking and a particular school of thought. The second meaning, though distinct from the first, is unavoidable since it is not possible to speak of metaphysics in the abstract. In spite of his disclaimer that he does not intend to propose "a specific school or a particular current of thought," John Paul II cannot but espouse a specific metaphysics. In fact, the Pope's brand of metaphysics may be called "critical realism," since he insists–adamantly and repeatedly–that metaphysics ought to maintain the possibility "to know a universally valid truth" (no. 93). It does not matter much whether this critical realism is of the Thomistic stamp or some other varieties such as Lonergan's or Rahner's.

Of course, there has not been anywhere one style of philosophizing and one school of metaphysics. As Kenneth L. Schmitz has shown, in the West metaphysics has been developed both as a style of thinking (metaphysics as "fundamental enquiry") and a philosophical discipline (metaphysics as "ontological discourse"), and in this double form it has undergone radical shifts as a result of the triple revolution in modernity, namely, the empirio-mathematical, historical, and linguistic turns.34 Therefore, if Western (and even Christian) metaphysics is used as a tool for the inculturation of the Christian faith into Confucians Asia, both as a style of thinking and an ontological discipline, there must be a deep sensitivity first of all to the distinctive style of philosophizing in Confucianism.

In his masterful description of the Chinese way of thinking, Hajime Nakamura has argued that the Chinese characteristically did not develop "non-religious transcendental metaphysics."35 This does not mean, of course, that there is no "metaphysics" in China. Indeed, among the ancient Chinese philosophies, Taoism can surely be said to have a metaphysical character. Neo-Confucians were attracted to certain aspects of Buddhist metaphysics and developed their own metaphysics (for example, Chu-Tzi's Sung-hsüeh philosophy). The Hua-yen sect incorporated some metaphysical doctrines of Mahayana Buddhism. However, metaphysical thinking was completely abandoned when Taoism turned into a religious art of achieving immortality; even

Chu-Tzi, the founder of Sung-hsüeh philosophy, did not elaborate a metaphysical system; and in the Hua-yen sect, the Buddhist all-important distinction between Absolute Reality and the phenomenal world is rejected. This anti-metaphysical trend of Chinese thought was not due to a lack of intellectual sophistication, but to a distinct way of thinking, and awareness of this difference will help overcome what Robert Solomon calls the "transcendental pretense" of the Enlightenment.36

The style of thinking which accounts for the nondevelopment of metaphysics among the Chinese has been referred to variously as "emphasis on the perception of the concrete," "non-development of abstract thought," "emphasis on the particular," "fondness for complex multiplicity expressed in concrete form," "the tendency towards practicality," and "reconciling and harmonizing tendencies."37 David Hall and Roger Ames characterize the Chinese way of thinking as "*first problematic, or alternatively, analogical or correlative thinking*" and the Western way as "*second problematic*" or "*causal*" thinking.38 The Chinese way of thinking is described as "neither strictly cosmogonical nor cosmological in the sense that there is the presupposition neither of an initial beginning nor of the existence of a single-ordered world. This mode of thinking accepts the priority of change or process over rest and permanence, presumes no ultimate agency responsible for the general order of things, and seeks to account for states of affairs by appeal to correlative procedures rather than by determining agencies and principles."39

With this basic difference in modes of thinking in mind, it would be difficult to concur fully with John Paul II's threefold recommendation for the inculturation of the Christian faith into Confucians Asia. First, he suggests that Christians in Asia should "draw from this [Asian] rich heritage the elements compatible with their faith in order to enrich Christian thought" (no. 72). This procedure seems to envisage inculturation as a straightforward business of adapting elements of one culture into another, without due attention to the different–at times, incommensurable–modes of thinking among cultures.40

Secondly, John Paul II appears to hold that nothing short of metaphysics can give a coherent account of divine revelation: "Metaphysics thus plays an essential role of mediation in theological research. A theology without a metaphysical horizon could not move beyond an analysis of religious experience nor would it allow the *intellectus fidei* to give a coherent account of the universal and transcendent value of revealed truth" (no. 83). Depending on what is meant by "metaphysics" and "metaphysical horizon," this view belittles the epistemological validity of the narrativistic and aphoristic mode of thinking, knowing, and expressing that is characteristic of Chinese philosophy and no less able to "give a coherent account" of its worldview. It seems to require that an Asian Christian theology must of necessity take the form of systematic exposition, as has been done so far in the West, if it were to achieve self-coherence.41

Thirdly, and perhaps in a piece with his second point, John Paul II specifies that "in engaging great cultures for the first time, the church cannot abandon what she has gained from her inculturation in the world of Greco-Latin thought. To reject this heritage would be to deny the providential plan of God, who guides the church down the paths of time and history" (no. 72). What John Paul II intends to say in this excerpt is highly ambiguous: (1) If the church cannot abandon its gains in its inculturation in the world of Greco-Latin thought in engaging great cultures *for the first time*, does it mean that the church is free to do so later, perhaps when the local church has reached sufficient maturity? (2) What is being included in the church's Greco-Latin "heritage"? Theology, liturgy, ethics, canon law, institutions, etc.? In terms of theology, does it mean for instance that an Asian Christology must employ categories such as person, nature, hypostatic union, and so on, perhaps in translation? And how far should this Greco-Latin heritage

be extended? Until the Middle Ages, but no further? (3) What is meant by saying that denying the church's Greco-Latin heritage is tantamount to denying the "providential plan of God"? Is it being implied that God has sanctioned and canonized the development of Western (even conciliar) theology? (4) If it is now God's providential plan to bring the Christian faith into Confucianist Asia, should the new Asian theologies be incorporated into the heritage of the church? If so, what are the mechanisms whereby this incorporation can be carried out effectively? How can this be done when papal and other official documents are all written in Rome, in Western languages, and then promulgated (and at times enforced) with authority and power to the churches of the non-Western world?

The Rites Controversy Revisited

As a concrete example of the inculturation of the Christian faith into Confucians Asia, perhaps no doctrine and practice can be as illuminating and challenging, both historically and theologically, as the cult of ancestors.42 My interest here is neither to rehearse this painful episode in the history of the Asian churches in which cultural misunderstandings, theological dogmatism, ecclesiastical rivalries, and international politics were all deeply enmeshed with a praiseworthy desire to incarnate the Christian faith into the Chinese culture, nor to examine the theological and liturgical validity of the cult of ancestors in itself.43 Rather, I would like to show how the inculturation of the Christian faith into Confucians Asia with regard to the cult of ancestors cannot be adequately carried out on the sole basis of the method proposed by John Paul II in *FR*.

As is well known, the cult of ancestors posed a difficult challenge to the earliest missionaries to China and other countries influenced by Confucianism.44 Basically, the question was whether the cult is theologically acceptable. At issue was the nature of this cult, that is, whether it has a "religious" character or is a purely civil or political ceremony. If the former, then it is superstition and, therefore, must be forbidden; if the latter, then it may be tolerated, and Christians' participation in it would be permissible, due care being exercised to prevent misunderstanding and scandal. The final position of the Catholic Church toward the cult of ancestors, after repeated and severe condemnations by several Popes, was acceptance, and the ground for this complete volte-face is the alleged nonreligious nature of this cult.45

The question of interest here is whether the issue of the cult of ancestors would have been more correctly and speedily resolved had the method of inculturation, which is now advanced by John Paul II, been known and applied? No doubt there were many metaphysical and, more generally, philosophical issues at stake. Philosophically, the cult of ancestors obviously implies certain views regarding the human person, the person's survival after death, the nature of this post-mortem life, and the relationship between the dead and the living. Ethically, it concerns the heart of the moral life as Confucianism understands it, namely, as the proper performance of the duties entailed by various relationships, the most important of which being the relationship between the children and their parents.46 It has been rightly said that filial piety is the central virtue for every Confucian. Furthermore, the cult of ancestors has implications for marriage and the family, because a man who does not have children by his wife may be morally bound by filial piety to marry another woman and have children by her so as to perpetuate this cult. Politically, the cult of ancestors functions as the glue that binds society together, from the king as the August Son of Heaven to the humblest citizen of the country, and provides continuity across generations. Theologically, the cult of ancestors raises, at least for Christians, the question of the relationship between this cult and the worship of God.

In view of these complex aspects of the cult of ancestors, it is questionable whether a method for the inculturation of the Christian faith into Confucians Asia that relies principally on philosophy and metaphysics is adequate to the task. Indeed, were one to follow John Paul II's three suggestions discussed in the previous section, one would run into intractable difficulties. First, it is impracticable, even counterproductive, simply to select from the Chinese cult of ancestors elements that are compatible with the Christian faith and incorporate them into the Christian worship because, apart from their immediate context, these rites lose all their meanings. In fact, it is only when it is viewed apart from its context that the cult of ancestors can be regarded as being nothing more than a civil and political act. The oft-endorsed practice of baptizing non-Christian rituals not rarely amounted to a cultural cannibalism and colonialism which divested these rituals of their own religious meanings and made them serve the Christian purpose.

Furthermore, metaphysics would not be the most effective tool to evaluate the cult of ancestors. The issue here is not whether Chinese philosophy would deny personhood or post-mortem survival or even the immortality of the "soul," all of which are postulated by the cult of ancestors.47Nor is it about whether Chinese philosophy is open to the affirmation of "God"; in fact, the existence of a transcendent being may be said to be implied in the Chinese concepts of *t'ien, t'ien ming, te, and tao*.48 Rather, even after all these metaphysical realities are affirmed, it still remains to be determined whether the cult of ancestors with all its manifold rituals is acceptable to Christians ethically, politically, and theologically. And on this question there is little that metaphysics can settle apodictically.

Lastly, it would be even less helpful to invoke the church's Greco-Latin heritage as the criterion for judging the validity of the cult of ancestors. Indeed, it was the early missionaries' approach to this cult from the vantage point of the Western understanding of worship that prevented them from achieving a full understanding of its meaning. Even the basic terms framing the debate were misleading. Should the term "cult" be translated as "worship" (*latria*) or "veneration" (*dulia*)? Should one use "worship of ancestors" or "veneration of ancestors"? Needless to say, the validity of the cult of ancestors, according to Roman Catholic sensibilities, depends very much on which of these expressions is used. And yet, the cult of ancestors cannot properly be understood in these terms. Nor would it be very helpful to find equivalents for the cult of ancestors in Roman Catholic devotional practices such as the cult of Mary and the saints, because these practices are undergirded by very different theological worldviews.

As has been said above, to obtain a comprehensive understanding of John Paul II's teaching on inculturation, especially the inculturation of the Christian faith into Asia, one should not limit oneself to *FR*. The Pope's fuller and richer insights can be found elsewhere, especially his Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia,* which he promulgated in the wake of the Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops on November 6, 1999.49 *FR*'s somewhat narrow views should, therefore, be supplemented by those the Pope proposes in Ecclesia in Asia as well as in another Apostolic Exhortation, Ecclesia in Africa (1995). Only by taking these papal documents together can a relatively adequate method for the inculturation of the Christian faith into Asia be devised.

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Notes

1. Wojtyla's best-known philosophical work, though generally recognized as highly abstract and abstruse, remains his *Osoba i Czyn* (Crakow: Polskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne, 1969). Its English translation by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, which bears the title *The Acting Person* (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Reidel, 1979), has been judged unreliable and criticized for having excessively phenomenologized Wojtyla's language and thought. A collection of Wojtyla's philosophical essays is available as Person and Community: Selected Essays, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993).

2. See his encyclicals *Veritatis Splendor* (August 6, 1993) and *Evangelium Vitae* (March 25, 1995). English translations of these encyclicals are available in *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, ed. Michael Miller (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1996), 674-771 and 792-894.

3. For the English translation of *Fides et Ratio*, henceforth *FR*, which was promulgated on September 14, 1998, see *Origins* vol. 28, no. 19 (October 22, 1998): 318-47. Citations of the encyclical will be followed by the number of the paragraph in parentheses.

4. I have already examined *FR* in relation to Asian philosophies in "*Fides et Ratio* and Asian Philosophies: Sharing the Banquet of Truth," *Science et Esprit* 51/3 (1999): 333-49.

5. For studies on *FR*, see Louis-Marie Billé et al., *Foi et raison: Lectures de l'encyclique Fides et Ratio* (Paris: Cerp, 1998); *Fede e ragione: Opposizione, composizione?* ed. Mauro Mantovani, Scaria Thuruthiyil, and Mario Toso (Roma: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1998); Tomás Melendo, *Para leer la Fides et Ratio* (Madrid: Rialp, 2000); *Faith and Reason: The Notre Dame Symposium*, ed. Timothy Smith (South Bend, IN: St. Augustin's Press, 2000); *Per una lettura dell'enciclica Fides et Ratio* (Città del Vaticano: L'Osservatore Romano, 1999); Peter Henrici, "La Chiesa et la filosopfia: In ascolto della '*Fides et Ratio'*," *Gregorianum* 80:4 (1999): 635-44; idem, "The One Who Went Unnamed: Maurice Blondel in the Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*," *Communio* (US) 26 (1999): 609-21; Joseph Kallarangatt, "Fides et Ratio: Its Timeliness and Contribution," *Christian Orient* 20 (1999): 22-39; Albert Keller, "Vernunft und Glaube," *Stimmen der Zeit* 217 (1999): 1-12; Job Kozhamthadam, "Fides et Ratio and Inculturation," *Vidyajyoti* 63 (1999): 848-59; Salvador Pié-Ninot, "La Encíclica *Fides et Ratio* y la Teología Fundamental: Hacia una propuesta," *Gregorianum* 80:4 (1999): 645-76; Kenneth Schmitz, "Faith and Reason: Then and Now [Dei Filius and Fides et Ratio]," *Communio* (US) 26 (1999): 595-608; Angelo Scola, "Human Freedom and Truth According to the Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*,"*Communio* (US) 26 (1999): 486-509; Tissa Balasuriya, "On the Papal Encyclical Faith and Reason," *Cross Currents* 49 (1999): 294-96; Avery Dulles, "Faith and Reason: A Note on the New Encyclical," *America* 179 (Oct 31, 1998): 7-8; Anthony Kenny, "The Pope as Philosopher," *The Tablet* 253 (June 26, 1999): 874-76.

6. Pierre d'Ornellas, auxiliary bishop of Paris, offers helpful reflections on *FR*'s concern with the unity of human knowledge in "Une préoccupation déjà ancienne pour l'unité de la connaissance," in *Foi et Raison: Lectures de l'encyclique Fides et Ratio*, 15-29.

7. Awareness of this fact has profound implications for theology today, especially the discipline of historical theology, because it is the task of theology to bring about a contemporary understanding, which is itself historically conditioned, of another past understanding, which is also historically conditioned. Hence, the complex yet inevitable task of hermeneutics in theology.

8. For recent studies of these issues, see *Christliche Philosophie im katholischen Denken des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Emerich Coreth et al., 3 vols. (Graz: Styria, 1987-1990); Wolfhart

Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science* (Philadelphia: Westminster,1976); Helmut Peukert, *Wissenschaftstheorie Handlungstheorie Fundamentale Theologie* (Frankfurt, 1978); Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Foundational Political Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979); Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, *Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1984); René Latourelle, *Finding Jesus through the Gospels* (New York: Alba House, 1979); idem, *Man and His Problem in the Light of Jesus Christ* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983); *Problems and Perspectives of Fundamental Theology*, ed. René Latourelle and Gerald O'Collins (New York: Paulist Press, 1982); David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981); Franz-Josef Niemann, *Jesus als Glaubensgrund in der Fundamentaltheologie der Neuzeit: Zur Genealogie eines Traktats* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1983); George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984); Martin Cook, *The Open Circle: Confessional Method in Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); Avery Dulles, *The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System* (New York: Crossroad, 1992); Thomas Guarino, *Revelation and Truth: Unity and Plurality in Contemporary Theology* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 1993).

9. On the relationship between Vatican I's *Dei Filius* and *FR*, see the balanced study of Mauro Mantovani, "Là dove osa la ragione. Dalla '*Dei Filius*' alla '*Fides et Ratio*'," in *Fede e ragione: Opposizione, composizione*?, 59-84. Mantovani rightly points out that there is a basic continuity between the two documents in their stance on the relationship between faith and reason, though there are of course novelties in *FR*, such as its rejection of contemporary philosophical errors, its recognition of certain valuable aspects of contemporary thought, and its appreciation of Asian cultures.

10. André-Mutien Léonard, bishop of Namur and former professor of philosophy at the University of Louvain, provides a helpful overview of *FR* in "Un guide de lecture pour l'encyclique Fides et Ratio," in *Foi et Raison: Lectures de l'encyclique Fides et Ratio*, 31-73.

11. Obviously John Paul II's appeal to the Pauline contrast between the "foolishness of God" demonstrated on the Cross and "human wisdom" elaborated in philosophy is no endorsement of fideism and fundamentalism.

12. For studies of *FR*'s view of the relationship between faith and reason, see Carlo Chenis, "'*Quid est veritas*?' Valore della '*ratio*' nei processi veritativi secondo la '*mens*' della Chiesa," in *Fede e ragione: Opposizione, Composizione?*, 85-105; Aniceto Molinaro, "La metafisica e la fede," in *Fede e ragione: Opposizione, Composizione?*, 107-118; Mario Toso, "La fede se non è pensata è nulla," in Fede e ragione: Opposizione, Composizione?, 119-30; Armando Rigobello, "Il ruolo della ragione, la filosofia dell'essere, la comunicazione della verità: Luoghi speculativi per un confronto tra '*Fides et Ratio*' e pensiero contemporaneo," in *Fede e ragione: Opposizione, Composizione*?, 131-37; Francesco Franco, "La filosofia compito della fede: La circolarità di fede e ragione," in *Fede e ragione: Opposizione, Composizione*?, 155-75; and Rino Fisichella, "Rapporti tra teologia e filosofia alla luce di 'Fides et Ratio,' in *Fede e Ragione: Opposizione, Composizione*?, 177-85.

13. However evocative is the image, speaking of a "circle" with two "poles" is geometrically infelicitous. Perhaps it would be better to speak of an ellipse.

14. For a study of *FR*'s continuity with the Tradition and its relative originality, see Kenneth Schmitz, "Faith and Reason: Then and Now," *Communio* (US) 26 (1999): 595-608.

15. Of course, John Paul II is neither the first nor the only one to denounce the various errors of modern philosophy. As Anthony Kenney has correctly pointed out, in criticizing modern

philosophy he stands in the company of philosophers such as Gottlob Frege and Lugwig Wittgenstein, and it may be added, Martin Heidegger. See Anthony Kenny, "The Pope as Philosopher," *The Tablet* 253 (June 26, 1999): 875. On the other hand, feminists will argue that other no less pernicious errors of modern philosophy such as its patriarchal and androcentric bias have not received the Pope's attention.

16. This concern is demonstrated in John Paul II's founding of The Pontifical Council for Culture in 1982 with its quarterly *Cultures and Faith*. John Paul II's writings on the theology of culture are voluminous. For a study of this aspect of John Paul II's theology, see Fernando Miguens, *Fe y Cultura en la Enseñanza de Juan Pablo II* (Madrid: Ediciones Palabra, 1994).

17. Some of the material that follows is taken from my earlier essay "*Fides et Ratio* and Asian Philosophies: Sharing the Banquet of Truth," *Science et Esprit* 51/3 (1999): 333-49.

18. Among the most important are: *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979), nos. 52-54; *Slavorum Apostolorum* (1985); *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), nos. 55-56, and *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999), nos. 21-22.

19. The thinkers mentioned are: John Henry Newman, Antonio Rosmini, Jacques Maritain, Etienne Gilson, and Edith Stein "in a Western context" and Vladimir S. Soloviev, Pavel A. Florensky, Petr Chaadev, and Vladimir N. Lossky "in an Eastern context" (no. 74). Apparently, the "Eastern context" does not include Asia in general (at least insofar as recent thinkers with whom the Pope is familiar are concerned). The list underlines John Paul II's European cultural formation.

20. For John Paul II's comments on Buddhism, which have provoked a storm of protest from Asian Buddhists because of his reference to its "atheistic" system, see his *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, ed. Vittorio Messori and trans. Jenny McPhee and Martha McPhee (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1994), 84-90. There is also a factual inaccuracy. *FR* mentions Tirkhankara as if he were an individual, like Gautama the Buddha, with whom he is paired. In fact, Tirkhankara (lit. making a passge, crossing, ford) is an honorific title in Jainism for a person who, by example and teaching, enables others to attain liberation. It designates 24 ascetic teachers in a line reaching back into prehistory, the most recent of whom was Mahavira (traditionally 599-527 BCE).

21. According to *FR*, the first stance is adopted by philosophy before the birth of Jesus and later in regions as yet untouched by the Gospel. By "Christian philosophy" *FR* understands "a Christian way of philosophizing, a philosophical speculation conceived in dynamic union with faith." It includes "those important developments of philosophical thinking which would not have happened without the direct or indirect contribution of Christian faith" (no. 76). By viewing philosophy as *ancilla theologiae*, *FR* does not intend to affirm "philosophy's servile submission or purely functional role with regard to theology," but to indicate "the necessity of the link between the two sciences and the impossibility of their separation" (no. 77). *FR* does admit that the expression *ancilla theologiae* can no longer be used today, but asserts that in this stance philosophy "comes more directly under the authority of the magisterium and its discernment" (no. 77).

22. *FR* repeatedly asserts the duty of philosophy to search for ultimate and universal truth. Indeed, it laments the fact that contemporary philosophy "has lost the capacity to lift its gaze to the heights, not daring to rise to the truth of being" (no. 5). Instead of focusing on metaphysics, contemporary philosophers have concentrated their research on hermeneutics and epistemology, abandoning the investigation of being. On the contrary, John Paul II wants "to state that reality and truth do transcend the factual and the empirical and to vindicate the human being's capacity to know this transcendental and metaphysical dimension in a way that is true and certain, albeit

imperfect and analogical" (no. 83). Against post-modern agnosticism and nihilism (see no. 91), *FR* affirms that "[e]very truth–if it really is truth–presents itself as universal, even if it is not the whole truth. If something is true, then it must be true for all people and at all times. . . .Hypotheses may fascinate, but they do not satisfy. Whether we admit it or not, there comes for everyone the moment when personal existence must be anchored to a truth recognized as final which confers a certitude no longer open to doubt" (no. 27).

23. I will examine this criterion in detail in the last part of the essay.

24. I will draw out the implications of this statement for theological methodology today in the last part of the essay.

25. For an evaluation of *FR* in terms of inculturation, see Job Kozhamthadam, "*Fides et Ratio* and Inculturation," *Vidyajyoti* 63 (1999): 848-59; Scaria Thuruthiyil, "L'inculturazione della fede alla luce dell'Enciclica "*Fides et Ratio*," in *Fede e ragione: Opposizione, composizione?*, 249-55; and Mario Midali, "Evangelizzazione nuova: Rilevanti indicazioni del "*Fides et Ratio*," in *Fede e ragione: Opposizione, composizione?*, 257-76.

26. For the Nyaya-Vaisheshika epistemology which analyses human knowledge in terms of the knowing subject, the object to be known, the known object, and the means to know the object, see Satischandra Chatterjee (ed.), *The Nyaya Theory of Knowledge*, 2nd edition (Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1950) and Karl H. Potter (ed.), Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology: *The Tradition of Nyaya-Vaisheshika up to Gangesa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

27. See Bernard Lonergan, Insight: *A Study of Human Understanding* (London) and Method in Theology (New York: Herder, 1971). For studies on how *FR* understands the universality of truth, see Gaspare Mura, "L'universalismo della verità," in *Fede e ragione: Opposizione, Composizione?*, 139-43.

28. For an informative contrast between the Western and Chinese ways of conceiving truth, see David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking from the Han* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 103-46. Broadly speaking, Westerners ask, "What is the Truth?" ("Truth-Seekers"), whereas the Chinese ask, "Where is the Way?" ("Way-Seekers"). Western philosophy makes two assumptions, namely, that there is a single-ordered world and that there is a distinction between reality and appearance. The first assumption takes truth as coherence, the second takes truth as correspondence between mind and reality. These two assumptions are absent in classical Chinese philosophy. Instead of the single-ordered world, the Chinese hold that the world is but the "ten thousand things" (*wanwu* or *wanyou*) and, instead of the distinction between reality and appearance, the Chinese hold that reality is essentially polar (*yin/yang*). See also other works by the same two authors, *Thinking through Confucius* (Albany, NY: State University Press of New York, 1987) and *Anticipating China* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1995).

29. For an illuminating account of this characteristic of Indian philosophies, see Hajime Nakamura, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1964), 93-129.

30. For a brief and helpful explanation of this theory, see *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, translated and compiled by Wing-Tsit Chan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 244-88 and Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: The Free Press, 1948), 129-42.

31. The works of seventeenth-century Jesuits in China and Vietnam, such as Matteo Ricci and Alexandre de Rhodes, are well known. See Peter C. Phan, *Mission and Catechesis: Alexandre de Rhodes and Inculturation in Seventeenth-Century Vietnam* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998).

32. This stance does not prevent the magisterium from acclaiming "the merits of St. Thomas' thought" and making him "the guide and model for theological studies." But *FR* argues that "this has not been in order to take a position on properly philosophical questions nor to demand adherence to particular theses" (no. 78). There is no doubt a bit of revisionist history here, in light of Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris* (1879) and Pius X's imposition of 24 "Thomistic" philosophical theses. For a study of the position of Thomas Aquinas in *FR*, see Georges Cottier, "Tommaso d'Aquino, teologo e filosofo nella "*Fides et Ratio*," in *Fede e ragione: Opposizione, composizione?*, 187-94.

33. *FR* itself explicitly acknowledges that "the objective value of many concepts does not exclude that their meaning is often imperfect" (no. 96).

34. See Kenneth Schmitz, "Post-modernism and the Catholic Tradition," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* LXXIII/2 (1999): 242. Schmitz argues that because of the empirio-mathematical turn in modernity, metaphysics as philosophical enquiry was replaced by epistemology as the primary philosophical discipline and Aristotle's concept of contingency as the result of the unintended conjunction of the causes ("causal contingency") was replaced by Pascal's concept of contingency as probability ("predictive contingency"). Later, because of the historical turn, metaphysics as a mode of discourse was forced to recognize its intrinsic condition of historicity, and the concept of contingency as predictive contingency was replaced by the concept of contingency as unrepeatable event ("non-predictive contingency"). Finally, in the linguistic turn, contingency is understood as the arbitrariness of linguistic signs (as in Saussurean linguistics) or as the conventionality of relations (as in Anglo-American language analytic philosophy). See Kenneth Schmitz, "An Addendum to Further Discussion," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* LXXIII/2 (1999): 277-79). This narrative of the recent career of metaphysics shows how complex the question about the use of metaphysics as a tool for inculturation, especially the inculturation of the Christian faith into Confucianist Asia, is.

35. Hajime Nakamura, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples*, 243.

36. See Robert Solomon, *The Bully Culture: Enlightenment, Romanticism, and the Transcendental Pretense 1750-1850* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993). The transcendental pretense refers to the claim that rational objectivity and universal science, allegedly the fruits of the Enlightenment, should be the norm to judge all non-Western cultures.

37. See Hajime Nakamura, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples*, 177-294.

38. David Hall and Roger Ames, *Anticipating China: Thinking Through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), xvii.

39. David Hall and Roger Ames, *Anticipating China*, xviii. Graphically, the difference between the Western and the Chinese modes of thinking is illustrated by the former's preference for the circle and the latter's for the square as images of perfection.

40. Apparently John Paul II is operating under the two Greco-Roman models of inculturation, that is, assimilation of non-Christian philosophy and incarnation in non-Christian culture, respectively. Aloysius has convincingly argued that these two models are not applicable to Asia. See his*An Asian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 51-53. See also Peter C. Phan, "*Fides et Ratio* and Asian Philosophies," 345-46.

41. It is unfortunate that the *ratio* in *Fides et Ratio* is successively reduced from rationality to philosophy to metaphysics. This gradual reduction is all the more misleading since "metaphysics" is currently understood not as reflective thinking or fundamental inquiry but mainly as a mode of ontological discourse (e.g., "onto-theology") and even, in popular circles, as astrology!

42. Systems of ancestor veneration are best known from Africa, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. In Asia, ancestor worship is an amalgamation of folk religion, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Shinto. It has been suggested that ancestor worship may have emerged from the worship of guardian spirits. This shift occurred when the family supplanted the clan or tribe as the basic unit of society, so that prayers addressed to tribal spirits were now redirected to the deceased members of the family. In Asian countries, ancestor veneration has been connected with other Taoist practices such as magic, divination, witchcraft, geomancy, and so forth.

43. For a history of the controversy, see George Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy from Its Beginning to Modern Times* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985).

44. I prescind here from the special question of the cult of Confucius in the Temple of Literature.

45. See the instruction of the Propaganda Fide, *Plane compertum est* (1939). See Peter C. Phan, *Mission and Catechesis*, 28.

46. *The Doctrine of the Mean* XX, 8 specifies five relationships and three virtues: "The duties of universal obligation are five, and the virtues wherewith they are practiced are three. The duties are those between sovereign and minister, between father and son, between husband and wife, between elder brother and younger, and those belonging to the intercourse of friends. Those five are the duties of universal obligation. Knowledge, magnanimity, and energy, these three, are the virtues universally binding. And the means by which they carry the duties into practice is singleness." See *The Doctrine of the Mean*, trans. James Legg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893).

47. *FR* affirms that "it is metaphysics which makes it possible to ground the concept of personal dignity in virtue of their spiritual nature" (no. 83). If it is meant that it is in virtue of metaphysics alone that personal dignity can be defended, then *FR*'s statement is gratuitous. Moreover, even if the statement is granted, there is still a further question to be settled, namely, which metaphysical argument for the dignity of the person is apodictic. For a study of the notion of person in *FR*, see Sabino Palumbieri, "*Fides et Ratio*": la persona, punto di sintesi," in *Fede e ragione: opposizione, composizione?*, 331-52.

48. For a discussion of t'ien and transcendence, as well as *t'ien ming, te*, and *tao*, see David Hall and Roger Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius* (albany, NY: University of New York Press, 1987), 201-37.

49. For an analysis and evaluation of this Apostolic Exhortation, see Peter C. Phan, "*Ecclesia in Asia*: Challenges for Asian Christianity," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 37/3 (2000): 215-32 as well as the essays by Michael Amaladoss, Edmund Chia, John Manford Prior, and James Kroeger in this issue.

8.

The Role of Christian Philosophy in the Present Transformation of Chinese Culture

George F. McLean

Introduction

Dialogue has a number of meanings according to the level at which it is understood. Rhetorically, it could be taken to mean simply two people speaking at the same time, as is had, at times, in an operatic duet in which each is expressing a train of thought unrelated or even contradictory to the other. Too often human expression can degenerate to this external level, but generally some positive interchange and agreement is being sought.

Taken metaphysically, however, dialogue is a characteristically human form of being in which to be is to exist consciously, to express this in action or especially in word, and to do so in a way that enables one's being to 'be with" (*mitsein*) the other. Dialogue, then, is not mere flatus voices, but a characteristic of being human, namely, to be as being in mutuality with others.

In this conference on "Dialogue between Christian Philosophy and Chinese Culture," the term dialogue is certainly to be taken in this latter manner. For our concern is how Christianity and Chinese culture can cooperate at a philosophical level in their creative advance through the third millennium. To examine this advance, the paper will look first in principle into the possibility and modality of the transformation of cultures through interaction with each other. Secondly, it will look more concretely, for one or more particular points on which a dialogue of Chinese culture and Christian philosophy can be creative.

This interaction must be bidirectional. Thus far, the issue has generally been taken, perhaps especially in China, as an issue of the impact of the West on China—the classical issue of the modernization of China. This issue reflected both the hubris of the modern West and the needs of the Chinese people for economic, political, and military progress. In this third millennium, as we proceed beyond modernity, however, the issue is increasingly that of how the modern mind can be saved from its own destructive rationalist limitations by the addition of new dimensions of cultural sensitivity. This enables a much deeper and more balanced approach.

Here we shall look only at the relation of Christian philosophy to the present transformation of China, hoping and expecting that this impact will be mutual.

Theory for a Dialogue of Chinese Culture and Philosophy Cultures

In order to look for an interchange of Chinese and Christian cultures in the third millennium, it is necessary first, to investigate the nature of cultures as dynamic and open, second, to project a hermeneutic of dialogue for mutual appreciation, and third, to look for the points of potential positive contribution between Chinese culture and Christian philosophy.

Culture as Dynamic

It is unfortunate that cultures have come to be seen more as inert and incommensurable, than as essentially dynamic and interactive. This is characteristic of the modern mind since Descartes and its search for knowledge that is sufficiently clear to be distinguished from all else. This trend tends natively to be analytic, to reduce all to their minimal components; thus, the synthetic and synthesizing character of reality, whereby the parts coalesce into larger organic and interactive unities, has tended to be missed.

For this reason, it can be useful to review the genesis of cultures in terms of the project of being against nonbeing, lived at the human level in terms that generate the values and virtues which guide the exercise of freedom, and which coalesce to form a culture as a distinctive way of cultivating the human person that is passed on as tradition.

Values and Virtues. The drama of free self-determination, and hence, of the development of persons and of civil society, is in human form the fundamental matter of being as affirmation in definitive stance against nonbeing. It was first articulated by Parmenides, the very first metaphysician, identically, this is the relation to the good in search of which we live, survive, and thrive. The good is manifest in experience as the object of desire, namely, as that which is sought when absent. Basically, it is what completes life or the "per-fect," understood in its etymological sense as that which is completed or realized through and through. Hence, once achieved, it is no longer desired or sought, but enjoyed. This is reflected in the manner in which each thing, even a stone, retains the being or reality it has and resists reduction to nonbeing or nothing. The most that we can do is to change or transform it into something else; we cannot annihilate it. Similarly, a plant or tree, given the right conditions, grows to full stature and fruition. Finally, an animal protects its life—fiercely, if necessary—and seeks out the food needed for its strength. Food, in turn, as capable of contributing to an animal's realization or perfection, is for the animal an auxiliary good or means. In this manner, things as good, that is, as actually realizing some degree of perfection and able to contribute to the well-being of others, are the bases for an interlocking set of relations.

The moral good is a more narrow field, for it concerns only one's free and responsible actions. This has the objective reality of the ontological good noted above, for it concerns real actions that stand in distinctive relation to our own perfection and to that of others—and, indeed, to the physical universe and to God as well. Hence, many possible patterns of actions could be objectively right because they promote the good of those involved, while others, precisely as inconsistent with the real good of persons or things, are objectively disordered or misordered. This pattern constitutes the objective basis for the ethical good or bad.

Because the realm of objective relations is almost numberless, whereas our actions are single, it is necessary not only to choose in general between the good and the bad, but in each case to choose which of the often innumerable possibilities one will render concrete.

The term "value" here is of special note. It was derived from the economic sphere where it meant the amount of a commodity sufficient to attain a certain weight on the scales, or worth. This is reflected also in the term "axiology" whose root means "weighing as much" or "worth as much." It requires an objective content—the good must truly "weigh in" and make a real difference; but the term "value" expresses this good especially as related to wills, which actually acknowledge it as a good and as desirable.1 Thus, different individuals or groups of persons at different periods have distinct sets of values. A people or community is sensitive to, and prizes, a distinct set of goods or, more likely, establishes a distinctive ranking in the degree to which it prizes various

goods. By so doing, it delineates among limitless objective goods a certain pattern of values that, in a more stable fashion, mirrors the corporate free choices of that people.

When this is exercised or lived, patterns of action develop that are habitual in the sense of being repeated. These are the modes of activity with which we are familiar in their exercise, along with the coordinated natural dynamisms they require; and with practice, come facility and spontaneity. Such patterns constitute the basic, continuing, and pervasive shaping influence of our life. For this reason, they have been considered classically to be the basic indicators of what our life as a whole will add up to, or, as is often said, "amount to." Since Socrates, the technical term for these especially developed capabilities has been "virtues" or special strengths.

This constitutes the basic topology of a culture; the prime pattern and gradation of values and virtues which persons experience from their earliest years and in terms of which they interpret their developing relations. Young persons peer out at the world through lenses formed, as it were, by their family and culture and configured according to the pattern of choices made by that community throughout its history—often in its most trying circumstances. Also, like a pair of glasses, it does not create the object; but it focuses attention upon certain goods involved rather than upon others. This becomes the basic orienting factor for the affective and emotional life described by the Scotts, Adam Ferguson, and Adam Smith as the heart of civil society. In time, it encourages and reinforces certain patterns of action which, in turn, reinforce the pattern of values.

Culture. Together, these values and virtues of a people set the pattern of social life through which freedom is developed and lived. This is called a "culture." On the one hand, the term is derived from the Latin word for tilling or cultivating the land. Cicero and other Latin authors used it for the cultivation of the soul or mind (*cultura animi*), for just as even good land, when left without cultivation, will produce only disordered vegetation of little value, so the human spirit will not achieve its proper results unless trained or educated.2 This sense of culture corresponds most closely to the Greek term for education (*paideia*) as the development of character, taste, and judgment, and to the German term "formation" (*Bildung*).3

Here, the focus is upon the creative capacity of the spirit of a people and their ability to work as artists, not only in the restricted sense of producing purely aesthetic objects, but in the more involved sense of shaping all dimensions of life, material and spiritual, economic and political. The result is a whole life, characterized by unity and truth, goodness and beauty, and, thereby, sharing deeply in meaning and value. The capacity for this cannot be taught, although it may be enhanced by education. More recent phenomenological and hermeneutic inquiries suggest that, at its base, culture is a renewal, a reliving of origins in an attitude of profound appreciation.4 This leads us beyond self and the other, beyond identity and diversity, in order to comprehend both.

Cultural Traditions. The development of values and virtues and their integration as a culture of any depth or richness takes time, and hence, depends upon the experience and creativity of many generations. The culture or *tradita* that is handed on comes to be called a cultural tradition; as such it reflects the cumulative achievement of a people in discovering, mirroring, and transmitting the deepest meanings of life. This is tradition in its synchronic sense as a body of wisdom.

This sense of tradition is very vivid in premodern and village communities. It would appear to be much less so in modern urban centers, undoubtedly in part, due to the difficulty in forming active community life in large urban centers. However, the cumulative process of transmitting, adjusting and applying the values of a culture through time is not only heritage or what is received, but new creation passed on in new ways. Attending to tradition, taken in this active sense, allows

us not only to uncover the permanent and universal truths that Socrates sought, but to perceive the importance of the values we receive from the tradition and to mobilize our own life project actively toward the future.

Because tradition sometimes has been interpreted as a threat to the personal and social freedom essential to a democracy, it is important to see how the cultural tradition is generated by the free and responsible life of the members of a concerned community or civil society that enables succeeding generations to realize their life with freedom and creativity.

Autogenesis is no more characteristic of the birth of knowledge than it is of persons. One's consciousness emerges, not with self, but in relation to others. In the womb, the first awareness is that of the heartbeat of one's mother. Upon birth, one enters a family in whose familiar relations one is at peace and able to grow. It is from one's family and in one's earliest weeks and months, that one does or does not develop the basic attitudes of trust and confidence that undergird or undermine one's capacities for subsequent social relations. There one encounters care and concern for others independently of what they do for us and acquires the language and symbol system in terms of which to conceptualize, communicate, and understand.5 Just as a person is born into a family on which he or she depends absolutely for life, sustenance, protection, and promotion, so one's understanding develops in community. As persons we emerge by birth into a family and neighborhood from which we learn and, in harmony with, which we thrive.

Similarly, through the various steps of one's development, as one's circle of community expands through neighborhood, school, work, and recreation, one comes to learn and to share personally and passionately an interpretation of reality and a pattern of value responses. The phenomenologist sees this life in the varied civil society as the new source for wisdom. Hence, rather than turning away from daily life in order to contemplate abstract and disembodied ideas, the place to discover meaning is in life as lived in the family and in the progressively wider social circles into which one enters.

If it were merely a matter of community, however, all might be limited to the present, with no place for tradition as that "passed on" from one generation to the next. In fact, the process of trial and error, of continual correction and addition in relation to a people's evolving sense of human dignity and purpose, constitutes a type of learning and testing laboratory for successive generations. In this laboratory of history, the strengths of various insights and behavior patterns can be identified and reinforced, while deficiencies are progressively corrected or eliminated. Horizontally, we learn from experience what promotes and what destroys life and, accordingly, make pragmatic adjustments.

But even this language remains too abstract, too limited to method or technique, too unidimensional. While tradition can be described in general and at a distance in terms of feed-back mechanisms and might seem merely to concern how to cope in daily life, what is being spoken about are free acts that are expressive of passionate human commitment and personal sacrifice in responding to concrete danger, building and rebuilding family alliances and constructing and defending one's nation. Moreover, this wisdom is not a matter of mere tactical adjustments to temporary concerns; it concerns,rather, the meaning we are able to envision for life and that we desire to achieve through all such adjustments over a period of generations, that is, what is truly worth striving for and the pattern of social interaction in which this can be lived richly. The result of this extended process of learning and commitment constitutes our awareness of the bases for the decisions of which history is constituted.

This process points us beyond the horizontal plane of the various ages of history and directs our attention vertically to its ground and, hence, to the bases of the values that humankind in its

varied circumstances seeks to realize.6 It is here that one searches for the absolute ground of meaning and value of which Iqbal wrote. Without that,all is ultimately relative to only an interlocking network of consumption, then dissatisfaction, and finally ennui.

The impact of the convergence of cumulative experience and reflection is heightened by its gradual elaboration in ritual and music, and its imaginative configuration in such great epics as the Mahabharata and in dance. All conspire to constitute a culture which, like a giant telecommunications dish, shapes, intensifies, and extends the range and penetration of our personal sensitivity, free decision and mutual concern.

Tradition, then, is not, as in history, simply everything that ever happened, whether good or bad. It is rather what appears significant for human life: It is what has been seen through time and human experience to be deeply true and necessary for human life. It contains the values to which our forebearers first freely gave their passionate commitment in specific historical circumstances and then constantly reviewed, rectified, and progressively passed on generation after generation. The content of a tradition, expressed in works of literature and all the many facets of a culture emerges progressively as something upon which character and community can be built. It constitutes a rich source from which multiple themes can be drawn, provided it is accepted and embraced, affirmed and cultivated.

Hence, it is not because of personal inertia on our part or arbitrary will on the part of our forbearers that our culture provides a model and exemple. On the contrary, the importance of tradition derives from both the cooperative character of the learning by which wisdom is drawn from experience and the cumulative free acts of commitment and sacrifice which have defined, defended, and passed on through time the corporate life of the community.7

Ultimately, it bears to us the divine gifts of life, meaning, and love and provides a way back to their origin and forward to their goal, their Alpha and Omega.

From this it can be seen that a culture or cultural tradition is not static but a developmental reality. It is:

- living, indeed it is essentially a way of life;
- ongoing, as it faces the new exchanges that continually emerge in the life of a people;
- influenced by the surrounding circumstances; and
- continually enriched as people achieve new cognitive levels and society organizes itself in new manners.

As incremental and organic, this process is essentially developmental. Each challenge must be understood synthetically as emerging within the whole and as needing to be responded to by the whole in and according to its overall awareness and sensibility.

Whereas in the past with a lower level of interaction, the challenges were especially local or from within and were handled in terms of one's own culture. In the new situation of continuing global interaction, one is continually challenged at all levels: economic, political, and cultural and, moreover, by different cultures so that each culture is challenged to be transformed in all of these ways or at all of these levels. Such development fortunately is not a destructive force, but is creative in keeping with the nature of cultural traditions as passing through time. But how this is so requires hermeneutic insight into the relations between cultures and between any one culture and the emerging whole or global culture. Thus, this challenge and response between different cultures carries our issue of dialogue a step further into the realm of hermeneutics in order to understand how a cultural tradition can evolve through relations with others.

The Hermeneutics of Cultural Traditions: Unfolding by Questioning

If we take time and culture seriously, then we must recognize that we are situated in a particular culture and at a particular time. All that can be seen from this vantage point constitutes one's horizon. This would be lifeless and dead, determined rather than free, if our vantage point were fixed by its circumstances and closed. Hence, we need to meet other minds and hearts not simply to add information incrementally, but to be challenged in our basic assumptions and enabled thereby to delve more deeply into our tradition and draw forth deeper and more pervasive truth. How can this be done?

First of all, it is necessary to note that only a unity of meaning, that is, an identity, is intelligible.8 Just as it is not possible to understand a number five if we include only four units, no act of understanding is possible unless it is directed to an identity or whole of meaning. This brings us to the classic issue of the hermeneutic circle in which knowledge of the whole depends upon knowledge of the parts, and vice versa. How can this work for, rather than against, the development of social life?

The experience of reading a text might be suggestive. As we read we construe the meaning of a sentence before grasping all its individual parts. What we construe is dependent upon our expectation of the meaning of the sentence, which we derived from its first words, the prior context, or, more likely, from a combination of the two. In turn, our expectation or construal of the meaning of the text is adjusted according to the requirements of its various parts as we proceed to read through the parts of the sentence, the paragraph, etc., continually reassessing the whole in terms of the parts and the parts in terms of the whole. This basically circular movement continues until all appears to be fit and clear.

Similarly, with regard to our cultural tradition and values, we develop a prior conception of its content. This anticipation of meaning is not simply of the tradition as an objective past or fixed content to which we come; it is rather what we produce as we participate in the evolution of the tradition and, thereby, further determine ourselves. This is a creative stance reflecting the content, not only of the past, but also of the time in which we stand and of the life project in which we are engaged. It is a creative unveiling of the content of the tradition as this comes progressively and historically into the present and, through the present, passes into the future.

In this light, time is not a barrier, separation or abyss, but rather a bridge and opportunity for the process of understanding, a fertile ground filled with experience, custom,and tradition. The importance of the historical distance it provides is not that it enables the subjective reality of persons to disappear so that the objectivity of the situation can emerge. On the contrary, it makes possible a more complete meaning of the tradition, less by removing falsifying factors than by opening new sources of self-understanding that reveal in the tradition unsuspected implications and even new dimensions of meaning.9

Of course, not all our acts of understanding about the meaning of a text from another culture, a dimension of a shared tradition, a set of goals or a plan for future action are sufficient. Hence, it becomes particularly important that they not be adhered to fixedly, but be put at risk in dialogue with others. When one's initial projection of their meaning will not bear up under the progressive dialogue, one is required to make needed adjustments in our projection of their meaning. This process enables one to adjust one's prior understanding, not only of the horizon of the other with whom one is in dialogue, but also, especially, of one's own horizon. Hence, one need not fear being trapped; horizons are vantage points of a mind which in principle are open and mobile,

capable of being aware of their own limits and of transcending them through acknowledging the horizons of others. The flow of history implies that we are not bound by our horizons, but move in and out of them. It is in making us aware of our horizons that hermeneutic consciousness accomplishes our liberation.10

For this, we must maintain a questioning attitude. Rather than simply following through with our previous ideas until a change is forced upon us, we must remain sensitive to new meanings in true openness. This is neither neutrality as regards the meaning of the tradition, nor an extinction of passionate concerns regarding action towards the future. Rather, being aware of our own biases or prejudices and adjusting them in dialogue with others implies rejecting what impedes our understanding of others or traditions. Our attitude in approaching dialogue must be one of willingness continually to revise our initial projection or expectation of meaning.

The way out of the hermeneutic circle is then not by ignoring or denying our horizons and initial judgments or prejudices, but by recognizing them as inevitable and making them work for us in drawing out, not the meaning of the text for its author,11 but its application for the present. Through this process of application we serve as midwife for culture as historical or traditional, enabling it to give birth to the future.12

The logical structure of this process is the exchange of question and answer. A question is required in order to determine just what issue we are engaging—whether it is this issue or that—so that we might give direction to our attention. Without this, no meaningful answer can be given or received. As a question, however, it requires that the answer not be settled or determined. In sum, progress or discovery requires an openness that is not simple indeterminacy, but a question which gives specific direction to our attention and enables us to consider significant evidence.

If discovery depends upon the question, then the art of discovery is the art of questioning. Consequently, in working in conjunction with others, the heart of the democratic process is not to suppress, but to reinforce and unfold the questions of others. To the degree that these probabilities are built up and intensified, they can serve as a searchlight. This is the opposite of both opinion, which tends to suppress questions, and of arguing, which searches out the weakness in the other's positions. Instead, in democracy, understood as conversation and dialogue directed toward governance, one enters upon a mutual search to maximize the possibilities of the question, even by speaking at cross purposes, for it is by mutually eliminating errors and working out a common meaning that we discover truth.13

Pluralism. Progress by Dialogue

In this engagement, there appears the important value of intercultural dialogue. Rather than being merely an external act of mutual acknowledgement, in view of what has been said above it, it is a true requisite if the cultures are open and developed. As culture is the basic configuration of the corporate consciousness of a people, interchange between cultures is important in order that this relation of cultures to their infinite source and goal remain open and be renewed. Indeed, this would seem to be more important the more education, especially in its modern rationalist context, advances. The more a tradition is rationalized or philosophized, the more it is made stable and fixed, and the greater the danger of its becoming closed in upon itself and inadequate for its task of reflecting the infinite and transcendent.

Further, in the present context of globalization, such interchange provides an alternative to the much feared conflict of civilizations projected by Samuel Huntington. It should not be presupposed that a text, such as a tradition, law, or constitution, will hold the answer to but one question or can

have but one horizon that must be identified by the reader. On the contrary, the full horizon of the author(s) is never available to the reader, nor can it be expected that there is but one question to which a tradition or document holds an answer. The sense of texts reaches beyond what their authors intended because the dynamic character of being as it emerges in time means that the horizon is never fixed but is continually opening. This fact constitutes the effective historical element in understanding a text or a tradition. At each step, new dimensions of its potentialities open to understanding, so that the meaning of a text or tradition lives with the consciousness and, hence, the horizons—not of its author—but of people in dialogue with others through time and history. This is the essence both of democracy within a nation and of globalization among peoples. They are processes of broadening horizons, through fusion with the horizons of others in dialogue, that makes it possible for each to receive from one's cultural tradition and its values answers that are ever new.14

In this, one's personal attitudes and interests remain important. If our interest in developing new horizons is simply the promotion of our own understanding, then we could be interested solely in achieving knowledge, and thereby in domination over others. This would lock one into an absoluteness of one's prejudices; being fixed or closed in the past, they would disallow new life in the present. In this manner, powerful new insights can become, with time, deadening pre-judgments that suppress freedom. This would seem to be the supposition of Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations. Unfortunately, he sees all identities as essentially self-centered and conflictual.

In contrast, an attitude of openness appreciates the nature of one's own finiteness. This has two dimensions. One is that of time, by which one is able at once to respect the past and to be open to discerning the future. Such openness is a matter of recognizing the historical nature of people and their basis in an Absolute that transcends and grounds time. The other dimension is horizontal, across civilizations and cultures. This, too, is based in the absolute that no culture can adequately reflect. This enables us to escape fascination with externals and to delve more deeply by learning from other's experiences.15

This suggests that openness does not consist in surveying others objectively, obeying them in a slavish and unquestioning manner or simply juxtaposing their ideas and traditions to our own. Rather, it is directed primarily to ourselves, for our ability to listen to others is correlatively our ability to assimilate the implications of their answers for delving more deeply into the meaning of our own traditions and drawing out new and ever richer insights. In other words, it is an acknowledgement that our cultural heritage has something new to say to us.

The characteristic hermeneutic attitude of effective historical consciousness is, then, not methodological sureness, readiness for new compromises or new techniques of social organization, for these are subject to social critique and manipulation on the horizontal level. Instead, it is readiness to draw out in democratic dialogue new meaning from tradition.16 Seen in these terms our heritage of culture and values is not closed or dead, but through a democratic life, remains ever new by becoming even more inclusive and more rich.

This takes us beyond the rigid rationalism of the civil society of the later Enlightenment and the too fluid moral sentiment of the earlier Enlightenment. It enables us to respond to the emerging sense of the identity of peoples and to protect and promote this in a civil society marked by solidarity and subsidiarity.

In this as a social work, one guiding principle is to maintain a harmony or social equilibrium through time. In addition, the notion of application allows the tradition to provide resources and guidance in facing new issues and in developing new responses to changing times. With rising

numbers and expectations, economic development becomes an urgent need. But its very success could turn into defeat if this is not oriented and applied with a pervasive but subtle and adaptive human governance sensitive to all forms of human comity. This is required in order to orient all smoothly to the social good in which the goal of civil society consists.

This process will require new advances in science and economics, in education and psychology, in the humanities and social services, that is, across the full range of social life. All these dimensions, and many more, must spring to new life, but in a basic convergence and harmony. The values and virtues emerging from a tradition applied in freedom can provide needed guidance along new and ever evolving paths. In this way, cooperation between cultures can be a key to social progress.

The Example of Buddhism

Professor Tang Yijie applies these in the context of Chinese culture. He questions how Buddhism from India could be absorbed into the culture of China.

His response is twofold. His first step relates:

to the demands or requirements of the heritage or continuity of ideological cultures [as they came into contact with one another]. As long as the development of an ideological culture is not drastically interrupted, what follows must be the product of a continuous evolution from what preceded it. The development of preceding ideas often would contain several possibilities, and the idea(s) which would continue to be developed, representing the subsequent parts of the development, would be bound to take the shape of one or another of these possibilities.17

As was noted above, the change relates to the needs of the culture. What Tang adds here is that the potential development of a culture is specific to its nature. Thus, the answer of a culture to its challenges is specified to one or another possibility.

Moreover, this is bidirectional. To the degree that the advenient culture can adapt to the potentialities of the resident culture, its influence and contribution can be greater. Conversely, Tang Jijie goes further to note, this influence can be so great that the advenient culture can become an integral part of the recipient.

If an imported alien ideological culture can, on the whole, adapt or conform to a certain aspect of a potential or possible development of the original indigenous culture and ideology [or fit into a trend or tendency of one of the possible developments], not only will it be itself developed and thus exert relatively great influence in itself, but it may even become directly a component part of the original indigenous ideological culture and perhaps even to some extent alter the course of the development of that original ideological culture.18

This suggests then that we need to look to the specific potentialities of Chinese culture and to the way in which Christian philosophy responds.

With this we have the elements of a theory for considering the relation of Christian to Confucian culture. First, as a cultural tradition, Confucian thought is essentially a developmental process and, therefore, not static and closed, but dynamic and open to the challenges of each age. Secondly, like all cultures today Confucian culture is being challenged by the new global character of life in our times, in its economy, politics, and, more profoundly, in its culture as a whole. Thirdly

as having a specific configuration, indeed as being the specific humane configuration of life, Confucian culture has specific potentials for evolution. Thus, while the challenge of globalization is the abilities of Chinese cultures to respond are specific they can be enabled and actualized by specific insights. In this case, the question becomes precisely the degree to which the contents of a Christian philosophy respond to the needs and potentialities of the Chinese culture under the pressure of globalization. In brief, in the present circumstances to what degree can Christian philosophy act catalytically upon Chinese culture to evoke and unfold needed new meaning?

Professor Tang Yijie would hold that in the case of Buddhism, it brought new elements without which they could not so correspond to the specific needs and potential of Chinese culture at the time that Buddhism itself became part of Chinese culture. In this light, we might ask in what specific ways in the present situation Chinese culture is challenged, its proper potentials for development and, in this light, assess the significance of Christian philosophy for contributing to the development of Chinese culture in our day.

Concrete Relation of Christian Philosophy to Chinese Culture in the New Millennium

The Contemporary Challenge to Chinese Culture

To the general question of the relation of China to modernization in the last century and a half, there are perhaps three answers, none of which quite contradicts the others. The first is that China modernize, but did so according to a too simplified notion of science; the third and more post-modern is that modernization was never an adequate goal.

The history of the efforts to modernize in China goes back to the previous century and proves to be highly problematic, both theoretically and practically. Essentially, the horizon was always the West and how to develop and absorb that technological and industrial instrumentation. Indeed, could Western technology be taken up simply instrumentally or did it require deeper changes in Chinese culture; and, if so, which would be substance and which accident? In 1919, the protest against the Versailles Conference evolved into a rejection of Confucian culture as it did not try as hard as did the Meji regime of Japan; the second is that it tried too hard to impede progress. Confucius, it was said, needed to leave in order that Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy might enter.

The history of the subsequent decades has raised serious questions about this formula, and there is now a sense that the May 4 slogans must be reviewed and reassured. Indeed, it appears that in order to collaborate effectively in the modernization of China, the two Misters are in need of Confucius, with his aesthetic sense of harmony, as their gracious host.

There is a striking and potentially instructive parallel between the structure of Kant's three critiques and recent Chinese history. Kant's first critique focused on science and necessity, while his second critique focused on morals and freedom. He had expected that this would be sufficient, but before that decade was out he came to the conclusion that a new set of categories, those of aesthetic judgment, was necessary.

In this light it can be said that the Confucian vision, contrary to the prognosis of 1919, has the most important potentialities for playing an essential role in the modernization in China. Following the lead of Tang Yijie then, in order to see the specific role Christianity can play, we look at the points at which Chinese culture is challenged by the present globalization, where Confucian thought contains potentiality for related development, and how a Christian philosophy can catalyze these potentialities.

The challenges are many and are found on a number of levels. One is on the material level as the shift is made to a market economy: Is it possible to overcome egoism and yet retain initiative. A second is on the civic level, in view of the general shift from the center to the people: Is it possible to find a sense of the person that will found responsibility in the communities. A third is found in the growing complexity of both physical and social life in view of the increasing power of technology.

Here I will describe this dynamic by looking only at the first of these levels and address the present relation of Christian philosophy to the challenge introduced by the opening of a market economy.

At first, the market, seen ideologically, was supposed to be a matter of vicious competition and conflict, devoid of any ethics. Nevertheless, China chose to open a socialist market to the great excitement of its people. This was necessary in order to engage more intensively the initiative of the people in support of the progress of so large a population. This required that the people, each with their own competencies and each in their own local or village situation, take initiative to develop the quality of their personal and social lives. On the front page of "People's Daily" on January 12, 2000, an important article reported the decision of the government Ministry of Community Affairs to promote the responsibility of village and neighborhood councils, in part to engage the people more actively in community efforts.

There is here a dilemma, however. It is not that a socialist government and culture is inviting and stimulating the participation and initiative of the people, for socialism was always intended to be a movement of the people. It is, rather, the danger that such initiative will become what had earlier been predicted, namely, a process of vicious competition, marked by the corruption of the rich and the ruin of the poor and the weak. Personal initiative there must be, but it must be directed beyond self in order to be creative.

To this point, the classical position of Confucius and its promotion of harmony in aesthetic terms presents great potential, whose practical value has been proven in the restricted spheres of "the small Asian tigers." Is it feasible on the vast scale of Mainland China? It will be necessary for the billion and a quarter persons to evolve a sense of themselves as both centers of initiative and cohesive one with another. It would seem that to the degree that the former is promoted, the latter is challenged and vice versa. The specific need there is for a context in which these two can be harmonized, personal initiative and social cohesion. What can a Christian philosophy contribute on this precise but nervous point?

The Role of Christian Philosophy as Response

First, overcoming egoism. Both socialism and a religious philosophy are centrally concerned with the effort to overcome the degeneration of human initiative into egoism and conflict. This is true of all three components of the culture of China: Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. In a recent colloquium of scholars from China in India, it was said that Confucianism focuses on the gentleman, whose concern is etiquette or the modes and customs of refined external behavior. Professor Gu Weikang countered that Confucianism is not simply about the mode of action of the gentleman. Still more fundamental to Confucianism is the wisdom of the sage regarding the goal and foundation of human life. This illumines the values and virtues that inspire a worthy manner of personal and community life. This vision of the sage is the real heart of Confucianism.

Daoism also focuses on a transcendence of the individual's possessions and competitive concerns. The Dao that can be described—it is noted famously—is not the Dao. If it has to do with

objects that can be possessed, one in contrast to another, it is not the Dao. Daoist thinking goes beyond any particular individual or object to include the harmony and meaning of all.

In this way, both Confucianism and Daoism open a most important dimension for the contemporary mind. Where Descartes sought only ideas that were clear enough to be distinguished from all else; Daoism seeks just the opposite. In talking of "this" rather than "that," one has not yet touched the roots and the meaning of human life. Only by transcending objects and individuals can their real meaning for human life be attained.

Finally, Buddhism has a similar message. Some have misinterpreted Buddhism to be a pattern of ritual superstition or an escape from society. In discussions in India with the professors from Shanghai and the Chinese National Academy, Professors Nayak and Mishra suggested the contrary. What the Lord Buddha suggested was a middle way: neither the great asceticism of his earlier efforts nor the great indulgence of a consumer society, but a properly balanced life between both. This entails abandoning all clinging, that is, all seeking, grasping, or holding onto things. As a result, one's consciousness is freed to direct the heart along a virtuous path; this is also the karma yoga of the Hindu roots of Chinese Buddhism.

It is set directly and purposively against individualism and egoism, corruption and exploitation, which must be overcome for a healthy socialist market system. Instead, the Buddhist message provides a deep basis for a sense of justice, of compassion for the poor and the suffering, and a universal concern. In other words, it includes a deeply social ethics, which it vigorously supports philosophically with an elaborate epistemology and metaphysics.

It is the task of a Department of Philosophy and Religion in China today, especially in Beijing, to enable these dimensions of the heritage of Chinese culture to be appreciated as more than superstition or flight. Their deep social wisdom is supported by a rich metaphysics that needs to be unfolded and applied by the tools of philosophy. This is needed for a broad social (and socialist) vision to guide the present process of transition.

Second, joining personal initiative with social concern. We come here to a difficult juncture. The challenge is not only to overcome the dynamics of the consumerist, which is at the heart of the three components of Chinese culture, but at the same time to stimulate the initiative of the people of the country. All the competencies of the people in their many specializations and configurations must be mobilized in order to face the challenges of so great a population on the move into the new millennium. Initiative must be stimulated in a context that protects it against degenerating into egoism and exploitation. For all lose if the values of peace and harmony are abandoned in order to stimulate initiative, or, on the other hand, if harmony is stressed in such a way that the initiative of the people is suppressed. The challenge is to join together both personal initiative and social harmony not in an isometric that paralyses both, but in a dynamic union that can build the future.

This is the point at which a religious, grounded philosophy plays its special role in enabling social life. For it opens a transcendent dimension for a culture that frees one's self-understanding from being reduced to one's material conditions, as are rocks, plants, and animals. Instead, it opens the mind to meaning and values according to which we judge and value concrete temporal options. Moreover, it provides a sense of our origin and dignity and that of our fellow humans. This counters centripetal self-concern by love for others as brothers and sisters under the one Source and Goal of all. This ideal provides a basis for real hope that people can be enlivened and mobilized for social goals, for it is the same vision that both ensures the importance of the self and sets one in relation to others as well.

A religious philosophy at once inspires both human initiative and its social relatedness by providing cultures with a sense of the human person—not reductively as the result of lesser physical forces as do the sciences—but as an image of God and, hence, transcending or opening beyond itself. This it does in three steps, which the Hindus would summarize as existence, consciousness, and bliss. First, the person is appreciated as self-sufficient in existence, that is, as existing, not of one's self, which is the character of the God as Absolute Being, but in its own right. Thomas Aquinas would use the term "autonomous," that is, possessed of all that is required in order to be fully human and to be able to act accordingly. The person then is active and a center of initiative. To use Heidegger's term, this is the *dasein*, namely, being as emerging into time through the conscious reality that is the human person. As seen by a religious vision, the person erupts or bursts into time and will not be suppressed. This is initiative indeed.

Moreover, as a creature and image of God the human person is a reflection of the All-wise, of knowledge itself or consciousness: *cit* as Hindu philosophy would say. The human, then, is not a blind, destructive force, but is conscious and creative.

Finally, religion points out that the person is not made as an object, tool, or instrument to serve a need of the creator. Rather, because the Source is already all perfect, it creates out of a generous love or bliss (*ananda*), and hence, as an image of God, the person's freedom is not essentially self-centered or self-seeking, but open, sharing and social. Christian philosophy is articulated against a parallel background of the Trinity of Father, Son *(Logos,* as conscious expression), and Spirit as love. This is of such great import that classical Western philosophy began to codify the transcendental characteristics of being itself as unity, truth, and goodness.

Religion, of course, is not philosophy, but rather a basic component element of the culture and civilization. But if it is true, as hermeneutic and scientific methods now insist, that it is possible to obtain answers only to questions that have been posed, then the religious elements in a culture enable philosophers to ask questions such as the nature and meaning of human life and to restate these questions when the answers thus far do not suffice. Thus, when, as is now the case, a people gives new attention to their cultural roots the religious content of their culture enables their philosophers to pose new and deeper questions, to develop proportional philosophical tools, and to achieve penetrating and properly philosophical insights about the nature and progress of human life. This contribution is that a Christian philosophy can bring to Chinese culture. Whether this will be such that it will become a part of Chinese culture itself is difficult to foresee and will depend on the Chinese people themselves over a number of generations. But the issue of initiative without egoism is bound to be a central issue for many generations.

Conclusion

In the case of modernization for China, where the paradigm tends to be the West as articulated in 1919 in terms of the two Misters, Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy, a Christian philosophy can be important for two quite special and specific reasons.

First, philosophy has always differed significantly according to cultures. It is often noted that the broadest ocean on the philosophical map lies between the Anglo-Saxon tradition of England and the Continental philosophy of France, though geographically the two are but 25 miles apart. In its search for a rational structure for life philosophy can stop at any level. If it takes life in a Humean manner, as basically a matter of material survival, then it can work out a reductive model based upon physical or economic relations, reducing thereto the human person and relations between peoples. All value theory is then substituted by value-free empirical sciences, and ethics

can be only utilitarian. This is the position of the positivist and analytic philosophies whose founders, Bertrand Russell and John Dewey, visited China around the time of the 1919 movement.

Of itself and logically this is so individualistic and disaggregative that it is prone to orient human initiative into a socially destructive egoism. Hence in the socialist tradition such pragmatic personal initiative has been more feared than attractive. The West has been enabled to survive this threat of individualism by its religiously grounded social vision. This is indicated by the way Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759)19 and Adam Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767)20 provided a necessary context or safety net for Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776).21

This suggests that a people opening a market economy, with its dangers of individualism and of grasping, has special need for a philosophy compatible with a religious vision. Philosophers can then go back to work in order to take account of additional dimensions of human life—of unity and harmony among persons and with nature, of truth and justice in human interchange, and of love and service to others—that is, of life as possessed of true dignity and beauty.

Human initiative must not be destroyed, for, in analogy with creation, it is essential in order to respond to human needs. Rather it must be inspired and promoted, but in terms that at the same time lift one's sights, open one's concerns, and enable and guide one's will along social paths. This is precisely the character of a Christian philosophy. It recalls to the human person that the great power by which it was created—the source and heritage of its initiative—is self-giving and love, and that this extends to all peoples and things. Hence to exercise this initiative properly and fully is not to attack and subdue, but to live in harmony with others whose welfare is also one's own. This vision continually inspires philosophy to seek ways to integrate both self and others within the fullness of life.

Secondly, this is not a matter only of speculative knowledge, for philosophy engaged in the life and struggles of society. China has long conceived modernization as a process of assimilating the products and productive processes developed in the West. This can be only partly true, however, for the West is not only a matter of possessions. It is more revealing to look not at what the West has, but at what it is, at its values and way of life. To do this properly would require a long history of the development of its culture which identically is the development of Christian philosophy and it extends from the time of the early Church Father, through the high Middle Ages, to its phenomenological revival in our day. This centers on the revival of respect for persons and rule of law, openness of communication and dialogue, and dedication to human welfare broadly and richly conceived. Thus inspired, the culture can so develop as effectively to apply the particular values needed for concrete forward progress in continually changing circumstances.

Paradoxically, however, this example of the West does not mean copying an alien culture. For the great lesson of a Christian philosophy is not that of techniques of production or of policy which can be copied, but of building upon the deep religious foundations of one's own culture. This means drawing upon those dimensions of transcendence which we saw above in Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism—and which are found also in Islamic, Hindu and Christian tradition.—These provide the foundations upon which can be built a solid, humane and distinctively Chinese future.

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Notes

1. Ivor Leclerc, "The Metaphysics of the Good," Review of Metaphysics, 35 (1981), 3-5.

2. V. Mathieu, "Cultura" in Enciclopedia Filosofica (Firenze: Sansoni, 1967), II, 207-210; and Raymond Williams, "Culture and Civilization," Encyclopedia of Philosophy (New York: Macmillan, 1967), II, 273-276, and Culture and Society (London, 1958).

3. Onnelat, "Kultur" in Civilisation, le mot et l'id (Paris: Centre International de Synthese), II.

4. V. Mathieu, ibid.

5. John Caputo, "A Phenomenology of Moral Sensibility: Moral Emotion," in George F. McLean, Frederick Ellrod, eds., Philosophical Foundations for Moral Education and Character Development: Act and Agent (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992), pp. 199-222.

6. Gadamer, pp. 245-53.

7. Ibid. Gadamer emphasizes knowledge as the basis of tradition in contrast to those who would see it pejoratively as the result of arbitrary will. It is important to add to knowledge the free acts which, e.g., give birth to a nation and shape the attitudes and values of successive generations. As an example, one might cite the continuing impact had by the Magna Carta through the Declaration of Independence upon life in North America, or of the Declaration of the Rights of Man in the national life of so many countries.

8 .H.G. Gadamer, Truth and Method (New York: Crossroads, 1975), pp. 262.

9. Ibid., pp. 263-264.

10. Ibid., pp. 235-242, 267-271.

11. B. Tatar, Interpretation and the Problem of the Intention of the Author: H.-G. Gadamer vs E.D. Hirsch (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1998).

12. Gadamer, pp. 235-332.

13. Ibid., pp. 225-332

14. Ibid., pp. 336-340.

15. Ibid., pp. 327-324.

16. Ibid., pp. 324-325.

17. Tang Yijie, *Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, Christianity and Chinese Culture* (Beijing: Peking University and Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1991), p.122.

18. Ibid.

19. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

20. (Edinburgh: Kinbaid and Bell, 1767; New York: Garland, 1971).

21. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

Part III
Chinese Culture and Ethics

9.

Worshipping the Divine in Spirit and in Truth

Françoise B. Todorovitch

All humans share an insight into the existence of an overwhelming Transcendence that Christians and other believers call God. The conviction that a Divine Being, whose essence remains unknown to us, can be incarnate and take up a human form can be found in Hinduism, Sufism, in Mahayana Buddhism, as well as in Christian faith.

When the Samaritan woman asks Jesus about the mountain where God should be worshipped, he announces that the time will come when God will be worshipped neither here nor there, but "in Spirit and in Truth."

This answer implies a striking challenge for all religions today. Does it mean that Christians alone are able to worship God in Spirit and Truth. What "inspired" humans of all times and places whose experience has always been translated more or less accurately into dogmatic creeds and ritual prescriptions that stemmed from their own cultural environment.

Is the Truth of which they had an insight and which nevertheless remained inaccessible to them, and which they attempted to communicate to their fellow humans, not what mystics of all times have recognized as something beyond the divergences of religious creeds? How can this "Beyond" be characterized? Is it the "Totally Other," the "Void," the "Abyss" as some Western and many Eastern mystics suggest strongly? Whatever the answer will be, we cannot avoid asking ourselves which one helps us best to choose life over against the powers of violence, destruction and death.

An article published in the *New York Times* some weeks ago gives an account of recent research in social psychology conducted by Richard Nisbert and Takaniko Masuda. It shattered totally the age-old opinion that humans all over the world share the same fundamental ways of thinking. This research—carried in the United States, Japan, China and Southern Korea—show that Eastern thinkers tend to think in a more "holistic" fashion than do Western thinkers, that they rely more strongly on knowledge linked to experience than on abstract logic. Moreover, they seem to accept much better contradictions and paradoxes more easily. Western thinkers, on the contrary, who share consciously or unconsciously the thought-patterns of Greek philosophy, seem to prefer a more "analytic" way of thinking that leads them to isolate objects from their context, and to rely upon "logical" reasoning focusing upon avoiding all contradictions.

This kind of rationality led Western thinkers to separate ever more strongly philosophical questioning and religious belief, whereas Eastern thinkers felt no such urge to distinguish both realms so sharply. The most typical expression of Greek rationality, says Umberto Eco, is the mode of reasoning to which logicians have given the technical name of *modus ponen*: "If *p*, then *q*." This way of reasoning fits well the classical idea of a "definition" ("to define," means to trace the borders of the validity of a concept) setting up limits which protect us against an Infinite which is synonymous with the Indeterminate as such (*peras* - *apeiron*).1 We must not forget that for the Greeks, the idea of infinity expresses an imperfection (the "in-finite" is that which is not yet finished, or that which has no limits whatever); by contrast, the finite expresses the perfection of an achievement, for instance the beautiful "finishedness" of the *cosmos*, similar to a jewel). Only through the influence of the Christian religion did the Infinite received a thoroughly positive meaning.

The Infinite and Its Manifold "Incarnations"

All humans, since immemorial times and all over the world, seem to have had the intuition of the existence of a transcendent principle which some humans decided to call "God." One of my patients, despite the fact that she was an atheist, told me that her desire was to encounter "as in poetry" something essential which she would probably call God if she did believe in him. The idea that this God, whose essence remains unknown to us, can become "incarnate" taking a human shape, can be found in Hinduism and Sufism, in Mahayana Buddhism as well as in Christianity. This is also stated in the verses taken from the *Bhagavad Gita :*

When goodness grows weak,
When evil increases,
I make myself a body
In every age I come back
To deliver the holy
To destroy the sin of the sinner
To establish righteousness.

What "inspired" men and women of all places and all times have experienced, drawn by the spirit that they felt living within them, although they did not know where it came from, has been translated into dogmatic creeds and ritual observances stemming from the cultural milieus in which they lived their experiences. The astonishing fact is that these practices, which appear to be strikingly dissimilar, share nevertheless a strong family resemblance. This is, for instance, the case with clothes specifically reserved to cult, offerings to the Divinity, sacrifices, the recitation of endless litanies, etc.

If it is well understood, this diversity of creeds and rites is a good thing, as Cardinal Nicolaus de Cusa tried to show in his dialogue *De pace fide*.2 This was published in 1453, the very year the Turkish army conquered Constantinople, thus putting an end to the Byzantine Empire. In this imaginery dialogue, a general Council has been organised by Christ himself and his apostles in Jerusalem in order to put an end to religious violence. All nations known at the time, representing many different cultural traditions are invited to speak, among which we find a French, an Italian, a Tatar, a Persian, a Chaldean and even an Indian. In Cusa's opinion the plurality of religions that finds its practical expression in the variety of rites becomes dangerous only if it produces "division and unfriendliness" leading to hating the other (§ 54).

Cusa's fundamental insight regarding the plurality of religions is the following: if the Divine Unity is transcendent and unspeakable, it can only imply a plurality of manifestations: "*magna multitudo non potest esse sine multa diversitate*." Plurality and Unity are not contradictory to each other as long as we acknowledge fully the unnameable transcendence of the Divine: "Therefore we see that Thou who gives us life and being, are sought in different ways through different rites and you are called by several names, for what you are remains unknown and unspeakable to us."3

In 1799, Friedrich Schleiermacher made a similar statement in his famous *Discourses on Religion,* where he developed the idea that the plurality of religions is as necessary and unsurmountable as that of languages. It is grounded in the very essence of religion; which requires a plurality of manifestations. In Schleiermacher's opinion, wherever a religious instinct is alive it will be able "to move back from the empty rituals and the abstract and rigid doctrinal formulations

toward the original source whence it stems."44 Obviously, humans can be led by their temperaments—which are influenced by several factors (among others, heredity or education) to strict observances and exterior ways of behaving in order to sustain a belief which would lose all meaning without being supported by such manifestations. Nevertheless, every human can catch sight of something lying "beyond" dogmas and rites that we try to express more or less accurately.

Was this not also what Jesus had in mind when he answered the question of the Samaritan woman, asking him in which place God should be worshipped? He told her that the time would come when God would not be worshipped here or there, but "in Spirit and in Truth"?5

Christians think—as a recent document published in Rome by the *Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith* has stressed—that this means that there is only one incarnation of the Divine, namely, that of Jesus Christ. Let us not forget, however, that Jesus himself reminded those who accused him of blasphemy when he called himself the Son of God, that in the Old Testament the men whom God had spoken to where called gods.6 This is also one of the reasons why in his *Discourses on Religion*, Schleiermacher stresses that the founder of the Christian religion did not intend to give birth to the only possible religion and that Christ did not claim to be the unique Mediator between the Divine and humans.7

The Quest for the "Point Omega"

In Schleiermacher's understanding, religion has its source in the obscure feelings that the Universe stirs up in us. Opening oneself to the "Truth" of which "inspired" humans all over the world have wished to give testimony, requires fundamentally "the passivity of a child,"8 that is, the ability to let oneself be affected by the Infinite itself. This is the reason why Schleiermacher refuses to reduce religion to a lower-grade metaphysics (a "Platonism for the populace," as Nietzsche calls the Christian religion) or to a specialised moral, which commits us to an infinite task of moral perfection, despite the finite character of our life.

The same idea that religion must rely only upon its own insights can be found in the teachings of the great spiritual masters of all times and places. "All that I know of the sciences of the Divine and the Holy Scripture, I have learned in the forests and the fields. I had no other masters than beechtrees and oaks," writes Saint Bernard: "Trees and stones will teach you more than what you can learn while listening to the words of a magister."9 Meister Eckhart's distinction between the *Lesemeister* (the masters in commenting texts) and *Lebensmeister* (the masters who teach us the difficult art of leading a good life) stresses a similar point.

Once we admit that the "originary passivity" is the source of all positive religions, what are the consequences for intercultural and interreligious dialogue between the different wisdoms developed by humankind? Must we, following Hans Küng's program of a *Weltethos*, look for the moral values common to all great religions? Or should we look rather for a transcendent "*Omega Point*" which only mystics are able to glimpse, as the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur stressed in his critical discussion with Küng?

The expression *"Omega Point"* was invented by the geologist and paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin. During his research regarding the evolution of species he had deep visionary insights which led him to the idea of an continuingly evolutionary universe that would ultimately converge toward a divine "*Omega point*."10 In response to this idea, which he expressed in several writings a Roman Congregation condemned him to silence.

In a soul that has not maintained some sparks of the receptivity of a child, the Universe will never awaken the intuition of the Divine essence. "If you are not similar to little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of God" says Jesus.11

No wonder that institutions which are mainly driven by their will to power, whether spiritual or political, have always been afraid of mysticism whose universal aim goes beyond established laws. As Bergson shows in his *Deux sources de la morale et de la religion,* mystics seek to unite directly with the transcendent Principle itself, beyond the bonds which link them to a particular religion.

Louis Massignon relates that a Muslim mystic told one of his friends who had insulted a Jew: "You must know that all religious creeds worship God the Highest and that Judaism, Christianity the Islam and all the other confessional denominations are but different names and contrasting appellations, but that what they aim at contain no differences nor contrasts." Then he quoted the words of the great mystic Al Hallâj: "I have pondered on how I could give an experimental definition of religious confessions. This is how I formulate it: an Unique Principle with multiple ramifications. Therefore you must not ask your interlocutor to adopt this or that confessionnal denomination. This would prevent him from being led to an authentic union. The Principle itself must come to this man, and illuminate within him the highest meanings and then this man will understand"12

Wholeness, Nothingness and Mystical Desire

Mystical language goes beyond logical reasoning. At least in the Western world, this means a major challenge for a philosophy and a theology that is thoroughly permeated by Greek and Roman rationality.

" Meditate upon the form for much time. Then let the visualisation of the tutelary deity melt away, till nothing at all remaineth visible of it; and put thyself in the state of the Clearness and the Voidness—which thou canst not conceive," advices *The Tibetan Book of the Dead.*13

For the mystics, God, whom they take to be both immanent and transcendant, is also the *Totally Other* who can be understood only through his continuity with all beings, and nevertheless through the paradoxical experience of what they call "the annihilation of the I," "the Void" and "the Nothing." Obviously, something like the "Void" or the "Nothing" can nowhere be encountered in the empirical world accessible to rational explanation, nor can it be found in the mental world accessible to introspection. The "Void" and the "Nothing" are just metaphors by means of which philosophical and religious language tries to designate the Unconceivable which lies beyond all empirical and intellectual grasp. The "Void" and the "Nothing" appear thus to be the reverse of an inaccessible "Wholeness."

In his book: *La pensée du rien*, Stanislas Breton states that "affirmative and negative theology are but the two sides of the same theology which is doomed to alternate additions and substractions in order to give expression to a purely excessive Unspeakable, through the interplay of the Whole and the Nothing."14 He concludes: "Therefore the most truthful and the highest theology is that which refuses to lay upon the Infinite the chains of our measures of being and knowledge." In accordance with Nicolaus de Cusa, he concludes that the highest wisdom is to be found in a *docta ignorantia*. "Socrates admitted that he knew only one thing: ‘knowing nothing’ and that was in his mind the highest wisdom." "Is not the most noble theology?" asks Breton, "the highest wisdom which fulfills the Socratic understanding of the human spirit?"15

However, several meetings with Japanese thinkers in Tokyo helped him to understand that the "Void" and the "Nothing have not at all the same meaning in the East and in the West. For Buddhist thinkers, the "Void" and the "Nothing" are linked to "a technique of emptying, whose progress is actualized through a certain number of exercises which imply both the body and the soul." In this progress, Breton suggests very cautiously, as he puts it, that one might distinguish a first phase of "detachment," followed by a "renouncment" and a "dispossession" which, from *synyata* to *nirvana*, leads to an *illumination* "which masters the flow of time and which consists in a liberating."16

In the last pages of his study on the "thought of the Nothing," he draws our attention to the "strange fact" that "both in Buddhism and in Christianism, the strife for distanciation stems from nothing else than the fascination of the Whole, or, in other words, the fascination of Being taken as a Whole."17

As for myself, it is not for philosophical nor theological reasons that I had to ponder upon the possible meanings of "Wholeness" or "Nothingness," but for reasons directly linked to my work as a psychoanalyst, during which many who belonged to religious orders asked me for therapeutic help.

"Suddenly I understood the truth of which I had a glimpse while I was a child: Everything is nothing," writes Teresa of Avila, relating the beginnings of her religious vocation.18 Whenever during a psychoanalytical cure we come across this truth glimpsed in childhood, it is expressed through similar words: "Nothing, Nothingness, a void, an abyss" that God alone can fill with his presence.

During the psychoanalytical cure, too, the "Nothing" turns out to be the reverse of a "Whole." In all the cases of the nuns who underwent psychotherapeutic treatment with me, the existential alternative: "Either the Whole or Nothing" appeared to have its roots in the very precocious and unspeakable experience of a "Nothing," which they felt in their early childhood to be the nothingness of their mother's desire in relation to them. Later, they would project the modalities of this first experience upon their unconscious representations of the God who was expected to satisfy totally their desire.

While they were infants they had wished to be the "whole" of their mother. This confronted them with the impossible task of having to become the "whole" of a love which was a void, thus becoming themselves a "nothing." How, indeed, can one under these circumstances take into account the nondesire of the other regarding oneself if not through desiring to become nothing in him?

The desire of not having to desire, which so many contemplatives who came to my consultations uttered right from the start, is nothing else than the negative face of the desire to be the Other's whole. This is also the advice that Saint John of the Cross gave to his novices in order to guide them in the mystic way, when he wrote in *Ascending Mount Carmel*: "In order to become everything, you must endeavour to be nothing at all."

The "mystics" that I encountered while working as a psychoanalyst expected to become the whole of their God, as during their early childhood they had wished to be the whole of a mother the failures of whose love proved them to be nothing.

A Promise of Life

Was darf ich hoffen?, "What am I allowed to hope?" asks Kant. This is the third major question of the four fundamental questions which human reason as such must deal with in Kant's mind: "What can I know?," "What must I do?," "What am I allowed to hope?," and, finally: "What is

man?" The third of these questions is in Kant's opinion the only philosophical key to a philosophical understanding of religion.

This is also the crucial question with which philosophers, religious believers, and finally, all humans are sooner or later confronted.

It is because they had reached a deathlock in the dynamic trajectory of their desire, which was supposed to lead them to the very Source of life, that many religious sought my help. I asked one what death meant to her. Her answer was: "Death? Nothing. . . ." Then she remembered that when she was a little girl her mother had left her once alone, putting her life in danger, and she began to associate: "My mother: nothing. . .death: nothing. . .existing no longer."

When the quest for a "Beyond" that should give full meaning to our life is rooted in an originary void, the impetus stemming from a first experience of being loved and loving, an impetus that could have taken them towards the Being whom they called God, fell back to its starting point: the void.

In this context, one could quote what Nietzsche says about the eternal return of the same in a passage of his *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* under the title *The Heaviest Burde*:

What would you answer to a demon who would tell you the following: The life which you are living for now and which you have been living, you will have to live it once more; and there will be nothing new in it, besides the fact that every moaning and all that which is unspeakably small or great in your life will return to you. How much kindness must you feel towards yourself and towards life in order to desire just this last and eternal confirmation, this last and eternal sanction?19

In formulating this paradoxical challenge, Nietzsche claimed that he had discovered the only real alternative against Schopenhauer for whom the eternal return of the same was the supreme malediction of the everlasting and universal will to live. This explains why Schopenhauer thought that the only true issue was to be found in a philosophical interpretation of Buddhism, the first and probably the most influential produced by Western philosophy. For Nietzsche, on the contrary, the radical acceptance of life which he himself interpreted as the will to power, leads inevitably beyond the "moral God" of Judeo-Christianism, back to Dionysos, the Greek God of life, torn apart by the Bacchants.

Is this alternative, represented by the two antithetic geniuses of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, who are also the two *enfants terribles* of Western philosophy, the last word, or must we look out for another answer to the Kantian question: "What am I allowed to hope?

To be caught in the trap of the eternal return of the same would indeed be a terrible condemnation of the hope which, consciously or unconsciously, dwells in all human beings. But whence does this hope and desire stem? Saint Augustin asked himself this question in the tenth book of his*Confession*, and endeavoured to give an answer.

Truly, whenever I seek thee, my God, it is a happy life that I am seeking for," he says. But what led him to this quest? "Is it reminiscing, as though I had forgotten and that I still retain that which I have forgotten, or is it because I desire to learn a life which I ignore and which I never knew?" If a happy life is indeed what everybody desires, "where have they come to know it, in order to desire it in this way."20

In my opinion, this desire of a happy life, which serves our life instincts, is rooted in the memories of moments of happiness that each one of us has felt one day or another. The desire of putting an end to an intolerable suffering is not enough for, as Piera Castoriadis-Aulagnier has shown in her reflections upon her experience as a psychoanalyst, it can also go together with death instincts. In other words, it can lead to "the attempt to annihilate all reasons for quest and expectation by returning to a primordial silence, a realm before all desire, where one could ignore that we are doomed to desire." And she comments: "Under this respect, one could say that death is the last illusion which the human being encounters on his path. Through desiring to die, he nourishes the foolish hope to accede to a realm before desire, forgetting that this implies the annihilation of all pleasure."21

It is exactly this desire of not having to desire the negative of the desire to be the other's whole—which I have come across more then once at the beginning of the psychoanalytical cure of contemplatives who had encountered from the very start of their life the nothingness and the void of their mother's love.

Reminiscing one's having been loved helps, on the contrary, the life instincts to triumph over our death instincts, even at the moment of our death. Françoise Dolto, the well-known French psychoanalyst, gives an interesting example of this. One of her young colleagues, who knew that she had an incurable cancer, met her regularly in order to confide her revolt to her. One day, however, she was appeased, feeling an intense joy similar to that of mystics, says Dolto. In one of her dreams, she had heard someone speaking ununderstandable words, which she remembered nevertheless. Thinking that it was an oriental language, Dolto advised her to have the words translated. The words turned out to be a Hindu lullaby, saying something like:

Sleep my little beloved child
Whose eyes are similar to stars

This young woman had been raised in her early childhood by an Indian nurse, while her parents where dwelling in the East. She remembered that this nurse enjoyed lulling her and singing to her before putting her to sleep. . . .Thus these words of love, stemming from the depth of childhood, still held their promise on the threshold of death.

In the same way, the injunction "You will love" that we read in the biblical book of Deuteronomy expresses the law of life itself: "Look: Today I put before you life and happiness, death and unhappiness, I who enjoin you today to love and you will live."22

Conclusion

To conclude, let me come back to the verse of the Gospel that guided all these reflections: "God is Spirit, and those who worship him, must do so in Spirit and in Truth." What about this "Spirit of Truth" who enables us to acknowledge and to glorify the Being which, beyond all religious particularisms, the Gospel of John calls God?

The Biblical tradition, to which this verse belongs, suggests an answer in the consideration of the "promise of life" or, following Saint Augustin, the desire for a happy life, which he identifies with the desire for God himself.

According to the same tradition, the Spirit of Truth which will lead us to the "plenitude of Truth" (Jn 16, 13), is the Spirit of Life which at the beginning of all creation reigned over the waters. Like the wind, he blows wherever he likes, nobody knowing where he comes from and

where he will go (Jn 3, 8). But this is also true, as Jesus tells Nicodemus, of anybody who accepts to be borne from the Spirit (Jn 3, 4).

As the French philosopher Michel Henry stresses over and again, there is only one Life in which all living creatures take part.23 But this fundamental unity of Life is not synonymous with uniformity. Of this also we find clear testimony in the fundamental texts of Christianity. At Pentecost, the Spirit descended upon the members of the first community gathered in Jerusalem under the form of tongues of fire, shattering the walls of fear behind which they were hiding. The marvel of this event is not, contrary to a common reading, that they become able to speak the same language and even less that they repeat the same things. The marvel is that on that day they became able to understand what was said in foreign languages.

Leaving aside the theological implications of this text, I would say that it is this miracle of recognition that happens again in every successful intercultural and interreligious dialogue. In this sense, we could apply Schleiermacher's prophetic insights in his discourse on the Leibnizian project of a universal language to the dialogue in which we are involved now in Taipei.

"Some people," writes Schleiermacher, "forgetting their own origin, think that they alone are able to represent true humanity through their existence." They do not accept that today we must "acknowledge the formative power of all nations and thus the equality of spiritual life in its diversity." This means hoping "that the slumbering receptivity awakens either suddenly or that it develops progressively through the contact of the breath of a foreign life" until the spiritual development extends to the whole earth.

Schleiermacher claims that no nation has the right to retreat into its own language, but at the same time he makes it clear that the plurality of languages will never disappear. "For someone who loves there is no greater success than translating into his own language what has impregnated in the most determinate fashion the other's particularity."24

This mutual recognition of the other can exist only where there is love, the only source of life.

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Notes

1. Umberto Eco, *Les limites de l'Interprétation* (Paris: Grasset, 1992), p. 51.
2. Nicolas de Cuse, *De pace fidei, La paix de la foi,* trad. Galebois (Sherbrooke, 1977).
3. "Tu ergo. . .es ille qui in diversis ritibus differenter quaeri videris et in diversis nominibus nominaris, quoniam uti es manes omnibus incognitus et ineffablis" (Nicolas de Cuse, *De pace fidei,* § 5).
4. Cf. Jean Greisch, "La religion et les religions" in *Archives de Philosophie,* 63 (2000), pp. 238-240.
5. Jn 4, 21-24.
6. Jn, 10, 33.
7. Cf. Jean Greisch, "La religion et les religions," *Art. cit.*, p. 244
8. *Ibid*., p. 237.
9. Cf. Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy* (Triad Grafton Book, 1985), p. 96.
10. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Oeuvres*, 13 vol. (Paris: Seuil, 1955-1976).
11. Cf. Mt 19, 13; Lc 18, 16; Mc 10, 14.

12. Louis Massignon, *La Passion de Hallâj* (Paris: Gallimard), vol. I, pp. 238-239.

13. Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*, *op. cit*. p. 358.

14. Stanislas Breton, *La Pensée du Rien* (Kok Pharos: Kampen, 1992), p. 29.

15. *Ibid*., p. 30.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

17. *Ibid*., pp. 109.

18. Marcelle Auclair, *La vie de Ste Thérèse d'Avila* (Paris: Ed. du Seuil), p. 48.

19. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Le Gai Savoir*, § 341, Œuvres Complètes) (Paris: Gallimard), t. V, p. 232.

20. Saint Augustin, *Les Confessions*, Livre X, XX, 29.

21. Piera Castoriadis-Aulagner, *La violence de l'interprétation* (Paris: P.U.F., 1975), pp. 65-66.

22. Dt 30, 15-16, 19.

23. Cf. Michel Henry, *C'est moi la vérité*. Une philosophie du christianisme (Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 1986).

24. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Des différentes méthodes du traduire* : sur l'idée leibnizienne, encore inaccomplie, d'une langue philosophique universelle (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1999), pp. 103, 105.

10.

"Human Dignity" in Retrospect and Prospect*

Michel Renaud

Introduction

1948-1998: More than 50 years have passed since the official Declaration of Human Rights. A stream of events has taken place: the crumbling of an empire, the slow growth of a European Union, but also new outbreaks of barbarism and genocide. At the same time, science has brought forth new challenges–among them, the investigation of the human genome, deeper knowledge of the beginnings of human life, together with inevitable adjacent issues such as the patentability of segments of the genome, the use of embryos in research, euthanasia, etc. It is impossible to sum up the last 10 years, let alone the century or the millennium. Yet, out of a whole batch of pertinent questions, we might probe one that is particularly interesting: What is our main concern today when we think about the human person? Is our way of *seeing* the human being the same as that tried out 10 years ago? This investigation is certainly contemporary, but this is true of all periods– the task of understanding the being of man and woman (as *homo* or *vir*) is as modern today as it was 10 years ago or as it will be in 10 years' time. Thus, it would be correct to pick up again the thread of the discourse begun a long time ago. This does not entail obsoleteness. Philosophy is not like science; a five-year old science magazine might be outdated in terms of natural science, whereas a dialogue by Plato, the *Summa Theologica* by St Thomas Aquinas, or a work by Locke may be more modern than many recent philosophical works.

Here, however, the orientation will be somewhat different; we shall try to highlight some of the difficulties we feel or sense in our day-to-day life. Thus, our questioning will depend more on practical ethics than on speculative inquiry into the essence of the human being. Still, concrete questions, even in philosophy, often raise the greatest theoretical difficulties. Thus, we shall propose four difficulties, presented in the form of four trilogies that enunciate four aspects of our concerns.

Conviction, Tolerance, Identity

The first difficulty worth noting bears on an aspect of the relationship of dignity and identity. In effect, this relationship is undergoing change imperceptibly, raising the question of how convictions and tolerance articulate in our way of thinking about our identity. Each one of us holds his or her own convictions, and we have always known that our neighbour's convictions do not coincide necessarily with ours. None of this worried us, inasmuch as dialogue left our certainties almost intact, as if nothing could sway them. Collectively we did feel the error, as if scepticism of perverse ideologies insidiously permeated our certitudes. Moreover, certainties relating to the permanence of standards of behaviour actually fell apart, with each generation bringing a fresh set of novelties, not only aesthetic but also social and moral. Dissension has taken such hold that great general confusion has set in regarding rules of conduct, education, essential values, and our outlook on life. Although we hold onto them, our certainties are affected by a coefficient of doubt greater than in the past. Like some new evil genius, the venom of doubt murmurs within us: "What if I were wrong, after all?" Whatever the source of these ideas–social, political, educational, moral,

etc.–doubt widens its sphere of influence, slipping into zones where we do not expect it. The speed with which ideas spread, the multiplicity of encounters availed by the mass media, all contribute to flood us increasingly with a profusion of information that we are often unable to critically assimilate. New, nonrationalised convictions drive out the old, taking away their strength. In the end, reason is confined to the mathematical or empirical sciences, while the domain once ruled by "practical wisdom"–by prudence, using Aristotle's terminology–has been abandoned to free will, which relies only on sense impressions and on yearnings for power.

On such grounds, a poor sense of tolerance grows; tolerance is rooted no longer in a soil of strong convictions but in their absence. Instead of denoting progress in respect for the other, this kind of tolerance is silently identical to indifference, which finds all convictions acceptable because they serve only as possible remedies for the existential *angst* of each one. This form of tolerance accompanies a moment of crisis in practical reason and of tacit capitulation of devotion to any values other than those of social and economic success. As Eça de Queiroz wrote some 100 years ago in his *Letters from Paris*, the essential thing is to get one's name in the papers; to become a media personality, as we say now, by appearing on TV, by becoming part of the so-called "jet set." Thereupon, paradoxically, the relation between private and public life becomes perverted: on the one hand, behaviour usually reserved for private life invades the public sphere, while, on the contrary, a new gulf opens between deep feelings and their external, visible expressions. It is in this sense that we may say that in the person's heart, in the core of the person's private life, there tends to be a growing inability to find the sources of happiness. Of course, the problem of human identity goes on being analysed and debated, but at the same time, it is redirected to one's personal convictions, whose incompatibility seems to justify all sorts of contradictory behaviour, perhaps unacceptable to many eyes.

In truth, not everything is possible now–there is a borderline beyond which behaviour is deemed almost unanimously to be ethically reprehensible. Indeed there are boundaries in place, which attest genuine progress in culture and civilisation. The political and international recognition of the inviolable dignity of each human being, despite the impossibility of reaching agreement as to its grounds, already represents an unquestionable value in human relationships. A minimum of agreement on the ethical dignity of the human being, on its fundamental rights, understood up to now as rights more personal than social, is essential to protect the peaceful coexistence of individuals and nations. Thus, not all kinds of behaviour are now juridically allowed; indeed, it is paradoxical that perhaps no century has gone so far in the practice of horrors against human beings, while going so far in subsequent reactions that defend their dignity. Notwithstanding this, within the interval delimited by the boundaries of acceptance of human dignity, doubt and scepticism have set in, together with a poor idea of tolerance. This situation is evident in the way scientific research treats human life in its beginnings, and in the way the reigning economic liberalism ultimately reduces human beings to their reproductive function.

The challenge that confronts us is the discovery of a new sense of tolerance, which allows the dynamic coexistence of individuals and collectivities. The basis of tolerance is not the banal acceptance of the lowest common denominator between various convictions; it is the acceptance, within previously established bounds, of strong differences that must coexist. The issue of tolerance has a direct bearing (or an indirect one, at the very least) on the understanding of human identity. Given that our existence must be lived as "co-existence," the convictions of others enter the sphere of our thinking, conditioning our reflexes and actions–from rejection, fear and isolation to the struggle for mastery and power. The just mean would lie in understanding the other's conviction, even when the other's words and actions touch the limits of acceptance; at that point,

dialogue may institute a dynamic of reciprocal approximation, seeking common ways to act that are guided by the dignity of the human being. Thus, instead of being a purely formal concept, dignity becomes inscribed in the space-time of one culture and in the dialogue between cultures. That is why the dignity of Man is not a static but a dynamic concept, requiring at all times the adjustments and improvements that dialogue can achieve. By going beyond pure formalism, the *dignity* of the human being will communicate content to the *identity* of the human being, and thus keep it from reduction to mere data on an ID card.

Authenticity, Desistance, Commitment

The problem of the identity of the human subject extends into a second trilogy that hinges on a crisis of authenticity. Usually, we like the convictions that drive us1 and are part of our unique identity in their simple, pristine purity. This means not that our faithfulness to them is exemplary, but that we let them guide our efforts to live our lives–we bestow on our beliefs concrete existence and draw from them motivation and support. Thus, we consider that what matters is not appearing to be but being, that inner reality is more important than fictitious, deceiving behaviour. It is better to be authentic than widely known; thus, authenticity is for us an ideal according to which we must shape our entire life.

As we look around us, however, sooner or later we experience the inverse: success and authenticity do not run hand in hand in our world, so that we often witness the triumph of unauthenticity, by virtue of which appearance eclipses being. What is essential is no longer the intrinsic value of the achievement or work done, but the art of showing off and acting "as if" the visible achievement were the absolute best. What is shown becomes pure appearance in the negative sense of the word, that is to say, form without content, superficial gloss devoid of action that truly changes reality. We all know, for example, that politics abounds in pseudo-actions, pseudo-reforms, pseudo-persons, and pseudo-facts, in "political" facts artificially created in order to make us forget the real problems. Let us not criticise the politicians alone, however, for the same happens in almost every area of existence. Many of the current philosophical–and scientific–publications that flood the market contain but pseudo-thoughts, many are hollow books whose sole purpose is to enrich a *Curriculum Vitae*. Will authenticity perish in the face of unauthenticity? If the bad penny can drive out the good one, we might think that giving up is the internal risk that threatens our identity–we don't mean giving up life, but desisting from the struggle for the values in which we believed early on in life, for instance, at the start of our professional career. "It is not worth it to struggle to improve institutions," we might think, for they are so ponderous that they will crush any such attempts, however well-intentioned. Doubt sets camp in the field of action, in view of the success of venality in all matters and of the triumph of the forces of inertia.

It is good then to return to an interpretation of the dignity of the human being that is ethical, rather than juridical. This dignity involves a capacity for commitment that, despite and beyond the weight of inertia, makes the human being truly human, and endows him with greatness amid his weaknesses and despair. It is no doubt a different concept of dignity, unlike the concept that underlies national or international declarations of human rights. According to this new concept, dignity is the result of human existence, not its starting point. Dignity becomes almost equivalent to the ethical quality of the *experienced contents* of existence, as if it was affirmed that, because we are all equally "dignified" [*digno*] and respectable, human beings do not confer upon their human *dignity* a content that is equally or similarly *deserving of value* [*digno de valor*].

Paul Ricoeur says that we must progress from Man *coupable* [guilty] to Man *capable*. We would extend this to say that we must recover our capacity for action starting from the zero moment in each of us, represented by ethical unauthenticity. In this different usage of the concept of dignity, what is at stake is no longer our *formal* identity–an identity that is marked by the act of birth and stamped in our ID card–but the return of our being to its *fons et origo*, to its original capabilities. According to Aquinas, the interconnection between being and action means that action "ensues from" being or corresponds to it; reciprocally, we shall arrive at our identity (that is, our being) by the way we manage the commitment (action) that makes visible our wish to be.

Thus, we are closer to the biblical vision of the world than to Greek thinking, inasmuch as *identity*, according to the biblical universe, emerges primarily from how one acts and not from one's "ontological" being. Now, it may be said that contemporary thought is seeking conciliation between the speculative interpretation of the human *being* (in the Greek manner) and the approach to human identity based on the existential dynamics of *action*. Thinkers such as Levinas and Arendt are found at this philosophical crossroads; it is no accident, either, that over the past few years there has been a multiplication of philosophical studies on the concept of responsibility. To acquiesce to a request entails a commitment, which, as a "response" to an appeal, becomes a responsibility. The commitment ensures mediation between the response and the responsibility, as if responsibility were the capacity to respond to an expectation placed on the human being. The effectiveness of the commitment gives content to the "ethical" dignity of the human being. While human beings are *formally* equal in dignity–which is expressed juridically as the dignity of "every human being"–they differ by virtue of the ethical *contents* generated by the multiple forms of the commitments they effectively make.

Memory, Forgetfulness, Forgiveness

The connection between our personal identity and the commitment that expresses our wish to be is neither *ad hoc* nor fragmentary. This connection must be regarded as subjective and temporal in duration. It would retreat into the inexpressible mystery of each person if it could not be expressed, at least partially. Now, the form of language appropriate to express it is the narrative.

It is no accident that the last two or three decades have seen the development of studies on narrative [*narratividade*], both in the scope of the literary sciences and in philosophy. Paul Ricoeur was one of the great theoreticians of philosophical narration, particularly in the trilogy he published over 1983-1985, *Temps et récit* [Time and Tale]. Even the term "history" is overburdened, since it means the history of what happened (and was lost in the silence of the past) as well as history as the narrative produced by historians. There is a connection between these two senses, between the *Geschichte* and the *Historie* of the German language. Narrative history revives in the present the fabric of human acts and the sufferings, activities and passivities, that make up the plot of past history. Historians are thus the guardians of memory, without which there is no identity, collective or personal. Documents, monuments, signs, and testimonies of all kinds, from civil registries to oral interpretations and eyewitness disclosures, support the memory that governs narrative history. But narrative reconstitutes the acts and events of history experienced. Now, the contents of living memory give temporal density to our human identity. It is not only the history of institutions, of societies, or States that needs to be kept alive, but also the individual histories of each human being.

In this context, it is opportune to remember that the issue of the "identity" of the human being was affected by studies of narration. In the mid-20th century, phenomenology insisted on human

identity as the *body experienced* and as *temporality*. This was, as it were, a formal concept of temporality, of temporality insofar as it affects every existence. One aspect it failed to stress–brought out particularly by the hermeneutic school–was the living contents of this subjective temporality. The latter is jointly the vehicle for the time plane [*tempo*] of a cultural tradition, which gives roots to human life, and for the time plane of the events in a unique life, of the events that weave, on the backdrop of the grand history of the world, a small individual history.

The concrete narrative of our personal existence provides the specific contents of our temporal identity. Now, because there is no narration without scansion, without *caesura* or rhythm, the narrative will hinge on actual events held to be remarkable. In effect, in the life of individuals just as in the life of the world, a strange phenomenon takes place, whereby events experienced initially as not particularly outstanding will be revealed in a later interpretation as having opened the future, becoming *a posteriori* candidates to the role of founding events. Such events are at the root of a series of other events that they made possible. Yet, at the time they were experienced there was not clear explicit awareness of their founding role. For example, were the Apostles aware that Christ's resurrection was the founding event it was and continues to be for Christians? Likewise, amorous encounters or the factors that govern the choice of a profession obey this "logic" of events that lay the foundation for a future still unknown. This kind of narrative will not lean for support only on words said and reproduced, but also on other elements that are part of our memory, such as photographs and objects that are emotionally charged because they serve as "reminders" of moments experienced with particular density. Such elements must not be neglected when we inquire into the identity of a particular human being. Human identity cannot do without a determinate past and a future that is partially determinable; to kill a person's identity, just as killing a culture, consigns to intentional oblivion one's tradition and memory.

Commenting on Husserl, Merleau-Ponty said in his book *Signes*:2 "Thus it is with the world–from the moment the painter first saw it, from his initial attempts, the entire history of painting provides him with a tradition, that is to say, Husserl comments, with the power to forget the origins and give the past not an afterlife, which is a hypocritical form of oblivion, but a new life, which is a noble form of remembrance." Although it applies to painting as an act of "describing" the world, Merleau-Ponty's reflection shows how memory, understood in this sense and not in purely psychological fashion, is part of our deepest human identity. It is the thick substance [*espessura*] of personal identity. Then, the paradoxical effect arising from the multiplicity of interpretations of the same "event" no longer appears strange: The same events, experienced by different persons, receive different echoes and are endowed with non-identical importance. This leads to the narrative taking on different contours; brothers from the same family, close friends, the partners in a couple, colleagues will describe differently events that, "objectively" speaking, are the same. Nonetheless, regarding this identity, the following question arises: Who is the "neutral" observer for whom these events are the same, given that the narrative necessarily springs from an existential precomprehension? Such an observer does not exist; hence, the "apparent" objectivity of events disappears. More correctly, we may affirm that this objectivity is always incorporated into a form of memory, which, contrary to what might be believed, is not exclusively affective; rather, it may be said more accurately to be "significative," being the bearer of a signification into which are integrated the multiple elements that constitute a personal history.

A narrative consists in condensing time and in stressing points considered pertinent. Because the choice of these stresses and of the contours they lend to that history depends on the narrator's activity, it may be said that past history awaits the historian who is able to do it justice. Hence, past history is always open to reinterpretation, because the interpretative lines of force [*eixos*

interpretativos] and the points of view that ground the presentation are not previously fixed. Now, it is the narrative that protects history from forgetfulness, from oblivion. This thesis may be, and ought to be applied to individual history, in which case it will take on specific contours. At the same time, however, no history is exempt from forgetfulness.

Forgetfulness is part of the narrative, so much so that, if personal *identity* is incorporated into the narrative that spells it out, then that identity also entails forgetfulness. What forgetfulness is meant here? I have definitely forgotten that I am unable to recall, for instance, my own birth and the first years of my childhood. This profound forgetfulness may propagate to diverse areas in my life. There is also a less deep psychological forgetfulness, compatible with the ability to recall. Yet, just as memory is not pure psychological recall reproducing the past, forgetfulness, likewise, is not the pure psychological vanishing of the ability to remember.

Without going into the meanders of psychoanalytical interpretations, we may affirm that there is a form of "narrative" forgetfulness that corresponds to the explicit intention of not constituting some datum in the past as a founding event. This form of forgetfulness corresponds to an act of will that desists from the real, perhaps spontaneous, possibility of integrating into the history, our own or social and political history, such and such event, encounter, suffering, success, or failure. This is not forgetfulness in the sense of a disappearance from memory; it is a matter of not integrating something into the central lines of force of the narrative plot of an existence.

In truth, there may be two cases in the constitution of this narrative, for the "forgotten" act, fact, or event may be "forgotten" in two ways. On the one hand, its nonintegration means that it is not part of the central interpretative moments of the narrative, because the weight it might have been accorded in a different interpretation is not recognised. This willful forgetfulness corresponds to an active attitude by the historian–possibly the "I" in the case of an autobiography–who considers that, for the purposes of the narrative, such facts, events or decisions are not relevant or significant. It is said that all autobiographies are a lie precisely because they "forget"–often intentionally–facts, events, or encounters that might affect negatively the biographer's image.

On the other hand, an ethical attitude might motivate the forgetfulness. This is the case when the narrator decides to invert the meaning of an act or fact of personal, social or political history. This is a different form of wilful forgetfulness. The way we see it, the *ethical* dimension of forgetfulness corresponds anthropologically to a manifestation of forgiveness. Forgiveness is not in effect the abolition of the marks (perhaps still visible) of some event, or of its inevitable consequences, but of the significance it takes upon the integration of its significance into a certain history. Maybe that is how we may understand the "pleas for forgiveness" for certain historical acts in the past. At the end of the twentieth century, the theme of pleas for forgiveness has been especially debated, namely concerning the attitude of the Catholic and other churches that have sought a "purification of memory." This initiative aroused reactions of opposite sign. Side by side with praise, there was talk of ambiguous acts, of "politically convenient" acts, since the past cannot be changed, anyway, and no one is speaking of the aberrations of today. Victims will be victims, with or without pleas for forgiveness. The above evaluation proves that all acts–including the plea for forgiveness–are open to considerably divergent interpretations, giving rise to diverse historical narratives. The case in point seems exemplary: indeed, what the plea for forgiveness determines first of all is the official designation of the victim as such by the institution that made it a victim. The institution acknowledges the past act, declared ethically perverse, now imbued with a new meaning, which is public and no longer private. The constitution of the history modifies the forms of forgetfulness by dint of what is stressed, changing the presentation of identity both personal and institutional. To consider the past as fixed, closed, not open to "alteration" by the new

interpretations provided about it manifests profound ignorance of the meaning of history as a narrative rooted in the understanding of a personal or institutional identity. It is true that one may ask about the authenticity of this reinterpretation and about the future consequences that are supposed to ensue from it. Thus, a reinterpretation of the past would lack authenticity if it did not place a commitment on future action, conditioning the latter to not reproduce that which is considered an error or perversion of the past. Even so, the legitimate and necessary question about authenticity may not disqualify at the start the sense of reinterpretation of the past, due to the indispensable dialectic between identity, narrative and reinterpretation of the central lines of force of this narrative. That is why decisions and acts such as the "plea for forgiveness" and the "purification of memory" confer upon historic meaning an ethical dimension, which, by reinterpreting the past, set guides for the future and modify the present *identity*.

Thus, what the question of identity conveys today is how identity articulates with temporal duration and with the narrative of its self-understanding. As Ricoeur saw it, the narrative serves identity, manifesting its permanence as human identity–and, we might add, as identity of an institutional type, too. Yet, just as every narrative is open to reinterpretation, human identity is likewise open to its own reinterpretations. The novelty of this inherent trait of identity resides in the incorporation into the *form* of personal identity of its *contents*, that is, of the narrative unity of time as lived experience [*tempo vivido*].

The history of bioethics does not escape these problems. How can the dignity of the human being motivate and ground the decisions needed to answer the questions raised by science? Note that the question may be formulated inversely: what contents will accrue to "human dignity" from concrete answers to the challenges of bioethics? What is at stake is the dignity of the human being, which stands to such decisions and concrete answers not only as a stable grounds but also as their content, a content that is culturally contingent and permanently threatened. That is why the historical narrative the future produces based on today's answers will focus on describing the contents we are building now for our human identity. It will be the task of the future to clarify what progress we may have made in our ethical understanding of human dignity.

Spirit, Determinism, Freedom

One last concern, out of other eligible concerns that we find particularly pertinent to an up-to-date discourse on the ethical dignity of Man, turns on the relationship between consciousness and determinism. Each era comes up with a new approach to this relationship; while the question remains the same in broad formal terms–the similarity of the question is all the more interesting for the constant refreshment of its formulation. In Saint Augustin's theology, the meeting of Grace and Freedom led to a quarrel about predestination: does free, non-determined choice exist? This theological context was reactivated in the sixteenth century, through the impact of the theological disputes stirred by the beginnings of Protestantism. Then the development of science, in the wake of the rationalism of the Enlightenment, set the stage for the entrance of determinism, which negated freedom. At the core of the human being, were discerned sources that unconsciously conditioned his action. The theological predetermination of freedom gave way to scientific determinism in the comprehension of the human being. We might say that this determinism feeds on the new discoveries of the sciences of man in order to segregate forms that are ever finer and more acute. In the nineteenth century, the impact of experimental psychology led to freedom being contested; in the twentieth century, using its newly found autonomy, sociology constituted as subject of scientific discourse the social group instead of the individual person. And nowadays,

the century of biology that prefigures itself–or, indeed, has started already–constitutes as subject of the discourse not conscious freedom any longer, but instead the genome on the one hand, and on the other, without incompatibility, the electrochemical functioning of the neurones. In this perspective, vulgarised by scientists who see themselves as the true philosophers of the future, what is resurfacing today is but the age-old problem of determinism and predestination. The dualism of Descartes might appear as a so-called "error" to someone who is convinced that he is reduced to an exclusively biological dimension; likewise, Spinoza's psycho-physical parallelism is held to reproduce in more sophisticated guise the "error" of Descartes. To leave error behind and enter the land of truth would require the scientific conversion of our way of looking: it would be a matter of grasping that the subject who speaks in us is but the resultant of neuronal interactions with environmental stimuli. Becoming articulated with the decoding of the genome, the problematics of thought would not be far from being interpreted as the manifestation of a genetic predetermination; thus, we should expect the discovery of the gene of ethical behaviour that is manifest in our neurones, the gene of happiness and–why not?–the gene of science and the gene of the scientific discovery of the genes?

Undoubtedly, scientific "materialism" has shifted from Marxist theory to the domain of science, in particular to biology, both molecular and genetic. As a philosophical theory, materialism is not deduced necessarily from science in the manner of a syllogistic conclusion; nonetheless, still from the philosophical point of view, it is a permanent temptation to the scientist who has not looked long into the epistemological critique of scientific knowledge. A certain notion of causality operates in the neuronal determination of the phenomena of the mind, just as genes exert their own causality on the makeup of the human body. The question to which there is still no answer has to do with the possibility of a different kind of understanding of the human phenomenon studied biologically; without denying in the least the value of this scientific method, we must analyse the relation established *a priori* between the field of objectivity of *that which is* under study and the *method* that studies it. For the scientific discourse now practised, this issue is hardly relevant, inasmuch as the scientist considers that it is the very nature of phenomena that determines the method of analysis. In the scientist's view, therefore, the method may not be questioned, as if *a priori*–that is, even before the determination of the empirical method–there had been an epistemological decision regarding the explanation of the workings of the genetic or neuronal "material." It is at this level that scientist and philosopher disagree–at least the philosopher as understood in the present study. The scientist's presupposition–here, too, we must repeat, a certain type of scientist that does not correspond to all scientists but only to those we consider to be marked by the philosophical presuppositions of "scientific materialism"–consists in not accepting the possibility of an approach to the phenomenon of the mind that does not depend *exclusively* on biological analysis. The word *exclusively* is crucial, because logically it marks the difference between a necessary condition and a sufficient condition. It is necessary that all mental functioning depends on a certain biological structure, whose functioning is painstakingly being revealed to us by extraordinary scientific analysis. But the enthusiasm around this discovery is converted into a wrong philosophical thesis when it considers that the key to explaining the "mystery" of the mind, of consciousness and freedom lies in the chemical, electrical and other impulses that regulate nervous functioning.

Just as there is no human freedom without a living body, there is no healthy mind without the regular functioning of the neuronal synapses. It is not because the life of the neurones determines the possibility of consciousness that this biological "determination" must be seen as pure and simple determinism of the mind. In other words, to determine the possibility of consciousness and

to determine consciousness is not the same thing. We mean by this that consciousness exists "for itself" and not for the neurones, which would be the "conscious subject." It is from the point of view of consciousness that neurones determine the possibility of consciousness, and not from the point of view of the neurones themselves. Science, with masterly spirit, succeeds in distinguishing the alterations in consciousness due to accidental or intentional interventions in brain functions. Yet, the world of consciousness, because it can be understood only by consciousness itself, is not open to "comprehension" by science.

Being valid to the debate of the "empirical science of consciousness"–a debate most relevant today–the reasoning above is fully pertinent, too, regarding the "conditioning" by genes of the self-awareness of which each individual is capable. Hence, the "determinant" function of neurones does not entail even remotely any scientific "determinism" of self-awareness or "feeling of self." Indeed, the philosophical aphorism, "the spirit is understandable only to the spirit," indicates that it is not possible to stand outside the problematics of the spirit and, at the same time, expect to watch the blossoming [*eclosão*] of spirit, which would thus become transparent from the point of view of neurons, of genes or of the body itself objectively apprehended. Scientific determinism is inhabited by a latent or underlying yearning for omnipotence, that is, by a vow to explain so adequately the material substratum of consciousness and spirit that, one day, we might be able to produce it and thereby lay out with complete intelligibility the working mind or thought itself. As an ideal that guides and drives scientific research, this yearning might prove fecund; yet, when it is justified by the belief that it will come true one day because it is in itself feasible, it rests on a serious philosophical error, epistemological as well as ontological, an error that surpasses by far any naïveté on the part of Descartes.

From the perspective of phenomenology, consciousness keeps some distance between itself and itself, failing to coincide completely with itself. In our view, this inadequacy might be seen as outlining the space–the metaphoric space–in which is inscribed the double finitude of consciousness, that finitude that impedes its access to the absolute knowledge of the real, but also the finitude that shows the necessity of bodily mediation, that is to say, in the case at hand, the need to unconsciously pass through the neuronal mediation to gain access to itself. Hence, it is not science that may see its determinations or scientific data as inducing full *determinism* of consciousness; it is consciousness, adopting a scientific attitude–which is also a *conscious* attitude–that may recognise its biological determinations as an expression of its finitude.

Thus, the conceptual trilogy *spirit–determinism–freedom* comes to mean that science, as a (spiritual) moment of *empirical* understanding of the human being, stands at the locus of mediation between, on the one hand, the possibility enjoyed by human beings to understand themselves *spiritually* (not only empirically) and, on the other hand, the ever personal path made possible and inaugurated by this understanding. In this sense, human freedom, far from being reduced to a pure possibility of choice, is the realisation of spirit in the humanity of the human being.

Conclusion

At the terminus of this journey in which we enunciated four difficulties out of those that belong in the discussion of the *contents* of human dignity, we may ask what is the link that connects these four conceptual trilogies. The challenge posed to the understanding of dignity lies in the median term of these trilogies. Above all, the perspective we chose consisted in extending the discussion of human dignity beyond the formalism to which it is usually confined. It was not our goal to complete the range of human rights that various declarations try to detail and structure.

In effect, it was necessary to take the discussion into the crossroads where philosophical anthropology and ethics meet, so as to discern the specific contents that, in this turn-of-the-century Western culture, best serve our thinking about human dignity. Now, on a first analysis, four challenges present themselves, namely, the practice of tolerance, giving up, forgetfulness and determinism. In each of these four cases, two orientations exerted their pull, one negative and the other positive.

Thus, *tolerance* appeared *either* as the banal acceptance of all opinions on the basis of a deep-seated scepticism *or* as an attitude that, albeit based on strong conviction, wishes to practice respect for other person's beliefs, although this takes place within certain limits that are culturally pre-established. *Giving up* seemed to emerge from the authenticity of the being who wishes "to keep his hands clean" and therefore does not enter games of compromise, as if all compromise or commitment were merely a form of *engagement*, but also a useless perversion. On the other hand, giving up was also the hypothesis of action that, once overcome, brought forth the virtue of a real commitment-*engagement.* Thus, giving up appears as an act of retreat or as a moment that demands and prepares an authentic commitment based this time on the authenticity of existence.

Forgetfulness made an entrance in connection with the narrative, since the latter contributes to the emergence of temporal unity in human *identity*. But forgetfulness connotes diverse attitudes, the most negative of which is forgetfulness of the founding moments of our individual or collective history. On the contrary, when forgetfulness is apprehended ethically it opens a new and liberating future to the history of intersubjective relationships both private and institutional. This ethical form of forgetfulness is not to be identified with historical silence but, on the contrary, with the *forgiveness* that may arise only out of a new interpretative reading. That is why such a reading is beyond the task of the historian, belonging rather to an ethics of history–that is, then, in its undeniable richness, the positive meaning of forgiveness.

Finally, *determinism* is invested with antagonic meanings. If it is taken to mean that human beings are but the interplay of biological factors, of which science alone–and not consciousness–is "conscious," we cannot discern the benefits that human dignity may gain from this standpoint, which gathers to itself the new sundry forms of biological-scientific materialism. The biological determination of mind, consciousness and spirit must be seen as a necessary condition, not as a *sufficient* condition for the understanding of conscious phenomena. The positive side of this kind of determinism, or rather, of these biological determinations of consciousness is that it lets us apprehend them as mediators of consciousness in its course of freedom.

These four challenges may originate opposing answers; still, there is no doubt that human dignity comes out victorious and enriched when the self-understanding of the human being jointly supports *tolerance* in our own convictions and in profound respect for the other; when the*commitment* to values succeeds in overcoming the temptation of passive desistance; when a new reading of history confers upon *forgetfulness* the rich status of forgiveness, that eminent gift to the future; and finally when the determinism of scientific causality is seen to fit into the course of a freedom that is acknowledged to be finite.

Over the past few decades, bioethics has become the field where, increasingly, an extended dense concept of human dignity is at stake. The presupposition underlying our analysis implies that it is in the area of the fundamental grounds of action that we may come nearest to that concept. Philosophy has no pretension to replace life; yet, starting from life, it leads us back to life. It is in this sense that it may render service to bioethics, since bioethics places itself at the service of the human being.

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Notes

* Meeting of CEB [Centre for Studies in Bioethics] members at the Convent of São Cristovão, July 1999.

1. «Animar» in Portuguese is to quicken, animate.
2. M. Merleau-Ponty, *Signes*, Paris, Gallimard, 1960, p. 74.

11.

The Philosophy of Life in Oriental Philosophy and Thomas Aquinas: Immanence and Transcendence

Eui-Chai Tjeng

Today, due to the astonishing advances in science and technology and the corresponding expansion of human knowledge, the true unity of humankind is rapidly becoming a reality. However, because of the historical and regional differences in philosophy, religion, ideology, and interest, it is also likely that the world will experience much conflict and confusion in the process of becoming one.

As the birthplace of some of the most profound philosophies and religions, Asia will play a crucial role in this process. Without a unified Asia, a unified world can scarcely be imagined.

Among Asian civilizations, the Chinese civilization is one of the oldest and richest. It is only appropriate that we initiate a conversation between the Chinese civilization and Christian philosophy as we enter the new millennium. This goal is made even more timely and urgent because it is clear that the Pacific Rim will increasingly become the center of world thought, economics, politics, and culture.

The Chinese civilization has never been expansionist, but rather peace-loving; it has always been able to absorb foreign cultural influences. As one of the world's oldest civilizations the Chinese has encountered, and has many times been invaded by, foreign civilizations. However, it has always absorbed those cultures to create syntheses. Moreover, Chinese civilization has helped in the further development of all those cultures with which it came into contact, providing them with new incentives and directions. In the recent era, she has absorbed communism.

Now, as we enter the new millennium, China will have to meet the challenge of a global culture that is increasingly becoming one. In this process, it cannot avoid an encounter with Christianity. During the past 2000 years, Christian thought has been the spiritual foundation on which the Western civilization has been built. On the other hand, by undergoing a process of indigenization through its encounter with Chinese thought, Christianity needs to absorb all the Chinese civilization has to offer. Through mutual understanding and cooperation, Christianity and Chinese civilization can contribute to the formation of a unified Asia and a unified humankind.

At the same time, Christianity and Western civilization need to be aware of the fact that, since the latter half of the 20th century as Western colonialism came to an end, the younger generations in many Asian countries began to express an even greater attachment to their traditional cultures. During the past few centuries, Western imperial powers, by using their advanced science and technology (guns, cannons, and the art of war), have colonized vast stretches of Asia. However, they have not been able to dominate Asia in cultural and spiritual terms. The younger generations of Asia are delving into the study of their traditional cultures with increasing conviction, partly as a reaction against past Western dominance and partly based on the new-found conviction that their traditional culture is superior to that of the West. There are many instances of young intellectuals with doctorates from leading universities of the West who have been immersing themselves in the study of Asian thought, especially their own native thought.

As we embark on the process of effecting a unity of all humankind, Christian philosophy, Chinese culture, and all other religions and cultures of Asia have to take as their starting point the most basic point on which all can agree. In other words, we need to start our conversation from

something that all people, individuals and religions can accept as being the most fundamental. Then we should try to build on that point so as to construct a common culture for all humankind. This common point, I think, is none other than love of life.

That is why I have titled my paper "The Philosophy of Life in the Oriental Philosophies and the Theory of Thomas Aquinas: Immanence and Transcendence. In this paper, I wish to compare, contrast, and synthesize in some sense the conceptions of life found in Asian philosophies and religions, on the one hand. On the other hand, Thomas Aquinas thought as a distillation of Christian philosophy. This is with a view toward constructing a common culture of mankind based on the love of life.

In 1991, Sogang University of Korea founded the Research Institute for Life and Culture. At that time, Korean society was witness to a rash of horrible crimes such as child kidnapping and murder, while environmental destruction through air and water pollution was becoming increasingly acute as the result of rapid industrialization. In response to these problems, various government agencies, academic institutions, the media, and religious organizations convened seminars, hearings, and meetings to increase people's awareness. However, none were as effective as the institute, which was founded under the motto, *Pro Mundi Vita,* "For Life in the World "(John 6, 25) by Sogang University, a mission school. With enthusiastic response and support from the media and the public, the institute and the university were instrumental in stemming the tide of child kidnapping and murder and instilling an awareness among the public of environmental issues.

The national committee, which drafted a "National Declaration of the Environment" exchanged the views of many segments of Korean society, including religious and civic organization leaders, all of whom were experts on the environment and issues of life in Korea. All this instilled an even stronger sense of the sacredness of human life and nature.

The Philosophy of Life in the Oriental Philosophies

Taoism and Life

Life in Taoism. Taoists believe that the "*tao*" (translated as "way" or "direction") is the origin of all things in the universe and the origin of life. The *tao* is the supreme master of the universe and its origin.1 It is the origin of all things in the sense that all things came from the *tao*, and they return to it in the end.

Lao Tzu frequently identified the *tao* with "*void*." The *tao* is a state of *void*, which is invisible and nameless. It is also the absence of desire, absence of knowledge, and inaction. The notion that the *tao* is a state of *void* also means that the *tao* in essence is limitless existence. In other words, the *tao* is understood as void because it transcends the limit of human perception.2

Being *void*, the *tao* can embrace all things in the universe, which have different shapes and characters, and at the same time allow them to exist separately, giving expression to their individual characters.3

Chuang Tzu, who refined the teaching of Lao Tzu 200 years later, explained that the *tao* is immanent in all things in the universe; it is omnipresent. According to Chuang Tzu, the *tao* forms one body embracing all things, at the same time lets all the creatures radiate their individual characters.4 Although the *tao* is the origin of the universe, it produces the universe through inaction by letting things follow their natural course. Chuang Tzu said the "Water springs out and flows down not because it tries to (inaction), but it does it spontaneously (natural way)."5

Both Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu ascribed the origin of life to the *tao*. In addition, Chuan Tzu introduced the conception of "*chi*" (translated as spirit of breath or vital force) to explain the process of birth and death. According to Chuang Tzu, birth and death are a result of the gathering and dispersion of *chi*. While life lasts for only a short moment and vanishes into an ever-evolving universe, *chi*, the origin of life, exists forever and presides over the evolution process.

Chuang Tzu further introduced the *Yang* (positive) and *Yin* (negative) side of *chi*.6 *Yang chi* and *Yin chi* interact with each other and produce the universe. But the *Yang chi* and *Yin chi* do not exist separately; they merely reflect the two facets of one *chi*.

Taoists emphasize spiritual life. Chuang Tzu said that the spirit comes out of the *tao*7 Human life is distinguished from other creatures because of their spiritual nature. Human beings can reach the state of "*tao*" through spiritual intuition, by elevating their spirit and ultimately assimilating it with the *tao*.

The elevation of spiritual life is a way of returning to the origin of life. This is called "returning to the root." The *tao* works to produce all things and lets them converge back to the *tao*. Returning to the root enables people to peel off the layers of pleasures of the secular life one after another, ultimately entering into the state of *void*. Returning to the root is a way of nature.

Lao Tzu emphasized returning to the root, as it enables humans to grasp the complete view of real life. Taoists view all things in the universe in the context of one organic body of life, adhering to the *tao* and assimilating oneself into it.8

The *tao* cannot be touched. It has no substance, but contains the substance of all things. It produces, penetrates, and fulfills all things. It has no form but contains all possible forms. People follow the laws of the earth; the Earth follows those of Heaven; heaven follows those of the *tao*. The *tao* is spontaneous. The *tao* is then in itself without laws; it is the *void* and cannot be understood as God in the sense of ruler, monarch, commander, architect, and maker of the universe.9

Natural Life and Moral Life. The Taoist is interested in natural life while the Confucianist attaches great importance to moral life. The Taoist view of life can be found in Yang Chu's theory of selfishness.

Mencius says, "Yang Che chose selfishness: If by plucking out a single hair he could benefit the world, he would not do it."10 Lu Spring and Autumn says "Yang Chu values self."11 The Huainan Tzu says, "Preserving life and maintaining what is genuine in it, not allowing things to entangle one's person, this is what Yang Chu established." Mencius criticized it.12 The Han Fei Tzu says, "There is a man who despises things and values life."13 He is Yang Chu.

From the above quotations, we can conclude that Yang Chu's basic thought was to value life and despise the external trappings of life, for example, fame, wealth, high rank, etc. The followers of Yang Chu seek extreme selfishness. They might be given to self-indulgence or free indulgence of the appetites. The Yangist regards oneself not as a moral self but as a sensual self. Therefore, selfishness cannot help degenerating into greed. They are susceptible to Nihilism.

People cannot live alone. They live according to many relations, for example, father and son, ruler and ruled, husband and wife, elder and younger, friend and friend, which are called the five cardinal relations in Confucian Ethics. In order to avoid conflict between members of society, there are norms that make a society vibrant and stable. The norm that maintains good relations is called Propriety. However, the Propriety of a kinship society can become empty. Confucius enlivens it with his teaching of human heartedness (benevolence). The Chinese character consists of two

words, man and two. It cannot be obtained through selfishness; human heartedness comes through a respect for the life of others.

Mencius develops the concept of human heartedness in his theory of human nature and debates with his opponent Kao Tzu, who might have been influenced by the Yangist. The two philosophers have opposite views of the problem of human nature. While Kao Tzu maintains that human nature only has a natural life, for example, eating and sexuality, Mencius insists that it not only has a natural instinct but also contains a moral inclination, for example, human heartedness and righteousness. Moral inclinations belong to nature in the same way as the physical growth of the body. Mencius says that man has four cardinal inborn virtues that emerge from four shoots. Mencius gives an exactly parallel account of the conflict between appetites and morality. He says, "Life I desire, the right too I desire, if I cannot have both, rather than life, I choose right." Life means natural life and right is the moral life.14 This saying is exactly contrary to the teaching of Yang Tzu, who says, despise things and value life.15

Confucianism and Life

Life in Confucianism. Heaven and Earth are the fountain of all beings and the space where all beings make their living. Heaven and Earth are logically prior to all beings. They are the source of all life.16

Heaven and Earth determine the direction. The vital force of mountain and lake are united. Thunder and wind arouse each other, water and fire do not combat each other. Thus are the eight trigrams intermingled.17

Heaven, earth, mountain, lake, thunder, wind, fire, these eight (things) are the beings that compose nature; through the interrelation of these things the natural world is constructed. The image of the natural world is as mentioned above. Heaven and Earth each takes their right positions, above and under, and together they combine their virtue.18

Between Heaven and Earth, the vital force of water in the lake rises to the mountain and becomes clouds and rain. The stream of the fountain on the mountain flows into the lake and becomes the fountain and water.19

Thunder and wind encounter and respond to each other. *Kan* water and *Li* fire are irreconcilable opposites. However, they do not conflict: On the contrary, they balance each other and constitute a harmonious world.

Thunder awakens and brings vitality to all things that are dormant; wind disperses vital energy to all things; rain sprays water over all the withering things, gives moisture to all things and makes them luxuriant; the sun brings warmth; the mountain makes all things complete; the lake brings pleasure. Heaven brings about rulership, the receptive Earth brings about shelter and conception and nourishes all things.20

As mentioned above, Heaven, Earth, mountain, lake, water and fire, each plays its own role and is interrelated and intermingled; together they bring about all living creatures.21

Confucius systematized the tradition. He spoke of Tien (Heaven) as purposeful and the master of all things. It is not the "greatest of all spiritual beings who rules in a personal way," but a Supreme Being who only reigns, leaving his moral law to operate by itself.

The First Principle in Neo-Confucianism

Chou Tun-I (Chou Lien-hsi, 1017-1073) is the pioneer of neo-Confucianism and was influenced by Taoism. He used the concepts of the Great Ultimate of Wu-chi (Non-Ultimate), which came from Lao-Tzu. He blended the Taoist element of the void with Confucian thought, but Chou never explained the nature of the Great Ultimate.

This was explained by Chu-His (1130-1200), who was also influenced by Taoism, but interpreted it in his own way. He said, "The Great Ultimate is nothing other than principle," and added, "The Great Ultimate is merely the principle of heaven and earth and the myriad things. With respect to heaven and earth, there is the Great Ultimate in them. With respect to the myriad things, there is the Great Ultimate in each and every one of them. Before heaven and earth existed, there was assuredly this principle. It is the principle that through movement generates the Yang. It is also this principle that through tranquility generates the Yin. He states then that man and heaven form one body, that is, he stated the unity of man and nature.22

The Confucian view of life seems more illuminating on aspects of morality. Confucian moral views such as the Three Cardinality, the Five Constant Relationship, Benevolence, Righteousness, Ritual and Wisdom, etc., articulated the most profound version of natural morality. To discuss its content further, however, will inevitably take us into a broader realm, beyond the focus of this paper.

Buddhism and Life

It is generally said that the reality of man is divided into two parts. One is man's body made up of four elements—earth, water, fire, and wind—and the other is man's spirit in man's body. This is the view of life in Buddhism. In Buddhism the essence of human life is Buddha nature.

Buddhism maintains that all sentient beings in this world, even insects, have Buddha nature in them. Every creature in this universe has already existed in various incarnations by Karma which is the law of moral causation; basically it is volition. Volitions may be good or ill. So actions may be wholesome or unwholesome according to their results. This endless play of action and reaction, cause and effect, seed and fruit continues in perpetual motion, which becomes or the continual changing process of the psycho-physical phenomena of existence. Therefore, the natural law is: if this exists, that also exists; otherwise, that does not exist, either.

This is the reality of life and the principle of existence. This shows us that everything into his universe is one and whole; an object is one and you and I live in mutual society or in mutual Karma.

In both the five precepts and the ten precepts of Buddhism, the thought, "Not to kill anything which has its own life," is one of the fundamental items in practicing human moral principles. This view of life about the human spirit produced the notion of Karma, with which originated the thought of rebirth. Karma is the corollary of rebirth; rebirth, on the other hand, is the corollary of Karma.

All things in the universe—green leaves, red and yellow flowers, mountains, rivers, the sun, murmurs of the stream, the sound of wind, and so on—is the sound of life. This is the essential view of life in Buddhism. As I am a small universe as well as an element in the big universe, I am the reality of life.

We live in an age of self-alienation and dehumanization, not realizing the thought of the one substance and great compassion—the Buddhist Commandments and sanctity of life. What makes us cruel, mean, and blind and prevents us from escaping the recycle of birth, death, and evil passions are the three poisons—greed, anger, and stupidity—in our minds.23

Buddha saw the suffering of people and started to search for a solution to this problem. He became aware of the futility of social living and of philosophical discourse and taught that they hindered man's right living. Finally, he came to the conclusion that nothing was eternal and thought that all was impermanent (Sanscrit: *anitya*), even gods. For him, all was a flowing reality (be it external things or human beings); all existence meant suffering; and all was a concatenation of points called dharmas.

Buddha also denied the essential or ultimate reality of things and the existence of the self or soul (*atman*). Consequently, he said that there was no eternal "I." For him, human beings and gods are caught in the cycle of births and deaths (*samasara*) because the extinction of life is only a projection toward a new existence. This cycle goes on until the effect of a completed deed (*karma*) is stopped. Karma is not substantial, but after a man dies his acts remain in another kind of corporal form. Those acts are rewarded or punished in heaven or hell but even heaven and hell are impermanent. For Buddha then, there will be further reincarnation and transmigrations, that is, new births or new existences that are also subject to misery and suffering.

Nirvana means etymologically to extinguish or blow out, and is man's main goal. It can be reached by following the "way of Buddha, that is, his teaching. Nirvana is a condition that is achieved by the elimination of the ego, craving, and all bonds. This elimination lets man overcome his Karma and the succession of lives and births (samsara). When man reaches Nirvana "neither man nor gods will see him again."24

The original teaching of Buddha denies all gods and states that everything is impermanent, and thus nothing is eternal. Later Mahayana Buddhism developed the existence of supreme and eternal being, the "Absolute Buddha," which is contrary to the original Buddha's thought. For them, this Absolute Buddha also cannot be known, is one, etc., that is, it was presented along the lines used to present Tao.25

Thoughts about life in Buddhism can be explained on the basis of human-centeredness. Purification of our mind to restore the true self is a Buddhist's thought about life. More specifically, suffering as a characteristic of all living beings comes from a false life that maintains the transmigration of life and death. Thus, one must seek release from the wheel of rebirth that will lead to the restoration of the true self based on "true permanent mind." This truth is the essence of the character of spirituality. One should not abuse this wisdom for this is a Buddhist's vision of life.26 This kind of "true life" should be done in the present life, that is, it is immanent in character.

Shamanism and Life

Life is one of the most interesting concerns in religions, East and West. Nonetheless, it is not easy to find a very discourse about what life is. In the world of religions, they say that all living things, human beings included, are created by God. In the folk religion of Korea, this kind of belief is expressed by, "God blesses with a baby." The deity of pregnancy, birth, and bringing up a child is called Samshin (p. 13) in Korea folk-belief, and/or in Korean, shamanism. According to research, the belief in Samshin is a widespread phenomenon all over the country. So, in this article I shall try to uncover the identity of Samshin in the stories about the life-giving deity in folk-belief and in the shamanistic world in Korea.

Belief in Samshin appears in various forms. The prayer for delivery of a son that is related to the Samshin shows the following characteristics: firstly, this Samshin-belief is dominated by women; secondly, this is a kind of natural thing (for example, people pray mainly to huge rocks

and big trees); thirdly, they pray in famous mountains and near big rivers. So it is a kind of belief in mountain-god (sanshin) and in water-god (sushin).

According to the shamans' transmission of words, the first deity among Samshin is for pregnancy, the second gives bones, and the third gives soul. These three deities have functionally different roles, but they are originally one God. This seems to be a kind of cosmic Triad theory in Korean shamanism. The effort to secure life is a natural conclusion, if one holds that life is sacred.

We can often hear of the Samshin-myth, even nowadays in shamanistic rituals, for example, we can analyze the identity of Samshin in the shaman's song, named 'samt' aejap uri, chesokponp'uri or langgumagit aryong. According to this, Samshin is born from a deity disguised as a Buddhist monk and a girl named Tanggumagi. In this story, we find the religious thought that while the direct cause of human birth is the sexual relationship between a man and a woman, the fundamental reason is the purpose of the deity (Samshin). In the field of Korean folk religion, it is believed that birth, bringing up, and death are beyond human control. Control over life belongs to the supra-mundane realm of the deity (Samshin). Here we can see that folk religiosity expresses what the human life itself possesses. God gives life to human beings. Therefore, the vital force or vital principle belongs to the divine realm. So a human being should not dare to invade this holy realm.

The shaman's explanation, through the Samshin-story about the origin and principle of life, shows that such phenomena as life and death are personalized or deified. They speak of the strong impurity, which the phenomenon such as death accompanies, of the cautiousness and prudence that tries to secure life from the contagion of death. This dark shadow, far from the order of life, is thought to access living people. This kind of attitude would confirm the characteristics of the religious life of most Korean people.

We can say this is the search for holiness. The right way that human beings should follow is finally the prudential method and the practical application of how we can secure our life. In this sense, life is a victorious figure that overcomes death. In the context of Korean folk religion, one can be really free when in harmony with Samshin, who is the source and donor of life. We call it the divine law or divine order, which connect Samshin with life.27

The shaman (called Mudang in Korea) is the mediator between the spirits (Kwisin) and humans. From early times, the ancestors were honored as members of the family and clan. Their descendants believed in their ancestors' power beyond death. This belief generated anxiety to keep them placated in order to receive protection and blessings. People feared evil spirits and venerated the good ones.

The relations between the spirits and man were arranged with the shaman's help. The shamans are said to have personal spirits to help them, and to possess magical forces. They dance, perform exorcisms, and offer sacrifices to the spirits to propitiate them. Their rites are called Kut. The Shamanist's main goal is to bring blessings and avoid misfortune. The Shamanist's idea of a supreme god who rules the universe and gives rain and grain for a good harvest is very appealing.28

Philosophy of Life in the Theory of Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas explains his theory of life at first from the point of view of experience of vegetative, sensual, and intellectual lives. Finally, he reaches Divine Life, which is life itself and the first principle of all life. I treat here Thomas Aquinas' theory of life according to his *Summa*

Theologiae I. 18. 75 and 78, from which I will quote frequently the texts by Thomas Aquinas because they are clear and concise.

Life in General

Thomas Aquinas considers life in general systematically in the *Summa Theologiae*. First of all he questions "what things have life?" that is "are all natural things a life?"29

Etymologically life is psyche (in Greek), nephesh (in Hebrew), soma and psyche, zeo and zeo aionis "sarx and pneuma and 'pneuma zoopoioun'" (in New Testament), etc. Philosophies of life are found in Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustinus, Boethius, Albertus Magnus, Fransis of Assisi, Bonaventura, R. Descartes, I. Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, K. Marx, S. Kierkegaard, Teilhard de Chardin, M. Heidegger, G. Marcel, H. Jonas, Mother Theresa, etc. But Thomas Aquinas asks directly "what things have life?"in his *Summa Theologiae*. He agrees with the words of Dionysos's *De div. Nom*,30 that "plants live with life's last echo." From this point of view, Thomas Aquinas thinks "plants have the lowest degree of life. Therefore, inanimate bodies, which are lower than plants, do not possess life."31

Thomas Aquinas thinks that life appears in animals obviously quoting the words of Aristotle's *De Plantis*, 1, 4,32 that is, "life in animals is plain to see." That is why "we first say that an animal is living when it begins to have movement of itself (*ex se*) and we judge that it is still living so long as this kind of movement appears in it; when it no longer has any movement of itself we say that life has failed and the animal is dead."33

We can understand this movement (*motus*) in two ways, that is, in a strict and in a wider sense. In the strict sense, we take movement as "the act of that which is incomplete." That is, in potentiality for (further) existence, or in the wider sense as including "the act of that which is already completed." In the way that an act of understanding or of sensation is also called movement34 (*De Anima III*).35 Thus we call "living" those things (*viventia*) that produce in themselves some kind of movement or operation.36

In "Is life an activity?" Thomas Aquinas quotes in the "Sed contra" the words of Aristotle's *De Anima II*37 that is, "for living things, to live is to be" (*vivere viventibus est esse*). Here, Thomas Aquinas considers the meaning of the words "to live" and "life," which discloses the principle or the root of appearance, that is, the phenomenon and the relation of both. "The word is applied to things because of something in their external appearance, namely self-movement; nevertheless it is not applied to indicate precisely that, but rather the substance which of its nature has the power of moving itself or giving itself any kind of impulse to activity." In the latter sense "to live" means simply to exist in such a nature (*secundum hoc vivere nihil aliud est quam esse in tali natura*); and "life" means the same but in the abstract. Hence "living" is not an accidental predicate but a substantial one. Yet sometimes "life" is taken in the less proper sense to mean the activities of life, from which things are said to have life.38 He cites the words of Aristotle's *Ethic. IX*,39 that is, "to live is primarily to have sensation and understanding."

In clarifying the derivation of phenomenon or operation from esse he notes "sensation and understanding and the like are taken to mean sometimes certain activities, sometimes the existence itself of things which have those activities."40 Thomas Aquinas quotes here the words of Aristotle's *Ethic. IX*41 that is, "for living things to be is to have sensation or understanding," that is, to possess a nature ready to sense and understand."42

Vegetable, sense, and intellectual lives with their different activities, are graded in a table life, intellectual life being more perfect than sense-life. Finally, the life of God, which is the first

principle (source) of all lives,43 is most perfect; it is life itself. He says: ‘life is attributed to certain things because they act of themselves and not as moved by other things; hence the more perfectly this is verified in a thing the more perfectly does it possess life. In the matter of movers the principal agent is that which acts through its own form.’44

Vegetable life. "Some things move themselves without consideration of the form or end in view provided for them by nature, but only so far as concerns the carrying into effect to movement. Such things are plants, which move themselves by growth and decrease according to the form with which nature endows them."45

Sense-life. "Other things move themselves in a further sense not merely with respect to the carrying into effect of the movement, but also with respect to the form, which is the principle of movement, which form they acquire for themselves. Such are animals, the principle of whose movement is not the form implanted in them by nature but one received through the senses. Hence the more complete their sense, the more extensive their self-movement. Thus in creatures which have only the sense of touch, their self-movement consists merely in dilatation and contraction, like oysters scarcely more than the movement of plants; while those which have complete sense-equipment, enabling them to know not only what is joined to them or touches them but also things at a distance, advance to what is at some distance from them."46

In this way Thomas clarifies the essence of the sense-life with self-movements not only in itself but also with regard to things at a distance. But this kind of life is limited to implantation by nature. Hence Thomas Aquinas’s consideration on life goes further, to a higher level of life which is an intellectual one transcending all the sense activities.

Intellectual-life. "Although such animals receive through the senses the form which is the principle of their movement, they do not independently determine for themselves the end of their activity or of their movement; that is implanted in them by nature, and an instinct of nature moves them to a particular activity by means of the form apprehended by the senses. Higher than such animals are those which move themselves with reference also to the end in view, which they provide for themselves. This can be done only by reason and intellect, to which it belongs to relate to end and means and to direct the one to the other. Thus beings which have intellect have a more complete kind of life in that their self-movement is more complete."47

Although intellectual activity or intellectual life is higher than the other, still it is restricted to the implantation of nature, that is, for the first principles and ultimate end of intellectual life, etc. Therefore, Aquinas’s consideration of life goes still further to the highest life without any limitation, that is, life itself. Such life is Being itself as it always in the state of activity.

Although our intellect is self-actuated in certain ways, still certain things are provided for it by nature, e.g., first principles (*prima principia*), about which it has no choice, and the ultimate end (*ultimus finis*), which it is not free not to will. Hence, although the intellectual moves itself to some extent, still it must in some things be moved by another. That Being, then whose own nature is its act of knowledge, which also does not have what belongs to it by nature determined for it by another, is the Being which has life in the highest degree (*summus gradus vitae*). Such a Being is God. Therefore God possesses life in the highest degree (*in deo maxime est vita*).48

Thomas here refers to Aristotle's *Metaphysics XII*.49 That is, Aristotle "having shown that God has intellect, concludes that he has life the most perfect and eternal: because his intellect is more perfect and always in the state of actuality."

Then Aquinas considers the principles (sources) of lives, that is, the principles of the vegetable, sense, and intellectual lives from the different activities of three kinds of souls, that is, of anima *vegetativa*, *sensibilis* and *rationalis*.

The various sorts of soul are distinguished from on another according to the different ways in which the activities of soul transcend the activities of inanimate bodies. (In the whole physical world) there is one particular activity of the soul which so greatly transcends the physical that is not even exercised through a bodily organ; this is the activity of the rational soul. Another level of activity, below this, takes place through a bodily organ, but is not itself a physical transaction (*corporea qualitas*), and such is the activity of sense-soul (*sensibilis anima*). (For though hot and cold and moist and dry and other such physical qualities are needed for sense activity, their activity is not the medium (*mediante virtute*) in which the activity of the sense-soul has its being (*operatio animae sensibilis procedat*), but is needed solely to render the organ ready. Then the lowest level of activity belonging to a soul is that which takes place through a physical organ and by virtue of physical qualities. This sort of activity is more than merely physical because physical change depends on external agents, whereas this has an internal source. For this is common to all activities of the soul; anything animate (*omne animatum*) in some fashion moves itself. And such is the activity of the vegetative soul (*anima vegetative*).50

Thomas here refers to Aristotle's *De Anima II* which notes: "Digestion and its sequel takes place through the instrumentality of heating."

Furthermore, Thomas Aquinas considers the modes of living in terms of grades of living things.

For there are some living things, namely plants, which are purely vegetative. But there are some with sensation as well, but without movement in place, motionless animals such as shellfish. Some again have the power of movement from place to place, the higher animals namely, which need many things in order to stay alive and hence need to move if they are to obtain distant things, which their life requires. And some living things have intellect along with these powers, namely men (with the power of intellect man can have the notion of universal being 'ends universale'). The appetitive powers, however, do not giver rise to any distinct mode of life, since appetitive is a property following necessarily on sense-knowledge.51

Furthermore, scholastic philosophers and theologians explain the spirituality of the rational soul from its immateriality as rational soul transcends total materiality. Accordingly, such a spiritual soul bears immortality as it has not been composed of any material parts. From this point of view an eternal life can be endowed to the soul of a human being supposing the grace of God.

The theory of Aquinas that "everything in God is life" receives ever profound meaning in this period of progress in human knowledge, life sciences and their technology. The words of God at the moment of creation: "God's life is his actual knowing. But in God intellect, that which knows, and the act of knowing, are the same. Therefore whatever is in God as known is his actual living or his life. Hence, since all the things God produces are in him as known, it follows that in him all things are the divine life itself."52 The words of Genesis on creation are suggestive for the problem

of life today and in the future. "In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved over the waters."53 So all the creature bear the vestiges of the spirit of God.

The Notion of Immanence and Transcendence in Philosophies of Life

There are many similarities between the oriental philosophies of life based on religions and the Christian notion of life, especially as found in the phenomenal dimension of Thomas Aquinas. However, among them there is also a great difference in the ontological dimension.

These differences arise from the notions of immanence and transcendence. Oriental philosophies, in general, concentrate on the studies of the first principle (source) that makes up the phenomenon of life—that is, on the studies of the beginning of life phenomena and its return to the first principle. This is a kind of transcendence in a broad sense, but, in this case, we can say that the root (source) and phenomenon, strictly speaking, are philosophically homogeneous or univocal, as the term "analogous" cannot be predicated properly of the root (the first principle) and phenomenon, nor can the term "equivocal" be predicted of them. From this viewpoint, oriental philosophies of religion are rather pantheistic, naturalistic and anthropomorphic.

The *Tao* in Taoism is the first principle of the existence of all things, including human life. All things come into existence from the *Tao* and return to the *Tao* which pervades all the things in the universe. If the notion of the *Tao* is void, then can the *Tao* be different from all things in the universe? It is very difficult to understand the reality of the *Tao* as just "void." So there is no clear distinction between *Tao* and all the creatures.

In Confucianism, the origin of all things is explained by the eight elements, that is, heaven, earth, mountain, pond, thunder, wind, water, and fire. The movement of the universe and the natural phenomena are explained by Shade and Light, the Five Functions, the *Tao*, and chi, The Great Ultimate, etc. Moreover, Confucianism views life as purely natural. The sacrificial ceremony for ancestors in Confucianism is an expression of a valued humanity and has some transcendent character in the sense that it is a representation of communication between the soul of the dead and living human beings. Today, the sacrificial ceremony for ancestors in Korea has become the national ceremony for reverencing ancestors. The material and the form of the sacrificial ceremony for ancestors are purely natural, human, and anthropomorphic. The notion of the supreme emperor, Chon, and the Great Ultimate that are developed through the long passage of history contains the idea of transcendence in some sense. These notions, too, in strict philosophical meaning, are anthropomorphic as they are considered only from the viewpoint of the realm of nature and human life.

To become a Buddha in human life is to enter into Nirvana by passing over imperfect earthly life. This stage is achieved only by the self-discipline of human beings. In fact Karma effects Nirvana; and becoming a Buddha is the manifestation of the various forms in human life.

In short, the great oriental religions, in general, explain the first principle and ultimate goal of human life within the realm of nature and the human being, but also include some kind of a notion of transcendence in that they seek to reach a higher stage by passing over the present state of life. It is common that religions believe in a supernatural being, in its power and in the communication of a human being with it. Therefore, although the oriental religions are consistent with the immanent element, they also include a transcendent tendency in their basis due to human nature. In other words, the oriental religions have a good disposition for real transcendence, especially Shamanism; they are very open to a real transcendence. The Korean religious mentality, in general,

is affected deeply by Shamanism because of its location. That is why Christianity flourishes with many conversions and fervent devotion.

On the other hand, the Christian notion of life, especially that of Aquinas, explains life by the theory of three kinds of souls and considers human life or the soul as its source having immanent and transcendent character: individual human life derives from the intellectual, spiritual, and immoral soul. Immortal life, which is the deep hope of the human spirit, can be achieved by revelation and the grace of God. In fact, great oriental religions have achieved a high level in spiritual and moral life. But from the viewpoint of philosophy of religion, the ontological search, especially the question of transcendence is incomplete. They are obscure on the origin and ultimate goal of human life, that is, its final destiny.

Due to this incompleteness of Confucianism, Catholicism was introduced into Korea about 220 years ago by a pagan Confucian scholar from China. When Confucian scholars in Korea who belonged to the ruling party at those times, came to read (*De Deo Verax Disputatio*), written by Matto Ricci, a Jesuit missionary in Beijing, they were impressed by its clear explanation of the transcendent idea of the origin and ultimate goal of human life, and one of the Confucian scholars was sent to Beijing to study it. He learned the catechism by writing (although he knew Chinese characters very well, he didn't know the Chinese pronunciation) and was baptized in Beijing. Returning to Korea, he did missionary work, beginning the life of the Catholic Church in Korea. These Confucian scholars tried to build up a so-called "Supplemented Confucianism" in Korea in which they added the clear Christian notion of the origin and ultimate goal of human life lacking in Confucianism, that is, the Christian notion of transcendence and immortality.

Aquinas's notion of life is based on the fact that human beings are the image of God.54 Christianity explains that the first principle of all things is God. Therefore, the Christian notion of life is originally derived from God by creation.55 As He is life itself, Thomas recognizes the spirituality and immortality of the human soul56 as immaterial. In other words, the first principle of human beings and human life is explained by a Divine Being who creates it. Human life exists for the participation of eternal life. Human dignity, sociality, and community life are explained from this ontological point of view.57 Furthermore, Thomism developed the theory of the interaction and inter-communion of the Divine Life and human life.

There is no univocal meaning between Divine Being and its creature; they are different, but somewhat the same. Therefore, there58 is an analogy between the life of God and human life. The notion of analogy is very important to explain the so-called identity (*secundum quid*) and difference (*simpliciter*) between the first principle and the creature. Oriental philosophies based on religions lack the notion of analogy. In almost all the oriental religions there is a strong folk belief in transcendence, though without an exact philosophical or logical explanation of it. That is why there is approximately a univocal notion between the first principle and creature, for example, between the *Tao*, heaven, nature, supreme emperor, Buddha, and Samshin, etc., and all things in the universe. There is not a clear notion of distinction between them. Rather, in the oriental philosophies in their strictly philosophical meaning there is no ontological distinction between the first principle of all beings in the universe and all beings derived from it, but only the psychological projection and religious tendency of human nature for transcendence. The important point is that human reason is not logically convinced of such a transcendent reality in the oriental philosophies. In the ontological sense, there is only a so-called notion of immanence. On the contrary, in Thomism there is a clear notion of the distinction between "*ens contingens*" and "*ens necessarium*," that is, the beings of the universe and the first principle by the notion of analogy. In Thomism the theory of creation is sustained by the notion of analogy. Hence in the early time of the Catholic

Church in Korea Catholic Confucian scholars preferred the term *Dominus Caeli* (the Lord of Heaven) to the supreme emperor, although they used both of them for God.

Conclusion: Common Culture Based on Love of Life

Life is precious, and, above all, human life is the most precious in the universe. Since every religion agrees to this, all the religions give their priority to protect and enrich human life. Thus, religions have a similarity or homogeneity in moral life, which is the proper domain of the human being. The comparison of the Decalogue in Christianity with the Three Fundamental Principles (the Three Bonds) and the Five Moral Disciplines in human relations (the Five Relationships), and the comparison of the Decalogue and *Septem Vitia Capitalia* in Christianity with the Five and the Ten Buddhist Commandments are examples.

Today, we are in need of a common culture in which all humanity can live together as one and the same. In fact, today in the intellectual world there is a strong tendency to shape the unity of humankind. The "Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities," "Universal Values of Ethics," etc., are proposed.59 Catholic philosophy can propose a more fundamental common way of living, that is, a common culture of humankind, based on love of life. Moreover, the incredible development in the life sciences and technology, such as the progress of the cyber world, the success of the genome project, the revival of some life from two hundred and fifty million years ago by scientists, and the survival of some organisms in boiling water, along with the invasion of the sacred realm of human life with human cloning, etc., create an urgent need for the formation of a common culture based on the true love of life, especially human life, should be the proximate value criterion of all things in the universe.

The slogan which led humanity for the last few centuries was "justice." The enlivening of this slogan was due to Marxism as a reaction against the harsh colonial reign throughout the world, and to the strenuous efforts of the Catholic Church, which enhanced "human dignity" and "justice." Asia, being the birthplace of most of the distinguished religions and profound philosophies, and having the broadest area with the largest population, fell to become colonies of the Great Powers. Now the colonial period in terms of territorial rights is ended, but still exists in terms of economic exploitation. Under these circumstances the concepts of "human right" and "justice" still are greatly needed. Such concepts are always needed in human life.

But a new culture is needed for humankind in this new millennium. Such a culture should be a common and able to solve the problems of life of all people, cultures, and religions. In the new millennium, we need to form a common culture based on the love of life. This implies justice based on human dignity, especially human dignity, as an image of God. This new culture should be equally participated in by all human beings even those who live in the hinterlands and isolated regions. In fact, the love of life is a requisite for all human beings. So it is desirable now that the consciousness of a "common vocation" and "participation"60 should be fostered. It can be expected that within a few centuries Asia will play an important role for the unity of humankind in the world; the era of Pacific Rim, especially of Asia, is coming. The unity of humankind must be preceded by the unity of Asia. At this point, all religions in Asia can contribute through their constant dialogue and cooperation, which are well in process in Korea right now.

Religions in Asia, including Christianity, should study and enrich each other through constant dialogue,61 not only in the phenomenal notion of life, emperor, heaven, becoming a Buddha, and Samshin of Shamanism, etc., which are dimensions of transcendence in a wider sense, but in the phenomenal and ontological dimensions of life in Christianity. Such efforts can form a common

culture based on the love of life required in the Third Millennium. Especially, at this point, the Catholic Church can play an important role with wisdom and practice of *"unitas in diversitate"* and *"diversitas in unitate."* The Catholic Church must increasingly open her mind and spirit to the future and to Asia as the Catholic Church is universal and eschatological.

In Korea, the Research Institute for Life and Culture, as mentioned above, has held many seminars on life for many years. It has gathered opinions broadly on the notion of life of the Korean religions. In fact, now there are some organizations for cooperation among religions for social welfare activities in Korea. Recently, some Catholic Institutes and periodicals in Korea have been trying to study and practice the notion of life and inculturation. Catholic philosophy can do its part in the formation and the expansion of a common culture with its ontological notion of being, including the transcendental notions of the one, the true, and the good. Up to now, Thomism has explained the ontological notion of being in the order of the "one," the "true," and the "good." But nowadays it is necessary that the Catholic Church practice the "good," which all human beings and religions can sympathize with. This must based on the "true," and this, in turn, on the "one." Then, by explaining the meaning of life in the order of the "good," the "true," and the "one," that is, basically by explaining the oneness of God, Catholic philosophy can contribute toward the formation of a new culture. In these terms, Mother Theresa in India can be considered as a great sign of the formation of the common culture of love of life in the new millennium.

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12.

Ethics and Life

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Ethics is the life of living. However brilliant and stimulating this formula might be, we must examine its pertinence so that it does not appear as vacuous bravado. The question is not merely rhetorical – what reasons lead one to entertain expectations; what may, today and tomorrow, rally one's energies to a project considered solid and valid?

Psychiatrists' and even psychologists' consulting rooms are often frequented by young people who, although not depressive, declare, "I don't feel motivated." The therapist will try to "get round" the lack of motivation by proposing directly or indirectly new sources of interest. In the end, after the invariable repetition, "That does not motivate me," he finds himself out of resources and must conclude that, indeed, the youngster is not motivated. It depends on the youngster alone – in part, probably on the youngster's circumstances, too–but it does not constitute a disease. In other words, "to feel" or "to be motivated" depends on the human agent oneself, and no one can take the place of the non-motivated person. How can we read this example, which would be anecdotal if its frequency did not make it tragic?

Motivation

Motivation depends on each human being and constitutes, therefore, an act by the subject. It may not be imposed from the outside. It is as if certain ideals were so appealing in themselves, *in abstracto,* that they have the power to involve and propel my will and trigger my action. An ideal or value that becomes attractive in an itself or in abstract manner, that is, regardless of how it relates to my will (or any concrete will), remains "abstract," not only in the sense of being "purely theoretical" but also in the sense of being "alien" to myself. Hence, inevitably, this ideal cannot motivate me, and thus I can claim that "I am not motivated." Motivation involves an active dimension of the person who agrees to turn to certain actions or values. In other words, the disease that affects motivation, taking the disease to be in this case a global absence or total loss of motivation, is a malady not of values but of the person in the way one acts. The common expression, "It's not worth it," expresses almost literally that the possible project is not worth the "pain" its accomplishment requires, as if the expenditure of energy, physical, psychic, or spiritual needed to achieve a certain purpose were estimated to be higher than the expected benefit from that purpose. From a formal point of view, the "good" of the purpose contemplated by the projected action is placed on one side of the scales of ethical evaluation, while the "pains" or efforts are placed on the other side. In the light of this metaphor of the scales, absence of motivation means that the efforts–or trouble–are considered so heavy that they will allow no swaying of the scales to the side of the hypothetical project. Evidently, other reasons besides the degree effort may intervene to complicate the model. In general, the possible projects for action are multiple and the choice between them does not bring into play only the relation "good-paints" or "good-costs" (physical, psychological, financial, or spiritual), but also the intrinsic contents of the projected purposes. This situation diverts us from the case in which, in simple or general terms, a person does not appear motivated by anything. It is readily apparent that the absence of motivation never

arises from absence of contents in the value itself, but from the irrelevance of that value to me or to my possibilities of action.

We may not conclude from this affirmation that the value exists *per se* independently of the action I take – every value, all values are intimately connected with action, although not necessarily with my action. Using Heidegger's terminology, we might say that the value, as it relates to action in general, constitutes an "existentiary" (an *existenzial* moment), while the relationship between the value and "my" personal action constitutes the concretion in a unique individual of this "existentiary," and then represents the "existential" (*existenziell*) of the will.

This brief discussion enables one to understand how Merleau-Ponty's aphorism, "*Je suis la source absolue du sens*," applies to the relationship between value and action. It is not a matter of interpreting this affirmation in its original context, but of highlighting its extension into the realm of values. When Merleau-Ponty enunciated, "I am the absolute source of meaning," he had understood that "meaning" intrinsically must cross my consciousness in order to exist as meaning. There is no such thing as a "meaning" that hovers above all consciousness, as if each one had to make an effort to appropriate a self-subsisting idea or theoretical entity.

Meaning exists only through consciousness, so that, strictly speaking, consciousness holds over meaning the power to not accord it existence. Consciousness controls meaning, not because it invents autocratically every possible meaning or interpretation of facts, events, and actions, but because every meaning must pass through consciousness, and be projected by it in order to acquire existential reality.

Values stand in the same relative position to consciousness as meaning. No value lives outside its assumption by active consciousness; from this point of view, I am "the absolute source of value." When I am not motivated, the fault does not derive necessarily from devaluation of the value itself but from the nonassumption or nonintegration of that value by my consciousness. Because we are talking of loss of values, of values that fall away or disappear, it is well to keep in mind that such loss affects the phenomenological experience [*vivência*] of the meaning of values, that is to say, the intrinsic dependence of values on consciousness.

The Hierarchical Ordering of Values

Ethics is the life of living precisely because life is the first value or the first good that enters consciousness. I mean life in general, not a certain lifestyle [*forma de vida*], because it is always possible to reject one lifestyle and choose another. No one disputes that several levels of lifestyle exist. What does matter is how the several lifestyles are structured or ordered into a hierarchy. The question is twofold: Is it possible to escape the hierarchical ordering of values; how does this hierarchical ordering of values present itself?

What is meant by lifestyle is a level of action whose motivation is the search for a good that is held to be preferable to many or to all others. Through our action, we have the capacity to achieve only an infinitesimal part of the range of theoretically achievable goals. That is why the motivation for action involves, on the one hand, fixing the attention on a certain goal and, on the other, forsaking other goals that are incompatible with our chosen goal. It is known that the pathology of decision often resides in the straying of attention, which, instead of staying fixed on the goal chosen by the will, lets itself be distracted by the goals forsaken, as if the sadness of having to renounce them invaded the field of attention dedicated to the goal that is effectively sought. To prevent this description from being limited to abstract statements, it should be reinserted it into the framework of concrete experience.

The act of eating is vital; we eat to nourish ourselves. It is, therefore, a vital value which enables our organic body, by means of the processes of internal combustion, to maintain its temperature and, in general, to preserve the functioning of its metabolism. Yet, we may eat together with one other person or many others. Thus, the act of eating is more than vital, because it is tinged by an aspect of meeting others that places it in the domain of shared intersubjectivity. During this encounter I may discuss working matters, analyse or assess with my colleagues projects pertaining to professional life. The value of meeting is interwoven with the vital value of taking in food. I may select a pleasant restaurant or, if I am at home, a beautiful table. The aesthetic value of the ambience or atmosphere is grafted onto the value of meeting to enrich it without robbing it of its character. When, on the other hand, the meeting units friends or relatives who rejoice together, the aesthetic value becomes expressive of a relationship that involves not only the public face we project of our life but also the most intimate part of our personality. It is still a meal that feeds our body, but this process bears no comparison with the acquisition of food through hunting, or with the struggle for physical survival that drives the great animal predators. Moreover, if during this friendly or family meeting the conversation among the "partakers" becomes an interesting discussion that enriches the way we understand life, the meal attains a truly spiritual dimension.

Thus, we may have several levels of understanding the same action (the meal), which are not mutually exclusive, yet are not of equal footing. The levels just mentioned correspond to kinds of life: biological life, social life [*vida de relação*], aesthetic life, spiritual life. Not all partakers of the meal are necessarily on the same wavelength. Keeping to the example of the meal, one person may be almost indifferent to the aesthetic aspects dedicated to an atmosphere conducive to conviviality. From another perspective, the more comprehensive values confer richer meaning upon the values involved or take away from them the possibility of this meaning. Thus, if I am in a situation of serious conflict with my relatives, the meal, regardless of its culinary quality and the aesthetic harmony of the atmosphere, loses the sense of a positive intersubjective encounter. Still, what has been termed comprehensive values may take on, without replacing, the values involved. For example, if I am dying of thirst in a desert, it will not be the artistic beauty of the proffered cup that gives meaning to the gesture that recomposes me. The interpenetration of the different levels of life is always present and, therefore, so is the reciprocal involvement of the values.

It is good, nevertheless, to distinguish the plane of concrete living from the plane of theory making. In almost spontaneous fashion, or based on a scarcely reflected intuition, every person builds its own hierarchy of values. This shows in the answer to the question, "What matters most to me in this act?" The weight of the circumstances under which action is pondered inevitably affects the spontaneous hierarchical ordering, so that this concrete hierarchical ordering still does not signify an explicit stand on the hierarchy of the levels of life.

Two conclusions stand out from the concept of the hierarchical ordering of values. Before all else, it is not possible to do without it, for it is always present upstream and downstream of our concrete acts. Yet, the concrete and spontaneous character of this presence makes it possible that it will appear in an implicit manner, subconsciously marked by the context of the action. The hierarchical ordering operated by theoretical ethics is quite another thing. This reflects an ideal model, which supposes that each level of life will produce the due response; in the example of the meal, eating satisfies hunger, the intersubjective presence breaks physical solitude, the harmonious or beautiful surroundings will meet our aesthetic taste, while the interest of the conversation will stimulate our spirit. It is at this point that the theoretical question of the hierarchical ordering of values arises. The highest values will be those whose absence most contributes to divest the meaning of the acts performed. In line with Max Scheler, we might say that cultural, ethical,

aesthetic, and religious values are those that possess the virtue of bestowing on our acts the most enduring and deepest meaning, as if the presence of these values had the ability to resist destruction of life. The point is not to comment Scheler's theses in this regard but to confront them with the questions that human beings, at the turn of a new millennium, are asking themselves. As "the life of living," ethics must be dynamic, not static–it must be steeped in the turbulence of change but, like life, well forth from its organic, unifying centre.

Ethical Imagination

In our hierarchical ordering of values, we must establish a connection between the concrete, pre-reflexive character of such values, on the one hand, and their theory, on the other. After all, the private and personal motivation of the acts is what bears the concrete character of hierarchical ordering. "Concrete" and "gratuitous" are not synonyms, however. The mystery of values resides in this subtle articulation. It is true that, in some way, I am the "absolute source" of values, in the sense mentioned above. But I can be a source only when I receive into my consciousness a value that I recognize as "able to motivate me." Now, not all the values that can rouse my motivation do so for the same reasons. Therefore, Max Scheler is right in discerning intrinsic differences among values and the superiority of some over others. What criteria might attest such superiority? Perhaps the most general and appropriate criterion is the capacity of a certain value to open my existence to that of others through a common relation to a content–a value content–that unites us by virtue of its shared "meaning." We say of such values that they are "spiritual" because they are distinguished by their power to unite what has been dispersed: individualised human bodies or isolated minds. Even in the pre-religious meaning of the word, we might say that the spirit of the human being is constitutionally a "communion," inasmuch as it makes unity possible where pure diversity reigns.

But how can this task be accomplished in concrete terms? To answer, we must invoke ethical imagination. The domain of this imagination is coextensive with that of "practical wisdom," which does not entail that it is redirected to the free will of each individual. Ethical imagination underlies ethical creativity. The first part of this analysis suggests, therefore, that we take up again the challenges we confronted once, to filter them through the prism of ethical imagination.

Against the *objectification* of the human being, and against the multiple forms of the instrumentalisation of the human being, we have the possibility today of *inventing* attitudes that manifest how ethics is possible, real and necessary. Ethics *exists*, despite and within the conditioning limits of human beings. Then, *motivation* no longer appears as a "given," as a fact for action; it is sought, it is wanted: "I want to motivate myself for a certain behaviour" which is attainable to my ethically free action. "I am capable of motivating myself and of being motivated," is the first gesture of ethical liberation. Today, it constitutes a true challenge or true ethical call to the person. Paradoxically, the oft repeated question, "What values might motivate young people today?" is to be answered at once: What motivates is the actual act of being motivated, the will to resist the incapacity to be motivated by anything at all.

Today's world might not contain more contradictions than the old; it is our awareness of those contradictions that has become wider and deeper. Because imagination has never been purely rational, it is especially endowed with an exploratory function: In the midst of contradictions, it has the ability to trace a course that is neither alibi nor a simple eclectic alternative. Navigating between the *security* of dominating reason and the *insecurity* of endemic violence, the ethical imagination will have to invent a motivating course.

In similar fashion, the implacable logic of profit, ignoring people and manipulating public opinion, presides over *globalisation* and constitutes a risk to the "humanity" of the human being. Yet, at the same time, human rights have never been stressed so strongly–here is a new contradiction that the ethical imagination will have to "manage" on a global level. It is not a matter of fighting globalisation, but of inventing new ways to respect persons, especially concerning their particular traits and areas of fragility.

The relationship, otherwise indispensable in itself, of being and appearance takes on, in our image society the form of an opposition and, not seldom, that of a contradiction. The ethical imagination will not respond to this merely by beating back into the refuge of a hypothetical inner purity; instead, it will discover a course that chooses *between* a right relation or a perverted relation, between the two inescapable facets of existence: authenticity or ethical duplicity.

The *instability* that affects the human being whose life unfolds in time may be equally–we might say, eminently–the domain of the ethical imagination. What is at stake is not only the ontological, but also the ethical relationship of the human being with time. The ethical imagination is able to discover the permanence of values behind the mutability of their forms of expression; that is, it is able to project ethical coherence into the person's experience. When all is said and done, might not the new outlook on life that the millennium expects from ethics be the discovery of a new ethical coherence?

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13.

Just War: Chinese and Western Perspectives

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Traditional Chinese Philosophy has a theory of Just War that is to be compared with Christian theories of just war. The present paper is part of a longer work discussing the subject. Its focus, on the Christian side, is the just war theory of Thomas Aquinas and Alexander of Hales, on the Chinese side, it is the *Huainanzi* as well as pre-Han such texts as the *Mozi* and *Laozi*. Comparison is also made with the Geneva Conventions regarding conduct in war as these illustrate the norms of *ius in bello*. In both fields, *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello*, the Chinese texts display concerns and norms similar to those evidenced in the later Western texts.

Warfare is a matter of great importance for the State. It is the ground of life and death, the way to success and failure. It may not be studied. (The Art of War)1

The sage's use of warfare is like using a comb on hair or a hoe on crops. What is removed is slight but its benefits are great. (Huainanzi)2

In previous works I have discussed the notion of "just war" in early Chinese philosophy (6th Century B.C.– 1st Century A.D.).3 That work was carried out from the viewpoint of Chinese philosophy and with no relation to the Western treatment of the same issue. This work takes a different tack, presenting the Chinese material within the framework of the Western discussion, noting differences and similarities. From the Western tradition I will focus on the works of Alexander of Hales and Thomas Aquinas. For a more complete discussion of the topic in the Western tradition, I refer the reader to my work, *Nonviolent Resistance*.

The present essay presents a preliminary study of the context of just war discourse in Christian philosophy and Chinese culture and then examines the respective just war traditions point by point, firstly with respect to two medieval Christian philosophers and then with respect to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

The Context of the Debate on War

Aquinas and the scholastics addressed the question of war under the heading, *Utrum bellum sit semper peccatum,* Whether war is always a sin? (Aquinas) *Utrum bellum sit intrinsece malum*. Whether war is intrinsically evil? (Suarez). This negative formulation of the question is not without its modern critics. What it does do, however, is face the reality of sin in the world. The world is not yet paradise; sin is present. In the Chinese tradition, we obviously do not find the Hebrew notion of sin, but we find that the context for the discussion of war is one that takes account of conflict present in the world.

Chinese texts present a legendary history of the world typically centered around the virtuous figure of the Yellow Emperor.4 The Yellow Emperor is a paragon of virtue and yet he is credited with inventing or at least using weapons. This creates a paradox and thus initiates a discussion as to whether it would be possible to eliminate all warfare. The answer, based on this use of the

legendary origin, is that in the real world in which we live, this would not be possible. In an ideal world, it may not be so.

Warfare is never judged as a good in itself: Weapons are instruments of misfortune and not the instruments of a gentleman.5

Three evils: The first is liking evil instruments; the second is promoting a rebellious spirit; the third is being led astray by the lusts of the heart. These are called "the three evils."6

Thus while the language is not theological in the Judaeo-Christian sense, the parallel is very strong. War, warfare, weapons (the same Chinese word bing covers all these uses) are intrinsically evil. Yet their use cannot be completely forbidden:

The Yellow Emperors, Tang and Yu, were the most glorious emperors. They possessed the entire realm and its control lay in the hands of a single man. Yet [even] during this time armed forces were not dispensed with.7

This situates the question in a legendary past, which we may take as a philosophical device for discussing the abstract proposition of how these evil weapons relate to justice. The same idea is presented in the *Lushi Chunqiu* in a discussion of King Hui's desire to disband the army:

King Hui of Zhao asked Gongsun Long, 'I have wanted to disband the army for over ten years without success. Is it that the army cannot be disbanded?' Gongsun Long replied,'the idea of disbanding troops comes from a heart which seeks to love the world impartially. Loving the whole world impartially cannot just be empty words. It must have practical effects.'8

Gongsun Long argues that the disbanding the army is an unrealistic ideal; war is a fact of human life.

At this point, it is worth noting that many contemporary discussions of war and justice do not even mention the reality of sin or evil. There seems to be a tendency to think in terms of ideals without sufficient awareness of practical realities. The ancient Chinese and the medieval people shared our desire for a peaceful world without war, but they were also aware of the reality of evil. Indeed, this element is even further emphasized in Chinese discourse, as will be pointed out.

Medieval Christian Philosophy and Ancient Chinese Texts on War

Alexander of Hales' *Summa* is more detailed than the corresponding one of Aquinas. It seems to have attained its final form some 10 years or more after Alexander's death.9 This would bring it to 1255, a time when Aquinas was teaching in Paris. Alexander's work may be seen much more as a textbook of knowledge, rather than an attempt to think creatively with regard to the tradition.

Alexander's work is notable for its elaboration of six conditions for assessing the justice of a war. The first three are objective: (1) The first considered here is *meritum* (desert), which is concerned with evaluating the way in which an injury should be dealt with.10 (2) Authority is the question of who can declare war. (3) Alexander demands that the soldiers be secular, not clerical, and uses the Latin term *conditio* to refer to this. There are three subjective grounds for war which present both the purpose of the war and the way in which war is conducted: (4) *causa*, the purpose

of the war, (5) *affectus*, the way in which the soldiers fight, and (6) *intentio*, the way in which the war is conducted.

Meritum. The Western tradition justified war on the grounds that it upheld the civilised order. In the post-medieval period this became equated with national sovereignty. The ancient Chinese tradition arises in a different political context. Nominally the King, or later the Emperor, claimed authority over the whole known world. This authority was thus greater than that assumed even by the Roman Emperor, who was always aware of other civilizations, for instance, Greece, Persia, and Egypt. The claim to universal authority by the Chinese monarch meant that war could always be seen as a form of rebellion and, hence, war carried out by the monarch would be seen in terms of punishment. This motive was present in Alexander but has been gradually eliminated from the Western tradition, perhaps because no nation-state could ever pretend to universal authority.

War is a form of punishment and the removal of evil. At least eight early texts repeat this message in words similar to those given below:

Punish tyranny and disorder and prevent unrighteousness.11

Hence, the values that are being upheld are those of an ordered and just society.

Even when the context is not that of the universal monarch, the idea is still that what exists should be preserved. The *Heguanzi* describes the role of the just minister as preserving the dying and maintaining the line of rulers with no issue, to save the weak and punish tyranny.12

This idea is taken up in earnest by the Mohists. They are generally credited with being anti-war, but this is to misread their position. The relevant chapter in the *Mozi* is entitled *Against Aggression*.13 The opposition is not to war as such, but to aggressive warfare. Indeed, the Mohists were organized so as to defend the small states that existed in 6th to 4th century China under the nominal auspices of the Zhou King. A large part of the *Mozi* is devoted to the topic of making ballistic devices that can be used to defend towns under attack. The *Mozi* presents attacks on these small states as a case of theft or murder. Just as these states merit punishment as crimes, so too does war, which causes even more people to suffer. The following passage comes in the *Mozi*, but is perhaps not to be ascribed to the direct Mohist tradition:

To kill one person is said to be unjust and for this the murderer must be executed. Extrapolating from this, to kill ten persons is ten times more unjust and demands that the ten murderers be executed. To kill a hundred persons is a hundred times more serious and requires that the hundred murderers be executed. Now, when all reasonable men know something to be wrong they say it is unjust. Yet when it comes to the great injustice of attacking states they do not acknowledge it as unjust.14

One of the three schools of Mohism applies this idea of punishment to the wars, which it approves. In these, heaven is said to give signs and speak clearly ordering an attack:

Three gods spoke to [King Wu] in a dream, saying, now that we have submerged Zhou of Yin in wine, you go and attack him. We will surely let you destroy him. . . .Speaking of the work of these three sages [Yu, Tang and Wu], it is not to be called attack but punishment.15

Thus, war of this kind is preserving the established order, whether on a large scale or on a small scale.

To this should be added another purpose of war, namely to stop war. This is set out in the opening paragraph of the *Sima Fa*. Government is seen as best achieved by the Confucian virtue of benevolence, *ren*, combined with justice *yi*:

In antiquity, taking benevolence as the foundation and employing justice to govern constituted 'uprightness.'16

When this combination, based on consensus and harmony, was unable to achieve its objective then resort to political authority based on military might may be employed. Thus, the text states:

For this reason, if one must kill to give peace to the people, then killing is permissible. If one must attack a state out of concern for the people, then attacking is permissible. If one must stop war with war, although it is war, it is permissible.17

We may also put the question of *meritum* in a negative way: If war is not waged, what will be lost? The *Huainanzi* is quite explicit on this point. Failure to go to war simply enables tyrants to go even further in their cruelty. It is better to nip the evil in the bud than allow it to proliferate:

There is no greater disaster than killing innocent people or sustaining an unjust ruler. There is nothing more abysmal than appropriating the wealth of all under heaven and apportioning it to the wants of one man.18

The passage goes on to relate how if Jie of the Xia and Zhou of the Yin Dynasties had been stopped, then they would not have barbecued people. A further two rulers who were also not stopped early on are mentioned.

These four princes all committed small faults but since none disputed them they went on to possess the whole realm and harm the common people. By giving free rein to the evil of one individual, they brought misfortune to all within the oceans. This is something that First Principles cannot allow.19

The term translated as "First Principles" literally translated is "Heaven's Reasoning" (*Tian lun*). It might well be considered an equivalent of the term "Natural law." According to the *Huainanzi*, the wrongdoer should be removed just as the otter must be taken out of the fish pond or the wolf out of the pens of chickens and flocks of animals.20 The purpose of war is thus seen as protection of the innocent.

Authority. The *Mozi* is exceptional in Chinese tradition in speaking so approvingly of popular religion, but it shares with the whole tradition a belief that heaven alone had the authority to command war. The *Sima fa* describes the ceremony in the temple prior to going into war:

They then announced it to August Heaven and to the sun, moon, planets and constellations. They prayed to the gods of earth, the spirits of the four seasons, mountains and rivers and at the great altar [of state]. Then they offered sacrifice to the former kings. Only thereafter would the Prime

Minister charge the army before the feudal lords, saying, a certain state has acted contrary to the Way. You will participate in the rectification campaign on such a year, month and day. On that date the army will reach the [offending] state and assemble with the Son of Heaven to apply the punishment of rectification.21

This formal ceremony indicates that the rulers sought celestial authority for their wars in combination with the Zhou King, the Son of Heaven.

The state of Yue, which engaged in war with Wu after having first been defeated, did so on the advice of Fan Li, who argued that the King of Yue needed to wait for the approval of heaven, in the form of famine in Wu, and the support of the local population of Wu in the form of resentment against their ruler.22 Thus authority is seen as coming from outside, whether from above or from the appeal of the people of the enemy state. Authority is never seen as proceeding legitimately from the ruler himself.

Conditio. Aquinas discusses the question whether clerics and bishops may fight. His conclusion is that they may not. For this he produces two arguments: one general and one particular.23 The general argument states that clerics are ordained to a life of prayer for the people, and anything which would disturb this contemplative life is to be shunned, whether it be business affairs or war. The second reason is to do with killing. All clerics are ordained to the ministry of the altar where the passion of Christ is present in sacramental signs. Since on this altar they remember the blood Christ shed for us, it would not be fitting for them to kill others and shed others' blood, rather they themselves should be more ready to give their blood for Christ. In other words, they may be martyrs but not soldiers.

Causa. The question of just cause is one that also receives treatment in the Chinese tradition. It is found in the characterization of the possible motives for war, which are typically given as three or five possible descriptions of troops. Of these categories, only two out of five or one out of three are approved.24 We may list them according to source as follows:

Category/Source *Wuzi Wenzi* and Han History *Jing*

1. Just War 1 1 2
2. Self-defense 2 2 -
3. War of anger 3 3 3
4. War for gain 4 4 1
5. War of rebellion 5 5

The last three categories in this table are all objectionable; only the first two merit approval. The second, for instance, is said to lead to victory by the *Wenzi*. It is the first, however, that gains the most attention. The tradition is that just wars are possible. Their purpose is stated negatively as preventing tyranny and disorder and removing evils, and positively, as rescuing suffering people, the weak, and rulers whose line is threatened with extinction. The negative role is summed up in the beautiful metaphor of the *Huainanzi* placed at the head of this chapter: war is like a comb or a hoe.

As I have shown elsewhere, the dominant image in Chinese thinking on just war is, however, that of water. War is designed to clear out the weeds in the pool and so to purify the water. Once

this is done the pond will become peaceful and calm. Simply letting the water be is not sufficient; the weeds must be removed first.25

While the military works are all unanimous on the role of the just war, there are other voices in Chinese thought. The *Mencius*, in reviewing Chinese history, decides that there have never been any just wars:

In the Spring and Autumn Annals there are no just wars. Instances there are only of one war better than another.26

This statement should not be seen as denying the need to assess wars in terms of justice, because it supposes the concept in order to make the judgment. What it does do is use the criterion of just cause to examine historical examples.

The statement of just cause given by the *Huainanzi* deserves special mention for its similarity to that of Alexander:

support of the good, coercion of the bad and peace for all. (Alexander of Hales)27

The sage emerged and rose up and disputed with the strong and tyrannous, pacified a confused world and leveled out dangers, removing dirt. (Huainanzi)28

Affectus. Affectus refers to the state of mind of both the soldiers and the person responsible for declaring war. As Nordquist points out, Augustin required "a mournful mood" as a condition for war, but in modern discourse this mental prerequisite is omitted, or perhaps, better, is converted into a legal and objective assessment.29 In ancient Chinese tradition it is an important aspect. As noted above, war motivated by anger is condemned in all military texts. This applies not only to the inception of the war, but even to its continuation. A war might have begun with good *affectus*, but if it is carried on too far then it may be self-defeating and unjust.

The *Daode Jing* describes the victorious general as weeping for the slaughter of so many persons.

When victorious, he does not think this a good thing.
Because to do so would be to delight in slaughtering people.
At the slaughter of such masses of people,
He weeps for them, mourning and lamenting.
When victorious in battle,
He takes his stand as at a mourning ceremony.30

This brief phrase is expanded in the *Huainanzi*, which describes the traditional way in which the Chinese general would go to war. He dresses as a corpse and leaves by the gate reserved for the dead. Whereas some earlier texts suggested that he returns in glory, this one declares the opposite. The general comes back full of apology, in the very mournful mood that will be described later by Augustin.31

Intentio. *Intentio* rules out fighting for booty or from cupidity. In the Chinese context, this is called fighting for gain or profit. The *Jing* gives a certain degree of approbation to this motive:

What is meant by profit is, the ruler sees [the land is suffering] famine, the state is not at rest, superiors and inferiors are at odds with one another, yet the ruler raises an army and thus causes misery. Although there is no great profit, there is no great harm either.32

The *Huainanzi* does not share even this qualified support:

One who wages war for land cannot become king of that land; one who wages war for himself cannot establish his merit. If one undertakes affairs for others then all will help one; if one undertakes affairs for oneself then all will desert one. When all come to help then even what is weak will be strong; when all desert then even what is large will be lost.33

The one who acts for profit, thus, will ultimately lose whatever gains are made. The Purist version of the *Mozi* holds that aggressive warfare aroused enmity in surrounding states and, thus, was ultimately responsible for the destruction, sometimes total, of the original aggressor:

It was due to offensive wars that Ju perished between two great states. And it was due to aggressive wars that in the south Chan and Cai were extinguished by Wu and Yue. And it was due to aggressive wars that in the north Bu Tu He perished among Yan, Dai, Hu and Mo.34

The passage goes on to relate how King Fu Chai of Wu attacked Qi and then Yue and won control over all of China, but because of his pride, Yue was able to invade and totally wipe out the kingdom of Wu.

If war for profit and out of anger are to be ruled out, the Chinese tradition reserves its greatest disapproval for wars of rebellion. In the Western tradition, rebellion and regicide are also discussed with similar disapproval in the majority of cases. However, since these kinds of armed conflict do not fit the narrower definition of war that has been chosen as the object of this study, I will not enter into greater detail. In fact, from the point of view of philosophical reasoning about war, rebellion may be seen as a particular application of the norms of "just war theory."

Conclusion: Last Resort. This criterion is upheld consistently in all military texts. Only when it cannot be avoided is warfare to be engaged in:

He [the gentleman] uses them [weapons] only when unavoidable.35

This same statement is repeated in other texts. For instance, the *Jing* after listing the three different causes of war adds a fourth paragraph explaining the circumstances in which war is to be engaged in:

The use of them [weapons] in conformity with the
Way is only when unavoidable.
If used when unavoidable
Then success is unlimited.36

The belief that success will be achieved when warfare is consistent with the Way reveals a basic metaphysical assumption of most Chinese reasoning: Only conformity to the Way brings success. In this sense, the military formulation is simply the application of a general rule.

Ius in Bello

Under this heading, we shall look at the way in which warfare is conducted and the limits imposed. Before considering equivalents of the principles of discrimination and proportionality, it will be good to draw attention to a constant theme in all Chinese military texts, namely, that the best kind of war is one in which there is no warfare:

A hundred engagements, a hundred battles, is not the best. To overcome the others' troops without any fighting, this is the best.37

The truly just army acts in the same way, not shedding any blood:

The coming of the just army is to manage to reach a state of not fighting and then stop.38

Thus, in all these texts, we find the essential norms of the Geneva Conventions that govern international norms for conduct in time of war. To bring out this point in greater detail, we will examine the Conventions alongside the relevant Chinese texts.

Treatment of Victims and Civilians. There are six documents relating to norms for the conduct in war. The first two deal with the wounded, sick, and shipwrecked members of the armed forces. The third and fourth deal with prisoners of war and civilians, respectively, whilst the last two are additional protocols relating to the protection of victims in international and noninternational armed conflicts.39 Naturally, the details of a modern legal document go far beyond what can be found in any of the Chinese philosophical texts, but the essential principles are the same.

The Four Geneva Conventions state how noncombatants and those who have laid down arms are to be treated:

Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed *hors de combat* by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria.40

The Second Protocol states that civilians and objects indispensable to their survival are not to be attacked:

The civilian population and individual civilians shall enjoy general protection against the dangers arising from military operations. . . .It is. . .prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless. . .objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works.41

Turning to Chinese philosophical texts, we find that these same principles are all observed. Thus, the Prime Minister and other officials deliver the following command to the army before it invades an adversary's state:

When you enter the offender's territory, do not do violence to his gods; do not hunt his wild animals; do not destroy earthworks; do not set fire to buildings; do not cut down forests; do not take the six domesticated animals, grains, or implements. When you see their elderly or very young, return them without harming them. Even if you encounter adults, unless they engage you in combat, do not treat them as enemies. If an enemy has been wounded, provide medical attention and return him.42

The *Huainanzi* repeats this section adding prohibitions against the burning of stores and the digging up of tombs. The *Liu Tao* adds the further stipulation that captives are not to be slain whilst the *Xunzi* forbids making prisoners of any who willingly surrender.43

Respect for tombs is also set out in the Geneva Conventions:

They shall further ensure that the dead are honorably interred, if possible according to the rites of the religion to which they belonged, that these graves are respected, grouped if possible according to the nationality of the deceased, properly maintained and marked so that they may always be found.44

Regarding the treatment of civilians, the *Huainanzi* explicitly mentions care for orphans, widows,and the poor:

They [the invading army] support orphans and widows, cherish the poor, empty the prisons and reward the virtuous.45

In the Fourth Geneva Convention, we find:

the Parties to the conflict shall endeavor to conclude local agreements for the removal from besieged or encircled areas, of wounded, sick, infirm, and aged persons, children and maternity cases, and for the passage of ministers of all religions, medical personnel and medical equipment on their way to such areas.46

Ruses and Perfidy

One principle that is common to all Chinese military texts is that ruses should be employed. The *Sunzi* puts it bluntly: "Warfare is the way of deception."47 The hero of the novel *The Three Kingdoms*, Zhuge Liang, is famed for his ability to use ruses.48 Aquinas also permits the use of lying in war. However, perfidy is to be condemned. The First Protocol to the Geneva Conventions makes a distinction between the two:

It is prohibited to kill, injure or capture an adversary by resort to perfidy. Acts inviting the confidence of an adversary to lead him to believe that he is entitled to, or is obliged to accord, protection under the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, with intent to betray that confidence, shall constitute perfidy.

Ruses of war are not prohibited. Such ruses are acts which are intended to mislead an adversary or to induce him to act recklessly, but which infringe no rule of international law applicable in armed

conflict and which are not perfidious because they do not invite the confidence of an adversary with respect to protection under that law.49

An example of perfidy would be to pretend to surrender, but once the opposing troops were close by to then open fire, or again, to kill prisoners of war. Ferguson shows how during the First World War, atrocities of this kind happened on both sides partly owing to a lack of trust.50 The holding power might fear that prisoners would break trust and open fire and hence, they would kill the prisoners first. Tension and resentment could also lead to such acts of perfidy. Ruses, the use of moving machines, dummies, camouflage, and other activities are what make Zhuge Liang such an exciting general. Here it is a question of skill and intelligence, rather than of trust.

Hence, from this brief study it is clear that the basic principles enshrined in the Geneva Conventions were already present some 2,000 years previously in ancient China.

The Sorrow of War

While there is no basis in the Chinese tradition for pacifism as a counterweight to the theory of just war: there is, nonetheless, a constant poetic theme of regret for war and the sorrows it brings. The theme of being parted from friends and from loved ones is particularly poignant. For much of Chinese history, the major danger of war has always come from the north where the nomadic peoples known as Huns, Mongol, or Manchus were adept at riding in the saddle and sweeping down on the civilised areas of China. War was thus a disruption of normal life as the following poem makes clear:

The Ballad of Longxi
Oath-bound to sweep aside the Huns, without caring for their own lives,
Five thousand soldiers with fur-trimmed coats died in the dust of the frontier.
O, the pity of it! These bones by the banks of the inconstant river are yet men
in the Spring dreams of their wives.51

Liu An, the Prince of Huainan appeals to these kinds of sentiment when he condemns a proposal to send an army to subdue barbarians in southeast China. He points out that the climate of the region is such as to engender cholera, yellow fever, and other epidemics. Geographical obstacles such as mountains and rivers all add to the difficulties, just as the vast deserts of the north make combat difficult. In a previous study of Liu An's argument I also noted that he has other reasons, related to his theory of humanitarian intervention, which rule out attack.52

Conclusion

The Chinese texts discussed here show remarkable parallels to the Western texts. There is a similar assessment of the evil of war, a recognition, though, that in an imperfect world, it may be used but only subject to moral conditions that bear striking resemblance to those in the Western tradition. Norms of proportionality and discrimination are designed to guarantee the safety of civilians in the same way as do the Geneva Conventions.

Naturally, the comparison is not perfect, especially because the Chinese texts considered are all over 2,000 years old while in the West we were looking at a much more recent history, noting how ethical discussion developed over the centuries. But these historical developments were not

seen as engendering a fundamental shift in the way of thinking. Even the extreme case of applying the proportionality or discrimination arguments to rule out war is by definition precisely that: a use of these arguments.

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