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of Traditions and Cultures 15

Jānis Tālivaldis Ozoliņš *Editor*

Religion and Culture in Dialogue

East and West Perspectives

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Volume 15

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In memory of Jacob Jānis Ozoliņš (1981–2013), for Barbara, my wife and my family, both here in Australia and in Latvia.

Preface

This volume is a result of a research project which brought together a diverse range of academics in philosophy and theology from a number of different institutions. The project had very broad aims, and had as its focus the role of culture and religion in shaping human persons and developing moral values. It also sought to engage with a variety of perspectives. During monthly meetings, a number of the contributors from Australian Catholic University met to discuss some of the issues which found their way into the book. Other insights were gained at various international conferences and dialogue during such meetings grew into the papers that came together to form this book.

One aspect of the modern world has been the communication revolution which has seen the possibility of diverse peoples being able to encounter one another and the variety of faiths, cultures and traditions that they have. The authors draw on this diversity in their considerations of the ways in which different cultures and traditions have addressed common philosophical and theological questions. These range from different conceptions of God, to human values and human dignity, as well as discussion of the beliefs that shape cultures and religious tradition. These discussions illuminate our understanding of the nature of the human person and personal identity. In an increasingly globalised world and in the pluralist context of Australian society, an understanding and appreciation of other cultures is vital. The contributors themselves are from a variety of backgrounds and cultural traditions and so the book is a window into a fascinating array of perspectives on a wide range of topics. Each chapter provides a vignette into this mix of religion and culture.

Fitzroy, Australia — Jānis Tālivaldis Ozoliņš

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Introduction

The contributions in this volume from a diverse range of authors from mixed backgrounds on a variety of topics illustrate well how culture and tradition shape approaches to the themes discussed. While we do not set out to analyse their texts here to see what cultural influences are present in their writing, it is broadly possible to see these emerge through not just the topics chosen, but the theoretical approaches taken to the topics themselves. The pluralism that is evident has produced a lively mix of perspectives and styles. Although there are several ways the essays could have been arranged, they have been presented according to broad themes that shade into each other. The first broad theme, deals with the nature of belief, and this is taken up in the essays by Tobin, Drum and Colledge. The second theme, in the essays of Quilter and Knasas, deals with dialogue among different cultures and traditions. The third theme, evident in the essays of Ozoliņš, Tan, Mooney and Williams, focuses on eastern understanding of God and what it means to lead an ethical life. The fourth theme, evident in the essays by Chiţoiu, Kirchhoffer, Sweet and Kūle, takes up the nature of the human person, human dignity, human rights and how to form virtuous human beings.

The introductory essay by Ozoliņš comments on the global forces that have brought cultures and traditions into contact with each other and explores these influences on cultural identity. Although it can be argued that contact among different cultures can lead to a "clash of civilizations", Ozoliņš argues that it can be a source of creativity. Different perspectives bring to light elements of what it is to be human that a single perspective could never uncover. These differing perspectives will all have their influences on forming our cultural identities. He concludes that we should be conscious of the global influences that shape our lives, acting to preserve our cultures and traditions, but also embracing what is good in other cultures.

Bernadette Tobin provocatively introduces her chapter by responding to the question, "Do you believe in God?", by answering, "I only hope I do." The question is about what we mean by God and the answer to this is by no means simple, since it involves some kind of cognitive understanding. Neither is it only a problem for the three monotheistic religions, but also for some of the more monotheistic forms of Buddhism and Hinduism. Responding to this question is not an easy task, because

of the tendency by human beings to de-divinise God, to reduce him from the ultimately mysterious other to some kind of anthropomorphised superhuman being. This leads us to ask questions about what we can know about God. A promising place to start is in the Jewish descriptions of God as the Most High, the God who provides salvation. With St. John the Evangelist comes a new description of God as *logos*, the principle of intelligibility, a God who does not act against the dictates of natural reason. Such a God does not order his followers to torture people to compel their obedience. A substantive conception of God will have implications for our ethical lives.

Peter Drum takes up the question of ethical beliefs, noting that it is always wrong to believe anything on insufficient evidence. This is because the good for human beings is to live according to the dictates of reason. This will also apply to religious faith, for though we may believe on faith, it must also be based on what is reasonable. The difficulty is that in ethical matters there is significant disagreement about whether a course of action is right or wrong. Drum points out that different cultures and traditions while applying the dictates of reason quite often will come to different conclusions about whether something is morally right or wrong. Nevertheless, there are grounds for recognising the universality of certain moral principles and closer scrutiny of differences reveal that they are not as great as first imagined.

The chapter by Richard Colledge considers the relationship between science and religion, continuing the theme of what we can believe and how we can believe it. His interest is in the debates about whether or not science and religion are compatible. He notes that there are two lines of thought, the first, the incompatibilist, argues that either the rational, scientific interpretation of the world is fundamental or the religious interpretation of the world is, but not both. The second, which he calls the equiprimordialist position, argue for the complementary of both. Colledge asks whether both of these positions miss the point that both reason and faith have their roots in something more primordial, namely the human condition. He concludes that religion is not the domain of the irrational, but involves rationality as much as science does. Furthermore, science is not the domain of rationality alone, but also involves faith.

The role of philosophy in fostering interreligious dialogue is the topic of John Quilter's wide-ranging chapter. He begins by noting the difficulties. Religious traditions are, except in a few cases, incompatible with one another, and those who are the leaders of particular religions have a duty to preserve their integrity. The question then, is to consider what kind of dialogue is possible and what would it be about. Quilter thinks that care must be taken if it is thought that the aim of such dialogue is the truth, understood in the way that the research scientists thinks about truth. He produces what he terms the Argument from Religious Diversity and argues that it has an impact on interreligious dialogue. The best approach is to adopt a pluralism in relation to religion and in dialogue with others listen carefully to what they say in an atmosphere of intellectual and spiritual friendship. Respect for the other means that the aim of interreligious dialogue is not conversion of the other to one's own faith.

In talking about dialogue on ethical questions between traditions, we assume that there are common and universal principles that we all share, but, as John Knasas points out in his chapter, how is it that even where we agree, the secondary principles we derive from these can be so different. Thus, we may agree that preservation of life is all important, but disagree about abortion and euthanasia. How does the Thomist respond to this conundrum? Knasas responds by suggesting that Aquinas provides an answer in the *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q. 94.4. He points out that pluralism arises because human beings tend to act according to sensual pleasures before intellectual ones and so do not follow through with intellectual reasoning. This results in a variety of positions and explains why error is possible.

God and our understanding of Him is never far away in this volume. That this understanding is many faceted is a truism and the chapter on God's immanence and transcendence in Aquinas compared to Mèngzǐ's view by Jānis (John) Ozoliņš provides an illuminating appraisal of two very different cultural traditions. Ozoliņš notes that immanence and transcendence appear to be mutually exclusive, since one the one hand, if God is immanent within creation, He cannot at the same time be transcendent, that is, beyond creation. An adequate response to this question is important, since it tells us about the kind of God that we claim exists. Different traditions have tackled this problem in different ways and Ozoliņš argues that both Aquinas and Mèngzǐ both provide a reconciliation between God's immanence and transcendence.

Jonathan Tan's chapter, continuing an engagement with Eastern thought, illustrates well the similarities and differences of cultures and traditions. In his discussion of the epic Vietnamese poem, Truyện Kiều ("The Tale of Kiều"), by the nineteenth century Vietnamese poet, Nguyễn Du, he informs us that it has been translated into more than 30 languages, a demonstration of its global human appeal. The poem strikes a chord across different cultures and traditions, dealing as it does, with human tragedy that is readily understood. A woman's commitment to filiality leads ultimately to her doom, an outcome that we perhaps do not expect, as commitment to a virtue would seem to be the right thing to do. The poem itself invites a rethinking of traditional Confucian stereotypes of the relations between husband and wife, parent and child. It remains, nevertheless, despite its resonances across cultures, very deeply a Vietnamese poem, the epitome of Vietnamese culture. As such, it provides a perspective on human relations that repays the effort to understand another culture.

Confucian filial piety (xiào, 孝), the duty to care for elderly parents, is the subject of the paper by Mooney and Williams, but their approach is very different. Their main aim is to investigate whether the filial duty of care has been eroded within Chinese communities. They approach their task using the techniques of analytic philosophy, paying careful attention to the meanings of terms, as well as being sensitive to the nuances of the Confucian tradition. This is clearly shown by the way in which they begin with a historical account of the origins of filial duty in ancestor worship and follow this by an account of the Confucian ethics which provides justification for filial piety. They conclude, after careful investigation, that the filial duty of care has not been eroded in Chinese communities.

In much of our philosophical discussion, we talk about human nature, human dignity and human person. Dan Chițoiu explains that the concept of person emerges from Christianity during the Patristic period. The concept has two aspects, the first, deals with the idea of the triune God as three persons but with one nature, and the second, the idea of human beings as persons. Chițoiu investigates the development of the idea of person in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine world, that is, in Eastern Europe. The term "person" is first introduced by the Cappadocian Fathers in the Fourth Century, and brings together two distinct ideas *Hypostasis* and *prosopon*. This investigation, he proposes, will shed light on our understanding of ourselves as distinct existences, not just aggregations of bodies and souls, as well as on our conceptions of God.

William Sweet's contribution to this volume discusses human rights in three different religious cultures, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. He examines the origins of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) from its drafting stages to its declaration and subsequent popularisation, noting that its foundations are within the Western Christian tradition. It draws upon Enlightenment ideas about the dignity of the human person, as well as asserting the universality of human nature. Nevertheless, despite its Western provenance, human rights can be universally understood and accepted as having normative value. Sweet notes that Buddhism is generally thought to have no concept of human rights nor human nature, yet the Dalai Lama has spoken of the importance of human rights. This leads him to consider whether there is any textual support for a conception of human rights within Buddhist texts. He shows that within the Khuddakapatha, the practice of Buddhism can only take place in the company of others and this involves the recognition of human rights. Islam also acknowledges the existence of human rights, and these are supported by reference to the hadith or the Q'ran. Human rights in Islam are culturally and religiously based, but what is salient is that these are held to be universally applicable. Sweet concludes that despite different starting points, it is possible to provide an account of human rights.

David Kirchhoffer's chapter takes up the issue of what is meant by human dignity, given that this cited as the reason for human rights. If the concept of human dignity is empty, as is sometimes asserted, then human rights themselves come under threat. Kirchoffer argues, utilising the UNDHR and what he calls the Component Dimensions of Human Dignity model, that the concept of human dignity is not empty, but anchors our claims of human rights. He notes that in the drafting of the UNDHR, although it is considered a Western text, some important contributions to it came from the Chinese representative on the committee. Human dignity, therefore, is not simply a Western concept, but is an important concept in other cultures, forming the basis of human rights claims. Culture forms the lens through which we see human rights and our sense of our own human dignity is dependent on the respect and love we receive from our immediate community. More than this, our identities are formed by the culture and traditions of our immediate communities.

The contribution from Maija Kūle brings us back to reality by asking questions about the nature of education and the kinds of values which it should impart. If we

are to engage in dialogue with others and with other traditions, the kind of education that we receive should be one that does not simply provide us with skills that are useful in the marketplace. It is difficult to see how we could appreciate other cultures and traditions if we have little appreciation of our own. Kūle points out that the Finnish school system acknowledges very clearly the importance of enculturation and the development of a path in life. This is not simply a matter of gaining a few skills, but a much more enriched understanding of education. Kūle argues persuasively for the importance of human values in education.

Human experience takes many forms and different cultures and traditions interpret its meaning in a myriad ways. Human life bursts with creativity, drawing its energy from God, its ultimate Source. The authors in this volume exemplify this creativity, addressing questions of perennial importance from diverse cultural and philosophical traditions. Each of the authors bring their own cultural identities to the conversations in this volume, providing a rich interchange of ideas, blending both East and West.

February 2015 Jānis Tālivaldis Ozoliņš

Chapter 1
Proglomena: Globalisation, Cultural Identity and Diversity

Jānis Tālivaldis Ozoliņš

Abstract Globalisation and the mass communication revolution of the last 40 years has made the world a much smaller place. It has brought diverse cultures, traditions and languages in far greater contact than was previously possible. The expansion of the free market economy and the growth of transnational corporations has also brought both East and West, as well as North and South in closer contact. While the potential for mutual understanding is great, so is the potential for conflict. The forces which shape cultural identity are varied and the challenge is to appreciate the influences that shape our values and beliefs so that we can understand ourselves. In doing so, we are in a better position to value diverse cultures, religions, languages and traditions and recognise their preciousness. This is important if globalisation is not to result in the growth of a monoculture that destroys the rich diversity of culture as well as our individual cultural identities.

Keywords Culture • Tradition • Values • Pluralism • Cultural identity • Globalisation

One aspect of the modern world has been the communication revolution which has seen the possibility of diverse peoples being able to encounter one another and the variety of faiths, cultures and traditions that they have. As a result, we have become aware of the diversity of ways in which different cultures and traditions have addressed common human questions. It is also obvious that a particular way in which the world is described and understood will be in part determined by the language in which it is expressed. Language is not restricted to oral utterances or to texts, but will also include a myriad bodily cues and cultural practices. In asserting that language expresses a 'form of life', that is, that to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life, Wittgenstein emphasises the role of language in forming the

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world which we inhabit. Wittgenstein (1953, para. 19) Adding to this insight, Gadamer acknowledges the importance of cultural tradition as the foundation of thought, arguing that thinking takes place against a background that includes morals, law and religion (Gadamer 1989, 235–236). Both of these views need to be taken into account if we are to understand what is communicated to us through our encounters with peoples of other nations, languages and cultures.

Globalisation has undoubtedly been both a blessing and a curse. At the same time as it has enabled us to appreciate, through a variety of means, the existence of cultures and traditions different from our own, it has also led to the rise of mass culture. What is to be resisted is that globalisation has resulted in a mutual understanding of ideas, values and practices that are the common currency of global discourse. Without some awareness of the differences between cultures and respect for the cultural and linguistic practices that each culture and language brings to global dialogue we risk failing to see new and novel perspectives on the global problems that we face. In this essay we firstly briefly discuss the possibility of mutual understanding, secondly, what we might mean by cultural identity, exploring the influences which form our sense of cultural identity and thirdly, consider the interaction between globalisation and cultural identity. We propose that without some consciousness of the influences that shape our lives we can fail to be open to new and innovative ideas to which different cultures expose us.

Although globalisation has led to some convergences, such as the rise of mass culture and the almost ubiquitous acceptance of the market economy, it has also exacerbated the differences among different religions and cultures so that in Huntington's famous phrase, there is a "clash of civilizations".[1] Huntington argued that future conflicts in world politics would be between different cultures or civilisations rather than because of ideological or economic differences between nation states. A glance around the globe suggests that the situation is more complex.[2] While Huntington sees the clash of civilisations as problematic, it can also be seen as having some positives. The clash of civilisations also results in creative tensions

[1] Huntington, Samuel P. (1996). The phrase "clash of civilisations" is not Huntington's, but it was popularised as a result of Huntington's 1993 paper and was more fully developed as a theory about the behaviour of nations in conflicts. After 9/11, his theory appeared to be vindicated, though it has been subjected to wide-ranging criticism. See Huntington (1993). Some of his critics include the following. Acharya (2002), Camroux (1996), Fukuyama (1992), Groves (1998), Mazarr (1996).

[2] There are very large number of conflicts raging around the world. In Africa, there are conflicts in North Africa, such as occurring in Libya and in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their origins are far from obvious. In some cases, they appear to be ethnic, in others, religious and ideological. In Nigeria, for instance, Boko Haram, a militant Islamist group is massacring people indiscriminately, but also singling out Christians, for particular attention. Conflict in the Middle East also appears to be based on ethnic, religious and ideological grounds, but economic grounds cannot be excluded. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine appears to be more clearly on geopolitical and economic grounds, though one argument has been the need to protect ethnic Russians outside the borders of Russia. It is not our intention to provide an analysis here, simply to note that the reasons for conflict are very complex and multi-faceted. What is striking is that the conflicts appear to be within states and not between the West (broadly understood) and the East. See Fenton (2004) for some analysis and discussion of ethnic conflict.

between one particular cultural perspective on human life and another. It also results in different conceptions of what it means to be a human person and so affects very concretely our conceptions of who we are as persons. The clash of civilisations does not need to imply a conflict to be feared, but rather an opportunity to learn about the perspectives of different cultures, values and traditions on such disparate human questions as conceptions of God, of human nature and human values. Openness to other values and beliefs, however, needs to be cultivated, even as the inculcation of our own cultures and traditions occurs. In being open to different outlooks, there is much to be learned about ourselves and our values. For example, if we are a Christian or a Muslim, in considering the Jewish conception of God, we become aware of common origins, of having beliefs shaped by being Abrahamic faiths, but also of profound differences. The commonalities enable monotheists to stand on common ground, but it is through the discussion of differences that our identities as adherents of a particular faith emerge. It is through knowing and interacting with the other that we know ourselves.[3] Similarly, those from the same faith but from a different cultural background will also offer different insights to their fellow believers.

When we investigate the values which guide our moral choices and decisions about moral actions, we will also discover that cultures and traditions will have quite diverse ways of arriving at similar conclusions. If we consider, for example, approaches to the virtues in Confucian culture and compare these to Western culture, at first glance, there appear to be profound differences. In Confucian philosophy, the four main virtues are benevolence (仁, rén), dutifulness (rightness) (義, yì), propriety (rites) (礼, lǐ) and wisdom (智, zhì). There are also a number of secondary virtues, such as filial piety, (xiàoxīn, 孝心), which enjoins children to respect and honour their parents. A person displaying benevolence is respectful (gōng 恭), magnanimous (kuān 寬), honest or truthful (xìn 信), hardworking or diligent (mǐn 敏) and gracious (huì 惠). 孔子, Kǒngzǐ, says in the 论语, Lún Yǔ, or Analects, that the benevolent person (君子, jūnzǐ) considers rightness (義) to be essential in everything, practising it by acting according to the rules of propriety (礼), humbly and with sincerity, both important virtues (Confucius 1971, *The Analects*, Book 15, Ch. XVII). In contrast, the virtues that are listed by Aristotle are courage, temperance, prudence or practical wisdom, justice, as well as liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, patience, truthfulness and friendliness, amongst others (Aristotle 1976, Book II, vii [1107b18-20]). Aquinas, following Aristotle, also includes amongst his secondary virtues euboulia (deliberating well), filial piety, perseverance, modesty, abstinence and sobriety (Aquinas 1981, *Summa Theologica* (hereinafter *ST*) II-II, Q.51, Art.1; Q.101, Arts. 1–4; Q137, Art.1; Q.146, Arts. 1–2; Q.149, Arts. 1–2; Q.160, Arts. 1–2.). He also introduces the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (*ST*, I-II, Q.1, Q.62). Modern lists of virtues include compassion, honesty, conscientiousness, care, integrity and respectfulness, which echo the classical lists of virtues. In all cases, the virtues are the means by which human beings are to reach their ultimate goal, which is happiness. In both the Confucian and the Thomist

[3] This thought recurs throughout Ricoeur's work and philosophical anthropology is a major theme throughout. For Ricoeur's clearest statement on this see Ricoeur (1992).

case, there is the possibility of a transcendent happiness which is being re-united with Heaven (天, Tiān) or God.[4]

The lesson to be drawn from this brief excursus into virtue ethics is to recognise that though there are commonalities among human beings, since they all desire the same end, that culture and tradition result in different ways of understanding the means by which the end is to be attained. The virtues, whatever way they are described, are to bring about the upright, virtuous human being, who having attained virtue, will also attain happiness. It is evident that there are very similar lists of virtues in different traditions,[5] but it is equally obvious that there are different emphases on which virtues are seen to be the more important. Filial piety, for example, is very significant in Confucian culture, reflecting its origins in ancestor worship. Aristotle extols liberality, that is, the right use of wealth, whereas this has disappeared as a virtue in the modern world. This does not mean that no one practises liberality, for instance, but means that the virtue has been subsumed under another virtue of which it is a part.

It would wrong to suppose that the task of understanding another culture or tradition is easy, however. Prejudice, ideology and self-interest act to blind us, as well as our preconceptions, values and traditions. Although MacIntyre is primarily addressing rival philosophical traditions of inquiry, he argues that debates between two such traditions are inevitably inconclusive because each makes its judgements about the other from its own standpoint and, moreover, one will regard the other as irrefutably wrong (MacIntyre 1990, 7.). For this reason, not only do we need to investigate the philosophical and theological foundations that shape our own culture and tradition, but also to try to stand in the place of the other, so that we are able to see ourselves from their perspective. It should not be supposed that this is unproblematic, as MacIntyre points out, since diversity of language, culture and tradition are significant barriers.

Despite the difficulties, we should not suppose that we are irremediably locked into our ways of thinking. Cultures, languages and traditions are not museum pieces, forever fixing our perspectives, but are fluid, always changing and in constant ferment, since each generation has to interpret traditions and culture anew. Language also changes under the influence of new experiences, encounters with people with other languages and cultures, new discoveries and changing patterns of life. Human beings adapt and change. New experiences result in fresh ideas that are expressed in novel words, sometimes borrowed from another language or culture.[6]

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[4] This is not to suppose that the Confucian Heaven is the same as Aquinas's Christian God, nor, that the thought that the Confucian Heaven is transcendent is accepted without dispute.

[5] Buddhist virtues, for example, will include compassion and kindness, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. Importantly, the cultivation and retention of these virtues requires habituation. An elaboration of these will show overlaps with other lists of virtues. See Irwin 2013.

[6] The view that language and thought are connected is not particularly new. See Whorf 1956. Whorf argues that different languages yield different conceptions of the world. Michael Dummett also holds that language is logically prior to thought. Those holding that thought is prior to language include Paul Grice and Jerry Fodor.

Although there are large divergences among the many diverse people and cultures of the world, this need not imply complete incommensurability and untranslatability of ideas between and among them.[7] It is a common experience of those travelling in a country where they do not speak the language that when necessary, they are able to make themselves understood. Admittedly this will be in a very limited manner and the danger of misunderstanding is high, nevertheless, this would not be possible at all if human beings did not share some common experiences and so have ways of communicating these. Empirically, languages and cultures are not completely incommensurable nor are ideas within them completely untranslatable. Hunger, thirst, being cold or hot, the need for shelter are all basic needs that all human beings require, but not only these. Human beings also need love, comfort in grief and the dignity that work can provide. They need an environment in which they can appreciate beauty and joy in the company of others and much more besides. These basic necessities are common needs that human beings share and so we can expect to find descriptions of these in different languages that we can recognise as referring to those basic necessities. While it is a matter of empirical evidence whether this is the case, if it is the case, then the possibility of communication exists. Since we can make ourselves understood, at least in a rudimentary way, basic communication is possible and incommensurability ruled out. Actions by people in other cultures are intelligible to us.

Before the communication age, individual identity was shaped by the language, culture and tradition of the village to which individuals belonged. Perspectives and values reflected the community in which people lived their lives and the encounters with strangers from different parts of the country, let alone the world were limited. Lacking experience of other cultures and traditions, people encountering strangers would have had difficulty in understanding them, perhaps regarding their customs as exotic and incomprehensible. Globalisation, made possible through rapid travel, trade and communication technology, has enabled far greater encounter with diverse cultures and has also brought with it the threat of cultural colonisation in which a dominant culture overpowers an indigenous minority culture. Intelligibility of another culture is a two-edged sword, enabling us to have comprehension of another culture, but also making it easier for an ascendant culture to weaken and finally eliminate the traditions and values of another, resulting in the creation of a monoculture.[8] Despite this threat, a diversity of languages, cultures and traditions remain and contribute to the shaping of the identities and characters of individuals.[9]

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[7] Davidson says that one of the problems with the idea of there being incommensurable languages is not that we could not understand them, but that the criteria for what would make languages incommensurable are not clear. See Davidson (1973, 13–14.).

[8] The loss of diversity can be observed through the dominance of transnational corporations in a variety of enterprises. Large shopping complexes in major cities whether they are in the United States or in China or anywhere in between tend to look the same and contain the same kinds of retail outlets. In order to experience the cultural diversity in a particular country we are forced to go further afield than the major cities.

[9] It should also be noted that there is also resistance to the creation of monocultures, so that minority cultures consciously work to preserve their cultures and identities.

1.1 Cultural Identity

An understanding of cultural identity is important if we are to understand the deeper motivations and influences that shape the perspectives and values of different individuals, including ourselves. This will be particularly so if we are seeking to understand what motivates individuals or explain statements or actions that mystify us. To say, for example, that someone is a Jewish writer is not simply to place an ethnic label on the individual, but to identify the tradition and the cultural perspective from which he or she writes. Moreover, it provides a key to interpreting his or her understanding of a particular problem or issue with which his or her writing is concerned. In practical terms, awareness of the nuanced understanding of putatively shared concepts that cultural identity brings enables us to appreciate that the concepts with which we construct our arguments and draw our conclusions may be understood by others very differently from how we understand and use them ourselves.

Cultural influences are observed, for example, when we consider what we mean by globalisation, another, just as difficult, is what we mean by human rights. In the West, globalisation is generally seen in positive terms and one definition of it is as the multidimensional and interactive processes of political, economic and cultural change across the world resulting in increased social interconnectedness among different peoples (Twiss 2004). This is by no means the only definition, but in places where the experience of globalisation is one of a renewal of domination by International interests, it is synonymous with oppression and colonisation.[10] Culture, affected by experience, will colour how globalisation is understood. The exploitation of resources by foreign powers is not a positive experience, so that what is meant by globalisation in that context signifies something very different from the Western context.[11] The arrival of a multinational corporation in a country may bring jobs and prosperity, but it may be at the expense of family life and the destruction of a community. Similarly, human rights, although universally acknowledged as important, are also contested because they are understood differently in different cultures. In cultures, for example, where family and community values are more important than individual values, group rights will be more important than individual human rights.[12]

[10] Martin Khor once said that globalisation was what those in the Third World have for centuries called colonisation. Khor (1995), quoted in Kukoc 2006, 375. Khor is known for his anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation views.

[11] I do not wish to single out the West in this regard. China, now the largest economy in the world, can equally be said to see globalisation as a process of furthering Chinese interests and so a positive process that leads to economic growth for everyone. Those who see themselves as oppressed by foreign powers will not distinguish between Western or Chinese forms of globalisation.

[12] See for example, Eagleton's essay on the interplay between culture and politics, and the universal versus the local in the understanding of ourselves and hence of human rights. Eagleton (2002). See also Kymlicka's discussion of minority rights, contrasting communitarian views with liberal views. Our point here is that the reality is that these conflicting views about the nature of human rights are not just due to philosophical differences, but also in cultural differences in the understanding of the relationship between individuals and their communities. Kymlicka (2001).

A number of factors, human dignity included, affect our sense of who we are. Cultural identity is one of these, but it is not easy providing some account of it. Proposing that it includes such things as attitudes, religion and religious practices, dietary habits and traditional dress is not particularly helpful, though some of these may well be outward signs of a particular cultural identity (Gupta and Bhugra 2009, 334). A more promising approach, especially since we want to bring out the cultural influences at play in the contributions in this volume, is to draw on a biography of Isaak Babel, a Russian Jewish writer born in Odessa in 1894 and executed by Stalin in 1941. The biography illustrates how ethnicity, language and culture interact in the development of cultural identity. In large measure a product of the social, cultural and political conditions existing in Tsarist Russia, his writing exemplifies the interplay between his identity as Jew and as a Russian.

The biographical account outlines the way in which Babel's cultural identity affected what he thought and wrote and he is described as having a "Russo-Jewish identity" (Sicher 2012, 12). What is salient is the description of Babel as having the identity of a Soviet writer and secondly as someone who passionately loved Yiddish. Later, Babel comes to be seen quintessentially as a Russian-Jewish writer, who retained his Jewishness, as well as his sense of belonging to Russia, since he could not bear to live outside Soviet Russia (Sicher, 13). Cultural identity, it is suggested, is shaped by the individual, but grows out of a literary, linguistic and ethnic context. Its construction is always in process (Sicher, 14). Babel's identity was shaped by the re-awakening of Jewish consciousness following the Kishinev pogroms of 1903 and 1905 (Pasachoff and Littman 1995, Ch. 73; Penkower 2004, 187–225), and by events following the Russian revolution that enabled Jews to break free of the restrictions placed on them in Tsarist Russia (Sicher, 15). Kishinev provided the motivation for Jews throughout Tsarist Russia to organise themselves into self-defence groups, emigrate to the United States and to settlements in Palestine, laying the foundations for the modern state of Israel. Babel's formative years were spent in Odessa, a thriving Jewish centre of culture during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Odessa was unusual for cities in the Russian Empire because it placed no restrictions on Jews; they were free to worship, enter the professions and to contribute to the cultural and civic life of the city. (Sicher, 109) Babel's early literary work identifies him as a Jew from cosmopolitan Odessa, influenced by the mix of cultures, Jewish, Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, for example, to be found in the city during the early part of the twentieth century (Sicher, 16). This vibrant cosmopolitanism was later to be extinguished by the dead hand of 70 years of Soviet rule.

Babel was the first Jewish writer to write in Russian. His cultural identity is revealed through his published works and his innovative style of writing marks him as an author able to see Russia from the outside, though at the same time he was no outsider, since he was also immersed in Russian language and culture. Part of the puzzle of cultural identity, it is suggested, could lie in the intertextuality of modernism, that is, the text makes use of various motifs and references that constitute a

subtext that will be understood by a particular cultural group, but not necessarily a general audience. Sicher, his biographer, claims that the Yiddish language breathes in the coded subtext of Babel's Russian prose (Sicher, 20–21). The use of motifs and cultural references understood only by a particular group is a common device used where an oppressed minority is repressed by a majority culture as means of fighting back at their oppressors. More significantly, what this reveals is that one way in which we can understand the cultural identity of an individual is through the text that he or she writes, since through the analysis of the text we are able to detect the particular cultural references and motifs that he or she uses. These will often point to his or her cultural identity. Paradoxically, Sicher comments, that attempts by other Jewish writers during the twenties and thirties of the twentieth century to sever their ties with their Jewishness and to exhibit their loyalty to Soviet Russia, did not solve the problem of identity. This was because despite cutting their ties with their ethnic past, even changing their names, did not dispel in the eyes of the Soviet regime, the suspicion that they were still ultimately loyal to their Jewish origins and not to Soviet ideology and the State (Sicher, 23–25).

Text will be only a guide to cultural identity, however, because in the case of Babel, it was clear that he was Jewish as well as Russian, so it is not surprising to find an element of Jewishness emerging in his writing. The existence of particular cultural references and motifs will not necessarily enable us to identify individuals as having a particular cultural identity. For example, a keen Latin scholar will have an excellent knowledge of Latin and his writing may be sprinkled with Latin phrases and words, as well as references to Roman literature. This will not mean that we will identify him as having a Roman cultural identity. Similarly, an English scholar who works extensively in German philosophy may make significant use of German phrases and ideas in expressing philosophical ideas, but will not be culturally identifiable as German.

A further complication to the use of text as a means of identifying cultural identity is not only that linguistic phrases and motifs may be the result of extensive scholarship in a particular culture or language, but also the purpose in the mind of the writer of the text. In many cases, the intention is not to convey a covert message that only those belonging to the particular language and culture will understand, but to borrow ideas that help to elucidate a particular issue. Someone interested in Heidegger, for example, may borrow his conception of *Dasein*, in order to make a philosophical point, but this should not be taken to mean her cultural identity is partially German. Neither does it mean that there is a coded subtextual narrative meant for a particular audience.

Equally, however, a text may not make use of any culturally specific linguistic phrases and motifs, but nevertheless be written in such a way that it is evident that the ideas come from a particular cultural perspective. It is common, for example, that philosophical papers (amongst other scholarly papers) are written in English, but not all are written by those belonging to an Anglo-American, English speaking culture. An obvious clue to this is the way in which certain ideas are put together and how they are expressed. In speech, those for whom English is a second language, will often be recognisable because of their accents and forms of expression

translated from their own native languages. In text, although no accent can be heard, the structure of the sentences in English will often echo a writer's native language. It takes significant mastery of a second language to avoid expressing ideas according to the syntax of a person's native language. Similarly, the subtleties of semantic import of words and expressions can be missed by a non-native speaker. In some cases, the expressions used to convey ideas point to novel meanings that do not exist in English itself. A phrase such as "human rights", for example, within Western culture has to be conceived within a context of the nature of the human person, human dignity and the duties owed to human beings. A translation from another culture may convey something with a very different context and so different meaning, as we have already said.

Consideration of the foregoing discussion enables us to conclude that cultural identity is not simply a matter of having mastery of languages other than our native tongue or a knowledge of cultures other than our native culture. This does not mean that we cannot have a cultural identity that spans more than one tradition or culture. Babel, who lived within a Jewish and Russian culture, is ample illustration that cultural identity is a complex interplay of upbringing, language and tradition set within a particular social milieu. It is not, however, simply constructed through these, but is also rooted in the physical reality of his birth into a Jewish family. He did not choose his Jewishness, it was what he inherited from his parents. In addressing the question of the nature of cultural identity, it is important to acknowledge the role played by nature. It is nature which provides the foundation for cultural identity, even though it is nurture, language, tradition and a particular community which shapes the our cultural identity.

This enables us to see why it is not possible to claim a particular cultural identity just because we have immersed ourselves in a culture not our own. Knowing how to speak English or French, for example, is insufficient to claim that our cultural identity is partially English or French. Babel, born a Jew, lived his life within a particular cultural milieu and it was this, as well as his ethnic origin, that was formative of his cultural identity. Scholars of other languages and cultures remain outside those languages and cultures because they are not formed in them; they do not live within them in the way in which someone like Babel does.

The development of cultural identity is a formative process that takes time and begins in childhood, though it is evident that it remains fluid and influenced by a variety of factors, including individuals themselves. It is possible, for example, for persons to repudiate their ethnic origins and to live their lives consciously within a host culture, identifying as closely as possible with the dominant culture. The tragedy for Jews in Europe has been the denial of their assimilation into a majority culture, as the Holocaust and other persecutions attest. This is not an isolated example, however, since ethnic and cultural tensions are, unfortunately, quite common. If we accept a constructionist view that cultural identity is constructed through the interplay of individuals and others, then the identification by others of the individual as of a particular ethnicity, suggests that cultural identity is based on ethnicity. Although we agree it is a component of cultural identity, indeed a basic one, it is not necessarily the defining characteristic.

Consideration of the example of Babel, lead us to conclude that cultural identity is fluid and that there are a number of factors which are involved in its development. (i) Ethnic origin; (ii) language; (iii) culture; (iv) customs and traditions, including religion; (v) individual preferences; (vi) family, community and social milieu; (vii) place, including nation, and time, that is, the period of history in which the individual was born and in which he or she lives. These are by no means equally influential on the formation of individual cultural identity, but are all factors that need to be taken into account in its formation. Ethnic origin, for example, is impossible to deny especially if persons fit a particular stereotype. Nevertheless, someone who is ethnically Asian, for instance, may be very far from being culturally Asian and so her ethnic origin plays a very minor part in her cultural identity. Language is important, since this is one of lenses through which people see the world, as Wittgenstein noted. The analysis of Babel's work shows the influences of Yiddish, even though he writes in Russian and provides us with a unique window to the world in which he lived. Culture is clearly important, since this will include art, architecture, music and the expression of a way of life, including dress. Customs and traditions will include rituals, manners and particular kinds of livelihoods. In a maritime nation, for example, it might include fishing and various other maritime occupations. Religion also plays a significant role in establishing cultural identity and there will be a clear difference between a Russian Jew, Russian Christian and a Russian Muslim, though they might share other commonalities.

Individual preferences will also be an important guide in the development of a cultural identity. Someone who wishes to suppress his ethnic origins will consciously try to live in a different culture, repudiating the customs and traditions of his ethnic culture, seeking to assimilate into the other culture. This is a common experience for the children of immigrants, who are forced by circumstance to live in two cultures. The influence of family, community and social milieu is also clear. Someone might want to see herself as belonging to a particular ethnic group, but those around her might have a different view. Someone might regard herself as Asian, for example, but an Asian community might regard her as a foreigner, since she does not come from that community. Babel's origins in Odessa during the last few years of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century provided him with an environment that encouraged Jewish Russian writers to explore ideas and themes in a very free manner, an opportunity to given to others. The time in which he was born and the place in which he lived had provided the context in which he was able to develop as a writer and to form his cultural identity.

1.2 Globalisation and Identity

Globalisation, whether for good or ill, is a means whereby there is increased social interconnectedness between people. It can also be taken to mean an increased awareness that all human beings and their activities do not occur in isolation, but have effects on those living elsewhere, both human and animal. Globalisation

therefore extends beyond political, economic and cultural processes and includes broader social, ethical and environmental questions that impinge on the way in which human beings interact with one another. Increased interconnectedness, the result of globalisation, requires all human beings to be concerned with the impact that human activity has on the future well-being of humankind and the planet on which they live. This is not to suggest that globalisation does not bring benefits, but to highlight the responsibility that human beings have for the world in which they live. This will mean using its resources wisely, looking after all living things and taking care of the environment. Globalisation also brings awareness that many problems are not regional, but are global and require a united effort on the part of all people to remedy.[13]

Focussing on the social processes that affect our identities, globalisation influences our understanding of ourselves, just as colonisation in the nineteenth century affected how different people saw themselves. Colonialists from the Western world saw themselves as superior to the peoples that they enslaved and the enslaved also saw themselves as inferior. The logic of dominance ensures that the dominated come to see themselves as inferior, so that unconsciously they identify their own cultures as primitive and lacking value. As a result, their cultural identity itself takes on the appearances of that of their colonial masters, diminishing, if not destroying their sense of identification with their own culture.[14] Globalisation, as well as regionalisation, where it involves a major culture can act to colonise a smaller culture, destroying its uniqueness and hence affecting the identities of individuals within that culture. There is good reason for distrust of a globalisation where the benefits seem to flow mostly to a major power and which result in centuries old customs and traditions being eroded.

Because of globalisation, cultures are no longer insulated from contact with each other, though this does not mean that every culture is in contact with every other in the same way or to the same degree. Communication technology and social media have made it possible, however, for there to be much more frequent contacts between those cultures to whom such technology and social media are available.[15] Television, at least of a basic variety, is almost universally available and enables even those in the most remote and impoverished regions of the world to have a window on the world. The growth in mobile phones and the technology which supports their

[13] There are a multitude of global problems that require international co-operation. Alleviation of poverty, the elimination of slavery, prevention of terrorism, the fight against illegal drugs, the resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers and so on are all problems that are global. Environmental destruction, pollution, endangerment and extinction of species are further problems that are not merely local, but global.

[14] Freire's argues very strongly that one of the important aims of education is to enable oppressed people to become aware that they have accepted the prevailing dominant culture's view of them as inferior. In order to fight this, people need to take control of their lives and to critically assess the prevailing orthodoxy that devalues their culture and hence, devalues them. Once they are able to do this, according to Freire, they in a position to improve their conditions of life. See Freire (2000).

[15] Chen and Zhang argue that the convergence of globalisation and new media has resulted in the transformation of cultural identity. See Chen and Zhang (2010, 795–796).

use has meant that even the most underprivileged people in the world can have access to social media and other information through the Internet. This is not to suggest that there are not wide variations in the quality of access or that there may not be severe limitations to the extent to which people have contact with social media and information about other cultures, but it is safe to say that it is much more extensive now than at any time in the past.[16]

The language of globalisation itself is increasingly English, especially in economic and financial matters, though it is also true of much academic work (Johnson 2009). There are numerous good reasons offered for using English, rather than another language such as Chinese or Spanish, to name two. One of the most obvious is that it makes it easier for transnational corporations located in different countries to converse with each other and to have a common perspective on their aims and goals. While this is not necessarily sinister, and has the practical result that people from different cultures are able to converse with each other in a common language, one unwanted consequence is the effect on culture, cultural traditions and cultural identity. For all those working in a common language, their own culture needs to be set aside and a new, common perspective from another point of view adopted. In doing this, there is a concomitant change in cultural identity, because it is not possible to quarantine one culture from another so that neither affects the other. The common language of discourse brings with it a particular perspective of the world, as Wittgenstein argued. As a result, the more the necessity to converse in a common language of discourse, the more the specific cultures of the individual participants recede, unless, of course, they belong to an English speaking culture.

Although it is true that cultures and languages are affected by the common, global language of discourse and are subsequently infiltrated by the culture from which the common language originates, they too, will leave their trace on the common culture. Babel's Jewishness, for example, affected the way in which he portrayed Russian culture and hence, left its imprint on it. Babel's Jewishness is absorbed by the Russian culture, but at the same time, its consciousness of itself is altered by its absorption. That is, Yiddish language and culture become interwoven into Russian culture. Similarly, common global culture, although dominated by English speaking culture, is also altered by its contact with other cultures, so that they are interwoven to differing degrees in it. Traces of these cultures can be identified in the common culture through the manner in which concepts change as a result of their different perspectives.

Global culture, national and local culture are in dynamic interaction and as a result, cultural identity itself is never fixed. It will ebb and flow according to how important new experiences are in their influence on individuals in the formation of their sense of themselves. New ideas and modes of thought often emerge from a particular local culture and through rapid global communication, spread through the global community. Their rapid dispersion can occur through social media, but also

[16] The most recent statistics reveal that 34.3 % of the world's total population have used the internet, with the largest percentage of internet users being in Asia. See URL: http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm. Accessed: 3/6/2014.

through interactions among corporations, academics and others in more formal settings. Cultural identity is, as a consequence, fluid.

The foregoing discussion enables us to recognise the dynamic nature of the interaction between peoples, their languages, cultures and traditions. The possibility of interactions, it is proposed, are founded on the common nature of human beings and hence the intelligibility of their basic needs, wants and desires. It was noted, however, that these may be expressed very differently in different languages and cultures. Diversity need not imply a clash of cultures or civilisations, though clearly, it is not ruled out.

New ideas and concepts stemming from a global culture, or indeed, any other, can influence our perceptions of who we are and can result in us developing a different conception of ourselves. The variety of ideas, approaches from different cultures, philosophical and theological traditions bring quite diverse voices to a broad conversation between cultures, religions and traditions. It is a dialogue of many parts. An appreciation of the diversity of cultures, traditions and languages, and variety of rich perspectives and cultural identities to which they give rise, leads us to acknowledge the importance of their preservation, while at the same time celebrating the opportunities for dialogue that globalisation brings.

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Part I
The Nature of Belief

Chapter 2
'I hope I believe in God': Some Implications for Contemporary Ethics

Bernadette Tobin

Abstract The claim that belief in God is more a cognitive achievement than a physiological state poses theological and philosophical challenges. It poses a theological challenge for adherents of (at least) the three main forms of monotheism. It poses a philosophical challenge to anyone with a serious interest in theoretical and practical ethics. In the first part of this essay I sketch a recent explanation and defence of this claim. In the second part, I sketch some implications of the claim for contemporary ethics.

Keywords God • Believers • Virtue

2.1 Introduction

In *Saving God: Religion after Idolatry*, Mark Johnston claims that God needs to be saved from us. Saved from our lazy and self-satisfied conviction that our patterns of belief and worship could themselves capture God (Johnston 2009). Indeed, the very best a believer can say in response to the question 'Do you believe in God?' is 'I can only *hope* I do' (Hart 2013). Someone could believe there *is* a spiritual being, could believe her spiritual being is *God*, could believe *in* her spiritual being, but still fail to *believe in God*. For, as used in the scriptures, the term 'God' is not an ordinary proper name: it is, rather, a compressed title. Johnston says that the title means something like the 'Most High'. Making the same point about the term's being not a name but a title, Eric D'Arcy once said that it refers to the one who is '*worthy* of worship' (D'Arcy 1973). It follows that believing in God is not a psychological state (discoverable by introspection) but rather a cognitive achievement. This claim poses a challenge for believers in each of the three main forms of monotheism and in the more monotheistic forms of Buddhism and Hinduism. In addition, since each form of monotheism embodies ideas about what is valuable or worthy as an object

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of desire or pursuit for human beings, the claim has implications for some trends in today's practical and applied ethics. So Johnston's essay has much to say to anyone interested in the ways in which religions and cultures shape human persons and influence their ethical commitments.

Contemporary ethics encompasses a wide variety of themes. At a popular level, where is it is expressed in and informs secular culture, some dominant themes are its secularism, its relativism, its non-cognitivism, its aggressive 'this worldliness' or autonomy. Johnston says that one ideal reader of his essay is the 'intelligent young person who is religious, but who feels that his or her genuine religious impulses are being strangled by what he or she is asked to believe, on less than convincing authority, about the nature of reality' (Johnston, *Op. cit.*) I think another ideal reader is the intelligent person who may or may not be a 'believer' in the religious sense but who recognizes a disconnect between (on the one hand) some abiding principles whose source is the monotheistic tradition (for instance, thou shalt not kill) and some contemporary ideas (the idea, for instance, that the moral status of intentional killing depends crucially on whether it 'maximizes good outcomes'). That is to say, the case Johnston makes for correcting our conceptions of God challenges not only traditional religious belief but also some aspects of modern secularist ethics. In the first section of what follows I set out what I think are the parts of Johnston's essay which are especially relevant to a reconsideration of contemporary ethics. In the second and third sections, I draw out some implications of his essay for contemporary ethics.[1]

2.2 Conceptions of God

The descriptions of God in Judaism, the first monotheism, include the god of gods (*elohay elohim*), the god who provides salvation (*elohay yishi)*, the Most High (*el elyon*). According to Johnston, a being who fitted these descriptions would, if it existed, truly be God. In addition, all three of the principal forms of monotheism claim that *we matter* to God such that we can say that he is our *salvation*. So in trying to understand who or what God is, it is helpful to try to understand what it is that believers hope for, that is to say, what believers take *salvation* to be.

As Johnston says, any convincing account of salvation will be higher order (such that various monotheisms can be seen as filling it out, each in its particular way) as well as comprehensible to unbelievers (such that they can express their unbelief in it). It will make sense of what is going on in other religions (such as Buddhism when it offers the promise of salvation in the overcoming of anxious desire), and it will avoid the 'religious fraudulence' of 60s-style forms of self-improvement which amount (Johnston thinks) to little more than opportunities for self-worship.

[1] Throughout the essay, I will follow Johnston in using 'believer' as a convenient abbreviation for 'religious believer'.

If we matter to God, if He is our salvation, then it must be the case that salvation is something like a new orientation that authentically addresses the large-scale structural defects of human life. On Johnston's view, the defects of human life are arbitrary suffering, aging once it has reached the corrosive stage, our profound ignorance of our condition, the isolation of ordinary self-involvement and the vulnerability of everything that we cherish to time and chance and ultimately to death. The 'ordinary' virtues – self-confidence, flexibility, openness, self-directed irony, perseverance, fair-dealing, moderation, and good judgment – take life on its own terms and make the most of it by way of these dispositions of character so often beneficial in ordinary life. The 'theological' virtues – faith, hope, charity – change the terms of life, not as intensifications of ordinary virtue but as the conditions of a 'redeemed' life. On this view, salvation provides a reservoir of energy otherwise dissipated in denial of, or resistance to, necessary suffering.

So, if there is a God that corresponds to the outlook of the monotheisms, then it must be that, somehow, in properly relating to God, a person acquires a way of going on which keeps faith with the importance of goodness and is open to love: for that is *what it is* to be saved. On this view, belief in God is an orientation in which God comes into view, with this salvific effect. (On this view, atheism (as opposed to mere disbelief in Yahweh, the Trinity, or Allah) is the conviction either that there is no God or that if there is there is no reason to suppose that He could, or would, offer us salvation.)

However, in Johnston's view, history shows that we are resistant to true Divinity. We attempt to domesticate the experience, to put it to some advantage in an unredeemed life. For this reason, even if a religion is true, it is likely to be filled with the inessential and the false. Recall how the one who introduces himself as 'I am' early in Exodus is, later on, de-divinized by the human writer into a proprietary and jealous god who so fears Israel's cuckolding him with the god of the pagans that he threatens to visit iniquities on them. Recall how Paul condemns the central elements of first century Christianity – speaking in tongues, prophesying, having a faith that moves mountains, understanding the mysteries, giving away one's possessions to the poor, even martyrdom – as themselves nothing if they are not animated by love. It follows that comprehending one's own religion is not just a matter of comprehending its dogmas and rituals. It also involves comprehending its *characteristic* ways of resisting the Divine, its *characteristic* forms of idolatry. Indeed, if any religion is true, this will be because of something wholly extraneous to it, namely God's activity animating it.

Idolatry, 'perverse worship', involves the aspiration to live in servitude to another's will, just because the other, real or imagined, is or is supposed to be more powerful than we are. But if God calls on us to be guided by his will, the legitimacy of that call does not derive from an awesome power to punish or reward us, but rather from the fact that God is the true object of our ownmost wills, the very thing we obscurely desire in everything that we desire. Because, as Plato might have put it, He is the Good.

If a religion turns out to be less than a form of engagement with God, then it will be illegitimate, blasphemous, a waste of spiritual energies. (Each form of

monotheism claims that of the *others*. Each defines *itself* as a religion in which God reveals himself.) So if any of the three main forms of monotheism is in any sense authentic, then God must have addressed some human being such as Moses or Jesus or Mohammed. In addition, in the case of Christianity, it must be that Jesus was in some way the embodiment of God in that his addressing those around him was *ipso facto* God addressing them.

If we are to continue to explore this way of understanding the object of hope, and to consider what it implies for contemporary ethics, we should put aside the philosophical question of the existence of God and follow Johnston's 'phenomenological' method. His method goes like this. Since it lies within the natural capacities of human beings to determine something of the character of another by that person's mode of address, by what that person says, by noticing which actions he favours and which he rejects, we should analyse the content of what is taken to be revealed about the Most High in each form of monotheism. We should ask: What *would be* the case if the claimed revelation *were* veridical? What is *implied* about the character of the putative spiritual beings who ostensibly appear in the foundational religious experiences of each form of monotheism? We should take at face value the description a religion gives of the primary revelations of God to this or that human being, and we should ask: Do we see here the character of the Most High?

Johnston points out that this question is only worth asking if we already have some sort of understanding of the nature or character of the Most High. It is a presupposition of his phenomenological method of enquiry that we do have an antecedent, if undeveloped, religious sense of things. He likens a religious sense of things to a musical sense, a sense which reveals a domain to which some are simply tone deaf, towards which some have been badly trained, in which some have bad taste, etc. That said, it is not a presupposition of this method that we have naturally (that is to say, independently of any putative revelation) a positive knowledge of the Most High's intrinsic character. In fact, a religious sense of things may consist mostly of negative propositions concerning the Most High: for example, that there could not be one Higher, that he could not have evil intent, that he could not have contempt for the truth.

What, then, does the phenomenology of the foundational experiences of this or that version of monotheism display about the character of God? Johnston invites us to consider what Pope Benedict claims about the nature of God. Benedict claims that, in Yahweh's revelation of his true name to Moses as 'I am', the first stirrings of an 'inner rapprochement' between Biblical faith and Greek philosophical enquiry can be seen (Benedict 2010). And when John the Evangelist says, 'In the beginning was the word', '*logos*', a new step is taken in the ongoing revelation of God's nature. Taking *logos* to be the principle of intelligibility, understood as an objective constraint on all actual reasoning and communication, Benedict claims the deliverances of reason are an ineliminable part of the revelation itself, that they have a kind of veto power over other purported revelations, over the 'often toilsome and tortuous threads of biblical faith' (Benedict 2010). So the phenomenology of Benedict's Christianity issues in the idea that God cannot do anything contrary to reason.

To appreciate the significance of this idea for debates in contemporary theology as well as ethics, it is necessary to clarify the notion of reason itself, that is, to distinguish the formal reasoning of mathematical logic (and today's decision theory) from what Johnston calls 'substantive reasonableness' that 'abjures violence and makes real communication possible' (Johnston 2009, 75). Substantive reasonableness is the kind of acquired discernment, indispensible in science and in ordinary life, which allows one to appreciate the force of considerations that go beyond those of pure logic as applied to our standing beliefs and desires: Plato and Aristotle thought of it as the ability to discern what we should desire. The inquisitors made no mistake in formal reasoning when they supposed they were doing the heretic a favour in torturing him into compliance with orthodoxy: what's a few days of torture when your immortal soul is at risk? However they acted contrary to reason understood as substantive reasonableness. Using violence as a means to convert or overcome unbelievers is perverse reasoning. It could not lie in the nature of the Most High to require torture for salvation. Thus does Benedict deploy a criterion of religious falsehood against the very idea that the Most High could order his people to use violence as a means to convert or to overcome unbelievers. Or, to put it another way, were such a being to exist and so to order his followers, that being would not *be* God: and that is something we can tell by the light of natural reason. If Benedict is right, that God cannot do anything which is at odds with substantive reasonableness, that the deliverances of reason (both of logic and of substantive reasonableness) are themselves an ineliminable part of revelation, then knowing what the religious traditions hold about substantive reasonableness itself should shed some light on the nature and purposes of the Most High.

There is, as Johnston reminds us, a long history of discussion in moral philosophy about whether ethics can stand on its own, whether it is autonomous. On one view, the domain of the ethical needs to be backed up by the 'threats and promises of a Divine Judge'. On another, a this-worldly ('humanist') response is enough to preserve faith in the importance of goodness. But the believer in God, though she may find this discussion interesting and important, will respond that there nonetheless remains the fact that God has revealed, or is revealing, the path of substantive reasonableness (ethical truth, the ethically good life, knowledge of what is worthy of desire) for human beings.

So what is this ethical path? Once again, Johnston's method is phenomenological. What *would be* the case about the ethical life if a claimed revelation about it *were* veridical? Johnston focuses on two themes in revelation: the myth of the fall and the announcement of the life of *agape*.

In Johnston's view of the myth of the fall, Eve exhibits two faults: self-will, manifested in her disobedience, and a longing for conventional wisdom, manifested in her eating the apple *from the tree*. Though it was given its first formulation in early Jewish tradition, the idea that we are fallen creatures is found in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. All three imply that the only thing that can set us right is something transformative entering from outside our fallen natures, a 'seizure by grace'. Fallen creatures are creatures whose will is compromised by self-will, creatures who, if left to themselves, at the very best live out adventitious and conventional

conceptions of the good life. For self-will ('self-love' or 'self-interest') is the tendency to seek premium attention to oneself at significant cost to others. And a longing for conventional, readymade, wisdom, wisdom 'from a tree', emerges from our sense of life as something to be lived according to the conception of what is worthy which we absorb from those around us, which is validated by our community insofar as it dovetails with the community's interests. This longing for conventional wisdom explains why some sense of the legitimacy of other-regarding demands – some sense of what we owe to others – is a widespread feature of human consciousness. The problem is that these two things, the psychological urgency of self-interest, and the other-regarding conception of what is worthy, sit uneasily with each other. Worse still, our other-regarding conception of what is worthy is likely to be compromised in other ways: according to Johnston, it will be averaged out; it will have the unquestioned character of a natural conviction; it will need to be collectively defended, etc. So it will be, in part, false or 'idolatrous': an adventitious and compromised conception of the way to live which is rigidly held to and treated as an absolute, a conception of the good which is little more than a parody of the good life *properly understood*. According to the myth of the Fall, on our own we are caught in an oscillation between self-will and false-righteousness.

As for the announcement of the life of *agape*. The claim of the life of ordinary virtue to be the ethical life is nullified by the announcement, found, for example, in Mark 12: 30–31: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like unto this. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* This command amounts to the announcement that the life of ordinary virtue is not the ethical life. Its persuasiveness is supported by two things: by our recognition that the large-scale structural defects of life obliterate much of the significance of ordinary virtue and by the fact that here and there in philosophy there is a mention of a form of life distinct from and higher than the life of ordinary virtue. If something like *agape* constitutes the ethical life, and if we are naturally turned in on ourselves, then we will need an external source of grace, a redeemer, to overcome the centripetal force of our self-will. All three monotheisms treat God as that external source of grace.

Here, *in medias res*, I will leave Johnston's articulation of what it is truly to believe in God. Except to say this: Johnston credits Aquinas with the most developed account of God. But he thinks that an inadequate philosophical theory prevented Aquinas from recognizing that God is the principle of intelligibility of all that happens, a kind of pre-eminent rational intelligibility whose ends are served by the operations of the laws of nature. God is not so much 'Being Itself' as Aquinas thought, as 'Being's Self-Giving': the self-giving within which we 'live and move and have our being' (Acts, 17:28), a self-giving (says Johnston) which is well-suited to command the affirmation of our will. This rational intelligibility, communicated in the unfolding of the universe and in human history, which deserves the name of 'speech' or 'word', is the natural realm *properly understood*: the physical realm which is the domain of the natural sciences and the realm of sense or meaning (the realm of that in virtue of which things are intelligible). To affirm the natural

realm *in this sense* is what it is truly to love God. Though his debt to Spinoza's 'panentheistic' conception of God is obvious, Johnston claims that much of this account of what it is truly to believe in God is implicit in the three main monotheisms. On this view, the religious or redeemed life is one in which the large-scale structural defects of human life are not miraculously removed (as in the promise of an afterlife) but rather overcome here and now by a transformed outlook. That transformed outlook is itself salvation: an orientation in which the defects of ordinary human life are addressed, healed, even rendered irrelevant – such that faith in the importance of goodness not only remains but is strengthened.

2.3 Cognitive Status of Ethics

Since each of the three main form of monotheism embodies ideas about what is valuable or worthy as an object of desire or pursuit in human lives, Johnston's thesis about what it is truly to believe in God has at least two sets of interrelated implications for ethics, the first to do with the cognitive character of ethics, the second to do with the so-called autonomy of ethics. On the first matter, it follows from Johnston's thesis that ethics involves reasoning, albeit reasoning of a distinctive kind, towards a grasp of truths about what is worthy of desire and pursuit, a grasp which itself is likely to be imperfect. On the second, it follows that, though the truths of ethics are available to non-believers, a this-worldly motivation may not be enough to sustain the requirements of an ethical life. The question then is how properly to understand the obligations of an other-worldly motivation.

Let us first consider the cognitive status of ethics. When we are doing ethics, we are engaged in a cognitive activity, that of discovering moral truths, whether they be expressible in a particular judgment about rightness or wrongness (that it would be wrong to evade a patient's anxiety about her prognosis) or in an assessment about the extent to which an action embodies this or that ideal (fairness, truthfulness, decency). Ethical cognitivism, or 'objectivism', is the view that our moral beliefs and judgments are expressions of our critical responsiveness to, and rational reflection on, our experience of what is worth our attention, care and respect, of what is worth desiring or having or being or doing. Objectivism says that our moral beliefs and judgments are beliefs and judgments for which we can give reasons, about which we can be mistaken, about which we can argue. They are of the kind 'this is so, isn't it?'.

However, the role of reason in ethics is not the kind of calculation described in what has become known as 'decision theory'. Decision theory, a mathematical exercise which purports to explain how choices can be rational in contexts in which there is uncertainty about likely consequences, conceives of the best decision as one which is the result of a process in which all possible courses of action are identified, their 'positive' or 'negative' values and the probabilities of their realization are determined, and the choice which is likely to give rise to the highest expected value is

identified as the rational choice. It is, of course, true that the likely consequences of our choices may matter (even, matter very much) in the evaluation of human action. But so too may any or all of a whole range of features of human conduct to which our reasoning about what to do and to be ought to be sensitive: history, motive, intention, the moral kind to which an act belongs, the agent's own moral beliefs, the surrounding circumstances, etc. Indeed, though decision theory may help a soldier work out how to win a war or a business executive how to maximize profits, it will not address the more basic question in each of these scenarios: whether, in particular circumstances, the soldier *should* try to win the war, whether in particular circumstances the executive *should* try to maximize profits. For, as Aristotle says, we reason not only about means to ends but also about ends themselves (Aristotle 2004). In fact, decision theory does not enter the scene until almost all that is morally significant has been settled. As Johnston says, reason in ethics has 'substantive reasonableness', the end or goal or point of human conduct, as its subject matter.

How, then, are we to understand 'substantive reasonableness' as the subject matter of ethics? There are, roughly-speaking, two models for assessing or passing judgment on human performance. One is that of the law court, the other is that of the art critic. The court sets out to judge whether or not an action falls under some particular law: it either does or it does not. The critic sets out to assess the extent to which an action, or indeed an individual person, embodies this or that ideal. Both models are found in most forms of monotheism, for example the former in the Ten Commandments, the latter in the Sermon on the Mount. Johnston's account of substantive reasonableness draws more on the latter than the former: recall his list of ordinary virtues: self-confidence, flexibility, openness, self-directed irony, perseverance, fair-dealing, moderation, and good judgment. That list belongs to the tradition which, going back to the Greeks, identifies dispositions which are either beneficial or detrimental in ordinary life. Plato thought four such dispositions were beneficial: courage, moderation, practical wisdom and justice. Aristotle added others, in particular a kind of friendliness towards others which makes justice unnecessary. Philippa Foot had an eye for spotting detrimental dispositions: a desire to be put upon or dissatisfied, an unwillingness to accept good things as they come along (Foot 1978). And Alasdair MacIntyre uses this same way of passing judgment on human performance to argue that, even if we could, we should not try to design our descendants: given that we would want to design them to have the beneficial disposition to engage in non-manipulative relations with others, they may not be grateful to us for having so manipulated them (MacIntyre 1979).

However, as Johnston says, our moral beliefs about substantive reasonableness, because communally received, are likely to be imperfect. Because our grasp of moral truths is acquired socially, via the beliefs and commitments of our particular society, our appreciation of them will be marred by error and imperfection. Absorbed from those around us, and validated by the conventions of our community, our moral sense will be at least partly other-regarding (because communities depend on some degree of cooperation between individuals). But, if Johnston is right, it will also likely be compromised: it will be averaged out because commonly available, it will have the unquestioned character of a natural conviction (like Huck Finn's 'natural

conviction' that Jim is the property of Miss Watson), it will need to be collectively defended (in the manner of the Pakistani politician who defended the practice of burying widows alive as 'our norm') (Sydney Morning Herald 2008, 23). Elizabeth Anscombe once pointed out that the chance that a whole range of conventional standards would be decent is very small (Anscombe 1958). Our own Australian past attitudes towards and beliefs about Indigenous Australians is sufficient testament to that fact.

Reflection on the fact that we acquire our ethical beliefs socially has important implications for the tendency for ethics to be thought of as an empirical study of the consequences, in terms of people's preferences and attitudes, of an individual agent's conduct, and for the thought that decisions about good public policy should be made on the basis of current public sentiments, the sentiments of what Chesterton called the 'arrogant oligarchy who merely happen to be walking about'.[2] For, if cultural relativism were true, then there would be nothing more to ethical assessment than a checking of current cultural conventions. It is true that circumstances, including cultural differences, may make a difference to what would satisfy substantial reasonableness: in greeting strangers, some shake hands, some rub noses, others merely bow. But sensitivity to such cultural practices does not justify the belief that there are no objective grounds for arguing against the deficiencies in human conduct of societies including our own.

2.4 The Ethical Life

I come now to a second set of implications of Johnston's thesis for contemporary ethics. Though the truths of ethics are available to non-believers (in God), a this-worldly motivation may not be enough to sustain an ethical life. How, then, are we properly to understand the obligations of an other-worldly motivation?

Belief in God, understood as success at hitting the mark, rules out (even well meaning) syncretism about religions. We need to distinguish an anthropological interest in religious traditions from a cognitive evaluation of their creedal commitments. It is one thing to consider religious traditions in an external, anthropological way, and thus to come to see the functional point of various features of each tradition. That is always interesting, often illuminating and sometimes practically requisite. Someone who is responsible for the conduct of a hospice may well need to be familiar with the idea, found in Tibetan Buddhism, that death is a process which, though it may take place over days, ought not be interrupted, and with the idea, found in Orthodox Judaism, that a doctor has a responsibility to prolong the life of even someone who is dying but whose soul has not yet departed from his body, and

[2] 'Tradition may be defined as an extension of the franchise. Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about.' (Chesterton 1908).

with the idea, found in Christianity, that though one ought not intentionally to take human life, one may legitimately withhold or withdraw futile or overly-burdensome treatment, etc. In general appreciation of what different religious traditions have to say about the proper care of people who are dying is required if we are to want to improve the way patients die. But if we are, as Johnston argues, rational beings who have a natural religious sense of thing, then we are well-suited to the task of *evaluating* the creedal commitments – including their embedded ethical claims – of each religious tradition.

In the midst of today's great social challenges decent people want to cooperate with people of other faiths, and to avoid sectarian violence. In addition, respecting others is a requirement of human decency, and respecting others involves respecting their religious beliefs. But it is quite another thing to adopt that well-meaning but confused syncretism which, overlooking the very different and inconsistent beliefs people have about God (his nature, his intentions, what it is to enjoy his favour, etc) says that 'we all worship the same God, we all have the same idea of what it is to enjoy his favour', etc. The desire to respect others and to cooperate with them does not justify the belief that we all worship the same God. Indeed we ought to respect others and cooperate with others even when we can recognize that the being they believe in *could not* be God! And that realization ought to prompt us to undertake a dispassionate investigation of our *own* habits of belief and worship.

In the *Euthyphro* Plato memorably shows what is wrong with any simple version of the 'Divine Command Theory'. The natural law tradition might be thought of as the tradition of thought according to which moral truths are held in principle to be discoverable by human reason without the aid of divine assistance. Nor is it inconsistent with that view to think that great religious teachers such as Jesus revealed critical features of the life that is worthy of a human being. But even if moral truths are discoverable by human reason unaided by divine revelation, there is a further question about their connection to belief in God. Can the ethical life stand on its own? Is a this-worldly motivation sufficient to ground and support the living of an ethical life? Can a this-worldly view of living a life worthy of a human being supply the requisite sense of obligatoriness?

Johnston thinks that two things speak against the life of ordinary virtue being the ethical life. First, the life of ordinary virtue can hardly be sustained, given its vulnerability to the large scale structural defects of human life. Recall his account of them: arbitrary suffering, aging once it has reached the corrosive stage, our profound ignorance of our condition, the isolation of ordinary self-involvement and the vulnerability of everything that we cherish to time and chance and ultimately to death. Of these he says: 'Those defects present themselves either as destructive fates that will obliterate much of the significance of virtue, or as intimations that there is something more than ordinary virtue' (Johnston 2009, 90). As was the case with Kant's dutiful philanthropist who took no pleasure in the good of others because 'his mind was clouded by some sorrow of his own', in may turn out that the life of ordinary virtue is insufficient to sustain the obligations of agape (Kant 1997, 4, 398). Secondly, and connected with that last point, Johnston reminds us that, here

and there in philosophy, there are hints of a life that is distinct from and arguably higher than the life of ordinary virtue.[3]

And so, according to Johnston, belief in God who is understood as 'worthy of worship' offers not the threats and promises of a Divine Judge as motivation for living an ethical life but rather a transformed outlook in which the large scale structural defects of ordinary human life are overcome. Part of what it means to believe in God is to be drawn to a way of life which, conforming to substantial reasonableness, announces that the life of agape transforms (without removing) those structural defects. On this view, the connection between the life of ordinary virtue and the life transformed by theological virtue is not to be understood on the model of reward and punishment as found in Matthew 26 but rather on the model of road to destination found in Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae.* As Eric D'Arcy says, '[T]he connection is therefore less of the nature, "If you graduate from medical school you can have a new Buick", than of the nature, "If you graduate from medical school, you can become a good doctor" (D'Arcy 1973).

That idea has implications for the nature of religious authority in *ethical* matters. It implies that religious authority is to be understood as that of the teacher not that of the judge. You should exercise your judgment about what you are asked to believe, in particular about the nature of God and about what it is to earn God's favour. You should do that not only because what may be proposed to you about and in the name of God may not be true (after all, some claims about the nature or God and about what it is to earn his favour contradict other such claims) but also because you have a natural religious sense of things which acts as an objective constraint on what is proposed to you about and in the name of God. Indeed, if it is proposed to you that God should be obeyed so that you will merit promised rewards or avoid threatened punishments in some future life, you should recognize just how at odds such a conception of God is from a conception of Him as the principle of intelligibility. Indeed, should such a being exist and demand allegiance *on these terms*, that being would not *be* God in the sense of 'worthy of worship' (D'Arcy, Eric 1973, 203).

2.5 Conclusion

Johnston argues that God needs to be saved from our lazy and self-satisfied convictions about the nature of God. He argues that belief in God is not so much an introspectible psychological state as a cognitive achievement, like success at hitting the mark. He argues that the phenomenology of the foundational experiences of Christianity reveal the character of God as *logos*, that is to say, publicly accessible reason understandable as 'substantive reasonableness', an external source of grace which enables us to overcome the centripetal force of illegitimate self-love. Johnston's essay deserves the serious theological interest it has already attracted. I hope I have shown that it is also worthy of the attention of philosophers working in

[3] For example, Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, 10.7.

practical and applied ethics, even those committed to the idea that ethics is independent of religion. It has much to say about the ways in which – for good and for ill – religions and cultures shape human persons and their ethical commitments.[4]

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Chapter 3
Ethical Beliefs

Peter Drum

Abstract Since it is wrong always, everywhere and for everyone to believe anything upon insufficient evidence, religions and religious beliefs are required at the very least to be shown to be not unreasonable, if they are to have any legitimacy. This means, first and foremost, that they must themselves *be ethical.* There is nothing startling about this, because everyone knows that Aristotle is right when he says that people who are puzzled about honouring the gods – or God – and loving their parents, need punishment, not perception. God is good, as indeed are our parents. What is, however, disconcerting, is that when pronouncements made by religious authorities are ethically examined, they are not infrequently found to be wanting.

Keywords Faith • Reason • Ethics • Theology

3.1 Introduction

R. C. Zaehner contends that "[i]t is both dangerous and stupid to disregard the religious foundations on which any given civilization is built. [For], [e]ven the most rationalistic of us frequently prefer to ignore how many of the institutions that we take for granted are essentially Christian in origin. Few Englishmen, probably, feel any desire to have more than one wife: and this seems strange, for the practice of polygamy is hallowed by antiquity and enjoys the sanction of both the Moslem and the Hindu faiths. Again, few Europeans would nowadays advocate the seclusion of women; yet this is a practice for which Koranic sanction is most justly claimed … [Thus] … had Europe fallen to the Moslem conqueror, both polygamy and the seclusion of women would be part of our Moslem heritage." (Zaehner 1970, 434) He may have a point, for the ethical dimension is evidently an important feature of the major religious traditions, and religions are – or at least have been – very much

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a part of societies. Yet, even if these were our moral beliefs and practices, *should* they be?

3.2 The Ethics of Belief

The ethics of belief has it that "[i]t is wrong always, everywhere and for everyone to believe anything upon insufficient evidence." (Clifford 1970) This is because argument and witness both attest to the fact that "'man's good is to live according to reason and his evil to live outside'". (*Summa Theologica ST* I-II, q. 18, Art. 5) Human excellence consists in our being *rational* animals; (Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* (*NE*) Book I, Ch. 7) and it is an expectation of everyone that they *be* reasonable. Therefore, if it is also true that "the most widespread and natural view of the nature of religious faith" (Swinburne 1981, 105) corresponds with this, and if one's own faith is based upon it, there should be no reason to fear that "[o]ur most holy religion is founded [simply] on *faith*, not on reason; and it is a sure method of exposing it to put it to such a trial as it is, by no means, fitted to endure" (Hume 2007, Book X, Ch. 2). St Thomas Aquinas explains that Christian faith is a human virtue, precisely because of this: "[t]he existence of God and other like truths about God … can be known by natural reason, [and, consequently,] are not articles of faith, but are preambles to the articles; for faith presupposes [this] natural knowledge …" (*Summa Theologica ST* I, q. 2, Art. 2 ad. 1). That is, we believe in God – in the sense of respecting him and trusting him – because we adjudge God to be *good*. For, "[u]nless we accept [Thomas] Hobbes' consistent but repugnant equation of God's right with his might, we must be persuaded independently of His goodness before we admit his right to command. We must judge for ourselves whether the Bible is the inspired word of a just and benevolent God … this is to make a moral decision, so that in the end far from morality being based upon religion, religion is based on morality" (Nowell-Smith 1961). Hence, "[i]f it is urged that God has infinite power and created everything, we point out that infinite kinghood or creatordom does not seem evidently more worthy of obedience [than his infinite power] but merely more difficult to disobey" (Williams 1990, 77–78).

The point is, since ethics is understood to be about harms and benefits to humanity – bad people do not care and good people do – and what count as harms and benefits are matters of fact – sickness is bad and health is good – no special religious insights are needed in order to get ethics going, and sensible religions can only get going because of it. Therefore, "[w]hen St Thomas [Aquinas] affirms that God is good, I think he means to be saying *at least as much* about God as one would say about, e.g., Socrates, if one were to affirm that Socrates is good" (Pike, Nelson 1981, 77).

For, "[e]ven the Holy One of the Gospels must first be compared with our ideal of moral perfection, before we can recognize him as such." (Kant 1990, 73) Therefore, Jean-Paul Sartre's skeptical question, (in the case of a woman suffering from hallucinations who said that God was telephoning her and giving her orders),

"what, indeed, could prove to her that it was God? If an angel appears to me, what is the proof that it is an angel; or, if I hear voices, who can prove that they proceed from heaven and not from hell, or from my own subconsciousness or some pathological condition?" (Sartre 1975, 351); admits readily to an answer. For, since God is good, voices from heaven can be expected to be uplifting and innocent, and voices from hell their opposites (Ignatius of Loyola 1963, paras. 329–333); so, who the messages are from will depend upon their nature. This is why the Problem of Evil is a genuine stumbling block to belief. We are greeted in the face of evil with a "message" of deafening silence. But, "any wise guardian wards off harm and evil from his charges as much as he can. Yet we see many evils in things. [So:] Either God cannot prevent them, and so is not almighty, or he does not really care for all" (*ST* I, q. 22, Art. 2). Consequently, there is the need of theodicy; in order to meet the difficulties confronting "those who withdrew from God's providence the mortal world where they discovered things to be haphazard and bad" (*Ibid.*).

3.3 Ethical Disagreements

However, the foregoing is uncertain, if the following is correct: "[it is easy to] find objections to the view that injury is necessarily bad … consider how St Paul does not think 'the thorn in the flesh' from which he suffered to be a bad thing … since it was a constant reminder to him that he was not sufficient unto himself … [And] … [Franz] Brentano was blind at the end of his life … [yet] … denied that his loss of sight was a bad thing … [since] … he was able to concentrate on his philosophy in a way which had been impossible for him before … where this gain could be foreseen, we might even imagine a person seeking injury rather than trying to avoid it" (Phillips and Mounce 1969, 235–237). But, the objection is invalid through failing to distinguish between intrinsic and instrumental goods. Presumably neither St Paul nor Brentano thought that their deficiencies were ends in themselves; rather, they were found to be instrumentally advantageous towards achieving certain incontrovertible goods. (Thus, neither would welcome these ills in the event of being otherwise able to readily secure these ends.)

However, it is objected that "[is]s it not the case that we cannot understand Brentano's attitude to his blindness unless we understand the kind of dedication to intellectual enquiry of which he was an example … Again, we cannot understand St Paul's attitude to his ailment unless we understand something of the Judeo-Christian conception of man's relationship to God … dedication to enquiry and dedication to God … determine what is to constitute goodness and badness … We can say that injury is necessarily bad at the price of favouring one idea of badness … In so far as philosophers construct a paradigm in their search for 'the unity of the facts of human good and harm', they are not far removed from the so-called scientific rationalists … One of these, in an argument with a Roman Catholic housewife over birth control, stressed the harm which could result from having too many children … The housewife, on the other hand, stressed the honour a mother has in bringing children into

the world … How would the scientific rationalist and the housewife reach the agreement which some philosophers seem to think inevitable if all the facts were known? It is hard to see how they could without renouncing what they believe in. Certainly, one cannot regard their respective moral opinions as hypotheses which the facts will either confirm or refute, for what would the evidence be?" (*Ibid.*) Yet, again the issue is by no means irresolvable. For, what is said by Church authorities in matters of morals must be examined by and pass the test of reason. And, this is their argument: "[n]either the Church nor her doctrine is inconsistent when she considers it lawful for married people to take advantage of the infertile period but condemns as always unlawful the use of means which directly prevent conception, even when the reasons given for the later practice may appear to be upright and serious. In reality, these two cases are completely different. In the former the married couple rightly use a faculty provided them by nature. In the latter they obstruct the natural development of the generative process" (Paul VI 1968, para. 16). But, there cannot really be anything wrong with married people obstructing the generative process when they have good reasons for not having children, and "they [are entitled to] use their married intimacy to express their mutual love and safeguard their fidelity toward one another" (*Ibid.*). The natural law is about what is perfective of us; it is not about respecting laws of physical nature. If it were, it would follow that the good of day should not be impeded by drawing curtains; and the good of night by turning on lights.

But, it is now concluded that "there is no settling of the issue in terms of some supposed common evidence called human good and harm, since what they differ over is precisely the question of what constitutes human good and harm. The same is true of all fundamental moral disagreements, for example, the disagreement between a pacifist and a militarist. The argument is unlikely to proceed very far before deadlock is reached … Their arguments are rooted in different moral traditions within which there are rules for what can and what cannot be said … [However:] …The view that there are ways of demonstrating goodness by appeal to evidence which operates independently of the various opinions people hold is radically mistaken … There are no theories of goodness" (Phillips and Mounce 1969, 238–239). Yet, why should we accept this? Surely moral traditions – albeit at their various stages of development, and variously influenced by cultural and regional factors – are not so fundamentally different so as to preclude cross-cultural moral dialogue and the possibility of moral progress. For, as Aristotle reminds us, "there really is, as everyone to some extent divines, a natural justice and injustice that is binding on all men, even those who have no association or covenant with each other"; (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book I, Ch. 13) and it is hard to imagine anyone disagreeing with him that "people who are puzzled to know whether one ought to honour the gods and love one's parents or not need [not perception, but] punishment …" (Aristotle, *Topics*, Book I, Ch. 11). Indeed, "[e]very culture has a concept of murder, distinguishing this from execution, killing in war, and other 'justifiable homicides'. The notions of incest and other regulations upon sexual behaviour, of restitution and reciprocity, of mutual obligations between parents and children – these and many other moral concepts are altogether universal" (Kluckhohn 1955, 672). If this were not the case,

how could there be the cross-cultural moral agreements we already have, in terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Court of Justice?

Consequently, when in her study of the customs and practices of the Melanesian islanders of Dobu anthropologist Ruth Benedict concludes that they are naturally "lawless and treacherous" because it is not uncommon for them to commit murder, she is mistaken (Benedict 1966, 95; 119). For, she fails see that the killings are really in self-defence, because the Dobuans believe that "[p]eople with whom one associates daily are witches and sorcerers who threaten one's affairs" (*Ibid.*, 95). The difference is between them and us, then, is not ethical, but metaphysical. Moreover, despite their exaggerated polemics, even people like [Friedrich] Nietzche are arguably not outside of ethics as we know it, but rather are trying to introduce or reinstate certain values which they consider not to have been given their due or have gone missing. Thus, "[a]dmittedly Nietzsche said 'You want to decrease suffering; I want precisely to increase it' but he did not just say this. Nor did he offer as justification the fact that suffering causes a tendency to absent mindedness, or lines on the human face. We are inclined to recognize Nietzsche as a moralist because he tries to justify an increase in suffering by connecting it with strength as opposed to weakness, and individuality as opposed to conformity. That strength is a good thing can only be denied by someone who can show that the strong man overreaches himself, or that in some way brings harm to himself or other people. That individuality is a good thing is something which has to be shown, but in a vague way we connect it with originality, and with courage, and hence there is no difficulty in conceiving Nietzsche as a moralist when he appeals to such a thing" (Foot 1978, 108–109). The same applies to Jesus. He too can be considered to be a moralist, because his message of turning the other cheek – which, if taken literally, would absurdly imply that we should not take up arms even in the face of murder, rape and the rest (*Luke* 6:27–35)– is tempered by his recognition that we have duties to Caesar; (*Matthew* 22: 21–22) and that there is nothing wrong with being a professional soldier; (*Luke* 7: 9–10) and that swords and clubs are necessary in the context of bandits; (*Matthew* 26:51–56) and that it is intolerable for the house of God to be turned into a marketplace (*John* 2:13–16). So, the prescription that we should turn the other cheek is presumably to remind us that in the pursuit of justice we should not forget the quality of mercy. Hence, Aristotle: "[nor] is [the great-souled man] mindful of wrongs; for it is not the part of a great-souled man to have a long memory, especially for wrongs, but rather to overlook them"; (*NE*, Book IV, Ch. 3) and that "the good tempered man tends to be unperturbed and not to be led by passion, but to be angry in the manner, at the things, and for the length of time, that the rule dictates; but he is thought to err rather in the direction of deficiency; for the good-tempered man is not revengeful, but rather tends to make allowances." (*NE*, Book I, Ch. 5) He notes that "[someone who] is no stickler for his rights in a bad sense but tends to take less than his share though he has the law on his side, is equitable, and this state of character is equity …"; (*NE*, Book V, Ch. 10) and that "presumably no one would repudiate a son who was not far gone in wickedness; for apart from the natural friendship of father and son it is human nature not to reject a son's assistance." (*NE*, Book VIII, Ch. 14). Moreover, "[i]f they [friends] are capable of being reformed one should

rather come to the assistance of their character or their property, inasmuch as this is better and more characteristic of friendship" (*NE*, Book IX, Ch. 3).

Therefore, it is an overstatement that "[i]t is both dangerous and stupid to disregard the religious foundations on which any given civilization is built … [and that] … [e]ven the most rationalistic of us frequently prefer to ignore how many of the institutions that we take for granted are essentially Christian in origin" (Zaehner 1970, 434). For, civilized living means having a rightful concern for oneself and for others; and what this means can be well understood quite apart from religious and cultural prescriptions and presuppositions.

3.4 The Test of Reason Applied

Consequently, if for example a religion forbids blood transfusions even unto death, then this law is probably either not from a god worthy of worship; or else it is not from God; or it is, and has been misinterpreted. So, the rectitude of the proscription must be examined quite apart from the religion; and is indeed a forerunner to the religious acceptance of it. For, "[t]here are recognized methods of moral argument. Whenever we say 'How would you like it if somebody did this to you?' or 'How would it be if we all acted like this?' we are arguing according to recognized and established methods …" (Bambrough 1979, 26). Hence, the heroic efforts of some moral theologians to show that the story of Abraham and Isaac can be squared literally with the goodness of God seem to be Quixotic. For instance, if the argument is based upon the idea that God "inflicts the punishment of death on all men, just as well as unjust" (*ST* I-II, Q. 100, Art. 8) then it is evidently morally bankrupt. Again, for God to order an old man to carry out this sentence upon his only son is unspeakably cruel, even if it is merely to test his faith. Therefore, either Abraham is mistaken about what God wants him to do, or the story is possibly allegorical, condemning human sacrifice. So, instead of trying to show that God's command is reasonable, it would be better here for moral theologians to heed the advice that "when there are different ways of explaining a Scriptural text, no particular explanation should be held so rigidly that, if convincing arguments show it to be false, anyone dare to insist that it is still the definitive sense of the text. Otherwise unbelievers will scorn Sacred Scripture, and the way to faith will be closed to them" (*ST* I, Q. 68, Art. 1).

Again, religious authorities who proscribe the trial of safe injecting rooms for intravenous drug users or the use of condoms despite the deaths from overdose and the contraction of HIV/AIDS; should heed the advice that "those who are in authority, rightly tolerate certain evils, lest certain goods be lost, or certain greater evils be incurred; thus [St] Augustine says: [i]f you do away with prostitutes, the world will be convulsed with lust" (*ST* II-II, Q. 10, Art. 1, quoting *De Ordine*, Book II, Ch. 4). By the same token, it would also be wrong for religious believers to blindly follow the example of their prophets, as if their being agents of God somehow or other guarantees their being morally exemplary. For instance, Moses' instruction to the

commanders of his army in relation to the Midianites, (on account of their debauchery and idolatry), to "kill all the male children … [k]ill also all the women who have slept with a man" (*Numbers* 31:17–19) is criminal; as is also Muhammad's executing certain intellectuals and propagandists, who argued against him and made fun of him (Rodinson 1996, 168). This is why mainstream Islamic jurists are now right to interpret jihad as the struggle or effort to follow the pathway of Allah, despite its traditionally being thought to mean a holy war to expand Islamic territory (Kung 1993, 108). It is wrong to seek to impose religious laws upon people unless they are identical with the secular law; and it is wrong to impose any law upon anyone unless they are so steeped in harming the innocent that the intervention and its costs are justified. For, "[w]ar and conquest are a sad necessity in the eyes of men of principle … [*only on the basis that*] … it would be still more unfortunate if wrongdoers should dominate just men" (Augustine 1972, Book IV, Ch. 15). By way of another example, the Roman Catholic Church should set about seriously considering revising its teaching that "'homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered' … [and] … [h]omosexual persons are called to chastity", particularly since it agrees that "[e]very sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1994, paras. 2357–2359). For, what is it if not discriminatory to deny to same sex persons who deeply care for each other the moral right to express their mutual affection?

Church teachings, then, are *required* to change if they are shown to be unreasonable, and all the more so when this has *ethical implications.* For example, prior to the 1588 prescription of Sixtus V that the canonical penalty for even early abortions – excommunication – should be the same as for homicide, the attitude of the Church regarding these abortions corresponded to the moderate Aristotelian-Augustinian-Thomistic position: that "a man is first of all alive, then an animal, and finally a man" (*ST* II-II, Q. 64, Art. 1). Consequently, the initial conceptus is just *that-which-will-be-a-man.* Gregory XIV, (sensibly and compassionately), overturned the new conservative teaching in 1591; yet, it was reinstated in 1869 by Pius IX. However, there really is no good reason for his doing this. For, the only *argument* for doing so is that "[t]he existence of an immortal soul [in the human embryo] … is a philosophical problem from which our moral affirmation remains independent for two reasons: (1) supposing a belated animation, there is still nothing less than a human life, preparing for and calling for a soul in which the nature received from parents is completed, (2) on the other hand, it suffices that this presence of the soul be probable (and one can never prove the contrary) in order that the taking of life involve accepting the risk of killing a man, not only waiting for, but already in possession of his soul" (Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 1974, fn. 19). But, it is incorrect to refer to "a human life" in the absence of a rational animation, as it is also to conclude that the presence of a mind is "probable", when at best it is esoterically possible. (Mind is not accepted to be there, for instance, when someone is brain-dead.) Therefore, the alleged parity between homicide and every abortion cannot be metaphysically sustained. (Note that the Vatican declaration states that "St. Thomas [Aquinas], the Common Doctor of the Church, teaches that abortion is a grave sin against the natural law" (*Ibid.*, para. 7). Yet, it is not refer-

enced where Aquinas says this; and it would clearly be inconsistent of him to do so, if by it he means to include even cases of gravity, calling for early abortions. Further, it is reported that "Paul VI, speaking on this subject on many occasions, has not been afraid to declare that this teaching of the Church 'has not changed and is unchangeable'" (*Ibid.*). However, the Pope's statement is historically incorrect, and is presumably premised upon abortion being "the deliberate killing of an innocent human being" (*Evangelium Vitae*, para. 62). But, of course, in those instances where this is dubiously the case, the definitive teaching should not apply; so the Church's current attitude towards those who choose to have an early abortion is ethically unacceptable.)

This is also true of the Church's probation of divorce and remarriage. Why should the *victims* of failed marriages be punished for something which is not of their own fault? The prohibition is morally wrong; and – fortunately – it also appears to be scripturally mistaken. For, in *Matthew* 5:32, Jesus's prohibition of divorce and remarriage is in the context of his warning: "[d]o not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish but to complete them" (*Matthew* 5:17–18). And, in *Luke* 16:18, the prohibition immediately follows his statement that "[i]t is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for one little stroke to drop out of the Law" (*Luke* 16:17). But, the Mosaic Law *accepts* divorce and remarriage (*Deuteronomy* 24:1). Therefore, it cannot be the case that Jesus forbids absolutely divorce and remarriage – all he can consistently do is to perfect the existing statute. This is confirmed in *Matthew* 19:1–12: Jesus's prohibition of divorce and remarriage is in reply to the Pharisees' question "[i]s it against the Law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever?" (*Matthew* 19:3–4). So, it is the liberality of the statute which is at issue, not the Law itself. Furthermore, in *Matthew* 19:1–12 and in *Mark* 10:1–12, it is because "what God has united, man must not divide" (*Matthew* 19:6; *Mark* 10:9–10) that Jesus prohibits divorce and remarriage. But, in the Matthean text Jesus states: "I am not speaking of [the case of] fornication"; (*Matthew* 19:9) and, in the earlier Matthean text, Jesus adds the same qualifier that the prohibition is "except for the case of fornication" (*Matthew* 5:32). Evidently, then, morally and scripturally in the instance of adultery there could be no such divinely sanctioned union: either God would not have approved the marriage in the first place, because the terms of marriage do not include that; or the union that was approved of has been severed, because the divine terms of it by adultery are broken. For, adultery is an injustice; *specifically* proscribed in the Decalogue; and it is an injustice *compounded* if the victim is still bound by the union.

Therefore, despite its being from the Lord that "a wife must not leave her husband – or if she does leave him, she must either remain unmarried or else make up with her husband – nor must a husband send his wife away", (1*Corinthians* 7:10–11) this cannot be true of all instances. For, this can only be assured when the cases are not of adultery. And, indeed, it cannot be guaranteed even then: when Jesus says that he is not talking about fornication, he does not say that this is the only exception – it is, of course, just the obvious exception. But, if adultery can nullify a marriage, by parity of reasoning so too might other equally damaging infidelities, such as coldness, cruelty, and neglect. (Note that even if the Matthean exception were to

be discounted, it would still be wrong for authorities to take Jesus' reference to divorce to be unconditional, when accompanying teachings – such as in *Mark* that "if your hand should cause you to sin, cut it off", (*Mark* 9:43) and in *Matthew* that "if anyone hits you on the right cheek [you must] offer him the other as well" (*Matthew* 5:39–40) – are treated by them merely proverbially.)

The test of reason should also be applied to the critical task of doing *dogmatic* theology. For, just as it is the duty of all men qua men to seek truth – "[a]ll men by nature [rightfully] desire to know" (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book I, Ch. 1) – it is especially the duty of all Christians to pursue religious truth, since Jesus tells us "the truth will make you free"; (*John*: 8:32). and "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." (*John*, 14:6). Hence, it is indeed "the honour and responsibility of a Catholic University to consecrate itself without reserve to the cause of truth", and to do so "without fear but rather with enthusiasm." (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Introduction, para. 4). For, "there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason. Since the same God who reveals mysteries and infuses faith has bestowed the light of reason upon the human mind, God cannot deny himself, not can truth ever contradict truth." (Vatican I, Session 3, Ch. 4, para. 6) However, in regard to the University, we are instructed by the authorities that this is subject to the stricture that: "every Catholic University, as Catholic, must have following essential characteristics: (1) a Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such; (2) a continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research; (3) *fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church*; (4) an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life." (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Part 1, para. 13, emphasis added).

But, this is hardly consistent with the institution being one which "guarantees its members academic freedom, so long as the rights of the individual person and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good." (*Ibid.*, para. 12) For, although a Catholic University is by definition Christianly inspired, Catholically reflective, and in Faith committed, "fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church" does not rest easily with "an impartial search for truth, a search that is neither subordinated to nor conditioned by particular interests of any kind" (*Ibid.*, para. 7). A Catholic University surely has the responsibility, and should have the courage, to examine its own religious beliefs without favour; otherwise, it cannot really call itself a University, the concern of which is essentially universal knowledge (Newman 1931, Preface).

Therefore, the teachings of the Church and the grounds of our accepting them must be readily shown to be not unsound, if "fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church" is to be warranted. So, their investigation must remain open to a Catholic University's scrutiny. Hence, it *cannot* be true that "[i]n particular, Catholic theologians, aware that they fulfil a mandate received from the Church, are to be faithful to the Magisterium of the Church as the authentic interpreter of Sacred Scripture and Sacred tradition" (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Part II, article 4, para. 3). For, "[t]heology has its legitimate place in the University alongside other

disciplines. It has proper principles and methods which define it as a branch of knowledge. Theologians enjoy this same [academic] freedom so long as they are faithful to these principles and methods." (*Ex Code Ecclesiae*, Part I, para. 29). The *most* that can be asked of the theological professionals in this regard, then, is that they take very seriously the teachings of the Magisterium; but not that they still must unconditionally accept them, if they are discovered in some way to be wanting.

St Paul's reporting that "[w]hen Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch … I opposed him to his face, since he was manifestly in the wrong" (*Galatians* 2:11) affirms this, and the fact that "piety requires us to honour truth [even] above our friends." (Aristotle, *NE*, Book I, Ch. 6) And, despite Aristotle's philosophical pre-eminence, St Thomas Aquinas sometimes finds it necessary to correct him[1]; and, indeed, to revise himself. (*ST* II, Q. 9, Art. 4) Therefore, although "the teaching authority of the Church in matters of faith and morals" (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Part I, para. 27) is a weighty constraint upon what is acceptable, it cannot be one that is absolutely indefeasible. For, even after the advent of the Spirit at Pentecost, (*Acts* 2:1–13). St Paul and Barnabus fell out because "one thought one thing good, while the other thought something else, due to human deficiency …" (*ST* II-II, Q. 37, Art. 1, ad. 3). Theologians specifically, and academics generally, owe their allegiance first and foremost to *truth*, not to anything else. Thus, John Henry Newman: "[where there are different schools of opinion in relation to difficult doctrines], a given individual such as I am, cannot agree with all, and has a full right to follow which he will. The freedom within the schools, indeed, is one of those rights which the Church is [or at least should be] too wise to interfere with. And this applies not to moral questions only, but to dogmatic also." (Newman 1946, 302).

3.5 Conclusion

Since it is wrong always, everywhere and for everyone to believe anything upon insufficient evidence, religions and religious beliefs are required at the very least to be shown to be not unreasonable, if they are to have any legitimacy. This means, first and foremost, that they must *themselves* be *ethical*. There is nothing startling about this, because everyone knows that Aristotle is right when he says that people who are puzzled about honouring the gods – or God – and loving their parents, need punishment, not perception. God is good, as indeed are our parents. What is, however, disconcerting, is that often when pronouncements made by religious authorities are subjected to the test of reason, they not infrequently fail. Consequently, they are materially blasphemous, because they are given in the name of God. It is a bitter irony, then, that the virtue of faith – trust in God in his goodness – can be so mistaken about what this means, that it can become a pernicious vice.

[1] For example, see Aquinas's *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, paragraph 990 (regarding time).

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Chapter 4
Faith, Philosophy and the Elemental

Richard J. Colledge

Abstract In recent debate concerning the relationship between faith and reason, a pervasive assumption is evident according to which one or other is considered to be original and basic. This paper develops an alternative view of the status of both rational and religious modes of thought drawing on the work of Adriaan Peperzak, and bringing his suggestion in this area into dialogue with a series of interlocators including Pascal, Levinas, Heidegger, Desmond and Van der Veken. Accordingly, neither rational and/or scientific methods, nor by religious orthodoxies, can claim primordiality. Rather, both of these phenomena are determinate concretions of a more elemental pre-conceptual source that can be spoken about in terms of a background experiential faith, or a metaphysical trust. It is on this basis that an alternative account of the relation between religious faith and reason is offered, according to which they are understood to be distinct yet intimately related at source.

Keywords Rationality • Faith • Adriaan Peperzak • Blaise Pascal • Martin Heidegger • Emmanuel Levinas • William Desmond

4.1 Introduction

In recent popular debate concerning the relationship between religion and contemporary philosophy and the natural sciences, two pervasive tendencies can be identified, these being what might be called 'incompatibilist' and 'assimilationist' approaches.[1] In what follows, I will maintain that neither of these is adequate to the

[1] Note that the classificatory terms introduced in this first section are used descriptively with reference to the content matter of this essay. As such, they are not to be understood with reference to their usage in other familiar philosophical debates (e.g., incompatibilism with reference to the metaphysics of human freedom, or eliminativism with reference to physicalist accounts of mind).

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task of seriously thinking through the relationship between rational-empirical and religious interpretations of the world.[2] But further, drawing heavily on the work of Adriaan Peperzak, I will maintain that the crucial shortcoming of both approaches is that they fail to recognise the essentially *derivative* nature of both kinds of discourse, and their rootedness in something much more primal and basic; if also, by definition, something vastly more difficult to elaborate.

4.2 Beyond Polarisation and Synthesis: Rethinking the Contemporary Debate

Before proceeding, it will be helpful to map the terrain of much of the contemporary debate. The first ('incompatibilist') approach assumes a bipolar view of the relationship according to which a *choice* essentially needs to be made to affirm either reason or faith as fundamental. Accordingly, one must affirm either the primordiality of contemporary rationality and scientific empiricism over and above religious truth claims; or alternatively, to adopt a position of fundamental faithfulness to a religious orthodoxy whilst regarding philosophical and scientific methodologies and conclusions with caution or even suspicion.

There are, of course, various shades of insistence with each position. In the case of rationalist incompatibilism, one might distinguish between more and less exclusivist tendencies. On one hand, there are those (e.g., de Botton 2012; Solomon 2006) who allow religious modes of discourse some level of legitimacy as aesthetic or ethical ways of speaking that can inspire us to act in positive ways or give us a sense of life meaning, but whose truth claims (in any realist sense) are to be largely (if usually politely) rejected. On the other hand, there are the advocates of a strongly 'eliminativist' bent (e.g., Grayling 2013; Onfray 2005) and an array of other anti-religion campaigners with scientific or social-scientific credentials. For such thinkers, religious, superstitious and supernaturalist approaches are inimical to rational and even civilized thought, so much so that even apparently 'reasonable' versions of religious thought need to unmasked and similarly discarded as the artefacts of pre-scientific barbarism that they nonetheless remain.

Meanwhile, religiously-orientated incompatibilism remains alive and well. Admittedly, strong eliminativism is comparatively rare within contemporary intellectual debate, if by that is meant the rejection of rationality out of hand when it comes to matters of faith, including all exercises in theology and apologetics that look to make a systematic case for religious belief. Absolutist disjunctions between

[2] Space constraints preclude a more expansive typology of worldviews that have been lumped together here under the headings of "rational-empirical" approaches (by which I include both scientific and rational philosophical outlooks in their myriad varieties) and "religious" interpretations (in their equally diverse manifestations). However, given the contentions of the essay that seeks to challenge at least one important aspect by which these two approaches are so commonly opposed, little is lost in initially granting such a broad-brush (if, in itself inadequate) characterisation.

Athens and Jerusalem that would regard reasoned accounts of faith as impious, illegitimate and (since they commit the category error of attempting to understand eternal things with finite concepts) impossible, are now quite rare. On the other hand, there are a large range of approaches that fit into what C. Stephen Evans (2008) has called "responsible fideism", as opposed to "irrational fideism" of which Evans gives the example of Shestov (1966). In insisting on the primacy of faith over reason, such approaches paradoxically provide serious reasoned justifications for this very primacy by which faith transcends reason. In doing so, they look *not* to rationally justify faith-based truth claims (which can only ever be recognised in faith itself), but rather to demonstrate *why* reason is unable to satisfactorily deal with religious problems and truths, and why faith alone can do so. The Reformed Epistemology school provides an interesting variation of this approach in arguing for a conception of faith as "properly basic" and not in need of being inferred from anything more fundamental (e.g., Plantinga and Wolterstorff 1991).

The second diverse group of approaches to negotiating the faith-reason divide – the assimilationist tendency – are those that look to argue not for the primacy of one over the other, but rather to affirm the equiprimordiality and/or complementarity (if not the complete unity) of both. Many versions of this assimilationist strategy can be identified. Putting to one side myriad efforts to unite pagan gnostic spiritualties with science of dubious quality, the focus here is on approaches that look to meld naturalism and religious thought, bringing faith and reason together in a higher synthesis by which the contingencies of both – understood as that which creates the *illusion* of polarisation – fall away, thus revealing a single vision of reality. The Process Theology of scholars such as David Ray Griffin (2004) and John Cobb (2007) is an example of this approach. (Such syntheses are to be distinguished from Hegel's *Aufhebung*, Spinoza's "true knowledge", and other such approaches in which religion emerges as the poorer cousin, one step below absolute the knowing of philosophical science.) A second approach, developed most famously by Stephen J. Gould (1999), is the strategy of affirming both science and religion as independent "non-overlapping domains" or authoritative sources dealing with separate but equally important areas of human knowledge: on one hand the facts, and on the other hand meaning, value and purpose. Third, there are those who make use of philosophically sophisticated forms of argumentation, and/or the findings of recent scientific research, to build a case for the common trajectory of philosophy, science and religious traditions. Among this group, one might count the work of philosophical apologists such as William Lane Craig (2008) and Richard Swinburne (1993), and scientist/theologians such as JohnPolkinghorne (2008). Somewhat like the method of Aquinas, this approach claims that there is a fundamental complementarity between reason and revelation, even if one cannot always simply be derived from the other.

These are, of course, very broad brushstrokes, but I make them in order to demonstrate a striking point about much of the current debate. It is this. What lies so often unremarked upon is the *assumption* that rationality (however configured) and/or religious belief (however configured) are – either singularly or together – "properly basic" (to borrow Plantinga and Wolterstorff's term). This is an assumption that cuts

right across a vast range of theories, from evangelical theism to evangelical atheism. But this is not an assumption that need go unchallenged. Might it not be that the community between rationality and religious faith has roots that go deeper than either of them alone?

In drawing on the work of Adriaan Peperzak and a series of other thinkers in the field, this paper argues not so much for the unity (of whatever kind) between faith and reason, but rather for their rootedness in a common pre-conceptual soil from which both spring. Rather than focusing on teleological attempts to do justice to both via synthesising them, I suggest that much more might be gained by allowing them to retain their distinctiveness even while developing an *archaeological* account of their common source in *pre-rational* and *pre-religious* soil. Of course, given this common source, elements of convergence among the fruits of each plant should come as no surprise, for the offspring carries a shared ancestry. But the change of focus from teleology to archaeology is nonetheless hugely significant, since affirmation of the desire for the unity of human knowing is no longer reliant on the demonstration of (often artificial) claims of culminative sameness.[3] As such, there is no need to, nor justification for, forcing faith and reason together in some kind of dubious epistemological hybrid in which one is almost inevitably made into a caricature of the other. Much better to allow each to maintain its distinctiveness even while being affirmed as an authentic expression of our common dwelling within the world.

4.3 Peperzak's Existential Archaeology of Thought

Over the course of the last decade and a half, Adriaan Peperzak has published a series of volumes in which a quite distinctive account emerges of what I will refer to here as an existential archaeology of thought; a meta-narrative concerning the origins of both rationality and religious thought.[4]

According to Peperzak, determinate religious belief (whether or not it follows a traditional creed) and rational reflection (regardless of its own structures and truth-claims) *both* need to be understood thoroughly in the context of their rootedness in the human condition. Specifically, both are ways of thinking and reflecting that are responses to the experience of finding ourselves in a more or less meaningful universe. To be existentially rooted in this sense means that both presuppose a certain *confidence* in the essential *reliability* of things that justifies our strivings and our taking a stand on matters of significance (whatever that stand might be in each

[3] Such claims are akin to pre-emptive notions about the ultimate sameness of all religions; claims that – as any careful analysis will show – are at best inconclusive, most likely misleading, and often just plain false.

[4] Peperzak generally takes philosophy as his representative discipline of modern rationality. However, it seems to me perfectly consistent to extend this (as I do in this essay) to include all forms of rational thought, including the contemporary empirical sciences.

case). This underlying confidence is a *lived affirmation* that marks all intellectual stances on the world – from conservative religiosity to vociferous atheism; from detailed empirical observations of the world to sweeping theories of reality – each of which involve interpretations of the situation within which individuals and communities find themselves (2005, 74–75; 1999, 122). Peperzak goes as far as to see this elemental lived confidence as indicating a basic sense of "faith", a fundamental "hope" and "trust" in the meaningful coherence of the universe (2003, 4, 10, 155; 2005, 75; 2013, 116). Accordingly, all human intellection is rooted within this basic existential dimension of human life within which questions of "decisive or ultimate meaning" are mediated "at least tentatively and in an embryonic, albeit half-unconscious form" (2005, 74). This is the "universal dimension, level or structure that can be found at the core of all forms or ways of life" (2005, 76), and thus all forms of reflection on the cosmos and the human place within it. It is out of this fundamental milieu that concrete theories of all kinds arise to give voice to this basic experience of the world.

This is a bold thesis, and one which very deliberately looks to undermine rival accounts of the primacy or rightness of determinate religious, philosophical or scientific thought. In taking on both sides of the polarisation between systematic expressions of religious and rational thought (in claiming to have seen beyond the pretensions of both, to a more basic originality), Peperzak has opened up two fierce fronts. In this, he is aware of potential objections from both sides.

First: the notion of primal 'faith' is a deliberate and devastating attack on the pretensions of philosophy to be an absolute and foundational discipline, and one on the basis of which other discourses are to be judged. For Peperzak, far from being a rival to faith, reason is in fact only possible on the basis of a prior "hidden faith" of its own (2005, 77). Reason is thus not basic: it is contingent upon, and derived from, deeper "pre-predicative and pre-propositional experience"; sources that are not themselves rational but are rather pre-rational, and even "affective" (2005, 75). To illustrate, Peperzak points to modern philosophy's "infatigable questioning and self-critical requestioning", something that he sees as betraying "a genuine desire of something greater than itself", perhaps even to an intimation of "absolute transcendence". After all, "from where does its passion for the truth come and what justifies its hope?" (2005, 81–82). In rejecting modern philosophical "autarchic" pretensions concerning its own primordiality (philosophy as *kath auto*; *sui generis*; *causa sui*), Peperzak at times mocks modern philosophy's illegitimate declaration of independence referring to it at one point as the "religion of [the] Enlightenment" (2005, 80).

Peperzak is keenly aware of the potential for rebuke from rationalistic forms of philosophy (and the natural sciences) that he has illegitimately read faith-based claims back into logic and the natural world. One might, for example, affirm the obvious point that philosophers philosophise (and scientists conduct research) out of particular life contexts, but that it is part of the professional rigour of such disciplines that personal subjective contexts need to recede into the background as the thinker puts forward arguments that need to pass the test of logical validity (and/or evidential plausibility). Peperzak need not deny that on one level this is obviously the case. Nonetheless, it seems equally obvious that if the last century of

hermeneutical epistemology (and philosophy of science) have shown anything, it is that claims to complete objectivity, in which the philosopher (or scientist) effectively disappear from the thinking process, are unsustainable. Science proceeds on the basis of *hypotheses* which are very human constructions built largely within existing paradigms, and which can only be rigorously tested *after* they have been formulated. Philosophy similarly proceeds on the basis of traditions of thought and individual *intuitions* that are the basis of rationally constructed arguments, a process that largely becomes obvious only in cases of stubborn and fundamental disagreement.[5] Peperzak's case is drawn from the familiar conclusions of twentieth century hermeneutics (and, one might add, work in the philosophy of science by thinkers like Kuhn and Polanyi). He illustrates the alternative via a parody:

> In order to separate their philosophy from their lives as they live them, philosophers must find a free-standing perspective outside their own worldly and historical existence. Only then can they form an objective and universally valid judgement about the universe, including their own functioning within it. Thinking thus becomes the activity of an extra-existential, suprahistorical, superterrestrial thinker. (2005, 77)

The reality, he reminds us, is obviously very different. It is true that significant philosophical progress is made when philosophers appropriate our shared inheritance in new ways, thereby opening new possibilities for others. But it is terribly naïve to accept the notion that new philosophical systems really are simply creations "founded upon indubitable evidence and crystalline logic". All philosophical contributions, even the great ones, "are rooted in some hidden faith, even when their authors are not aware of it" (2005, 77). Peperzak's nod in the direction of the mysterious and indeterminate life context (indeed, the social and individual psychology) of philosophical (and scientific) practitioners can be understood as naming something of this vast inchoate reservoir from which rational thinking of all kinds arises.[6]

Second: While writing as an unmistakably Christian philosopher, Peperzak's view, it seems to me, should be understood as equally an assault upon determinate religious traditions insofar as they harbour their own foundationalist (literally *fundamentalist*) assumptions. This includes positions that insist on the originary primacy of concrete Christian theological truth claims (or those of any other tradition) as the starting point for all subsequent reflection. Far from being "properly basic", particular concrete religious traditions are themselves responses to, and only

[5] This is a matter on which I have written at length elsewhere. See Colledge 2014.

[6] Having said that, Peperzak does not help his cause, it seems to me, by his references to this fecund "existential" dimension of human life as "the *religious* dimension" (2005, 74; emphasis added). His justification for this "very broad definition of religion" is, to my reading, never sufficiently explained, for it is not clear why faith in this more elemental and existential sense needs to be associated with the religious per se, with the elemental religious dimension then having to be distinguished from "concrete (or 'positive') religions" (2005, 74). Terminological confusions aside, there is also a significant risk here of a telling asymmetry forming according to which an ambiguous priority is afforded *after all* to the religious over the rational, where no such slanting is necessary. In what follows, I abstain from using this terminology which seems to me both unnecessary and incurring significant risks of misunderstanding.

possible on the basis of, a more immediate indeterminate experiential faith which is thereby given determinate and systematic doctrinal formulation.

Peperzak recognises the grounds for protest from religious communities that he is at risk of reducing creedal faith to "existential categories that fit all human beings so well that religions in any normal sense of the word and the differences between religions no longer matter" (2005, 76). After all, to claim that concrete faith-claims arise out of a deeper experiential dimension, is to open the whole problem of the *contingency* of both one's affective experience of the cosmos *and* of the tradition's dogmatic interpretation of this basic human experience. Who is to say (and what possible criteria could one use to establish) *which* experience of the cosmos (and interpretation thereof) is the most adequate, worthy and faithful to the universe as it actually is? This is clearly a complex matter that goes to the heart of Peperzak's broadly hermeneutic conception of theology proper, a topic that lies well beyond the scope of this paper.

Nonetheless, Peperzak's approach would indeed appear to be at odds with Christian doctrinal foundationalism. In the Augustinian/Anselmic tradition, *the* faith is both the starting point and the content from which, and in the service of which, rationality seeks to provide understanding: *fides quaerens intellectum*. Thus any method which inverts this order of priority – which would assess faith on the basis of rational reflection – is a critical distortion.[7] This conviction is widely attested across a range of Christian traditions, and is at the heart of the Reformed Epistemology movement (with its Calvinist roots) that has brought this view to the heart of contemporary analytic philosophy of religion. Unlike Peperzak, this variously articulated tradition of Christian fideism makes no differentiation between primal existentially-based "faith" and properly Christian doctrinal truth-claims. Only when the meaning of "faith" is stretched (or perhaps more accurately, changed) to take on an elemental existential rather than a dogmatic sense can faith seeking understanding be understood in the way Peperzak suggests.[8]

In any case, against both angles of attack – from the rationalists and the religious traditionalists – Peperzak insists that his project is not interested in efforts to *reduce* either faith or reason to one another; nor to subjectivise them in any relativistic sense. His aims are much more modest. It is simply to insist on a common source for all concrete systematic thought as grounded in originary human experience. They are thus not relativised or undermined, so much as *contextually* affirmed.

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[7] Such staunchly incompatibilist thinking is echoed in a very different context by Leo Strauss in his famous address on Jerusalem and Athens: "According to the Bible, the beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord; according to the Greek philosophers it is wonder. We are thus compelled from the very beginning to make a choice, to take a stand. Where then do we stand? Confronted by the incompatible claims of Jerusalem and Athens, we are open to both and willing to listen to each … Yet since we say that we wish to hear first and then to act or to decide, we have already decided in favor of Athens against Jerusalem (Strauss 2011).

[8] In saying as much, I admit that across his various works Peperzak is not especially consistent with his use of the terminology of "faith". A notable case in point is his 1999 text, *Reason in Faith* (the sub-title of which is "On the Relevance of Christian Spirituality for Philosophy"), where faith is often used in a specific sense to mean adherence to the Christian tradition.

4.4 Engaging Peperzak's Archeology of the Primal

Peperzak's writings are deeply informed by, and interlaced with, references to the history of western philosophy and twentieth century phenomenology. His sources and interlocutors are many. Before moving on, I wish to touch very briefly on aspects of the work of four figures who provide helpful contexts for further exploring this idea of a primal faith from which emerges both rationality and religion.

A key source is Blaise Pascal, particularly those rich and oft quoted passages from the *Pensées* where he provides an account of the relationship between faith and reason. Of particular relevance here is Pascal's notion of the role of "faith" (knowledge of the heart) in providing the "first principles" by which reason can then operate:

> The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know. We feel it in a thousand things … We know truth, not only by the reason, but also by the heart, and it is in this last way that we know first principles; and reason, which has no part in it, tries in vain to impugn them … For the knowledge of first principles, as space, time, motion, number, is as sure as any of those which we get from reasoning. And reason must trust these intuitions of the heart, and must base them on every argument … And it is as useless and absurd for reason to demand from the heart proofs of her first principles, before admitting them, as it would be for the heart to demand from reason an intuition of all demonstrated propositions before accepting them. (Pascal 1968, n. 277, 282)

While Pascal's reference to "intuitions of the heart" is clearly intended to denote conviction of the presence and love of God ("This, then, is faith: God felt by the heart, not by the reason" (n. 278)), this elemental awareness is not to be confused with a systematically elaborated theological conviction which must, by definition, involve the application of reason. The "first principles" that are revealed by the heart are sensed by an immediate intuition which transcends both the senses and rationality. Further, Pascal is clear that it is these intuitions that are "properly basic" (so to speak), and which indeed are the foundations of all reasoning. They are not deductively derived, but are grasped all at once, inspiring immediate conviction.

However, while Pascalian intuitions of the heart are clearly not to be understood as determinate Christian theological claims, one is nonetheless left with a sense that what he has in mind has a certain proper form (if not 'content') that bears the marks of the creator. If this is so, then there is a nascent suggestion here of some kind of universal pre-rational experiential core that is the basis for all concrete knowledge. If this is so, then a range of familiar problems from the debates of early modern epistemology are raised. Is this knowledge of the heart innate (needing perhaps only to be recognised) or does it need to be acquired? If the former, why is it not generally recognised? If the latter, how does it come to be known? More recent lines of questioning might proceed as follows. Are (radically) different life experiences likely to induce (radically) different kinds of knowledge? Does one need to be formed in a particular way of thinking and being (e.g., within a particular religious tradition; or indeed through study of mathematics, science or philosophy) in order for the eyes of the heart to be opened to those things?

These are real and difficult questions for interpretations that would posit a universal content for the primal ground of discursive thought. It is not clear, however, that Peperzak's primal faith is of this kind. As instructive as the Pascalian background is for understanding what Peperzak has in mind, it seems to me that the most helpful points of reference are more recent.

One such more recent interlocutor is Emmanuel Levinas, on whom Peperzak is, of course, a leading commentator. While Peperzak does not explicitly cite Levinas in this context, it is no accident, I would suggest, that it is Levinas himself who has provided one of the richest phenomenological descriptions of what Peperzak refers to as the "pre-predicative and pre-propositional" dimension of human life. According to Levinas, "the non-intentional consciousness" lies prior to, or perhaps beneath, the reflexivity of consciousness that establishes the self-aware and free ego with its possibility of contrivance and projection of status.[9] As such it stands before the other in utter vulnerability and openness:

> [T]he non-intentional … has no intentions or aims, and cannot avail itself of the protective mask of a character contemplating in the mirror of the world a reassured and self-positing portrait. It has no name, no situation, no status …It has not yet been invested with any attributes or justified in any way. (Levinas 1989, 81)

Importantly, far from framing this elemental state as an early developmental stage which rapidly recedes with the onset of self-consciousness, Levinas emphasises that the non-intentional "remains" (79) beneath the intentional overlay:

> Prior to any particular expression, and prior to all particular expressions which cover over and protect with an immediately adopted face or countenance, there is the nakedness and destitution of the expression as such … This is the hidden human face behind perseverance in being…the affirmation of being. (Levinas 1989, 83, 85)

The non-intentional is "prior" to all structures of intentionality which allow the positing of propositions that are the essence of determinate faith structures on one hand, and philosophical and scientific claims (the realms of fact and theory) on the other. As such, the sphere of the non-intentional might be characterised as the ultimate *a priori*; that elemental layer from which thought arises, and to which it – in some sense – returns. The *priority* of this elemental encounter with the world is thus a function of its humility: it is pure receptivity that is unadorned with justification or contention.

On this basis, one might even suggest that the authenticity of conscious rational thought of any kind (be it religious or secular in nature) comes down to the faithfulness of the transition/ translation from elemental experience to determinate discourse and practice. One might perhaps suggest that this is the primary hermeneutic task:

[9] It is interesting that Peperzak prefers the term "pre-intentional" (which is more suggestive of Merleau-Ponty and indeed Husserl) than it is of Levinas. To speak of the *pre*-intentional is to suggest a temporal orientation in relation to the intentional. The "non-intentional", on the other hand, is entirely *other* to intentionality, and it is perhaps for this reason that it is generally preferred by Levinas. Nonetheless, the absoluteness suggested by utter "non-intentionality" is in some senses inconvenient for Peperzak, given his interest in the *transition* from indeterminate to determinate forms of faith.

the movement from authentic subjectivity (defined here as a patient attentiveness to one's elemental experience of being in the world) to the possibility of objectivity which, as Bernard Lonergan famously put it, is its fruit (Lonergan 1990, 292; also 265). Rationality comes too late to be the author of the basic intelligibility and meaningfulness of the world, or of its saturation with value. If these characteristics are not already present for us to be brought to the table of discursive thought, no amount of rational theorising can force them into existence.

Other than the obvious Husserlian background, Levinas' non-intentional is also substantially indebted to Martin Heidegger's phenomenology of Dasein's modes of being in the world, and Heidegger is clearly another major source for Peperzak. Of particular note here is Heidegger's analysis of basic attunement (*Befindlichkeit*).[10] Peperzak is keen to emphasise the "primarily affective character" of his notion of the elemental human domain, using explicitly Heideggerian language in speaking of "a fundamental attunement, a basic 'mood'" (2005, 75; see Heidegger 1962, §29). With Heidegger, Peperzak would maintain that rationality is not *sui generis*, springing into the world as the beginning of all thought. Logic always has a context; its "metaphysical foundations" (to borrow from the title of one of Heidegger's early lecture courses: Heidegger 1984) need to be understood in the context of Dasein's being-in-the-world.

With Heidegger, Peperzak also emphasises the importance of distinguishing particular emotional states from the whole domain of affective attunement to the world:

> [O]ur affective response, rather than being a constellation of particular emotions, consists in a general and diffuse attunement that is so deep and permeating that often we are not even aware of it: a mood. We are in touch with the world by feeling ourselves involved in it, more or less at home or exiled, more or less at peace or struggling … [A] basic mood is the way in which we let the universe attune us. (2005, 160)

For Heidegger, as for Peperzak, this attunement – this affective basis for thought – has *structure* (of which his early thought looks to provide a phenomenology) but no universally instantiated *content*. In bringing our past with us, we experience the world differently. The whole structure of attunement is characterised by its factical nature; Dasein finds itself "assail[ed]" by moods (Heidegger 1962, 176), though which it is always *already* attuned to the world in inevitably idiosyncratic ways. Elemental human experience has a common structure to be found at the core of all forms or ways of life, but the *character* of this basic attunement will differ (sometimes dramatically) from individual to individual. The point is not that we basically experience the world in the same or similar ways (that would be ridiculous); rather that all thinking happens on the basis of a fundamental affective experience of living in the world. Indeed, *given* the differences in basic experience, one would expect that reasoned arguments in philosophy and theology, ethics and aesthetics, the

[10] While I do not deal with this topic here, Peperzak's phenomenological roots are also evident in his suspicion of the impoverished metaphysics of rationalistic and empirical scientific accounts of the world. Even while being highly critical of the Heideggerian and post-Heideggerian critique of onto-theology, he clearly accepts aspects of this critique insofar as western thinking about God has reduced the Divine to a definable term in a syllogistic game of chess (see Peperzak 2005, 98 ff).

natural and human sciences (and so on) would show great diversity in progression and conclusion. And so they do. Indeed, Peperzak's suggestion that all such determinate rational and faith-based systems of thought are derivative of a more basic affective and experiential dwelling in the world provides a compelling *reason* for the vast and ubiquitous differences of judgement we see among religious and philosophical communities. It also goes quite some way to explaining what is at stake in incommensurable scholarly arguments that seem impervious to resolution through rational means (see Colledge 2014).

Peperzak's focus on the way in which our pre-intentional emotional attunement to the world speaks of an elemental faith or trust in the world is strongly echoed by William Desmond. In a passage that strikingly evokes Desmond on this theme, Peperzak put it as follows:

> The universe can inspire awe, admiration, gratitude, anxiety; we can feel threatened, safe, secure, content, frustrated, nostalgic, and so on … So long as we continue to live, however, there is always some sort of basic consent and trust, even if these are overwhelmed by anguish and temptations of despair. Somehow we remain attached to our existence and confident that it is better to be than not to be … Trust, confidence, or 'faith' … implies the affirmation that existence has an overall meaning … This affirmation is lived rather than pronounced or thought. It is the element of consent in our moods … 'Faith is thus linked with hope'. (2005, 75)

Desmond's work on the dynamics and affectivity of primal faith and its relation to determinate thought provides a perfect context for developing Peperzak's own contributions to this field. Of primary importance here is Desmond's notion of the "primary ethos" within which human beings fundamentally dwell, and which we then reconfigure in drawing up determinate and familiar ways of being. Desmond speaks of this ("properly basic") context of our lives in various ways, such as the following:

> By ethos, I mean the ontological context or overdetermined matrix of value in which our human ethos and ethics come to be articulated. This is prior to, and in excess of, every ethical [and epistemological] determination that we define … The ethos is not first revealed by thinking or by reflection; it is a happening *before* we make any firm difference between inner and outer, subject and object … [T]his pre-determinate ethos of value is not just 'back there' in an indefinite beginning, but is with us always. (Desmond 2001, 17, 21, 22)

For Desmond, recognition of this elemental context of being is essential, for without it we illegitimately see ourselves as creators of meaning, value and insight, which are in fact always derivative. This is an insight that he explores in a series of directions in his work, for it has metaphysical, ethical, aesthetic, psychological and theological implications.

Desmond speaks of this basic idiosyncratic context of all personal being and thinking as "elemental idiocy" (in the Greek sense of *idios*, the private). This "elemental I" is "presupposed by all subsequently 'constructed' selves". However, "this'root' is not the Cartesian 'I think', or any version of it. It is not a prereflective *cogito*. It is a prereflective idiocy, prior to all *cogitos*, and all determinate thinking" (Desmond 1995, 63). Paralleling Peperzak's notion of the movement from the pre-intentional *archē* to determinate forms of rational and religious thought, Desmond is interested in the way that we move from this primary *ethos* to reconfigured forms

out of which arise particular modes of determinate thought. Much is at stake in this reconfiguration of the primal ethos, by which we "stay true, betray or disfigure its promise" (Desmond 2001, 17). A paradigm case of the disfigurement of the *ethos* is what he sees as the devaluation of being in modernity: an epoch (which is in some ways still very much with us) in which the dominance of rational discourse and scientific method has often left philosophers with few tools with which to speak of the intrinsic goodness of being as such; of a cosmos already infused with value. In this way, the "primal ethos" in which we "live and move and have our being" is entirely overlooked and its derivative products (including all determinate forms of thought) are instead as regarded original.

Much more might be said of the rich ways in which Desmond unfolds his analysis of the primal *ethos* and of his call for a return to a new attentiveness to its intimations in the context of life and thought. There is, for example, a closely related and strikingly recurrent motif in his work of the stages of thinking relative to one's relationship to this primal *ethos:* from the immediate joy of living (wonder, first innocence); the fading of wonder as the ethos is reconfigured; stages of despair through unfulfilled *conatus*; and finally the gift of renewed wonder (variously: "idiotic rebirth", "agapeic rebirth", "aesthetic recharging"), as something of the primal love of being in its basic goodness (the *passio essendi*) returns in a chastened and deepened sense (see Desmond 1995, 256; 2001, 380; 2008, 31–43, 118–121, 337). Despite everything, there can be a dawning of a new *ontological faith* (2001, 381, 508–09; 2008, 82, 121, 338–40). This state of renewed openness to the gift and goodness of being – even in the midst of evil and suffering – seems to be what Desmond is gesturing to, wishing for, for the whole of western culture; and he sees philosophy as a discipline that needs to undergo its own transformation in order to play its part. A very similar trajectory is discernible in Peperzak's own recent work.

4.5 Religion and Philosophy as Modes of Determinate Discourse

Given this discussion of the primal domain of experience and the derivative domains of thought that emerges from it, it remains to clarify the nature of the difference between concrete expressions of religious faith (particularly in creedal form) and philosophical (and/or scientific) reason. In what follows, Peperzak's approach is brought into conversation with Greg Moses' development of Jan Van der Veken's distinction between faith and reason along the lines of the particular and the general.

In dealing with the case of a Christian philosopher, Peperzak considers the switch of mode that occurs when conversing with those who do not share the same religious conviction. In such as case he will look for common ground and shared assumptions in order to make discussion possible despite any fundamental differences. If we reserve the name 'philosophy' for the level of universally shared assumptions, we abstract from all the real and possible differences in faith. Such a universally valid philosophy does not represent the concrete (and therefore existential) thought of its author, because it is only an abstract element of it (2005, 79–80).

In this way, philosophy, for Peperzak, is "nothing other than the theoretical part of [the philosopher's] existential endeavor" (2005, 79). This "theoretical part" is to be understood as that which is (in principle) *intelligible to all people* and not simply a concrete expression of the individual's own intimate experience of meaningful dwelling in the cosmos. But against the claims of rationalistic philosophy, this theoretical mode of expression cannot be simply affirmed as independent and absolute, for to do so would be to uproot it from its elemental context. Reason itself is a doxastic practice every bit as much as determinate religious faith. But reason is a very particular *kind* of expression of faith: one that tries to speak in a language that is *accessible to all*.

Now it seems to me that Peperzak's point feeds directly into the distinction that Jan Van der Veken makes (as related by Moses) between "what can be said about God on the basis of generally available experience, versus what can be said on the basis of particular experiences of particular people" (Moses 2004, 37). This is likened to "the knowledge that a perfect stranger might have of my good friend and the knowledge available to me *as* his or her good friend" (2004, 38). In both cases, what is at stake is an immediate familiarity or intimacy out of which one might speak (the particular), versus an abstract, theoretical and formal mode of knowing and speaking that seeks to find a place (so to speak) within the *common domain* (the general). Moses goes on to conclude that:

> the … distinction between faith and reason is not that of subjective versus objective, or non-rational versus rational, or supernatural versus natural, but more like, particular versus general, or even, as it will turn out, more particular versus less particular. (2004, 39)

In rejecting the standard objective/subjective, rational/non-rational, natural/supernatural ways of understanding the faith-reason distinction, the pretensions of concrete philosophical, scientific *or* religious traditions to claim the role of the master discourse is undermined, for all are rooted in something far more elemental and primal which is the truly "properly basic" starting point of all determinate discourses. Theoretical discourses transform immediate and intimate elemental experience into concrete theoretical and reflective accounts typical of both theology and philosophy (as well as scientific discourses in their own way). This distinction maps perfectly onto Peperzak's own distinction between derivative faith (i.e., concrete or "positive" religions) and derivative reason (such as philosophical enterprises).

It is important to note that this approach entails a distinction between religious experience as such, and developed theological reflection which can be both individual and communal in nature (and which may then be distilled into highly formalised creedal form). As literally a *logos* concerning the Divine, a living theology is rooted in elemental experience and is a reflectively (and communally) distilled response to that experience. True, the distillation that occurs within religious traditions begins as a communal enterprise, and only with growing maturity does it looks to address the human condition in a more general way. To that extent, even concrete religious discourses retain a degree of particularity that is often in tension with an impetus to broaden its base to address humanity in more general terms (a tension accentuated by canonical and doctrinal conservatism).

Nonetheless, vital philosophical reflection is also a product of reflective distillation, in dialogue with others, of the experience of dwelling within an overdetermined (meaning-saturated, if deeply perplexing) universe. It is for this reason that Moses' qualification in the quotation above – less "particular versus general", than "more particular versus less particular" – is so important. It is crucial that reason – qua the general – is not understood to be free of any particularity, while faith is associated only with the particular, or even the idiosyncratic. This would be to entirely undermine Peperzak's (and Van der Veken's) whole distinction. Further, the category of the "general" must not be taken to mean generally applicable or absolute, but rather simply as the *commonly accessible*. Rationality seeks to provide a common language and collection of methodologies – albeit is in ways that are perhaps largely constrained within the horizons of the western intellectual paradigm – by which people may communicate, but this is far from claiming it to be the master discourse as such. General means *less* particular, but particular nonetheless.

In sum, *both* forms of discourse (the theological and the philosophical), if they are to retain their vitality, must remain rooted in elemental experiential soil, and both become empty abstractions as soon as that rootedness is lost. But, of course, the very process of transition (or distillation) from elemental experience to rational discourse involves both a loss as well as a gain. The very drive toward generality means that rationality is constrained in the range of insight and elaboration thereby open to it according to what can be thought and spoken within this mode. Thus, ironically, in abstracting experience from its native context, theoretical discourses can perhaps be equated as much with a *loss* of the absolute as its achievement. On the other hand, the great and important benefit of rational discourse is precisely the *distance* it is able to take on elemental experience in all its overwhelming immediacy, and thus the wider perspective and common clarity it is able to bring to reflection. Thus, while it lacks intimate affective-cognitive enmeshment in the primal experience, it instead contributes (literally) to the *common sense*. While the immediacy and intimacy are lost, determinate discourses look to retain the formal structure of experience.

Moses applies this point to rational and religious reflection on the experience of God: "The God of the philosophers may well be the same as the God who properly deserves the name, the God of the Religions, but only abstractly considered"(2004, 53–54). It is thus the role of reason – in this case philosophical theology – to provide a breadth and depth of perspective to the questions at issue. However, as one necessary step removed from the intimacy of a distinctively human confrontation with what is at stake in the question of God, reason alone is "incompetent to decide in any final fashion" or to "make religious choices for us" (2004, 56).

What all this highlights, of course, is the complementarity of elemental faith and discursive reason in the realm of religious experience and thought. However, such a conclusion is now beyond any merely 'tactful' affirmation of mutual legitimacy, and is instead underpinned by a demonstration of the intrinsic belonging-together of faith and reason in their joint rootedness in the primal human experience of dwelling meaningfully in the cosmos.

4.6 Conclusion: Faith, Reason and the Elemental

I return to where this paper began: with the current state of the debate concerning the relative primacy of faith and rationality. What is clear, I would suggest, is the inadequacy of both incompatibilism and assimilationism in all their varieties.

Incompatibilist approaches (of whatever hue) are wrong to polarise the ways of reason and faith. On one hand, while distinct, philosophical and theological discourses are not mutually exclusive contraries, for the rational and the non-rational may be identified in each. Philosophy is not to be simplistically correlated with the rational; for as unable to ground itself, philosophy needs to face its own contingency and its rootedness in non-rational and pre-philosophical sources. If the history of western philosophy proves anything, it is that attempts to refound philosophy on indubitable rational principles that banish all contingency, is lost cause. Similarly, determinate religious intellectual traditions cannot be simply associated with the non-rational, for they too seek to give concrete form to their contentions through the use of reason.

But there is also much that should give us pause about assimilationist approaches to conceiving the faith-reason relationship. To be sure, there is much to affirm in the view that the unity of reality can be approached differently through a diverse range of thinking practices. Nonetheless, there remain important matters of assumption, methodology and perspective that separate the philosophical and religious domains. Philosophy (*logos*, albeit with its non-logical roots) and religion (*mythos*, albeit with its rational modes of articulation) need to be carefully – if not absolutely – differentiated. But just as importantly, they need to be understood in the context of their common roots in elemental human experience.

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Part II
Dialogues Between Culture and Tradition

Chapter 5
The Nature of Religious Dialogue, the Diversity Argument and Religious Pluralism

John G. Quilter

Abstract In this paper I make initial attempts to distinguish 'dialogue' from other forms of intellectual engagement across boundaries of disagreement. From there I consider an argument from the diversity of religions, modelled on atheological arguments elsewhere in philosophy of religion. I use this argument to explore defensible responses and provide some argumentation for a kind of pluralism about the diversity of religions that differs from Hick's.

Keywords Religious diversity • Plurality • Interreligious dialogue • Relativism • Exclusivism • Inclusivism • Reason and tradition • Reason and religion

5.1 Dialogue Among Religions: Some Preliminary Points About Its Importance and the Parties to It

In this era of global interconnectedness, the dialogue among religious traditions can seem of utmost importance and gravity. The major civilizations on the planet are deeply formed and influenced by religious traditions. Even where aspects of culture- especially in the West and in East Asia- have developed to be secular in character, the secularity there is arguably still expressive of at least the historical influence of the major religions in those civilizations. The major civilizations come into sometimes deep contact with each at many points of the life of the planet across many dimensions of our global lives together, not just in matters of trade. They need to talk to each other in the UN, work with each other in finding solutions to large-scale natural disasters and in dealing with challenges such as climate change. They need to work together to seek solutions to problems such as failed states, gross violations

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by states of international law and rights of their citizens. And so on. If the religious traditions which have formed the great major civilizations of the Earth cannot understand how each other thinks and lives and learn to respect and honour each other precisely as so understood, the prospects of the planet for peaceful solutions to conflict and disagreement or for mutual understanding and respect can seem dim.

On the other hand, and equally importantly, the pressures which religious traditions have been feeling from non-religious parts of culture seem also to have given rise to 'back to basics' movements in all the major traditions. These are complicated by the history of relations among different societies and cultures. However, these 'fundamentals-oriented' expressions of religious traditions have posed threats and other challenges to the positive aspects of globalisation. In view of this, the need for interreligious dialogue can seem not only gravely important but, more particularly, urgent and non-negotiable as the necessary response to the pressures within the religious traditions themselves towards intolerance and the stigmatisation of those who are different (including whole populations) as heretics, heathens, pagans, infidels, gentiles, 'white devils', 'gaijing', 'secularists' (said sneeringly) or the like. Thus, where this species of religious life is highly visible, the prospects for the religious traditions leading the great civilizations in the humanising dialogue that fosters mutual understanding, respect and learning from each other can seem very bleak indeed. It can seem that if the great civilizations need the religious traditions to achieve worthwhile dialogue for the sake of peace, mutual understanding and ongoing civilized development, the future is hopeless. Alternatively, if religion is at bottom fundamentalist, if, in particular, fundamentalist religious outlooks bring out honestly and explicitly what is implicit in religious commitment and dishonestly suppressed by more liberal or modern-sounding kinds of religious outlook, the great civilizations would be better off without religion altogether. And yet, if, as I think is arguable, even the secularising aspects of those of the great civilizations which have strong secular strands, continue to express, despite themselves, the influence of their historical roots in religious culture (eg. Western secularism is 'christian', East Asian secularism is 'Confucio-Buddhist'), it would seem impossible to exclude religion from such inter-tradition dialogue altogether. So, is there any hope in all this? If it is crucial even to secularising inter-civilizational dialogue, is the need for the great world religions to achieve worthwhile dialogue something that can be discharged?

In this paper, I want to argue that Philosophy has a central role to play if there is to be any tangible hope for constructive inter-religious dialogue. I do not want to overplay this hand of course. Philosophy, ideas generally, can change the world to be sure. However, in general, other non-intellectual forces will likely be more significant in causing actual outcomes. And prognosticating the future is a notoriously hazardous venture. So I propose no hypotheses in that regard.

Rather, what I want to argue is that given the nature of religious commitment as a form of conviction in the essential truth of one's religion, there are good reasons for being worried about the freedom and opportunity for institutional leaders of religions to be able to push the conceptual and doctrinal boundaries of their religious traditions in the ways that constructive inter-religious dialogue may require. For such religious leaders as Popes, Moderators, Archbishops and Dalai Lamas and

so on have responsibilities to their communities to protect the integrity of the traditional teachings of their traditions. Their roles are, in a sense, inherently conservative: they need to be visible as protecting what is non-negotiable if one is to be an adherent of the tradition. To emphasise this thought, I will present an argument which takes the nature of commitment to one's religious tradition and sets it against the fact that there are many religious traditions which, taken at a global level, are ultimately incompatible on a straightforward reading.

The conclusion of my examination of this argument will be that something worth calling Pluralism about religion is the only viable conclusion if we take a view to constructive inter-religious dialogue. But religious leaders ultimately cannot be pluralists about other religions and be visible as defending the essential truth of their religious traditions and its integrity. Even capacious doctrines like those of Hinduism and Buddhism which could in principle make room for the great monotheistic religions as viable religious ways, make room for these traditions as viable religious ways against a background of a soteriology that is essentially reincarnationist, and involves escape from the world/samsara as conceived in those traditions. That is, these most capacious of religious worldviews may be able to accommodate incompatible traditions and even appropriate them in some sense but only in a broader *Hindu or Buddhist* picture of reality and as less complete and inadequate pictures and practices. So much less can a leader of one of the monotheistic traditions accommodate these Eastern religious pictures of the world, our religious destiny and the like. Religious leaders have a duty to their tradition and its adherents to conserve the essentials of their traditional teachings, outlook and spiritual and moral visions. Though I shan't argue it here, an analogous point seems to be true of theologians in the Western religious traditions, especially those who have some kind of official status in their church, synagogue or mosque as intellectuals of their faith.

5.2 What Exactly Is 'Dialogue': Some Preliminary Points

A second matter which one ought to address is exactly what 'dialogue' is. It should be obvious that not all the possible communicative interactions between religious traditions should be understood as 'dialogue'. For instance, clearly some are polemic, some are apologetic criticising other traditions, some are disputation and so on. Even those which are respectfully irenic in character are not obviously all 'dialogue'. Sometimes religions negotiate- as when they share resources such as church buildings and youth workers. Sometimes traditions debate each other- as when, for instance, they put their respective sides of disagreements on some public policy proposal. Sometimes they merely tell each other what they think about some matter of some common concern (eg. As Christians and Muslims might over what to make of Jesus; or Buddhists and Hindus might over what to make of rebirth) though with no further interest in following this up in any way. It would seem clear that whatever institutional roles the parties to different kinds of communicative interaction with others from a different tradition occupy affects the character of the

communication in the interaction. A church Warden from the Anglican tradition has no authority to say anything about what the Anglican church believes about the eucharist even if in communication with Jews he finds insight into understanding it from the Jewish notion of Kiddush. Similarly, for the purposes of negotiations with Muslims concerning a shared worship space, a Bishop might require that there by no unconsumed Eucharistic elements after Communion for the sake of obviating the need for a tabernacle or ambury so as to permit the Muslims' Friday prayers to take place unencumbered by furniture with no role in their worship; but this act of the Bishop's has no implications for the meaning of communion for his or her flock.

It would take us too far afield to explore what inter-religious dialogue is best understood to be. Suffice it to make a small number of points here. First, it seems a truism about dialogue that it involves some attempt at mutual understanding. One is not merely collecting opinions for the sake of having a doxographical account of some other tradition. Second, this mutual understanding, then, involves setting aside polemical or apologetic purposes and seeking, rather, a kind of sympathetic, just and open understanding of another tradition and an honest explication of one's own tradition. This understanding and explication would include explanations of sources of belief and practices and how they work as well as a certain coverage of varieties of their interpretation and higher-order reflection on them. The point is not to cling to one's own tradition's beliefs in order to show, come hell or high water, that they are correct and anything inconsistent with them is incorrect and why. The point is to *understand* each other. This is not to say that understanding, or dialogue itself, excludes reasoned rejection of the other's view. But it is to say that such reasoned rejection is not part of polemic or apologetic or that dialogue is pursued for the sake of these. To be sure, the line between reasoned rejection and polemic or apologetic might be hard to draw exactly. Still, the difference is clear enough in the clear cases to bear insisting on even if in unclear cases there is room for disagreement.

Thirdly, it would seem that dialogue has a certain character of being for its own sake. One conducts dialogue with those with whom one wants to 'get along' or hopefully do better than 'get along'. The spirit of the kind of dialogue I am interested in is more along the lines of intellectual-cum-spiritual friendship and the exploration, from such a base, of how things really are by explicating one's own religious world-view, its why's and wherefore's and seeking to understand those of another. Fourthly, this brings up the question of the place of truth in dialogue of the kind we are discussing. Is truth the aim of such dialogue? It seems to me that the answer to this question requires care. For truth is clearly the aim of the 'dialogue' among research physicists for instance in their professional research journals. Such a search for truth does not necessarily involve any kind of intellectual friendship and does not of necessity exclude various kinds of competitiveness and unrelenting criticism, even if this is quite uncommon in these fora. However, that kind of search for truth is not the sort of thing being envisioned in typical talk of inter-religious dialogue. Why might this be? It seems to me that something like the following answer is relevant to this.

Religions are unlike Physics or Philosophy as we understand them in the contemporary world. Religions are, and have always been, comprehensive life-encompassing ways of living which include ways of seeing the world and moral outlooks. In contrast, it is ordinary for intellectual disciplines such as Physics or

Philosophy to distinguish between the professional and the personal, between what goes on in conduct of one's professional work addressing questions, debates, theoretical hypotheses, arguments and so on; and how one lives. There is no ground for criticising someone doing plasma physics for not being a good plasma physicist that she is a Buddhist, an atheist or a Jew. There is no ground for criticising a philosopher doing philosophy of language for not being a good philosopher of language because she is a Catholic, a Muslim or a Hindu. Yet, there are good grounds for criticising a Christian if upon leaving church she conducts dishonest business or slanders someone's good name. Similarly, there are at least prima facie grounds for criticising a Christian who is a philosopher of mind for not being a good Christian whose arguments in the Philosophy of Mind lead her to conclude that we are not free and responsible for our action at all; or who in Metaethics decides that morality is an empty sham. That is, religions make a claim on one's very person in a way that professional academic disciplines, and even professional Philosophy, have become accustomed not to doing. If this is right, the search for truth in professional academic research need not be a good guide to the place of truth in inter-religious dialogue. For parties to inter-religious dialogue are claimed as persons by their religious commitment in ways that practitioners of an academic discipline as such are not claimed by their discipline as persons. In the sense of interest to us, then, the kind of search for truth that we find in academic disciplines as such is not the same as that involved in inter-religious dialogue. Of course, it cannot be utterly dissimilar from the search for truth we find in the academic disciplines. Afterall, at least at a *prima facie* level they both concern truth. However, this claim that religions make on the parties to inter-religious dialogue as men and women has to be taken into account if we are properly to understand the place of truth in this dialogue.

We are now at a point where I can introduce the argument I want to discuss. For this argument raises quite sharply, I suggest, exactly how the religion one is committed can claim a party to inter-religious dialogue as a person while still being involved in such dialogue as of the kind I have briefly sketched above.

5.3 The Diversity Argument

Let me begin by simply stating the argument. It is very abstract and ignores many important distinctions among religions. In a fuller treatment, I could defend the argument and what I take to be its essential force. I put it here so as to raise sharply the issue of the nature of the relation a party to inter-religious dialogue ought to have to her own tradition if she is committed to dialogue. Here is the argument.

5.3.1 The Argument from the Diversity of Religions

I want to argue that there is a philosophical challenge for religions which claim divine underwriting for their view of the ultimate aim of life and how to attain that aim, or how to live so as to be well placed to work towards the religious aim of life.

In what follows "R" is a variable ranging over religions and one is to read the premises as uttered by a proponent of R, not as uttered in the third person by someone who does not endorse R. The argument goes like this. I will make comments on the argument after stating it.

1. (My) Religion R teaches and practices about what is needed for the achievement of the aim of the religious life by any human being.
2. (My) Religion R is a gift to us, from the ground of the religious life, from "the divine", and its authority to teach on what is needed for the achievement of the aim of the religious life, is based on this.
3. Achievement of the aim of the religious life is for the good- and essential good- of each human being.
4. The divine relates to the good of each human being positively: eg. the divine "wants" the good of each human being.
5. /∴Therefore, the divine relates positively to each human being's having real access to the truth R teaches.
6. /∴The divine will have led to the real access to R, for all people.
7. But there is a diversity of religious teachings and practices that are incompatible with R, and this represents an obstacle, though in different forms for different people, to some human beings' real access to R, for there are adherents of non-R religions who are sincerely influenced by non-R, or are otherwise prevented from being able to access R, even if exposed to it.
8. /∴ The divine has not led to the real access to R for all people.
9. /∴ R is not true.

The argument is modelled on atheological arguments which aim to take propositions held by religious adherents and reason that, taken together, these propositions make an inconsistent set of propositions. They cannot all be correct and so the religious person is confronted with making some choices among what they have believed in order to render their set of beliefs consistent or giving up on their beliefs entirely.

5.3.2 Comments on the Argument

(a) This argument does not apply to religious traditions that are self-consciously tribal or otherwise limited to a particular people or group. For such religions do not suppose that what they teach about the achievement of the religious aim of life concerns all human beings but only their group. The argument, then, applies to religious traditions which see themselves as having a universal import. This applies to all the religious traditions among which inter-religious dialogue is to be hoped for.

(b) Premises 1 and 2 characterise the claims of many religious traditions. With premises 3 and 4, which I take to be independently plausible, these imply 5 and 6. 7 is inconsistent with 1 and 2 and their implications. 7 seems to be plausible despite some religious myths that all people given fair exposure to their religion R but who reject it do so insincerely or in some kind of bad faith.

(c) Premise 2 is essential. For it is the basis of the relevance of 4 and 5. Moreover, without 2, R would have to be seen as a purely human invention which has to compete in the human market place of ideas and ways of life along with other acknowledged purely human ideas and ways of life, such as political systems, sub-cultures and philosophical outlooks. As such, there would be nothing about R to suggest that its teaching and the like was of universal significance for the good of all human beings. It would be an avocation rather than a source of universally significant vocation.

(d) 7 is there is allow for the real possibility and actuality of insincere rejection of R. I take it that while 'insincere', or 'retail' unreflective, rejection of some of R is relatively common (no doubt, like 'acceptance'), it is not the only kind: there is sincere rejection and a wide range of responses to R in between. I mean here to leave room also for various kinds of denominationally – and religion – specific rejections: eg. many who used to be religious and became atheists before Vatican II, used to complain that they were pre-Vatican II atheists, and could not see the difference between what they now believed as atheists, and what many post-Vatican II Catholics believe; others who reject, say, Christianity to become Buddhist do so by rejecting the corporate culture of Catholicism and its authority structures, finding the liberty or conscience of, say, liberal Congregational groups very akin to their own Buddhism. Nevertheless, such forms of rejection are sincere though more complex than often taken to be.

(e) Premise 4 is extremely difficult. It aims to abstract over personal and impersonal gods/or ultimate beings or principles, for example, regarding "wants" and the language in premise 6 of "led to": these formulations intend to allow the various interpretations in the different religions, of how R arrives in human life from the divine and takes human beings to whatever the point of religious life is according to R. As such this is a schema for several arguments got by formulating this (and other) premis(es) with more religiously specific content.

(f) We should perhaps treat premises 1 and 2 as a conditional, $1 \supset 2$, rather than as distinct premises. The conditional will be true of any religions I am familiar with. On this construal, the similarity to an 'inconsistent triad' structure is tighter: $1 \supset 2$, 4 and 7 are a logically inconsistent set of propositions. The present formulation, however, has the advantage that it allows independent consideration of each element of the argument in a clearer way.

(g) There are various ways in which the conclusion could be formulated to express a generally sceptical judgement on R. What is essential for our purposes is not exactly how the scepticism based on the diversity of religions is directed and formulated. It suffices for our purposes here that the argument leads to some kind of general scepticism about R. Hence, I have kept the conclusion simple and focussed on the fact that we seem to be led to a self-contradiction within R itself between its own self-image and manifest facts about access to belief in R which, I assume, R would accept.

(h) I take it that if this formulation of the argument is unobjectionable, the argument cannot be faulted for invalidity. Our only responses to the argument, then, can be to reject some premise(s).

(i) What response to this argument should be taken? There are some options:

(i) R does not teach and practice the truth about what is needed for achievement of the aim of the religious life by all human beings (deny 1).
(ii) R is not a gift from the divine: it lacks any special authority to teach and oblige its adherents to practice in particular ways on the basis of its claimed authority to direct them towards the aim of the religious life (deny 2).
(iii) Achievement of the aim of the religious life is not necessary for the good of each human being (deny 3)
OR
(iv) The divine does not care about the good of each human being (deny 4).

Since, as an atheological argument, the argument is one about the internal coherence of a religious outlook, the adoption of (i)–(iv) is not to be guided by general considerations of what is plausible taken in abstraction from *religious* plausibility even if a particular move is also independently plausible.

5.3.3 Standard Responses to the Diversity of Religions

In discussions of the significance of religious diversity, it is conventional to distinguish Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Pluralism among responses to the issue (Quinn and Meeker 1999, 4 ff). The paradigm of Exclusivism is the Roman Catholic doctrine that *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*- there is no salvation outside membership of the Roman Catholic church- understood as requiring *public* membership of the church. On this view, there is one truth, it is possessed by one's religion R and all non-R people are excluded from achieving the end of religious life because they are not public members of R. Worried by those who have never heard of Catholicism but whose worldview approximates Christianity's and whose lives are exemplary, Inclusivism broadens the terms of inclusion among those who can achieve the religious end of life. The paradigm example of this Rahner's idea of 'anonymous Christians'- certain people who are not public, explicit members of the Catholic Church can be deemed to be implicit members because of the merits of their understanding of the world and their good character, life and works. On this picture, there are significant elements of truth in other religions beside R, as determined by the criterion of R's teaching and these can enable their followers to achieve the end of the religious life. By following this truth, followers of non-R religion or philosophy can achieve the religious end of life more or less despite themselves, unwittingly. Among other reasons, finding this patronising, others adopt Pluralism.

The paradigm of Pluralism is John Hick's account of religious diversity (cf Hick 1995, 2005; Hick and Knitter 2004). According to Pluralism, no religion is criterial for truth in another religion. The great world religions and many indigenous or tribal religions cannot be distinguished from each other in any serious way as productive of greater moral excellence or spiritual depth and insight among their adherents or less prone to corruption. All religions are equal, you might say, though Hick is not

committed to an uncritical stance towards any religious tradition and would reject any which turned out to be systematically corrupting or grossly irrational. All genuinely good religions are grounded in 'the Real' and each one's teachings, practices and traditions represent historically and culturally specific responses to the Real enabling insight into the Real and religious and moral virtue. Wanting to avoid an out and out relativism, Hick developed an account of religious truth which asserts both that the distinctive teachings and practices of the different religions are true but also not exhaustive of the truth about the Real nor true in such a way that excludes the truth of the insights of incompatible claims about the divine in other religions as insights into what they are insights into. A favourite analogy was the Hindu story of the men studying the elephant.

In terms of the Argument, we can characterise these three positions as follows. There are at least two kinds of Exclusivist. Many accept 1–6 and challenge 7. Instead, they argue that, where non-adherents have been exposed to R, in keeping with 6, any rejection of R must be insincere or somehow in bad faith. Among others, one obvious difficulty for this kind of Exclusivist is that 6 is not obviously true. Many of God's creatures have no knowledge of R. To deal with this, other Exclusivists reject 6 and deny that 1–5 imply it. For nothing could oblige God to make real access to R available to those whom he chose not to. God (Hashem/Allah/Buddacitta) loves (or has some other religion-specific, suitable relation to) all people (4 is true) but there is nothing obliging him/her/it to make Christianity/Judaism/Islam/… an available option to anyone: it is a gift of such high price and we are so undeserving of it, that no one has any grounds to object if God just damns those who never had any exposure to Christianity, and so, never even had the chance to consider whether to believe in Jesus Christ (Hashem/the Prophet/…) and live as a member of the church (Chosen People/ummah/sangha …). The difficulty with this is that it has the burden of showing what there is to 5 if God does not do anything about making access to R real for all people, if he cares so much about each human being's salvation.

With respect to the "Problem of Diversity" Argument, the Inclusivist accepts all of 1–6 but denies 7. God provides all human beings with the means to find their way to at least enough of R to be granted salvation. Perhaps their non-R religion or the findings of their rational reflection suffices. Thus, commitment to a non-R religion or philosophy is not an obstacle to being an adherent of R, despite what the adherent of non-R might think or their overt behaviours or professions suggest. Though Inclusivism, with the second kind of Exclusivism, allows the possibility of sincere rejection of R, it differs from the latter in not seeing such rejection as a sufficient for exclusion from membership of R. Yet, Inclusivism agrees with the first kind of Exclusivism about the Argument. All essentially agree on the nature the religious end and on the necessary of its achievement: R teaches the truth about the religious end and membership of R is necessary. These positions disagree about the criterion of membership in R. They share more common ground in relation to the Argument than the differences between them are deep. I suggest then, that we view not two quite distinct kinds of position here. Though they are different, what divides the Exclusivism and Inclusivism is a matter of details rather than principle. R alone is

the one true religion and there is an end on it. We would do better, I suggest, to see a spectrum: a quite intolerant Exclusivism, a more generous Exclusivism and a liberal Exclusivism. Inclusivism as a distinct position is something of a furphy.

In terms of the argument above, Pluralism rejects 1 in part but, in keeping with what we said in our comments about the argument, has to interpret 1 in such a way as to remove suggestions of exclusiveness. For instance, Pluralism will typically not claim that R is the way to the religious end for *all* people. For the pluralist, 1 should be read as

1′. (My) Religion R teaches and practices about what is needed for the achievement of the aim of the religious life by some human beings.

Pluralism also accepts 3–4 as independently plausible. It will accept the spirit of 5 but qualify it in that the divine will be taken to ensure access of all people to the offer R *as one of a range of options* for human beings whereby they might achieve the aims of religious life. Finally, it accepts 7 but does not find any challenge from 7 to acceptance of R. For R, as one of a range of options, does not exhaust ways in which the divine has arranged for human beings to be able to pursue and achieve the aims of religious life.

Clearly, then, the Pluralist has to reinterpret or amend his religious outlook from the traditional one in any way that suggests it has a divine origin that is unique, more authoritative or a truer revelation of God or the divine than other religions. Of itself, strictly speaking this does not require the Pluralist to deny the divine origin of R and deny 2. It only requires her to deny the uniqueness of R as having a divine origin. However, we find Hick, as a Christian, arguing that the Incarnation is not literally true but is a kind of metaphor of the openness of the man, Jesus, to the presence of God, so much so that God could act on earth through and in him (Hick 2006). He also has developed a speculative account of the afterlife which melds together elements of eastern and western religions and represents a radical reinterpretation of the traditional Christian doctrine of the afterlife by introducing elements of reincarnational doctrine (Hick 1994). Hick's Pluralism does not leave traditional Christian religion where it had been. So, whereas denying 2 does not formally require Pluralism to see R as merely a human invention, what is true is that insofar as R is distinctive by comparison with other religions, Hick's approach to Pluralism tends to present R as a merely human invention. As such, it seems best to see Pluralism as denying 2 in its response to the Argument, though, to be sure, subject to the rider that religion as such (rather than the specifics of R) is sourced, for Pluralism, ultimately in the divine so that what is deepest and truest in all religions is what they share and that core is authorised by its groundedness in the Real or divine.

5.3.4 What Is the Best Response to the "Problem of Religious Diversity" Argument?

I want now to offer some considerations on the relative merits of the different ways, (i)–(iv), of responding to the Argument so as to avoid its sceptical conclusion. I intend what follows as a *prima facie* argument.

First, I want to argue that we should retain 3 and 4. I would urge that 3 and 4 are independently plausible. Religion is a deep aspect of human nature and cultures and the pursuit of its aims, under some description intelligible to the pursuer, is for the essential good of the individual and of communities of people. Life without religion, somehow understood even if not understood in explicitly religious terms, is impoverished. Further, if there is a divine ground of existence of some kind, it seems plausible that it would be 'positively disposed' towards the essential good of beings dependent on it. But if 3 and 4 do not seem independently plausible, the following considerations are worth noting.

Consider this. Imagine that R teaches and practices about what is needed for the achievement of the aim of the religious life by any human being but nevertheless, achievement of the end of religious life was optional or otherwise not for the essential good of all or some human beings. From a religious point of view, this would be very odd. Purely tribal religions aside, why should a religion teach and practice concerning the end of religious life and its achievement if it weren't for our essential good as human beings? A religion is not like a croquet club nor growing in religious virtue like getting a higher degree. In some sense, then, 1 'implies' 3. The same can be said of 1, 2 and 4 for most R. Why would R authoritatively teach and practice concerning the end of religious life unless the divine in which it is grounded were positively related to the religious good of all human beings? For instance, if we knew that God couldn't be fussed whether or not pagans were told of Christ's life, death, resurrection and offer of grace and forgiveness as revelation of God's love for us, why suppose that the Christian story is authoritative concerning the way to live so as to attain salvation for more than ourselves and so, why bother telling the pagans? In some sense, then, 1 and 2 imply 4. So, if we are inclined to retain 1 and 2, we would need to retain 3 and 4. So, *prima facie*, there is good reason to retain 3 and 4 if we wish to retain 1 and 2 or if we think there are independent reasons for 3 and 4. Hence, if we are going to resist the conclusion of the argument, the more promising tack seems to be to consider rejecting or amending 1 or 2 and retaining 3 and 4.

Many religious people will think this an invidious choice. Rejecting premise 1 can seem like emptying R of ultimate significance or turning R into merely an optional club for those interested in such things. Instead, surely one's religion is for the essential good of being human. Rejecting 2 can seem like making R out to be a merely human invention with no more authority than any merely human invention such as a political ideology or a system of etiquette. In contrast, surely one's religion is grounded in the divine and its authority derives from this fact.

Nevertheless, this seems to be the choice we have to make. If this is so, we might ask which of the two alternatives is the most defensible or the least problematic? I want to suggest that denying 1 is the less difficult of these options.

First, for most believers in R, 1 is true only if 2 is. That is, one's religion's teaching about the aim of the religious life and the way to achieve it is relevant for all human beings as it rests on the source of the religion in the divine and so, denial of 2, that is, adopting (ii) in response to the argument, will imply denying premise 1.

Further, I think we could say this. It can seem that denying 2 in practice amounts to seeing R as a purely human invention, and so, as lacking any *special* reason for

us to accept what it teaches about the aim of religious life and how to attain it, except inasmuch as what it teaches can be established in ultimately rational ways. Hence, denying 2 might lead us, if we were to wish to protect R from criticism that what it teaches is unreasonable, to deny 1 or reinterpret it in such a way to render the content of the teachings more reasonable. That way, R becomes relevant to all human beings. However, the cost, arguably, is that it turns R into a philosophy rather than a religion. But no religions are in general prepared to have their authority so shorn of divine origin that they are prepared to amend their doctrines as radically as this might suggest, no matter how rationalistic they might otherwise be. The religious life involves faith or some parallel form of commitment to teaching and practice and this gambit loses the sense of that. Thus, adopting (ii) would, from a religious point of view, amount to seeing R as one among many religious outlooks without any special role in human life or claim on us except as far as it could be rendered a reasonable form of life, competing for adherents much as artists might in the art market, scientists might for research funding or philosophers might in the competition of ideas, in a market where "the purely rational" has no serious show of determining a uniquely right way to think and do things. And I believe it is probably fair to observe that this is, for most, not a religiously plausible way to think of one's own religion, at the end of the day; and if it is, it is not the traditional way religions have seen themselves. For most adherents, commitment to one's religion means being unable to think of it except as 2 states.

That said, this much can be said for retaining 2. To say that the authority of one's religion derives from its groundedness in the divine is not necessarily to rule out that one's religion is *also* a human invention. That is, a form of life could be both. As such, having grounds in the divine furnishes special reason for believing in R whereas being a human invention means that R is answerable to the human good as best as it can be discerned rationally. Retaining 2, then, does not, without other assumptions, set up conflictual relations with the notion of human reason taken abstractly. I take this to be an advantage of retaining 2.

In contrast to this situation, we can deny 1 without further implications. Denying 1 permits us to retain 2. In this way, to deny 1 in response to the Argument incurs less damage to traditionally understood commitment to R. Denying 2 prima facie requires us to deny 1. But denying 1 has no such implications for 2.

This, of course, raises the question "with what should we replace 1?" This is not the place to pursue that in any detail. I make only a few observations that bear on our original question regarding inter-religious dialogue.

First, this response to the Argument differs from Hickean Pluralism. We retain 2 where he rejects it. We reject 1 where he partially retains it, *modulo* his reinterpretation that filters out anything that implies exclusivity and universal significance of that which is distinctive of R. This is important for it opens up the possibility of other kinds of Pluralism that could inform inter-religious dialogue.

Second, rejecting 1 presents a barrier to extending one's religion's worldview to provide a master-view of other religions' worldviews which accommodates them as alternative ways to the religious end though only in the setting of one's own religion's understanding of that religious end. I suggested at the end of section I that

this kind of accommodation of the great monotheistic religions by versions of Buddhism and Hinduism is what one should expect of religious leaders of those traditions. However, it is more than that in relation to inter-religious dialogue. It is the same kind of move as Rahner's anonymous Christian idea. If that idea is found to be condescending to the Buddhist and Hindu, so too is the parallel move on the part of the Buddhist or Hindu to the Christian. It is better to block such moves before they become tempting. Rejecting 1 offers such possibility. Instead of accommodating other religions within one's own doctrinal matrix as a kind of master-narrative, one can simply set the different pictures in juxtaposition and allow them to 'speak' in their own terms with their own integrity.

Third, it would seem that *something* like 1′ would have to replace 1:

1′. (My) Religion R teaches and practices about what is needed for the achievement of the aim of the religious life by some human beings.

The religious thinker who accepts something like 1′ is in the position of accepting that her religion is a source for the pursuit of the religious aim of life and it has divine underwriting. As such, her religion grounds a commitment which is familiar in the ordinary understanding of religious commitment- it is deep for the believer, it is a way to the religious aim of life, this aim of the greatest moment for a human life, it is grounded in the divine and so, authorised by that ground. This is no less serious and deep a matter for a religious thinker than religious commitment conceived in the manner of 1–6. What it takes out of such a person's religious situation is *antecedent* reason or other antecedent pressure to try to convert the person of equally deep and sincere religious conviction in a different religion. The proponent of R is free to recognise in the interlocutor a religious life in her non-R religion that is as deeply meaningful and satisfying for her, as deepening of life, death, moral effort and our relationships with others, the world and divinity as hers is for her. While the proponent of R is of the view that her own religion is the religion for all human beings, there exists the antecedent reason to try to bring the other around to seeing the world and life as R sees it. It is hard to see, ultimately, how such a view could foster the kind of inter-religious dialogue I sketched above. Any effort at dialogue would be shadowed by the ghost of apologetic criticism of non-R religion, by the antecedent thought that it is necessary to proselytise its adherents (patronisingly) for their sake and perhaps even by polemic, at least in relation to areas of ongoing disagreement. It seems to me that this is not the kind of inter-religious dialogue the global community needs.

5.3.5 Pluralism and Inter-religious Dialogue

There are many questions left that one needs to address to develop this view of inter-religious dialogue. There are three which will be of special importance to philosophers. As has become clear in the literature responding to Hick, the bogey of Relativism is an important matter for a pluralistic approach to inter-religious dialogue to address. Another, related, matter is the role and nature of reason in

inter-religious dialogue. A third, though again related, matter is the role of truth in inter-religious dialogue. Each of these on its own deserves more attention than I can give it here. The comments on them will have to be brief.

Relativism concerning anything can be very crude or very sophisticated. Crude Relativism about religion is widespread it seems. I will not consider it. Formulations of Relativism have become more sophisticated in the last several years among philosophers who see something correct in it in relation to various areas of life. In religion, however, a couple of points seem quite evident. One is that religious people do not think of their own religion relativistically. So any form of Relativism which sought to give a meta-religious account of religion parallel to, say, Emotivism in Metaethics would be unconvincing. Christians do not generally think that Christ died for their sins …. "for them" as in "That is true for them (but not true for others)". A second is that most forms of Relativism amount to claiming that our use of religious language involves no distinction between truth and falsehood in religion or about religious questions. Such Relativism will also fail to capture what religious thinkers understand by the views they believe on the basis of their religion. In religious life, there is a distinction between true and false and the views of one's own religion are true.

Further, it is important in inter-religious dialogue to resist forms of Relativism which advocate ceasing to apply the distinction between truth and falsehood in the religious life (cf Strandberg 2006, 45–50; Baghramian 2004, 41–48). For such Relativism invites tolerance of the forms of religion which are toxic to human life and in various ways dangerous and otherwise objectionable. Such Relativism also closes off the attitude towards inter-religious dialogue which opens the interlocutors to growth of understanding and reasonable change of view and practice in the light of the dialogue. 'Dialogue' suggests the possibility of learning and improving one's understanding even of one's own tradition and growth in the appreciation of its depth and insight. Such possibilities are shut off by a Relativistic approach to dialogue (cf. Strandberg 2006, 55–56). On such a view, there is just R and S and T and the other religions. Since we are not to think of them in terms of truth and error, dialogue is source of doxography more than understanding. There is nothing to give reasons for or assess in terms of coherence and consistency, in terms of the reasoning in religion preserving truth or being vulnerable to error. This is a large cost that Relativism incurs and it is better avoided. Distinctions of epistemic and semantic appraisal such as those between truth and falsity, reason and unreason, good and bad argumentation all have a place in such dialogue.

This brings us to the second philosophical theme: the place and nature of reason in inter-religious dialogue. It is arguable that abstract universalistic conceptions of reason are at the end of the day mistakes, except for certain, quite particular purposes. In general, they are too thin to defeat the sceptic in any non-pyrrhic way. Without the information of practice and culture, such conceptions of reason are incompetent to capture the distinctions of rationality that we need in sorting hypotheses, evaluating real arguments, critically appraising sets of views and practices of enquiry and elaboration of ideas. Rather, reason's distinctions of appraisal and justification take their interpretants from the place they have in our lives as actually

lived.[1] For different religious traditions, these will differ from each other though not so much that they cannot be seen to be being practices of reason and distinguishing between truth and error.

The role, then, of reason in inter-religious dialogue is a work in progress as dialogue evolves. To the extent that religious traditions have not developed mature intellectual traditions of understanding and intellectual friendship with other religious traditions, there is only the intellectual tradition of the religion itself for it to work with in dialogue. This tradition may or may not enable constructive dialogue with another tradition. This is not something we can know in advance of the attempt. Some religious traditions may be so alien to each other that dialogue of the kind I am envisaging may be impossible. We have no reason to rule this possibility out. Where there is sufficient common ground between two traditions for dialogue to develop and perhaps flourish, reason will, one expects, be able to find a way to achieve mutual understanding and even the respectful criticism of friendship. Equally, to achieve anything like an approach to dialogue that is reasoned for both parties may take a number of false starts. 'Reason' here which permits something worth calling mutual understanding is not something specifiable in advance. It cannot be assumed that it will be one thing for all pairs of tradition in dialogue. For areas of common ground will be different between different pairs of tradition. A dialogue between Buddhism and Hinduism prima facie has much more to get started with than a dialogue between Judaism and Buddhism. Reason, then, is not entirely preformed from materials of an allegedly contentful but abstract universal rationality. It is achieved only with creative graft and good will. But there is nowhere to begin from except the resources of one's own tradition.

To be able to provide an account of the notion and role of truth in religion and in inter-religious dialogue is more than I can do here, if I can do it at all. It is hard to see, however, how the kind of dialogue between religions that I am describing could function without concern for truth. Of course, a party to dialogue who was somewhere on the spectrum of Exclusivisms I described in section IV (including Inclusivism) would take truth ultimately to be proprietary to her own religion. A pluralist who rejects 1 does not do this. Rejecting Relativism, such a pluralist requires the critical vocabulary of truth and falsehood in order to explicate her own view, understand the interlocutor's and explore shared understanding and explain how far and why she can agree with the interlocutor (that is, offer reasoned criticism of the other religion). All of this involves working with the distinction between truth and falsehood. It is important at this point to recall the difference between the role of the true and the false here and the competitive character of academic debate for the sake of truth. It will be recalled that I insisted that religion claims the parties to inter-religious dialogue as persons in a way that is not true of academic debate. This claim that religion makes on its adherents imposes constraints on the pursuit of truth in inter-religious dialogue. These constraints go to the religious faithfulness of the parties to dialogue. Truth in religion has something to do with faithfulness to the light religion casts on

[1] This line of thought represents the moral I take from wide range of thinkers including Davidson, Gadamer, Kuhn, MacIntyre, Putnam, Rorty (in more sober moments) and Wittgenstein.

the great facts of life- being born of a woman, death, psycho-sexual development, intimacy with others and so on. Truth as a claim on a person is not the same thing as truth of a proposition though it may have relations to the latter. There is much to get clear on about these matters. Suffice it to say that truth is crucial to inter-religious dialogue but it is truth as it is given sense in the religious life by the way it correctly distinguishes in that life between what is true and what is unfaithful. This has to be an element in the understanding of truth's role in inter-religious dialogue.

In this, I would urge that Philosophy has a most important role. This role is not only in the explication of the notion of truth in religion or in the clarification of the nature of reason and its distinctions and so on, the typically philosophical menu of topics. This of course is important. Rather, I want to urge that there is in Philosophy at its best an ability to think in disciplined, rigorous and systematic ways that are not limited by the kinds of constraints that formal roles in religious communities impose. Theologians and religious leaders have such roles. Their scope for the kind of disciplined, creative conceptualisation and exploration of argumentation and the like that the best philosophers do is limited by these roles. This is only right. On the other hand, religiously committed philosophers trained the in cut and thrust of academic Philosophy can offer much that is conceptually imaginative and 'outside the square' to inter-religious dialogue, offerings which, at their best, can advance understanding between religions and our grasp on the truth in each and its limitations. Such philosophers will need to be deeply knowledgeable about their own tradition and well versed in the tradition of their interlocutor. Such philosophers would need to overcome the tendency of their professional work to ignore "life" and take seriously that their philosophical work must infiltrate their own life and that their life must infiltrate their work (cf. Gleeson 2012, viii–ix) . They must not be guilty of the charge too often put against them that their philosophy abstracts viciously from life. That in place, Philosophy (at its best) can offer much that casts light in the very doing of inter-religious dialogue, not just in thinking about it.

I want to end with a metaphor for the kind relation the believer engaged constructively with inter-religious dialogue has to her religion. I believe it can be helpfully compared to the way someone loves their spouse in the best kind of marriage. For in marriage, one's love of one's spouse dominates the very shape of the world. (I speak as a heterosexual male.) She figures in that world as its central structure and principal content. The thought about one's spouse that one's love for her provides one with is that she is the best woman in the world, that she is wonderful in this way and that way and in some other way. She is the very texture of life and fills the anticipation of it. The content of such thoughts is "wife …..". That is, the content is not "I love <wife ……>". There is no relativisation of such thoughts to what makes them possible in one's life. The content of these thoughts is directly *about the beloved*. In a similar way, religious believers do not have thoughts about the divine relativised to their relationship in the religion to the divine- eg. relativised to their Judaism when praying and adoring HaShem. Rather, it is HaShem who fills their thoughts.

Further, in mature romantic love, however, the fact that one's thoughts are so taken up by the beloved and are not relativised in being as they are to her being the

beloved of *oneself* does not prevent one from being able to see in the lives of others that they have the same kind of relation to their beloved. Though it is exclusive, Exclusivism is not true of romance. Indeed, in wishing others well in their life, one thing we naturally wish them is to find someone in their life who is that for them and who reciprocates with thinking of them the same way. And when we see it in another's life, it is a joy. We neither take our own love for our beloved to be delegitimised by that other person's love for his spouse. Nor do we feel any need to defend our beloved as worthy of love and demonstrate her superiority to their beloved because they have such a relationship with their beloved. We do use language such as "she's the one for me" and "she is the one for him". But these "for him" and "for me" are just ordinary language. They do not invite any relativistic interpretation. Indeed, the language of true and false love is salient in such relationships but this does not, without further argument, invite either the Relativist's "true for him"/"false for her" or any other particular philosophical theory of truth. In a similar way, in inter-religious dialogue there is no requirement, without considerable further argument, that it is not enough to see in another's sincere religious life something which is a cause for nothing else but joy. In particular in a way similar to the romantic case, there is no incoherence between both holding one's own religious commitment to be true (not *true for me*) and holding it with the fervour of one who, for instance, loves Christ deeply, while at the same time recognising that the religious commitment of the interlocutor is true (not *true for her*) and is that of one who loves and worships, for instance, Allah deeply and in sincerest humility. Of course, this is only a metaphor and should not be pushed too far. How far is too far is another matter.[2]

I have argued that the Argument from Religious Diversity has an impact on the notion of inter-religious dialogue. I argued that the most defensible response to the Argument is a pluralist response but one which diverges in a number of ways from Hick's. I have argued that in the light of this argument and its conclusion, we do well to pursue a kind of inter-religious dialogue which fosters intellectual and spiritual friendship without the baggage of a felt need to convert the interlocutor, defend one's own tradition according to an apologetic agenda or polemically criticise the interlocutor's tradition. Rather, the ideal of inter-religious dialogue as intellectual and spiritual friendship animated by a pluralistic understanding of the significance of religious diversity opens up the space in the dialogue for trusting explication of one's own religious position and openness to discovery and learning from the truth of the interlocutor's tradition. Trusting criticism, that of friendship, explaining how far one can agree with the reasoning of the interlocutor and why one can not go further becomes possible against this background. From such responses of others to our own thoughts we learn more about our own thinking, in this case, about our own religious worldview. It grows and deepens in such dialogue. It can learn from the other and the other can learn from oneself. Let us hope for the sake of our future together on the planet that the great religious traditions of the world can take up the challenges of this kind of friendship.

[2] Cf. Forrest (1995, 41–46) for an ingenious suggestion how this metaphor could be explicated with a holistic correspondence theory of truth.

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Chapter 6
Aquinas' Natural Law Versus Ethical and Cultural Pluralism

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Abstract I argue that Aquinas' natural law ethics is so true that it can manage ethical and cultural pluralism. I first argue that the meaning of the subject in the basic proposition of natural law ethics, "The good ought to be done," is best understood in terms of Aquinas' philosophical psychology of the intellection of being. Being is also the good. Hence, the person as intellector of being is a particularly intense presencing of the good and calls for respectful and solicitous treatment. But the intellection of being can play two tricks in the human psyche. First, because it is abstracted from sensible data, our attention can become stuck on the data and miss intellection. Hence, many ethicists have only a weak sense of human dignity such that actions really immoral are judged to be moral. Second, some sensible data are prone to an intense but superficial cognitive association with being such that the data acquire a value out of all proportion to the truth. I employ his second "trick" of the intellection of being to understand cultural pluralism as described by Christopher Dawson.

Keywords Notion of being (*ratio entis*) • Intellection • Abstraction • Notion of the good (*ratio boni*) • Subject of first moral principle • Intellector of being • Weak knowledge of first principles • Secondary precepts • Christopher Dawson • Religious impulse • Fauxizing

6.1 The Problem

In arguing for your own positions, have you ever been met by the question: "If you think that you are so right, how come so many people disagree with you?"? If you are trying to be a disciple of the philosophical and theological thought of Aquinas, you will encounter this response. In terms of today's culture and beliefs, Aquinas is just too strident in his assertions. Aquinas' remarks about the ability of human reason, about God, the world, and ethics naturally invoke incredulity in the minds of listeners

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who judge the Thomist by whether the Thomist convinces others. In this vein a number of Catholic philosophers, viz., Gerald McCool, Nicholas Lobkowicz, Adriaan T. Peperzak, John Caputo, and Wayne Hankey, encourage Thomists to be more open to pluralism as pluralism stems from the cultural and historical origins of all rationality.[1] To the contrary, I am going to argue that Aquinas' natural law ethics is so true that it even explains why people think differently. To this end I want to elaborate on a text from Aquinas' natural law ethics as presented in his *Summa Theologiae*.

The text is *S.T.* I-II, 94, 4. In this text Aquinas explains how the precepts of natural law can vary both in truth, or rectitude, and in knowledge. Into this framework Aquinas places the general principles of natural law (elsewhere, viz., arts. 2 and 5, called "primary precepts") and certain conclusions that follow from the principles (elsewhere, as just noted, called "secondary precepts"). Regarding the primary precepts, Aquinas says that these are the same for all as to knowledge. Yet regarding secondary precepts, the knowledge of the precept can be different for different people. Aquinas mentions that among the Germans theft was not considered immoral. Aquinas' admission that secondary precepts can vary in human knowledge is his admission of the possibility of ethical diversity.

But to some readers Aquinas' admission seems problematic. The problem is this. The secondary precepts are proximate conclusions from the primary precepts of natural law. Two articles earlier Aquinas described the primary precepts as self-evident propositions known to all humans, just as in the speculative area the non-contradiction principle is self-evident to all. So, if the secondary precepts are proximate to the primary ones, how could any one not know the secondary ones? For example, a primary precept is to be respectful and solicitous of one's life. From this precept it would seem to be most easy to conclude that suicide and euthanasia are morally wrong. Yet we know of many intelligent and good-willed people who argue and lobby for the lawfulness of suicide and euthanasia. Likewise, another primary precept concerns the exercise of sexuality. For Aquinas the sexual embrace should be marital and left procreative. From such an understanding it should be easy to conclude that both causal and sterilized sexual activity is wrong. But again we know of many intelligent people who view sex as just another form of recreation. Others may also be very religious and believe polygamy is a morally appropriate context for sexual activity. Yet, how can these people be missing an understanding of the respective secondary precepts if the secondary precepts are proximate, or near, to primary precepts that are self-evident to all?

True, at 94, 4, Aquinas says that passion and bad habits can pervert reason such that the secondary precepts are not known.[2] But we all know many people in which

[1] Gerald McCool (1990), 9–12; also McCool (1992), ch. 9. Nicholas Lobkowicz (1995), 413, says that a conceptual relativism has unseated Thomism. Likewise, Adriaan T. Peperzak (1998), 437–8, and John D. Caputo (2000), 565. For an extended obituary of Gilsonian Thomism, see Wayne J. Hankey (1998). The Augustinian Thomism of theologian Tracey Rowland (2003), ch. 6, with its central post-modern element of culture dependent/constituted rationality can also be mentioned. A leading light for Rowland is Alasdair McIntyre.

[2] "Consequently, we must say that the natural law … as to certain more particular aspects, what are conclusions, as it were, of those common principles … may fail … as to knowledge, since in some

these deficiencies do not seem to exist and still these people miss the secondary precepts. In fact, at *De Ver*. 24, 10, Aquinas repeats the above two deficiencies but adds a third – a universal ignorance, *ignorantia universali*. His example is the fornicator who does not realize that fornication is a sin. Somehow the intellect itself can go astray. One need not assume passion or bad habit. Aquinas says: "The third [influence for sin] is a false judgment of reason in regard to a particular object of choice. It comes either from one of the two influences mentioned above, the surge of passion [*impetus passionis*] or the penchant of habit [*inclinatione habitus*], or else from a universal ignorance, as when one is of the erroneous opinion that fornication is not a sin." (Aquinas 1954, III, 79).

6.2 The Subject of the First Practical Principle

Aquinas' explanation of ignorance of the secondary precepts needs an elaboration by Thomists. His brief remarks seem to make that ignorance implausible. My thesis is that while the primary precepts are self-evident to all, the primary precepts can be so superficially understood that people will not draw the correct secondary precepts from the primary. To explain how a proposition can be self-evident to someone and still be superficially known, I must comment on the meaning of the subject in the first principle of practical reason mentioned at 94, 2. Practical reason's first principle is "Good ought to be done." Aquinas describes the proposition as self-evident to all. He says that a self-evident proposition is one in which the meaning of the predicate is contained in the meaning of the subject. Hence, how is the notion of the good, the *ratio boni*, understood so that the notion of the good includes oughtness? Earlier in the *Summa*, Aquinas presented the notion of the good, the *ratio boni*, as the notion of being, the *ratio entis*.[3] This connection seems fair since the notion of being is unlike other intelligibilities in two respects. First, being is a sameness in all things.[4]

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the reason is perverted by passion [*passione*], or evil habit [*mala consuetudine*], or an evil disposition of nature [*mala habitudine naturae*]." Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, 94, 4c; ed. Pegis (1945), II, 778.

[3] "But everything is perfect so far as it is actual. Therefore it is clear that a thing is perfect so far as it is being [*ens*]; for being [*esse*] is the actuality of everything [*omnis rei*]. Aquinas, *S.T*. I, 5, 1c; Pegis (1945), I, 42.

[4] *Supra* note 4. Also, "But nothing can be added to being as though it were something not included in being – in the way that a difference is added to a genus or an accident to a subject - for every reality is essentially a being: quia quaelibet natura essentialiter est ens." Aquinas, The *Disputed Questions on Truth* I, 1c, trans. Mulligan (1952), I, 5. And, "for there is no real being which is outside the essence of being in general, though some reality may be outside the essence of this being: nulla enim res naturae est quae sit extra essentiam entis universalis; quamvis aliqua res sit extra essentiam huius entis" Ibid., XXI, 1c; Schmidt (1954), III, 5. I have noted Aquinas referring to *ens* as a *ratio*. Elsewhere at *In I Sent*. d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1m, Aquinas refers to *ens* as a common nature, *natura communis*. Both ways of speaking, "*ratio*" and "*natura communis*," are for objects of what the *De Ente et Essentia* ch. 4 calls the intellect's absolute consideration and what Aristotle's *De Anima* III, 6, describes as the first operation of the intellect. For Aquinas these objects abstract

Not everything is a triangle, a human, or an animal. But every sensible thing is a being. Second, the commonality of being englobes or embraces all the things to which it applies. Hegel and Aquinas disagree on this second respect. Hegel maintained that the notion of being is "immediacy itself, simple and indeterminate."[5] Such talk implies that being has a content in inverse relation to its extent. Hence, because being is the widest notion, being is the emptiest. But for Aquinas, as widest being is the richest. Echoing Aristotle's position that being is not a genus, Aquinas says that being must somehow continue to embrace the very differences of things.[6] Fidelity to sense realism underwrites this need to nuance the way in which the notion of being relates to the differences of things. For to place the differences of things outside of being, as one does the differences of a genus, would consign the differences of being to oblivion.

Because of these two respects the notion of being has in Thomism an unspeakable richness and also merits being called the good. Because of this richness being can function as a final cause that ignites volition and so be denominated the good. But an issue emerges. Before the good pure and simple two psychic effects follow, but neither are the obligation of the first practical principle. The first effect is the just mentioned eruption of volition subsequent upon the intellect's presentation to the will of its object.[7] Volition here is automatic and necessary and so is not something obligatory. The second effect is the will's indetermination or freedom before any instance of the good.[8] Against the notion of being understood as the good, any thing

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from every *esse* and so a prior to the objects of logic that have an *esse in anima*. For a Thomistic text on common nature, see *In II de An*., lect. 12.

[5] In *The Logic of Hegel*, first part of Hegel's *The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. Wallace (1968), 158.

[6] *Supra* note 5. Also, "But no difference shares in the genus in such a way that the genus is included in the notion of the difference, for thus the genus would be included twice in the definition of the species. Rather, the difference is outside [*praeter*] what is understood in the nature of the genus. But there can be nothing that is outside that which is understood by being [*ens*], if being is included in the concept of the things of which it is predicated. Thus, being cannot be contracted by any difference. Being is therefore, not a genus." Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* I, 25, *Quod*; trans. Pegis (1975a), I, 127, 6. Thomists also refer to this non-generic character of being as analogical, understood as a sameness in difference. They call the sameness an analogon, and the instances in whose differences is the sameness they call analogates.

[7] At *S.T*. I, 82, 1c, Aquinas insists that natural necessity (*necessitas naturalis*) is not repugnant to the will. For just as the intellect of necessity adheres to first principles, so too the will necessarily adheres to the last end which is happiness (*ultimo fini, qui est beatitudo*). But "happiness" here is the *ratio boni* for elsewhere the last end is the object of the will (*rationem finis, est obiectum voluntatis*, I-II, 9, 1) and the object of the will is the *ratio boni* (*ratio boni, quod est obiectum potentiae*, I-II, 8, 2c). Aquinas reiterates the point by saying that the will "tends naturally" (*naturaliter tendit*, I-II, 10, 1) to the *bonum in communi* which is its object and last end just as the intellect knows naturally the first principles of demonstration. No empty or merely formal sense of the *ratio boni* could play these roles of igniting desire. Rather, it is the *ratio entis* that is playing the role of the *ratio boni*.

[8] At *S.T*. I-II, 10, 2c, Aquinas explains that since the will necessarily tends to the universal and perfect good, then before any particular or finite good the will does not necessarily tend. The will can either set aside or approve these particular goods. This conclusion makes sense in terms of the

comes across as only a good. Hence, the instance can be willed but also need not be willed. Here there is simple freedom without obligation. How must the good, the subject of the first practical principle, be understood so that precisely obligation emerges?

My suggestion is to realize that the subject is not the notion of the good pure and simple but as present in humans thanks to their intellection of being. Such a construal of the subject transfers the preciousness of being to humans insofar as they are intellectors of being. Precisely our intellection of being gives us a dignity not had by other things in our experience. We have being in a more heightened way than a rock, a cow, and a daisy. Likewise, we are also heightened presentations of the good. Hence, Aquinas would be translating our dignity as "rational animals" into our dignity as intellectors of being, aka the good.

The perspective of the human as an intellector of being lies behind the primary precepts of Aquinas' natural law ethics. Situations of direct involvement with humans automatically call for respect and solicitude. Such obligation, not necessary volition or unlimited freedom, is the appropriate response when the good stands before us in the intellection of our fellows. Actions are evaluated as morally right or wrong insofar as they are congruent or not with that respect. For example, suicide strikes at a human who because of intellection is a heightened presentation of the good. Is not obvious that suicide morally unseemly? Casual sex amounts to discarding the good as it was given in an earlier partner. How seemly is it to discard the good?

6.3 Possibilities for Ethical Pluralism

So, if everyone supposedly knows the primary precept enjoining a respectful and solicitous treatment of humans, why do so many people disagree about suicide, euthanasia, and casual sex? Is there something odd about the intellection of being? Yes. Being can hide itself while it reveals itself. How this is so is explained by Aquinas in the *Contra Gentiles* III, 26:

> Nor do more persons seek the pleasure that is associated with knowing rather than the knowledge. Rather, there are more people who seek sensual pleasures than intellectual knowledge and its accompanying pleasure, because things that are external stand out as better known, since human knowledge starts from sensible objects [quia ea quae exterius sunt, magis nota pluribus existunt, eo quod a sensibilibus incipit humana cognitio]. (Aquinas 1975b, *SCG* III, Part 1, 109–110)

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ratio boni as the *ratio entis*. If things profile themselves as individual beings before the *ratio entis*, then they should also profile themselves as individual goods if the *ratio entis* is also the *ratio boni*. Poised before beings seen in the light of the *ratio boni*, the will is indeterminate or free. As individual *goods*, the will can go for beings, but as *individual* goods, the will need not go for them. This freedom is known and understood as real and non-illusory because it has been built up from the *ratio entis* whose objectivity is assured by its abstraction from the real beings given in sensation. Aquinas' direct realist epistemology regarding sensation has a crucial and basic role to play here.

Aquinas explains that it is not strange that humans act for sensual pleasures rather than intellectual ones because most humans lack intellectual experience. For this lack Aquinas appeals to his abstractionist epistemology. He says that external things are better known because human cognition begins from sensible things. But instead of contradicting Aquinas' position that the primary precepts are known to all, these remarks produce a better understanding of Aquinas' position. For one would be wrong to interpret these remarks to mean that the workings of the intellect are totally absent or that these workings have no experienced effects. Even on the level of sensation, we know of more than we are aware. Sense has a focus that is narrower that its entire field. For example, my vision is giving me a dozen objects yet my awareness does not yet include that number. For Aquinas a similar relation can exist between sensation and intellection. Even though our attention is focused on sensible things, our intellection has gone on to grasp commonalities of which we are still unaware. How else does one explain that we abide by the non-contradiction principle, are inevitably dissatisfied by finite goods, and know that we are free in respect to anything in our experience? These phenomena show that the notion of being haunts the human mind. A clever Thomist would seize upon each phenomenon to lead the person to realize something that the person in fact already knows - viz., the notion of being and the understanding of being as the good. So much of Thomism is making the implicit explicit.

Furthermore, our awareness of things and the intelligibilities that things contain is never so focused that all self-awareness is lost. Hence, we cannot but have some awareness of ourselves as intellectors of being.[9] So, with avoidance of contradiction, yearning, and freedom, the phenomenon of obligation is another outcropping indicating the presence of the *abstractum* of being in the depths of human consciousness. Again, we know more than we are aware. While our attention is on sensible things, or phantasms, the intellect can be doing its own work with the mentioned results.

So, a Thomist is not upset that most people appear to be living with no awareness of themselves as intellectors of being. In the Thomist's contemplation of his fellows, the knowledge of themselves as intellectors of being is present and is explaining their inchoate sense of their own dignity. This inchoate sense of dignity paradoxically appears in proponents of euthanasia who point out the indignity of a long, lingering, painful death. Even proponents of recreational sex acknowledge it when they insist that recreational sex is morally ok because "no one is getting hurt" and it involves only "consenting adults." A Thomist will continue to regard euthanasia and recreational sex as morally abhorrent, but that dislike should not cause him to miss a concession to his understanding of the value of the human person. But furthermore, the Thomist's understanding of human epistemology allows the Thomist to understand the genesis of the moral confusion. The opponent knows

[9] Aquinas agrees with Aristotle that "knowledge and perception and opinion and understanding have always something else as their object, and themselves only by the way." (*Meta*. XII, 9, 1074b 35–37) Hence, the basic data for abstraction never includes just real things but also includes those thing cognitionally existing.

that he ought to respect himself and others but does not know why. And the opponent does not know why because the opponent still lacks an awareness of his apprehension of being as the good. The awareness is lacking because even though intellection has already discerned in external sensible things the notion of being, attention is focused on the sensible things. With only a superficial grasp of themselves, people can honestly believe that they are respecting their dignity when tragically they are not.

So even though the primary precepts are *per se notum quo ad nos*, i.e., self-evident to all humans, it does not follow that all humans are equally aware of the meaning of the subjects of the precepts. In the case of the primary precept, "The human ought to be treated with respect and solicitude," the subject is the human person. In light of Aquinas' abstractionist epistemology, is it not possible to have varying depths of understanding of this subject? Can it not be the case that we are intellectors of being long before we become aware of that fact? An affirmative reply would explain why most people experience obligation both to themselves and their fellows yet can be so confused in what this obligation consists. That confusion would also explain why these people go on to miss knowledge of the secondary precepts of natural law. Hence, at *S.T.* I-II, 94, 4c, Aquinas mentions Caesar's observation of the approval of theft among the Germans. The Germans permitted armed robbery of others outside the tribe. The basic reason appears to be their paranoid opinion that outsiders were potential enemies. This opinion is indicative of a shallow understanding of what lies in the depths of the human person.

6.4 Cultural Pluralism

In all of the above, I have been speaking about an ethical pluralism among the members of one population. But ethical pluralism is not just a pluralism among individuals of one culture. Ethical pluralism can assume cultural proportions. In these cases of cultural pluralism, different world views that carry different moral obligations are in play. We are not now speaking of hedonists, utilitarians, Kantians, natural law ethicists, as they all populate the Western cultural tradition. Now I am speaking of the plurality of cultures that is displayed not only in the present world but also in the world's past. How can ethical pluralism take hold on the level of cultures? Also, what will be the indications that Aquinas' primary precept as it is understood to bear upon the person is still somehow known?

The above is one trick that our knowing can play on itself, viz., because being is an abstraction, being can hide itself in the process of revealing itself. Another trick is important for understanding the phenomenon of cultural pluralism. The notion of being can fauxize things. It can present them as epiphanies of being when in truth they are not that. Hence, being can present the thing with a value out of all proportion to the truth. It does this fauxizing not with all things but only with the great or the small. Once abstracted, the notion of being can become merely associated with certain sensible phenomena such that the sensible phenomena take on all the

preciousness of being itself. For example, sensible objects of gargantuan size can prompt a usage of the notion of being for their contemplation. To contemplate the physical universe we hang it in front of something in our consciousness. This backdrop for objectifying the universe is being. But the cognitional usage of being leaves us prone to identify the two such that the universe acquires all the preciousness of being itself. Less large physical phenomena can be treated to the same confusion. To the American Indian on the western plains the mountain is something mystical. The Indian unknowingly mixes the experience of the mountain with his intellection of being. The scientist's insistence that the mountain is just a basalt dome is so focused with minutia that the association of the mountain with being is lost. Yet if the scientist is not careful, being can break though in the scientist's consideration of minutia. To contemplate the small everything else must be removed. The result is that the small stands alone with being. Because of that cognitive association, the small can become invested with the preciousness of being itself. Hence, the reverential and awe filled remark of that popularizer of current science, Carl Sagan, that we are all "star stuff."[10]

It should be noted that this fauxizing can involve theistic considerations. In other words, the fauxizing divinizes the thing. This faux divinizing is a result of causal implications in the notion of being. Our mentioned self-awareness, dim as it may be, also provides us with real things cognitionally existing in our sense perception of them. This accessible double existence for a thing means that a thing itself is existence neutral and so requires something else for a cause of its real existence.[11] A conscious indication of this thinking is Leibniz's question of why there is something rather than nothing. As Heidegger points out at the start of his *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Leibniz's question steals upon us in moments of despair, rejoicing, and boredom. Looked at Thomistically, Heidegger's remark makes sense. Common to these moods is the shutting down of our plans and designs so that we are left simply in the presence of things. But that hovering of things in our awareness bespeaks, as mentioned, an instability in existents that prompts Leibniz's question.

My Thomistic basis for this second trick of the notion of being is *Contra Gentiles* III, 38. There Aquinas describes an ordinary knowledge of God possessed by all mature human beings. Aquinas concedes that this ordinary knowledge has many errors. For example, Aquinas notes that some went on to identify God with the heavens and the elements. Yet, it is important to realize that Aquinas does not say that men reach something "like" God. Aquinas' assertion is unqualified. Men reach God, even though they take what the reach and identify it with the above non-divine instances of something large, the heavens, and something small, the elements.[12]

[10] Also, in Sagan (1980) we are "like a mote of dust" (p. 4) and are "cosmic ash" (p. 318). Recall also Aquinas' remark at *S.C.G.* III, 38, that some knowers of God identified God with the elements.

[11] For Aquinas' use of this double existence to distinguish the thing and its existence, see Knasas (2003), ch. 6. For the causal implications of this distinction, see ch. 7.

[12] Interestingly, Aquinas extends no similar largesse to David of Dinant who identified God with prime matter. See *S.C.G.* I, 17.

This paradoxical situation of how men can be so right and also so wrong is what leads me to my thesis of being faux divinizing some things. An encounter with the small or the large can enlist the use of being which harbors causal considerations. This intellectual situation can lead to a faux divinizing of the small or the large.

Since human cognition is spontaneously extroverted, since it is first of other things and secondarily of ourselves, one can suspect that this second trick confuses the notion of being with something other than ourselves. Hence, the earliest cultures had a cosmological morality. Only later with the reflective and probably implicit, discernment of the human person as an intellector of being would a personalist morality emerge. One can suspect that striking the correct integration of and ordering between these two sources of morality would be naturally achieved, if ever, only after wild swings and oscillations between them. A cosmological morality and a personalist morality are two poles that will mark the swings of cultural history.[13]

I want to illustrate the truth of these expectations by relating Aquinas' psychology to Christopher Dawson's work in cultural anthropology, especially to Dawson's magisterial narrative of cultural development in his *Progress and Religion* (Dawson 2001). For purposes of illustration I will go down only a portion of that narrative, the portion from archaic to world religions.

6.5 Dawson's Narrative of Culture

By "culture" Dawson understands a way of life of a particular people adapted to a special environment (*Ibid.*, 52). Culture is the result of an intimate communion between man and the region in which and from which he lives. Nevertheless, culture is not a mere passive result of material forces. The greatest agent of cultural development is the human intellect. By "intellect" Dawson does not understand the human mind of modern science but the "whole domain of human consciousness from the first obscure effort to correlate the data of sensible experience up to the highest achievements of the speculative intellect." (*Ibid.*, 69) In respect to this wider

[13] Accordingly, I see Richard Rorty's thesis of the priority of democracy over philosophy as too narrowly defined; see Rorty (1991b), 175–196. By "philosophy" Rorty means explicit philosophy, philosophy done by philosophers. But before that and due to the spontaneous workings of the human mind, an implicit philosophy exists in every human. Further, Rorty's claim that only history and sociology, not a disciple as philosophical anthropology, is required as a preface to politics (p. 181) draws a too facile distinction between philosophy and history/sociology. Human experience is never just history; it has always included intellection. In Burrell (2003), David B. Burrell conflates "inquiry" with explicit philosophy, "In short, 'relativism' gives way to the human fact that all inquiry takes place within a tradition, and the specter which it evoked turns out to be the residual shadow of our faith in 'pure reason,' that is, in the pretension of human inquiry bereft of any tradition. So the discovery (on the part of reason) that every inquiry employs presuppositions which cannot themselves be rationally justified opens the way to self-knowledge on the part of enlightenment philosophy itself, which can then take its place among the traditions." (p. 4). As I will explain, the implicit philosophy of the intellection of being is what initiates traditions with their explicit philosophies.

sense of "intellect," Dawson introduces the "religious impulse or intuition."[14] The religious impulse places man under something that is transcendent and to which he owes allegiance. It is the dynamic element for cultural development. In primitive cultures the religious impulse consists in an obscure and confused intuition of transcendent or pure being. The object of intuition is variously referred to. It is the Wakan of the Dakota Indians, Cagn for the Australian Bushmen, Yok for the Eskimos. None of these references is to be confused with the more obvious mythologies of these primitive cultures. The superficial and ridiculous elements of the mythologies can camouflage the depth and reality of religious dimension of the cultures.[15]

Dawson's observations illustrate that the human is never so primitive that the human lacks intellectual capacity. Hence, as the primitive human looks out at the world, that intellectual capacity introduces him to transcendent being. For Aquinas the intellectual capacity is defined by its object, the notion of being, the *ratio entis*. In primitive times the consideration of the natural world and awesome objects within it would have forced the use of this object and of the causal implications which the object contained. Hence, what Dawson is calling "religious" is more philosophical than properly religious. It is dealing with the natural workings of the human mind.[16]

Dawson goes on to notice how cultural development follows upon the religious impulse. The intuition of transcendent being is more than an intellectual discovery like the Pythagorean theorem. The intuition is a grasp of something to which the human owes allegiance. Moreover, since transcendent being is behind nature, there follows a human conforming to natural rhythms. In primitive cultures elaborate rituals and ceremonies express this conforming. Dawson surmises that the religious practices were the occasions for the development of agriculture and husbandry. This observation becomes clearer in cultures with a distinct class of priests (Dawson 2001, 91). For example, a practical knowledge as to the care of seed and time and place of planting suffuses the rituals of the Pueblo Indians of Arizona and New Mexico. Mayan and Aztec cultures continue the development of culture within the womb of religion. Here the ritual cycle led to amazing progress in astronomical and

[14] "The dynamic element in primitive culture is to be found rather in the sphere of direct religious experience than in that of conscious rational enquiry. It may seem paradoxical to suggest that the starting point of human progress is to be found in the highest type of knowledge – the intuition of pure being, but it must be remembered that intellectually, at least, man's development is not so much from the lower to the higher as from the confused to the distinct." Ibid., 76–77.

[15] Cf., "Rather, our species has – ever since it developed language – been making up a nature for itself. This nature has been developed through ever larger, richer, more muddled, and more painful syntheses of opposing values." Rorty (1991a), 213.

[16] "The primitive has the same ultimate experience of reality on the deeper level of consciousness as the civilized man, but he has no criterion to separate what is spiritually transcendent from what is naturally extraordinary. He cannot connect his intuition of transcendent power with any rational metaphysical system; but he can superimpose upon it some image or intuition of external reality which makes a powerful psychological appeal to him, since primitive thought develops by association and images rather than by arguments and ideas." Christopher Dawson (1948), 40.

chronological science. Jumping continents, the same can be observed in ancient China and India, though only vestiges survive under forms of higher culture (*Ibid.*, 94). Finally, of course, the Egypt of the pyramid builders is the paradigm case of an entire high civilization organized around the religious impulse – viz., the glorification of the Sun god and his child the god King (*Ibid.*, 95).

Dawson mentions a price paid by these archaic religions. They purchased a steadfastness by conforming themselves to the larger cycle of the natural world. Hence, human history is circular, not linear. To a Thomist this stalemate is unsurprising. The consideration of nature can involve a heightened presentation of being, but nature is not itself an epiphany of being. That status is reserved for the human person. So until that confusion is untangled, culture will not be able to take advantage of morality as a fount for identity. But of more interest to a Thomist is Dawson's explanation of the way cultures eventually flounder. The reef upon which cultures come to wreck is urbanization (*Ibid.*, 58, also 164–165). Referring to Hellenic civilization, Dawson observes that its strength was drawn from its regional and agrarian foundation. The citizen was not only a landowner but a farmer, the rough Acharnian peasant and rural Dorian noble. When the Greeks became a nation of town dwellers, its culture was in its heyday and yet falling apart from within. As Dawson sees it, one can observe the same dynamic in the passing of Roman civilization and in our industrialized societies.

Reflecting on Dawson's observations of the danger of urbanization, the Thomist will see a congruence with Aquinas' psychology. The hectic character of urban life that is often driven by a desire for power or wealth distracts attention from the world of nature whose consideration most readily calls for the *ratio entis*. But being is still there, at least implicitly, in the minds of the urban populace. Urban life then leads to a dissonance in the minds of people, a sense of futility and disrespect of oneself. Moreover, the current psychological programs that try to deal with this dissonance by emphasizing one's self-worth inevitably fail because subjectivity by itself is not the solution. As noted in Aquinas, what gives us a sense of our own self-worth is not intellection *per se* but the object of intellection, the *ratio entis*. But the *ratio entis* is an abstraction and to be grasped, abstractions require appropriate data. Hence, to grasp our own dignity we must grasp being in our intellection. For such a grasp to have impact, intellection must begin from appropriate data. As rulers realized at the time of Rome's decline, spectacle is an effective datum to distract us from our woes. But if spectacle succeeds in giving us a sense of being and so some sense of our own dignity as intellectors of being, then spectacle can also exacerbate feelings of hopelessness. Far from calming the populace, spectacle could agitate the populace. Better to provide sources of recreation that do not so readily suggest being – dissonant music, alcohol, video games, etc. Attention must be kept on the data. The ruler must eschew any possibility of the populace achieving a perception of depth to the situation.

In other words, we need to distinguish between recreation and leisure. Joseph Pieper spoke eloquently of leisure as the basis of culture, which is our current concern. Pieper connects leisure with the philosophical act of wonder, which in turn he connects to an intuition of being:

> The innermost meaning of wonder is fulfilled in a deepened sense of mystery. It does not end in doubt, but is the awakening of the knowledge that being, *qua* being, is mysterious and inconceivable, and that it is a mystery in the full sense of the word: neither a dead end, nor a contradiction, nor even something impenetrable and dark. Rather, mystery means that a reality cannot be comprehended because its light is ever-flowing, unfathomable, and inexhaustible. And that is what the wonderer really experiences (Pieper 1963, 102–103)

This passage summarizes admirably what I called the richness of the *ratio entis*. As a sameness-in-difference the *ratio entis* is only partially revealed by its analogates. Moreover, as expressing the *ratio entis*, the differences of things are seen to arise from the *ratio entis*. Consequently, the *ratio entis* is apprehended as an unfathomable concrescence of perfection and obviously as an object of wonder. This view on things *sub ratione entis*, however dim or bright it may be, provides refreshment and orientation to life. Aquinas' philosophical psychology and Dawson's reflections both indicate that a sense of being is, and has been, available to ordinary people. A quiet and perhaps solitary contemplation of natural things, for example, provides being. To combat the eclipsing of being produced by urbanization, opportunities to be in natural surrounding must be aggrandized.

At this point a reader might wonder how the archaic religions evince some knowledge of Aquinas' first practical principle as it bears upon the human being. These religions seem to be too cosmological for a Thomist to insist that they have some knowledge, dim as it may be, of the value of the human. It will do me no good to insist that a swing to the subjective is just up ahead in Dawson's narrative of cultural history. If I understand Aquinas, the primary precepts cannot be obliterated from the human heart. They may be understood in varying degrees but they cannot blink in and out of human knowledge. So can the faux epiphanies of being in the archaic religions completely sidetrack human attention so that a sense of the human as a true epiphany of being is lost?

For a Thomist to answer this question, it is important to note Dawson's comments that the archaic religions demand just the external observance of ritual and not the interior adhesion of will (Dawson 2001, 99). In other words, as long as the people or priests go through the rituals the gods are satisfied. One's interior life was still one's own. The person can be integrated by the archaic religions into the cosmos only so far. A Thomist would take this measure of reserve as indicative of a feeling that something was off, that there was something unseemly about a total integration of the person into the cosmos. In sum, the restriction of archaic religion to the "magical" indicates some acknowledgement of Aquinas' first precept as I have interpreted it to bear upon the dignity of the human.

Dawson points out that beginning around the third millennium B.C., less civilized peoples of Indo-European stock assaulted the civilizations of the archaic religions. With the passing of the civilizations and with the resulting chaos, the religious impulse assumed another guise. The transcendent is less a transcendent being and more a transcendent moral code. The deeply felt impropriety of the social chaos set in relief this moral code. It asked not for external observance of ritual, as was the case in the archaic religions, but for interior adhesion of the person. It surfaced in the Tao of Confucianism, in the Rta of the Rigveda, the most ancient of the sacred

books of India, and in the Arta of Old Persia. In Hellenic culture there corresponded the universal law of Dike, the Eternal Right. Dawson notes that Plato's *The Laws* is a classic expression of this.

To a Thomist the shift to a moral law is reflective of the fact that moral necessity need not be initiated from the grasp of a transcendent being but from the grasp of ourselves as intellectors of being, also the good. This personal source of morality explains the continued presence of an obligation to propriety despite the demise of the archaic religions. The moral law continues to make a demand.

Dawson observes that this moral law was considered a reflection of a universal order that rules the universe. So, the Thomist can see that some confusion still exists about the source of this call for propriety. Yet some incipient grasp of the human person as the origin of this obligation is indicated in the Indian line of religion. This line stretches from the Brahmins, to the Upanishads, to Buddhism. For Dawson, this line returned to a stage of thought older than Archaic Culture and intuited once more the transcendent being that is the ultimate basis of religion (*Ibid.*, 105). Yet the supreme principle was identified with Atman, or Self. Atman was the source of all that exists, especially our own consciousness. It was the Soul of our soul with which our soul was in a sense identical.

This subjective twist to the absolute is also understandable in Thomistic psychology. As noted above, we can experience external things so large that a consideration of them prompts a utilization of the *ratio entis* and so engenders a faux epiphany of being. The same model can be modified to apply to internal experience along these lines. One's own subjectivity as it intellects being is a case of the large. Hence, one's contemplation, not of the heavens or of the mountain, but of one's subjectivity as intellecting being can prompt an association with being. In the resulting conflict to juxtapose object and background, the intellector of being will be constricted or diminished to fit the backdrop. Hence. we can lose our identity in the absolute.[17] We can confuse ourselves with being and its implications.

Dawson notes that the Upanishads' achievement of Atman transforms the spiritual attitude of Indian religion (Dawson 2001, 106). The moral ideal no longer has any relation to social rights and duties. True happiness is to be found in a flight from the world to unity with Atman. Though it contains less speculation than the Upanishads, Buddhism also makes deliverance primary. Buddhism is ethical by assuming a fatalistic stance in regard to life and the external world. Dawson observes a similar development in China (*Ibid.*, 109–110). To the propriety of a Confucian life-style, Lao Tzu preached a mystical cosmology whose ideal was one of quietism and spiritual detachment. Interestingly Dawson observes that these fatalistic refinements of Indian and Chinese religion survived only because of the continuance among the populace of traditional archaic culture with its religion of mysterious forces in nature. A Thomist would see this fact as more than a grudging acknowledgment of practical necessity. It also expresses an epistemological one. To confuse

[17] Though my application is different, my strategy is similar to Jacques Maritain's (1972), 279–280, n. 18. For Maritain the Indian mystic attains God by a heightened experience of the *esse* of the mystic's own soul.

the implications of being with the self, one must first have the notion of being. But as an abstraction, being requires the data of sensation. The personalist pole of morality can never eliminate the cosmological pole.

But the oriental spirit of flight from the world migrated into the Hellenic and Roman world views. Platonic mysticism used intelligence, not asceticism, to flee the world (*Ibid.*, 112–119). The Roman Stoics denigrated the world by understanding the world to function cyclically in imitation of the realm of pure being. As functioning cyclically, the world produces nothing new and so slips from interest.

So far in Dawson's narrative human intelligence shows itself as unable to achieve an integral view of morality. The religious impulse began cosmologically. From that basis it generated, for example, Mayan and Egyptian cultures. But when the vagaries of history prompted attention to a personalist basis for morality, the cosmological pole became severely subservient to the personalist pole. The highest form of religion consisted in a kamikaze feat. The most holy ones left the world for an obliterating union with the absolute Self. This triumph of personalistic morality is not surprising to a Thomist. The world may provide a heightened presence of being, but the world is not itself an epiphany of being. Only intellectors of being and certain of their actions are epiphanies of being. Hence, in any competition between the cosmological pole and the personalistic pole of morality, even an inchoate sense of human dignity will prevail every time. But winning can be Pyrrhic, as was the case in the Orient. Only by keeping the world real do we guarantee the objectivity of being which as the good in turn bestows dignity on its intellector. Lose the world and the *ratio entis* ceases to be a reliable guide to the location of true moral worth.

Religion was called back to its senses with Judaism (*Ibid.*, 120–124). Dawson observes that unlike the other world religions which were linked to some great historic culture, the religion of Israel practically lacked a material foundation. This religion belonged to a minor people, neither rich nor highly civilized, and living in a limited territory. But for Aquinas there is always in the human an intellectual base. The spontaneous and automatic abstraction of being stamps the human intellect. Hence, it is conceivable that in certain individuals there results an attunement to the call from the creator of the world. Being calls to the intellector of being and instant communication is achieved. Dawson also observes that Israel possessed no metaphysical tradition. But the lack does not cut against my Thomistic observation. The human intellect has a life of its own before the start of philosophy. Even at an implicit level the life of the human intellect is luxuriant enough to dispose positively some individuals to revelation.

Now the creator of heaven and earth exercises the initiative and breaks into human history with his revelation to the Jewish people. Even though the eruption of the absolute was not in the self, revelation was a dialogue of personal creator to created person. This manner of relation established from its beginning a value to the created person by the creator of the world. Hence, in Judaism both the world and the person have a place. This is a religion that integrates both the cosmological and personalist poles of morality, or in Dawson's terminology, both forms of the religious impulse. But the integration exists because of the divine initiative. The balance and integrity of Aquinas' natural law position is in fact a very elusive point for human reason to hit and required divine assistance to realize.

Dawson goes on to notice that with Christianity the Jewish God spoke not only to the Jewish people but to the world in the personage of Christ. The Jewish affirmation of the significance and value of history found a yet wider development in Christianity (*Ibid.*, 125). Hence, any remaining opposition between this world and the world to come cannot deny the world of change. And in that world of change it is the human being that is considered central. The human is not the Oriental self understood as a portal through which to escape mystically from the world. The human in the here and now is considered as of deep moral and spiritual worth so that turning away from the human is religiously derelict. Against Manichaeism and Gnosticism, the Church Fathers emphasized man's central place in creation and the obligation to help people. In this respect, Dawson compares Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius (*Ibid.*, 131). Augustine's spiritual ideal was the City of God understood as a force that manifests itself in human society. For the Areopagite the ideal was a speculative mysticism embodied in a system of ritual. Nevertheless at the thirteenth century high point of the Church's influence, theocracy was avoided by individuals like St. Francis of Assisi and St. Thomas Aquinas both of whom acknowledged the reality and value of humanity and the entire order of nature (*Ibid.*, 135–137). Aquinas especially broke the old established tradition of Oriental spiritualism and Neo-Platonic idealism.

6.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, what I have tried to show is that Aquinas' philosophical psychology of the intellector of being, which I have used to ground his natural law ethics, can manage ethical and cultural pluralism. His ideas not only explain how to attain moral truth but also how error is possible. The clever Thomist will try to make evident to his opponent that psychology. The opponent is using it all along, though imperfectly. Far from a destruction of one's opponent, the correct procedure is to patiently and sympathetically listen and to be alert for openings to elaborate a wider appreciation of the truth. The notion is being is there when we are moral, it is there when we are immoral; it is there when we are correct, it is there when we are incorrect. Being cannot be eliminated from the human heart.

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Part III
Eastern Perspectives on God and Ethics

Chapter 7
God and Conceptions of Immanence and Transcendence in Aquinas and Mèngzǐ

Jānis Tālivaldis Ozoliņš

Abstract The immanence and transcendence of God is clearly outlined in Aquinas and these, he sees as being complementary rather than separate. Only in God are existence and essence united, since he is a simple being and so utterly transcends created things. Nevertheless, God is immanent in His creation because created things depend for their existence on God, who sustains them in their existence. The notion of the transcendence and immanence of God is not so clear in Confucian philosophy. Matteo Ricci in his classic text, *T'ien-chu Shih-i* [*The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, 天主實義] considers the question of whether the concept of the Lord of Heaven corresponds to the Christian God and though there are similarities there are important distinctions (Ricci, The true meaning of the Lord of Heaven. Trans. Introduction and notes D. Lancashire and P. Hu Kuo-chen, ed. by E.J. Malatesta. The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, 1985). Transcendence and immanence are present in Mèngzǐ and these concepts in Aquinas and Mèngzǐ are outlined and compared.

Keywords Immanence • Transcendence • God • Aquinas • Mengzi • Heaven • Christianity • Confucianism

7.1 Introduction

Although there are those who would argue that transcendence and immanence are mutually exclusive, this is not the case. When we think about transcendence and immanence the question that concerns us is whether there is any paradox in claiming that God (assuming there is a God) in being transcendent is completely removed from human beings and at the same time claiming that he is intimately involved with

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them that is, immanent in His creation. For the Jews, it was clear that God had chosen them to be His people, and so God was intimately involved with their lives. In establishing the Covenant with them, he became immanent in everything that they did. To the rabbis, says Eisenberg (2010, 6) transcendence and immanence are not two mutually exclusive concepts, despite being diametric opposites. The Rabbis hold that they are complementary aspects of the relationship of the Divine to the world. They developed four ways in which God was involved with the world – *Shechinah*, *bat-kol*, *ruah-kha-kodesh* and angels. *Shechinah* refers to the Divine Presence, and is the direct manifestation of the transcendent God in the natural world, such as in the relationship of love between husband and wife. *Bat-kol* is the expression of the Divine voice through an individual or a group of people, where the immanent God is heard to speak and to relay a particular judgment. *Ruah-kha-kodesh* means the Holy Spirit, and is sometimes held to be the same as the *Shechinah*, and is the special Divine gift of prophecy or foreknowledge. Lastly, the Talmud speaks of angels who are creations of God, and who have special tasks to perform in relation to human beings. Thus, the angel Michael is the guardian of Israel, and announced to Sarah that she would bear a son, Gabriel who visited Abraham, and also destroyed Sodom, Raphael, sent to heal Abraham after his circumcision and Uriel, who brought knowledge to human beings (Eisenberg 2010, 6–8). The development of the Jewish understanding of the relationship between God and His Chosen people – and so of His transcendence and immanence – grew out of their collective experience of that relationship over time. It is important to note that Aquinas does not argue from such an experience (Elders 1990, 165).

The Old Testament begins with the creation of the world by God, who despite being represented as wholly other and so transcendent, from the book of Genesis onwards, shows a remarkable propensity to be involved in the history of the Jews. Though for the Jews, God is a hidden God whose name cannot be spoken, He is, nevertheless, a God who intervenes in history on behalf of the people whom He has chosen and with whom He has established a Covenant: the Jews will be His people and He will be their God. The Old Testament makes us aware of both God's transcendence and His immanence. The Jews carry no image of their God, He is not like the idols of the tribes around them. He cannot be depicted because He is wholly other and not of this world, transcending the created world. He is a transcendent God. On the other hand, He is not an absentee deity, who having created the world, takes no further part in it. For the Jews, as the Old Testament relates, He is a faithful Lover of His people, who at various times turn away from Him and as a result find themselves in trouble. Despite their inconstancy, God remains ever faithful. They only succeed in reversing their ill fortunes when they return to God, who confounds their enemies and revives their spirits, bringing them back to prosperity and the good life. God is, therefore, immanent in the Jewish world, more than just an active principle, but is a personal God who is intimately involved with His people. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and of all their descendents (*Matt*. 15:31, *Mark* 12:26, *Luke* 1:68).

Christianity takes up the narrative of the Old Testament, not only is the transcendent God immanent in the world, but he sends his only Son into the world (*John* 3:16). The continuation of the involvement of God in His creation is taken a step

further with God becoming man and dying on the Cross for all humanity. God is revealed to us in the person of Jesus Christ. It is not the purpose of this paper to present or develop some form of Christology in order to explain the significance of Jesus for Christians, it is simply to point out that Christians believe that at a particular moment in human history, God was made flesh and dwelt amongst us (*John* 1:14). Though this is partly a historical statement in that it refers to a historical figure, Jesus Christ, it is also very much a theological and metaphysical statement.[1] In seeking to explain the relationship between God and Jesus, we are drawn into a discussion of the Trinity, and this returns us to what we wish to focus, namely, the transcendence and immanence of God.

From a philosophical point of view, the transcendence and immanence of God is connected with firstly with the question of the existence of God and secondly, the question of the creation. The question of the existence of God is central because the kind of God we are claiming exists (or does not exist) will also address the issue of His transcendence or immanence. Whatever the account of creation that is adopted, it will also lead us to understand the connection between God described as transcendent and as immanent. If the world is created *ex nihilo* and not from some kind of pre-existent substratum that brought itself into existence, then it presupposes a Creator who is entirely other than the world and so completely transcendent. If God is utterly other, then, as Aquinas says, we cannot know anything about Him directly, but must discover what we can by considering what He is not – that is, through the *via negativa.* Of course, Aquinas does not restrict himself only to the *via negativa*, since it is evident that we can know something of God in other ways, but it is also apparent that we cannot comprehend God. This means that what we can know of God is extremely limited and, as Aquinas recognizes, we are reliant on revelation from God Himself.[2]

The Confucian tradition does not have God at the centre of the narratives of its classic texts, though this is not to say that God does not feature in these texts. There is clear evidence, however, that despite some shift from the idea of a personal God in earlier classical texts to an abstract God, a deity with more in common with the philosopher's conception of God, the idea of a personal God does not disappear and persists through the texts. Confucianism, in coming to an apprehension of God, begins with human experience of the world and then extrapolates from this to the Creator of the world, emphasizing a cosmological argument for the existence of God, even though the existence of God is not specifically argued. God, just as in Judaism and Christianity, is taken as existing, but he does not take as central a role as in these two religions.[3] In the Confucian tradition, Heaven is transcendent and so

[1] Kasper writes that even in John's gospel the unity of nature between Father and the Son is not yet really conceived as metaphysical, but is understood as a unity of willing and knowing. See Kasper 1977, 166.

[2] See Aquinas 1956. *Summa Contra Gentiles* [hereinafter *SCG*], Ch. 4; see also Te Velde 2002, 134 ff. for discussion of this.

[3] Julia Ching says that there is evidence for the notion of a personal God in Confucianism that shares some of the characteristics of the Judeo-Christian God. See Ching, Julia 1977, 115.

the problem of immanence and transcendence is a problem between Heaven and human beings, rather than between God and human beings.[4]

Heaven, however, in a variety of contexts is a term for God. It is Heaven that is the transcendent creative power at work in the world, not only creating the universe, but sustaining it in its existence. Heaven is also immanent, since it penetrates deep into the tiniest pores of all things, not just of natural things, but also into the deepest recesses of human beings. For some Confucians, this means that transcendence and immanence are complementary, but not all agree. Hall and Ames,[5] for example, argue quite strongly against attributing transcendence to Chinese thought, proposing that it is not required for the ethical or religious characteristics of Heaven. This conclusion, however, will depend on what is meant by transcendence and hence on what is taken to be immanence. In general, though the interpretation of Chinese thought from a process point of view does have some merit in that it brings out certain ideas more clearly, there seem to be good arguments for rejecting the position of Hall and Ames and for supporting the proposition that transcendence and immanence appear in Chinese thought. One significant reason for this is that a natural reading of the *Zhōng Yōng* (中庸)[6] suggests that the concept of a transcendent God is present. The concept of the Mandate of Heaven, *tiānmìng* (天命) occurs in its very first sentence and in the first paragraph, the concept of a universal way (*Dào* 道).

A significant problem in the Confucian context for western philosophers and theologians (though this does not necessarily exclude Confucian scholars) that has been identified is the issue of what term actually means God. Several terms have been suggested, with two of the most important being *Tīan* (天) Heaven and *Shàng- dì* (上帝), Lord on High. The latter term is associated with the earliest Chinese dynasty *Shàng* (上) and *Dì* (帝) means Lord and belonged to a cult of the ancestral spirits of the ruling dynasty. In later periods of Chinese history, these terms come to be used interchangeably. What is salient in this later development is that *Tīan* is seen as the transcendent God to whom, nevertheless, prayers and supplications are addressed. God is seen as the source of the moral order and the judge of good and evil.[7]

Another term for God, used by Protestant Christians in China, is *shén* (神), but this term has many meanings. Three of these meanings are: (i) Heavenly God, Creator and Ruler of Heaven and of all things; (ii) Heaven in contrast to Earth, and a sort of god; (iii) a ghost or spirit of dead people. Clearly, only one of these, the first, is a meaning with a connection to a Christian understanding of God.[8] A serious question to be asked is, given that the Judaeo-Christian God is not only transcendent, but also clearly personally involved with his creation and with his creatures,

[4] As is noted by Liu Shu-hsien 1972, 45.

[5] Hall and Ames interpret Confucianism as not having a conception of God, so there can hardly be a transcendent God. See Hall and Ames 1987, 13.

[6] *Doctrine of the Mean*, also Chung Yung, in Wade-Giles. See Legge 1893.

[7] As argued by Ching. See Ching, Julia 1977, 116–118.

[8] Huang provides a more detailed argument for this. See Huang 2009, 75 ff.

hence immanent, whether one of the conceptions of God in the Confucian tradition, such as *Tīan*, is similar to or can be seen to have similar attributes to the Judaeo-Christian God. If so, then the prospect of similarities between Confucian conceptions of transcendence and immanence and Christian conceptions is likely to be enhanced.

Matteo Ricci in attempting to compare Christian beliefs and doctrines to Confucian beliefs, titles his volume *T'ien Chu Shih-i* (天主實義),[9] *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, arguing for the use of Lord of Heaven, *Tīan zhǔ* (天主, *T'ien Chu*, Wade-Giles), as the title for God. Ricci was convinced that there were parallels to be drawn between the Christian conception of God and the Confucian one. He went so far as to think that there were parallels between Confucian concepts of *Tài jí* (太極, conceptualised as the Supreme Being – also translated as the Great Ultimate), *Lǐ* (理, translated as the underlying intelligence and order of nature) and Qì (氣, thought of as a creative energy from which all things emerge) and Christian concepts of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, but the consensus is that he was mistaken in this.[10]

This is not surprising, as these concepts are not only difficult to translate into Western terms, but tracing the shifting interpretations of them in Confucian thought is also an involved, specialised task. What is suggested by this is that such parallels as may be found with Christian concepts are to be regarded as at best pointing to a superficial similarity. It should not be concluded that such similarities are valueless, but that it is dangerous to infer too much from them. The complexity of the task of unravelling concepts in different traditions is, however, amply highlighted by these reflections. In the case of the conception of God in the Confucian tradition, it is evident that there is as much variation as there is in the Western tradition. The use of the Ricci's term, *Tīan zhǔ*, has some merit, but *Tīan*, Heaven, in classical Confucian texts, to mean God, seems to be more appropriate, leaving open the kind of God that is meant. We shall restrict ourselves largely to Mèngzǐ's usage.

As proposed above, it should not be assumed that there are not differences in Western conceptions of God. Unitarians, for example, do not accept the conception of God as Trinitarian, that is, that there are three persons in one God. Others accept that God is a Supreme Being, but do not attribute personhood and there is room to deny certain of His attributes. The notion of the suffering God, for example, who suffers along with His Creation and is not omnipotent nor omniscient, but is immanent and not transcendent, also finds its place in Western theology. This is the God of Whiteheadian process theology.[11] It is not intended to provide an account of these variations, except where they impinge on our main line of discussion. We shall,

[9] This is the title in Wade-Giles. In Pinyin it would be *Tīan zhǔ Shí- yì*.

[10] See Translators' Introduction, Ricci 1985, 47–48. Rahner quite categorically denies that there can be any connection between Christian conceptions of the Trinity and seemingly similar vestigial conceptions in other religions. He regards such conceptions as incommensurable with the Christian understanding of the Trinity. See Rahner 2001, 21, for further elaboration.

[11] See, for example, Whitehead's essay, God and the World in Whitehead 1978. It is also at URL: http://www.anthonyflood.com/whiteheadgodandtheworld.htm Accessed: 22/4/2012.

therefore, largely restrict ourselves to the Christian conception of God as understood by Aquinas and, as mentioned, in the Confucian tradition, to Mèngzǐ. It is from these conceptions of God that we shall draw out the similarities and contrasts of transcendence and immanence.

7.2 Aquinas's Account of God

Aquinas deals extensively with our understanding of God in his magisterial work, *Summa Theologica*,[12] and also in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (*SCG*). The former is arguably written with a Christian audience in mind, while the title of the second work suggests that the audience are non-Christians or non-believers.[13] In both, however, Aquinas writes as a Christian, someone who is committed to the existence of God and to what this entails. There is no neutral stance possible for Aquinas, culturally bound though he is, he believes that God exists and that there are good grounds for holding that He does.

Te Velde (2002, 97) says that there is a tensions to be found between the immanence of human language and the transcendence of God, between the plurality of diverse names of God and the simple unity of God. This is an important point on which to reflect, since the diversity of names for God will attempt also to identify particular features of God. Though God is immanent, it is the experience of God in a particular way which will lead to a name being given to that experience. Thus, Jesus experiences God as His Father, His Abba, and it is this intimate name which articulates the kind of relationship that Jesus has with God. To the extent that we can also have an experience of God, it is also possible that the name conveys a rich set of experiences of God. God remains transcendent, since He cannot be known, except in a very weak sense. The finite human being is not able to grasp the infinite and transcendent God and this is a theme that recurs throughout Aquinas's consideration of how and what we can know about God. Aquinas is well aware of the dangers of assuming that the names that are given to God are synonyms, arguing that they cannot be, since they are merely conceptions of the intellect that do not mean that what they are conceptions of is fully understood. In fact, different intellects will have different names according to their different conceptions of God (*SCG*, Vol. 1, Ch. 35). This is, in fact, a very important point, since it points to the possibility of many different experiences of God by many different people and cultures. The question of the names of God is pertinent here also, since one of the questions which Christians and Confucians have faced is precisely what the names of God signify for human beings, Thus, *Tīan*, Heaven, is a significant name of God, which alerts us to certain aspects of God, while *Shàng- dì*, Lord on High, alerts us to other aspects. It is evident that other terms for God alert us to other ways of understanding God.

[12] Hereinafter, we refer to the *Summa Theologica* as *ST*.

[13] See the general introduction by Pegis to Volume 1 of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Pegis 1955, 26.

Pegis in commenting on the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, says that it is important to understand its general structure. Aquinas holds that there is a two-fold way of understanding truth about God. There are some truths about God which exceed the grasp of reason, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, but some that can be reached by reason, namely, the existence and unity of God. Our knowledge begins in the world of the senses, but God transcends the world of the senses as well as our knowledge of it. For Aquinas, says Pegis (1955, 28–29), in the presence of a transcendent God, reason must be open to many truths that surpass its power to know. According to Aquinas, the role of revelation is vital, since for many human beings, few would come to know God through reason alone as it would take too long and they would make many mistakes on the way (*SCG*, Vol. 1, Ch. 4). Pegis (1955, 29–30) observes that human beings have to learn to direct their desire towards a divine good that transcends human experience in the present life. This especially true for the Christian religion which teaches that there are spiritual goods to be found in eternity (Pegis, *Ibid*.). This also echoes to a degree Aristotle's account of the end of human beings as being happiness, but he hints that it is more than just an earthly happiness.[14] Aquinas has no qualms about stating the end of human beings is happiness, but a happiness in which human beings come face to face with God. That is, their ultimate happiness is communion with God. In the final analysis, if human beings follow the path that is ordained for them by God, they will come face to face with the transcendent God Himself (*ST I-II*, Q.1, art. 4 and Q.2, art. 8).

Pegis (1955, 37) says that Aquinas sets out in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* an account of the perfection of Divine nature in Book 1, then proceeds to a consideration of His power as creator and lord of all things in Book 2 and in Book 3 a study of God as the end and the ruler of created things. Book 4, takes up questions about the Trinity and also various questions about the nature of the sacraments and the resurrection of the body. The *Summa Contra Gentiles* is a large, systematic work and Aquinas addresses a multitude of questions about God and what we can know about Him. Our review of Aquinas, therefore, will necessarily be selective, brief and we can only summarise what he has to say. Our intent, however, is to bring out his conception of God and in so doing, we will obtain an impressionistic picture of the Christian God, which points to both His transcendence and immanence within His creation. In Book One in the second chapter, Aquinas begins, having indicated that his purpose is to provide arguments to non-believers about the truth of the Christian Faith, with a statement that he intends to argue using natural reason, even though he recognizes its limitations. He does this in order to appeal to an audience much wider than Christians and Jews, including also Muslims and pagans as the targets of his arguments (*SCG*, Vol. 1, Ch. 2). In Book One, he considers the question of the existence of God, and having established this to his satisfaction, he turns to a consideration of the attributes of God and how we can know God.

The second book, having shown in the first book that God exists and considered His attributes, as already stated, deals with God as Creator. It deals with three main problems, the act of bringing things into being, the distinction of things from one

[14] See Aristotle (1976, Book 1, Ch. 13 [1102a13–23]).

another and the nature of these. The nature of created things is important, for Aquinas, since, as he shows, there is a diversity of being which exists in an hierarchy (*SCG*, Vol. 2, Ch. 23 and 24), and because God's intellect is the principle of production of creatures, it is necessary in order for the universe to be perfect that there be creatures endowed with intelligence (*SCG*, Vol. 2, Ch. 46). Moreover, he says, created things will have two perfections, the first, is in its nature and in the act of being and the second, in its operation. That is, Aquinas observes that since it is through God that something exists, being actual and existent is a perfection. A second perfection, which some beings will possess, will be the capacity to act in such a way as to return to God. Existing is one perfection, but living is another.[15] This means the actions of such creatures take place through an act of intellect and will, which are the only operations which God Himself possesses, and so it is fitting that there are some creatures that possess intellect and will and complete their return to God by their actions, using their intellect and will. God communicates His Being to other things and so is the cause of all being (*SCG*, Vol. 2, Ch. 6).

The structure of the third book is indicated by Aquinas in the first chapter. The first part argues that God is the end and good of all things, the second, explains God's governance of things and the third, the relationship between God and rational creatures. He reiterates what he has argued previously, namely that God is the one and only First Being, possessing the full perfection of the whole of being and that from the abundance of His perfection He endows all existing things with being and so is the source of all existing things. Moreover, He grants being to all things, not by a necessity of his nature, but through His will. From this it follows that God is the Lord of the things that He has made (*SCG*, Vol. 3a, Ch. 1).

In relation to the question of God's freedom to act, Schleiermacher's observation that we should be careful how we understand this is important. He remarks that it is self-evident that He on Whom everything is absolutely dependent is absolutely free. He warns, however, that we ought not understand God's freedom in the same way as our own by supposing that there was prior deliberation followed by a choice to create. This is how freedom for human beings is understood, namely, that a free decision means that we can choose to do something or not to do it, and that, otherwise, we are compelled. Even within human action, there are different ways in which we can think about the freedom of the actions which we choose. Just because we act in accord with our natures does not mean we act from necessity; it may be that we act from within the limits of the freedom given to us as finite, physical creatures. A consideration of possible actions might leave us with only one that can be chosen. We are therefore not compelled if we act according to our natures and our wills. Because God is not limited in the way human beings are, His freedom to act is absolute and so the act of creation occurs freely in accord with God's nature and His Will. God is the Absolute Author of all Being and what exists can only do so as a result of His Will and always remains subject to Him.[16]

[15] See *ST* I, Q.4, Art. 2, reply to Objection 3.

[16] Schleiermacher says, "… if we suppose that the free decision implies a prior deliberation followed by choice, or interpret freedom as meaning that God might equally well have not created the

In explicating this further, Aquinas tells us that no matter what the kind of being it is that has been created by God, it will still be subject to rule by Him. If it has been endowed with intelligence, it may not only be ruled by God, but be a ruler itself, directing its actions to its ultimate end. If such a being directs itself in submission to Divine rule, it will achieve its ultimate end, if not, it will be rejected. In the final analysis, says Aquinas, those beings that reject Divine rule will nevertheless not escape the power of the First Ruler, the Great Lord (*SCG*, Vol. 3a, Ch. 1). There are obvious parallels here with Confucian thought, for the injunction on the virtuous human being to follow the way of Heaven, when freely chosen, leads to happiness, while the decision to turn away from Heaven, leads to misery. The reason for this is not necessarily because of the punishment that Heaven will mete out, but because the human being has not acted according to his or her nature.

The fourth book is largely concerned with an explanation of Christian belief, but reiterates some of the discussion about God that has come earlier. In particular, Aquinas once again draws attention to our inability to understand, except in a very limited manner, the ways of God. In relation to intelligent creatures such as human beings, he says, it is illogical that they would have been created for no purpose, and so he concludes that they have been given a certain way through which they can rise to the knowledge of God, that is, as he showed in Book 2, they come to what is the end of human life, namely, God, who is the perfect good of human beings. Aquinas notes that the perfections of things descend in a certain order from God, and, just as they descend in a certain way, they will also ascend in the same way. This means that human beings can, by beginning with the lowest of things, gradually ascend to God in whom there is the greatest of perfection and most perfect unity (*SCG*, Vol. 4, Ch. 1). The problem is, as Aquinas acknowledges, the further we go from God, the greater the diversity of things, even though because God is the ultimate source of being of all things, they are all united under that one principle which gives them existence. This means that even if we grasp something of the nature of things, tracing them back to their source in God, will be extremely difficult, even if we were to have perfect knowledge of their causes through our senses. Our intellects are much too weak to be able to reach more than a very feeble knowledge of God, given that as the source of the existence of all things He transcends by an infinite degree the various ways by which we might attempt to reach Him (*SCG*, Vol. 4, Ch. 1).

Aquinas concludes, because of the feeble knowledge of God that this results in, that God in His infinite goodness has revealed certain things about Himself that transcend the human intellect. It is, however, he says, the same process that we use in seeking to reach knowledge about God starting from our knowledge of things in the world, that is the use of our reason. This is because what is revealed to us is only a "drop" and, moreover, only expressible in similitudes and obscurities and so our reason is forced to work hard to obtain any grasp of them at all. As St. Paul says, we

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world (because we think that there must have been this possibility, otherwise God was compelled to create), we have then assumed an antithesis between freedom and necessity, and, by attributing this kind of freedom to God, have placed Him within the realm of contradictions." (Schleiermacher 1928, 156.)

are only able to see through a glass darkly (1 *Cor.*13:12). In summary, Aquinas says that there are three ways in which we can have knowledge of the Divine. The first, as already discussed, is through the use of reason to ascend to a knowledge of God through the use of the senses to understand the natural world, the second, is through God's revelation of Himself to us and the third is through death when human beings will be elevated to gaze perfectly on the things revealed.

Aquinas's view of God, in the first instance, is of an infinitely Good, Loving Being who freely willed the existence of the World in all its complexity. God is the Lord of His creation, and though he transcends any attempt to know Him, since, in essence, He is beyond our capacity to comprehend, nevertheless, since He has given us intellect, it is possible for us to know something of Him through the use of natural reason. As indicated, He also in His goodness, has revealed Himself to us. In this respect, a central element which we have not considered, is the importance of the doctrine of the Incarnation, God's dramatic intervention in human history. Nonetheless, we have shown that God's transcendence, His utter Otherness as the Creator, at the same time guarantees His immanence in that creation, since His creatures, descending in a hierarchy of being from Him at the same time, by the same pathways are directed to ascend to Him by the same ways. That is, those creatures endowed with intellect and will, through their activities, have as their end a return to the source of their intellect and will. Everything begins with God and in full circle, ends in God. There are significant parallels that can be drawn with Confucian conceptions of God.

7.3 Mèngzǐ and Confucian Conceptions of God

Taking *Tiān*, Heaven, to represent God in the classical Confucian canon with which we are concerned, what we can glean from the writings of Mèngzǐ suggests a God that is immanent, but there are hints of a transcendent God also. Mèngzǐ aims to argue that human nature is good and that in order for human beings to be fulfilled they must cultivate the development of moral virtues. In this, the relationship between human beings and Heaven is important, since a person will not develop fully as a human being if he or she does not follow the dictates of Heaven. The seeds of morality which are in each human being's heart, *xīn* (心), are sown by Heaven and this leads us to ask what about can be discovered about the nature of Heaven, which appears to be not only transcendent, in that it is seems mysterious and far above the human world, yet curiously present and active in the human world. The question of whether Heaven has a personal aspect is debatable, and Mèngzǐ does not make any definitive statements, though he opposes the Mohist tradition which proposes universal love for all human beings on the grounds that this means that we devalue the concrete expression of love we should have for our family and this is what gives rise to the possibility of loving more widely. Applying this principle more generally, if Heaven is merely a principle of action, a blind Will, in the style of Schopenhauer's account of the world as will and representation, then there is no

personal God (Schopenhauer 1969). This means that there is no meaningful relationship between human beings and Heaven, apart from a recognition that living in accord with the dictates of Heaven does not actually demand any empathetic or compassionate concern for our fellow human beings. All that is asked is that we do what is necessary for ourselves. On the other hand, realisation that Heaven is a personal God, demands that part of what it is to be human – and humane – is to be in relationship with others, to care about them in an authentic way and not only because this is required of us in order to fulfil our duty. It is this genuine exercise of the virtues that Kǒngzǐ is concerned with in his discussion of what it is for someone to have *rén*.[17] If Heaven is a personal God, our relationship with such a Being is likewise going to be more satisfyingly fulfilling and lead us, arguably, to a greater commitment to a moral life.[18]

In the cosmology of the *Zhuāng zǐ* (庄子),[19] a Daoist text from roughly the same period as Mèngzǐ (孟子), all things (*wù*, 物) are connected to Heaven, and all things are in constant flux, transforming and changing. The conception of Heaven here, however, does not seem to be of a personal God. Human beings should not aim to take control of things, since in this Daoist cosmology this would be seen as an attempt to overcome Heaven. Human beings are to take pleasure in the constant flux of the universe, amongst these being their own lives and deaths. Here the Schopenhaurean conception of the ceaseless striving of the will against the world, drawn from Hindu sources, is paralleled. Human beings should overcome the constant striving of their will and accept the world as it is. In the context of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, instead of attempting to overcome Heaven, they should glory in the transformations of Heaven. As Zhuāngzǐ puts it elsewhere, the aim is to "use to the utmost what one receives from Heaven". We must accept what Heaven has given and our spirit will not be content unless we do what we are meant to do. Happiness will result if we follow the order of Heaven (Puett 2002, 128). It is not, however, the dictate of a loving God with whom we have a relationship.

In opposing any effort to overcome Heaven, Zhuāngzǐ opposes any effort by human beings to transcend themselves, to try to become more than what they are. On one level, this means that we should not reject our humanity, but on another, we should accept ourselves as we are. Hence, we should not try to overcome or control things, but to allow things, including ourselves, to fulfil our natural endowment.

[17] This is clear from the following statements by Kǒngzǐ (孔子) in the Lún Yǔ. "The Master said, 'If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity [*rén*], what has he to do with the rites of propriety [*lǐ*]?" Further, Kongzi continues, by saying, "In the ceremonies of mourning, it is better that there be deep sorrow than a minute attention to observances." Confucius, *The Analects*, Book 3, Chs. 3–4, in Confucius (1971).

[18] This is clearly a contestable statement, but since moral virtue is for the sake of others, the effect of virtuous actions is much more obvious if we can observe their effects on others and this, in its turn, will reinforce the need for us to behave virtuously. By the same argument, a personal relationship with a God who is the source of moral law will make us more aware of the need to act in a way that does not damage our relationship with Him.

[19] See Palmer and Brieully (eds.), 2006. This is one translation, there are others, such as James Legge's.

As individuals, we have unique qualities and whatever these are, in order for us to be fulfilled, it these which we should firstly discover and secondly, develop. This brings with it the necessity of yielding to change and striving to perfect the Heaven within us (Puett 2002, 131–132).

The nature of Heaven, as expressed here, is suggestive more of a supreme principle from which certain kinds of virtues and attributes are passed on to human beings. There is not a sense of a God with any interest in human beings. Nonetheless, it seems clear that there is both a transcendent sense and immanent sense of Heaven that is implied. We are to develop what Heaven has bestowed on us, implying a transcendent being with the capacity to gratuitously give us certain kinds of intellectual and physical gifts. That these are an intimate part of our being suggests a continuing connection between human beings and Heaven in which it is immanent within us. Moreover, we cannot escape the destiny to which our particular, individual circumstances give rise. This does not mean that we do not possess freedom, only that we should be mindful that an important task of our education is to learn about the limitations of what is possible for us to do. We cannot overcome Heaven in the sense that as human beings we cannot accomplish more than the powers given to us allow. Striving against this is acting against our own nature and so turns us away from the path marked out for us by Heaven.

Like Zhuāngzǐ, Mèngzǐ also calls upon human beings to accept the order of Heaven. He argues that cultivation of themselves is exactly how human beings fulfill their duty to Heaven. Precisely why human beings owe a duty to Heaven if it is not a personal being needs to be explained and while an account is certainly available, it is another matter how far Mèngzǐ himself has given such an account, since he does not dwell a great deal on the nature of Heaven. Certainly, a key feature of what he has to say is that the relationship between human beings and Heaven is reciprocal, and that for their own sakes, the good of human beings is connected to doing what Heaven has ordained. Hence, preserving and nourishing the mind and the nature endowed to us by Heaven is the way in which we serve Heaven and ourselves. In addition, knowing ourselves is how we know Heaven. Mèngzǐ says: "For a man to give full realization to his heart (*xīn*) is for him to understand his own nature, and a man who knows his own nature will know Heaven. The retention of his heart and the nurturing of his nature are the means by which he serves Heaven. Whether he is going to die young or to live to a ripe old age makes no difference to the steadfastness of purpose. It is through awaiting whatever is to befall him with a perfected character that he stands firm on his proper destiny (*mìng*, 命)."[20]

The concept of *mìng* is very important in Mèngzǐ's thought, since each individual is enjoined by Heaven to act morally. Human beings are set apart from animals because they have *xīn*, that is, they have heart, which also gives them dignity. Because of this, there are some things which human beings will value more than life. Someone who loses her sense of shame and comes to do things for unworthy

[20] Mencius (1970, VIIA.1) The translation referred to here is that of D.C. Lau. There are other translations, including more recent ones, as well as the classic James Legge translation. Cited hereafter as *Mencius*.

motives has lost her heart – or true heart and so has lost her dignity. Human beings are conscious of their dignity as human beings and this is worth more than life itself. Mèngzǐ says that the beggar will not accept a bowl of soup and a basketful of rice, if he suffers abuse in getting them (*Mencius*, Book VI.A.10). He adds that to feed a man without showing him love is to treat him like a pig, to love him without showing him respect is to keep him like a domestic animal (*Mencius*, Book VI.A.37). These are not the ways of the heart. The function of the heart (*xīn*) is to think, by which he means reflect on the kinds of actions which we pursue. Heart is more than just reflecting and determining an action, it is doing something because it is right and in the right spirit. It is Heaven that has given human beings the capacity to do things in the right way and for the right reason; it is Heaven that has given human beings heart. As Mèngzǐ says, our body and our complexion are given to us by Heaven, but it is only a sage who can give his body complete fulfillment (*Mencius*, Book VII.A.38). This is because only a sage has cultivated his humanity to a perfect degree.

Hence, in speaking of acting morally, Mèngzǐ says that when self-interest comes into conflict with morality, it is self-interest that should give way. "Life is what I want; dutifulness is also what I want. If I cannot have both, I would choose dutifulness rather than life.' (*Mencius*, Book VI.A.10). This statement alerts us that transcending our personal likes and dislikes is an important moral lesson to be learnt, since it tells us that moral principles cannot be transgressed if we are to be faithful to ourselves and to what Heaven has ordained. As the story of Duke Jing of Qi 's game keeper related by Mèngzǐ shows, it is important that we are true to who we are and to act authentically. It is far better, says Mèngzǐ, to set our ideals high, even if it means that we might end in a ditch (*Mencius*, Book III.B.1 and Book V.B.7).

In striving to acting according to what is right and to follow the path decreed by Heaven, we can do no more than act according to what we see as following the Way (*Dào*). Though he does not speak about conscience here, Mèngzǐ asserts that in trying to follow the Way as best we can we are following the Way. He warns, however, that if it is true that seeking something is within our own power to obtain, then we will get it, and similarly, if letting go is in our power, then we will lose it, on the other hand, if it is not within our power to do something, we will not. Striving will make no difference, if something is not in our power to do. Mèngzǐ says, "Seek and you will get it; let go and you will lose it. If this is the case, then seeking is of help to getting and what is sought is within yourself. But if there is a proper way to seek it and whether you get it or not depends on Destiny (*mìng*) then seeking is of no help to getting and what is sought lies outside yourself." (*Mencius*, Book VII.A.3).

What is suggested by Mèngzǐ proclaims an inner doctrine, alluding to the presence within the heart, *xīn*, of that which is greater than itself. The heart has been given to us by Heaven and leads us back to Heaven, provided that we use our hearts to think (*Mencius*, Book VI.A.15). Though there are honours that may be bestowed upon us by powerful people, these are not of the same value as those bestowed by Heaven and if we prefer those of human origin, we will perish in the end (*Mencius*, Book VI.A.16). Our task in life is to do what Heaven decrees and in the end become one with Heaven. It is the ground of innate virtues, given to us by Heaven, which

require cultivation in order to blossom and bear fruit. Every human being has within himself, within the core of his being, that which exalts him (*Mencius*, Book VI.A.17). Heaven can therefore be said to be immanent within every human being. This seems to be similar to the Thomist and Christian view that God is at the very core of our being. Ching remarks that in what he says Mèngzǐ is similar to what one of the early fathers of the Christian Church, Gregory of Nyssa, spoke about (Ching 1993, 77).

What is striking in this account of Mèngzǐ is that though he emphasizes the immanent presence of God – or Heaven – within the human being, there is also the sense that human beings have as their purpose a return to their origins, namely, to Heaven once again. There is in this something of the Thomist account of creatures created with intellect and will whose proper path to is to search what gave them intellect and will. Thus human purpose is to reach God, just as it is for Mèngzǐ. While the explanation of the purpose of the individual human life comes from a different perspective, the underlying direction is the same. Whatever way we explain the existence of love deep within us – remembering St. Augustine's statement that God is more him than he is himself – we can bear witness to a remarkable concordance here. We exist because it is God who holds us in the palm of His hand and His trace – His love – remains deep within. At the same time, because it is deep within us, we long to return to God and so the path to God, as Mèngzǐ says is through the cultivation of virtue. This, just as it is for the Christian, is not simply a turning within, but a reaching out to the other. The Gospel also uses the metaphor of the seed in several places – if a seed falls on fertile ground, that is, cultivated ground it will produce a hundred fold (*Mk*4:8; *Mt*. 13:8) and if it does not die, it does not bring forth fruit (*Jn*12:24). It is more than coincidental that Mèngzǐ also uses the metaphor of the moral seeds within us that require cultivation if we are to flourish as human beings. There are, it seems to me some significant similarities here.

7.4 Conclusion

Because we would have had to write a much longer work to fully do justice to the varying conceptions of God both in Christian and Confucian traditions, we have contented ourselves with sketching a Christian view, borrowing also from the Jewish tradition, and one strand within the Confucian account. The comprehensive account offered by Aquinas shows a rich variety of ways in which we can think about God and His relationship with His creation and His creatures. He is, in that account, both transcendent and immanent. He is, however, more than just a Supreme Being, but a personal Being who loves His creatures and lovingly bestows upon them intellect and will, which if exercised in accord with their natures, will eventually lead them back to union with Him. There is, in the restricted account given here of Mèngzǐ, a similar account. Heaven bestows upon human beings the seeds of moral virtue and provides a path which will unite Heaven and human beings. Mèngzǐ says that there is something which causes the universe to function and that something is Heaven.

According to Mèngzǐ there is a flood like *qì* (氣) which fills the body and which moves the heart to action, this he calls *hào rán zhī qì* (浩然之气) which is in the highest degree, vast and unyielding. It is a *qì* which unites rightness and the Way (*Dào*). It is this *hào rán zhī qì* that one should cultivate. Mèngzǐ says that we should cultivate it and it will fill the space between Heaven and Earth (Lau 1970). Though it is unclear whether Mèngzǐ ever thought of Heaven as personal, it is evident that he thought that Heaven had bestowed on human beings the capacity for moral virtue and for goodness. In doing so, it made them capable of love and it is this capacity for love and loving that enables them to bridge the unbridgeable gap between Heaven and human beings. In a similar vein, though obviously from a very different starting place, Aquinas argues that Christ is the concrete expression of the Love that God has for His creation and is the Way back to Him. Transcendence on this view demands immanence, and vice versa. In this requirement, the Christian view and Confucian view are in agreement.

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Chapter 8
The Confucian Filial Duty to Care (*xiao* 孝) for Elderly Parents

T. Brian Mooney and John N. Williams

Abstract Central to Confucianism is the doctrine that an adult child has the 'duty' to care for his elderly parents (*xiao* 孝). We give indications that this duty remains robust in Chinese communities and sketch its historical underpinnings. We then explore the conjecture that the origin of filial piety is the worship of ancestors as petitioners of *Shangdi*. Next we elucidate the Confucian ethical vision, according to which by being aware of the moral force of *Tian* (天), one must try to promote *ren* (仁) by means of *li* (礼) so as to exercise *de* (德), in a way appropriate to a *junzi* (君子). Then we examine how the filial duty of care is justified by this vision *via* the application of the Golden Rule. We anticipate objections to this justification and suggest replies available to a Confucian.

Keywords Confucian • Filial piety • Golden rule • *li* • *ren* • *Shangdi* • *Tian* • *xiao*

8.1 Introduction

Central to Confucianism is the doctrine that an adult child has, for want of a better word, the 'duty' to care for his elderly parents.[1] Whether this should be framed in terms of duties, rather than for example, the dispositions appropriate to an agent who is good within the Confucian moral vision, is problematic.[2] Nonetheless since

[1] We deliberately use the masculine gender because it is controversial whether the doctrine extends to daughters. This controversy lies beyond the scope of our paper.

[2] Chung-Ying Cheng (1986) argues that the ethics of filial piety found in the context of the *Analects*, the *Ta Hsüeh*, the *Chung Yüng*, and the *Mencius* sees filial piety as a virtue which is a root of *ren*, whereas the ethics of filial piety in the *Classic of Filial Piety* sees filial piety as the motive for performing all other virtues, including *ren*.

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the doctrine is characterized in terms of a moral 'ought' we will talk of the 'filial duty of care.' By way of introduction we reflect on whether Chinese communities still have a strong sense of this duty. We tentatively conclude that although there is a perception among Chinese communities that the duty has been eroded, it remains robust. However this conclusion would require considerably more sociological support. Our main goal is rather to explain this robust adherence. One explanatory strategy is historical—to first locate the historical origin of the duty and then show how historical forces resisted socio-political changes. Accordingly we make the conjecture that the duty originates in the worship of the highest God (*Shangdi* 上帝) in the earliest pre-history of China.[3] This historical origin of *xiao* may also be seen as a source of justification in the sense that the tradition itself has normative force. A different explanatory strategy is to discover an ethical ground of the duty congenial to its adherents. In Chinese thought these grounds are found in the ethical concept of *ren* (仁) and its application in *li* (礼). One important way in which the concept of *ren* receives its articulation is through the Confucian Golden Rule. Accordingly, we analyze some problems for a Confucian defense of the duty as so articulated and suggest ways of solving them. So one key plank of our paper seeks to establish the metaphysical and religious origins of the duty of care (*xiao*) in order to bring out its central role in the history and practices of the Chinese tradition. And the second key plank concentrates on a particular way of taking up the duty of care (*xiao*) from a more purely ethical perspective.

In Sect. 8.2 we give some indications that despite contrary perceptions, the filial duty of care (*xiao*) remains robust in Chinese communities. In Sect. 8.3 we sketch the historical underpinnings of the duty. In Sect. 8.4 we explore the conjecture that the origin of filial piety is the worship of ancestors as petitioners of Shangdi. In Sect. 8.5 we elucidate key concepts in the Confucian ethical vision, according to which by being aware of the moral force of *Tian* (天), one must try to promote *ren* by means of *li* so as to exercise *de* (德) in a way appropriate to a *junzi* (君子). In Sect. 8.6 we examine how the filial duty of care (*xiao*) is justified by this vision. One way in which it does so is *via* the application of the Golden Rule. We anticipate objections to this justification and suggest replies available to a Confucian.

8.2 How Strong Is the Sense of Filial Duty of Care (xiao) in Chinese Communities?

In contemporary China and Chinese diasporas there appears to be concern that the sense of the duty of an adult child to care for his elderly parents, is being eroded.[4] This worry is nothing new. As early as 1944, Cheng Ch'eng K'un wrote:

[3] Donald Holzman approaches our conjecture in attempting to show that the earliest Chinese saw filial piety as a 'metaphysical entity' (1998, 185) but does not identify the *origin* of filial piety as ancestor worship or worship of Shangdi, although he discusses Holzman (1998, 186). Nonetheless, we are very much indebted to Holzman's paper.

[4] See Shahrum Sayuthi (2007). The article reported that 'a significant number of people are seeking advice on suitable old folks' homes for their elderly parents' from Malaysian Chinese Association

> The large family system in China is rapidly being liquidated. The disruptive forces created by industrialization, urbanization, governmental actions in the nature of economic, social and political reform, civil wars and external conflicts during the last 100 years have all combined to hasten this process of liquidation. (Cheng Ch'eng K'un 1944, 59)[5]

Such views are still echoed widely in the popular media (for example, Leong Ching 2007 Mark Magnier 2006; Raymond Zhou 2004).[6] However, the erosion of large families by the communist one-child policy does not entail the erosion of the duty of filial care.[7] Moreover, psychological and sociological studies suggest that despite socio-political changes, the sense of the filial duty of care (*xiao*) remains robust. For example, Stoodley refers to data that 'suggests that Chinese students in British Hong Kong adopted notions of personal choice in marriage along western lines but observed Confucian values of filial obligation' (1967, 773). In other words, although personal autonomy is more valued, there has been no serious shift away from the adherence to the duty. In an analysis of survey data collected in Hebei in 1994, M.K. Whyte argues that in China, 'the sense of obligation to support and care for elderly parents has already been weakened' (1997, 2). Yet he also concludes that 'familial obligation remains robustly intact' (1997, 31). Indeed, the robustness of the duty is evidenced by numerous studies even among the Chinese in the USA (for example, Masako Ishii-Kuntz 1997 and Marks and McLanahan 1993) and other Confucian-based societies (for example, JaHyun Kim Haboush 1995).[8] Indeed, one writer attests to the centrality of these family values in Chinese communities by arguing that Chinese capitalist business practices have adopted traditional patterns of familial obligation and adapted them to 'clan corporations engaged in creative contracting to construct business entities that formally corresponded to the idealized Confucian family' (Teemu Ruskola 2000, 1600). We submit that it is a reasonable working hypothesis that the filial duty of care (*xiao*) remains robust within Chinese communities.[9]

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services centres in Kuantan. The centres were 'concerned that the age-old practice of filial piety in the Chinese community could be under threat from the stresses of modern living.'

[5] The writer, however, goes on to point out that *psychologically* the Chinese remain committed to the centrality of traditional familial obligations.

[6] These issues are presently a matter of some concern to the Singapore government which is initiating public debate on the issue of homes for the elderly. This issue is exacerbated by the prevalence of increasingly long working hours.

[7] It is likely that this will become an arena for much debate in the near future, given the consequences of the People's Republic of China's 'one-child' policy, especially since the older Confucian familial values may be under threat by the existence of 'little emperors and empresses'. Moreover, though this does not seem to be a major issue at present, the filial duty of care may need some reconceptualisation if the practice of adopting children were to become more prevalent.

[8] The robustness of filial obligations runs so deep in the Chinese *psyche* that it permeates the legal system. In 1993 a court intervened in favour of a mother in Shandong province whose two sons had abrogated their filial duties, as reported in the *People's Daily Overseas Edition*, August 25, 1993, Beijing edition. Indeed, Chinese law states that just as parents have a legal obligation to care for their children so too grown children have a duty to support aged parents. See *Marriage Law*, art. 15, sec. 3; *Senior Citizen Protection Act*, 1996, art. 2, sec. 11.

[9] On a personal note, this is also how it still seems to us in Singapore, having lived here for some 30 years.

8.3 Historical Underpinnings of the Filial Duty of Care (xiao)

Filial obligations probably originated in the pre-history of China and may well be related to religious and metaphysical beliefs. The archaeologist Chang Kwanh-chih has postulated that burial mounds uncovered in Eastern Gansu, dating back to the third millennium before the Common Era, 'make it highly probable that the cult of ancestors to symbolize lineage solidarity had already been initiated during the Yang-shao stage' (Chang Kwanh-chih 1968, 103). Moreover, as Holzman points out, 'the earliest written records in China, those scratched on tortoise carapaces and on bones … suggest that the worship of ancestors played a central and absolutely vital role [in the society of that time]' (1998, 186).

The Chinese character for filial piety (*xiao* 孝), consists of two components, one standing for 'child' and the other meaning 'old.' It has the part symbolizing the old *above* the part symbolizing the child, meaning that the child both supports and succeeds the parent (Chenyang Li 1997, 219).

This might also be taken to mean that the child is subservient to the parent, who is morphologically, and by implication, socially 'higher' than the child. This character does not appear in the earliest written records. Nevertheless the worship of Shangdi, the highest God, is known to have been mediated through the intercessions of ancestors of the Shang king in this period, prompting Holzman's conclusion that '[F]ilial piety or, more exactly, ancestral piety, was an essential element in ancient religion and thus in ancient life in general' (1998, 186).

As far as we are aware, apart from Holzman, the religious and metaphysical foundations of filial piety have been largely overlooked in the literature. We conjecture that despite the much later politicization of filial piety, it originates in the practice of ancestor worship which itself originated from the practice of prayers to the high God, Shangdi, on behalf of dead relatives and also from prayers to dead relatives for intercession with Shangdi, to whom these relatives are closer in origin.

This conjecture coheres with the earliest pre-history of China. Because the Chinese do not postulate anything like a Western religious notion of Heaven, they naturally tend to what is nearest to them, namely their ancestors and direct bloodlines, as being nearer in origin to the high God. This feature of building patterns of concern and care from the family 'upwards' became an essential feature of Chinese ethics. In this respect the Chinese ethical mentality is more concerned with expanding the *foci* of ethical concern from the family outwards, marking a salient difference with much of contemporary western moral theory, which begins with *universalizing* considerations, as in deontology and consequentialism. In this respect, Chinese ethics might be congenial to a treatment in terms of virtue, although we will not pursue this suggestion.[10]

[10] For an interesting and provocative attempt to consider a rapprochement between Confucian ethics conceived in terms of virtue theory and western discussion of duties and rights, see Cheng Chung-Ying (1986).

'*Shangdi*', a term used since the second millennium BC, names the highest God in the original Han religious system (see Derong Chen 2009 and Paulos Huang 2009, particularly Chapter 3). Literally it means 'Above Emperor' which may be interpreted as 'highest God' (Holzman 1998, 186). From the earliest times of Chinese history, Shangdi was also called '*Tian*', which can either mean the physical sky or the presiding God of Heaven (see Machle 1993, particularly Chapter 1). By the time of the Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) the influential Confucian scholar Zheng Xuan declared that 'Shangdi is another name for Tian' (Lung 1983). Shangdi is never represented with images or idols in the Chinese tradition. Shangdi is first mentioned in the *Classic of History*, probably the earliest narrative of China, which narrates how Emperor Shun (*circa* 2200 BC) made yearly sacrifices to Shangdi, a practice that continued throughout the Ming Dynasty. The many references to Shangdi assign him the attributes of intellect, judgement, compassion, supremacy and masculinity.[11] Shangdi is considered by some to be the Creator of the universe, predating the Daoist creation myth of Pangu around 200 AD by at least 500 years (Paul Carus 1974). After the ascension of Daoism during the period of the Warring States (from 500 BC to the unification of China by the Qin Dynasty in 221 BC) Shangdi became depersonalized and then personalized again around 900 AD (Poo 1998). During the period of the Warring States, Mozi describes Shangdi as a benevolent creator. Shangdi is believed to rule over natural and ancestral spirits, who act as His ministers and is thought to be the Supreme Guide of both the natural and the human order (Ivanhoe 2007, 211). During the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 AD) the *Text of the Border Sacrifice*, depicting the 1538 AD Annual Sacrifice Ritual, includes the words spoken to Shangdi by Emperor Jiajing:

> In the beginning there was great chaos, without form and dark. The five elements had not yet begun to revolve, nor did the sun and the moon to shine. In the midst thereof there existed neither forms nor sound. Thou, O spiritual Sovereign, camest forth in thy presidency, and first didst divide the grosser parts from the purer. Thou madest heaven; Thou madest earth; Thou madest man. All things with their re-producing power, got their being … It is thou alone, O Lord, who are the true parent of all things" (Legge 1852, 28–29).

It is believed that the earliest existence of the character for filial piety occurs on a bronze vessel of the late Shang or early Zhou dynasty about 1000 BC and subsequently appears 64 times during the Zhou period and 17 times in the Spring and Autumn period, i.e. the seventh and sixth centuries (Li Yumin 1974, 19). While most of these inscriptions are concerned with filial piety towards *dead* parents, there are already early cases of the extension of filial piety from the ancestors to living parents. For example, the *hu* vessel named 'shuji liangfu' mentions filial piety to 'elder and younger brothers, to in-laws and to deceased fathers and uncles.' Other inscriptions extend it to 'close friends' and 'relations by marriage' (Li Yumin 1974, 20–21). However, the extension of ancestor worship to the filial duty of care (*xiao*) does not appear to have taken place in the earliest periods of Chinese history, as evidenced by two of the earliest canonical works, the *Shijing* (the *Book of Songs*) and the *Shangshu*

[11] See for example, The Shijing (詩經), 241, 245, 236, 300; 192, 224, 235, 254, 255, 258, 274, 276, & 304; and The Wujing (五經) (i.e. Liji (禮記) 04:1:13; i.e. Liji Book 4, Section 1, Verse 13).

in which it is clearly ancestral worship that is being discussed in relation to religious rituals (Arthur Whaley 1949).[12]

After the ascension of Daoism during the period of the Warring States (from 500 BC to the unification of China by the Qin Dynasty in 221 BC) the practice of filial piety towards living parents and family members had become the cornerstone of ethical thinking in China. Among the Confucians it is the starting point for *ren* (roughly, goodness) and *li* (roughly, ritual propriety). The *Classic of Filial Piety* together with the *Analects*, were widely read and deeply influential (Chenyang Li 1997, 219). Indeed, the *Classic of Filial Piety* turns filial piety into the cardinal virtue of Confucian ethics in a way that recalls the religious and metaphysical origins of filial piety:

> Filial piety is the constant [method] of Heaven, the righteousness of Earth, and the practical duty of Man. Heaven and earth invariably pursue the course [that may be thus described], and the people take it as their pattern. [The ancient kings] imitated the brilliant luminaries of heaven and acted in accordance with the [varying] advantages afforded by earth, so that they were in accord with all under heaven. (Legge 1899, 473)

The Classic of Filial Piety promulgates five key imperatives: (1) one must support one's parents; (2) one must honour, revere, and obey one's parents; (3) one must produce heirs; (4) one must bring honour and glory to one's ancestors; and (5) one must mourn, offer sacrifices and memorial services to one's dead parents (Lo Ping Cheung 1993).

These prescriptions find support in the writings of Confucius himself and in Mencius. For example, Confucius elaborates upon (1) and (2) by indicating that appropriate internal dispositions are required:

> Filial piety nowadays means to be able to support one's parents. But we support even dogs and horses. If there is no feeling of reverence, wherein lies the difference? (*Analects*, 2:7)[13]

His point is that filial piety exists only when the filial duty of care (*xiao*) is exercised with *jing* (敬), namely reverence or veneration. Mencius notes that the 'greatest thing a filial son can do is to honor his parents' (*Mencius*, 5A: 4) and admonishes that 'there are three ways of being unfilial. The worst is to have no heir.' (*Mencius*, 4A: 26).

The prevalence of the regard for filial piety goes beyond the Confucians. Mencius claims that 'Mo's principle is—"to love all equally," which does not recognize *the peculiar affection due* to a father' (Legge 1885, 22).

But it appears that there is a disagreement over the centrality of filial piety only because both schools agree that filial piety is an imperative. Moreover, Mozi appears to think of filial piety as a necessary condition for achieving universal love (Hsiao Kung-chuan 1979, 227–228).

An apparent lack of commitment to filial piety is found in the Daoists. Zhuangzi says:

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[12] However Holzman refers to the 'new text' of the *Shangshu* in which 'there are at least two passages … in which filial piety clearly refers to the treatment of living parents' (1998, 187).

[13] All translations (except where explicitly mentioned) of the canonical texts are drawn from Wing-tsit Chan (1963).

> Filial piety, brotherliness, benevolence, righteousness, loyalty, trust, honor, integrity—for all these you must drive yourself and make yourself a slave of Virtue. They are not worth prizing. (Burton Watson 2013, 109).

Given Chapter 31's view that love and filial piety are outward manifestations of Truth 'in the service of parents' it follows that the outward manifestations of Truth 'in the service of parents' are not worth prizing. But perhaps the thought is that the outward manifestations of the truth that we must care for our parents—such as listening politely to one's father—is not worth striving for in comparison to emotional internalization of that truth. After all, one could listen politely in order to cheat him.

An apparent lack of commitment to the value of filial piety is also found in Laozi's *Tao Te Ching* (道德经), where he suggests that filial piety and maternal affection are effects of a fall from a higher state. Nonetheless he still sees filial piety and maternal affection as natural (Benjamin Schwartz 1964, 204).

Only one key philosopher rejects the traditional thinking on filial piety—the legalist Han Feizi, who is interested in devotion to the state, rather than to one's parents. Nonetheless, for him, devotion to the state is an extension of one's attachments to family. Yet he holds that although attachments to family are subservient to attachments to the state, attachments to the state *arise out of* filial piety. After the period of the philosophical schools, the role of filial piety became increasingly entrenched and issues in a host of anecdotes, descriptions and *compendia* (Holzman 1998, 185–199).

This concise history shows just how important the filial duty of care (*xiao*) was and how deeply rooted it is in Chinese culture and ethics. Nevertheless, now we need to pursue why this became so.

8.4 Filial Piety as Originating in Worship of Ancestors as Petitioners of Shangdi

We have already offered one foundational reason for the enduring importance of filial piety, namely that filial piety arises out of the context of religious and metaphysical beliefs in ancient China. The historical origin of the practice of the filial duty of care (*xiao*) is religious. Adherents of religious or ethical visions that judge that this historical origin is contained within their vision should also judge that the origin has moral prescriptive force. This is especially true of Chinese adherents, who judge that a tradition of moral practice is a *prima facie* justification of its continuance, and that the length of the tradition only improves the justification.

Scholars have tended to overlook this point. For example, Chenyang Li writes,

> Although filial piety is a cardinal virtue in Confucianism and there is plentiful discussion of it by the writers of the Confucian Classics, one can hardly find a well-formed systematic statement of justification among them. This is so, perhaps, because in the old days there was so much overwhelming support for filial piety that it did not need philosophical argument to support it. (Li 1997, 221)

Such a view is also rendered by Holzman:

> … discussion of the origins of filial piety in China … [shows] … that this phenomenon seems always to have been central in Chinese life and very seldom, if ever, called into question. (Holzman 1998, 185)

Our conjecture is that the practice and exaltation of filial piety has its origins in those forms of intercessionary worship of ancestors that arise in the context of the Shang king's relations to the supreme Deity, Shangdi. The metaphysical and religious beliefs which issue in the cult of ancestors and later becomes extended to the more commonplace filial piety towards close family members, particularly parents, are the ultimate justificatory origin.

Schematically, one may see our argument as follows:

P1) Shangdi-worship is the origin of ancestor-worship.
P2) Ancestor-worship is the origin of the practice of the filial duty of care (*xiao*).
So
C) Shangdi-worship is the origin of the practice of the filial duty of care (*xiao*).

By 'the origin' we mean 'the historical cause.' So our argument is valid just in case '*X* is (or is partly) the historical cause of *Y*' is a transitive relation, which indeed it is.

We should accept the first premise because the Chinese believed that Shangdi had dominion over all dead human beings, who survive death by becoming spirits. This led the Chinese to offer petitionary or intercessionary prayers to Shangdi on behalf of their dead relatives. They did this in order to care for dead relatives. This motive survives today, encapsulated in the Daoist practice of making offerings of food and of burning replicas of money or houses that are to be transfigured into their counterparts in the spirit-world. This is not yet ancestor-worship, because it was Shangdi to whom they prayed, not the relatives. However, an essential feature of the adherence to the filial duty of care (*xiao*) had already emerged: because the Chinese saw themselves as having a duty to offer petitionary or intercessionary prayers in order to secure *the welfare* of their dead relatives, they *ipso facto* saw themselves as having a duty to care for their dead relatives—which included their dead parents. Given that the Chinese saw themselves as having a duty to offer prayers on behalf of their ancestors, it might be supposed that they would also offer prayers to their ancestors themselves, since the ancestors are closer in origin to Shangdi and thus the ancestors in their turn may intercede with Shangdi himself on behalf of their living relatives, if prompted to do (which they might need, being of the same forgetful and fickle human nature as their petitioners).

The reason for the second premise is at least partly psychological. Because the Chinese came to see their living parents as future survivors of death that they *would* have a duty to care for, they naturally came to see them as persons the welfare of whom they had duty to care for when they were *still alive*. Given this, it is plausible to suppose that as their parents became older, and therefore closer to death, the Chinese felt this filial duty of care (*xiao*) all the more acutely.

8.5 Key Concepts in the Confucian Ethical Vision

However, there are other sources of justification of the filial duty of care (*xiao*) in the broader Confucian vision of goodness and self-identity. Here the crucial ethical justifications are to be located in the notion of *ren*. As Chenyang Li observes, the meaning of '*ren*' is easily lost in translations such as 'benevolence, love, altruism, kindness, charity, compassion, human-heartedness, humanity….' and concludes that '…these words, though individually inadequate … collectively offer a good clue to understanding the concept' (1997, 222). The character for *ren* comprises two elements, one representing a human being and the other representing the number two. So a part (but by no means all) of what '*ren*' means, is 'how two people should treat one another'. The term has strong connotations of altruism and benevolence even if these latter characteristics do not fully capture its range of meanings. Its *foci* is much more than the relation between two people since it permeates the entire range of relationships considered as central to Confucian society. Thus, it embraces the five key social relations of Father to Son, Elder brother to younger Brother, Husband to Wife, Elder to Junior and Subject to Ruler. (We explore some of the social dimensions of *ren* in Sect. 8.6.) These considerations in no way imply that *ren* diminishes the ethical importance of self-cultivation, because one is also a part of humanity.

When combined with the concept of the 'Mandate of Heaven' (*Tian ming* 天命), the moral order of the universe as encompassed by the imperative that the Emperor concern himself overwhelmingly with the welfare of the people—it is natural that '*ren*' as meaning 'common people' eventually would come to include the moral obligations of the Emperor to the well-being of the people (China Glossary 2008). The connection of *ren* with the Mandate of Heaven no doubt confirms the original link between *ren* and its metaphysical and religious origin.

Having discussed the religious and metaphysical origins of the filial duty of care (*xiao*), we now turn to its primarily ethical justificatory framework. By the time of the *Analects*, the concept of 'Shangdi' coincided with that of '*Tian*' (China Glossary 2008). While this literally means 'sky,' it is sometimes translated as 'Heaven'. Confucius inherited a view of *Tian* that minimized its personal and supernatural dimensions (Bo Mou 2009) and saw it as a universal source of goodness (Van Norden 2002). Human beings participate in the actualization of the will of *Tian* through the cultivation of *ren*.

At the same time, Confucius sees a morally good society as ordered according to the aesthetic, moral, and social canons of tradition. In order to cultivate goodness in oneself, one must be aware of the moral force of *Tian* and also compare oneself with these canons, because they are in turn, actualizations of *Tian*. In order to promote goodness in the world, in accordance with *Tian*, one must promote *ren*.

One important form of guidance for doing so is provided by a negative ethic of reciprocity, namely the Confucian Golden Rule (*Analects* 12.2):

> What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others.

In other words

> If you would not wish to have *X* done to you by others, then do not do *X* to others.

The Golden Rule is expressed *negatively*. It tells us what we should refrain from doing, rather than what we should do. Moreover it tells us this not on the basis of we do want but on the basis of what we do *not*, possibly as a case of indifference. In contrast, Jesus' rule (Biblica 2012, Mathew 7:12)

> So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.

in other words

If you would wish to have *X* done to you by others, then do *X* to them tells us what we should do on the basis of what we *do* want. This difference might be an important clue to the nature of Chinese moral psychology. Perhaps the minimalism of the moral imperative of the Golden rule is indicative of caution in seeking ethical guidance for action.

In its turn, the Golden Rule is embodied socially and politically in the practice of '*li*' which may be translated as 'ritual propriety':

> Do not look at, do not listen to, do not speak of, do not do whatever is contrary to ritual propriety. (*Analects* 12.1)

Li is a self-replicating formula for regulating order. This order has an aesthetic dimension. For example, a passage from the *Classic of Poetry* may be an instance of good taste and quoting it, in socially appropriate *fora*, may also exemplify good taste. Secondly, it is moral. A display of good manners demonstrates both concern for others and a sense of one's place. Finally, it is social. Rituals duplicate ideal hierarchies of power between ruler and subject, parent and child, or husband and wife, and so on. So *li* is the means by which family, the state, and the world may be aligned with *Tian's* moral order, thus promoting *ren*. As David Hall and Roger Ames (1987) have argued, this aesthetic Confucian order is both intrinsically moral and profoundly harmonious. When persons and things are in their proper places, as dictated by tradition, life is harmonious and peaceful, and people seek to do and be good. In the hierarchical political and social conception of Confucius (and all of his Chinese contemporaries), what is below is informed by what is above. A moral ruler will diffuse morality among his subjects, just as a moral parent will raise a moral child. This is another way in which the moral order is self-replicating, thus once again promoting *ren*. In promoting *ren* by means of *li*, one must exercise *de* or 'moral force', in a manner befitting a *junzi*.

'*Junzi*' literally means 'lord's son' or 'gentleman'. Tu Wei-ming (1979) translates it as 'profound person,' in contrast to the *xiaoren* (小人) or 'small person.' Confucius characterizes the *junzi* by saying,

> The profound person understands what is moral. The small person understands what is profitable. (*Analects* 4.16)

and by his remark:

> The *junzi* is the person who always manifests *ren* in his person and displays *li* in his actions. (*Analects* 4.5)

For Confucius, the highest moral achievement is to become a successful ruler, because the ruler manifests, in a central way, the moral order of *Tian* within the social order. Such a ruler must practice *ren* or humaneness towards his subjects or lose the 'Mandate of Heaven', in other words the will of *Tian* for him to rule. In ruling his subjects, he must do so with '*de*' or 'moral force':

> Direct the people with moral force ('*de*') and regulate them with ritual, and they will possess shame, and moreover, they will be righteous. (*Analects* 2.3)

For Confucius, *de* is a power for good:

> One who rules by moral force may be compared to the North Star—it occupies its place and all the stars pay homage to it. (*Analects* 2.1)

While '*de*' is often translated (as above) as 'moral force' it also has the characteristic of moral excellence, in a way very similar to the ancient Greek notion of *areté*. You could not be a force for moral good unless you were a person of moral excellence. This seems to capture something of the Greek notion of the attractiveness of moral excellence, as in the descriptor *Kalos kai Agathos*. In the Confucian tradition, the idea is elaborated by the notion of *yi* (义), which means roughly 'righteousness'. Without *de*, a ruler could not succeed in ruling at all.

In summary, by being aware of the moral force of *Tian*, one must try to promote *ren* by means of *li* so as to exercise *de* in a way appropriate to a *junzi*.

8.6 Ren, the Golden Rule and the Filial Duty of Care (xiao)

Having outlined the key concepts of the Confucian ethical vision, let us now see how the filial duty of care (*xiao*) is justified by this vision.[14] One way in which it does so is *via* the application of the Golden Rule. In applying it, we must be mindful that in Chinese thought at the time of Confucius, the *situation* was always considered before the *individual*. In other words, ethical scenarios are predominately considered, not in terms of the particularity of the individual, but rather, in respect to social stratification. Individuals were considered under inflexible socially-stratified roles. Indeed Henry Rosemount Jr. even makes a compelling case that in Confucianism the self of a person is roughly the collection of that person's social roles. For Confucius, 'I am the totality of roles I live in relation to specific others' (Rosemont, Jr. 1988, 177). Thus the family was more important than the individual, and the state was more important than the family (this remains the case in Chinese *diasporas* like Singapore). Accordingly, loyalty to one's ruler came first, then to one's family, then to one's spouse, and lastly to one's friends. This is consistent with our earlier claim that the *development* of the moral personality expands from the family outwards and upwards. Pragmatically and in terms of social order, the priori-

[14] In what follows we will be concerned with 'natural' family relations. Nonetheless, the arguments we present are *mutatis mutandis* applicable to analogous relations such as adopted aunts and uncles or teachers treated like parents.

tization of duties becomes hierarchically ordered from the Mandate of Heaven back down to the family.

So the Golden Rule should be sensitive to this stratification of social roles, resulting in a finer-grained version:

If you, in social role 1, would not wish, as an occupant of social role 2, to have *X* done to you by an occupant of social role 1, then you should not do *X* to occupants of social role 2.

Although much has been written about the Golden Rule, this point appears to have been overlooked. An instance of the finer-grained rule includes:

If you, an adult child (in social role 1), would not wish, as an elderly parent (in social role 2), to be neglected by your children, then you should not neglect your elderly parents.

Given that adult children would not in fact wish, as elderly parents, to be neglected by their children, it follows that adult children should care for their elderly parents. This duty is a necessary condition of *xiao*, or filial piety. As we have already observed, filial piety exists when the filial duty of care (*xiao*) is exercised with reverence, or *jing*. The Golden Rule provides a similar basis for this duty of reverence. Given that adult children would not in fact wish, as elderly parents, to be treated with irreverence by their children, it follows from the Golden Rule that adult children should not treat their elderly parents with irreverence.

At this point we anticipate three objections to this justification of the filial duty of care (*xiao*). The first is that the Golden Rule should be rejected by good Confucians. This is because another substitution-instance of it is:

If you, a husband (in social role 1), would not wish, as a wife (in social role 2), to be dominated by your husband, then you should not dominate your wife.

But a good Confucian must reject this, and so must reject the Golden Rule, because the subservience of a wife to her husband is part of the social order, dictated by tradition, and so is an actualization of *Tian*. Therefore to fail to treat one's wife as subservient is contrary to *li*.

However a Confucian has at least three replies to this objection. Firstly, he may say that the substitution-instance fails as a counterexample to the Golden Rule because anyone who is a good wife in the Confucian social order *would* wish to be subservient to her husband. Since anyone, in the proper scheme of things would wish this, the antecedent of the substitution-instance is false, and thus fails as a counterexample. Secondly, he might deny that the subservience of a wife to her husband *is* part of the traditional social order (see Li-Hsiang 2006). Thirdly, he might argue that the supposition that he is a wife is incoherent. He might appeal to Kripke's (1980) thesis of the necessity of origins, namely that it is necessary that a person comes from the parents from whom he or she in fact came. Moreover since a particular man would not be the same person had he been born a woman, it is impossible that he, *that same person*, be a woman. Therefore the antecedent of the

putative counterexample is necessarily false, so the injunction of its consequent fails to apply.[15]

A second apparent counterexample to the Golden Rule is the substitution-instance:

If you, a ruler (in social role 1), would not wish, as a subject (in social role 2), to have orders given to you by your ruler (say, to shoulder burdensome taxes) then you should not give orders to your subjects (say, to shoulder burdensome taxes).

But a good Confucian must reject this, because it is part of the social order, dictated by tradition, and so is an actualization of *Tian*, for a ruler to give orders to his subjects. Therefore to fail to do so is contrary to *li*. Hence once again, a good Confucian must reject the Golden Rule.

A Confucian could reply that when a good ruler judges that he would not wish to be given a certain directive were he a subject, he is really universalizing to the claim that no good subject would wish this. This means that the directive does not have the Mandate of *Tian*, so the ruler should not give it. Taken this way, the substitution-instance is acceptable, and so does not falsify the Golden Rule.

The third objection is that substitution-instances of the Golden Rule may be slanted away from talk of care and towards talk of independence, as follows:

If you, an adult child (in social role 1), would not wish, as an elderly parent (in social role 2), to have your children interfere with your independence, then you should not interfere with the independence of your elderly parents.

A Confucian might try to disarm this objection by claiming that it is a brute sociological fact that most adult Chinese would want to avoid neglect by their children and would have no desire for independence, in the relevant sense. But now suppose that the antecedent is true of you, but you also know that your elderly parents *want* care, not independence. The Golden Rule enjoins you to refrain from caring for your elderly parents in the name of preserving their independence—since that is what you would want for yourself. Yet you know that this is precisely what they *don't* want. You may even know that care is what they *need.* Thus it seems to be a major fault of the Golden Rule that it attempts to universalize a moral prescription with no sensitivity to the *differences* in individual wants and needs.

A possible reply a Confucian might make is that the scenario we have described could not arise in a Confucian society, because of the self-replicating moral order of *li*: a moral parent will raise a moral child. This makes it more likely that parents and children will largely share similar familial values and that, in turn, there will considerable overlap in desires with respect to those values.

[15] The objection we have just considered proceeds in terms of numerical personal identity. Another interesting objection we might have considered proceeds in terms of psychological identification, namely, that a man cannot act upon the Golden Rule with respect to his wife because he is unable to identify sufficiently with a wife in her social role *qua* wife. However space precludes us from pursuing it here.

The problem with this reply is that in the real world, the scenario we have described may easily arise, even in a society dominated by a Confucian ethos, in which case the objection goes through as before.

The third objection is that the Golden Rule gives us no guidance about how to treat our parents if we have no wish to have children, because of the resulting oddity in the antecedent of:

> If you, an adult child (in social role 1), would not wish, as an elderly parent (in social role 2), to be neglected *by your children*, then you should not neglect your elderly parents.

The Confucian has at least three replies to this objection. The first is that the Golden Rule is not expected to give guidance without exception. No guidance in a few cases is better than wrong guidance in many cases. Secondly, he might appeal to the fact that one of the duties of children to parents in Confucianism is to produce heirs.[16] As Chenyang Li (1997) argues, because there is nothing in Confucianism that corresponds to a Christian Heaven, Confucians have to look elsewhere for immortality and the meaning of life. The nearest they can get to it is to continue the family line. Through reproduction, one can pass on not only one's name, but also one's blood, and hence life, to later generations. The meaning of life is realized by the fact that one will be remembered by family members yet to be born.

However, this is philosophically contentious. Firstly, one's blood is not literally one's life. Although one has a genetic role in determining the personalities, and hence the identity, of persons who are one's descendents, that role diminishes exponentially with each succeeding generation. Secondly, it seems likely that over time, succeeding generations would remember nothing about one except one's name. It is unclear how this is supposed to give one's life a purpose. Thirdly, producing heirs does nothing to pass one's *mother's* name to future generations, because on marriage, as is still generally the case, the wife takes the family name of her husband.[17]

A better reply is that there is a difference between *wanting to not* be neglected by one's children and *not wanting* to be neglected by them. Suppose that you have no desire to ever have children. Then from your point of view, you will never have children, and so you have no wishes concerning them, with the result that the antecedent is, strictly speaking, true, thus disarming the objection.

Another justification of the duty to have children appeals again to *ren*. It is plausible that without raising children of one's own, one cannot fully appreciate our parents for raising us (Chenyang Li 1997; Joseph Kupfer 1990). To appreciate

[16] In the Elder Tai's *Record of Rites* (Bk. LXXX.) one ground for divorcing a wife is her failure to bear a son.

[17] There is an increasing trend in Singapore for Chinese women to either append the title 'Madam' to their original family name on marriage, as in 'Madam Tan' or, more recently, to hyphenate it with that of their husband, as in 'Mrs. Tan-Wee.' A Confucian could avoid this last difficulty by recommending this latter practice.

someone, when appropriate, is to increase *ren*. We have an obligation to increase *ren*, starting with the family, as the most immediate and practical context for doing so. Therefore we have an obligation to raise children, because doing so is a means to an appreciation of our parents. This, of course, makes the justification instrumental, but we see no reason why a Confucian cannot employ both instrumental and non-instrumental justifications of the filial duty of care (*xiao*). Presumably, we need only have as many children as it takes to fully appreciate our parents for raising us. Ideally, we should discharge this obligation while our parents are still alive, because in that case, not only may we fully appreciate our parents for raising us, but we may also express that appreciation to them as well, thus further increasing *ren*. However, the obligation may remain after our parents are dead. There is no contradiction in saying 'I have come to appreciate my parents more, now that they are dead,' which establishes the possibility of appreciating the dead. So given that one has had no children while one's parents are alive, one still has an obligation to have them even when one's parents are dead. There is no obvious incoherence in the idea of obligations to the dead. For example, if one promises one's father to take care of the family business, one is hardly released from this obligation on one's father's death. It should be noted however that this justification only succeeds if it *is* appropriate to appreciate our parents for raising us, as presumably would not be the case if we have had bad parents who neglected and abused us.[18]

8.7 Conclusion

We started with the working hypothesis that the filial duty to care (*xiao*) for one's elderly parents is robust among Chinese communities. We advanced the conjecture that this duty has its historical origin in the metaphysical and religious beliefs of the earliest Chinese communities, specifically in the worship of Shangdi. We made a case that a development of Shangdi -worship culminated in the Confucian ethical vision, in which the key concept is *ren* and its application in *li*. We showed how *ren* receives its articulation through the Confucian Golden Rule, which in turn provides justification of the filial duty of care (in contrast to Chung-Ying Cheng (1986) who explains *ren* in terms of filial piety). We anticipated three objections to this justification and considered ways in which a Confucian might reply to them within the Confucian ethical vision. We concluded that the Confucian has plausible ways of disarming the first two of these objections. However, the third objection remains problematic; it seems to be a major fault of the Golden Rule that it attempts to universalize a moral prescription with no sensitivity to differences in individual wants and needs.

[18] Another possible objection is that we might come to fully appreciate our parents for raising us by means of raising adopted children.

This is not, however, to say that the grounds for a duty to care for one's elderly parents to which the vision appeals are grounds that everyone will judge compelling, if only because the vision itself is not universally compelling.[19]

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Chapter 9
A Daughter's Filiality, A Courtesan's Moral Propriety and a Wife's Conjugal Love: Rethinking Confucian Ethics for Women in the *Tale of Kiều (Truyện Kiều)*

Jonathan Y. Tan

Abstract Nguyễn Du's Truyện Kiều ("The Tale of Kiều") is widely regarded as the epitome of Vietnamese culture and literary heritage. This essay seeks to read The Tale of Kiều intratextually to explore the implications of a powerful yet subversive tale of a woman whose unconditional commitment to filiality resulted in her gut-wrenching descent into the abyss of despair as concubine and courtesan. It seeks to show how an intratextual reading reveals the heroine of the story to be a well-educated, strong-willed, intelligent and courageous woman whose character transcended all the rigid stereotypes of traditional Confucian ethical admonitions for women. It will also discuss how Nguyễn Du sought to redefine the relations between parent–child and husband-wife, as well as explore their significance for reconceptualizing Vietnamese Confucian ethics for women away from the "Three Bonds" and "Three Obediences" to a virtue ethics for women that is derived from the Confucian Five Relations.

Keywords Nguyễn Du • Truyện Kiều • Tale of Kiều • Confucian • Gender ethics • Women

9.1 Introduction

Translated into more than 30 languages and honored as a monumental literary work of international stature, the Vietnamese narrative poem *Truyện Kiều* (*The Tale of Kiều*)[1] is widely regarded as Vietnam's national poem, the epitome of Vietnamese culture and the greatest accomplishment of Vietnamese literary heritage. A masterpiece of the Vietnamese vernacular prosody (*truyện nôm*) with its characteristic

[1] All Vietnamese and English quotations to *Truyện Kiều* in this essay are taken from Huỳnh (1983).

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"six-eight" (*lục-bát*) verse couplet, the tightly succinct and vividly imaginative 1,627-couplet *Truyện Kiều* was written in the Vietnamese vernacular (*chữ nôm*)[2] by Vietnam's foremost scholar and national poet, Nguyễn Du (1765–1820). Originally written under the title *Đoạn trường tân thanh* ("A new cry from the Sorrowful Ones"),[3] it was first published with minor editing by a fellow scholar, Phạm Quý Thích (1760–1825) under the title *Kim Vân Kiều tân truyện* (*A New Tale of Kim, Vân and Kiều*).

The elegant simplicity of *Truyện Kiều* belies its complicated history of hermeneutical interpretation. On the one hand, as a text *Truyện Kiều* emerged from the early nineteenth century Vietnamese milieu with memories of the destruction of Lê Dynasty (1428–1788) by the Tây-sơn peasant uprising (1778–1802) and the subsequent restoration of feudal Confucian structures by Emperor Gia Long still freshly imprinted in the mind of its author as well as its first audience. The aesthetic, artistic and literary gems in this epic poem express Nguyễn Du's worldview, ethos and thoughts in his creative weaving of language, insights, understandings, meanings into the life realities of early nineteenth century Vietnam. On the other hand, in a real sense the story of *Truyện Kiều* is very much intertwined with the socio-cultural realities of the lives of Vietnamese people in every age and generation. Its powerfully emotional and evocative language is replete with multivalent layers of meaningfulness which defy easy compartmentalization. Clearly, its richly variegated and colorful mosaic of images, tones, metaphors, adages and folk wisdom strikes a deep chord in the hearts and souls of Vietnamese in every age and place. Its deep-seated popularity and wide influence are rooted in its ability to be relevant to, and to continue to nourish the Vietnamese people's ethos and self-identity amidst their daily upheavals and struggles. This is not surprising, because their daily life experiences are grounded in, as well as fleshed out by the many stories which they tell among themselves, of which the story of *Truyện Kiều* stands out as the story *par excellence*.

In other words, the story of *Truyện Kiều* and all other epic stories of cultures and peoples around the world reveal a very important dimension of stories and story-telling. Stories and story-telling are part of the foundational elements which continually embody, shape and reinforce a people's self-identity, life experiences and worldviews. People tell stories to one another because that is how they view and

[2] The *chữ nôm* script is a demotic script that uses Chinese ideograms in various combinations for either their semantic equivalence or phonetic similarity to Vietnamese words. This enabled Vietnamese *literati* to compose prosody in the Vietnamese vernacular, in addition to classical prosody in literary Chinese (*chữ Nho*), thereby giving rise to an explosion of vernacular Vietnamese poetry. According to Huỳnh Sanh Thông, Vietnamese literati wrote in *chữ nôm* as "a tool for the rediscovery and celebration of their ancestral roots… If they had been riveting their eyes on books from a quasi-mythical realm beyond the northern frontier, now more and more they turned their ears to the melodies and words, naïve but not devoid of charm or wisdom, of a poetry cultivated by their own people in the soil and mud of their fields" (Huỳnh 1979).

[3] *Đoạn trường* (literally, "cut-up entrails") is a traditional term for the "Sorrowful Ones" i.e., intelligent, talented and beautiful people who are cursed to a gut-wrenching life of woe and despair (Huỳnh 1983).

relate to the world. Stories are able to address deeply gnawing existential questions, as well as provide vital comfort in times of crisis or doubt. With their plots, characters, problems, conflicts, attempts at conflict resolution, and the conclusion when everything falls into place, stories are able truly to convey how the way a world is actually perceived by a people. In addition to providing an important matrix for understanding, experiencing and relating to the world, stories may also take on a subversive character and provide the context for subverting, contesting and transforming a prevailing worldview.

On the one hand, many scholarly and popular studies on *Truyện Kiều* in the last 100 years have often sought to interpret the highly complex character of *Thúy Kiều*, the heroine of Nguyễn Du's magnum opus, extratextually as a social-national metaphor of the Vietnamese people or nation, or as a political-existential allegory of Nguyễn Du's personal struggles with his divided loyalties (Durand 1966; Chesneaux and Boudarel 1966; Nguyễn Khắc Viện 1965; Nguyễn Văn Hoàn 1965; Huỳnh 1983; Woodside 1983). On the other hand, none of these studies has attempted to read *Truyện Kiều* intratextually as a story in its own right or critically examine the most striking elements of *Truyện Kiều* as a story in and of itself. Here, intratextual readings refer to methods of literary criticism which are able to provide close readings of the details (e.g., character, plot, point of view, etc) of stories and narratives in general, and certainly of *Truyện Kiều* in the present discussion, in order to generate new and fruitful insights. Such intratextual readings of *Truyện Kiều* would reveal Nguyễn Du's subversive portrayal of the character of the heroine, Thúy Kiều, in stark contrast with the strident androcentrism of Confucian moral-ethical norms which were being strictly implemented by the Nguyễn emperors in nineteenth century Vietnam. In other words, when one abandons an extratextual reading of the character of Thúy Kiều in favor of a critical intratextual reading, perhaps one would discover this poem to be a powerful yet subversive story of a woman whose unconditional commitment to filiality (*hiếu*) resulted in her gut-wrenching descent into the abyss of despair as concubine and courtesan. With stoic and unwavering perseverance (*nhẫn*), she eventually triumphed and was reunited with her family and her true love. While this poem certainly upholds traditional Confucian virtues such as filiality (*hiếu*) and moral propriety (*lễ-giáo*) from beginning to end, nevertheless it proceeds to *relativize* and *subvert* their oppressive impact on women.

An intratextual reading the story of *Thúy Kiều* and her confrontation with the socio-cultural challenges of the androcentric Confucian society in which she lived in raises interesting questions on how Nguyễn Du might have viewed the status of Vietnamese women and the moral-ethical norms which bound their conduct in the midst of the nineteenth century revival of Confucianism under the Nguyễn emperors. Surely it was not a mere coincidence that Nguyễn Du wrote *Truyện Kiều* at about the same time that Emperor Gia Long promulgated the *Hoàng Việt Luật-lệ* ("Laws and Regulations of the Imperial Viet") in 1812. This was a harsh legal code which was based upon the deeply Confucian Great Qing Legal Code (*Da Qing Lüli*), and which eroded the status and reinforced the subordination of nineteenth century Vietnamese women. Moreover, the subversiveness of this poem can also be seen in the fact that Nguyễn Du wrote it in vernacular (*truyện nôm*) prosody and the

popular script (*chữ nôm*) rather than in the classical Chinese prosody and script (*chữ Nho*) which the Nguyễn emperors favored. Clearly, the subversive power of vernacular *truyện nôm* prosody to inspire or incite opposition to the Confucian status quo was recognized by the Vietnamese political elite, as the following folk adage attests: "*nôm-na là cha mách-qué*" ("the popular vernacular is the father of knaves and rogues"). As Huỳnh Sanh Thông explains, this folk adage "does not, as some critics or historians have claimed, sum up the utter contempt men in power were supposed to feel for the native tongue and their worship of Chinese by inference. Rather, it dramatically says how much they feared the potential mischief of antiestablishment diatribes in folk verse, either spread by word of mouth or distributed in the Southern script" (1979).

This is not to say that the various extratextual interpretations of the character of Thúy Kiều as social-national metaphor or political-existential allegory in scholarly and popular studies are inaccurate or mistaken. Clearly, as the Vietnamese national poem and the epitome of the Vietnamese literary tradition, the status of *Truyện Kiều* as a Vietnamese "classic" is not in doubt. *Truyện Kiều* fulfills all the elements of a "classic" as enumerated by David Tracy, viz., it is a text which bears "an excess and permanence of meaning, yet always resisting definitive interpretation," and "though highly particular in origin and expression," it has "the possibility of being universal" in its effect (Tracy 1987). One also notes Tracy's contention that "the classic is important hermeneutically because it represents the best exemplar of what we seek: an example of both radical stability become permanence and radical instability become excess of meaning through ever-changing receptions" (Tracy 1987). More importantly, it is precisely because of the paradox of "excess and permanence of meaning" that one can engage in both extratextual and intratextual interpretations of *Truyện Kiều*. In Tracy's words, a classic is not so easily domesticated: "It is difficult to approach any classic text and force it into the Procrustean bed of more of the same or the deceptively more modest claim that 'Well, it is similar enough to what I already know to merit no greater effort at understanding" (Tracy 1987). Likewise, Hans-Georg Gadamer emphatically argued that "not just occasionally but *always*, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author" (Gadamer 1989, *emphasis added*). As he explained:

> Every age has *to understand a transmitted text in its own way*, for the text belongs to the whole tradition whose content interest the age and in which it seeks to understand itself. The real meaning of a text, as it speaks to the interpreter, *does not depend on the contingencies of the author and his original audience*. It is certainly not identical with them, for *it is always co-determined also by the historical situation of the interpreter* and hence by the totality of the objective course of history (Gadamer 1989, *emphasis added*).

Elsewhere, Gadamer stated: "Just as the events of history do not in general manifest any agreement with the subjective ideas of the person who stands and acts within history, so the sense of a text in general reaches far beyond what its author originally intended" (Gadamer 1989). As Gadamer pointed out, new questions by new audiences often open up new possibilities of meaning. For Gadamer, these new questions, insights and interpretation are part of an ongoing and infinite process by which "new sources of understanding are continually emerging that reveal

unsuspected elements of meaning" (Gadamer 1989). This ability to ask new questions presupposes the possibility of multiple standpoints and referents which are capable of revealing new insights and interpretations, leading in turn to the possibility of generating an intricately woven tapestry of diverse and profound meaningfulness. Clearly, precedents are important, but they are not exhaustive. No one approach can exhaust all the meanings of *Truyện Kiều*.

Hence, as a "classic," *Truyện Kiều* possesses multiple referents and interpretational standpoints which allow for both extratextual and intratextual readings of this poem. There is an inherent dynamism within the polysemy and multivalency of this "classic" poem which is able to generate new meanings in response to new questions by new audiences in new circumstances. In addition, the character of *Thúy Kiều* is replete with multivalency, such that both extratextual and intratextual interpretations are possible in different hermeneutical contexts. Indeed, extratextual interpretations were carried out in the past, and have become precedents for contemporary interpretations of this epic poem. At the same time, while extratextual precedents are important, nevertheless they are not exhaustive. The very open-endedness of *Truyện Kiều* as a "classic" means that fresh rereadings from different perspectives and using different methods are capable of revealing new insights and interpretations. To put it another way: both extratextual and intratextual readings of this poem lead to the possibility of generating an intricately woven tapestry of diverse and profound meaningfulness.

This essay seeks to read *Truyện Kiều* intratextually to explore the implications of a powerful yet subversive tale of a woman whose unconditional commitment to filiality resulted in her gut-wrenching descent into the abyss of despair as concubine and courtesan. It seeks to show how an intratextual reading reveals the heroine of the story to be a well-educated, strong-willed, intelligent and courageous woman whose character transcended all the rigid stereotypes of traditional Confucian ethical admonitions for women. It will also discuss how Nguyễn Du sought to redefine the relations between parent–child and husband-wife, as well as explore their significance for reconceptualizing contemporary Vietnamese Confucian ethics for women away from the classic "Three Bonds" and "Three Obediences" to a virtue ethics for women that is derived from the Confucian Five Relations.

9.2 Nguyễn Du: His Life and Achievements

Nguyễn Du was born in 1765 into a Vietnamese Confucian scholar-gentry family in the North with a long and illustrious heritage of service at the imperial court of the Lê Dynasty. He began his formal education at the age of six and by all accounts was a brilliant and erudite student with a prodigious memory who successfully passed the imperial examination at the young age of 19. The period in which he grew up (1765–1800) was a period of transition and crisis that was marked by much discontent, anarchy, and turbulence. The weak and decadent Lê Dynasty was a pale shadow of its glorious past, desperately clinging on to a farcical show of pomp without any

real power beyond the imperial palace. Real power was in the hands of the provincial lords (*chúa*) from two feuding families, that is, the rival Trịnh and Nguyễn clans that controlled the northern and southern regions respectively since the 1620s. More significantly, the year 1771 saw the rise of the Tây-sơn revolt that began as a peasant rebellion led by three brothers, Nguyễn Nhạc, Nguyễn Lữ, and Nguyễn Huệ. Capitalizing on the peasants' deep-rooted discontent, this incipient uprising soon developed into a full-blown revolutionary movement that destroyed and replaced the hegemony of the Trịnh and Nguyễn clans with an egalitarian socio-political order with a modest program of land and wealth redistribution (Durand 1966).

Coming from a family with a distinguished record of faithful service to both the Lê and Trịnh rulers, Nguyễn Du had no sympathy for the peasant-based Tây-sơn uprising. Not surprisingly, he spent most of the first 35 years of his life alternating between resisting and surviving the Tây-sơn revolution, "haunted by the tragedy of a vanished 'orthodox succession' of emperors to which his family had been deeply attached and by the whirlpool of unstable, promiscuous political affiliations which had replaced it" (Woodside 1983). Upon his failure to join the imperial cortege of Emperor Lê Chiêu-Thống who was fleeing into exile in China in 1789, Nguyễn Du collaborated with his elder brother-in-law Đoàn Nguyễn-Tuấn in a failed bid to restore the Lê Dynasty. When this revolt was crushed, he fled to the sanctuary of his native village. Next, Nguyễn Du traveled to the south to offer his services to Nguyễn Phúc-Ánh (1762–1820), the sole survivor of the Tây-sơn massacre of the Nguyễn clan who was then fighting to recapture the south from Tây-sơn rule. Unfortunately, he was captured and briefly imprisoned by the Tây-sơn army. Demoralized, he wanted to further role in the ongoing civil war. He retreated to the countryside where he engaged in introspective self-reflection, hunting, reading, and writing poetry (Durand 1966).

After Nguyễn Phúc-Ánh overthrew the Tây-sơn Dynasty and declared himself Emperor of a unified Vietnam under the name of Gia Long in 1802, he summoned Nguyễn Du to serve him in his court. Nguyễn Du responded reluctantly, if only to ensure that his family was not persecuted for their efforts to restore the Lê Dynasty (Huỳnh 1983). In 1805, he served in an imperial "scholars' pavilion," the Đông-các Đại-học-sĩ. In 1813, he was placed in charge of a diplomatic mission to China and was promoted to be the Assessor of Ritual Propriety in the Ministry of Rites in 1815. Subsequently, he was appointed to lead a second diplomatic mission to China but passed away in Huế in 1820 before he could carry out his duties (Durand 1966).

Lest anyone should have any illusion that Nguyễn Du exercised real political power after his rehabilitation by Gia Long, his official appointments were designed to ensure that he and other members of the Confucian scholar-gentry class who had served the discredited *ancien regime* would not pose any threat to Gia Long's reign. As Woodside explains:

> [T]he Huế scholars' pavilions were usually little more than airless, apolitical sanctuaries which collected and employed elderly Lê dynasty scholars or supplied learned tutors to the children of the imperial family. Diplomatic missions to China, for their part, were customarily staffed with poetic masters of Chinese literature, who could represent Vietnamese politics in unimpeachably Chinese terms within the frigidly condescending atmosphere of a Peking audience hall (Woodside 1983).

Undoubtedly, Nguyễn Du's service to Gia Long projected a loyalty of convenience to Southern upstarts. Conveniently concealed beneath this thin veneer of loyalty was his depression and agony at his compromises with the vicissitudes of a new socio-political order that viewed people like him with much suspicion. His inner depression, which arose out of the ignominy of his rehabilitated status, led him eventually to die of illness in 1820 after stoically refusing medical treatment. Quoting from the official court chronicles Durand states:

> Minh-mệnh appréciait beaucoup Nguyễn Du qui, très fier et très indépendant de caractère, présentait cependant un extérieur doux et timide. Devant l'Empereur il parlait peu et semblait comme effrayé… Dans l'exercise de ses fonctions Nguyễn Du était humble avec ses supérieurs et il avait toujours l'air triste et peu heureux. Quand il fut malade il ne voulut pas boire de médicaments et mourut sans faire d'éclats (1966).

It was during this period of inner depression, personal disillusionment, and extended self-introspection that Nguyễn Du penned the powerfully poignant and much-beloved *Truyện Kiều* in the Vietnamese vernacular (*chữ nôm*). On the one hand, it is true that *Truyện Kiều* was not Nguyễn Du's original composition *per se*, but rather his condensed rendition into the Vietnamese vernacular (*chữ nôm*) prosody of an early Qing Dynasty Chinese prose novel entitled "The Tale of Jin, Yun, and Qiao" (*Jin Yun Qiao Chuan*) by an anonymous author who used the pseudonym, "Pure-hearted and Talented Master" (Qingxin Cairen) (Nghiêm 1966; Huỳnh 1983).[4] In turn, the Chinese prose novel is a literary fictionalization of certain historical events in 16th century Ming China:

> The novel is about historical figures who lived and died during the Ming Dynasty. In 1554, Governor Hu Tsung-hsien (Hồ Tôn Hiến) mounted a campaign to quell the revolt led by Hsü Hai (Từ Hải), whose troops controlled the seacoast area of Fukien and Chekiang. Unable to vanquish him by force of arms, Hu bribed Hsü's mistress, a former courtesan named Wang Ts'ui-ch'iao (Vương Thúy Kiều): she persuaded the rebel to surrender, and he is killed. Forced to marry a 'barbarian' (a tribal chief), she drowned herself. But in the novel the anonymous author allowed her to be rescued and reunited with her family (Huỳnh 1983).[5]

On the other hand, by condensing a 20-chapter prose novel into a tightly succinct and vividly imaginative 1,627-couplet *truyện nôm* poem, Nguyễn Du had successfully transformed a mediocre novel into a powerful expression of hope and fulfillment. Today, *Truyện Kiều* is regarded as Vietnam's national poem, the epitome of the literary heritage of Vietnam, and honored as a monumental literary work of international stature. For all his literary accomplishments, Nguyễn Du was honored by UNESCO as one of the greatest poets of humanity (Đặng Quốc Cơ 1998; Đặng Vũ Nhuế 1998).

[4] For an excerpt of this Chinese prose novel in French translation with commentary, see Nghiêm (1966).

[5] See also Durand (1966) for a discussion of the historical allusions of this Chinese prose novel. For studies of the metamorphosis of the Chinese novel into a Vietnamese poem, see Nghiêm (1966) and Benoit (1981).

9.3 A Synopsis of *Truyện Kiều*

Old man Vương had three children, viz., two older daughters Thúy Kiều and Thúy Vân and the youngest was a son called Vương Quan who was studying to be a scholar (lines 13–16). Of the two daughters, Thúy Kiều was by far the more beautiful, brilliant and talented, being well versed in poetry, painting, singing, music performance and composition (lines 23–34). The plot unfurls on the "Festival of Sweeping the Graves" (*Thanh-ming*) in spring, when she chanced upon the abandoned grave of a courtesan, Đạm Tiên (lines 59–80). She was moved to make offerings for Đạm Tiên, who subsequently appeared to her in a dream that night and forewarned her of her unfortunate destiny as recorded in the "Register of the Sorrowful Ones" (*Sổ Đoạn trường*, lines 81–104, 185–202). Meanwhile, on the same day at the cemetery her eyes also glanced upon Kim Trọng, a youthful scholar and Vương Quan's classmate. Kim Trọng also caught sight of her and it was love at first sight for them (lines 133–170). Subsequently, they met secretly at his house and vowed to bind each other in eternal love (lines 289–528).

Alas for Thúy Kiều, she was hit with a double tragedy. First, Kim Trọng was suddenly called home far away on the death of his uncle (lines 531–567). Barely had she digested that heartbreaking news when her father was imprisoned on false charges (lines 575–598). Thúy Kiều agreed to sell herself into concubinage to an unscrupulous character, Mã Giám-sinh to raise the money to redeem her father (lines 599–692). Before Thúy Kiều left, she made her younger sister Thúy Vân promised that she would marry Kim Trọng in her stead (lines 693–756). Unfortunately for Thúy Kiều, Mã Giám-sinh was married to an ex-prostitute, Tú Bà (Old Lady Tú) who operated a brothel. He connived to place her there with the intention of living off her earnings (lines 805–844). In her despair, she tried unsuccessfully to commit suicide the first time (lines 979–1000). Tú Bà promised that she could leave when a decent man came to buy her out (lines 1001–1054). Meanwhile, she set a trap for Thúy Kiều, getting one of her minions to feign sympathy for the naïve Thúy Kiều, persuading her to escape with him (lines 1059–1120). In the ensuing escape, Thúy Kiều was caught and savagely beaten by Tú Bà, who used this attempted escape as an excuse to force her into prostitution (lines 1121–1274).

Eventually a wealthy man called Thúc Kỳ Tâm fell in love with Thúy Kiều, bought her out and made her his second-rank wife (lines 1275–1472). They lived happily together for a year until Thúy Kiều suggested that he should go home and introduce her to his first wife, Hoạn Thư ("Lady Hoạn") (lines 1473–1530). However, Hoạn Thư found out about her husband's deceit from public gossip. Filled with rage and jealousy, she arranged for Thúy Kiều to be kidnapped, beaten and made her slave to serve her and her hen-pecked husband, who was now too afraid to acknowledge his second-rank wife (lines 1531–1884). After humiliating her, Hoạn Thư allowed Thúy Kiều to become a Buddhist nun. Changing her name to "Cleansed

Spring" (Trạc Tuyền), she was cloistered in the shrine of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Quan-âm in the garden of Hoạn Thư (lines 1909–1936). Unable to play the game of constant humiliation with Hoạn Thư, Thúy Kiều ran away with several altar vessels from the shrine and sought refuge in a Buddhist temple, where she placed herself under the protection of its prioress, Giác Duyên (lines 2003–2060). However, Giác Duyên soon learned of Thúy Kiều's escape with stolen objects. To avoid a scandal, she arranged for Thúy Kiều to leave the sanctuary of the monastery to the care of the Bạc family (lines 2063–2086). Unfortunately, the Bạc family proved to be pimps and Thúy Kiều soon found herself back in the brothel (lines 2087–2164).

Thúy Kiều's fortune took a turn for the better. A rebel leader by the name of Từ Hải fell in love with her, redeemed her and took her as his spouse (lines 2167–2212). A year later, Từ Hải led a great uprising, defeated the imperial troops and became the ruler of a vast domain (lines 2213–2288). Both Thúy Kiều and Từ Hải lived happily together for five years. Meanwhile, the provincial governor Hồ Tôn Hiến was ordered to capture Từ Hải. Having failed to defeat Từ Hải by force of arms, he resorted to a cunning stratagem to win Từ Hải's head (lines 2451–2460). He made a spurious peace offer to Từ Hải, who immediately rejected it (lines 2460–2472). However, the guileless Thúy Kiều, naïvely believing in the fine words of Hồ Tôn Hiến, persuaded her husband to accept his peace offer (lines 2473–2502). No sooner had Từ Hải ordered his troops to disarm than the imperial army launched a treacherous attack, killing him and capturing Thúy Kiều (lines 2503–2564). In her ignominy, Hồ Tôn Hiến compelled her to marry a local tribal chieftain (lines 2565–2602). She refused, ran away, and for a second time, tried unsuccessfully to commit suicide by jumping into the Tiền-đường river, but was rescued unconscious by Giác Duyên (lines 2603–2710). While still in her unconscious stupor, Thúy Kiều met Đạm Tiên in a dream, who assured her that because of all the merits she had performed, her name has been struck out from the "Register of the Sorrowful Ones" (*Sổ Đoạn trường*) (lines 2711–2724).

Fifteen years had elapsed since Thúy Kiều was separated from her first love, Kim Trọng. At first, he had searched for her in vain upon learning about her misfortune. Unable to find her, in his grief he married Thúy Vân (lines 2739–2856). By chance, he encountered Giác Duyên, who informed him that Thúy Kiều was still alive (lines 2973–2992). Finally, Thúy Kiều was reunited with her family and Kim Trọng (lines 3009–3032). On account of the entreaties of Thúy Vân, Kim Trọng, and her family members, Thúy Kiều reluctantly agreed to marry Kim Trọng (lines 3061–3134). At Thúy Kiều's insistence, Kim Trọng reluctantly agreed not to consummate the marriage (lines 3135–3226). The household was richly blessed. Kim Trọng had a successful civil service career, Thúy Vân bore him many heirs, and Thúy Kiều lived happily together with her beloved, a kindred couple "sharing no bed but the joys of lute and verse" ("*chẳng trong chăn-gối cũng ngoài cầm-thơ*") (line 3222).

9.4 What Happens When One Reads *Truyện Kiều* Intratextually?

Moving from the generality of Vietnamese prosody to the specificity of *Truyện Kiều*, one must acknowledge that *Truyện Kiều* is an extremely complex poem with a complicated history of interpretation across the ideological spectrum. On the one hand, it is true that the prevailing scholarship of the last 100 years has tended to downplay the Confucian elements of *Truyện Kiều*. For example, Đặng Vũ Nhuế (1998) suggests that Confucian values "seems to be irrelevant" in the case of *Thúy Kiều* because, among other things, she failed to practise the four virtues (*tứ-đức*).[6] On the other hand, there was a vocal minority of highly conservative Vietnamese *literati* who took issue with Nguyễn Du's characterization of Thúy Kiều. They were led by the famous scholar-minister Nguyễn Công Trứ (1778–1858), who, among other things, wrote the following scathing critique of the character of Thúy Kiều for her poor ethical-moral conduct according to Confucian mores:

> "Pour les belles c'est connu, le sort est ingrat
> Kiều, dit-on, de manquer à son serment
> Elle oublia l'épingle et l'éventail donnés en gage à Kim Lang
> La piété filiale l'emporte sur l'amour, c'est juste après tout
> Mais de Mã Giám-sinh à Từ Hải
> Quand la fleur brisée se vendait aux maisons de joie
> Jusqu'à blaser abeilles et papillons
> Que restait-il de la piété filiale de Kiều?
> Le sort ingrat n'a jamais souillé les cœurs purs
> Ah! Les malheurs sans nom d'une vie de plaisirs!" (Chesneaux and Boudarel 1966)

These conservative scholars recognized, but could not accept *Truyện Kiều* for what it was, i.e., the exaltation of an independent, courageous and strong-willed woman who overcame all difficulties and sorrows in her life to achieve a marriage of equals with her true love. Their interpretation of this text as subversive of Confucian mores for women should not be surprising, especially when juxtaposed with Emperor Gia Long's program of strict Confucianization of the early

[6] According to the fifteenth century Sino-Vietnamese Confucian admonitions on the proper ordering of family life, *Gia huấn ca*, which instructs various members of a Vietnamese family on strict adherence to Confucian moral-ethical orthodoxy, the four virtues for women (*tứ-đức*) are *dung*, *công*, *ngôn*, and *hạnh*, which Stephen Young succinctly summarizes as follows: "*Dung* is appearance, which should be neat and attractive. *Công* is industry, which should be precise and careful. *Ngôn* is speech, which should be submissive and respectful. *Hạnh* is character, which should be upright, filial, devoted, and trustworthy" (Young 1998). Note the parallels in the Confucian Book of Rites (*Liji* or *Lễ-kí*), which states: "Therefore, anciently, for three months before the marriage of a young lady, if the temple of the high ancestor (of her surname) were still standing (and she had admission to it), she was taught in it, as the public hall (of the members of her surname); if it were no longer standing (for her), she was taught in the public hall of the Head of that branch of the surname to which she belonged – she was taught there the virtue, the speech, the carriage, and the work of a wife" (Legge 1885), as well as Ban Zhao (48–117 CE)'s presentation of the four virtues in her classic work, *Instructions for Women* (*Nüjie*) as "(1) womanly virtue; (2) womanly words; (3) womanly bearing; and (4) womanly work" (Swann 1932).

nineteenth century Vietnamese society. Seen from this perspective, the many extratextual endeavors to interpret the character of Thúy Kiều metaphorically, existentially or allegorically are in reality endeavors to *relativize or avoid the profound iconoclastic impact* arising from *intratextual* readings. This is because intratextual readings invariably give rise to a damning indictment of the androcentrism of Confucianism, to the chagrin of Nguyễn Công Trứ and other conservative Vietnamese Confucian scholars.

In hindsight, perhaps one could posit three ways of looking at this state of affairs. First, there are close parallels between the fictional life experiences of Thúy Kiều with the real life experiences of Vietnam's infamous poetess and Nguyễn Du's contemporary, Hồ Xuân Hương (1772–1822), whom "Vietnamese historians are virtually unanimous in acclaiming… as the 'most special' poetry writer who ever lived in Vietnam" (Woodside 1971). Both the fictional Thúy Kiều and the real-life Hồ Xuân Hương were extraordinary well talented and intelligent, witty, skilled in rhetoric and able to express themselves in excellent prosody. Both were also concubines for part of their adult lives. Both had sought to deconstruct and reshape prevailing Confucian moral-ethical norms for women by their subversive actions. In this regard, Woodside observes that Hồ Xuân Hương "wrote poetry which, for all its playfulness, may have been the darkest assault upon Confucian ethics ever delivered by a literate scholar of a classical East Asian society. Most modern Vietnamese writers agree that she often went too far, to the point where her contemporaries regarded her as a 'monster,' whose influence should be obliterated" (Woodside 1971). Just as many scholars wanted to "obliterate" the subversive and deconstructive influence of Hồ Xuân Hương, perhaps many scholars sought to relativize the character of Thúy Kiều on the same grounds.

Second, the efforts at metaphorical, allegorical and existential relativization of *Truyện Kiều* may be compared to the manner in which Vietnamese literati sought to relativize the poem of a fan's fate by Ban Jieyu (Ban Tiệp-dư), the concubine of the Han Emperor Chengdi. Citing Huỳnh Sanh Thông:

> When Lady Pan, disgraced consort of the Chinese Emperor Han Ch'eng-ti, used in her plaintive poem the fact that a fan is appreciated in summer and tossed aside in autumn as a metaphor of her fate, she must have been aware that the delta-shaped object perfectly emblems both a woman's sexuality and her condition in a world dominated by men. Yet *male writers always feigned not to see it in that light and preferred to treat the Han queen's fan as a political allegory, representing the plight of some Confucian scholar-official fallen out of favor with his sovereign or unemployed in auspicious times*: that was the interpretation adopted by Nguyễn Trãi in "For years you wallowed in the scholars' world" or by Nguyễn Khuyến in "To a discarded fan." Almost ten centuries after Lady Pan, it fell to Hồ Xuân Hương, a Vietnamese woman brought up in a folk tradition of no mealymouthedness, to confront the sexual meaning of a fan and compose a hymn to womanhood (Huỳnh 1979, *emphasis added*).

In other words, many otherwise brilliant Vietnamese Confucian scholars, e.g., Nguyễn Trãi and Nguyễn Khuyến could not, or would not accept the possibility that the fan imagery might actually be referring to a woman's quest to understand herself and her precarious position in a patriarchal milieu. They preferred a safer recourse by allegorizing the fan imagery as symbolizing the plight of an out-of-favor

Confucian scholar-gentry. In view of the foregoing, perhaps the gauntlet thrown down by Nguyễn Du was way ahead of its time and like Ban Jieyu's fan imagery, too subversive to be seriously considered. This has resulted in the tendency of generations of scholars to look for safer ways of interpreting this poem by relegating it to the realm of allegory, metaphor or existentialism. Such an understanding is also borne out by the fact that historically, many Vietnamese *paterfamilias* considered *Truyện Kiều* to be subversive of the patriarchal order and forbade their wives and daughters to read it, for fear that they would be "contaminated" by Thúy Kiều's free spirit.

Such a tendency to relativize a potentially subversive text in order to blunt its challenge to the status quo is not merely a phenomenon among nineteenth century Vietnamese Confucian scholars. Allegorizing in order to blunt the subversive edge of a text is a common strategy in many cultures and traditions. For example, the scandalous dimension of the adulterous affair between Krishna and Radha, as well as the explicit description of their love-making in Jayadeva's love poem, Gitagovinda (circa 1185 C.E.) have been relativized and domesticated by later mystics and *Vaisnava* adherents as an allegory or metaphor which describes the longing of the human for the divine. One could also say the same for allegorical and metaphorical interpretations of the Song of Songs in both Jewish and Christian scriptural exegesis.

Third, perhaps one could infer from the subversive characterization of Thúy Kiều that Nguyễn Du was interested in reconciling the harsh androcentrism of the Nguyễn emperors' rigid Confucian orthodoxy with the less restrictive attitudes towards women among the popular masses in nineteenth century Vietnam. This should not come as a surprise, especially since he would have been painfully aware that his contemporary, the extraordinarily talented Vietnamese poetess, Hồ Xuân Hương was highly outraged and embittered that despite her literary talents and excellent educational qualifications, she could never aspire to the public careers in nineteenth century Vietnam that were opened to her male counterparts with lesser scholarly credentials. He would also have been cognizant of the fact that there was no love lost among the popular masses for the Nguyễn emperors' program of strict Confucianization. As the popular folk adage points out: "*phép vua thua lệ làng*" ("the king's law [i.e., Confucianism] must yield to the village custom").

If Nguyễn Du had such subversive intentions, he could never have expressed it explicitly, for fear of running afoul of spies from the Bureau of Censors (*Đô Sát Viện*) who reported on any bureaucrat's deviation from Confucian orthodoxy. Under the Nguyễn rule, all writings were carefully scrutinized and printing presses tightly controlled. Consequently, many Vietnamese scholars disguised their views on particular socio-cultural or politic issues using the fictive literary genres of novel and poetry. The ambiguity of fiction as a literary device enabled Vietnamese scholars to cloak their subversive or anti-establishment views without attracting too much notice from the Bureau of Censors.

On the basis of the foregoing, perhaps one could draw a parallel between an intratextual reading of the subversive character of Thúy Kiều in *Truyện Kiều* on the one hand, and the tradition of subversive pro-women Chinese fictive literature

written by eighteenth and nineteenth century Confucian scholars on the other hand. An important but often overlooked development in Chinese Confucianism beginning from the late-seventeenth century and reaching its apogee in the nineteenth century was the rise of subversive pro-women fictive literature by Confucian scholar-gentry as covert critique against the status quo of Confucian androcentrism during the Qing Dynasty. Not surprisingly, such veiled attacks at Confucian orthodoxy were cast by these Chinese scholars in fictive terms to avoid the loss of their positions or death for subversion. In general, these writings were remarkable for their positive portrayal of women vis-à-vis the pervasive androcentrism of eighteenth and nineteenth century Confucian orthodoxy. The ambiguity of fiction as a literary device enabled Qing-era Confucian scholars to express more positive views on women in a subtle but defiant way than what Confucian orthodoxy would permit. In doing so, they were interested to attack practices imposed upon women in the name of moral propriety (*lễ-giáo*) such as female illiteracy, widow suicide, concubinage and foot-binding.[7]

9.5 New Insights from an Intratextual Reading of the Character of Thúy Kiều

*9.5.1 Education (*văn*)*

One of the first things which one notices about Thúy Kiều in the poem is her education (*văn*) and upbringing. Contrary to the Vietnamese Confucian adage, "women without talent are virtuous" (*nữ tử vô tài tiện thị đức*), which idealized a woman's ignorance to ensure her submission to familial duties and obligations, Nguyễn Du

[7] Of the many subversive pro-women Chinese fictive narratives, three stand out: Pu Songling's *Liaozhai Zhiyi* ("Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio"), Wu Jingzi's *Rulin Waishi* ("The Scholars") and Li Ruzhen's *Jinghua Yuan* ("Flowers in the Mirror"). Written in 1679, Pu Songling's *Liaozhai Zhiyi* enjoys the distinction of being the earliest attempt by a Confucian scholar to write a fictive narrative which discusses women's gender roles, albeit in classical Chinese prose. The *Liaozhai Zhiyi* is a collection of short stories which portrayed women as more independent, intelligent, active and courageous than men in moments of crisis. Wu Jingzi's *Rulin Waishi*, which is often regarded as the first great Qing novel in vernacular Chinese rather than in classical Chinese, attacks the androcentrism of Confucian orthodoxy by, among other things, satirizing widow suicide as a pre-eminent Confucian virtue of female moral propriety. Li Ruzhen's *Jinghua Yuan* is often regarded as a fictive *tour de force* which brilliantly subverts and deconstructs the pervasive Confucian androcentrism of Qing China. This novel is best remembered for its brilliant attack on Confucian androcentrism in its imaginative satire of a "Land of Women" where gender roles are reversed. The merchant Lin Zhiyang visited the "Land of Women" hoping to make a fortune selling cosmetics. Unfortunately, he was captured and selected to be a "concubine" to the female "king," who ordered that Lin be "womanized," i.e., his feet were bound, face powdered, eyebrows plucked and ears pierced, and so forth. For a more in-depth analysis of these three novels, see Hou (1986) and Ropp (1976).

portrayed Thúy Kiều as being highly educated in the classical Confucian education. Thus, in lines 29–32, one reads:

> "By Heaven blessed with wit, she knew all skills,
> she could write verse and paint, could sing and chant.
> Of music she had mastered all five tones,
> and played the lute far better than *Ai Chang*."[8]

Even her fiancé, Kim Trọng was very impressed with her literary ability, comparing her to two erudite Chinese women scholars who where the epitome of the highest learning, i.e., Ban Zhao (Ban Chiêu, 48–117 C.E.) and Xie Daoyun (Tạ Đạo Uẩn, c.340–c.399 C.E.) (lines 405–6):

> "Your magic conjures gems and pearls!" he cried.
> "Could Pan and Hsieh have measured up to this?"[9]

Two observations can be made here. First, it appears that Thúy Kiều's poetry skills mirrored closely the poetry skills of the extraordinarily talented Vietnamese poetess *par excellence*, Hồ Xuân Hương, as previously discussed. Second, and more importantly, the choice of Ban Zhao (Ban Chiêu) is noteworthy, because she was a highly respected female Confucian scholar and the first *de facto* woman historiographer in the history of China. According to her official biography in the *History of the Later Han Dynasty*, she "was 'deeply learned and highly talented' and a model of widowly rectitude" (Raphals 1998). Upon the premature demise of her elder brother, the noted Confucian scholar Ban Gu (32–92 C.E.), she was invited by Emperor He (89–105 C.E.) to the Dongguan Imperial Library in order to complete the writing of the "Eight Tables" and the "Treatise on Astronomy" in the *History of the Han Dynasty* (*Hanshu*), a task which had been left unfinished by her brother Ban Gu, thereby putting her on par with, if not above many of her male Confucian counterparts (Swann 1932).

*9.5.2 Moral Propriety (*lễ-giáo*)*

Thúy Kiều was clearly an independent and strong-willed woman who had a mind of her own, and yet acted within the bounds of moral propriety (*lễ-giáo*). On the one hand, she was bold enough to defy the strict Confucian orthodoxy by not only freely loving Kim Trọng without parental consent, but also visiting him without her parents' knowledge (see lines 301–2). Prima facie, Confucian moral orthodoxy would

[8] The Vietnamese text reads:

> *Thông-minh vốn sẵn tư trời,*
> *pha nghề thi họa đủ mùi ca ngâm.*
> *Cung-thương làu bậc ngũ-âm,*
> *nghề riêng ăn đứt hồ-cầm Ngại Trương.*

[9] The Vietnamese text reads:

> *Khen: "Tài nhả ngọc phun châu!*
> *"Nàng Ban à Tạ cũng đâu thế này?"*

consider it scandalous that she vowed eternal love to Kim Trọng without her parent's knowledge and permission. On the other hand, she had no intention marrying him without her parents' consent, as can be seen in her response to Kim Trọng's wooing (lines 333–336):

> When comes the time for love, the marriage bond,
> my parents' wish will tie it or will not.
> You deign to care for me, but I'm too young
> to know what's right and dare not give my word."[10]

Kim Trọng, a good Confucian gentleman himself, promised to arrange for a go-between to set up the wedding, which was the only way they could marry (see lines 341–2). More significantly, when Kim Trọng, who was intoxicated with Thúy Kiều's music and charms, began lustfully to take wanton liberties with her, she replied in no uncertain terms (lines 501–10, 519–22):

> She said: "Treat not our love as just a game
> please stay away from me and let me speak.
> What is a mere peach blossom that one should
> fence off the garden, thwart the bluebird's quest?
> But you've named me your bride – to serve her man,
> she must place chastity above all else.
> They played in mulberry groves along the P'u,
> but who would care for wenches of that ilk?
> Are we to snatch the moment, pluck the fruit,
> and in one sole day wreck a lifelong trust?
> …
> If I don't cast the shuttle in defense,
> we'll later blush for it – who'll bear the guilt?
> Why force your wish on your shy flower so soon?
> While I'm alive, you'll some time get your due."[11]

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[10] The Vietnamese text reads:

> *Dầu khi lá thắm chỉ hồng*
> *nên chăng thì cũng tại lòng mẹ-cha*
> *Nặng lòng xót liễu vì hoa,*
> *trẻ-thơ đã biết đâu mà dám thưa.*

[11] The Vietnamese text reads:

> *Thưa rằng: "Đừng lấy làm chơi,*
> *"Rẽ cho thưa hết một lời đã nao!*
> *"Vẻ chi một đóa yêu-đào,*
> *"vườn hồng chi dám ngăn-rào chim xanh.*
> *"Đã cho vào bậc bố-kinh,*
> *"đạo tòng-phu lấy chữ trinh làm đầu.*
> *"Ra tuồng trên Bộc trong dâu,*
> *"thì con người ấy ai cầu làm chi.*
> *"Phải điều ăn xổi ở thì,*
> *"tiết trăm năm nỡ bỏ đi một ngày.*
> …
> *"Gieo thoi trước chẳng giữ-giàng,*
> *"để sau nên thẹn cùng chàng bởi ai?*
> *"Vội chi liễu ép hoa nài?*
> *"Còn thân ắt lại đền-bồi có khi."*

Clearly, Nguyễn Du praised mutual love freely shared between two individuals, but he also argued that it should not be an excuse for lustful and scandalous behavior. Although men and women could freely choose their spouses, they ought to observe moral propriety in doing so.

*9.5.3 Filiality (***hiếu***)*

Thúy Kiều did not shirk her obligations of filiality (*hiếu*) to her father when he was imprisoned on false charges. Notwithstanding the fact that she had pledged her love to Kim Trọng, she, as the eldest daughter, resolved to sell herself into concubinage to save her father. Far from being an easy decision, she struggled with the pain of deciding, torn between love to her fiancé and filial duty (*hiếu*) to her father. Nguyễn Du described her anguish at the dilemma which confronted her as follows (lines 599–604):

> "By what means could she save her flesh and blood?
> When evil strikes, you bow to circumstance.
> As you must weigh and choose between your love
> and filial duty, which will turn the scale?
> She put aside all vows of love and troth
> a child first pays the debts of birth and care."[12]

In fact, even when she was the consort of Từ Hải, the rebel leader turned ruler, her filiality (*hiếu*) did not diminish in fervor (lines 2237–2240):

> For her old parents how it ached, her heart!
> Had time allayed their sorrow at their loss?
> With more than ten years gone, if still alive,
> they must have skin with scales and hair like frost."[13]

When she was reunited with her family after 15 years, Thúy Kiều alternated between her joy at seeing them once again, and the vows of Buddhist nunhood.

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[12] The Vietnamese text reads:

> *Sao cho cốt-nhục vẹn-tuyền?*
> *Trong khi ngộ-biến tòng quyền biết sao.*
> *Duyên hội-ngộ đức cù-lao,*
> *bên tình bên hiếu bên nào nặng hơn?*
> *Để lời thệ hải minh sơn,*
> *lam con trước phải đền ơn sinh-thành.*

[13] The Vietnamese text reads:

> *Xót thay huyên cỗi xuân già*
> *tấm lòng thương-nhớ biết là có nguôi?*
> *Chốc đà mười mấy năm trời,*
> *còn ra khi đã da mồi tóc sương.*

Nevertheless, as a filial daughter she yielded obediently to her father's request to return home (lines 3057–8):

> "Heeding her father's word, had to yield
> she took leave of cloister and old nun."[14]

While Confucian rigorists may quibble on Thúy Kiều's less-than-literal observance of Confucian orthodoxy in her life as concubine and courtesan, no one can doubt the sincerity of her unconditional filiality (*hiếu*) throughout her entire life. Without any doubt, Thúy Kiều's filiality (*hiếu*), even to the point of struggling with life's adversities with stoic perseverance (*nhẫn*), shines through clearly as the cornerstone for her moral self-cultivation. Clearly, she has faithfully and unconditionally upheld the *grundnorm* of Confucian orthodoxy, because all other Confucian virtues and ideals are either directly or indirectly rooted in the virtue of filiality. On this ground alone, Đặng Vũ Nhuế's assertion that Confucian values "seems to be irrelevant" in the case of *Thúy Kiều* because, among other things, she failed to practice the four virtues (*tứ-đức*) (Đặng Vũ Nhuế 1998) is not justified and therefore untenable. In other words, Thúy Kiều is truly a Confucian *par excellence* by her faithful and unconditional filiality to her father.

9.5.4 *Female Chastity (*tiết*)*

In *Truyện Kiều*, Nguyễn Du presented a most remarkable and revolutionary idea of female chastity (*tiết*) in a profoundly moving conversation between Thúy Kiều and Kim Trọng. At first, Thúy Kiều argued that she was unable to marry Kim Trọng because she felt herself ashamed and unworthy of him after failing to preserve her chastity for him (see lines 3091–3112). Kim Trọng's reply was revolutionary (lines 3115–3120, 3123–4):

> "Among those duties falling to her lot,
> a woman's chastity means many things.
> For there are times of ease and times of stress:
> in crisis, must one rigid rule apply?
> True [filial] daughter, you upheld a woman's role:
> what dust or dirt could ever sully you?
> …
> The faded flower's blooming forth afresh,
> the waning moon shines more than at its full."[15]

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[14] The Vietnamese text reads:

> *Nghe lời nàng phải chiều lòng*
> *giã sư giã cảnh đều cùng bước ra.*

[15] The Vietnamese text reads:

> *"Xưa nay trong đạo đàn bà,*
> *"chữ trinh kia cũng có ba bảy đường.*
> *"Có khi biến có khi thường,*

Nguyễn Du also returns to this theme in the penultimate couplet (3251–2):

> "Inside ourselves there lies the root of good:
> the heart outweighs all talents on this earth."[16]

Clearly, Nguyễn Du was emphatic that female chastity *transcends* its literal sense (i.e., virginal chastity) to encompass a woman's chastity of heart and mind. Such a figurative understanding of chastity was truly groundbreaking in the 1810s. Not surprisingly, scholars such as Nguyễn Công Trứ criticized him severely for proposing such an "immoral" notion of chastity, arguing that it would lead to promiscuity (Chesneaux and Boudarel 1966). Subsequent generations of scholars were also embarrassed by such a "liberal" interpretation of chastity. They have tended to relativize its full impact and implications for Vietnamese women by allegorizing it instead to refer to Nguyễn Du's personal-existential struggles with his "political" chastity. In this regard, they often draw a parallel between Nguyễn Du, who was forced to renounce his loyalty to the Lê Dynasty and prostitute himself to a dynasty of usurpers to protect his family from reprisals, and Thúy Kiều, who was forced to renounce her loyalty to her betrothed and prostitute herself to scoundrels to ransom her father (Nguyễn Khắc Viện 1965; Nguyễn Văn Hoàn 1965; Huỳnh 1983).

*9.5.5 Mutual Respect (***kính***), Reciprocity (***thư***) & Equality (***tề***) in Conjugal Relations*

Nguyễn Du had also relativized the traditional understanding of the obedient submission (*thuận*) of a subservient wife to the dominance of her husband within the hierarchical ordering of the Three Bonds (*tam-cương*)[17] and the Three Obediences (*tam- tòng*).[18] In response to Thúy Kiều's reluctance to consummate the marriage,

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> *"có quyền nào phải một đường chấp-kinh.*
> *"Như nàng lấy hiếu làm trinh,*
> *"bụi nào cho đục được mình ấy vay?*
> …
> *"Hoa tàn mà lại thêm tươi*
> *"trăng tàn mà lại hơn mười rằm xưa.*

[16] The Vietnamese text reads:

> *Thiện-căn ở tại lòng ta,*
> *chữ tâm kia mới bằng ba chữ tài.*

[17] That is, the lordship and supremacy of ruler over minister, father over son, and husband over wife. Tu Wei-Ming argues that the Three Bonds was a relatively late development in Han Confucianism and had its roots in Legalism. He points out that "the first textual evidence of the idea [of the Three Bonds] occurs in the *Han fei tzu* (*Han fei zi*), the Legalistic classic: 'The minister serves the king, the son serves the father, and the wife serves the husband. If the three are followed, the world will be in peace; if the three are violated, the world will be in chaos'" (Tu 1998).

[18] That is, when a woman is young, she obeys her father, when she is married she obeys her husband, and when she is widowed, she obeys her eldest son. See Raphals (1998) for bibliographic references of the Three Obediences (*tam- tòng*) in the Confucian Book of Rites (*Liji* or *Lễ-kí*).

Kim Trọng graciously agreed to a platonic friendship between them as two soulmates deeply in love with each other (lines 3169–70, 75–8):

> "We loved each other, risked our lives, braved death
> now we two meet again, still deep in love.
> …
> If I long searched the sea for my lost pin,
> it was true love, not lust, that urged me on.
> We're back together now, beneath one roof:
> to live in concord, need two share one bed?"[19]

Such a platonic friendship between two soulmates was possible because Thúy Kiều, as Kim Trọng's "secondary wife," did not have to bear him any children. As a matter of fact, Thúy Vân, his "primary wife" had given him many children (lines 3237–8) in fulfillment of the classical Confucian injunction in the Book of Mencius to maintain a family's posterity.

More significantly, Nguyễn Du did not present the conjugal relations between Thúy Kiều and Kim Trọng in terms of the hierarchical submission-domination matrix of the Confucian Three Bonds and Three Obediences. Rather, their conjugal relations was built upon a *friend-to-friend relationship* that forms part of the Confucian Five Relations as articulated in the Book of Mencius (3A:4), i.e., the moral and reciprocal relationship between ruler-minister, husband-wife, parent–child, old-young, and between friends. Nguyễn Du's use of the friend-to-friend relationship is instructive because of all the Confucian Five Relations, *only the friend-to-friend relationship is a relationship of equals*. By contrast, the other four relationships are ordered hierarchically. Nguyễn Du's characterization of the conjugal relations of Thúy Kiều and Kim Trọng as mutual friendship also comes through clearly in the following excerpt (lines 3221–6):

> "Of love and friendship they fulfilled both claims
> they shared no bed but joys of lute and verse.
> Now they sipped wine, now played a game of chess,
> admiring flowers, waiting for the moon.
> Their wishes all came true since fate so willed,
> and of two lovers marriage made two friends."[20]

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[19] The Vietnamese text reads:

> *"Thương nhau sinh-tử đã liều*
> *"gặp nhau còn chút bấy nhiêu là tình.*
> …
> *"Bấy lâu đáy bể mò kim,*
> *"là nhiều vàng-đá phải tìm trăng-hoa?*
> *"Ai ngờ lại hợp một nhà,*
> *"lọ là chăn-gối mới ra sắt-cầm.*

[20] The Vietnamese text reads:

> *Hai tình vẹn-vẽ hòa hai,*
> *chẳng trong chăn-gối cũng ngoài cầm-thơ.*
> *Khi chén rượu khi cuộc cờ,*
> *khi xem hoa nở khi chờ trăng lên.*
> *Ba sinh đã phỉ mười nguyền,*
> *duyên đôi-lứa cũng là duyên bạn-bầy.*

In other words, what characterizes the marriage between Thúy Kiều and Kim Trọng is not the traditional self-abnegation, self-abasement, unconditional obedience (*tong*), and submission (*thuận*) of a wife to the lordship of her husband that one usually expects in nineteenth century Vietnam. Instead, it is the mutual respect (*kính*), loyalty (*trung*), reciprocity (*thư*), and harmony (*hoà*) between Thúy Kiều and Kim Trọng in a marriage which is expressed as a *friendship of two equals* who are deeply in love (*ái*) with, and true (*tín*) to each other unconditionally. In particular, one notes how Nguyễn Du also described the harmony (*hoà*) and mutual respect (*kính*) between Thúy Kiều and her spouse using the image of musical harmony arising from lute-playing (line 3222). This is highly significant, because lute-playing is a traditional Confucian metaphor for harmony and concord within a conjugal relationship (Chan 2000; Huỳnh 1983). Clearly, by choosing to portray this marriage as a marriage of "equals," i.e., where the wife is on an equal footing with her husband as two friends sharing the "joys of lute and verse," sipping wine, playing chess, admiring flowers, etc., Nguyễn Du was putting forward a new way of forging conjugal relations that is rooted in the egalitarianism of friendship. Hence, Nguyễn Du sought to redefine the conjugal relations between Thúy Kiều and Kim Trọng in particular, and more generally ethics for Vietnamese women more generally away from the "Three Bonds" and "Three Obediences" towards the equality and mutuality of the relations between two friends within the matrix of the Confucian Five Relations. Such a view was highly revolutionary and was neither fully understood nor grasped in the androcentric Confucian climate of nineteenth century Vietnam.

9.6 Conclusion

An intratextual reading of *Truyện Kiều* reveals new insights which may have escaped the scrutiny of scholars who were more intent on extratextual analysis of this poem. Perhaps Nguyễn Du's sympathetic and positive view of women could be seen as a veiled critique of the rigidity of Confucian moral norms for women that were *de rigueur* in his days. His sympathetic and realistic descriptions of Thúy Kiều's feelings, desires and aspirations brought out flesh and blood, unlike the dry and legalistic Confucian manuals of instructions for women and girls, e.g., the fifteenth century Sino-Vietnamese *Gia huấn ca* instructing various members of a Vietnamese family on strict adherence to Confucian moral-ethical orthodoxy. Clearly, Nguyễn Du was not a firebrand revolutionary that some of his disappointed Marxist admirers may have desired. Nevertheless, perhaps *Truyện Kiều* was his attempt at embedding a humanizing countertrend *within* the prevailing Confucian orthodoxy of the Nguyễn ruling elite in nineteenth century Vietnamese society which sought to relativize and subvert its cold and legalistic impact in an unobtrusive but effective manner, without necessarily wanting to overthrow it.

An intratextual reading also reveals Thúy Kiều as well-educated, strong-willed, intelligent and courageous. It highlights the fact that her character transcended all rigid stereotypes of traditional Confucian ethical admonitions for women. On the

one hand, Thúy Kiều was truly a Confucian *par excellence* by her faithful, unflinching, and unconditional filiality to her father throughout her entire life. On the other hand, Thúy Kiều was not a typical submissive wife, a sex object, or a producer of children that centuries of Confucian androcentrism have come to praise. By making the relationship a mutual friendship within the Confucian Five Relations rather than the Three Bonds and Three Obediences, Nguyễn Du was able to subvert prevailing Confucian moral-ethical norms for women. For him, the ideal conjugal relationship is not hierarchically ordered. Rather, it is based upon the shared love of two equals in a manner akin to the equality of a friendship. In addition, conjugal relations are also built upon mutual respect, socio-intellectual companionship, and gender equality, rather than on the obligation to produce offspring. In the final analysis, Nguyễn Du's Thúy Kiều is truly a virtuous, courageous, and heroic woman (*liệt-nữ*) at the same time.

Moving forward, an intratextual reading opens the possibility for *Truyện Kiều* to be understood and appropriated as a *parable* which gives insights into living in an uncertain world. Here, a parable may be understood as a juxtaposition of concrete and familiar images and life experiences which seek to engage its audience and capture their imagination by its vivid realism, strangeness, inherent tension, conflict, satire, or paradox. Parables are always open-ended and unbounded. On the one hand they give rise to familiar recognition and stimulate one's imagination to new and exciting potentialities. On the other hand, they unsettle the self-contented and challenge them to introspective reflection by subverting or challenging comfortable presumptions.

As a parable of life, *Truyện Kiều* is polysemic and multivalent: it is genuinely creative and inexhaustible in meaning, enabling it always to break forth with new meanings in new circumstances. Nguyễn Du uses realistic images from daily living that catch his audience's attention by the vividness of their descriptions. Yet, the entire poem is laden with paradoxical twists. One is confronted by the fact that superficial appearances are deceptive and reality is often the occurrence of the unexpected. Like the parables of Jesus, *Truyện Kiều* is laden with paradoxes and contradictions: there are antinomies of good and evil, equity and injustice, kindness and cruelty, honesty and dishonesty, generosity and selfishness, selflessness and egotism, contentment and avarice, humanity and inhumanity, integrity and duplicity, as well as respect and disdain.

The conflicts, tensions, and paradoxical twists in the poem interrupt the normal course of things and displace uncritical complacency, thereby breaking open extraordinary meanings in the ordinary and mundane images of life. To give an example: the characterizations of Thúy Kiều and Từ Hải as prostitute and rebel leader respectively are ironic and paradoxical. In every age and place, prostitutes and rebels are marginalized for their threat to a society's well-being, proper ordering, and socio-ethical morals. Yet, paradoxically, both of them are not what one expects prostitutes and rebels to be. Their personalities, as well as moral-ethical values and ideals are juxtaposed with the circumstances of their lives to generate clashing images, tense moments, and paradoxical twists, all of which interact

together to subvert and change one's way of thinking and perceiving reality, thereby generating new insights and creating new meanings for new circumstances.

Hence, one cannot reduce the diversity and pluriformity in *Truyện Kiều* to a single grand narrative or overarching symbolism. *Truyện Kiều* is more than merely a moralistic tale of good triumphs over evil. The normative meaning is always elusive: the text will always be enigmatic, thereby allowing for new interpretations and insights by new audiences in new contexts and in reaction to new socio-cultural data, including intratextual readings that afford insights for re-visioning and reimagining Confucian gender relations and gender ethics for Vietnamese women. There is a sense of open-endedness which freely invites an imaginative response from its audience to appropriate the story in their lives. In today's world, one can wrestle with *Truyện Kiều* intratextually as an overarching parable of life, recognizing one's own moral values and cultural ethos within the story, identifying oneself with the characters and events, and allowing oneself to be transformed by this encounter.

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Part IV
Human Dignity and Rights

Chapter 10
The Patristic Notion of *Person* and Its Importance for Modern Culture

Dan Chițoiu

Abstract The notion of *Person* was one of the novelties brought by Christianity. This notion played a central role in the formulation of a new understanding of man, but first and foremost, of a new understanding of God. The consequences of this new description of God and man are really extraordinary for the formation of modern mentality. If the origin of the notion comes from patristic times, a careful investigation into how it was constituted and shaped within this horizon offers us the grounds to better understand our relation with self, otherness, and God. But the indistinct superposition of some significations of this notion, which come from different ages and perspectives, has led to its rather imprecise and sometimes improper use. It is important today to clarify the notions of person that have been accepted thus far and there is a very interesting notion of person in the Byzantine and the post-Byzantine tradition (of what we call now the Eastern European region). To consider the human mode of existence as a *type of reality*, means to consider *the person* not as an aggregate of different parts (body-soul, etc.) but something distinct, and distinct from any other kind of existence. This understanding can provide interesting answers to the contemporary questions about the description and the understanding of God, or about the status and the meaning of human existence.

Keywords Byzantine tradition • Person • Prosopon • Hypostasis • Patristics • Eastern Christian spirituality

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10.1 Radical Novelty About the Human in the Christian Message

Among major changes brought by Christianity and having exceptional significance for the emergence of a new cultural model is a different description of human, different from all that had been done before. All that had been said so far about the human being has proved insufficient, for Christian Revelation speaks not only about body resurrection at the end of history, but also about a different relationship between man and his Creator, the man is now described as deiform being, created to become God by participation. Freedom as being constitutive of man involves an understanding nonexistent in Greek philosophy or in Eastern Cultures. On the other hand, once with the first Christian theorizing, it was stressed that the essential aspect that can be linked to man's humanity is not only the soul (as it was in the Ancient Greeks thought), but also the flesh. The notion of the human cannot be covered by privileging one or another part (soul or flesh), but by understanding its existence as a whole and also as distinct from all other beings. The need to express this description brought a formidable challenge. This is because the existent language at that time, even that of Greek philosophy, offered nothing to indicate such a reality. This is why we can speak of a real leap in language by the Fourth Century authors who expressed this new description of man, a leap not only in vocabulary, but also of a different way of signifying by words. This formidable effort in shaping a different understanding of what is proper to human involved the making of many differences and distinctions, as well as shaping of a holistic view by using an apophatic language.

Recovering the patristic meanings given to the human, understood as a personal mode of existence, is especially important today in the context of an increasingly narrow research specialization that gradually has led to the loss of understanding of what characterizes the human being as a particular and integral reality. The emergence of the human sciences, especially psychology, involved (for various reasons) a relatively undefined use of the terms designating the human being, with the concept of person often being used interchangeably with other terms, such as 'individual' or 'personality'. The paradox is that looking for rigor and precision in research, the human sciences ignored the patristic significance of the person, and have lost clarity in distinguishing what characterizes the whole man. We can talk of involving two kinds of precision, beside that one claimed by science, one that takes into account the rigor of experiment, the other, applying to the specificity of the human being as a whole.

In the history of Christian spirituality there has been a continuous deepening of the discourse on person, and this has required a certain rigor. Although it has not implied quantification, spiritual experience – especially the experience that we call mystical – has implied a need for a discourse that could separate what is genuine from what is false, the true path from wrong paths. This is why the search for precision has mainly had a practical character.

The recovery of another meaning of rigor represents the opportunity for new formulations and for unexpected uses of paradigms that can operate in scientific

explanation (like in quantum physics or cosmology), and also as much in opening up new approaches in philosophy. The recovery of another meaning of precision, that one should not include quantification, can bring again into discussion what is proper to the human way of being. This because what we term unquantifiable or ineffable as proper to the personal dimension have nevertheless a mode of manifestation, of presence, that can be assessed and described.

10.2 Constitution of the Concept of Person as the New Description of the Human Being

The notion of 'person' is an original creation of the Fourth Century, the authors of this new account of God and human being the Fathers of Cappadocia: Gregory of Nyssa, Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus. This crucial notion was based on redefining two terms that had different usages in the vocabulary of the classic period, *hypostasis* and *prosopon*. The history of the constitution of the term *hypostasis* is complex and there are various modern interpretations about the reasons for its use, for the first time, with reference to another understanding of man in the Fourth Century A.D. The term *hypostasis* was used at the time of Classical Greek philosophy and Hellenism as an equivalent for *ousia*, but subsequently it acquired meanings that enforced a certain understanding of the essence of reality. In the first centuries after Christ the term received the meaning of a real and concrete being as opposed to the seeming and evanescent being, and this evolution is probably due to the Stoics. Besides this, the Cappadocians also made a real and significant change of meaning in the usage of the term. Beginning with the Fourth Century, in the Byzantine mind, reality could only have a hypostatic dimension: there was no pure essence. But what represents a major difference is the identification of *hypostasis* with *prosopon*. This indicates a different understanding of man, one made from the perspective of Gospel. Originally, the term *prosopon* was part of the vocabulary of old Greek, and it signified the part of the head right under the forehead, what we call today face. Yet it was especially used to mean *mask*, as part of the props that actors in the ancient Greek theatre used. It is known that from the perspective of Greek philosophy one cannot find the grounds to argue for the real essence of a free human act, because what obsessed the mind of Greek antiquity was the order and harmony of a world that was, essentially, *kosmos*.

For the Greeks, the order of the world necessarily stood under the power that was conceived from a logical perspective, which allowed no deviance from the laws of the harmony of the whole. Greek tragedy exploited the conflict between man's attempts to act according to his own will, to avoid his destiny and disregard the will of the gods, although this attitude was necessarily doomed to failure; the closing scene of ancient tragedy always recorded the fulfillment of necessity (Zizioulas 1985, 32). The actor of tragedy feels the significance of the state of freedom, and steers, though in a limited and unsuccessful way, towards assuming the state of a *person*, characterized by freedom, uniqueness, and identity. The mask, in the prac-

tice of ancient tragedy, proves to be a superimposed element and not something that pertains to his true being. However, this dimension of *prosopon* was exploited by the Fathers of Cappadocia, Gregory of Nyssa and Basil the Great, in order to confer the desired dimension in understanding the personal modality of the Trinitarian God's existence as well as of the human being. The spectacular leap was that of identifying *hypostasis* with *prosopon*. This is how the 'face' acquired an ontological dimension, whereas previously it had been simply a mask. Thus, a double and mutual clarification of the meanings that the two terms needed to have in the new Byzantine spiritual horizon is performed. What is more, the semantic enrichment almost totally transforms the functions of *hypostasis* and *prosopon*.

Byzantine thought deepens and re-signifies understanding of *prosopon* by highlighting the etymological implications of the term. This is so because in Greek, *person* is made up of *pros*, which means *towards, to, in the direction of*, and *ops* which means *glance, eyes, appearance, looks, face*. Implied here is the dimension of direct, immediate report: relation. In this reinterpretation, *prosopon* excludes the possibility of understanding the person as an individual as such beyond and outside of what we call relation. The depth of the personal mode of existence is indicated precisely by relation as specific difference, and it excludes any attempt at statistical understanding of individuality. The hypostatical dimension of the human individual and of God can only be understood as *hypo-stance* that is always becoming an exit and a relation towards the other. What is proper to the person is to be always outside itself, to be constantly steering towards something else. According to Christos Yannaras, the ontological content of the person is represented by absolute alterity as existential difference from essence. The person is characterized by absolute alterity, by uniqueness and non-repeatability, yet this alterity cannot be conceptually expressed and framed; alterity must be lived as a concrete act, as non-repeatable relation (Yannaras 2007, 20). The experience of the *other* in a face-to-face relationship is the only and exclusive way to know him in that which is proper to him. What we encounter here is more than simple transmutation of meaning in the terms that begin to designate the *person*: words are used on another level. Yet the way to operate the distinction is not conceptual, because once with the Trinitarian understanding of Divinity, it became clear that concepts have a limit in designating what lies beyond Creation, and this is when words started to have the role of *sign*, of a symbol of a reality (Lossky 1976, 75). The person must be understood especially as *relation* and it defines a report and a relation. The semantics of the word excludes the possibility of interpreting the person as individuality *per se*, outside the space of the relationship. The perspective opened by this type of thinking, which will mark the discursive grounds of Byzantine spirituality, is one that resorts to other symbolic codes, and the dominant aspect is that of the person's apophatism.

The transition from concept to sign is a crucial interpretative key for the understanding of intentions of a text produced in the Early Christianity. If the concept aims to delimit or to define, the sign indicates that we are dealing with an aspect of a reality that cannot be known mentally but rather by the full involvement of man's powers, namely by what is understood by the experience of living. The non-conceptual use of words also stems from a constant conviction: the realities designed

by words can never be fully known because everything lies under the sign of the sacrament. The signification of the sacred and mysterious way of being of any reality cannot be understood as a limit raised in front of man's knowledge, like a forever undisclosed secret, but as the paradoxical situation in which, as a certain reality reveals itself, one becomes equally aware of its depth. Progress in knowledge means to establish a *relation* rather than to deposit information. The person must be understood especially as report and as relation and it defines a report and a relation. The semantics of the word excludes the possibility of interpreting the person as individuality per se, outside the space of the relationship. The perspective opened by this type of thinking, which will mark the discursive grounds of Eastern Christian spirituality, is one that resorts to other symbolic codes, and the dominant aspect is that of the *apophatism of person*.

The need for a discourse on the *person* within these frameworks certainly springs from the central dimension that the Scriptures grant to man: as *image of God*. Man was created *in the likelihood and image of God*. Yet, as Andre Scrima mentions, the concept of "image of God" is mysterious and antinomic. This is so because, speaking properly and according to common logic, nothing exists that could resemble God. God is beyond any categories and absolutely unlike His creation. And yet, the evidence of the image and likelihood of God in man introduces the first apophatic element in the human being, as it constitutes its ontological core, which is inaccessible and non-exhaustible by cataphatic notions (Scrima 2005, 107). There have been numberless comments on and interpretations of the topic of the image of God. The difficulty of a positive discourse on this topic is obvious, and even the most persistent analyses ultimately verge towards adopting the apophatic language. However, what has been associated with this essential dimension of humanity is *freedom*. This is the dimension that approaches man to God, this is the measure of the presence of God's image in man. For to avoid the one-sided understanding of the subject of the person in the Patristic perspective, we have to mention that it would be totally wrong to associate the notion of person with what has been called the "spiritual side of man". Current scientific research offers increasingly solid arguments in favor of the compulsory association of what we call 'mind' with its material basis, the brain, and on the whole, of human spirituality with the body. Yet philosophy also, especially via phenomenology, registers a similar turn during the second half of the last century, and it insists upon the importance of recuperating the body as a major subject of philosophy. Eastern Christian spirituality had an anthropological doctrine that gives special attention to the body as early as its patristic origins. The anthropological topic of the *garment of skin* is less known and recovered nowadays. The starting point was the interpretation given to the passage in *Genesis* that describes the state of man after the Fall and the fact that God makes "garments of skin" for the proto-parents (*Genesis*, 3:21). Christian authors beginning with Origen dealt with this, as they were greatly interested to clarify the anthropological dimension of this garment that is added to the human being not as an external piece of clothing but as part of him. Origen hesitated about whether to understand this addition as body or as a supplementary dimension to it. Of course, this was due to his Neo-Platonic education that devalued the body and regarded it

as external and non-essential to the human being. Yet the Church Fathers severely criticized this hesitation for the dangerous implications that it had because it could totally change the understanding of the path for salvation as well as the significance of salvation (Nellas 1987, 79).

Gregory of Nyssa or Maxim the Confessor mentioned that these *garments* have a double signification, they must first be seen also as the God's mercy because the two proto-parents that had been driven away from Heaven were in an improper, painful condition on the dry and deserted land. These garments signified their ability to survive the new condition that they had earned as a result of their disobedience. The interpretation made by the Church Fathers is that we must see this garment as the addition of something supplementary that comes from a nature that had been foreign to man until then, the irrational or animal nature. The body becomes biological. Biologism did not characterize the primary age of humanity because, as we are told in *Genesis*, the two inhabitants of Heaven did not feed on the fruit of trees because of hunger but so as to partake from certain gifts and virtues. But with the Fall due to disobedience, the human condition meant the passage from *living* to *survival*. The biologism of the skin garment has a double character. Beyond God's blessing so that man could stand his new earthly dwelling, this new dimension of corporality also meant the fulfillment of the warning that if the two were to eat from the tree of knowledge they would taste death. Yet this is not a definite curse, because it is precisely biologism and its accompanying necrosis that can bring about the unbinding of this state of fall by death. Mortality has become part of human nature; it means that man is in a permanent state of dying, so that the moment of death is the end of dying, the death of death (lest the evil should become eternal) (Gregory of Nazianzus 1853, 263). That unbinding of body and soul at the time of death is understood by the Church Fathers as the chance to restore human nature, but not by its own strength, but through Christ. Thus, the consequences of Adam's fall will be turned towards his well-being and redemption. Patristic anthropology offers such a nuanced and differentiated understanding of the current situation of human nature. Gregory of Nyssa and others draw our attention to the fact that we must see something more than biologism in the addition of this garment. Symbolically, the garment represent all that pertains to human abilities to relate to the world. So biologism was not the only way to relate with the world, but it was also an essential dimension, that could be resumed as the cultural mode of being.

The double character of this new anthropological dimension is manifested here: on the one hand, the need for culture means to diminish certain abilities, a different previous state, yet it enables not just man's survival but also his meaningful disposition, the orientation of his life according to what was called value. By culture, man can survive otherwise than on a purely biological level, and can meet an equally important need: to know. Here is not a reference to the rational knowledge but to a much broader and comprising meaning, of the kind that the word have in Scriptures, as a way of being with the world and in the world, but not beyond it. Culture is a 'garment' to the extent that humans cannot immediately relate to the surrounding reality, or even to the self.

10.3 Freedom as the Decisive Aspect of Person

When the human being is understood as a way of *personal* existence, it is not just a piece in a universal aggregate guided by immutable laws. The positivism that has dominated the way to do science over the last three centuries, and whose influence is still present now, could not give man anything more than the role of a link in a chain of determination that is under the strict command of the causal laws of nature. This vision hardly gives meaning to the notion of human freedom. Obviously, as far as classical science is concerned, guided as it is by the rules of positive experiment and of its verifiability, personal reality as a mode of interaction with the world cannot be considered. Yet contemporary science is placed in the situation of resorting to what lies beyond the visible and the describable when it must offer the description of a certain reality that eludes conventional scientific explanation. It increasingly takes into account the elements pertaining to the personal mode of existence and influence. The contemporary recuperation of the Eastern Christian perspective on the person can have significant consequences because this vision presents an understanding of the person which supports explicitly a totally different dimension of the personal mode of existence. The person is described as active on the ontic level, as having a radical influence on reality. Person is, basically, the only possible relation with other beings, with the things that exist in reality. Beings exist only as objects, whatever exists does so only by relation to a person. This relation defines the existential character of beings as phenomena. Beings appear, are manifested as what they are, only because of their relation with the person (Yannaras 2007, 21).

This understanding can also offer an answer to the question about human freedom, of how freedom can be described and understood. If the significance of freedom is to go beyond the borders of moral and moralizing discourse, then a consistent description of the effectiveness of the person's influence must be offered, from the perspective of the relationship between freedom and determinism. One question should be answered first: how can the status of a person, and the framework of the personal mode of existence, be described. A static description of a person, or a description in terms of an essence, is excluded. The person is not a static reality, but is something that can be intuited. However, what we might call *dynamism* in this case is not simply to describe or to frame. This dynamism is not similar to flux or flow, it is something more radical, an ontic dynamism. The person is a reality that does not stand in its very fundamental grounds, it is in the making and it becomes that which it was not.

In this anthropological model man is not, he *becomes*, for he is called to go beyond himself, to be united with a nature beyond himself and all creation. The apophatism of the person is a phrase that must be interpreted in the light of this latter statement. The language of negation is more appropriate when one aims to talk about something that ceaselessly makes oneself and is beyond oneself in union with something above the self. Yet one must add that this calling and this proper feature of the person does not point to a single path, because everything is discussed within the limits of identity, unrepeatability, unity. Nothing else exists but concrete persons

and the concrete, unique and unrepeatable experience of each of them. As Dumitru Stăniloae says, "Although each person has inside the whole human being, each person lives the whole human being in relation with other persons, or makes it real in relation with other persons. This is why, the experience of living the whole human being by each person, is united with the increase in the experience of living of the whole being by itself, in its own way, via the relation with other persons, who live it in their own way" (Stăniloae 1990, 224). This is an important aspect according to which we can assert the existence of the free way of being as person: persons are not conditioned in their experience, nor are they given, via any determination, the content of the experience of living and its orientation. We are dealing here with more than a psychological description of feelings (that could be determined), because the experience of living, as a fundamental state of the personal mode of existence, means much more. Human experience of the world should be understood as an act whose consequence is a radical change of the subject of this 'living'. (In fact, it would be extremely interesting to discuss the relationships, similarities and differences between experience and experiment.) The purpose of this personal, unique experience, does not simply aim to enrich the experience of man, but it aims to create existential openings towards a reality beyond the self.

The communion between man and his Creator implies the paradoxical union of different natures. Man cannot remain man anymore. This situation invites a lot of things to explain and to think of, at least as much as such a paradoxical situation can be put into words. Melchisedec Törönen asks, for instance, if there is a mutual interpenetration of natures or just a penetration of the human nature by the divine (Törönen 2007, 122). This deification of man means that what we call freedom is not something that has been simply given to man; it has degrees, and levels, that correspond to this human-divine communion that is dynamic and existential. Although man, as personal reality, has freedom by his very constitution, the manifestation of this freedom supposes something more or something less; it supposes a certain way of becoming actual that cannot be presupposed beforehand. Or, when human powers are degraded, when the effects of the Fall become manifest, the actualization of freedom is limited; it is marked by the limit of the inauthentic, of the improper (the sign of the Fall). The specific notion of *perfection*, that is typical for Orthodox spirituality, implies this way of increasing freedom. This is why the path towards perfection is a central topic in the texts of Orthodox spirituality. This path implies asceticism and mysticism. Thus, for Evagrius Ponticus or Maximus the Confessor practical life or purification means death with Christ, and progress by contemplation means resurrection with Christ. Thus, Saint Maximus talks about three types of spiritual crucifixion: in 'practical philosophy', via the abandonment of passions, which implies death vis-à-vis the temptations of the sensitive world; in 'natural contemplation', by giving up the symbolic contemplation of the mind with respect to things; simple and uniform mystagogy of theological understanding, the renunciation of all features of God for what He is in himself (Thurnberg 1995, 389). Yet this progress, or *betterment*, as it is termed, as gradual acquisition of a deeper freedom, implicitly supposes an increasing unfettering from limits and determination. At this point it becomes necessary to clarify the term 'determinism', according

to its function in various contexts. Its current use is today connected to how the laws of nature are manifested. Yet when this concept is used in connection with the discussion about the person, it cannot have the same meaning, because in that which is proper to the personal mode of existence one cannot talk about the existence and manifestation of laws, the structuring of personal existence in agreement with some previous determination. And yet, as we have already stated, the notion of perfection implicitly contains the idea of progress in freedom and therefore, of a passage from *less* to *more*. This need is in agreement with the Scriptures; it does not arise from man's original nature, but from the episode of Adam's fall. It is a limit that, on the one hand, is the result of the exercise of freedom, and on the other hand, it constitutes an obstacle to its authentic exercise, in its highest meaning. This limitation, understood as the fruit of sin, ends up in death, and it is only Christ's deliverance that makes the *restoration* of man's humanity possible.

Certainly, this understanding of freedom means more than the possibility of exercising choice (although the latter is implied); it implies a mode of being that is corrupt in its possibility, a situation of being. Let us not forget that the notion of person must not be associated, in any way, to the soul or the spirit, because it is a reality that equally comprises the body. There are numerous examples of how the Fathers of the Church saw and described the person as complex and full reality, from which corporeality cannot be excluded. Thus, Saint Gregory of Nyssa envisioned human freedom in interaction with different parts of the human person and he explained how the body is connected to the mind and to free choice. Gregory imagined the human person as a compound of various parts, each with its own dynamism. Among them, the highest is the intellect, whose main activity is the contemplation of various objects and their discrimination, especially the discernment between good and evil. Yet since the intellect is simple, the area that includes the irrational soul is quite complex. This irrational soul is linked to the body; it is a manifestation of the impulses of the body. According to Saint Gregory of Nyssa, the human person is thus created so as to take part in all levels of material, immaterial and divine reality (Harisson 1992, 177). The change of Adam's state after the Fall took place in the body; the body underwent change and addition, which equally implied the presence of a limit that had not been experienced before. This limit means, on the one hand, to live the duration that means inevitable flow towards death; on the other hand, it is a bound to man's possibilities of interior and exterior manifestation. This exterior bound, which is manifested in all human needs for survival – for this is the condition of the thickened body, of the garment of skin as a state of perpetual dying – means subjection to the laws of nature. *Genesis* indicates that this was not man's original state; it therefore falls under the province of the improper and the inauthentic. According to exegesis in Patristic literature, the Fall of man, who had been nominated to rule over all Creation, brought about another state of the world, of the cosmos, affecting its each and every last stone. This conditioning that man, via his thickened body, starts to receive from nature is, after all, an effect of his own deeds. The fallen man's actual life on the earth means suffering and the pursuit of deliverance. This state has concrete consequences in man's complex relationship with what is called nature, and which includes his own

corporeality. Christ's embodiment means the possibility of restoring man's humanity, but only as something potential. This restoration becomes real in the concrete case of each man not identically, but in agreement with the characteristic features of the uniqueness of each personal exercise of the freedom *to be*.

The restoration must not be understood as man's return to that which is proper to him, to his lost existential state; this change leads to another relationship and another way to exercise his influence on nature and on creation. This change of relationship must be understood as real and not symbolic, as one that produces real and concrete effects in nature. The patristic texts highlight the fact that this is how man opens endless possibilities to bring about change and novelty in nature. This does not imply the flouting of nature's laws and rationality, but contributing to actualizing the potencies that it contains that otherwise would have never become manifest. The patristic vision on the world is that it was created as a 'setting', as the site of encounter between persons. The world does not have a meaning and a purpose in itself; it exists with a view to creating deeper and more effective possibilities for encounter between persons, between the Persons of the Holy Trinity and people, as well as between people. This is so because the person is the reality of the highest degree of existence, because she is aware of her existence and of the existence of persons and things. This is also so because the person exists as a conscience aiming towards another conscience. Thus, the determinism of nature, the existence of some laws of physical reality, is not an eternal given; it was modified when Adam fell and it encounters continuous changes by the exercise of man's act of freedom, especially of the man who is on the path of restoration.

It would be more appropriate to talk not so much about natural laws as about the rationality of the world, or, to be more precise, the rationality of creation. When we talk about the rationality of the world we give a more adequate expression to the purposes for which the world received its existence, a world which, for Christians, cannot have, under any circumstances, a purpose and a meaning in itself, or could simply exist. If there are limits in Creation, and if they are not due to man's Fall, then the understanding of the limit must be positive: it is a limit that creates the possibility of communion, of the encounter, and that proves to engender an infinity of possibilities. This would be the meaning of some of the reasons of creation, of some *logoi*, as Maximus the Confessor calls them. Man's aim is definitely to overcome conditionings; this fact is apparent in the whole historical behavior of humanity. Throughout his whole history on the Earth, man has attempted, by all means, to go beyond his conditionings, dependences and limitations. The fact that he does science pertains to this need as well. According to Maximus the Confessor, man has a high calling: to mediate and to unite. Man is called to consistently integrate the macrocosm with the microcosm, the objective perspective with the subjective one, in a common vision of spiritual transitus. The natural tension in the macrocosm between sensitive and intelligible reality must be mediated in the human microcosm via the spiritual vocation that is proper to the man of ascetic practice and contemplation (Blowers 1991, 131). This mediation and unification asks for an actual change in reality, at all levels, for a subtle modification of a constitutive element in each of the terms of mediation.

10.4 Person and/as Reality: The Need for a New Understanding of the Human Being and the World Today

In the last century, because of the failure of modern descriptions, the need to reconsider the understanding of reality as a whole, and of the human as an exceptional and separate level of reality, became evident. These days scientists admit that there is an informational level to matter, and that information structures reality in a certain way. But the possibility of knowing reality, *as it is*, becomes problematic once it was clear that any mediation or interaction in gaining knowledge results in a kind of distortion. To know reality as it is has proved to be a most difficult thing. Future researches can provide a better understanding of possible convergence of different disciplinary visions in an integrated perspective on the human, this being the ideal formulated by Dumitru Stăniloae when he affirmed that today we need an integral spirituality and an integral knowledge, surpassing any fragmentation coming from disciplinary approaches. For classical physics the statement that the human person can influence matter through its free acts was incomprehensible. But today, quantum physics and neurosciences begin to come up with evidence of the influence that mind can have on matter. Contemporary thinkers resort to the texts of Christian tradition and read Patristic statements about man and the rationality of creation under another interpretative grid. Scientists also change their attitude towards the text of the Scriptures or towards Patristic literature, ceasing to consider them a collection of symbolic statements at the most, that do not apply immediately to concrete physical reality, to its states and evolution. Eastern Christian tradition, in an exceptional way, discusses the levels of reality and the diverse types of processes that support it; the hesychast texts, as part of this tradition, are excellent opportunities for establishing bridges between the discourses of philosophy, sciences and theology. We need now an approach that should go beyond fragmentary perspectives, that should recognize the multiple and complex modalities through which knowledge can be achieved and that the various discourses are necessarily complementary.

The recognition of the person's reality as an active instance in the world is increasingly acknowledged in contemporary science, and the use of texts found in Eastern Christian tradition offer the opportunity for a very productive dialogue between theology, philosophy and science, result of which should be a new modality for the acquisition of knowledge. A knowledge that must not be understood as the sum of diverse information but one sending to a different experience of world, and in the first place of a different and better understanding of human life's meaning and purposes.

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Chapter 11
Questioning Human Dignity: The Dimensions of Dignity Model as a Bridge Between Cosmopolitanism and the Particular

David G. Kirchhoffer

Abstract The claim that human dignity is universal is challenged by the particular experience of the horrible things people do to others. If dignity is just a 'vacuous concept' then the notion of universal human rights and the claim of cosmopolitanism that all human beings form a single moral community are also called into question. A close reading of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and an analysis the historical development of the text reveals a complex conception of human dignity as expressed by the Component Dimensions of Human Dignity model. The model conceives of human dignity in terms of four Component Dimensions—existential, behavioral, cognitive-affective and social—each consisting of a Complementary Duality comprising two facets held in tension along an axis of the Already and the Not Yet. Consequently, human dignity can be understood both as Already a universal truth, and as Not Yet realized in every particular life.

Keywords Human dignity • Human rights • Cosmopolitanism • Human person • Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The term 'dignity of the human person' is often used when referring to rights, duties, morality, the common good and other ethical categories. In cosmopolitanism, the allegedly universal nature of human dignity provides a basis for the claim that all human beings form a single moral community. However, the concept of human dignity has itself been challenged for a number of reasons, not the least of which is particular human experience. For example, how do we account for the idea that all human beings have dignity despite the apparent lack of dignity in a world where suffering is rife; and how do we account for the desire, expressed by so many people, to live a dignified life if we claim that everyone already has dignity? As

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Arthur Chaskalson asks, "Why do [these things] continue to happen, if respect for human dignity is indeed a universal social good?"(Chaskalson 2002, 137).

According to Bagaric and Allan (2006, 269), "dignity is a vacuous concept," that puts the whole notion of human rights at risk. Since human rights are an expression of the cosmopolitanist ideal, one could argue that it also threatens cosmopolitanism. For Bagaric and Allan, the vacuity of dignity means that almost anybody can claim almost any right on the basis of almost any understanding of human dignity. Thus, they maintain that "the notion of dignity should be discarded as a potential foundation for rights claims unless, and until, its source, nature, relevance and meaning are determined." Therefore, we must ask whether the notion of human dignity can really still be used as a foundational concept in ethical discourse, for, if not, then it may spell the "The End of 'Human Dignity' in Ethics?" (Wils 1989) or, indeed, the end of cosmopolitanism.[1]

This chapter will provide a case for why dignity, properly understood, should not be discarded: the concept of human dignity, as understood in the United Nations' 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) and as distilled in the Component Dimensions of Human Dignity model proposed in this chapter, allows us to both defend a universal claim that all human beings have dignity and are therefore equally entitled to certain goods, and account for the particular experience of the apparent lack of universal human dignity. Furthermore, and more importantly, it allows us to take the diversity of moral systems and cultures into account without having to necessarily sacrifice the ideal of cosmopolitanism. In other words, the desires and moral preferences of particular communities can be understood within the broader concept of universal human dignity. The key lies in the fact that human dignity, properly understood, is not an either/or concept; dignity is both/and. It is something that is universally already true *and* something that must be particularly realized. The paradoxes that Bagaric and Allan see as seemingly insurmountable problems that undermine the relevance of dignity as an ethical and legal criterion are, indeed, the essence of the concept of human dignity and the basis of its value as both a descriptive category and a normative criterion for ethics.

The aim of this chapter is, therefore, to present a model—the Component Dimensions of Human Dignity model—that may provide a good foundation for a proper understanding of human dignity. The model is elucidated by means of a close reading the use of the word *dignity* in the UDHR. The UDHR is used for two reasons: first, it is a document widely referred to in contemporary ethical and legal discourse, largely because of its constitutional character; second, the role, meaning and foundation of the concept of dignity was much debated during the drafting of the document, so its inclusion reflects something of its importance in the minds of the drafters. In addition, if cosmopolitanism says that all people have equal moral

[1] Wils raises similar concerns in his article and comes to a similar conclusion regarding the necessary multi-dimensionality of the concept of human dignity. However, his approach is different in that, via a historical-systematic analysis, he seeks to classify various types of dignity according to their methodological presuppositions. The model presented in the current chapter focuses instead on the semantic aspects of human dignity independent of the concept's historical development.

standing, then the UDHR must surely be a document that both testifies to that belief and underpins its affirmation in practice.

First, I shall offer an introductory overview of the Component Dimensions of Dignity model before demonstrating, in more detail, how the model is in evidence in the understanding of human dignity found in the UDHR.

11.1 The Component Dimensions of Dignity Model

There are four dimensions to the word dignity when it refers to the human person. The four dimensions shall be referred to as 'Component Dimensions.' They are 'component' because they are fundamental to the greater meaning of the term dignity of the human person. They are 'dimensions' because they are inadequate on their own. They are aspects of the whole—the dignity of the human person.

Each of these Component Dimensions is constituted by a 'Complementary Duality.' They are 'dualities' because they represent two poles, i.e., the 'Already and the Not Yet.' They are 'complementary' because both poles are necessary to the proper meaning of each Component Dimension of dignity. One pole of the Complementary Duality is something that is already accomplished; it is a universal objective reality; it is something that *is*. The other pole is still to be accomplished; it requires further action; it is something that should *become*. The example of an apple will illustrate what this means. A complementary duality of an apple is 'seed and tree.' An apple already has a seed. The seed is an objective reality, something that is. An apple can become a tree although it is not yet a tree. This duality is complementary in the sense that an apple is only a seed because it has the potential to become a tree and an apple is only a tree when it has fulfilled the potential in the seed.

The reason that I argue for four dimensions is that these correspond to four facets of human existence and experience. First, the Existential Component Dimension deals with human existence. It is the most abstract of the Component Dimensions in that it deals with the issue of what constitutes a human person per se. Second, the Cognitive-Affective Component Dimension reflects the human capacity to experience emotion and reason, to think creatively, and to sense and form ideas about oneself, others, and how others think about oneself. Human beings are thinking, feeling self-conscious beings, and it is this capacity that enables them to act morally and reflect on the meaning and purpose of their existence. Third, the Behavioral Component Dimension addresses human action in the world, and the observation that human beings act, and justify their actions, according to societal mores and moral norms. Finally, the Social Component Dimension makes it clear that every individual is inextricably bound up in the fortunes of others who affect and are affected by the individual in each of the three aforementioned facets of human existence and experience.

Table 11.1 presents the Component Dimensions of Dignity Model. The subsequent sections explain each Component Dimension in more detail by looking at how they are expressed in the UDHR.

Table 11.1 The component dimensions of dignity model (Kirchhoffer 2013)

	Complementary duality	
Component dimension	Already	Not yet
Existential	Have (potential)	Acquire (fulfilment)
Cognitive-affective	Inherent worth	Self-worth
Behavioural	Moral good	Morally good
Social	Others' dignity	My dignity

11.2 Dignity in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The United Nations' 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) is essentially the result of an approach that asked two questions: "Are there not some things so terrible in practice that no one will publicly approve of them? Are there not some things so good in practice that no one will want to seem opposed to them?"(Novak 1999, 41–42).

The foundation for why these things should or should not be done appears to be the dignity of the human person (see article 1), despite the fact that the UDHR does not use the word dignity very often. 'Dignity' is used five times in the UDHR: twice in the preamble and once in articles 1, 22 and 23. However, when it does use the word, it uses it in a foundational way. The dignity of the human person is understood as the basis for the rights contained in the declaration.

Very little elaboration is given on precisely what is meant by the dignity of the human person. There is no definition in the document itself. Therefore, in the analysis presented here, the drafters' understanding of the term will be inferred from the wording of the final document and aspects of the historical debate that preceded it.[2]

11.2.1 The Existential Component Dimension: The Dignity We Have and the Dignity We Acquire

Article 1 of the UDHR states, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." The second sentence of article 1 may be interpreted as a justification for and elaboration of the first, in the sense that it presents both the anthropological basis for and the moral implications of the first. Evidence of this connection may be found in earlier drafts of article 1. In particular,

[2] Certain assumptions regarding the intended meaning are made where the meaning is not immediately clear. These assumptions are made in support of the model of the dignity of the human person presented in this chapter. Whether these assumptions are in fact correct is an area for further research, both into the historical development of the document, and thus its intended meanings, and the use of this document in contemporary debates, and thus its ascribed meanings.

the draft of 16 June 1947 states, "Being endowed with reason, members of one family, they are free and possess equal dignity and rights" (E/CN.4/AC.1/W.1, p. 2 quoted in Lindholm 1999). Thus, when we speak of a human being, we are speaking of a being with certain given capacities, capacities that are universal. Moreover, these capacities have a teleological aspect in that, according to the above, they seem to imply directionality in human development towards a society of brotherhood. In other words, if one is going to truly live out one's potential, then it must be done by living in a spirit of brotherhood. Johannes Morsink (1999) argues instead that 'reason and conscience' should be understood as epistemological rather than ontological characteristics of the human person. They "are the vehicles by which we come to know that we should treat 'one another in a spirit of brotherhood.'" I do not believe that Morsink's interpretation significantly undermines the Component Dimensions of Dignity model because, understood this way, reason and conscience are the means by which one progresses from the dignity one has to acquired dignity. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the final wording was chosen to replace "All men are brothers" because it was felt, according to Boglomov, the Soviet representative, that "it would be less abstract to speak about a duty of brotherhood" (E/CN.4/AC.2/SR.2 pp. 4–5, quoted in Lindholm 1999).

Thus, if we accept the idea that the second sentence grounds the first in article 1, then it seems that the concept of human dignity encompasses both of these aspects—given capacities and teleological directionality. Therefore, we could say that dignity is something we have, our inherent capacities, and something we acquire, the realization and fulfillment of these capacities.

A brief look at the Western, historical, philosophical development of the notion of the dignity of the human person confirms this link between the dignity of the human person and both the capacity to reason and the goal of acting in a morally good way. For example, Kurt Bayertz (1996) demonstrates how the dignity of the human person came to be associated with the notions of rationality, perfectibility, and autonomy (see also Rosenbaum 1981, 8–24). Moreover, such a connection is apparently not unique to Western philosophy, a fact that enhances the validity of its claim. For example, the Chinese representative to the Drafting Committee, Peng-Chun Chang, is credited with the introduction of 'and conscience'—a rendering of the Chinese notion of *run* or, literally translated, two-man-mindedness (Lindholm 1999, 33; Morsink 1999, 297).

The word 'should', in article 1, underlines the fact that this living in a spirit of brotherhood is not yet the case. Though human beings already have dignity by virtue of their inherent potential to live in a spirit of brotherhood, they will only realize that potential, i.e., acquire the fullness of their dignity, if they actually do live in a spirit of brotherhood.

An analogy may clarify the Complementary Duality of 'Having Dignity and Acquiring Dignity' in the UDHR. It will also illustrate how the notion of human dignity can still be effectively used as the foundation for human rights, if it is properly understood as a Complementary Duality rather than only as a one dimensional declaration of an inherent worth that ought to be respected. The analogy I shall use is that of a child.

The dignity one allegedly has is one of potential, in the way that an infant child has the potential to grow up into a responsible, dignified adult. A child lacks a certain dignity in its behavior. One doesn't think of children as dignified. They are messy, they play with their food, they throw tantrums to get what they want, and they poke each other in the eye when they don't get their way. There can be no doubt, however, that they have the potential to grow up to be individuals of immense dignity: every great leader or dignified person was once a child. This potential for a child to grow into a dignified adult is one of the reasons that most families and societies spend so much time and money caring for them, nurturing them, protecting them and educating them. In this way, a family respects and protects the dignity that a child has, which is the inherent potential to acquire dignity, that is, to fully realize this potential, later in life.

As article 1 points out by using the word 'should,' the same is true for most adults. We have a potential to make our dignity apparent, but we may question whether most of us have really realized the fullness of that dignity. Certainly, when one attaches the moral values of justice, freedom and peace to dignity as the UDHR does in its preamble, one would be hard pressed to say that any society, and therefore the majority of human beings who constitute societies, has achieved real dignity. Therefore, as parents acknowledge the dignity, i.e., the worth of the potential, that a child has by providing for and nurturing the child in the hope that it will realize that potential and become a dignified adult, so too, the UDHR maintains that the cosmopolitan provision of certain rights will allow the human person not only to have her inherent dignity acknowledged, i.e., the potential inherent in the capacities of reason and conscience, but to acquire the true dignity of living in a spirit of brotherhood. Jack Donnelly expresses a similar view:

> The human nature that is the source of human rights rests on a moral account of human possibility. It indicates what human beings might become rather than what they have been, or even what they 'are' in some scientifically determinable sense. Human rights rest on an account of a life of dignity to which human beings are 'by nature' suited and the kind of person worthy of and entitled to such a life. And if the rights specified by the underlying theory of human nature are implemented and enforced, they should help to bring into being the envisioned type of person. The effective implementation of human rights should thus result in a self-fulfilling moral prophecy (Donnelly 1993, 22).

11.2.2 The Cognitive-Affective Component Dimension: Inherent Worth and Self-Worth

As pointed out in Sect. 11.2.1, all human persons already have a dignity founded upon their uniquely human potential to fulfill or realize that dignity through morally good behavior. However, affirming the dignity of the human person in an abstract way means very little if people do not concretely experience this dignity. The Existential Component Dimension allows us to affirm the inherent worth of all

persons, the dignity they have by virtue of their human capacities, whether or not they themselves consciously appreciate it or apply these capacities. In this sense it addresses the universality of human dignity. The Cognitive-Affective Component Dimension, on the other hand, considers how, at the level of particular personal experience, most people become aware of this worth, and in doing so, naturally seek to actualize it by furthering their own particular sense of self-worth. Thus, it addresses how the universal plays out in the particular.

The UDHR does not speak of self-worth explicitly. Nonetheless, it does speak of the 'development of [one's] personality' (articles 22, 26(2) and 29). The so-called social or positive rights (Donnelly 1993, 26) should ensure the correct environment for the development of one's personality. Article 26(2) links this development with the respect for human rights: "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms." Therefore, the proper development of one's personality entails a respect for human rights, or, more generally, morally good behavior. This is stated explicitly in article 29(1): "Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible."

If a world in which these rights are respected is a world in which human dignity flourishes, then one need only consider the content of these rights in the light of the notion of the development of an individual's personality to see how the UDHR associates acquired dignity with self-worth. In the perfect world envisioned in the UDHR, the world in which all human persons have realized their potential to acquire dignity through morally good behavior, all human beings will be safe from persecution (articles 2–11), will be respected by their communities (article 12), will be proud of their nationalities (article 15), will be loved by their families in a home they can call their own (articles 16 and 17), will perhaps have a deep and meaningful relationship with the Transcendent (article 18), will feel like they have an important say in what happens in their societies (article 19–21), will feel like they meaningfully contribute to their societies through their work, will feel sufficiently rewarded in return for their contribution (articles 23 and 24), and will not fear being treated as a burden in sickness and old age (article 25). Are these not precisely the opposite of those feelings that diminish one's sense of self-worth? According to Jonathan Mann, then Dean of the School of Public Health, Allegheny University of the Health Sciences in Philadelphia, "When dignity is violated, people suffer. Situations in which personal dignity is violated evoke strong emotions—of shame, humiliation, disgust, anger, powerlessness and sadness—which persist" (Mann 1998, 176). And does one not spend one's life trying to overcome such feelings of diminishment, the feeling that one has no dignity, no worth, or that someone has taken it from one? Alain de Botton maintains that all our attempts to achieve status, which in many ways is a form of dignity because it involves respect by others and a sense of self-worth and pride, are attempts to feel unconditionally valued again, the way we were as children (De Botton 2004, 21).

The UDHR recognizes this drive to feel respected and cites it as one of the reasons for the declaration in the first place: "Whereas it is essential, if man is not

to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law." Such rebellion is a consequence of people becoming aware of the inherent worth that they possess, i.e., the potential to acquire self-worth, under circumstances that prevent them from fulfilling that potential and from living lives of true dignity.

Therefore, if dignity is the basis for human rights, because it is the moral good that the morally good behavior derived from these rights seeks to attain; and the practice of such behavior in a context in which these rights are guaranteed will lead to the full development of one's personality, which can only but be associated with a sense of self-worth; then this dignity, of which the UDHR speaks, must contain an element of acquired self-worth.

11.2.3 The Behavioral Component Dimension: The Moral Good and the Morally Good

The first element of this Complementary Duality underlines that the dignity of the human person is a moral good. A moral good is a good that is an end in itself. It is not merely a means to other ends. Thus, something is always *already* a moral good. In the UDHR, the dignity of the human person is presented as the end—that is the moral good—of morally good behavior and, therefore, as the foundation of human rights.

The preamble to the UDHR begins, "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." If the recognition of dignity is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace, then is it not logical to conclude that directing action towards the moral good, i.e., the end, of the dignity of the human person will realize the other goods of freedom, justice and peace? This, I propose, is what the UDHR is advocating. It does so by arguing that people and the societies that they constitute should act in a way that ensures that certain rights are met:

> Now, therefore the General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction. (Preamble)

It seems that the UDHR's primary supposition, then, is that the provision of rights will lead to a flourishing of dignity in a spirit of brotherhood. For example, article 22 argues that there are economic, cultural and social rights that are "indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality." Morsink tells us that the quoted phrase was introduced by the Cuban delegation. There is a means-to-ends relationship between social, economic and cultural rights and human dignity and personality. This is borne out by the Cuban delegation's willingness to

adopt a Lebanese proposal that underlined this relationship. The Lebanese proposal was rejected by the Third Committee of the General Assembly. This rejection, however, had more to do with what was meant by 'social security' than with denial of a means-to-ends relationship (Morsink 1999, 206). Thus, this means-to-ends relationship means that the rights (means) declared are aimed at the moral good of the dignity of the human person (end).

The Not Yet pole of this Complementary Duality is the 'Dignity of the Morally Good.' The following will illustrate how this is present in the UDHR's understanding of dignity in two ways: first, by considering the etymology of the word moral, and, second, by returning to the analogy of a child.

'Moral' has its root in the Latin *moralis*, literally meaning "pertaining to custom" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., s.v. 'moral, a.'). Thus, in one sense at least, to speak of morally good behavior is to speak of behavior that is appropriate to the mores and customs of a society. The rights proclaimed in the UDHR are themselves set up as mores, customs and eventually laws that should be upheld. Indeed, the preamble states, "Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law." Later commentators maintain a similar stance. For example, Pieter van Dijk (1998), member of the Netherlands Council of State and judge of the European Court of Human Rights argues, "I believe that the principles laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights constitute something like a natural law which ought to be followed by all peoples and governments" (103). Therefore, since morality deals with mores and customs, and the UDHR sets up mores in the form of rights that should be protected by law, one could say that the UDHR is a document about morality. Moreover, since the basis and end of these mores (rights) is the moral good of human dignity (previous paragraph), one could argue that to act according to these mores (rights) constitutes morally good behavior.

Recalling the supposition that a society in which these rights are upheld will be a society in which dignity flourishes, is it not logical to also conclude that those who act according to these mores will experience the flourishing of their own dignity as the fruit of their morally good behavior? Therefore we could say that one acquires dignity by being morally good.

An analogy may illustrate this more clearly. Most people are loved regardless of what they do when they are infants. Therefore, a child may only get on with others insofar as others pander to the needs of the child. When they don't, the child quite easily resorts to violent outbursts. A child may take what she wants from another child. The other child pokes her in the eye in retaliation. Augustine of Hippo (1961) noted such jealous and 'immoral' behavior in his *Confessions* (1.7) and pointed out how we will often tolerate behavior in a child that would be condemned in an adult. Thus, we could say that as a child, one has the potential to grow into an adult that behaves in accordance with society's mores thereby winning society's approval. An adult who behaved like a child would be considered undignified. Moreover, such approval doubtless enhances one's own sense of self-worth. So one acquires dignity in terms of both social respect and a personal psychological sense of self-worth, as

indicated by the Cognitive-Affective Component Dimension, by behaving according to the expectations and customs of society, or in other words in a morally good way. So too, according to the UDHR, the human person fulfils her potential dignity by living in accordance with the rights declared therein.

11.2.4 The Social Component Dimension: Others' Dignity and My Dignity

The first paragraph of article 29 of the UDHR affirms the idea that the fulfillment of one's potential cannot happen unless one also contributes to the fulfillment of others' potential: "Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible."

This interpretation is supported by a statement made by the Belgian delegate to the Third Committee, Fernand Dehousse, who felt that article 29 (1) "quite properly established a sort of contract between the individual and the community, involving a fair exchange of benefits" (UN GAOR 1948, 660, quoted in Morsink 1999, 284). Likewise, with regard to an extended debate concerning the inclusion of the word 'alone,' Corbet of the United Kingdom said the word should be included because it "stressed the essential fact that the individual could attain the full development of his personality only within the framework of society."

Therefore, we can see in the UDHR the Complementary Duality of Others' Dignity and My Dignity. The first pole, Others' Dignity, refers to the dignity of all people, oneself included. This inherent dignity, which is associated with the potential to acquire dignity through one's actions, implies therefore that all people seek to fulfill this potential by attempting to acquire some form of dignity as self-worth for themselves. However, this pole, like the others on the 'Already' side, still only addresses the universal and abstract affirmation of dignity, but not its actual realization.

Therefore, the second pole, My Dignity, refers to the ideal, acquired dignity. This pole captures the 'should' in our ethical discourse, i.e., one's acquisition of dignity should enhance, or at least not infringe upon, the inherent dignity of others. One cannot truly fulfill the dignity one has, if one denies others' dignity; such a denial entails performing morally bad actions, i.e., undignified acts against the moral good of the dignity of the human person, thereby reducing one's worthiness for respect by others, with potentially negative consequences for one's own dignity as self-worth. One has only truly fulfilled one's potential, one has only truly acquired dignity, when the dignity of others is not only abstractly affirmed by society but is also concretely experienced as self-worth by all. In other words, this pole of My Dignity ultimately expresses the normative dimension of the concept of dignity. It is not only something that all people have in an abstract sense but it is something that depends on our action for its realization, both for ourselves and for others.

11.3 Conclusion

Four outcomes with regard to the concept of dignity itself and to the implications for the ideals of cosmopolitanism are apparent from the above analysis.

First the UDHR is a document that emphasizes both the dignity that the human person has as an inherent potential that should never be impinged upon, and the dignity that a person acquires by striving for worthwhile goals. As we shall see below, this latter 'Not Yet' element opens the way to understanding the particular behaviors of individuals or communities without undermining either the notion that all human beings have dignity or the normativity of the ideal of cosmopolitanism, i.e., the realization of a society in which all human beings live together in a spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood.

Secondly, the document attaches significant moral value to dignity. It strongly implies that the universal recognition of the moral good of the dignity of the human person, the end to which the provision and protection of human rights seem to be directed, can only be achieved if people are morally good, i.e., they *don't* do the terrible things and they *do* do the good things that the questions mentioned at the beginning of Sect. 11.2 bring to light. Therefore, this conception explains the observation made in the introduction regarding the apparent discrepancy between the affirmation of universal human dignity on one hand and actual human behavior on the other. We all attempt to fulfill the dignity we have that inheres in our potential by seeking to acquire a sense of self-worth through what we believe to be morally good behavior. Yet, these attempts may vary and even be misguided based on any number of historical, communal or individual particularities. Though the UDHR proposes certain rights as the necessary mores, human freedom, situatedness and historicity mean that there are always going to be cases in which different mores are put forward as the standard, even if these are mistaken. Exclusion of others may be a moral norm for some communities because they believe that it protects the dignity of their own community. Or consider the case of violence. James Gilligan develops the thesis that shame, i.e., the lack of self-love, is a significant cause of violence. The following quote is particularly relevant to the discussion on the dignity of the human person. It is the answer given by a violent prisoner when questioned about his reasons for attacking other prisoners, knowing that it may cost him his life or at least incur further punishment: "Pride. Dignity. Self-esteem. And I'll kill every mother-fucker in that cell block if I have to in order to get it! My life ain't worth nothin' if I take somebody disrespectin' me and callin' me punk asshole faggot and goin' 'Ha! Ha!' at me. Life ain't worth livin' if there ain't nothin' worth dyin' for. If you ain't got pride, you got nothin'. That's all you got! I've already got my pride" (Gilligan 1997, 106). The criminal's understanding of dignity is heavily colored by the idea that justice requires the punishment of those who offend one's dignity. He has acted morally for the good of his dignity as self-worth (note, I am not saying he has acted in an objectively morally good way, only that he has engaged in behaviour that he might justify to himself and others as morally good). You can see here how the Component Dimensions of Human Dignity model can serve a descriptive

function. Nevertheless, it also has a normative function, for example by taking the Social Component Dimension into account, it can critique and correct skewed mores. Despite the violent man's own belief that his self-worth, his dignity, is assured only through the violent punishment of those who challenge it, the Social Component Dimension shows that no conception of self-worth (My Dignity) that requires the violation of others' dignity is acceptable. Such conceptions and the behavior that they justify are morally wrong.

The third outcome encapsulates both the Cognitive and Social Component Dimensions of dignity. The UDHR is careful to show that whilst one is afforded rights based on the dignity (Inherent Worth) that all human beings have (Others' Dignity), it is only by ensuring that these rights are met for all people that one can really achieve the goal of acquiring one's own dignity (Self-Worth). The dignity of others is as important as my dignity–something that seems to escape Gilligan's criminal. One should therefore never seek to acquire one's dignity (Self-Worth) at the expense of others' dignity (Inherent Worth) and vice versa. The fact that the document makes an appeal in conjunction with its affirmations means that in the present state of the world, the ideal of the dignity of the human person has not yet been realized.

Finally, the Component Dimensions of Dignity model, though commensurate to the understanding of dignity in the UDHR, may also be used to critique the UDHR, its particular rights, and cosmopolitanism. Dignity thus defined, does not preclude a variety of legitimate morally good strategies that affirm the moral good of the dignity, both inherent and acquired, of all and yet that do not necessarily correspond exactly with the rights in, or implied by, the document. For example, are we certain that democracy is the only way to ensure political participation, or even that political participation is a necessary element of every person's conception of self-worth? Moreover, in terms of cosmopolitanism, though the affirmation of the inherent worth of all human beings and the normative Not Yet pole of the Social Component Dimension certainly support cosmopolitanist attitudes, the model of human dignity presented here does not preclude the possibility that one has a greater moral obligation to one's immediate community than to strangers, for example. After all, it is in one's immediate community, in the love and respect that one receives from those closest to one that one's dignity as self-worth is most enhanced.

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Chapter 12
Human Rights, Religious Culture, and Dialogue

William Sweet

Abstract This paper focuses on outlining some ways in which different cultures and traditions have addressed the notion of human rights. After a brief presentation of the model of human rights articulated in the Universal Declaration of 1948, I look at some other models of human rights found in three cultural-religious traditions – specifically, Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam – and discuss how they reflect key values within those traditions. Finally, I conclude with some comments on how the recognition of human rights and related underlying values could serve as a basis for dialogue across those, and perhaps other traditions concerning the nature of the common good and of social institutions.

Keywords Buddhism • Islam • UNESCO • Rights • Duties • Dignity • Culture • Maritain, Jacques • Universal declaration of human rights • Christianity

12.1 Introduction

In a pluralistic world, is it possible for different cultures and traditions to realistically 'encounter' each other, to communicate effectively and constructively across traditions, and to build genuine community? The answer I will defend here is in the affirmative, and that one way is through the language of universal human rights.

The existence of universal human rights is widely accepted in today's world. Nevertheless, there have been forceful criticisms of this view and from a range of perspectives, from Benthan and Burke, through Marx, to Walzer and MacIntyre (Marx and Engels 1973, pp. 320–321; Burke 1969, pp. 149–151, 153, 194–195; Bentham 1838–1843; Waldron 1987; Walzer 1984; MacIntyre 1984). Moreover, regardless of the plausibility of these criticisms, the existence of universal human rights seems also to be challenged by two widely-accepted claims: that philosophical

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ideas are a product of culture, especially religion and moral values, and that human rights are addressed and understood in different ways in different cultures. And so, might the cultural basis of the relevant ideas and values in fact not undercut the universality and normative character of human rights? In other words, can we can engage other cultures in talk about human rights and can human rights be universal and normative when the values which inform those cultures seem to vary?

To address this latter challenge, I wish to discuss how three cultural-religious traditions have addressed the notion of human rights; what place values, culture, and religion have had in this; and how far culturally-based philosophical ideas have affected the understanding of human rights. Specifically, I begin with the model of human rights articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). I then look at some models of human rights found in other cultural-religious traditions – specifically, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam – and discuss how each model reflects values within those traditions. I will argue that, while the underlying values may differ, these models of human rights are broadly consistent with one another, and it is still reasonable to speak of universal human rights. It is because of this shared idea, I will suggest, that different cultures and traditions can have a starting point for dialogue, and from which people can build community.

12.2 The Model of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Perhaps the best known international document on human rights is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948.

The UDHR gives us a list of rights and freedoms over some 30 articles – though it does not give a definition of what a right is. This is, not surprisingly, intentional – for reasons that will become apparent as we proceed.[1] But, for the moment, let me provide a definition. By 'right' we may understand "a power that is or can be claimed by (or on behalf of) a being to engage in certain activities (with correlative obligations on others not to interfere), or that requires that a being be treated in certain ways." (Sweet 2010, Vol. 1, p. 2724). (Note that this does not say what specific activities one can engage in, and that it does not say why or how one has or can claim this power.)

12.2.1 Rights and Values in the UDHR

When we read the UDHR, we have the following perspective on human rights:

[1] See UNESCO 1948, Appendix II, p. 6: "For the purposes of the present inquiry, the Committee did not explore the subtleties of interpretation of right, liberty, and democracy."

First, human rights are universal – i.e., these rights are to be universally recognised and respected – and possessed equally by all human beings (see the Preamble and Article 1).[2]

Second, human rights are inalienable.[3] This is perhaps a more difficult notion, but what it is generally taken to mean is that a right is not removable by, because not conferred by, any external authority (Specifically it cannot be bought, sold, or transferred – though under certain circumstances (such as committing certain crimes), one may forfeit such a right.) Rights are inalienable just as the 'personhood' of a person is inalienable.

Third, human rights are fundamental to social and political life, for example, in that they are 'natural' to human beings; the UDHR states that we are "*born* free and equal in dignity and rights" (Article 1, emphasis mine).

Fourth, rights are based on – and are necessary to – human dignity, i.e., to the value and respect due all human beings as human beings (see Article 22[4]).

The UDHR then lists a series of civil and political rights (e.g., rights to life and to a series of liberties, such as freedom of speech, of conscience or religion, and of association, and basic securities and freedom from arbitrary treatment, described in Articles 3 to 21), but also economic, social, and cultural rights (e.g., enumerated in Articles 22 to 28).

Many have argued, however, that this statement of human rights presupposes and reflects a number of values – values that are characteristic of 'Western' culture and religious traditions – and some would add that this approach is, in fact, rooted in 'Western' philosophical traditions. (By 'Western' here, I believe, we are to understand 'those cultures and traditions that dominate in those countries west and north of the Middle East, in the Americas, and in some countries of the southern Pacific.')

What are these values? The UDHR identifies a number of them: life, liberties, equality (before the law), protection from arbitrary or cruel or degrading treatment, and certain social and economic minima. At the base of these, however, are two principal values: (i) the apparent priority of and emphasis on the individual and his or her desires, and (ii) 'negative freedom' – i.e., that rights are generally restrictions on others, particularly the state, from interfering with one's freedom. The UDHR leaves unstated any comprehensive conception of the good or common good.

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[2] Preamble: "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world".

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

[3] This is a disputed category. See, for example, Nelson 1989.

[4] Article 22: "Everyone, as a member of society, has … social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality."

It is not obvious that these values are *uniquely* characteristic of 'the West' or even of the modern 'West'. Still, this much is true: they are characteristic of 'Western' countries, and the UDHR was formulated in a 'Western' ethos. To support this, some background to the UDHR may be helpful here.

12.2.2 Background to the UDHR

From the beginning of the idea of the United Nations in 1942, thought was given to the formulation of an international bill of rights. And so, within a year of the formal creation of the UN, it established a Commission on Human Rights which, beginning in January 1947, set about to develop such a bill of rights.

The Commission "had members from 18 nations, appointed by [the UN Economic and Social Council] ECOSOC: Australia, Belgium, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR), Chile, China, Egypt, France, India, Iran, Lebanon, Panama, Philippine Republic, United Kingdom, United States of America, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Uruguay, and Yugoslavia." Though international, almost half of these countries were 'Western' and responsibility for producing a first draft fell to an executive committee whose principal authors were 'Western' or Western-educated; it consisted of Eleanor Roosevelt (of the United States, Chair of the Commission), Peng-chun Chang (of China), Charles Habib Malik (of Lebanon) (see Mitoma 2010), as well as – in a secretarial capacity – John Peters Humphrey, a Canadian, who was the Director of the Secretariat's Division on Human Rights. Malik was a Lebanese Greek Orthodox Christian. Influenced by the philosophies of Whitehead and Heidegger, but also a Thomist and a strong defender of natural law theory, Malik received his PhD from Harvard. Though Chang was a scholar of Chinese studies and Confucian thought, he did his university studies in the United States, obtaining an undergraduate degree from Clark University and a PhD from Columbia University, and he was influenced by John Dewey (who was popular in the early twentieth century both in China and in the US).

While later drafts were produced by an expanded Committee – with additional representatives from Australia, Chile (Hernan Santa Cruz [see Waltz 2001, p. 60]), France, the USSR, and the UK – and eventually by the Commission as a whole, again, many members were 'Western' or Western-educated.

It is worth mentioning one other figure, Jacques Maritain.

Even though Maritain was not part of the drafting committee, he was involved at least peripherally (Ochs and Gimeno 1985, p. 5; see McCauliff 2009). He was also not only an early advocate for universal human rights (which we find detailed in some of his work, such as his 1942 *Les droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle* [Maritain 1942, 1943]), but a leading figure in the philosophy of law and social and political philosophy, especially in Latin America, the US, and Canada – and throughout the world in Catholic circles. Moreover, as French delegate to UNESCO and as Chief of the French Delegation to the second meeting of the UNESCO General Conference in November 1947 – and tasked with giving the opening address ["La voix de la

paix" (Maritain 1990)] – Maritain helped to galvanize support for a bill of universal human rights (McCauliff 2009, p. 435). In 1947–1948, he was the author of the Introduction to the important UNESCO volume, entitled *Human Rights: comments and interpretations*, on "the theoretical problems raised by the elaboration of an International Declaration of the Rights of man." Throughout Maritain's work, one finds a number of parallels between his early articulation of human rights and those of the UDHR, and he was a leading advocate for the UDHR in the years following its adoption by the UN.

Clearly, then, the historical roots of the UDHR are in 'Western' values and culture. There was, admittedly, some effort made to make the document itself as broadly appealing as possible. A number of revisions were suggested by commission members from India, China, and Latin America, and it was decided early on to separate the text from a particular philosophical foundation. Maritain notes a comment about this issue in his Introduction to the UNESCO volume: "we agree about the rights but on condition that no one asks us why" (UNESCO 1948, p. I). The UDHR was, in a sense, then, the expression of a shared faith. In the UNESCO volume on *Human Rights*, we read "An international declaration of human rights must be the expression of a faith to be maintained no less than a programme of actions to be carried out" (UNESCO 1948, appendix II, p. 1).

12.2.3 Duties

It is important to note one feature of the UDHR that is sometimes overlooked. Though its emphasis is on rights, there is a place, in the UDHR model of rights, for one's duties.

In the penultimate article of the UDHR, Article 29, there is a reference to conditions and limitations on rights. One of these conditions is the reminder that human beings are importantly social and political beings – that "(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible." This is followed by a reference to a limitation on the exercise of rights, based on what might broadly be seen as 'public order':

> (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

Rights, then, are not absolute and unlimited.

Still, Article 29 leaves it vague whether duties to the community exist only because the community is essential to human flourishing, or whether duties might exist regardless of whether the community contributes to such an end.[5] The former

[5] In the earliest draft version of the UDHR, as part of the proposed preamble, we read that one "must accept his fair share of responsibility for the performance of social duties and also his share of any sacrifices made necessary by the exigencies of life in common" [personal copy of the

interpretation suggests that duties are secondary and that, in any event, the conditions in the second clause of Article 29 suggest that limitations on rights are few and rare.

Though there is an acknowledgement of one's duties rights still seem to be primary. On this 'secular' model, rights are understood as what is *owed* to a person [a subjective entitlement], entailing corresponding *duties* on others.

12.2.4 Implications

There is no denying that the UDHR has roots in Western thought. Nevertheless, it sought to provide a model of human rights that is: non-foundationalist,[6] secular, recognized by international consensus, that seeks to 'instruct' and impose limits on the state, and without *any* comprehensive conception of the good – although it emphasizes and reflects values of respect for freedom and choice, of equality, of the value of the individual, and of dignity.[7]

One might well ask, then, how such a secular model of human rights 'fits' with the religious traditions that characterise so many of the cultures and societies in the world today.

12.3 A Christian Model

To begin with, it is clear that the UDHR provides us with a model of human rights that, while clearly secular, is not just a product of Western culture and values, but is congenial to – if not rooted in – *Christian* culture and values. This is far from surprising. The Islamic historian and scholar, Mohammed Arkoun (2011, p. 174), for example, describes the UDHR as a transformed Christian 'social imaginary,' and some critics regard it as "a secular understanding of the Judeo-Christian tradition."[8] Whether this latter remark is true is not the issue here; it is perceived by many to be

author]. Yet this latter text was deleted, and the article on 'duty' moved from the beginning of the text to its present place.

[6] In his Inaugural Address at the second UNESCO conference in Mexico City in 1947, Maritain stated: "agreement between minds can be reached … not on the basis of common speculative ideas, but on common practical ones, and not on the affirmation of one and the same conception of the world, of man, and of knowledge … but upon the affirmation of a single body of beliefs for guidance in action" (Maritain 1948a, p. II).

[7] While dignity is found in a number of religious traditions, in understanding it as 'equal dignity' it has a strong affirmation in Western Enlightenment thought. And while the concept of the person as 'autonomous' and the emphasis on a common humanity, again, are values in many cultures – found, for example, in Stoicism – again they are reaffirmed in Western Enlightenment thought. See Sweet 2007.

[8] This was the view of the then-Iranian ambassador to the United Nations, Said Rajaie-Khorassani. See Mayer 2007, p. 9.

true, and there does seem to be some foundation to it. To confirm that there is at least some connection to Christianity, let us look again at the context of the drafting of the UDHR.

While it is clear that some of those involved in the drafting and the promotion of what became the UDHR held a strong secular stance, there were influential figures who held a strongly religious view. A clear example of this is Charles Malik and perhaps others such as Hernan Santa Cruz. More significantly, however, we have the writings and activities of Jacques Maritain. For Maritain, a declaration of human rights was a logical consequence of a Christian-inspired humanist philosophy: human beings had basic rights to life, liberty, and security, and the human person as person had a priority over any society or state. These rights were essential to human dignity and human flourishing, and were to be ascribed equally and to all.

Maritain's view – a view that was also shared by Malik and Santa Cruz – was that an account of human rights had to rest on a theory of natural law. In his December 1949 Walgreen Foundation lectures – later published as *Man and the State* (1951) – Maritain argued that "the philosophical foundation of the Rights of man is Natural Law" (Maritain 1951, p. 80; Maritain 2001, p. 53). This echoes a comment Maritain made in 1942 that "The awareness of the rights of the person has in reality its origin in the conception of man and of natural law established by centuries of Christian philosophy" (Maritain 1988, p. 671, my translation).

Admittedly, the natural law tradition is not uniquely Christian – though, in its most developed modern forms, it is closely associated with it. For example, for Maritain, this natural law was based on, and derived its obligatory force from, an eternal law. To say that natural law theory is congenial to Christianity is certainly not an exaggeration.

Moreover, for Maritain – and unlike what is suggested in the UDHR – rights *do* depend on a comprehensive conception of the good (which is articulated in, and revealed by, the natural law) that is itself rooted in human nature. We see this particularly in another text written at the time of the preliminary work and drafting of the UDHR, *The Person and the Common Good* (Maritain 1946a, b, 1966). Here, Maritain is concerned with exploring human nature; he writes: "The person is directly related to the absolute" (Maritain 1966, p. 42). So, although persons are free and autonomous, each human person is directed towards God as its end. There is, then, a relation of human beings to a transcendent reality. Thus, Maritain writes that "the human person, as a spiritual totality referred to the transcendent whole, *surpasses* and is superior to all temporal societies" (Maritain 1966, p. 71; see Maritain 1946b, p. 442). Indeed, it is in this regard that the human person has the basis its dignity. Maritain writes that "the deepest layer of the human person's dignity consists in its property of resembling God … It is the *image of God*" (Maritain 1966, p. 42) – and this is, of course, a view that has roots within the Catholic tradition: the notion of "the dignity of the human person [as] rooted in his creation in the image and the likeness of God" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, sect. 1700).

Maritain's Christian-inspired model of human rights also sees rights as subject to limits – and these limits, particularly, the duties, are arguably more robust than in the UDHR. For example, Maritain argues that if the exercise of even very basic

rights "goes so very far afield that it leads to acts repugnant to natural law and the security of the State, the latter has the right to interdict and apply sanctions against these acts" (Maritain 2001, p. 79, n. 40). Moreover, Maritain would also place fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of conscience, within a context as well – that is, in the prior (individual) duty to seek the truth (See Sweet 2006). Further, because all rights are themselves the product of the natural law, even though rights are prior to, and restrict, the state, they exist because they are necessary to carrying out basic duties[9] – to oneself, to one's neighbor, and ultimately to God. This is because the human person is essentially a relational being, fundamentally oriented to God, and called to become the "new man."

12.3.1 Implications

Clearly there are differences between the model of human rights presented in the UDHR and that described by Maritain. For example, on the Maritainian Christian view, there needs to be a foundation for human rights, a comprehensive conception of the good – specifically of a transcendent reality – and a relation of that transcendent reality to both the human person and the law. Interestingly, however, one's possessing such rights also seems to have a relation to one's duties – that there are tasks that all are called on to do, and that one's rights are part of this too, so rights do not just reflect aspirations but obligations.

The relation between these two models of human rights is also instructive. Although the models are distinct at the theoretical level, Maritain held that – at the practical level – they are congenial, that one did not need to share a conception of the person, or of the state (and the relation of the individual to the state), or of the existence of God, to agree on human rights – and that, despite the cultural differences and differences in foundation, they can be known by all and still have a normative value. This also shows the proximity of a religious tradition and the secular – and therefore the possibility of communication with, and engagement with, one another.

12.4 A Model from Buddhism

One religious-cultural tradition that may seem particularly challenged in fitting with the secular model of the UDHR and the Christian model of Jacques Maritain is Buddhism. Can a discourse of human rights have a place in a culture that may seem rather different from that of the West?

[9] Maritain writes (1948b, pp. 62–63): "if it be true that the foundations of human rights lie in the natural law, which is at once the basis of duties and of rights – these two concepts being correlative – it becomes apparent that a declaration of rights should normally be rounded off by a declaration of man's obligations and responsibilities towards the communities of which he is a part, notably the family group, the civil society and the international community."

12.4.1 Contexts

Buddhism originated in the fifth/sixth century BCE in North India, and the 'canon' was passed on orally until it began to be written down at the time of the Fourth Buddhist Council in Sri Lanka in 29 BCE.

There are many challenges in talking about Buddhism. There are not only – much like Christianity – several different traditions, but also variations in scriptures and other canonical texts.

The two principal traditions are Theravada ("Doctrine of the Elders", originating about 250 BCE) and Mahayana (originating about the beginning of the common era, though expansion did not take place until about the fifth century CE). But there are many further divisions – for example, in the broad tradition of the Mahayana, we have the Vajrayana (including Tibetan) and Chan Buddhism. Some of these divisions – or, better, schools – occurred as Buddhism spread – south to Sri Lanka, but also north and further east. Buddhist traditions and values permeated these cultures, and it is worth noting that Buddhism is the state religion – or the majority religion – of over a dozen countries.[10]

In Theravada Buddhism, the standard – and oldest – collection of buddhavacana ("the Word of the Buddha") is in the Pali Canon (or *Tipitaka* = literally, 'three baskets [pitakas]'). Of the three pitakas – the *Vinaya Pitaka*, the *Sutta Pitaka*, and the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* – the first two are generally shared with other Buddhist traditions, and it is the second – the *Sutta Pitaka* – that contains discourses, mostly ascribed to the Buddha. (It contains the *Digha Nikaya* as well as the *Khuddaka Nikaya*, which in turn contains the *Dhammapada* and the *Khuddakapatha* and which, in its turn, contains the *Mangalasutta*.) It is particularly in reference to the Sutta Pitaka that one can draw some general conclusions about Buddhism, but modern Buddhist teachers and interpreters are helpful here as well.

12.4.2 Challenges to Human Rights

Some scholars have argued that there is no room for human rights in Buddhism.[11]

One reason often advanced is that the concept of human rights seems incompatible with Buddhist views and presuppositions concerning the nature of the human self, and with Buddhism's advocacy of non-attachment or detachment (nekkhamma).

[10] Buddhism is the religion of over 90 % of the citizens in Laos, Cambodia, Japan, Thailand, Mongolia, Taiwan, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Bhutan. Buddhism is a state religion in Cambodia (Theravada Buddhism) and in Bhutan (the Drukpa Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism / Vajrayana Buddhism). Sri Lanka accords Buddhism the "foremost place," though it is not formally recognized as the state religion. The 2007 constitution of Thailand declares that "The State shall patronize and protect Buddhism, which is the religion the majority of Thai people have practiced for long time" (section 79), however, it is not formally named as the state religion.

[11] For a more cautious view, see Schmidt-Leukel 2006.

For example, throughout Buddhism, there is suspicion of universals and metaphysical essentialisms, which entail that there are rigid differences among things, especially – given the doctrine of punabbhava (rebirth) – concerning nature and human nature. If there are no essences, there are no essences in nature or in human nature. Subsidiary notions, such as the 'universal dignity' of human beings, distinct from the rest of nature, do not, therefore, seem to have much of a place. Or again, a feature of Buddhism that would seem to marginalize or exclude talk of human rights is Buddhism's focus on the internal rather than the external. In some respects, then, Buddhism has been charged with being ethically quietistic (Faure 2010) or escapist – that the 'solution' to external crises or individual suffering is simply detachment.

A second reason to doubt that there is much room for human rights in Buddhism is that there is no discussion of rights in the key Buddhist texts. There are, in fact, few substantial texts on philosophical ethics (Keown 1995, p. 2), there is no word in Pali, or even Sanskrit, for subjective 'right,' and the term 'human dignity' is alien to the texts as well. Arguably, then, as Damien Keown has pointed out, there is no clear framework for human rights as part of a 'social ethics' (Keown 1995, p. 4).

Nevertheless, many have argued that there are resources within the Buddhist traditions, texts, and practices that can allow for a notion of human rights. Consider two examples.[12]

12.4.3 Contemporary Tibetan Buddhism

The Tibetan Buddhist (Vajrayana) tradition, which is a development of the Mahayana school, is generally associated today with Tenzin Gyatso (b. 1935), the 14th Dalai Lama, who was enthroned in 1950. He is a public figure on a par with the President of the United States, Queen Elizabeth II, and the Pope of the Catholic Church, though his presence on the world stage has been much longer than any of the recent pontiffs – and he has contributed public statements and writings for over 50 years.

One frequent theme in his writings is the need to respect human rights. Consider two strong statements of this:

> Whether you believe in God or not does not matter so much, whether you believe in Buddha or not, does not matter so much; as a Buddhist, whether you believe in reincarnation or not does not matter so much. You must lead a good life. And a good life does not mean just good food, good clothes, good shelter. These are not sufficient. A good motivation is what is needed: compassion, without dogmatism, without complicated philosophy; just understanding that others are human brothers and sisters and respecting their rights and human dignity (Dalai Lama 1984, p. 20).

Again,

> No matter where we come from we are all basically the same human beings, having common human needs and concerns. We all seek happiness and try to avoid suffering regardless

[12] An additional useful source here is Perera 1991, who argues that there is no obstacle for a Buddhist to accept human rights.

> of our race, religion, sex or political status. Human beings, indeed all sentient beings, have the right to pursue happiness and live in peace and in freedom. (Dalai Lama 1998, p. 89).

Where do such rights come from? What reasons might one have for asserting their existence?

In a discourse given shortly after the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights in 1993, the Dalai Lama stated that "it is the inherent nature of all human beings to yearn for freedom, equality and dignity," and he refers again to "the basic human desire for freedom and dignity" (Dalai Lama 1995, pp. xvii–xxi).

It is presumably not just that rights are naturally *desired* that they exist – for the Buddhist aspires to the elimination of all desire – but that they seem to be required for something greater that all human beings seek; all seek moral perfection and wisdom – the attainment of general welfare and bliss for all. Thus, a *first reason* for the need to respect human rights is not something about individual desires or one's origin (i.e., one's nature), but about one's capacity for goodness (Keown 1995, p. 13) – the vision of the human good set forth in the 3rd and 4th noble truths,[13] concerning the cessation of dukkha (suffering, anxiety, dissatisfaction) – that seems to lie at the source of these rights.

It is important, then, to understand what these rights are. The Dalai Lama himself points out that there is a need for a definition of 'rights'; he writes: "We must therefore insist on a global consensus not only on the need to respect human rights worldwide, but more importantly, on the definition of these rights" (Dalai Lama 1995, p. xviii). Part of this definition must include the recognition that rights are connected to responsibilities and duties (dhamma). Here, then, is a *second reason* for human rights – and an insight that is often overlooked in 'Western' traditions. Thus, the Dalai Lama writes: "When we demand the rights and freedoms we so cherish we should also be aware of our responsibilities" (Dalai Lama 1995, p. xviii).

What are these responsibilities? To begin with, human beings have responsibilities to one another: between parents and children; husband and wife; rulers and subjects, and so on. For example, for subjects to fulfill their responsibilities, they must have the powers, or rights, to do so.

One's responsibilities, however, go beyond the particular relations that people have with one another. In carrying out one's responsibilities and duties, the Dalai Lama writes, "The universal principles of equality of all human beings must take precedence" (Dalai Lama 1995, p. xix). The recognition of equality helps to see what these responsibilities are and also gives a *third reason* for the need to recognize and respect human rights. It is not just that human beings "yearn" for them and "need" them to fulfill their responsibilities, but that all human beings are equal – all human beings are basically the same and therefore deserve equal treatment.

This equality may be shown in various ways.

All human beings are fundamentally equal as the kinds of beings that they are. As Keown notes, the concept of the awakening to 'no self' (anatman), open to all

[13] See Keown 1995, p. 16. These noble truths are: suffering or dissatisfaction (dukkha) is a feature of existence; the origin of dukkha is ignorance and attachment; there is a cessation of dukkha, in nibbana; the path leading to the cessation of dukkha was described by the Buddha.

human beings, provides a ground for seeing equality in relation to others – and also an interdependence (Keown 1995, p. 7). Moreover, human beings have common concerns and responsibilities. They all require the conditions for life, and for 'fulfilled lives', such as life, liberty, security, freedom from slavery and torture, and freedom of religion. These common conditions for life are also implied by Buddhist precepts, such as 'do not kill,' 'do not steal,' and so on. Finally, that all have a capacity to attain moral perfection or enlightenment (nibbāna) attests to a fundamental equality of human beings. (This emphasis on human equality is also evident in the critique of caste, that will be discussed later.)

On the view of the Dalai Lama, then, human rights have a foundation in values and, importantly, a spiritual foundation. Human rights can and must exist: because they are required for seeking moral perfection (and flourishing), because they are necessary for the performance of duties, and because people are equal and therefore deserve equal treatment.

Still, some may say that this appeal to rights in Buddhism is idiosyncratic, and that mention of human rights in Tibetan Buddhism arose only after the UDHR and, indeed, only after the 1960s. To address this concern, but also to identify other resources within Buddhism that bear on the question of human rights, one can turn to another of the major schools of Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism.

12.4.4 Theravada Buddhism

That Buddhism can contain, or is congenial with, a model of human rights can be defended by considering texts which critique caste and, thereby, signal a basic equality among human beings and the importance of a concern for one another. It can also be defended by looking at Buddhist practice.

One way of coming to a conception of human rights, then, is by looking at what the Buddhist texts say about equality. In the *Digha Nikaya* – specifically in the *Aggañña Sutta* and in the *Ambattha Sutta* – we find accounts where the Buddha emphasizes that people from any caste may become monks and, thus, pursue the path to nibbana (nirvana) or enlightenment. (It is not that everyone attains this, but that all *can* seek it.) For example, the *Aggañña Sutta*, the 27th Sutta of the *Digha Nikaya* collection, describes two young novices, Vasettha and Bharadvaja, who seek out the Lord Buddha for instruction. When the Buddha learns that they have been mocked for leaving their Brahmin families and caste, he reminds them that personal quality is not based on caste. He says:

> Since both dark and bright qualities, which are blamed and praised by the wise, are scattered indiscriminately among the four castes, the wise do not recognize the claim about the Brahmin caste being the highest. Why is that? Because, Vasettha, anyone from the four castes who becomes a monk, an Arahant who has destroyed the corruptions, who has lived the life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached the highest goal, destroyed the fetter of becoming, and become emancipated through superknowledge – he is proclaimed supreme by virtue of Dhamma and not of non-Dhamma (Gautama Buddha 1987).

Similarly, in the *Ambattha Sutta* ("Discourse of Ambattha"), the 3rd Sutta in the *Digha Nikaya*, the Buddha challenges the young Brahmin Ambattha and his colleagues, showing the contradictions and pretensions in principles of caste. We read:

> In the supreme perfection in wisdom and righteousness, Amba*ttha*, there is no reference to the question either of birth, or of lineage, or of the pride which says: 'You are held as worthy as I,' or 'You are not held as worthy as I,' It is where the talk is of marrying, or of giving in marriage, that reference is made to such things as that, For whosoever, Amba*ttha*, are in bondage to the notions of birth or of lineage, or to the pride of social position, or of connection by marriage, they are far from the best wisdom and righteousness. It is only by having got rid of all such bondage that one can realise for himself that supreme perfection in wisdom and in conduct… (Gautama Buddha 1923, p. 123).

This emphasis on natural equality, while not specifically entailing human rights, supports a general humanism and – though the term itself is not used – an 'equal dignity' of all human beings, without arbitrary distinctions. Constitutive of this quality, then, is that one ought to have the power to pursue a life that may lead to enlightenment. Another text that has led some to argue that Buddhism entails an account of human rights is the *Khuddakapatha* – specifically in the *Mangalasutta* [Aphorisms on the Good Omens], a text that provides a summary of Buddhist social ethics, precepts, and practices, necessary for spiritual development. Here, we find the Buddhist notion of Paticcasamuppāda, variously translated as dependent origination, relational origination, conditional arising, and interrelatedness.

Paticcasamuppāda is the general principle that, all things that occur, do so as the result of multiple causes and conditions. Everything and everyone has a dependence on others, physically, intellectually, and spiritually. As Mettanando Bhikkhu writes: "Our lives are conditioned by others, and our success or failure comes from conditions associated with our moral actions" (Bhikkhu 2016).

In Buddhism, all are called to constant improvement. Since, however, the spiritual life cannot be lived in isolation from others, each not only depends on others, but has a mutual responsibility for others. Moreover, since all human beings are connected in some way, there is a reciprocal relation between the good of individual members and the collective good. The consequence of this is that *human beings should act in ways that show a respect for one another*.[14] This respect, rooted in the spirituality and values of Buddhism, involves (scholars such as Mettanando Bhikkhu conclude) the recognition of equal rights.

Another way of coming to this recognition of human rights is by noting that basic equality and concern and respect for others are characteristic of Buddhist practice.[15] Sanghas (Buddhist religious/monastic communities) are not marked by social caste or ethnic origin and, particularly today, are international in membership. There is an

[14] See Keown 1995, p. 11, though Keown ultimately demurs from this. See p. 13.

[15] The Communist Party of China, however, maintains that this was not true of Buddhism in Tibet. It alleges that Buddhism in Tibet was a quasi-feudal system possessing a "caste-like social hierarchy" prior to the invasion of 1950. This charge is consistent with the allegation of quietism in Buddhism – e.g., that Buddhism involves a withdrawal from the world and its affairs, and that there is no need to change society and social conditions. For a discussion of Buddhism in Tibet today, see Fjeld 2004.

equality in possessions and a practice of communal decision-making which is essentially democratic – and so the sangha is an environment in which the respect for life and values, that human rights in general seek to ensure, is recognised. It is also worth noting that monasteries are not just contemplative communities, and that there is an active engagement in social matters. Monasteries are involved in operating hospices and leproseries, taking care of the dying, as well as being cultural centres (See Faure 2010). Monasteries are also environments in which the spiritual life is pursued and the obligations and duties of the tradition are lived out. It is because of these duties (dhamma) that correlative expectations – what might be called human rights – arise. Even at the level of religious and spiritual practice, then, there are characteristics of Buddhism that are at the very least congenial to, if not supportive of, values underlying human rights.

12.4.5 Implications

From what we have seen, we can find, in Buddhism, values and principles – as well as a spiritual foundation – that suggest or entail what many would call 'human rights'. These values are respect for life, basic equality, the opportunity to pursue one's religious obligations and to seek the good, and the importance of fulfilling one's responsibilities – values that extend to all human beings. Similarly, one can also find resources and resonances in Buddhism for a concept of human dignity, but whether this has the same character of dignity in the Western traditions is not clear. Still, as we have seen, one can find in contemporary Buddhist teaching, in Buddhist texts, and in Buddhist practice respect for life and for the person, and the duties that are constitutive of this respect. Thus, even if there is no term for rights or for human dignity, the notion of what is 'due' to another, and what one's duty is, are both concepts in Buddhism and they provide a basis for rights such as rights to life, liberty of conscience and religion, security, freedom from slavery and torture – and so on.

The key to this account is Buddhist dhamma. In a 1993 address entitled "Human Rights and Universal Responsibility," the Dalai Lama writes: "to meet the challenges of our times, human beings will have to develop a greater sense of universal responsibility." Some of these responsibilities are to individuals themselves – such as, to pursue the spiritual life, which is a responsibility of everyone. There are also the responsibilities that follow from this – particularly those which refer to what Keown calls "the logic of moral relationships" – that are "what is due under dharma" (Keown 2000, p. 73). If one starts with this idea of 'duty,' one can arguably extrapolate a wide range of human rights. Indeed, it may be that the Buddhist can extrapolate rights that go beyond the rights of humans.[16] Moreover, such rights are not subjective

[16] Keown allows that different rights (e.g., animal rights) arise from different natures; see Keown 1995, p. 17.

rights (i.e., given to a person as an individual), but are, rather, based on a larger imperative, as was seen in the Maritainian Christian approach to human rights.

There are, then, resources in Buddhism that resonate with the thinking of the UDHR, and that would seem to allow for a fruitful engagement with 'Western' thinking on human rights – and, arguably, for developing a more robust account of human rights that recognises one's relations and duties to others. That such engagement is possible is important, given that Buddhist is a tradition that informs the daily lives of many people not only in Asia but, increasingly, in the Americas and Europe.

12.5 A Model of Human Rights in Islam

Islam is a religion of the West as well as of the East. What place is there, if any, for rights, such as those in the UDHR?

As was the case with Christianity and with Buddhism, there is a challenge in where one might start in identifying human rights in Islam. Mohammed Arkoun notes that there are a number of problems in talking about an 'Islamic' view of human rights (Arkoun 2011). As with most religious traditions or cultures, one might look at beliefs expressed in basic texts, or at the interpretation of belief, or at practice – assuming that they can be separated. Yet even here there are many challenges. For example, there is no central interpretative authority, such as that played by the magisterium in the Catholic Church. Authorities tend to be country or region-specific; in some cases, these authorities are national or local religious leaders but, in other cases, the task of representing Islam is left to the state. Or again, one could look for references to human rights in constitutions or the legislation in Islamic countries (of which there are some thirty)[17] – particularly those that are signatories to the UDHR[18] – though there is a great variety (and some potential tension) here.[19] One could also look for such discussion in the religious and political writings of

[17] Countries in which Islam is identified as a state or constitutionally-recognised religion include: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei, Comoros, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Libya, Maldives, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates (Sunni Islam); Iran (Shi'a Islam); Oman (Ibadi); Bahrain, Kuwait, Yemen (Shi'a and Sunni); Somalia (Sufi) and Bangladesh, Djibouti, Iraq, Pakistan, and Palestine.

[18] Most Muslim-majority countries – including Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and Turkey – voted in favour of the UDHR at the meeting of 10 December 1948. Saudi Arabia, however, abstained, objecting to the wording of Article 16 (on the right to marriage and family) and Article 18 which states that all human beings have the right to change their religion or belief.

[19] As an example of this tension, consider the *Constitution of Afghanistan.* In the Preamble, "Observing the United Nations Charter and respecting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," there is reference to the "creation of a civil society free of oppression, atrocity, discrimination, and violence and based on the rule of law, social justice, protection of human rights, and dignity, and ensuring the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people." In Ch. 1, Article 7, the text reads: "The state shall abide by the UN charter, international treaties, international conventions that Afghanistan has signed, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." Yet, at the same time, in

Muslim authors or religious or political leaders.[20] Yet, again, it is unclear which figures would provide a representative basis.

One very useful document – though again, not without its limits – is the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Islam" (UDHR-I),[21] published in 1981 by the Islamic Council of Europe.[22] This document presents a list of human rights that is meant to parallel the UDHR, and that can serve as a useful model of comparison.[23]

12.5.1 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Islam

The Islamic Council of Europe was established in 1973 in the UK in order to coordinate the work of Islamic Centres through the continent. The Council was supported by King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, and among its members were scholars such as the controversial Saudi diplomat Salem Azzam.

The UDHR-I is a document containing a lengthy preamble and some 23 articles, which list such rights as rights to life, freedom, equality, justice (including protection from tyranny and torture) as well as freedom of thought, belief and expression, along with 'religious freedom'. The UDHR-I also lists a number of economic rights, the rights and duties of the worker, and social rights – such as the right to found a family, the rights of the married woman, and rights to education, migration and asylum, as well as the right of the individual to protection of honour and reputation. Each of these rights is supported by references to the Qur'an or to the hadith (i.e., the Sunna [the life and the example and practice of the prophet Muhammad]).

Several of the principal rights described in the UDHR-I correspond to those of the UDHR. For example:

1. All individuals are born equal and free: UDHR, Article 1; UDHR-I, preamble, paragraphs 2 & 3
2. Right to life: UDHR, Article 3; UDHR-I, Article I
3. Equality before the law: UDHR, Article 7, UDHR-I, preamble 10

Ch. 1, Article 3, the text reads that "In Afghanistan, no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam."

[20] Arkoun (2011, p. 154) notes another challenge. He describes Islam as 'theologically Protestant' but 'politically Catholic' – i.e., that, in Islam, any adherent has the right of the examination of scriptures, but there is an absolute authority of the caliph or imam.

[21] See, the Islamic Council of Europe, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Islam" (UDHR-I). The text was published in English in 1983 (by Penelope Johnstone), but there seems to be another, "official," translation of the same document, entitled the "Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights" (Islamic Council of Europe 1998, pp. 102–112).

[22] Not only this document but what constitutes an accurate translation of it have been controversial. See Halliday 1995; Mayer 2007, p. 30; Tomalin 2013, pp. 140–142. For a discussion of this and related documents, see Brems 2001.

[23] For another, related document, see the *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam*, Aug. 5, 1990.

4. Right to a fair trial: UDHR, Article 10, UDHR-I, Article V
5. Right to marriage: UDHR, Article 16 (1), UDHR-I, Article XIX
6. Recognition of the importance of family: UDHR, Article 16 (3), UDHR-I, preamble 4
7. Right to own property: UDHR, Article 17 (1), UDHR-I, Article XV.c
8. Right to participate in government: UDHR, Article 21, UDHR-I, Article XI.a
9. Right to (choose) work: UDHR, Article 23, UDHR-I, Article III.c
10. Right to education: UDHR, Article 26, UDHR-I, Article XXI.a

These rights in the UDHR-I are described as being "eternal… not capable of being suppressed nor rectified, nor abrogated nor suspended" (Islamic Council 1983, p. 104), unchanging, and beyond positive law– apparently like those of the UDHR that are "inalienable" and "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations." There is also reference to human dignity in the UDHR-I – "We know that his Creator endowed him with dignity, nobility and grace, above the vast number of His creature" (Islamic Council 1983, p. 104) – that seems to be akin to "the inherent dignity … of all members of the human family" recognised in the UDHR.

It is fair to say, however, that there are also a number of differences, in content and in emphasis, between the two.

At a very broad level, there are two notable differences between the UDHR and the UDHR-I. To begin with, there is a different order in the list of rights, and sometimes elucidations of what those rights are signal differences in emphasis or content from the UDHR – e.g.,

1. the focus in the Preamble of the UDHR-I on rights as aiming at "the correct introduction to Islamic society" (which are their end)
2. certain rights of the worker are relative to the worker's effort
3. rights of property are limited by usury, hoarding, etc
4. rights of asylum are focussed on Muslims
5. the right to liberty also includes the right that '*no nation* may menace the liberty of another' (presumably, Westphalian sovereignty)
6. rights concerning the family: that men have "a certain authority" over women

Moreover, the UDHR-I begins with affirmations of the truth of Islam and that human rights are part of Islam as "laid down by the Creator" – though this is (simply) a theoretical foundation.

There are also some differences in content. For example, some rights of the UDHR-I are not (obviously) found in the UDHR.

1. rights to summons and proclamation (UDHR-I, Article XIV) – which are described as being 'to command good and forbid evil' but, in the Preamble, include 'to save the world from error' and to preach Islam
2. rights of the married woman (stated in detail)
3. equality means being "equal before the sharia" (Article III.a.b).

And some rights of the UDHR seem to be missing from the UDHR-I, such as:

1. a right to a nationality (Article 15)
2. right to a recognition as a person before the law (Article 6)
3. rights to assembly, social security generally, leisure, and a social and international order (Articles 20, 22, 24, and 28)
4. the right to participate in public life (Article 21 in the UDHR) is only a right to consultation (sura)
5. the presumption of innocence (Article 11)

Just as other approaches to human rights recognize limits or restrictions on rights, so also in the UDHR-I. We find, as well, however, a lengthier list or specifications of social obligations:

1. general limits on rights "no falsehood, incitement to evil, or harm to the community" (Article XII.a)
2. "every individual is the conscience of his social group" (Islamic Council 1983, p. 106)
3. a "responsibility towards human society" (Islamic Council 1983, p. 104)
4. to "render account for [his responsibility] before his community and in the next" (Islamic Council 1983, p. 105)

Nevertheless, perhaps the most important differences in the respective accounts concern the nature and source of rights, the assertion of the fallibility of human reason[24] and the claim that all rights are subject to, and in given the context of, *šarī'a* [sharia] – the infallible law of God.

12.5.2 Implications

In short, the UDHR-I is an explicitly religious account of human rights, that asserts Islam's priority over the political. It is also framed within the context of obligations and law. For example, there is repeated emphasis on the importance of social obligations, particularly those concerning the family. It asserts, as well, that human rights are subject to (divine or eternal) law. In a way, this protects rights from the interference of secular institutions, but there can also be little, if any, critique; there can be no critique of legal reasoning,[25] and, in any event, human reason is incapable of reaching truth without divine guidance. Still, although this model of human rights is clearly shaped by religion and culture, it remains a model of human rights.

One may well question or challenge the UDHR-I, the rights enumerated, or whether it has any place or authority within Islamic states today (See Mayer 2007;

[24] "We assent that human reason is incapable of establishing the most correct plan for life, independently of God's guidance and revelation…" Islamic Council 1983, p. 104.

[25] We must take account of the distinction between Qadis (eternal law) and fiqh (interpretive law by human reason).

see also Mayer 1994). One might also argue that the UDHR-I is anachronistic, because it employs terms and concepts that were not part of the early Islamic texts (Arkoun 2011, p. 171), or that it tries to ignore genuine differences in culture and religion, or that its account is inconsistent or disingenuous – that it cannot say that 'it is not permitted to anyone to scorn the beliefs of another, nor to stir up society against him' (Article XII.e) and yet claim the superiority of a religion –, or that before such rights can be connected with the Qur'an and hadith, there needs to be a discourse analysis of those texts themselves (Arkoun 2011, p. 170). Yet these matters are not key to the issue under discussion. It is also beside the point that the aim of the UDHR-I – and of the rights it refers to – are rooted, not in human equality or dignity, as in the UDHR, but in duty, specifically duty to God and to that duty as described in the law (sharia). The UDHR itself acknowledges the presence of duties along with rights, and the place of duty is even more present in accounts of rights in Christian and Buddhist traditions. The issue here, in short, is whether there is a model of human rights in Islam that is in some way similar to those other models, such as the UDHR.

While it is obvious that the account of human rights in the UDHR-I is rooted in a culture and in the values of that culture, it is not restricted to that culture to the extent that it is a model of human, and not just Muslim rights or the rights of Muslims. Many rights in the UDHR-I are universal, inalienable, and cover not just negative freedom, being free from restraint, but also positive freedom, by having a positive organization of social and economic conditions to allow those in need to be assisted. Moreover, it is a model in which there is at least some recognition of human dignity, and that aims at human flourishing: "a good and noble life ruled by truth, goodness, justice and peace" and a "life wherein humankind will breathe the qualities of freedom and equality, of brotherhood, nobility, dignity … instead of being stilled beneath the constraints of slavery, racial and social discrimination, oppression and humiliation" (Islamic Council 1983, p. 103). The UDHR-I shows, then, key aspects of the human rights traditions in Islam. This bears noting clearly since, like Buddhism, Islam informs the lives of many, not only in its countries of origin, but, increasingly, in the Americas and Europe.

12.6 Conclusion

In this paper, I have presented four models of human rights: one, a 'secular' model, that of the UDHR, and the others reflecting Christian, Buddhist, and Islamic culture and values.

It is clear that the respective cultures and values 'colour' the understanding, formulation, and ascription of rights. That there are such differences may be troubling to some. Yet this would not have been a major concern for the drafters of the UDHR, nor of many of their successors.

The 'Memorandum and Questionnaire Circulated [to a number of eminent world figures] by UNESCO on the Theoretical Bases of Human Rights' in March 1947[26] stated that a declaration of human rights had to be universal and "sufficiently definite to have real significance both as an inspiration and as a guide to practice," but that it also needed to be "sufficiently general and flexible to apply to all men, and to be capable of modification to suit people at different stages of social and political development" (UNESCO 1948, Appendix I, p. 5). And some 45 years later, as the Vienna Declaration of 1993 adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights states, one cannot deny the presence of culture in both the understanding of human rights and in their promotion and protection, and that "the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind" (Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action I, 5).

Given the models discussed in this paper, it seems that, despite the differences of culture and tradition, including religious tradition, there *can* be a discourse of human rights that allows these cultures and traditions not only to engage one other, but to have a basis to communicate effectively and constructively, and perhaps to build genuine community. Nor is there any evidence to show that such communication is only apparent, and not real. The adoption or endorsement of the UDHR by a state in which some rights seem different from those in other states, for example, should not be regarded as a mere political strategem.

As one reflects on the four models discussed in this paper, one can see that there are points of intersection and consistency not only with regard to the rights themselves, but also with the underlying values, and that these features can form a basis for engagement with each other. Two features are particularly characteristic of the preceding models of rights: first, that human beings have duties to others – duties of respect and of, as far as possible, assistance – that entail rights; second, that in order to pursue and achieve some measure of human flourishing (in community), human beings need rights.

Some may still challenge this view. To this one should note two things. First, the principal claim of this paper has been that there can be, and is, a congeniality across the different cultural and religious traditions that have been discussed. This is not to say that individuals within those traditions could not find texts or resources that challenge this, or that they could not find a 'reason' not to support mutual engagement; the claim is simply that there are ways in which such engagement is possible. Second, when confronted with such challenges, one might well ask whether the problem is the claim that there is a congeniality among the different traditions, or the claim that there are human rights, period.

In short, if one takes the perspective of any of the cultures and traditions discussed above, one does not need to share a concept of the person, or of the state, or of God to agree with other traditions on these rights – or to hold that certain basic duties and rights can be known by all and have a normative value. Yet this does not mean that there is no room for discussion on the nature and character of such rights. Discussion

[26] This survey and its results are discussed in Reis Monteiro 2014.

on what is required for human beings to fulfill their duties, and on what is needed for human flourishing, then, can be a basis for communication across cultures.

Despite their differences, the similar features of the preceding models of human rights, as noted above, are instructive. They can, I would claim, not only give guidance in engaging different cultures, but serve as a basis for – as Jack Donnelly (2009, pp. 83–84) puts it – "the construction of a life of dignity."

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Chapter 13
Life Experience, Values and Education

Maija Kūle

Abstract The paper deals with the contemporary problems of education – its functions, mission, humanistic essence and need for the understanding of value. Education is not only school training or getting competences at the highest educational institutions. It is understood as a life experience, where cognition, judgement and practical activity come together in one complex. Nowadays the most popular systems of education are structured on the model based mainly on pragmatism, professionalism, information, technology, to which philosophers are trying to attach moral and cultural dimensions, but their views do not carry much weight. The author agrees with R. Dahrendorf that we need empathetic education and with P. Kemp that educational institutions today are transformed more and more into commercial institutions, that universities try to sell knowledge, people are educated for competition, while cultural and moral education are considered useless. Therefore the author argues for the development of cultural and moral education at all levels of education starting from childhood up to life long learning. Teaching and practising of philosophy must be returned to the curricula more widely because philosophy is able to explain values, teach morals, cultivate critical, creative and caring thinking and develop personalities.

Keywords Education • Life experience • Values • Philosophy • Competitive education • Understanding • Conscience • Admission • Critical thinking • Creative thinking • Caring thinking

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13.1 Contemporary Problems of Education: Functions, Mission, Humanistic Essence

Education is an endeavor concerning formation – formation of personalities, cultures and system of values. The basic feature of education is not only training, but knowing, understanding and doing. In general it means to realize life experience with orientation to development.

Education cannot be reduced either to theory or to activity. It is a process where three parts of human life – cognition, judgement (*Urteilskraft*) and practical acting come together in one complex of life experience. Education holds a meaning from the point of learned possibility to evaluate life processes, to create new life forms, to develop culture and respect values. Therefore the up-bringing and socialization of individuals are of the same importance as obtaining information and factual knowledge. The assertion of the meaning of culture and humanization of personalities is the pathos of education.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu examines two ways of treating contemporary reality: the cynical and the clinical one. Both are based on knowledge, however, the question is as to how it is used. The cynics know a lot, and they use their knowledge to better adjust to circumstances. They seek the social tools to guide strategies in academic research.

Clinicists use their knowledge of the way society functions to fight all that degrades the human being and makes him or her inferior and immoral. They treat science as an instrument for self-understanding. According to Bourdieu, knowledge as such is neutral; the question is about us: *how should we live*? It means that the education system is always closely related to the question of values (Bourdieu 1992, 210–211).

Nowadays the system of education is structured on a model based mainly on technology, pragmatism, professionalism, and practice, to which philosophers are trying to attach moral and cultural dimensions, but their views do not carry much weight. No wonder that even the most modern system of education creates people who evaluate themselves and other people by the amount of wealth and not by wisdom, spiritual richness, helpfullness, and moral qualities at all.

The parameters that have to change educational systems lie very deep and the problem is not whether to reduce or increase the number of lessons for a particular subject or create a new curriculum. It is rather the fundamental contemporary question about the fate of modern civilization, about human existence today and the place of education in it.

The question is whether the contemporary educational system is able to perceive that values, understanding and respect (in every sense of the word – where pupils respect teachers and *vice versa*, where society respects the teacher etc.) are the highest dimension for education; or – whether we will have to recognize that these values of education have been replaced by cold pragmatism, formalism, narrow professionalism, and indifference to values.

Different elements are entwined in education. In the broader school networks and general educational systems around the world, the most clearly defined goals of education can be recognised as the following:

(a) to provide an opportunity for obtaining knowledge, getting information, developing abilities, acquiring skills;
(b) to socialize young people for social roles, for example, the labour market;
(c) to acquire communicative competence, that is, to learn to live together with others, to cooperate, to compete, to oppose;
(d) to continue and to transform the cultural experience of the nation and humanity;
(e) to develop creative potentialities, ability to evaluate and know the difference between good and evil, that is, ethical competence;
(f) to make historically grounded relationships between generations (for example, people exercise power over children on behalf of the society and the problems in children of disobedience and insubordination);
(g) to respect authority, to win power, to enjoy power, etc.

Finnish scientists write about the meaning of education:

> Educational institutions have had a central role both in the individualization of socialization, or *enculturation*, and in the *institutionalisation of life-course.* (Antikainen et al. 1996, 9)

Education provides knowledge, significant learning experience, shapes the identity and life-course.

One of the main problems of the contemporary education system is denying or ignoring the humanistic content of educating, based on existential and moral values. Educational institutions are subjected to political and economic pressure to transform themselves into economically oriented management institutions that can sell information, skills, knowledge and promote the competitiveness of individuals and states. Nowdays we can see the process in which big educational institutions, namely universities and academies, are involved in the economic race between states and world regions.

Why has the ranking of universities become so popular among university managers? The answer could be: to demonstrate competitiveness and priorities in the world market, rather than to acknowledge the importance of the implementation of human values and the development of responsible citizens. It means – education measured through economic power and not through the development of human potentialities.

We know that the ideology of university ranking differs according to who does the ranking and is sometimes controversial.[1] This ideology itself belongs to competitive education. Expert in higher education, Professor Philip G. Albach sees in competition teaching and learning stimulus but little speaks about loss of specific

[1] See, for example, information about university ranking http://www.shanghairanking.com/; http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings; http://www.webometrics.info/en/ranking_europe/central_eastern_europe?sort=desc&order=World+Rank. Accessed February 2, 2014.

cultural values when underdeveloped higher national institutions are running after global leaders (Altbach 2010).

This kind of transformation of educational values means that the goal of teaching and learning is less about cultural and moral formation of human beings and more and more about training for technical and pragmatical performativity, for economic competition on the market. It means that education starts to be dehumanized. Human values disappear, capitalistic, pragmatic, profit and money based values take over.

From the philosophical point of view, cultivating of economic values over human, cultural and moral values takes the educational system on the wrong path. Many scientists and philosophers ask: how do we oppose this dehumanization of education, the shortening of philosophy and ethics courses, excluding from the curricula courses on history of cultures, religions, literature, avoiding moral practice or of developing of responsible and politically educated citizens?

What is the right way of reforming education?[2]

Contemporary philosophers make tentative calls for nurturing feelings and self-understanding rather than filling people with information and training their skills.[3] Not to extract something that the system of education itself has filled the human being with, not to test, intimidate, examine and subordinate, but to develop the intrinsic capacities and moral values that the human person as a unique, cultured, thinking and maybe even altruistic being possesses.

Danish professor and philosopher Peter Kemp recognizes, that today's theoretical and practical basis for changing and replacing educational values is a change in State ideologies: *a competitive state* eliminates *a welfare state*. The welfare state's ideal means to take care of every citizen through human development, justice and moral values, but the competitive state is globally orientated to power, superiority and other pragmatic questions about who are the best at the moment. If we are considering the sustainability of societies, it seems that the welfare state's ideals are based on long established humanistic culture and the values of peace, but the competitive state's ideals promote superiority and, at the same time, conflict in society and between nations. Kemp writes:

> Thus, public institutions for education, health, information etc., are transformed more and more into commercial institutions that must enter into competition with each other. The university, for instance, becomes an enterprise that only searches for knowledge it can 'sell' and is less interested in reliable, credible knowledge. In addition, students in primary schools and high schools are educated for competition, while cultural and moral education are considered 'useless'. Their performance is constantly tested and the results published in ranking lists. The goal of all education becomes to make the person capable of asserting him- or herself as the strongest in competition on the market, not only the national but also the global market. Everything is done in order to serve the struggle between nations. (Kemp 2012, 202–203)

[2] Discussions about need of global education reforms and failure of results are described in Bereiter 2002. See especially Chapter 12. Why Educational Reform Needs a New Theory.

[3] See, for instance, Vandenberg (1981, 38–64).

The idea that higher institutions of education, namely universities, must be turned into commercial institutions that must enter into competition between each other and promote the state's competitiveness, expecially in export, isn't new. Many European higher educational establishments are turning in this direction notwithstanding the protests of academics and students. This process, for example, has been critically described in Gordon Finlayson's paper on the education system in the United Kingdom "The Storm Breaking on the University: UK Politics and Higher Education since 1979" (Finlayson 2012, 110–130).

Hannah Arendt Prize winner (1999) Vartan Gregorian recognizes a wide spectrum of university tasks:

> Universities become mere multiversities of specialisms. Yet their task is greater than ever; it is to transform information into knowledge, to ensure that we provide not training but education; not education, but culture as well; not information, but its distillation – namely knowledge, in order to protect our society against counterfeit information disguised as knowledge. (Gregorian 2000, 101)

Similar observations have been published by Wim Blockmans, historian from the Netherlands and an expert of science evaluation for the TECHNOPOLIS company, as well as by many others (Blokmans 2007, 89–94).

Universities in Latvia as well as many other higher educational establishments in post-Soviet countries are trying to follow the idea of commercialisation as they are convinced that a very important strategy for their development is increased funding through the generation of profits from tuition fees. Professor, ex-minister of education in Latvia, Raiba Rivža observes that for many years she applied to the Latvia's Cabinet of Ministers for an assessment of the adequacy of the funding provided in the proposed state budget for state higher educational establishments (Rivža 2000, 102–109, 2011). Until now, there has still been no response.

Commercialisation has resulted in students who pay fees being enrolled in many faculties practically without competition and later it is difficult to expel them from the university for poor progress because they are paying large fees. This is common for many post-socialistic countries when state budget support for higher educational institutions is poor and inadequate.

Weak quality assurance for education and doubtful basic values which are orientated only to the market but not to developing of student's personalities are among the main obstacles for the progress in education around the world. Professor Maria José Guerra Palmero from Spain analyses bureaucratization, neoliberalism and ideas of the "society of control" which have influenced the wrong turn of contemporary educational systems. She writes:

> My opinion regarding the last question (Why are bureaucrats taking control of the good ideas and noble ideals so easily?) is that the exacerbated and hypertrophied bureaucracy strongly hampers the effectiveness of the Spanish university and promotes demoralization by overlooking the human factor and the teacher's need for time and autonomy. (Guerra Palmero 2012, 137)

The Bologna[4] process means the end of the university as we know it from classical times in Europe. Productivity for the state and global economy, interests of the world monopolies, competitiveness, and innovation now stand as the top priority of higher education institutions. Philosophers cannot disagree with the idea of innovation if it is understood as a realization of human creativity but today in many countries innovation means realization of technological power and not development of mental, artistic, cultural creativity.

Without strengthening of fundamental human values there will not be a future based on welfare, feeling of a sense of life, or elementary human happiness. Guerra Palmero finishes her passionate paper with the recognition that now we see educational and social needs step backwards. (*Ibid.*, 134–137) Bologna has an uncertain future because it stimulates an irresponsible institutional design based on the demoralization of education, and the loss of philosophy courses, teaching of ethics, logic, and culture. The short competence model in education forces students and teachers to develop only pragmatic skills and short-circuits critical thinking, knowing the history of culture, understanding religions and new religious movements, and possibility of being able to analyse political processes.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26 helps to defend the thesis of the education as a formation process of personality. It declares:

> Education shall be directed *to the full development of the human personality* (italic, M.K.) and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.[5]

The orientation of education systems only to the labour market, competitive education and making educational institutions develop into a form of entrepreneurship does not allow for the realisation of aims such as friendship, tolerance, and an understanding of global processes. Education must be turned much more to the acquisition of human classical values including peace making, reasonable conduct, responsible life, freedom, cooperation and democracy.

Lord Ralf Dahrendorf discusses contemporary universities from the point of view of ideas and reality. As a main point about universities in Europe at the beginning of the twenty-first century he mentions education in the *emphatic sense*:

> Turning information into knowledge – is certainly a task of all schools, high and low. (Dahrendorf 2000, 103)

He shares the opinion of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities ex-president Dieter Simon that a nearly 30-year-old hankering after

[4] Guerra Palmero, M. J. means the Bologna process which was launched in 1999 by the Ministers of Education and university leaders of 29 countries, including University of Latvia, it has further developed into a process encompassing 46 countries. The progressive step for Europe was the idea to harmonize the national educational systems, but the Bologna process oriented universities to the three cycle degree system where every cycle gives the possibility of joining the labour market. The demands of market power seem to be much more stronger than the necessity to develop socially wise and responsible personalities.

[5] See: http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#a26 Accessed December 20, 2013.

inter, trans, and *pluri* (scil. disciplinarity) has had no discernible effect on progressive specialization. Dahrendorf follows the idea that:

> There is value in not allowing oneself to be boxed in [this means 'boxes' of knowledge or *Fächer*, M.K.], but there is no particular value in sticking boxes together or punching holes in their sides. (*Ibid.*, 104)

The formal requirement for interdisciplinarity always and everywhere as the best means of scientific progress has started to lose its effect. But the demand for the inclusion of a philosophically-ethical dimension in the development of sciences and educational systems these days is too inaudible and unnoticed.

Higher education institutions and their missions in the twenty-first century have become so multidimentional that it is time to return to the question of the meaning of education and its role in relation to the experiences of life. Without considering this question from a fundamental philosophical and ethical perspective it will be very difficult to find a new, better orientation for education systems.

13.2 Life Experience: The Role of Values at the Education Systems

Contemporary societies have become very advanced technologically – just think of how many buttons and programs even a washing machine has – whereas with regard to human mentality and values it is becoming increasingly uncultivated. The spectrum of responsible feelings and the understanding of social and cultural processes is declining and is becoming unstable. There is no demand for the development of positive, sophisticated and deep feelings, required, for example, in friendship and human understanding of another.

In the nineteenth century the famous German scientist, philosopher and linguist Wilhelm Humboldt separated culture, knowledge and skills from education. For him education was something specific. It meant the 'subtle string' of inner formation which is never crossed, but which is in the process of shaping, expansion and improvement. Education is a way of thinking, which, arising from understanding and being sensitive both to intellectual and moral aspirations, harmoniously drifts into senses and character. Here education does not mean culture any more, that is, formation of ability or talents. It is something higher. Education in this sense means *creating the form of human feelings*. This type of education is based on an understanding of the human being's integrity and on understanding a human being as purposefully implementing content and form. That is, the humanities, philosophy and ethics implement an axiological dimension to life experience, and convey understanding about meanings, values and humanistic feelings. In addition, what is very important, is that philosophy can interpret human rights at the anthropological and ethical dimension with the goal – not only to know about rights and duties from the legal point of view but also to implement rights and duties at the life experience level. (Kuçuradi 2013, 1–11; 51–60; 193–199) Philosophical and ethical teachings

and practice have an important influence at all levels of education starting from childhood until life long learning.

How many lessons have been wasted teaching curriculum, electrons, moles and sinuses in contemporary schools? But how many lessons have shaped the human being? If spelling and punctuation have consumed more time than talk about responsibility, love, peace, freedom and solidarity, about happiness, life and death and pupils have not mastered these qualities, they can start treating this type of educational institution with distrust. Distrust is an understatement. They start to show disrespect.

Very characteristically, today's competitive education undermines the role of the humanities and disregards a teacher's motivation to be a master of his or her profession, where to be a master means having an extra-curricular presence, encouraging togetherness and friendship, teaching values, human co-operation and solidarity to his or her pupils. There is no time, no interest in such an educational mission. But as a result – the teacher has no followers and no belief in the values that he or she teaches. It is impossible to achieve educational aims such as training the abilities to communicate, participate and to show solidarity if there is no respect and no authority, and education is turned to merely practical skills. The teacher who tells pupils or students about bytes and files is just an intermediary or an appendage to the computer. Is he or she going to be the teacher of life experience, happiness and moral values? That is why declarations about ethical and cultural components as the predominant ones in contemporary system of education are highly questionable.

Existing educational theories in a knowledge and skill based society overemphasise the role of the natural sciences and underestimate the role of the humanities. Of course, the natural sciences and practical training offer benefits to people and serve the desire to rule over nature and utilise natural resources for the technological development of mankind. But educators must remember that it is the humanities and value systems, not merely technological constructivism, which shape today's world. Natural sciences are not competent to deal with values, that is, with questions of why and how discoveries should be used.

The common goals of social development cannot be defined only as economic growth. A modern knowledge and skills based society is inconceivable without a humanistic dimension which is rooted in culture. We need the humanities to justify the importance of economic growth.

Contemporary society is experiencing a shortage of respect and understanding. It is a shortage of a specific, culture-based, sophisticated sensitivity, on a par with feelings of holiness, compassion and humility, all of which have become almost extinct. Feelings and emotions are no longer discussed because it is impossible to evaluate them and one cannot find didactic methods to cultivate them.

Many contemporary people identify a human being's value with the amount of money, information, things and connections he or she has. The cult of possessions is growing; people are becoming soulless and greedy. Many are well informed, formally educated but are not culturally developed personalities. Personality is developed on the basis of understanding and not only knowing, since understanding means being able to recognize values, to think deeper than is required by practical,

utilitarian motives. A philosopher from Turkey, Betl Çotuksöken warns that education without values is not possible:

> Education as a kind of civilisation exists in a definite place or cultural environment that requires a society, social and public relations as well. At the same time, every fact of education is a construction with an economic dimension and owns a system of ideas, values and theories orientating all educational processes. (Çotuksöken 2005, 196).

To look much more to the question of values in education is the task of contemporary scholars.

13.3 Understanding, Conscience and Role of Philosophy in the Process of Education

The concept of "understanding", to my mind, can be one of the most useful for explaining the role of humanities and philosophy in the process of education. Education in the humanities and philosophy enables people to not only obtain information, aiding their knowing and acting, but also understanding what is going on from the point of view of values. Understanding is not the same as evaluation but it can be seen as a phase of the life process which gives possibility to reflection and the making of decisions.

Life experience exists in the process of interpretation and re-interpretation of meanings and values. Understanding gives the possibility of participating in the formation of culture which means a wider and deeper process than the economic process and social life.[6] The process of understanding enlivens the past, connects it with the future. It wrenches past events from the abyss of non-being, lending them new meanings. Understanding means to get experience of the "school of life" not only to participate in the labour market and play social roles.

Understanding manifests itself as a dual process: on the one hand, it is not a purely productive activity, rather – it is reproductive; on the other hand, the process is inevitably connected with creation. Understanding combines perceiving, givenness and creating new meanings. Good education offers such possibilities – not only to learn, but to be able to re-interpret, to approbate and develop understanding.

If meaning-formation and understanding are attributed to human abilities, they should be characterized as striking a balance between the given, definite, existing world and the creative freedom in its interpretation.

Creative actualization of meaning is the repetition of the old in a new way, the synthesis of what is given and what is created, of passivity and activity. It contains a capacity to perceive the given meaning and to actualize it in a concrete situation. Recurrence is necessary for any actualization of values and understanding. On the basis of the given, a new sense takes shape, the novelty of which is relative.

[6] The concept of "understanding" has been developed in philosophical hermeneutics, see the classical book by Gadamer (2006).

Recurrence does not mean identification with the past, knowing of history. It is creation of the present in the form of a new interpretation.

But meanings have their own inertia, including inertia of language, styles and forms. Only by being conscious of the deepest roots of culture can a human being participate in creation.

Understanding and meaning are correlated philosophical notions but in some sense understanding is in contradistinction to cognition. Cognition yields information and knowledge, understanding reveals attitude to sense. While the result of cognition is usually considered to be either true or false (and on attaining true knowledge, recurrence of a cognitive act in the field of culture becomes superfluous), understanding can be characterized as having a broader range of evaluation: strength of influence, depth and integrity of comprehension, successful communication, and the process of dialogue. In understanding sense it is of greater importance to see the falsehood, mystery or fallacy – "the heart of the matter" – rather than to reach bare scientific truth.

Understanding, unlike cognition, does not always tend towards adequacy – it rather tends to depth. The subject of understanding is not to be identified with another subject who has expressed him- or herself by means of words or the meaningful objects of culture; the dialogue starts on equal terms and the outcome of it is the pledge of sense realization. Absence of dialogue, of communication, renders knowledge "mute".

We as human beings not only cognize the world but interpret and evaluate it. Understanding means to recognize values. It must be acknowledged that understanding and valuation does not develop automatically, of itself. The German classical philosophy of the nineteenth century showed that mind is linked with reflection, that is, thinking about thinking. It is closely connected with life practice: observe and know yourself! Do, but be aware of what you are doing! When you go ahead, turn back to see what road you have covered! Observe and control yourself! Respect this "turning back" as a kind of responsibility.

Accordingly, a deep layer of education in the human being's life is that which provides for a *self-critical approach*. That is the road to the perfection of intellect and deeper feelings. In the ethical sense conscience is the same as reflection for a cognitive mind. Conscience is also a kind of reflection because it is contemplation and an account to one's self on what was good and what was bad.

The word "conscience" has never been as frequently used in Europe as in nineteenth century educational and ethical theories. Conscience started replacing confession as a form of classical life in the centre of which was the evaluation of behavior and thoughts from the point of view of a stable religiously erected value hierarchy. Through the hearing of confession the church keeps its followers in obedience and controls its parish helping them to orientate themselves to value. With the help of conscience the individual controls him- or herself, the point of departure is searched within one's own self, not outside. However, in the deepest sense, conscience is not anarchically free because its formation depends on the bases inherent in culture, upbringing and also religion.

In the postclassical period there is no developed practice of confession. Another type of procedure comes into being: *admission*. To a believer confession seems to be an element necessary for ordering his or her life to which he or she willingly submits; to a secular man conscience is like an inner voice difficult to ignore; *admission* in the postclassical period appears mostly as a result of external pressure. Admit you are guilty of transgression, admit your weakness and admit what you have appropriated! The autonomous, individualized man does not readily accept this form of admission because it appears more like being caught in the act than a system involving all. The competitive educational system does not teach about conscience and human values but only deals with guidance about successful business or political communication.

If in Christianity all are sinners, if in the classical period all are conscience-stricken then in modernity it is not all who agree to admit to transgressions. The postclassical period "opens" man to the market, information, emancipation and free sexual relations, but much more "closes" to meditation, reflection and fairness. Competitive and pragmatic oriented educational system excludes the serious attempt to moral and cultural values. Use of examples of cultural differences and stories about the differences of civilizations provide support for developing business not for the educating of personalities and democratization of states.

Philosophical education and knowledge of humanities are important for higher-order thinking and avoiding of short competitive education. The founder of philosophy for children Matthew Lipman recognizes that the capacity of philosophy, when properly reconstructed and properly taught, to bring about higher-order thinking in education is significantly greater than the capacity of any alternative approach (Lipman 1991, 238–240).

He offers a model joining three important models of thinking:

(a) critical thinking based on judgments which is contextual and self-corrective;
(b) creative thinking with imaginative, productive, and holistic features;
(c) caring thinking based on values, involved in maintaining, protecting, promoting, praising. Caring thinking he defines as empathic experience. (Lipman 1998, 6–30)

Many competitive education systems are orientated to informative, explanatory thinking, logical discourse, rationalization but avoid the teaching of caring thinking. Feminist thought elaborates the ideas of care, including care ethics but it isn't enough to achieve the understanding of value that is required by a good education. My opinion is that without returning to inclusive philosophical and ethical studies to all curricula there will not be progress in the realization of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26. An appeal for the inclusion of philosophy in education which appeared in the world public space on November 30, 1992 and was signed by well-known intellectual and political leaders, has contemporary relevance. The Appeal declares:

> In many countries institutions of learning have either continuously ignored philosophy and intellectual history as subjects of instruction or increasingly pushed them aside: millions of

> students cannot even begin to make sense of the concept of philosophy. We nurture professional and practical talents and let the philosophical spirit of creativity spoil. [..] Therefore we appeal to all parliaments and governments of the world to introduce, support, and underwrite with full force the study of philosophy and its history [..]. This is the inerradicable presupposition for every genuine encounter between peoples and cultures, for the creation of new categories to overcome existing contradictions and to be able to direct humanity on the path to goodness. (Instituto Italiano Per Gli Studi Filosofici 1999)

Education starting from childhood and continuing with life-long learning will find a path to goodness if it deals with people's life experiences and discusses values.

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