

**Accounts of Hope:
A Problem of Method in
Postmodern Apologia**

Ivana Dolejšová

Peter Lang

Accounts of Hope

European University Studies
Europäische Hochschulschriften
Publications Universitaires Européennes

Series XXIII
Theology

Reihe XXIII Série XXIII
Theologie
Théologie

Vol./Band 726



PETER LANG

Bern · Berlin · Bruxelles · Frankfurt a. M. · New York · Oxford · Wien

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Die Deutsche Bibliothek – CIP-Einheitsaufnahme

Dolejšová, Ivana:

Accounts of hope : a problem of method in postmodern apologia /

Ivana Dolejšová. – Bern ; Berlin ; Bruxelles ; Frankfurt am Main ;

New York ; Oxford ; Wien : Lang, 2001

(European university studies : Ser. 23, Theology ; Vol. 726)

ISBN 3-906767-54-X

British Library and Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data:
A catalogue record for this book is available from *The British Library*, Great Britain,
and from *The Library of Congress*, USA

ISSN 0721-3409

ISBN 3-906767-54-X

US-ISBN 0-8204-5626-8

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Printed in Germany

To Christina
With the debt of friendship

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PREFACE

The theme of apologetical theology is important to me for two reasons. First, having lived for more than two thirds of my life in a communist country with a strong atheist ideology and oppressive practices, has taught me to value the strength of hope and the sense of liberation present in Christianity. The time before the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia was marked for me by an experience of the courage and openness of some Christian communities and individual Christians, whom I have encountered. They faced persecution and often experienced betrayal from their own people. With the exception of Albania, Czechoslovakia had the strictest anti-religious policy in former communist Europe.¹ The state provided its citizens with ‘clear’ ideas of who is an enemy and who is a friend, and the churches belonged among those, who had to be destroyed completely. This attitude was justified by referring to Marx’s claim that religion was ‘the opium of the people’,² which was taken out of context and as such contributed to the programme of elimination of Christians. Churches were directly controlled by the state, whose strategy moved from the plan of total destruction within one generation (in 1950s) to infiltration of their structures by the secret police and thus their subsequent collapse (from 1970s till 1989). In 1980s, when I was a seminarian, the ministers still needed state permission to practice their ministry (this was the ‘legal’ practice

1 See Dolejšová, I., 1999e, ‘The Velvet Revolution: Ten Years On’, *The Month* 9–10 (1999), 361–365.

2 The full quotation goes as follows: ‘Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness.’ (Marx, K., ‘Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right’ in Marx and Engels, *On Religion*: 1957:42)

since 1950), and if they were successful in addressing anyone other than the older generation of churchgoers, or if they were politically active, they usually lost this permission. Any informal activities were forbidden under threat of prison. Religious orders had been banned since 1950 (with a short exception in 1968). Anyone practising religion, which the constitution formally allowed, had to expect that their children would not get secondary or higher education and their job prospects would be limited. At the same time, as the collaboration of Christians with the secret police was a part of the scene, it was difficult to overlook courageous examples of people who, at great personal cost, communicated their belief as something which had a future.³ Yet, after the Velvet Revolution too much energy has been spent in fighting for the ‘right’ Christianity, and in searching for. Sadly, they have all too often mimicked the atheist state’s behaviour in this respect. This situation has raised questions as to how the persecution has influenced the inner dynamics of the churches living under the communist dictatorship, their development, their values and images, their relation with the wider church and the wider society. Questions, which, I am sure, can be asked also from the Western side, where the concept of ‘the evil coming from the East’ played a significant role in the building up the image of a ‘better’ Christianity west from the Berlin Wall.

The second reason, why the theme of apologetical theology is important to me has to do with more general questions arising from the historical experiences mentioned above, and can be summarised as the conflict between communicating Christianity as something hopeful and liberating for the hearers, and imposing a religious ideology, which is beneficial for those who spread it. This interest brought me to the field of the methodology of *apologia* and to religious epistemology, where I deal with the questions of what it is that we communicate under the heading of Christianity. What distinguishes communicating Christianity from imposing an ideology (in the negative meaning of the

3 See Dolejšová, I., 1999d, ‘Fundamentalism and Liberalism: Churches before and After the Velvet Revolution’, *Epworth Review* 26, No.3 (July 1999), 76–84.

word)?⁴ And how can religious postulates be validated? These questions are for me again tied up with the images and values of people who experienced totalitarian and post-totalitarian society, which includes also ideologies of Western neo-liberal capitalism, of prosperity at the expense of the weak, and their impact on what is communicated under the name of Christianity. What I want to avoid, however, is painting a black and white picture of an easily categorisable ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ Christianity. In my opinion, entering into a competition for the guardian of the ‘best, most pristine’ Christianity is already a sign of a well embedded ideology giving priority to the self at the expense of the other, something, which I argue against. If Christian belief and practice are to remain something hopeful and relevant in the postmodern world, I am convinced, they have to find ways of overcoming the temptation to dominate, to explain what cannot be explained, and to limit conversion to belonging to a narrow privileged group.

This book is based on a thesis, which was submitted at Heythrop College, University of London in 1999. Neither the thesis nor the book would have been written without the support of a number of people and organizations. First of all I want to thank my supervisor Francis Joseph Laishley S.J., who has been a source of much help and inspiration down the years. I want to thank also Peter Vardy, who was a big help especially in the earlier stages of the research and without whom the project would have never started. My gratitude goes to the whole staff of Heythrop College, and in particular to its former principal Brendan Callaghan S.J., for making doctoral studies at Heythrop possible. There have been a number of organizations which supported me at different stages of the research, and whom I want to thank: the Masaryk Scholarship Foundation, the Saint Luke’s College Foundation, the British Council in Prague, the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, the Czech Catholic Community in London, and the Jürg and Katharina Brandenberger-Oppliger Foundation. I am indebted to Sally Theakston and to the

4 J.B. Thompson defines the negative meaning of ideologies as ‘ways in which meaning serves to keep the relations of power’ (*Studies in the Theory of Ideology*, 1984:4). The plurality of definitions of ideology is explored in T. Eagleton, 1994, *Ideology: An Introduction*.

Community of S.H.C.J. in Holland Villas Road for their warm hospitality and, really, for becoming my second home during the years of studies, and also to the Jesuit communities in Osterley and Harlesden for their hospitality and friendship during the time of my continuing research. My thanks are also due to my colleagues at the Institute of Ecumenical Studies in Prague, and at the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague, for giving me space and support for this work. One of the nicest gifts have enriched the adventure of this research has been that of the 'Christina Group'. It is impossible to name all, but at least to mention the most important ones: Helen Costigane S.H.C.J., Peter Tyler, Philip Endean S.J., Michael Kirwan S.J. and Tim Noble S.J., who very kindly also did the language corrections of the book, many thanks for their love, help and shared vision.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- 1Ap – Justin Martyr, 1867, ‘First Apology’.
2Ap – Justin Martyr, 1867, ‘Second Apology’.
BB – Wittgenstein, L., 1958, *The Blue and Brown Books*.
Con – Drury, M. O’C., 1984, ‘Conversations with Wittgenstein’.
CPR – Kant, I., 1963, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*.
D – Justin Martyr, 1867, ‘Dialogue with Trypho’.
Ex – Francis of Assisi, 1982, ‘Exhortations’.
ES – Hus, J., 1904b, ‘Exposition of the Sentences’.
FS – *Franciscan Sources*, 1982.
GB – Wittgenstein, L., 1979, *Remarks on Frazer’s Golden Bough*.
GS – ‘Gaudium et Spes’, 1966, *Documents of Vatican II*.
LMa – Bonaventure, 1982, ‘Legend Maior’.
LMi – Bonaventure, 1982, ‘Legend Minor’.
Not – Drury, M. O’C., 1984, ‘Notes to Conversations with Wittgenstein’.
OC – Wittgenstein, L., 1969, *On Certainty*.
PCHR – Hegel, G.W.F., 1961, ‘The Positivity of Christian Religion’.
PI – Wittgenstein, L., 1958, *Philosophical Investigations*.
RW – Rhees, R., (ed) 1984, *Recollections of Wittgenstein*.
SCH – Hegel, G.W.F., 1961, ‘The Spirit of Christianity’.
STS – Hus, J., 1985, ‘The String of Three Strands’.
TLP – Wittgenstein, L., 1990, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.

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INTRODUCTION

Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you, but do it with gentleness and respect.

(1 Peter 3:15.16)

There are a wide variety of accounts of hope associated with Christian faith and love and with their source and giver, God, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. As I mentioned in the preface, there is a need to examine what type of hope each of the explanations brings about, and for whom it is hopeful. Is it for the proclaimer, who thus broadens his/her power base and sphere of influence? Or is it the addressee, for whom it opens a more authentic existence? This book searches for a relevant method in apologetics as a non-ideological communicating of Christianity in the postmodern culture, which enables the discourse to talk about Christian hope without seeking to impose on others the necessity of a 'conversion' to a particular closed system. In order to do so, it concentrates on possibilities for rethinking relations of knowledge, belief and practice, of nature and grace, of the transcendent and the immanent; for symbolic understanding of language; and for a holistic notion of human conversion.

To explain the terminology employed: for methodological purposes I make a distinction between 'apologetics' and '*apologia*', both stemming from the root word 'apology', which historically signified apologetical discourse as defending the integrity of Christian belief and practice against its accusers.¹ I maintain this distinction throughout the book, except where I quote other sources. Although there is an artificial element in this distinction, it will help to differentiate between a reflective, historical, vindication of the integrity of Christian belief and practice, which I call *apologia*; and the rational defence of particular systems of

1 See Justin Martyr, Ch. Two, 1.1.

beliefs, ideas, attitudes and values, aiming to prove that only these are universally true, of which apologetics is an instance. I assert that apologetics takes religious, philosophical or scientific theories as a primary source for doing theology;² by these means it arrives at ‘unchangeable’ truths, values and practices, forms them into a closed ideological system to which it forces others to ‘convert’. And it is this which is the target of my criticism. My own definition of *apologia* is based on a variety of its historical representations, which I bring in Chapter Two, and it is developed in the conclusion of the book, where I offer a summary of criteria which help to differentiate *apologia* from apologetics.

When I speak of ‘postmodernity’, I have in mind socio-cultural changes marking the second part of this century in Europe and the United States. T.W. Tilley in *Postmodern Theologies* shows that the peculiar prefix ‘post’ marks our age in different ways: ‘Manifestos appear with disheartening regularity, announcing that our era is postmodern, postchristian, postreligious, postcolonial, postindustrial, postideological, postmoral, postanalytic, postliterate, postnarrative, postauthorial, postpersonal, poststructuralist, postliberal, etc.’ (1995:vi) My point is that this ‘post’-period provides us with a critique of stability – we know only too well what is passing and what we are losing. Perhaps we know this far better than we know what we are gaining, where we are arriving at, which new periods are being opened. The critique of stability concerning apologetic discourse is directed to the foundations on which all forms of apologetics built: their fixed meanings, their universal claims, their unchangeable theories, their reduction of ‘the other’ to ‘the same’. *Apologia*, in contrast to apologetics, in our ‘post’-age is marked by a willingness to reevaluate critically pre-modern conventions and certainties and modern progressivist optimism.

The last term I want to define here is foundationalism. It is derived from ‘foundation’. This has its roots in the Latin word *fundamentum*, which the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* interprets as ‘That on which a thing depends or is based’ and ‘that which is indispensable’ (1971:746). There is, however, a difference between foundations and foundationalism. The

2 Cf. Maritain, J., 1955, *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 55-56.

problem of foundations is stated by Karl Rahner in *Foundations of Christian Faith*:

We do not abandon this circle between faith and the grounds of faith when we ask: In a historical inquiry what can be established with sufficient certainty about those events which are not only objects of faith but also grounds of faith? Concretely, did Jesus know himself to be the absolute saviour, and can it be maintained with sufficient certainty before the tribunal of conscience and of truth that such a claim is known by historical inquiry? (1993: 244–245)

Foundationalism, then, is a position which defines the grounds of faith in terms of pieces of absolute truth, which, however, is uncritically identified with one's own knowledge and understanding of it. Merold Westphal³ states that foundationalism 'is not the innocent claim that some of our beliefs rest on others, which play a foundational role to the former. It is stronger claim that some of our foundational beliefs can be final truths, pure pieces of cognitive gold, bits of Absolute Knowledge.' (1992:xi) It is important to recognise that responses to the quest for foundations can be both foundationalist as well as non-foundationalist and to ask questions about what is wrong with foundationalism, in its roots, its strategies and its fruits. In this book I examine foundationalism in three ways: (i) as a defective picture of reality which claims to rest on fixed foundations of knowledge, belief and judgment;⁴ (ii) as a defective system which harmonises different approaches into one meta-theory, while excluding practical particularities;⁵ and (iii) as a defective principle which divides positions into two categories: either they require or provide evidence with regard to (i) and (ii).⁶ The roots of all these three elements of foundationalism will be traced in a fideist conviction that their assumptions are 'given', universal and infallible. An examination of foundationalist strategies, then, involves positions which

3 Cf. Westphal, M., 1992, 'Preface' to *Modernity and Its Discontents*, ix-xiv.

4 Cf. Cahoon: 3.

5 Here I refer to Lechte, who demonstrates in Lyotard's critique 'the impossibility of making a general idea identical to a specific real instance' (250).

6 Cf. Phillips, 1988: xiii.

may be identified as traditionalist and those which may be seen as liberalist or revisionist. Concerning the fruits, then, in this book I understand foundationalism as a fertile ground on which ideologies grow, either secular (like communism) or semi-religious (like Nazism) or religious (like all types of fundamentalism). Apologetics, then, in my understanding, relies on foundationalism and is an advocate of religious ideologies.

1. The Aim and Methods

This book is based on my investigation into the tradition of Christian *apologia* and the religious epistemologies underpinning its postmodern critique. The aim of the book is to demonstrate that postmodern critique does not have to be destructive but can provide *apologia* with tools for a reevaluation of its own tradition, and for a rediscovery of liberating, exciting and credible accounts of Christian belief and practice within it, which makes a creative continuity of *apologia* up to the present time both relevant and epistemologically respectable.

There are two parts of the book, employing different methods. Part One: Apologetics and *Apologia*, which employs predominantly two methods: one a critical historical analysis, the other hermeneutical. In Part Two: Changes in Religious Epistemology, there is a change of tone and the main method is one of epistemological analysis. Both parts operate on the boundary between theology and philosophy; nevertheless, their aim is primarily theological, to rehabilitate apologetical discourse in a postmodern cultural setting.

Part One starts with postmodern criticisms of language, meaning and truth applied to what I call a foundationalist and a revisionist apologetics.⁷ I argue that these two versions are not exhaustive of apologetical discourse. They are contrasted with different facets of *apologia* as these have developed down the centuries. The critical historical

7 By revisionist apologetics I mean apologetical discourse relying on a modified version of foundationalism (see n.3).

analysis examines *apologia* in the changing historical, social, cultural and religious contexts, and arrives at two conclusions: factual changes in the history of *apologia*; and a revised version of its historical continuity. This helps to locate the postmodern situation in which *apologia* appears and to identify its relations with the past neither as ‘radically different’ from the rest of a ‘simple harmonic movement of Western history’⁸ nor as ‘the same’ as if serious changes had never taken place.⁹The other method employed in the first part is hermeneutical. It deals with the process of understanding and interpretation, with what D. Tracy in *The Analogical Imagination* calls a ‘faithful attendance to, and thereby involvement in and interpretation of the truth-disclosure of genuinely new possibilities for human life’ (1981:67) in the classics of *apologia*. In other words, it asks: What must appear in every good interpretation? And how are the possibilities of a new meaning and truth disclosed in it?¹⁰ Hermeneutical method as applied in the book has a practical advantage and a theoretical weakness compared to postmodern critique: for as Tracy says, it ‘is dependent upon the assumption that ‘classics’ – understood as those texts, events, images, persons, rituals and symbols which are assumed to disclose permanent possibilities of meaning and truth – actually exist’ (68).Part Two mainly employs the method of epistemological analysis. However, attention will also be given to understanding the individual thinkers in their particular context and looking for legitimate interpretations of their positions. The epistemological analysis is concerned with methods of validation with regard to knowledge, belief and commitment. It looks at how changes in a hierarchy of knowledge, belief and commitment influence approaches to transcendent reference¹¹ and to immanent coherence¹². The analysis is concerned

8 Derrida following Heidegger criticised “all Western thought” because of its “logocentrism” and also its “foundationalism”. See Ch.One, 1.1; Cf. Culler, J., 1983, *On Deconstruction – Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*, part on ‘Writing and Logocentrism’: 89–110.

9 See G. Tyrrell’s comments on the “rule of implication” Ch.Two, 4.2.

10 See Tracy, D., 1981: *The Analogical Imagination*, 68.

11 For transcendent and reference, see glossary.

12 For immanent and coherence, see glossary.

with the problem of whether post-Enlightenment religious epistemologies have to operate on foundationalist models¹³ if they do not want to give up the assumption accepted by the hermeneutical method in Part One, namely the disclosure of permanent possibilities of meaning and truth. This problem is expressed in terms of transcendent reference possibilities. The basic argument of the book goes as follows: In Part One, Chapter One: Postmodern Critique and Two Types of Apologetics, I identify three key points of postmodern criticism inspired by Derrida, Lyotard and Levinas and address them to apologetical discourse: (i) deconstruction of objective meaning and truth in language; (ii) death of metanarratives; (iii) constitutive otherness. To clear the ground for further discussion, these criticisms are addressed to two extreme contemporary approaches: foundationalist apologetics represented by Richard Swinburne and Brian Hebblethwaite, and revisionist apologetics represented by Don Cupitt and Gareth Moore. The problem of how to distinguish between reality and fiction is addressed and both approaches are found incapable of providing a satisfactory answer based on an account of Christian belief and practice that would take seriously both the ways in which they are experienced within history and their postmodern critique.

This provokes the question whether there are any further satisfactory examples to be found in apologetical discourse. In Chapter Two: Roots of Christian *Apologia* and a Variety of Definitions, I argue that down the centuries we encounter different themes and methods, which in their variety do not form a single system as apologetics tried to do, but at the same time provide us with a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of this discourse. In spite of the diversity, there is a shared intention: namely to communicate the vitality of following Christ in each particular situation, while facing different opponents, as I show in selected examples: in the second century, when Christianity represented a persecuted minority within the Roman Empire; in the fifth century, when the church was divided within itself and

13 Cp. Guarino, T., 'Between Foundationalism and Nihilism: Is Phronesis the Via Media for Theology?', *Theological Studies* 54 (1993), 37–54.

painfully faced the end of the Christian Empire; in the thirteenth century, when the 'Christian Spirit' and the 'Christian life-style'¹⁴ were overshadowed by the church establishing its power in the struggle over rights of investiture or in the crusades; and even more radically in the sixteenth century, when the church expelled the critics from her body and made her authority into something total and exhaustive; and in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, when the church fought against the spirit of the time and treated the dialogue between apologists and the modern world as dangerous and undesirable. My choice of authors and themes seeks to be representative, if inevitably partial. Justin's argument for the reasonableness of belief; Augustine's vindication of authoritative tradition, Francis' embodiment of Christian practice, Hus's concern for the following of the *vita Christi* under all circumstances; Newman's striving for human integrity; and Tyrrell's search for a credible plurality of human knowledge, which brought together Christian tradition and the modern world, which were claimed to be irreconcilable. The Conclusion of Part One: How to Overcome Foundationalism? brings three epistemological recognitions and a question. The first recognition is that the apologists were reluctant to give up transcendent reference but that for them it was the practice which referred: living out one's belief in relationship with God, with people and with the rest of creation. The second recognition is that in situations of crisis referential practice stood as a criterion for distinguishing between reality and fiction, and also allowed development of reflection on belief as something active. The apologists did not understand Christianity as a dead theory, as a metanarrative strengthening religious ego-centrism;¹⁵ nevertheless each of the discourses relied on some kind of assumed foundations. Attempts at avoiding the differ-

14 See Thomas of Celana, 1982, *The First Life of St Francis: I/1/i*.

15 Against this, Levinas argues that identity, including religious identity, comes from outside, from the Other, which is irreducible. Levinas reaches the other extreme of egocentrism, as he argues that the relationship between Self and the Other is 'dissymmetrical' in terms that the Other can dictate to the Self without any reciprocity. See Lechte: 117–118.

ences in foundations of *apologia*, and harmonising different approaches into one meta-theory, which I call foundationalism,¹⁶ led from *apologia* to apologetics, which took religious, philosophical or scientific theories as a primary source for doing theology. Thus, a return from apologetics to *apologia* needs a different epistemological underpinning from foundationalism. The third recognition is that the apologists communicated God as both radically other than us and our world, and yet irrevocably present in every single part of it as Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. However, most of them did not succeed in maintaining the trace of this God in the otherness of people, and aimed at conversion to their own sets of beliefs and practices. Part One raises a question, whether *apologia*, in order to keep claims to referential practice (and thus not to fall into relativism), has to aim at the conversion of others. The problem as to whether *apologia* can justify a claim to refer to one triune transcendent God without regressing to a metanarrative opens Part Two: Changes in Religious Epistemology, where I look at the pre-history of the postmodern critique and search for alternatives which Derrida, Lyotard and Levinas overlook. I examine the split in the post-Enlightenment epistemology stemming from Kant; one stream via Hegel, the other stream via Kierkegaard.

In Chapter Three: Human Autonomy and Belief in the Transcendent, my main attention is given to how Kant's shift in thinking, towards the subject and its autonomy, produced an alternative to metaphysical foundationalism;¹⁷ nevertheless Kant's alternative rests on rationalist¹⁸ foundations. It is shown that the transcendent is approachable as numinous¹⁹ and as practically necessary,²⁰ and that, according to Kant, we need its aid for acting against the evil present in our roots. At the same time he claims that we cannot have descriptive tools for the tran-

16 It is important to recognise that 'foundationalism' was not their theme. Thus, there is an artificial element in applying this category to the past and limits of its usage in the interpretation of the past have to be recognised.

17 For metaphysics, see glossary.

18 For a distinction between 'reasonable' and 'rationalist', see glossary.

19 Cf. *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*, 1963: 260.

20 Cf. Kant, 1963:88.

scendent since God, freedom and immortality are but postulates of practical reason. Any descriptions of the transcendent, both in cosmic and in ethical terms, are seen as threats to human autonomy. Then I point out that the tension present in the claim to radical human autonomy and the need for transcendent aid is theoretically harmonised in Reformed Epistemology. However, it is pointed out that for the purpose of *apologia* the strands taking this tension seriously and exploring their possibilities are more important. Chapter Four: History and Immanence, is dedicated to Hegel. His method of immanence does away with any claim to transcendent reference. But it is shown that Hegel's criticisms of Christianity for being a "positive" (or we can say 'foundationalist') religion give way to foundationalism of a different kind: the philosophy of the Absolute Spirit is substituted for Christianity. Interestingly, without transcendent referential claims, Hegel still uses the language of the 'Absolute'²¹ and constructs a large theoretical system aspiring to universal validity, which eliminates the independence of the other and makes it a part of its dialectics. An analogy is made between Hegel and Phillips, both of whom start with anti-foundationalist claims and are both vulnerable to the use of their own weapons. In Chapter Five: The Truth Which Edifies, I introduce a counterpart to Hegel: Kierkegaard, and his attempt to reestablish the transcendent as the Absolute. Kierkegaard's language of paradox is examined and the question raised as to how far he is willing to sacrifice the rational and the communal elements of Christianity. In his thought there are distinctions between the rationalist and the reasonable, the community of individuals and the crowd of Christendom. As Kierkegaard mainly reacts against Hegel's rationalism, understood as the sufficiency of human reason in all realms, and against an appeal to the objective as universally valid, he develops his own vocabulary to reflect the role of subjectivity and of the individual.²² However, I point out that there is a gulf between reason and belief which creates a problem of how to distinguish fiction from reality. Therefore I complement Kierkegaard's epistemology with others found in contemporary theories of truth, where I deal with the problem of cri-

21 See Ch.Four, 2.2.

22 See Ch.Five, 1.1.

teria for such a distinction on a theoretical level. Chapter Six: 'Don't Think, Look', examines how the division stemming from Kant's epistemology can be reconciled in a way that would be beneficial for *apologia*. I examine Wittgenstein's move from logical foundationalism to a phenomenological concentration on language as a game. He sees its rules as innate in its social practice, and this forms an argument against private language. At the same time he proposes a phenomenologically based plurality of language games and emphasises the seriousness with which we have to take differences in their rules. According to Wittgenstein one learns a particular language game by learning how to practise it, and practice is awarded a referential role. Finally I concentrate on Wittgenstein's reversed hierarchy of certainties, where knowing is dependent on believing and believing on acting, from which it takes its currency.²³ Conclusion of Part Two: Realism Without Foundationalism, reevaluates the relations between foundationalism and reference. It brings three key points and one question: first, that foundationalism relies on a private language being given universal validity, which we saw to a different degree in Kant, Hegel and Kierkegaard, however much Kierkegaard disliked the word 'universal'; second, that once a split between the objective and the subjective, the transcendent and the immanent took place, reference became either unnecessary (as in the case of Hegel or Phillips), or dependent on a fideist assumption – if you believe this, than you can be granted the rest (as in the case of Kierkegaard); third, that a reversed hierarchy of certainties starting with practice enables a deed to refer, which is reflected in terms of belief and conceptualised into verifiable systems of knowledge. If we do not want to sink into foundationalism again, it has to be recognised that the assumptions on which we build our knowledge are not more certain than the conclusions at which we arrive in terms of a decision how to act. The question is directed to *apologia*: can it adopt a supremacy of practice over theory without renouncing the 'what' of Christian belief? In other words, would it not end in saying that it is not important what you believe, but how you act? Can we hold orthopraxis and orthodoxy together in a way

23 Cf. Thiselton, A.C., 1995, *Interpreting God and the Postmodern Self: On Meaning, Manipulation and Promise*: 35.

that Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein did not manage to do? And if so, how can the 'what' of belief be justified without relapsing into foundationalism?

In the Conclusion of the book Part One and Part Two are brought together. I look again at the two experiences, first at Christianity as an experience of hopeful belief, and different from totalitarian political ideology in its reference to a transcendent dimension. This had a practical effect insofar as people found the strength in religious symbolism to live their lives in conformity with the Gospels. Second, I return to the experience of the fall of a totalitarian political system, when Christians tended to occupy the free space by a number of religious ideologies and developed the 'absolutist' strands of Christianity in order to 'convert' secular society. Against this background I address the problem of how to retain the freedom and humility of *apologia* and resist the temptation to 'save' others by the religious grand schemes advocated by apologetics. I evaluate the methods used in the book and point out areas which need further attention. And then I conclude with a summary of rules, which can help postmodern *apologia*, not to fall into religious ideology.

2. The Place of the Project in Current Research

The book is a methodological one and its main contribution and originality lie in vindicating *apologia* as a relevant and epistemologically respectable discourse in the postmodern setting. It attempts to bring a contribution to the task pointed out by Avery Dulles in the end of *A History of Apologetics*, where he says:

The 20th century has seen more clearly than previous periods that apologetics stands or falls with the question of method. In the past few decades apologetical science has merged to an increasing degree with the epistemology of religious knowledge. It is in this difficult area that the most important work remains to be done.(1971:24)

Dulles recognised that the apologetical enterprise ceased to have a lasting influence as it sank into ‘disinterested speculation’ in the form of ‘gigantic apologetical *summae*’ resting upon too many uncriticised postulates, and therefore ‘their massive tomes gather dust on the shelves of theological libraries and are only rarely disturbed by the rummagings of the curious scholar’ (1971:246).

This book vindicates a notion of referential practice as key to a non-foundationalist *apologia*.²⁴ Such *apologia* can be located on the boundary between fundamental and practical theologies, or perhaps, to use Johan Baptist Metz’s terminology, within ‘practical fundamental theology’.²⁵ In accordance with Metz I see practical fundamental theology as a discourse dealing with the foundations of theology in the way that concentrates on the dialectical tension between theory and praxis, and in order to do so, rehabilitates ‘the intelligible force of praxis itself’ (1980:50). Metz emphasises that practical fundamental theology does not divorce praxis from theory, but their relation is not given by subordination of the former to the later, as if praxis was only an application of a previously defined theory. Praxis, and in his terms, primarily ‘the praxis of imitation of Christ’ (1980:51) is the starting point for a reflective and critical theory. It is the source of our theological knowing. Let me make another reference, namely to David Tracy’s notion of fundamental, systematic and practical theologies:

Theology, in fact, is a generic name not for a single discipline but for three: fundamental, systematic and practical theologies. Each of these disciplines needs explicit criteria of adequacy. Each is concerned with all three publics [academy, the church, and wider society]. Each is irrevocably involved in claims to meaning and truth. Each is, in fact, determined by a relentless drive to genuine publicness and for all three publics.’ (1981:31)

24 Here I argue against T.Guarino, according to whom theological foundationalism is necessary, see ‘Between Foundationalism and Nihilism: Is *Phronesis* the *Via Media* for Theology?’, 1993:51.

25 Cf. Metz, J.B., 1980, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*.

Fundamental theology in his understanding is primarily related to the academy, the systematic theology to the church, and the practical theology to the wider society. With Tracy I share the conviction that, although, 'Each theologian often seems dominated by a single concern' (54), there are no strong dividing lines between the three types of theology. Thus, according to his system, I would locate *apologia* within fundamental theology, whilst recognising that it grows from the praxis of the following of Christ and from a life of prayer, and, thus, has its roots in practical and in systematic theologies. I will treat *praxis* and contemplation²⁶ as the proper criteria for meaning and truth in theology, which will enable me to include responsible commitment and the theologian's personal faith among the sources of theological knowing and among the conditions of a successful theological communication.

I am aware of the fact that there can be different legitimate approaches to *apologia*. It can address the academic setting with an attempt to gain respect for Christianity by means of providing reasonable arguments for it. In the spirit of honest critical inquiry it can articulate reasoned positions open to all intelligent, reasonable and responsible persons.²⁷ Or similarly, it can be addressed to the church in order to wake her from her lethargy by means of re-interpretation of her own tradition, to highlight its transformative power, and to deepen the creative and critical fidelity to the church.²⁸ My approach assumes involvement in a transformative *praxis* and a theological articulation of it,²⁹ it assumes a life of prayer and a theological articulation of it as well. As we can see the book involves a number of areas and problems and I do not give a detailed account of these for their own sake; such accounts are available elsewhere. In order to dispel the reader's false expectations, I will list what the book is not about: (i) the variety of roots and under-

26 In the Orthodox tradition, we find the word *theoria* as a synonym for contemplation.

27 Cf. Tracy, 1981: 57–58.

28 Cf. Tracy, 1981: 57–58.

29 Tracy, 1981: 58.

standings of postmodernity and postmodernism;³⁰ (ii) a wide range of different contemporary examples of apologetical discourse;³¹ (iii) a historical survey of apologists, their background and methods;³² (iv) the post-Enlightenment history of religious epistemology;³³ (v) a survey of epistemological discussions of the contemporary philosophical and theological scene;³⁴ (vi) varieties of interpretations and complex accounts of the individual authors to whom I refer.³⁵

30 See Harvey, D., 1989, *The Condition of Postmodernity: an enquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Waugh, P., (ed.), 1992, *Postmodernism: a reader*, Introduction. Lechte, J., 1994, *Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers*. Lyon, D., 1994, *Postmodernity*. Tilley, T.W., 1995, *Postmodern theologies*. Cahoon, L. (ed.), 1996, *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology*. Eagleton, T., 1997, *The Illusions of postmodernism*.

31 See bibliography referring to notes of Ch.One.

32 Congar, Y., 1963, *Tradition and Traditions*. Tillich, P., 1968, *A History of Christian Thought*. Dulles, A., 1971, *A History of Apologetics*. McBrien, R., 1994, *Catholicism*. Küng, H., 1995, *Christianity: The Religious Situation of Our Time*.

33 Gill, J.H., (ed.), 1968, *Philosophy and Religion: some contemporary perspectives*. Bowker, J.W., 1987, *Licensed Insanities: religion and belief in God in the contemporary world*.

34 Dancy, J., 1985, *An Introduction to Contemporary Epistemology*. Geivett, R.D. & Sweetman, B., (eds.), 1992, *Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology*.

35 A bibliography is given in notes to particular problems.

PART ONE:

CHAPTER ONE:

Apologetical discourse has often been described as a defence of the foundations of Christian belief and a search for proofs that this belief is true¹ over against different groups seen as a threat: persecutors, heretics, schismatics, rationalists, agnostics, atheists, traditionalists, etc. This book argues against such a reduction of apologetical discourse. In Part One I identify three key points of postmodern critique and address them to such foundations of apologetics. This is the main concern of the first chapter, which looks at the contemporary scene. The second chapter, then, is historical and demonstrates that *apologia* has been much wider and more diverse than reductionist apologetics allows.

Postmodern Critique and Two Types of Apologetics

The word “postmodern” is a peculiar one. It was first significantly used in architecture in the 1950s and 1960s for the movement criticising the international style of machine-like buildings. Soon it was extended to other branches of art, reacting against what was commonly called “modern”. In the 1970s the term was adopted within philosophy as a rough synonym for deconstruction and for poststructuralism. Now it increasingly appears as a label for artistic, social and intellectual movements. These, however, are diverse, and it would be a mistake to assume that they form a kind of programme or a single manifesto. Rather, as

1 Fiorenza, F.S., 1986, *Foundational Theology*: 256-259.

L. E. Cahoon emphasises, there is a family resemblance.² I will rely on the very basic family characteristic, namely a critique of the stability of the foundations of what follows after the prefix “post”.³ The postmodern critique I speak of grows from what Terry Eagleton calls “a style of thought”:

Postmodernity is a style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity, of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation. Against these Enlightenment norms, it sees the world as contingent, ungrounded, diverse, unstable, indeterminate, a set of disunified cultures or interpretations which breed a degree of scepticism about the objectivity of truth, history and norms, the givenness of natures and the coherence of identities. (1997: vii)⁴

The first chapter shows the success and the weak points of postmodern critique when addressed to two extreme contemporary approaches: the foundationalist apologetics of Swinburne and Hebblethwaite; and the revisionist apologetics of Cupitt and Moore. I maintain that neither approach to apologetics is exhaustive of the discourse and show that their vindication of the integrity of Christian belief and practice does not stand up to the postmodern critique. Therefore it is important to re-evaluate the tradition of *apologia* and search there for more satisfactory accounts of Christian belief and practice, which will be the task of Chapter Two.

2 For a history of the term, see Cahoon, L.E., 1996, “Introduction”, *From Modernism to Postmodernism: an Anthology*: 1-23.

3 Cf. Tilley, T.W., 1995, *Postmodern Theologies*: vi.

4 Eagleton makes the following distinction: ‘The word *postmodernism* generally refers to a form of contemporary culture, whereas the term *postmodernity* alludes to a specific historical period.’ (*The Illusions of Postmodernism*, 1997: vii).

1. Postmodern Criticisms

Jean-François Lyotard begins *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* with the following introduction of the problem: 'Our working hypothesis is that the status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known as the postindustrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age.' (1994:3) The book, written in 1979 as a report for the Quebec government, examines knowledge, science and technology in advanced Western European societies. The postmodern condition as seen by Lyotard is a loss of trust in singular explanations of reality and a move to a plurality of inevitably incomplete pictures of the world, where knowledge and power are more closely connected than ever before.⁵

Apologetic discourse in the second part of this century has been confronted with the breakdown, especially after the trauma of two world wars, of the Enlightenment ideals of the reasonableness of the world in which we live, of trust in scientific progress, and of the assumption that educated people would use their freedom justly.⁶ The subsequent experiences of totalitarian regimes in the East and of the new form of transnational capitalism in the West started the specific "post"-age and the culture of postmodernism. T.W. Tilley shows that 'Contemporary theologians write *after* Freud, *after* Wittgenstein, *after* Auschwitz, *after* Christendom, *after* the death of God' (1995:vi), where 'A "post"-age is a paradoxical age, an unstable era, both denying and affirming the present power of the past (1995: vi).

The complex phenomenon of postmodern critique can be approached from different angles. One way starts with the important pre-history of postmodernism going back to Marx's social theory,⁷ Nietzsche's philosophy of the death of God and of radical human free-

5 For the problem of how knowledge is related to power in Lyotard, see Keane, J., 1992, 'The Modern Democratic Revolution: Reflections on Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*'.

6 Lechte, J., 1994, *Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers*: 246.

7 Docherty, T., 1996, *Postmodern Theory*.

dom such as will to power,⁸ Freud's psychoanalysis,⁹ Durkheim's social analysis,¹⁰ Wittgenstein's philosophy of language¹¹ or Heidegger's hermeneutics.¹² Then, for each of these one may trace the development of different strands of postmodernism, distinguishing the historical, the methodological and the positive, as Cahoon does,¹³ or analyse it according to individual themes and names, starting with Saussure's theory of language and Levi-Strauss's, structuralism, both fighting against logocentrism,¹⁴ continuing through Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction¹⁵ and Lyotard's "death of metanarratives"¹⁶ to philosophers criticising the Western ego-centric concentration on the subject and articulating the need of "otherness", notably Levinas, Ricoeur or Kristeva¹⁷ and to Habermas's theory of communicative action.¹⁸ Any of these approaches, however, would be beyond the scope of the book and there are other works dealing with these issues.

I will concentrate on three points of postmodern criticism which are vital for the debate concerning apologetical discourse and its foun-

- 8 *Nietzsche and Christianity*, 1981, eds. C. Geffre and J.-P. Jossua. Millbank, J., 1992, *Theology and Social Theory*. Owen, D., 1994, *Maturity and Modernity: Nietzsche, Weber and Foucault and the Ambivalence of Reason*.
- 9 Lacan, J., 1989, *Ecrits: A Selection*. 1988, *Book I: Freud's Writings on Technique*. Ricoeur, P., 1970, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. Samuels, R., 1993, *Between Philosophy and Psychoanalysis: Lacan's Reconstruction of Freud*.
- 10 Hughes, J.A. & Martin, J.P., 1995, *Understanding Classical Theory: Marx, Weber, Durkheim*. Morrison, K., 1995, *Marx, Durkheim, Weber: Formations of Modern Social Thought*.
- 11 See Ch.Six.
- 12 Derrida, J., 1990, *Heidegger et la question*, Steiner, G., 1992, *Heidegger*.
- 13 Cahoon: 17-18.
- 14 Saussure, F., 1983, *Course in General Linguistics*. Culler, J., 1986, *Ferdinand de Saussure*. Levi-Strauss, C., 1969, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. 1963, 1978, *Structural Anthropology*, vol. I and II.
- 15 See Ch.One, 1.A.
- 16 See Ch.One, 1.B.
- 17 For Levinas, see Ch.One, 1.C; Ricoeur, P., 1984, *Time and Narrative*. 1996, *Hermeneutics of Action*. Kristeva, J., 1980, *Desire in Language. A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. 1991, *Strangers to Ourselves*.
- 18 Habermas, J., 1984, 1987, *The Theory of Communicative Action*. 1992, 'Transcendence from Within, Transcendence in This World', in *Habermas, Modernity and Public Theology*.

dations. These will be: (i) the deconstruction of objective meaning and truth in language; (ii) the death of metanarratives; (iii) constitutive otherness. I will rely mainly on Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard and Emmanuel Levinas, as their radical critiques provide *apologia* with a significant challenge.

1.1 Derrida's Deconstruction of Objective Meaning and Truth in Language

The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy defines deconstruction as:

A sceptical approach to the possibility of coherent meaning initiated by French philosopher Derrida. There is no privileged point, such as an author's intention or a contact with external reality, that confers significance on a text. There is only the limitless opportunity for fresh commentary or text (a linguistic version of the idealist belief that we cannot escape the world of our own ideas). (1994:95)

Derrida's deconstruction starts in literary criticism. He sees language as radically metaphorical, deprived of any literal meaning and claims that we have to do away with an idea that a text discloses any single truth value which is there to be discovered: 'The "rationality"-but perhaps that word should be abandoned... inaugurates the deconstruction, not the demolition but the de-sedimentation, the de-construction, of all the significations that have their source in that of *logos*. Particularly the signification of *truth*.' (1976:10) Concentration on *logos* led to logocentrism, the "impurity" of writing, to the preoccupation with the "proper", the "distinguished", the "literal", the "exclusively clean",¹⁹ which contrasts with the always changing living speech.

Deconstruction has as its main target the logic of identity,²⁰ which, according to Derrida, lies at the heart of Western metaphysics and

19 Cf. Spivak, G.C., 1976, 'Translator's Preface' to Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, lxxxiii-lxxxiv.

20 The logic of identity is derived from Aristotle and B. Russell summarises it as follows: (1) The law of identity: 'Whatever is, is.' (2) The law of contradiction: 'Nothing can both be and not be.' (3) The law of exclusion: 'Everything must either be or not be.' (*The Problems of Philosophy*, 1973: 40)

which approaches life as a theory. It makes the whole system exclusivist in regard to differences and deprives it of creative power. It treats reality as static, homogeneous, logically coherent and essentially simple. The whole dualist metaphysical vocabulary is, according to Derrida, a result of the process of exclusion of the different. Concepts like sensible-intelligible, ideal-real, internal-external, fiction-truth, nature-culture, speech-writing, activity-passivity, etc. propose that there is a fixed “objective” structure of reality, which does not change. Such credulity, according to him, has to be deconstructed. Then a creative unboundedness of reality can be rediscovered, where the different is no longer excluded or imprisoned in fixed metaphysical rules. For this purpose he introduces the notion of *différance*. This neologism attempts to combine the two meanings of the French verb *différer*-to “differ” and to “defer”. Derrida’s *différance* points to the ‘finitude of reason’ and ‘the permanent impossibility of absolute knowledge.’²¹ Concerning the “*différance*”, Derrida goes back to Saussure’s structuralist theory, where ‘language in its most general form could be understood as a system of differences, “without positive terms”’ (Lechte: 107). Saussurian analysis brings Derrida to the recognition of an ‘unconceptualisable [sic] dimension’ in language, as Lechte concludes:

Difference without positive terms implies that this dimension in language must always remain unperceived, for strictly speaking, it is unconceptualisable. With Derrida, difference becomes the proto-type of what remains outside the scope of Western metaphysical thought... Difference is not an identity; nor is it the difference between two identities. Difference is difference deferred (107).

John D. Caputo²² explains Derrida’s *différance* in terms of meaning as ‘an effect produced by the spacing between signifiers’, and points out that ‘the ‘system’ of such meanings is not a system, does not close over, but remains in a permanently open-ended condition’. *Différance* ‘makes it possible both to say something and impossible to nail it down definitively, decidedly.’ (1992: 51.52) Caputo summarises:

21 Cf. Westphal, M., 1992b, *Modernity and Its Discontents*: xiii.

22 Caputo, J.D., 1992, ‘On Being Inside/Outside Truth’.

We never get a chance to write from on high, we never win the transcendental high ground. We write from below, slowly and painfully forging unities of meaning from the flow of signifiers... unities about which we keep our fingers crossed that they will get us through the day. We are always inside and outside truth, unable to stop the rush of truth, yet unable, too, to hold truth in place and stop its rushing off. (1992: 52)

The emphasis on not reducing language to the identity of its concepts is attractive; however, this also means that words do not have any sharp boundaries, they can become circular, which makes communication incredibly difficult.²³ Here is the vulnerability of Derrida's approach, when the fixed objective structure of reality is gone, the conceptualisable truth is deconstructed, what is left?

Derrida's deconstruction is, in the final analysis, addressed to a "metaphysics of presence". Presence is perceived as particular and temporal. Derrida speaks about "positing" presence in events. He points out, however, that events have a paradoxical structure. Jonathan Culler summarises Derrida's view in the following way: 'for presence to function as it is said to, it must have the qualities that supposedly belong to its opposite, absence.' (1983:95). The difference between presence and absence in Derrida's terms is not grasped in an immediate experience, but in a reflective reconstitution of presence. We posit presence through an interpretation, through a fiction about it, where an original lack of something makes possible an appreciation of its presence. And on the other hand, presence provides us with a permanent destruction of such fictions and their principles.²⁴

The de-sedimentation or de-construction of truth and reviving creativity also has its shadow side. G.C. Spivak in the 'Translator's Preface' to *Of Grammatology* points out that this problem is best seen in

23 Cf. Garver, N., Lee, S.-C., 1994, *Derrida and Wittgenstein*: 218.

24 For a relationship between deconstruction and negative theology in Derrida see Coward, H. and Foshay, T. (eds), 1992, *Derrida and Negative Theology*; Almond, I., 1999, 'Negative Theology, Derrida and the Critique of Presence: A Poststructuralist Reading of Meister Eckhart'; Bradley, A., 2000, 'God sans Being: Derrida, Marion and 'A Paradoxical Writing of the Word *Without*''; Collins, G., 2000, 'Thinking the Impossible: Derrida and the Divine'.

Derrida's reference to Nietzsche. Spivak quotes Nietzsche's claim: 'Truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions' (1976:xxii), and says that for Derrida, as for Nietzsche, the concept of truth employed in writing cannot be dispensed from the relativity of meaning. It is a metaphorical concept, like any other. According to Derrida, there is nothing fixed in it, nothing that passes from one time to another, and the use of Nietzsche's texts in the Nazi period is a clear example which Derrida uses to show that. As C. Norris summarises: 'One must ask "why is it not enough to say that 'Nietzsche did not think this', 'didn't intend that'"' (1987:200). He maintains that Derrida accepts that Nietzschean texts have given rise to oppressive interpretations, but: 'It is not that there exists some deep (perhaps "unconscious") reserve or latent or potential meanings which are there just waiting to be activated with certain kinds of ideological prejudice.' (1987:201) Instead, Norris argues for Derrida's suggestion 'in terms of "mimetic perversion", of a reading that can seize upon the text's various resources (of syntax, metaphor, structural economy) and bend them to its own purpose.' (1987:201)

Yet, once we accept this standpoint, are not we accepting that some purposes are better than others, precisely what Derrida does not do? At this point charging Derrida with relativism is justified, as long as it is understood as a critical moment of his deconstruction and not as a building of a positive relativist theory. Derrida's separation from Western metaphysics has practical effects. In refuting the logic of identity he suspends the possibility of making judgements of what is "right" and "proper". These terms are context-dependent, or rather they are dependent on the plurality of contexts, as there is no "proper context" to be taken as a measure. 'Context is unbounded,' (109) says Lechte, echoing Jonathan Culler. In other words, context cannot be taken as a constant. The negative side of this broad statement is that it legitimates also the context of oppressive ideology, such as nazism or communism. S. Critchley concludes that 'there is a need for a political "supplement" to deconstruction...to prevent deconstruction from becoming a fail-safe strategy for reading...[as] a means to private autonomy that is publicly useless and politically pernicious.' (1992:237) However, it also has to be recognised, that there is a liberating element in Derrida's deconstruc-

tion, which ‘opens an ethical space for alterity or transcendence.’ (Critchley:236) And even if Derrida does not follow this path, it represents a strand which can be developed out of his criticisms.

Derrida’s critique raises painful questions for apologetical discourse: What can provide a guarantee of continuity of objective meaning and truth in the Christian discourse, if neither the “right” language nor the “right” context exist? Or can apologists do without such a guarantee? Would they not have to give up the truth-claims of traditional Christianity, e.g. that Jesus is both God and human, that he died for the salvation of the world and was resurrected? The foundational stories of Christianity are subject to question. Or more exactly, one may ask in which way, if any, these stories can be maintained as true as opposed to fictions? On the other hand Derrida’s deconstruction also opens up new possibilities for apologetical discourse. Having cleared the ground, he provokes the question, whether the absence of Christian stories is not an argument for finding out that we actually need them, for re-evaluation and re-appreciation of their meaning and truth? A further exploration of this, however, lies outside of the scope of this book.

1.2 The Death of Metanarratives Announced by Lyotard

In *The Postmodern Condition* Lyotard identifies “metanarratives” as stories or explanations of a society, which are assumed to be superior to other stories and explanations. The metanarratives were passed from one generation to another and were supposed to disclose timeless truth. This definition has ever since been applied also to grand narratives in religious traditions and in particular to Christianity. Lyotard’s analysis calls on the sociological model of Durkheim, treating society as an organic unity, the functional system of Parsons and on the class-opposition system of Marx,²⁵ saying that each of them attempted to explain society by means of a single theory. This is, according to him, no longer satisfactory. He shows this through the two most striking examples of

25 Cf. Lechte: 246.

metanarratives from the past: that 'knowledge is produced for its own sake'; and that 'knowledge was produced for a people-subject in quest of emancipation' (Lechte: 246), which, after the Second World War, in particular, lost their credibility.

When scientific knowledge and technical progress stood against the freedom and emancipation of humankind, as the Holocaust or Hiroshima and Nagasaki brutally demonstrated, these metanarratives died. Now it is more than ever clear that knowledge is bound up with power, both political and economic. Building up new metanarratives, according to Lyotard, would increase the danger of yet another more perfect universal dictatorship. In opposition to this he defines the postmodern condition in terms of losing trust in metanarratives as such and moving from a singularity of explanations to a plurality, where, as Derrida similarly emphasised, no single one is "objectively" better than the other.

According to Lyotard, metanarratives are advocates of fixed maxims that lie at the base of regimes of power: 'its [referring to the performance of grand narratives] only validity is as an instrument to be used toward achieving the real goal, which is what legitimates the system-power.' (1994:61) To gain freedom is, in his view, connected with deconstructing such maxims. This, however, is not to be done by using other maxims, simply of a different kind, but by throwing ourselves into the arbitrariness of choices, into the non-prescribability of our decisions. Against Kant²⁶ he claims: ' "Always act in such a way that the maxim of your will may" I won't say "not be erected," but it is almost that, "into a principle of universal legislation." ' (Lyotard and Thebaud, 1985:94)

Lyotard's criticisms have a strong political, social and ethical emphasis, especially with regard to issues of power and justice. The freedom of an individual, as he states, does not mean taking refuge from social reality. He examines post-totalitarian models of society. Analysing contemporary structures of power in Western European societies, he says that power is connected with having access to technol-

26 'Act so that the maxim of thy will can always at the same time hold good as a principle of universal legislation' (Kant, 1963: *Critique of Practical Reason*: 119).

ogy. Those who have resources to fund research and influence its direction have power. And, thus, those who have power can influence shifts in the rules, but can also abuse this power by manipulating others—silencing or eliminating a player in a language game. This is in Lyotard's terms equivalent to a terrorist act. Justice, nevertheless, cannot be achieved by pointing at maxims embedded in the “objective” order of the universe, as the credibility of such maxims died with metanarratives, and cannot be regained or replaced without relapsing to a dictatorship mentality. This recognition has become much more enlightening after the fall of communism in Eastern and Central Europe, where the societies that left the “fixed maxims” of communism have found it immensely difficult to live with the culture of pluralism and have struggled with adopting other fixed maxims such as those of nationalism.

Having done away with metanarratives, social action, according to Lyotard, is made possible in postmodernity on the grounds of consensus among those who are involved. He says: ‘A recognition of the heteromorphous nature of language games is a first step in that direction... The second step is the principle that any consensus on the rules defining a game and the “moves” playable within it *must* be local, in other words, agreed on by its present players and subject to eventual cancellation.’ (1994:66) Meaning, then, is no longer located ‘outside’ action, but within it.

The role of knowledge in this new process is performative, says Lyotard.²⁷ It is not safeguarded by a certainty that the development of knowledge and its use by power is predictable and is not going to end in catastrophe. Here postmodernity departs from modern optimism. Addressing the relativity of meanings, Lyotard gives an account of his move from “truth” to “performativity”. A claim to truth, in Lyotard's terms, is bound to ‘reality being in the way I say it is.’ (1994:24) Lyotard says that such statements are usually supported by “proofs”. But the mistake, as he points out, is to think that any proof is more certain than

27 Lechte points out, ‘knowledge in the society of the last quarter of the twentieth century, follows the principle of optimal performance: maximum output for minimum input.’ (247)

the claim itself. He identifies a circularity of appealing to a proof as a condition for truth, saying: 'What I say is true because I prove that it is—but what proof is there that my proof is true?' (24) The strength of an argument, as Lyotard points out, lies somewhere else, namely in its ability to perform, to give a good case. Thus he places any speaker in the position of an actor performing his piece, more or less convincingly.

Similarly to Derrida's deconstruction, Lyotard's undermining the power of metanarratives is vulnerable once charged with relativism. As S. Sim puts it, his "'here-and-now kind" of political action' (1996:140) may stand as an alternative against authoritarianism only with morally strong characters. Sim points out that Lyotard does away with the advantages of grand narratives too quickly, namely with 'their sense of involving an individual in a cause larger than his or her own, thus empowering him or her, and of offering solidarity with his or her fellow human beings.' (142) And he summarises his critique of Lyotard as follows: 'Not everyone has the strength of character for the somewhat rugged, and certainly highly principled, individualism demanded by Lyotard's philosophical politics...and not everyone can face up to the challenge of an existence without rules or criteria of judgment' (142). Indeed, we can say that, as with Derrida, Lyotard does not construct a relativist theory; and even that there is a democratic element to his society, based as it is on a consensus of its members. However, it does not give a solution to the crisis of democracy, when a dictatorship is more or less freely elected by the majority, like Nazism in Germany in 1933 or communism in Czechoslovakia and other countries "predestined" for the communist future by the Yalta agreement in 1945. Therefore, for the purpose of my argument I complement Lyotard's critique of metanarratives by that of Eagleton, stating:

The other misleading choice...is to imagine that there is either a single metanarrative or a multiplicity of micronarratives. The same goes for the postmodern concept of foundations: either there is one of them, or none at all... What if we have a plurality of metanarratives?... There is a difference between a theory from which everything else can be supposedly deduced, as in the more megalomaniac forms of rationalism, and a narrative which is "grand" in the sense of providing the matrix within which many, but not all, of our other practices take shape. (1997:110.111)

While I accept Eagleton's emphasis on the narratives' providing the non-exhaustive matrix for our actions, I stick with Lyotard's vocabulary, according to which metanarratives claim to be exhaustive.

Lyotard's critique applied to apologetical discourse is particularly relevant when we look at the problem of the presentation of Christian narratives as metanarratives with universalist ambitions and political interests. This problem will be elaborated in the second chapter. From here, nevertheless, we have also to take on board one major difficulty of Lyotard's position: if knowledge is not bound up with truth but with "optimal performance", how can a society or church avoid a "consensus" to eliminate the "different"?²⁸

1.3 *Constitutive Otherness in Levinas*

The third point of postmodern critique represents a change in focus.²⁹ Instead of the Enlightenment concentration on the subject and its autonomy, still a vital strand of the previous two critical points, it is claimed here that the Other is constitutive for the subject and gives it its lost identity. Tilley, with H.F. Felice, offers an excellent summary of this change in focus given by Edward Farley, which I will quote in full:

[One] emphasis in the literature of the interpersonal focuses not on the act or posture (recognition, empathy, availability) in which the other is present but on the mystery of personal encounter and dialogue. This is the line from Martin Buber to Emmanuel Levinas... [T]heir fascination is not with the specific acts that yield the reality of the other but with the mystery of yielding itself, the mystery of the thou. This is the theme of Buber's semipoetic *I and Thou* and also the theme of the "face" (*visage*) in Levinas. Face articulates neither physiognomy (the plane of sensibility) nor acts which emotionally feel the other. It is the "infinitely strange" and mysterious presence of something which contests my

28 Lyotard himself was aware of the difficulty of his position and addressed it in his later work *The Differend*. See also Barron, A., 1992, 'Lyotard and the Problem of Justice'. Compare to the "scapegoating mechanism" in Girard, R., 1977, *Violence and the Sacred*. 1985, *Scapegoat*.

29 The title "constitutive otherness" is taken from Cahoone: 14.

projecting meanings of it, an unforeseeable depth which can evoke the act of murder but which cannot be cognitively mastered... What actually occurs when human beings share emotions or engage in dialogue. Levinas, Marcel and others contend that something happens in human being-together which is not just negotiating agendas or calculating how self-interests might be met. Something is going on that is irreducible to the negotiations of power and status. Levinas's thesis is somewhat startling. When we experience the face of the other, or when the face occurs in conjunction with being-together, we experience a summons, an invocation (Marcel), a claim, a call to commitment and responsibility. *This primordial summons is the bias of the values in the normative culture: the normative culture is not the bias of the summons...* The summons from the other is something that evokes a response in which compassion and obligation converge (1990: 39–40,41; in Tilley: 70–71).

Levinas's philosophy, from which I take the third point of postmodern critique, starts with ethics and derives its crucial role from the command "thou shall not kill" (Ex 20:13) as a means of dealing with the problem of otherness. Levinas in *Totality and Infinity* emphasises that the otherness of people must be in no way nullified (or "murdered") and that it stands as an appeal to ourselves: 'Man as Other comes to us from the outside, a separated-or holy-face. His exteriority, that is, his appeal to me, is his truth.' (1987:291). The face of the Other³⁰ calls to responsibility and establishes the identity of the subject: 'I' consists in being able to respond to this essential destitution of the Other, finding resources for myself.' (215). The Other is always the particular Other and not an abstraction, and as such he/she is transcendent: 'The Other who dominates me in his transcendence is thus the stranger, the widow, and the orphan, to whom I am obligated.' (215). In *Ethics and Infinity* Levinas explains why he sees the relation to the other as non-symmetrical: 'In this sense, I am responsible for the Other without waiting for reciprocity, were I to die for it. Reciprocity is *his* affair.' (1985:98).

Levinas acknowledges that his philosophy draws on religion and that religion and philosophy are 'two distinct moments, but both are part of the same spiritual process which is *the approach* of transcen-

30 See also Levinas, 1993, *Outside the Subject*: 158.

dence' (1988:204; the translation is taken from Davis: 95). Colin Davis emphasises that for Levinas

Philosophy is part of a process in which religion is also involved, and the difficulties involved in talking rationally about God are the same as those raised by alterity.. thematization serves to reduce its transcendence, to capture radical otherness in the webs of the familiar (95).

Levinas speak of God as *a-Dieu*, which has a double meaning in French: to God, and farewell. Levinas's God is not personal, as was Buber's, instead he uses the term "illeity", stating that God's alterity is still other than the absolute otherness of what we can imagine, 'prior to the ethical obligation to the neighbour, transcendent to the point of absence, to the point of its possible confusion with the bustle of *il y a*' (1992:115; Davis:99). Davis explains that the pronoun "il" shows that 'God is glimpsed only in the third person, neither a presence nor an absence, but a trace,...infinitely close and absolutely distant' (99), and shows that 'Levinas's writing is caught in a curious dilemma: refusing to make God the object of experience and knowledge, and rejecting even propositions to do with the existence or non-existence of God, the texts become increasingly verbose and repetitive in their disclosures of their own limitations' (100).

Before we apply the third, and in my understanding, most important point of postmodern critique to apologetical discourse, we have to identify its weak points. Gillian Rose in *Judaism and Modernity* criticises the lack of space for the immanence of the subject and calls this approach a 'self-defeating remedy' (1993:8). She says that the "new ethics" simply commands the sacrifice of the self, the substitution of myself by the Other and, thus, transcending the autonomy of the subject it reaches heteronomy, a dictate coming from outside. This leads, according to Rose, to becoming self-defensive and intolerant, 'because the trauma of sacrifice, or the gesture towards the unidentified plurality of others, leaves me terrified of the unknown but effective actuality which forms a large part of myself.' (8) The immediacy ascribed to the experience of the Other does not provide the self with means for its own inner development, and finally, it produces what Rose calls 'an un-

happy consciousness, for the immanence of the self-relation of “the Other” to my own self-relation will always be disowned’ (8). The main problem, as she sees it, is the lack of reciprocity, which comes from the claim that the self receives identity heteronomously—from the Other. The attempt to overcome ‘the subjectivity of the agent’, says Rose, at the same time, ‘denies the subjectivity of “the Other”, produces in this “Other” the inflexible abstraction it sought to indict.’ (9)³¹

J.D. Caputo points out that Levinas’s notion of the ‘absolutely other’ is dangerously close to the ‘absolutely identical’, as it still relies on the language without *différance*:

For this absolutely Other, this infinite alterity, is, as it stands in Levinas, the dream of virgin lands and arctic snow, of absolute nonviolence, of full of presence utterly unmarked, unmediated, unmodified. It is the dream of absolute presence in the mode of absolute absence, the dream of the world without *différance*, without textuality, without phrases, without horizons, contexts, settings, frameworks, or any form of mediation—all this is delivered up in *le dire*, not *le dit*, that is, in phrasing. So it is an impossible dream, even dangerous dream, inasmuch as promises of what is absolutely unmediated are usually followed by the most massive mediations. (1993: 82)³²

For an apologist, a more moderate approach than that of Levinas, taking into account Rose’s criticisms, may be of more use, with regard to both ethics and religion. This is represented by David Tracy,³³ who claims that Judaism and Christianity allow the otherness of God and of

31 Similarly to Rose, J.H. Olthuis criticises the breakdown of mutuality in Levinas and attempts to transform Levinas’s ‘I-am-for’ the other to ‘I-am-with’ the other. He also shows that some critique of this sort is present already in Levinas himself, when he speaks about the relationship with the third party as as ‘an incessant correction of the asymmetry of proximity’. Levinas, E., 1981, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*. Olthuis, J.H., 1997, *Knowing Other-Wise: Philosophy at the Threshold of Spirituality*.

32 The last sentence is taken from Derrida’s *Truth in Painting*.

33 Cf. Tracy, ‘Theology and the Many Faces of Postmodernity’, *Theology Today* 51 (1994), 108.

other human beings to be taken seriously, and at the same time recognise that the otherness is not “wholly other”. Tilley summarises:

God so transcendent of the world that God is finally absent from the world. That is the God of modernity. Rather, postmodern theologies construe the otherness of God as unavowably, remarkably present-as-radically-other to us in the worlds in which we live. The language may be one of sacrament or of manifestation or of prophecy or risk of solidarity. (168)

The third point of the postmodern critique also offers to apologetical discourse a way forward; however, my claim is that this way cannot be successfully taken if we are not willing to take seriously the previous two criticisms and unmask where narratives of both modernity and Christianity were ultimately used as “alibi-stories”³⁴ for gaining power and eliminating the different. Because, as Wittgenstein says: ‘We must begin with the mistake and transform it into what is true. That is, we must uncover the source of error; otherwise hearing what is true won’t help us.’ (1979:1e) Our attention will now be turned to two approaches to apologetics which illustrate two extreme responses to the postmodern challenge. The first ignores the challenge, the second extends the postmodern critique until it becomes a metatheory, which deprives *apologia* of its creative power, its transcendent dimension and its historical continuity. If the first response sees nothing wrong in washing a baby in dirty bath water, the second throws out both water and baby.

2. Foundationalist Apologetics

Thomas Guarino points out that the problem of foundationalism has been examined ontologically or epistemologically as a compulsion to establish some first principle:

34 Cf. Tracy, 1981:108.

This search for ultimate and determinate ontological or epistemological grounds guides virtually the entire tradition of Western thought, wholly enveloping the Platonic-Carthesian-Kantian-Husserlian axis. It attempts, once for all to “stop the show” by means of assorted foundationalist *archai* or *principia* such as *esse*, *ousia*, *eidōs*, *res cogitans*, *Wille zur Macht*, etc. (1993:38)

Foundationalism in hermeneutics, then, according to Guarino, ‘is known as reconstructive or objective interpretation.’ (38) This means that ‘Foundationalism provides the basis for the idea that doctrinal statements, from Nicea and Chalcedon, for example, may be reconstructed and transmitted in their integrity from one generation of Christians to the next.’ (39) In comparison with Guarino, my definition of foundationalism, as I presented it in the Introduction, is more restricted and allows reference³⁵ and historical continuity to be understood in a non-foundational manner. There I defined foundationalism as a defective response to the quest for foundations. However, I agree with Guarino’s definition of foundationalism with regard to apologetics as that which attempts to establish fixed foundations of the true knowledge, belief and judgment by means of a metanarrative which with some appeal to “evidence”, explains the superiority of this particular system to all other systems; and excludes differences which do not fit into the system. In this section I will be dealing with two apologists whose approaches fall into this category: Richard Swinburne and Brian Hebblethwaite.

2.1. *The Undisturbed Metaphysics of Swinburne*

Richard Swinburne in his *The Coherence of Theism* (1977), *Responsibility and Atonement* (1989), *Revelation* (1992), *The Christian God* (1994) and *Providence* (planned final volume) presents a foundationalist apologetics which completely ignores postmodern criticisms.³⁶ None of

35 Guarino states that ‘a foundationalist ontology [utilizes]... both the referential nature of doctrinal statements as well as their integral and continuous transmission.’ (39)

36 Cf. O’Collins, G., ‘Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy. By Richard Swinburne’, *Heythrop Journal* XXXV (1994), 84-85.

the themes or the writers discussed in the previous section appear either on his agenda or even in the bibliography. The closest Swinburne gets is in *Revelation*, where he discusses the literal, analogical and metaphorical meanings of documents 'purporting to contain revealed truth' (1994:3),³⁷ but, even there, his thought is undisturbed by contemporary movements, which are completely overlooked.

Swinburne is an example of what the postmodern critics are attacking. He represents a typical Western metaphysical system growing from Plato and Aristotle, and built on the logic of identity. He aims at the justification of central Christian doctrines as revealed truths by means of describing divine nature and the world in terms of substance, cause, time and necessity. He is concerned with 'grounds for believing some religious doctrine to be revealed truth' (2) and claims to provide his reader with 'arguments of pure reason in favour of the necessary truth of the doctrine of the Trinity... that God had good reason to become incarnate' (1), which, as he states, are 'backed up by arguments from history and revelation' (2). I will concentrate on his two books: *Revelation* and *The Christian God*, and in particular on the language Swinburne uses for making major truth claims about the Christian God and the world.

In *Revelation* Swinburne defends the position that Christianity involves propositional revelation:

It is in any case very hard to see how God could reveal himself in history (e.g. in the Exodus or the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus) without at the same time revealing some propositional truth about himself. For events are not self-interpreting.... Events can only be recognised as revelatory by a community who do not witness them with their eyes if they can inherit a true description of what has occurred. (1992:4)

In the introductory chapter Swinburne clarifies the terminology he uses,³⁸ which later in the book will allow him to say: 'When words which

37 'The focus of this book is: what are the grounds for believing some claim of this kind, that some book or creed or act conveys revealed truth?' (Swinburne, R., 1992, *Revelation*: 1).

38 For definitions of: token sentence, type sentence, declarative sentence, statement and proposition, referring expression, definite descriptions, proper names, rigid designator, substance and property, predicates, mode of presenta-

have a sense in the language are combined into a well-formed declarative sentence, and the context³⁹ gives its referring terms a reference, then... that sentence will express a statement and in that sense have meaning.’ (50)⁴⁰ The continuity of objective meaning and truth in revelatory events grounding Christianity, is thus, according to Swinburne, guaranteed by the “right” propositions and context, both of which Derrida rejected.

Swinburne also relies on evidentialism. In fact the whole second part of the book, where he outlines the human need for revealed truth and the miraculous nature of it, is entitled “Evidence of a Revelation”.⁴¹ He summarises this issue in the Conclusion, where he shows with the example of the resurrection that: ‘The stronger that evidence, the better authorised as revelatory is the teaching which followed from it.’ (1992:211) The original teaching of Jesus is, according to Swinburne, authorised revelatory teaching by the miracle of resurrection. Then attention is moved to the subsequent declaration of what that teaching was and how it was to be interpreted⁴² by the church in her teaching documents: the creeds and the declarations of the first councils, and in the Scriptures.⁴³ Swinburne’s insistence on authorised teaching being built on evidence provides an excellent illustration of what Lyotard meant by metanarratives and their superiority of explanation. Swinburne even raises a question of who is the “best continuer” today, with respect to doctrine and organisation, but does not propose any single body to fulfil this role. On the contrary, he criticises exaggerated

Continued from previous page:

tion, sentence-meaning and speaker’s meaning, literal sense, normal meaning, publicly agreed criteria, ambiguity and coherence, see Swinburne, 1992: 9-26; for analogy and metaphor, see 1992:39-49.

39 For Swinburne’s distinctions of the literary, the social and the cultural contexts, see 1992:64.

40 Swinburne is willing to accept ambiguity in the meaning of a sentence, which can be clarified by context; see 1992: 51.

41 1992: 95-97.

42 1992:118.

43 O’Collins points out that Swinburne is mistaken in saying that both the Council of Trent and the Second Vatican Council taught a double source of revelation (1994:84).

demands by adherents of particular traditions to extend their trust beyond the central core of doctrines agreed by the Roman Catholics, the Orthodox and the Protestants.⁴⁴

The third point of the postmodern critique, constitutive otherness, is countered in Swinburne's book *The Christian God*, where he tries to explain the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation in a coherent way. The First Part: "Metaphysics" deals with understanding of Substances, Thisness, Causation, Time and Necessity. Here I will concentrate on Chapter Two elaborating the notion of "Thisness", as this represents a contrast to Levinas's concerns with otherness.

Thisness (lat. *haecceitas*)⁴⁵ can be traced as 'the instantiations of properties in all pure substances and so their continuity over time' (1994:33). For its discernment Swinburne applies what he calls 'a very weak form of the principle of identity' (34). He says that although there can be different individuals who all have the same properties, it is not the properties which make them individuated, but "Thisness", which is distinct and intrinsic to each individual who has it.⁴⁶ As G. Hughes sums up: 'Swinburne thinks it is probably true that material objects have Thisness, and more clearly true that human souls do; and that spatio-temporal continuity and continuity of character and memory are, respectively, the best criteria for identifying things as the same ones.' (1996:480)

The sources of Thisness of material objects and of souls differ, while for material objects Swinburne is happy to accept a hylemorphic theory;⁴⁷ with regard to human souls he says that they cannot be split or combined, or become anything other than souls: 'if we say that souls are individual essences...which can exist on their own, without being united with stuff... They may in principle go in and out of existence,

44 Cf. Swinburne, 1992: 212-216.

45 Swinburne refers to Duns Scotus, who in the fourteenth century introduced the notion of *haecceitas* into philosophy, and complains about its being 'most unliterally translated' as "individual essence" with regard to material objects also. As an alternative literal English translation he proposes the word "Thisness" (cf. 1994:47).

46 1994:38.

47 For hylemorphic theory, see glossary.

without this involving the uniting or separation of a form with anything.’ (1994:50) Thus identity comes purely from within, nothing external can take anything from it or add anything to it. This strong understanding of the human soul as a bearer of human identity does not need the other in the sense Levinas or even Buber propose. The I-Thou relationship is not constitutive for it, and even less the “face of the other” as an appeal to me in terms of being a resource for my identity.⁴⁸ This I consider to be the main weakness of Swinburne’s position.

So, however much Swinburne’s foundationalist apologetics desires to present Christianity as coherent and evident truth, its account of Christian belief is embedded in habits of mind alien to postmodern thinkers. Swinburne’s insistence on objective meaning and truth is thus “objective” only for a small group of metaphysicians who are willing to decipher Swinburne’s “right” propositions and put themselves in agreement with Swinburne’s idea of the authorised Christian teaching supported by evidence. In a more popular way, however, his “objective” truth supported by evidence is attractive for people searching for timeless immovable certainties, in an age where they feel lost, and this phenomenon is also a part of the postmodern scene.⁴⁹ But there is a problem: once the timeless and immovable certainties are gone, there is not much left to sustain Christian belief as distinct from atheist humanism, as will be shown in the section on revisionist apologetics.

2.2 Hebblethwaite’s Defence of Objective Theism

The main difference between Richard Swinburne and Brian Hebblethwaite is that Hebblethwaite at least tries to recognise the challenge present in the postmodern criticisms, although he reacts to it by defending “objective theism”, which is not that far from Swinburne’s posi-

48 See Ch.One, 1.3.

49 Cf. McGrath, R., 1992, *Bridge-building: Effective Christian Apologetics*: 223-229.

tion.⁵⁰ Therefore I will concentrate rather on Hebblethwaite's understanding of postmodern critique and on the reasons why he thinks Christianity has to be defended against it. I will rely on two books by Hebblethwaite: *The Ocean of Truth* (1988) and *The Essence of Christianity* (1996).

In *The Ocean of Truth* Hebblethwaite directs his criticisms to Don Cupitt and his TV series and book *The Sea of Faith*. I will deal with Cupitt in the following section; here it may be worth noting that Cupitt, according to Hebblethwaite, represents Christians 'who cannot bring themselves to assent to the traditional doctrines of the Church' and thus find attractive and liberating 'an anti-metaphysical, non-dogmatic, expressivist version of Christian faith' (1988:ix). In this book the word "postmodern" does not appear, rather some of the critical issues raised in the polemic over Cupitt's version of Christianity. Hebblethwaite takes issue with 'the collapse of the notion of objective truth' (87), which, according to him, follows from the assumption of the "death of God" which is at the heart of Cupitt's position.

Hebblethwaite sees the "death of God" concept as arising from an attitude of suspicion towards arguments for the existence of God and more generally of foundationalism in philosophy, which he defines as 'the view that human knowledge, to be secure, has to be built up piece by piece on indubitable premises' (87). Such foundationalism, according to Hebblethwaite, dominated the Western theory of knowledge since Descartes, and can be rightly criticised. The critique Hebblethwaite stands for is still rationalist: instead of relying on indubitable premises he argues for the 'internal rationality of a developed theistic belief system', which relies on 'external supporting arguments' rather than on 'indubitable, demonstrative proofs' (87). But these arguments are still supposed to provide 'ultimate explanation' (88) of the universe, of human destiny, of the infinite and absolute God.

50 Cf. Hebblethwaite, B., 1988, *The Ocean of Truth*: 7; the difference is, that according to Hebblethwaite 'the basic grounds of belief can be set out in terms that do not necessarily commit us to first, fifth, thirteenth or sixteenth-century modes of thought' and, thus, he speaks of 'their possible transcendence of any historical and cultural setting. (13)

Hebblethwaite does not argue for fixed meaning and truth in language that would speak about God by means of timeless doctrines.⁵¹ He also emphasises that objective theism is not to be defended by ignoring intellectual critique, but only by listening to criticisms, wrestling with doubt and arguing with unbelief.⁵² Yet he still talks of Christian truth in terms of a metanarrative as criticised by Lyotard. This appears even more strongly in the second book, *The Essence of Christianity*, one of whose tasks Hebblethwaite identifies as ‘to try to see whether the Christianity of the creeds, despite all this plurality, still has the power to foster and sustain a unified vision of the world and of world history, including the history of religions.’ (1996:11)

This second book aims to demonstrate that credal Christianity is the ‘*historic* faith [which] encapsulates the truth’ (7), and opens ‘the possibility that one can find embedded here in the Christian tradition the clue to the meaning of life.’ (4) Hebblethwaite starts this demonstration with a description of today’s world as: pluralistic, secular, transformed by science and technology, insisting on human autonomy, in its numerous extremes lapsing into ethical relativism, subjectivism and nihilism, and generally losing the sense of history, a world in which the phenomena of religion, art and culture are ambiguous. Then he constructs his argument for the recovery of the sources of meaning and hope as a cumulative case⁵³ claiming that it makes more sense to ground things in ‘absolute goodness and absolute beauty’ (27), whose ‘fragile presence in the world is otherwise a complete mystery’ (27–28). Here, once again, Hebblethwaite prefers as a source of meaning and hope an explanatory theory rather than the fragile mystery. To be fair to him, he does not claim his explanation to be exhaustive, but one which participates in the exhaustive universal credal religion.

Here also the problems of Thisness, as understood by Swinburne, as opposed to otherness as understood by Levinas, enter the scene. Hebblethwaite states that there are good reasons ‘why we must reject the

51 1988:143.

52 1988:142.

53 See the “cumulative case” in Newman, Ch.Two, 3.B.

old exhaustive attitudes of Christianity' (115) and in a more inclusive manner, compared to Swinburne, he distinguishes between 'the *hidden* work of God' (116) in other religions and cultures and the revealed God in the person of his incarnate Son Jesus Christ. He even favours the universalist hope of salvation: the view that in the end all God's creation (in Hebblethwaite's version: 'God's personal creatures' 200) will be saved; as opposed to conditional salvation only for those who use their freedom and responsibility in a way that would make them redeemable. However, he sees this universalism as conditioned by the abandonment of belief in the decisiveness of death:

There must be further opportunities-for conversion-beyond the grave... We may add the point that further opportunities will doubtless be required for people nurtured in cultures and civilizations beyond the reach of Christianity to grow into the triune life of God and come to recognise the central role of Christ for all divine/human relations. (200.202)

Hebblethwaite tries to be open up to the point of postponing the conversion of the other to the same to purgatory,⁵⁴ rather than to lose the coherence of his universal explanatory theory. Thus in the last analysis his apologetics relies on the notion of superiority and a privileged access to truth on the side of the self to whom God granted the true revelation-as opposed to the partial revelation granted to the other. Paul Lakeland labels this approach as "evangelism" and claims that it can be suspended by the Christian economy of redemption 'in the name of what it considers a more fundamental dimension of its mission, namely, sacramental presence', which: 'While related to the world, it does not seek to absorb it.' (1997:112) This takes us back to the initial distinction between foundations and foundationalism, and it becomes clear that while foundations involve commitment to a particular tradition, foundationalism claims exclusive superiority for its foundations.⁵⁵

My main criticisms of Swinburne's and Hebblethwaite's apologetics are that they use universal explanatory theories in order to overcome

54 See Hebblethwaite, 1996, *The Essence of Christianity*: 201-202.

55 Cf. Lakeland, P., 1997, *Postmodernity: Christian Identity in a Fragmented Age*: 113.

the “otherness” identified by postmodernity. For their theories to function they must assume that all alterity will be overcome once it is converted to the superior tradition of credal Christianity and the Western metaphysical system associated with it (in the case of Swinburne). Another point is that both Hebblethwaite’s and Swinburne’s foundationalist theories are prospective: they project the assumed foundations for faith into the future, as something that can transcend any historical and cultural setting.⁵⁶ However, as Fiorenza, commenting on Annat’s use of the metaphor of foundation,⁵⁷ points out theology searching for foundations ‘is retrospective rather than prospective. It does not seek to build a foundation for the faith so much as to search for the foundations already existing.’ (1986:255) This will be the task of the second chapter which will look at both the plurality and the historical continuity of *apologia*. Nevertheless, as I pointed out in the introduction, my aim will not be to construct a theory of non-foundationalist foundations, but rather to trace where and in which senses practice was taken as a primary source for doing *apologia*.

3. Revisionist Apologetics

When Zarathustra was alone, however, he said to his heart: Could it be possible! This old saint in his forest hath not yet heard of it, that *God is dead!*
(Nietzsche, 1909:6)

Nietzsche’s Zarathustra proclaims the death of God as good news that brings freedom to people, although freedom accompanied with a diffi-

56 See n. 47.

57 Fiorenza refers to Annat, Pierre, 1700, *Apparatus ad Positivam Theologiam methodicus*, where the task of positive or fundamental theology is defined as the grounding of the sources of Christian faith.

cult break with the past. As was said previously, French deconstruction was inspired by Nietzsche's notion of freedom from the metaphysical, and interpreted such freedom in terms of being able to oppose totalitarian ways of thinking and acting.⁵⁸ Don Cupitt and Gareth Moore, whose revisionist apologetics⁵⁹ will be analysed in this section, may seem to bring an analogical message, although in a different genre. Nietzsche speaks in the language of myth and symbol, hoping to touch some of the aspects of the whole of reality, which in his view, cannot be fully caught in words. Cupitt and Moore try to present us with a descriptive theory of a world without a transcendent God.

The difference between the language of myth and symbol and the language of theory is a striking one. Nietzsche, as a good post-modernist, offers a story that one may take or leave, or understand in one's own manner. Cupitt and Moore paradoxically write about "how things are going to be taken to be", even if both of them proclaim that there are no longer absolutes independent of a language-game. Their claims, such as that there is no objective truth, are, however, stated with the same exclusivist certainty as were those in the previous section, that there is clearly such a thing. Cupitt's and Moore's language game allows them to substitute a new theory (anti-transcendent metaphysics) for the old one (metaphysics), and this is exactly what neither Nietzsche nor Derrida nor Lyotard could do.⁶⁰ My claim is that Cupitt and Moore rely on a modified version of foundationalism, which does away with the foundations of credal Christianity, but in its anti-objectivity keeps an exclusivist manner of thought.

58 See Ch.One, 1.1.

59 The notion of revisionist apologetics as used in Hebblethwaite is different from my usage. He speaks of it in terms of defending and expounding theism in different ways from its classical exposition (cf. 1988:143), while what I call "revisionist apologetics" is for him a non-theistic conception of Christianity (144).

60 See Derrida's carefulness not to build his critique up as a positive theory, Ch.One, 1.A.

3.1 Cupitt's *Theology without the Transcendent*

Don Cupitt writes in *The Long Legged Fly*: 'The age has become radically post-theistic, in the sense that all the leading thinkers have left traditional metaphysical belief in God very far behind.' (1987:7) As an example he quotes Richard Rorty's insistence that 'everything-the world, morality, language, truth, man-must be completely "de-divinized"' (7),⁶¹ and the slogan: 'Deconstruction is the death of God put into writing'.⁶² The post-theistic age, in Cupitt's terms, operates with a particular idea of what is left behind. Traditional Christianity is perceived as a theory, in other words, as a dead body of doctrines. Later in his book Cupitt says: 'We seem to have turned faith's language about Christ into a chain of supernatural dogmas. They then become matters of intellectual controversy, and they die as religion because they are no longer directly *lived*' (1987:170). He suggests, in other words, that traditional belief in God died, because people were no longer capable of living up to it.

But Cupitt is not satisfied with this claim; he goes further and locates the centre of the problem in the notion of belief in God as such. People, according to him, misunderstood what belief in God was about and naively thought that it was about being related to some transcendent, human mind-independent being. Their misunderstanding had its roots in a realist ontology and epistemology that were taken for granted. He classifies as naive the realist who wants to maintain that Christian worship 'is undeniably addressed to one other than the worshippers, a King of the universe who makes all things, knows all things and rules all things... a cosmos-transcending absolute being' (1980:67). The realist belief in the Transcendent God, in Cupitt's terms, gave rise to fixed doctrines which tried to express in descriptive language unchangeable meanings and truths, and present them as foundations of Christianity. One of the roles Cupitt ascribes to himself is to announce that these foundations have vanished.

61 Cf. Rorty's lectures, reprinted in the *London Review of Books* 8, nos. 7,18,13, of 17 April, 8 May and 24 July 1986.

62 Cf. T.J. Altizer and others, 1982, *Deconstruction and Theology*: 3.

Cupitt's starting point, however, involves important moves that do not seem to be justified. He assumes traditional Christianity to be monolithic and holds that it is dead.⁶³ Then he interprets it by a sequence of causally related features, whose causality is difficult to trace. He claims that maintaining a realist belief in a transcendent God causes religion to fall into systems of "supernatural truths" where language is assumed to carry unchangeable meanings. Cupitt argues that a realist belief in the transcendent God must involve both a description of the supernatural world "up there", and forgetfulness of the human dimension of religion; this is what the Christian tradition did, and why it died and is now ignored by all leading thinkers.

Cupitt's look at Christian tradition explains his next move: a break with the tradition. He says: 'Fixed views are proper only in a fixed world, such as we do not have any longer.' (1987:1) Then he transforms the old model of thought into its opposite, for which he argued in *Taking Leave of God*: 'In the old world meanings and values came down from above, but now they come up from below. We no longer receive them; we have to create them.' (1980:3) Cupitt identifies this new perspective as "anthropocentric":⁶⁴ as a form of radical Christian humanism, and proposes the break with the past: 'It is up to *us* to reimagine Christianity, to re-invent faith for our time.' (1987:2)⁶⁵ The anthropocentric perspective proposed by Cupitt places God in a position of a "religious ideal".⁶⁶ To speak of a God as of a person remains possible, provided we understand it as a personification we use about the requirements and goals of our life.⁶⁷ Cupitt states:

63 Bruno Brinkman: 'Outsidedness and High Noon', *Heythrop Journal* XXXV (1994), 53.

64 As Cupitt's position shifts, in *After All: Religion Without Alienation* (1994a) he argues for a form of gnosticism rather than for anthropocentrism.

65 Cupitt later sees his own approach as the one that brings 'scientific understanding' and 'imaginative creation' closer together and he states that 'it might even provide the basis for a new religious apologetics' (*What's a Story*, 1991:xi).

66 Cf. Cupitt, 1994a, *The Sea of Faith*: 276.

67 Cf. Cupitt, 1980:88.

So it appears that we are forced back to the point from which we began, namely that for us there is no god but the religious requirement: the imperative *Become spirit!* is the presence of God within us, and for us it is God, it is the goal as well as the requirement. (1980:91)

Cupitt's notion of religion stands and falls with an individual. In *What is a story?* Cupitt points out that the religious goal and requirement is present in the stories we live by: 'Story's kiss wakes us up, produces desire, produces reality' (1994b:16), and later in his book, 'Stories create and produce life' (50). Reality or life produced by a story, according to Cupitt, does not have to be checked against anything external to it. One can live by whatever story one likes. There are no better or worse stories. Cupitt echoes Lyotard when he says that it was an illusion of the past to think of there being a "master narrative": one single true story. Cupitt suggests that

we should read this as meaning that the old kind of realistic, dogmatic and exclusive belief in the cosmically privileged status of just one master-narrative-one's own, of course-has broken down. It has broken down because we now see that there is nothing out there, independent of all the master-narratives, that does anything to privilege any of them. They are all just optional fictions to live by... You are free to play which you like, or none. There is no constraining truth. (1994b:93)

He departs from Lyotard, however, in saying that although the master narrative has broken down, one can still live by it, if one wishes. And he goes even further in saying that one can make it true for oneself, provided one does not rely on any external assistance for support.⁶⁸ This is what Cupitt means when he says: 'I am Christian. I live by the Christian stories' (1994b:63). He then makes explicit what it is to live by Christian stories, saying: 'The moral of all Christian stories is: "Give up those illusory mystical yearnings, accept the human condition, love your neighbour, pour your own life into the common life of humanity. In a word, give up God, and be content with Christ"'. (1994b:133)

68 'You can make your own fiction come true, and feel its truth coming back at you. It can be *as if* there were Grace' (1994b:95).

Speaking about Christ without speaking about a transcendent God enables Cupitt to treat Christ as a fictional hero, and subsequently to locate his presence in human emotions and imaginations. Incarnation as a cosmic event, when the transcendent God has become a human being without ceasing to be God, belongs in Cupitt's system to the yearnings after "outsidedness" which are to be cured. Cupitt understands himself to be a doctor, announcing to patients with a metaphysical disease that one does not need anything external to be religious, to be Christian.

Besides metaphysics, which Cupitt perceives as anti-human,⁶⁹ because it substitutes illusory yearnings for life here and now, (along with realist ontology and epistemology); Cupitt strongly attacks the notion of religious experience.⁷⁰ Here, what is claimed to be an encounter with the transcendent or an intuition of it does not fit in with Cupitt's healing programme. Creating fictions and living by them may bring satisfaction to people, as he repeats, but there is nothing external to this process. He is prepared to speak about experience in terms of psychological events related to a language-created reality, but not of any extra-linguistic experiences. They are, according to Cupitt: 'The chief remaining factor that keeps people loyal to realism and resistant to fictionalism' (1994b:143).

3.2 *The Authoritative Story in the Absence of God in Moore*

Gareth Moore's starting point is less explicit than that of Cupitt. He says in the Preface to *Believing in God*: 'my concern is with what it is for Christians to believe the things they do, not with the truth of a particular range of beliefs.' (1988:ix) Then he begins to bring examples of what Christians do: they speak when there is nobody to speak to and describe this as "speaking to God"; they kneel before nobody, talk of

69 'Metaphysics is anti-human.' (1994b:130)

70 Interestingly, this is a field which he rehabilitates in *After All: Religion Without Alienation* (1994a), a book which came out in the same year, and in *Mysticism after Modernity* (1997).

“kneeling before God”; and so on; and of what they believe-“that there is an extra being”.⁷¹ But what these Christians believe and do, although it is important to them, does not have to be “true” and even cannot be “true”, except for them. To think that there is any external point of reference for their beliefs is, according to Moore, an error.

‘We speak of God in the absence of anything (any thing, person) that is called God’ (19), says Moore. Then he gives an explanation of what he means by using sentences referring to God. The transcendent, in his terms, does not belong to the realm of what exists. We cannot point at it, we cannot discover it, we cannot experience it, it is totally other. To say that God is transcendent, then, means exactly speaking of God as of absence.⁷² Nevertheless, it is still possible, as Moore says, to speak about God as present everywhere and at all times, provided we do not expect to refer to an external reality. Even the concept of reference may be retained under a similar condition: God is not an external reality to be referred to. He clarifies this point by two statements: (i) ‘There is no such thing as discovering God’ (17); (ii) ‘People do not discover religious truths, they make them’ (287).

The otherness and transcendence of God has its place in Moore’s system. It is created by people. As Peter Vardy emphasises, Moore holds an antirealist position. Vardy says: “People do not discover religious truths, they make them”. This expresses his [Moore’s] position clearly. A realist would say the opposite. A realist claims that people do not make religious truths, they discover them’ (1990:64). This antirealist angle for interpreting Christianity brings Moore close to Cupitt, since for both of them there is no external transcendent reality to be discovered, and from this point of view all religious truths are held to have the same status.

There is, however, a difference; while for Cupitt the individual is decisive for religious requirement and for making up his/her stories, for Moore the religious requirement is community-based. He points to a distinction between grounds and evidence. For a believer, he says, there is no evidence e.g. that the earth was created in six days, as the Scrip-

71 Cf. Moore, G., *Believing in God*, 1988: 7.9.

72 Compare with Levinas, Ch.One, 1.3.

tures say. However, if the believer belongs to a Christian community, the words of the Scriptures are certainly grounds for believing. A similar example is used with ecclesiastical authority: ‘That the pope says contraception is wrong is, again, not evidence that it is wrong; but for a Catholic or mainstream Christian it is certainly grounds for believing it is wrong.’ (1988:27) What counts as authority in a particular community of faith has to be respected as “the voice of God”,⁷³ according to Moore. As examples he lists the following authorities: ‘a set of scriptures, a class of experts such as priests or theologians, or perhaps the community as a whole’ (28). “The voice of God” is transmitted through these authorities accepted by a community of belief, continues Moore. He emphasises that it belongs to the concept of “the voice of God” to speak with authority.

As Moore’s notion of religion is community-based, the transcendent is created by a community, transmitted by a community’s authorities and, subsequently, is to be obeyed by community members. The notion of obedience is vital for Moore. He makes this point explicit by saying: ‘In religion, what is said and done is not to be in conformity with what is established by impartial enquiry, by going and looking how things are, by experimenting. Rather it is to be conformable to what is *authoritatively said*.’ (28)⁷⁴ Thus, the stories Christians are supposed to live by are not their own stories, but rather stories that they have accepted on the basis of authoritative requirement, independently not only of God, who is absent, but also of whether these stories fit with the rest of their lives, their knowledge and their experience.⁷⁵

As I have demonstrated, Cupitt and Moore start with the assumption that there is no transcendent reality, no transcendent God. They claim that to think that there is any external point to belief to which this refers is an error. There is no transcendent God to be discovered. There-

73 Cf. Moore, 1988:29.

74 Compare with Lyotard’s claims concerning reality, Ch.One, 1.1.

75 See Levinas’s “Other” and problems of the dictate from outside, which, however is given by the presence of the other and not by an authoritative story about the other; Ch.One, 1.3.

fore it must be people who create their gods. According to Moore, communities of people; according to Cupitt, individuals.

Moore attempts to ground this anti-realist anthropocentric perspective in community-based authorities. They decide what is to be believed, and whatever they say is to be respected. According to Cupitt one can do with these words and stories whatever one wishes, including contradicting oneself.⁷⁶ There is, however, one exception to this wide freedom—the break with the tradition must be made; one cannot interpret the stories from the point of view of belief in a transcendent God. Such a position is perceived by Cupitt as well as by Moore as illegitimate and naive. It has to be given up as the ‘nostalgia for any sort of Elsewhere’ (Cupitt, 1987:8). Moore adds that religion does not include experience of ‘how the things are’ but conformity to how they are described as being by the authority.

The treatment of language as the last resource in Cupitt and Moore points to the fact that in this respect they use a foundationalist manner of thinking. There is no “outsidedness” to human concepts, that could provide a change or a corrective. Also, there is no mystery. As Cupitt points out: ‘Nothing is hidden, everything is manifest, nothing is *wrong* with the manifest, faith chooses and embraces the manifest, and all nostalgia for any sort of Elsewhere or other-than-this is to be forgotten... Such is, I believe, the final message of an incarnational religion.’ (1987:8) In other words, Cupitt proposes to replace traditional belief in the transcendent God, who has become a human being without ceasing to be God, with a language-based antirealism that stands and falls with human words, human fictions about reality.

For Moore, God is no person,⁷⁷ God is “nothing”,⁷⁸ and religion is about conforming to authority. These two claims, however, contradict each other. Cupitt, for whom there is no authority except his likes and dislikes, is at this point in an easier position, as he does not claim to refer to any authority. Moore claims to hold to the authorities of a Chris-

76 ‘The ground beneath our feet is continuously shifting. When we relativized the past, we relativized ourselves also.’ (Cupitt, 1987:3)

77 Cf. Moore, 1988:19.

78 1988:41.

tian community while denying what these authorities are actually saying with respect to the transcendent God.

To conclude: deconstruction of the transcendent, as proposed by Cupitt and Moore, cannot avoid deconstructing incarnation, as portrayed in mainstream Christianity. Deconstruction of the transcendent indeed involves a break with the past, as Cupitt has pointed out, and, moreover, a re-invention of religion according to anti-realist rules. Nevertheless, I oppose their claim that this is a vital religious alternative for our time. As I see it, Cupitt's and Moore's break with the past and their renouncing the transcendent reference does not provide a religious discourse with an intellectual integrity, but leads either (as in the case of Cupitt) to criteria-less fictions, which can be altruistic as well as violent; or to totalitarian systems claiming to have exhaustive authority: to be "the voice of God", as in the case of Moore.

4. Summary: Apologetics and the Problem of Foundationalism

Chapter One has offered a confrontation between postmodern criticisms and apologetical discourse understood as a defence of two types of foundationalism at the heart of the two types of apologetics. The first, foundationalist apologetics, argued for the objectivity, universal validity and truth of credal beliefs, metaphysical ideas, and judgments built on these.⁷⁹ The second, revisionist apologetics, asserted the opposite, but through an equally exclusivist claim of the illegitimacy of any transcendent and universalist claims to knowledge, belief or action. I identified three key points of the postmodern critique, derived from Derrida, Lyotard and Levinas: (i) deconstruction of objective meaning and truth in language; (ii) death of metanarratives; and (iii) constitutive

79 See n.1.

otherness. Now I will summarise both the success and the weakness of these three criticisms, as well as indicate how the two types of apologetics respond to them.

i/ Deconstruction of Objective Meaning and Truth in Language

Derrida's critique undermined a continuity of objective meaning and truth, arguing that these were constructions of Western metaphysics to prevent human freedom and creativity from its full development.⁸⁰ He strongly criticised its approach for treating life as a theory, ignoring its complexities and excluding what was different. His alternative: an ever-changing plurality of reflections, did not give space for the "right" language or the "right" context to be criteria for any authoritative interpretation. An apologist taking Derrida seriously would have to do without such guarantees. The main weakness of Derrida's approach, then, appeared: there was nothing left that would make it possible to distinguish between reality and fiction. In fact, Derrida claimed that such a distinction was not needed.⁸¹ His position provoked two types of reaction on the side of apologetics: one was the defence of foundational doctrines of Christianity as objectively true; the other was precisely doing away with their being more than human-invented stories we live (or don't live) by.

As I showed, the foundationalist apologetics of Swinburne and Hebblethwaite insisted on objective meaning and truth, in Swinburne's case, being carried by the "right" propositions and the "right" context. Both Swinburne and Hebblethwaite rely for support on the Western metaphysics Derrida condemned, including the logic of identity. Hebblethwaite's approach argued for a moderate form of it and took development and change of thought into account. Swinburne chose for one of his key points the notion of timeless Thisness and related it to material objects and to souls. While ignoring the postmodern criticisms

80 Cf. Lechte:106.

81 Cf. G.C. Spivak, 1976, 'Translator's Preface' to Derrida's *Of Grammatology*: xxii.

as such, he also claimed that authorised objective Christian teaching was supported by evidence.

Cupitt's and Moore's revisionist apologetics took language as the last resource: there is no other reality beyond language, nothing transcendent, not even the transcendent God. They claim that there is no external point to refer to; what is left are stories with no objective truth-value. In accord with Derrida, Cupitt and Moore hold that truths are illusions;⁸² however, they depart from him in making positive statements from this, while Derrida is more critical.⁸³ Cupitt's theory shifts and changes,⁸⁴ but the core-relativism with regard to meaning and truth-stays firmly in place. For Moore it was grounded in the authoritative claims of a particular community. None of the approaches develops the possibilities following from Derrida's critique, namely having reflected the absence of Christian belief, allowing re-evaluation and re-appreciation of its meaning and truth.⁸⁵

ii/ Death of Metanarratives

Lyotard's argument, similarly to Derrida's, criticised timeless truth and the objective validity of grand stories explaining the superiority of one system above another. He showed that these laid the foundations of dictatorships-and that if we were to avoid these, we have to give up metanarratives once and for all. What remained was the ability to perform, to make a good case. Thus the only criterion was whether a rhetor performed his piece convincingly. As I pointed out, Lyotard's critique

82 See n.78.

83 Cf. Cahoone on Derrida: 'saying that, "There is nothing outside the text." This need not mean that there is no real world, but that we only encounter real referents through texts, representations, mediation.' (14)

84 See n.73.

85 Compare to J.M. Domenach's account of Girard's '*voyage* to the end of the sciences of man which, having reached the edge of the abyss of nihilism, do an amazing about-face that leads them back in a blazing journey to the very domain they believed they had left for ever: that of the word of God.' ('*Voyage to the End of the Sciences of man*', 1987, in *Violence and Truth: On the Work of René Girard*: 159)

was particularly relevant when applied to the apologetical discourse and the problem of the presentation of Christian narratives as metanarratives. But I identified also a major difficulty of Lyotard's position: bounding knowledge up with "optimal performance" rather than with truth, which opened up a possibility of a consensus-based dictatorship eliminating the "different".⁸⁶

Swinburne's and Hebblethwaite's apologetics use universal explanatory theories in order to overcome the different by claiming the superiority of their own foundations. Thus they produced foundationalist theories based on the tradition of credal Christianity and the Western metaphysical system associated with it. For both Hebblethwaite and Swinburne, the foundationalist theories were prospective: they projected assumed foundations for faith to the future, as something that could transcend any historical and cultural setting.⁸⁷ Their theories had to be coherent in order to prove their superiority and their privileged access to truth.

By contrast, for Cupitt and Moore there is no transcendent God to be discovered, no transcendent superior truth to be claimed, but either individuals or communities of people who created their gods and their truths. Cupitt's and Moore's move from one single transcendent metanarrative to a "unlimited" plurality of wholly immanent micronarratives, includes one exception: it without exception demands a break with the tradition. Christian stories cannot be told from the point of view of belief in the transcendent God any longer. Such a position is no longer legitimate. As Cupitt says, its "nostalgia for Elsewhere"⁸⁸ is destructive. The alternative is to accept that the metanarratives one lives by are dead.⁸⁹ Thus, either in the case of Cupitt we are left with criterialess fictions, the one of Hitler as good as the one of Ghandi; or in the case of Moore with a new possibility of totalitarian systems based on claims to exhaustive authority: to be "the voice of God", and demanding a total obedience.

86 See n.25.

87 See n.53.

88 Cupitt, 1987:8.

89 See n.65.

Levinas's position puts the main stress on ethics and emphasises that the otherness of both people and God must not be done away with at any cost. According to him responsibility to the Other established the identity of the subject, and is the way of transcendence. Levinas speaks of God as *a-Dieu* and announced a farewell to our making God the object of experience and knowledge.⁹⁰ The weakness of Levinas's position, as Rose pointed out, was in the lack of reciprocity⁹¹ and the lack of immanence. Human identity comes from outside the subject.⁹² The third point of postmodern criticism, nevertheless, offers to apologetical discourse also a way forward, to 'construe the otherness of God as unavowably, remarkably present-as- radically-other to us in the worlds in which we live' (Tilley: 168). This can be best communicated in the language of sacrament or of manifestation or of prophecy or risk of solidarity, as these unite word with action.

The apologetics of Swinburne and Hebblethwaite, as I showed, uses universal explanatory theories in order to overcome the "otherness" identified by postmodernity, and aim at converting all alterity to the superior tradition of credal Christianity, in the case of Hebblethwaite, and to the Western metaphysical system associated with it, in the case of Swinburne. Swinburne represents the opposite position to Levinas: human identity comes purely from Thisness of the soul, nothing external could take anything from it or add anything to it.⁹³ Thus, it did not need the other in the sense Levinas or even Buber proposed. As was pointed out, neither the I-Thou relationship nor the appeal of the "face of the other" were constitutive for human identity.

For Cupitt and Moore otherness is limited by the claims that there is no "outsidedness" to human concepts and no mystery. Everything is supposed to be manifest,⁹⁴ not as an objective truth in terms of evi-

90 Cf. Levinas, 1969:215.

91 Levinas, 1985:98.

92 Cf. Rose: 8-9.

93 Cf. Swinburne, 1994:50.

94 Cf. Cupitt, 1987:8.

dence, but as human fictions about reality. For Moore, as for Levinas, God is no person,⁹⁵ God is “nothing”.⁹⁶ But, then, Moore holds that religion is about conforming to a communal authority, which decides what is to be believed. The dictate comes from outside, but rather more explicitly than in Levinas.

The first chapter presented the strengths and the weak points of postmodern critique, and addressed them to two extreme contemporary approaches: foundationalist and revisionist apologetics. I showed that neither of these succeed in facing up to the postmodern critique and in providing a satisfactory response based on an account of Christian belief and practice. They do not take seriously the practical transcendent dimension, which was emphasised by Levinas and for theology more accessibly by Tracy and Tilley. At its best, they speak of transcendence in terms of a theory, as do Swinburne and Hebblethwaite. Foundationalist apologetics also harmonises into one metanarrative the *aporias* present in the historical experience of Christian belief and practice. Or they do not give a fair interpretation of it, holding that any interpretation of Christian belief and practice (except the one involving transcendence) was a fair one (Cupitt), or claiming to stand for an authoritative interpretation, while denying what the Christian authorities were actually saying in terms of God’s transcendence (Moore). In particular, the problem of how to distinguish between reality and fiction was indicated and both types of apologetics were found to be lacking in reasonable criteria. However, I claim that these apologetical approaches represented extreme positions and are not exhaustive of the discourse. Therefore in Chapter Two attention turns to traditional *apologia* and to a search for more satisfactory accounts of the Christian belief and practice, which might provide a reasonable distinction between reality and fiction.

95 See n.74.

96 See n.75.

CHAPTER TWO: ROOTS OF CHRISTIAN *APOLOGIA* AND A VARIETY OF DEFINITIONS

The previous chapter provided me with grounds for the argument that a distinction between apologetics and *apologia* is useful. In the Introduction I defined apologetics as: a rational defence of particular systems of beliefs, ideas, attitudes and values, aiming to prove that only these are universally true; and contrasted it to *apologia* understood as: a reflective vindication of the integrity of Christian belief and practice. I also pointed out that both of these words stem from a root word “apology”. It has to be noted, however, that this distinction has its importance in English, where the word ‘apology’ was used in translations of the first defences of the integrity of Christian belief and practice against its accusers¹ and the concept of apologetics has been heavily loaded by its post-Enlightenment use.² In Greek, where the concepts came from, we do not find the three distinct words, but a single one, *apologia* (initially translated as apology). The distinction I use, nevertheless, enables me to emphasise the differences in the two strands of the apologetical discourse. While I am happy to accept that both stem from the initial apology, I also argue that the wider understanding of the discourse in terms of *apologia* has better historical support. It is better able to preserve the aporetic nature of claims to knowledge and belief when speaking about God and the world. It does not renounce the transcendent dimension of practice and the historical continuity of the discourse. This will provide me with a material for the second part of the book, where I demonstrate that differences between apologetics and *apologia* lay already in their underpinning epistemologies.

1 See Justin, 1867, ‘First Apology’ (1Ap) and ‘Second Apology’ (2Ap), in *The Writings of Justin Martyr and Athenagoras*.

2 Cf. Dulles, 1971:246.

1. The Rise of *Apologia*

It is already possible to speak about *apologia* in Stephen's defence, when the Christians are facing persecution (Acts 7, 2–53), in Paul's speeches in Antioch (Acts 13, 13–43) and Athens (Acts 17, 22–33), and in references to the apocryphal 'Preaching of Peter' and the lost Apology addressed by Quadratus to the Emperor Hadrian in AD 125.³ In this part I look at the reasons for hope and belief in Christ that led his followers to profess their faith publicly, even if threatened by the loss of their social well-being or by the death penalty.

1.1 *How to Respond to Persecutors*

The first apologies were written in a situation of persecution, when to hold the Christian faith involved a significant commitment up to a readiness for martyrdom (Greek *martyrein* means 'to bear witness'). Christianity was attacked from three main sides: (i) the Jews;⁴ (ii) philosophers; and (iii) representatives of the Roman Empire.

i/ Jews claimed that Christians did not keep the Law of Moses and denied belief in one God.

As Avery Dulles summarises:

Some of the Jews outside the Church were eager to slander Christians and to denounce them to the civil authorities. The Christians sought to refute these charges and in some cases to respond in kind. As in New

3 The lost Apology is mentioned in Eusebius' *The History of the Church*, 1989:4.3.

4 When I use the word "Jews" it has to be understood as a historical label referring to the first Christians' need to find their own identity against the religion which lay at their roots and whose representatives were responsible for Jesus' death and now for their persecution. But it has to be recognised that this historical label gave rise to the sad history of antijudaism and antisemitism on the part of the Christians.

Testament times, they wished to persuade the Jews that Jesus Christ was the fulfilment of the hopes of ancient Israel. To those Judeo–Christians who attempted to combine faith in Christ with observance of the Mosaic Law, including the Levitical worship in the temple, the Christians sought to demonstrate that Christ had set His faithful free from the obligations of the old covenant. (1971:23)

ii/ Philosophers despised Christianity as nonsense, superstition mixed with philosophical fragments. This is stated in Origen’s *Contra Celsum* where he quotes Celsus’ charge: ‘Now first we must speak of all the misunderstandings and corruptions of the truth which they have made through ignorance. For they vulgarly discuss fundamental principles and make arrogant pronouncements about matters of which they know nothing.’ (1980:315)

iii/ Representatives of the Roman Empire increasingly construed Christianity as a political threat undermining the structures of the Empire. This was the most dangerous accusation, which later led to massive persecutions. Origen, again, gives us an account of it:

Celsus’ first main point in his desire to attack Christianity is that the Christians secretly make associations with one another contrary to the laws, because “societies which are public are allowed by the laws, but secret societies are illegal”. And wishing to slander the so called “love (agape) which Christians have for one another”, he says that “it exists because of the common danger and is more powerful than any oath”. (1980:7)

Then Origen elaborates Celsus’ attack upon Christianity as a political threat, adding charges of secret barbarian rites and doctrines, of atheism towards Greco–Roman gods and of superstitious beliefs of their own, which they do not allow to be questioned by reason.⁵

The first accusation raised the idea that there were two different Gods, one for Jews the other for Christians, which the apologists denied: ‘Nor do we think that there is one God for us, another for you, but that He alone is God who led your fathers out of Egypt with a strong

5 Origen, 1980, *Contra Celsum*: 7–14.

hand and a high arm.’ (Justin, 1867, D:99) It put Christians into the position of a sect, which they also refused arguing that they had not departed from the Law of Moses⁶ and did not have secret rites and doctrines.⁷ The second accusation represented Christianity to a Greco–Roman educated audience as intellectually substandard. Dulles points out that it represented a move from charging Christianity with atheism, immorality and “Thyestean banquets” to more sophisticated charges, increasingly intellectual, that led Christians between the 2nd and 4th centuries to give a more carefully reasoned justification for their faith.⁸ In Tillich’s view the accusations operated simultaneously and the fundamental philosophical questions were raised already by Celsus’ charge against Christianity.⁹ Finally the third accusation making Christians out to be a politically dangerous group led to the most severe persecutions. The political loyalty of Christians to the Empire was tested by their willingness to make a sacrifice to pagan gods or to the emperor, which were understood as a means to overcome the crisis of the Empire and gain unity. Christians who refused such sacrifices usually became martyrs.

The first Christian apologists, Quadratus, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tatian, Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, Minucius Felix, Tertullian and others, were confronted with three tasks: to find a possible common ground with their accusers in order not to be ‘unjustly condemned for their mere name’ (Justin, 1867, 1Ap: 9); to demonstrate that attacks against Christianity were based on lack of information;¹⁰ and to vindicate Christian belief and practice as credible, relevant and attractive. It needs to be said that their defences in part presented to the emperor, in part to an educated Greco–Roman audience, in part to Jews, were usually unsuccessful in terms of stopping persecution. The apolo-

6 Justin, 1867, ‘Dialogue with Trypho’ (D): 98–100.

7 Origen, 1980:8.

8 Dulles, 1971:22.

9 Tillich, P., 1968, *A History of Christian Thought*: 29–39.

10 Among the earliest Christian apologists, who joined in the task of accommodating Christianity within the Empire we find Apollinaris of Hierapolis, Melito of Sardis, and Athenagoras of Athens. (Cf. Grant, R.M., ‘Five Apologists and Marcus Aurelius’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 42 (1988), 1).

gists had greater publicity within the church, rather than any significant political effect on the society of their time. For Christians taking risks, defences of faith helped to raise their self-consciousness and offer a theological reflection upon their situation. Treatises communicating their belief as something intellectually respectable and attractive, nevertheless, could not solve the question of sacrificing to state gods by appealing to the accusations as misunderstandings. Therefore, in the end, the apologists had to give an account of how their belief was different, why it mattered to act in accordance with it and what lay at its roots.

The Greek concept of *apologia*, which they employed, etymologically comes from the prefix *apo* (out of, following from) and the root word *logos*, which for Greco-Roman educated Christians meant two things: (i) *logos* as the popular idea of the underlying rational principle of the universe; and (ii) *Logos* as the ‘out-spoken’ Word of God who has become man, as the Johannine scriptural tradition emphasised.¹¹ The term *apologia* was generally used in the context of a court defence as an answer or a reply. But when employed by Christians vindicating their belief and practice, it also referred to *Logos* and it was even claimed that it arose from *Logos*, as we will see in Justin’s works. Therefore, in order to examine the apologetic discourse as represented by the early Christian martyrs, we must first look at this concept of *logos*.

1.2 *Logos Adopted by a Christian Tradition*

Historically the concept comes from Platonic and Stoic tradition, but its roots go back to Heraclitus and Anaxagoras. For Heraclitus, it was *pyr* (fire), the source of all existing things, omnipresent cosmic intelligence

11 I accept the convention of utilising lower case “l” when referring to the general use of *logos* and upper case “L” when talking about the *Logos* of God, in the Old Testament, the New Testament as well as in the Church Fathers (Cf. *Iustini Martyris Apologiae pro Christianis*, 1994, ed. M. Marcovich). There is a different convention in the texts quoted by D.C. Trakatellis, where he employs lower case “l” for every use of *logos* (*The Pre-existence of Christ in Justin Martyr: An exegetical study with reference to the humiliation and exaltation Christology*, 1976).

and reasoning force, which was identified with Logos.¹² In Anaxagoras, there is an antecedent to Logos, the concept of *nous* (reason) as an opposition to material forces and as a force producing out of chaos a phenomenal world.¹³ From here the concept of *nous* was taken by Plato, who, as Goodenough says attempted ‘to give the *nous* consistent reality.’ (1968:7) For this purpose Plato distinguished between *nous* as the supreme intelligence that brought about the non-material creation of forms;¹⁴ and *logos* as an expression or an explanation,¹⁵ as an immanent power undergoing development.¹⁶ This distinction allows him to keep a fairly strict dualism of God or *nous* and matter, which even Aristotle did not overcome.¹⁷ In the Stoic cosmology *logos* was identified with *pneuma* (spirit, energy). The Stoics followed Heraclitus in taking *pyr* as interchangeable with *pneuma* and with *logos*, which they identified as the universal reason.¹⁸ In general they denied the existence of immaterial reality and Stoic *pyr-pneuma-logos* unlike Platonic *nous* did not make the sharp distinction between the material and the immaterial. Stoics thus spoke about *logos spermatikos* or *logoi spermatikoi* (the spermatik *logos* or the seeds of *logos*) referring to the realms of physics and biology to signify the material spermatik principle.¹⁹ In the first two centuries AD *logos* mediated by Plotinus as Platonic *nous*, as well as the Stoic notion of *pyr-pneuma-logos* became a part of the popular understanding of the divine and its interaction with the world. However, there was still a tension between the different cosmologies underlying these two traditions. Platonic cosmology in-

12 See the definition in Plato, 1973, *Theaetetus*: 291, c.7ff.

13 Cf. Goodenough, E.R., 1968, *The Theology of Justin Martyr*: 4.

14 Cf. Plato, 152, *Timaeus*: 39.e.

15 *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1978: 600–601.

16 ‘That fixed and pure and true and what we call unalloyed knowledge has to do with the things which are eternally the same without change or mixture, or with that which is most akin to them; and all other things are to be regarded as secondary and inferior.’ Plato, 1952, *Philebus*: 59,C, 371.

17 Goodenough: 13.

18 For these reasons Platonic cosmology is defined as dualist, while Stoic is monist.

19 Goodenough: 16.

clined to a split between the material and the spiritual, while Stoic cosmology as well as that of Heraclitus assumed an identity between the material and the spiritual.²⁰ Philo, whose influence on the early Christian Logos doctrine Goodenough regards as decisive, linked Hellenistic and Jewish speculative thought and arrived at a contemplative dimension of *logos* rooted in claims to the Creator's presence in mind.²¹ R. Williams states that it is 'the Philonic notion of a Logos who constitutes that "dimension" of divine life in which exist the potentialities of the rational creation' (1987:186). Although the early Apologists took from Philo and other Jewish writers such as Aristobulus and Josephus the freedom not to seek any sharp opposition between Judaism and Hellenism, nevertheless, as R. M. Price points out, the identification of their discourses is not possible.²² L. W. Barnard mentioned the decisive difference: 'The logos had become flesh – that was the line which divided Christian speculation from the speculations of Hellenistic and Rabbinic Judaism and Philo.' (1967:87)

The concept of *Logos* flowing into the early Christian *apologia* had biblical roots as well as philosophical. As was pointed out, in a significant way due to the speculative diasporan Judaism of Philo and others, the early Christian apologists found no hesitation in combining biblical and philosophical discourse, provided they arrived at theological and also christological conclusions. It is possible to say that the Hellenistic Jewish writers of their time inspired the apologists with their method of interpreting the Old Testament, trying to make it accessible to Greek audiences. They took the concept of *Logos* and employed it in the translation of the Old Testament into Greek. They prepared the link between Hebrew and Greek culture, which was taken for granted by the Christian apologists.

20 Cf. Williams, R., 1987, *Arius*: 203–204.

21 'and a love of the prophets, and of those men who are friends of Christ, possessed me; and whilst revolving his words in mind, I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable. Thus, and for this reason, I am a philosopher.' Justin, 1867, D:96; See also Goodenough: 139–175.

22 Price, R., 1988, "Hellenization" and Logos Doctrine in Justin Martyr', *Vigiliae Christianae* 42 (1988), 19.

Logos (heb. *Dabar*, aram. *Memra*) in the Septuagint²³ signified the following: (i) the Word of God in Creation (Gen 1: 3,6,9; Ps 23:6); (ii) the Word of the message of the prophets by means of which God communicates his will to his people (Jer 1:4; Ezek 1:3; Amos 3:1); (iii) A way of speaking about God without using God's name (Gen 3:8);²⁴ (iv) was synonymous with *Hokhmah* (*Sofia*, Divine Wisdom) a creative force with a strong personal element, as the one accompanying every action of God (Prov 8:22; Wisd 7:22,27); and (v) was synonymous with *Torah* (*Nomos*, Law of God) used in Rabbinical interpretations as an equivalent of *Hokhmah*, which found a resting place in Israel being identified with the law as a source of life (Ex 34:28; Sir 24:8ff,23ff).²⁵ *Logos* and its synonymous concepts coming especially from the sapiential literature and from the Rabbinic interpretations stands in contrast to the lifeless system of ideas identified by postmodern critique as "logocentrism".²⁶ There is a personal element in the overlap of *Logos* as the Word, the Voice, the Utterance of God, *Sophia* as the creative Force of knowing and understanding, and *Nomos* as the Law, the Norm distributing justice. Thus, it is possible in the book of Wisdom to speak of 'God... who hast made all things by thy word and by thy wisdom hast formed man,' (9:1–2a); of the *Logos* that: 'heals all people' (16:12); 'touched the heavens but stood upon the earth' (18:16).

The sapiential literature with its poetic language helped to make links between Judaism and the Hellenic culture, used later by the New Testament writers and the Church Fathers. It prepared a common ground known to Hellenic as well as Jewish audiences. There, the acceptance of the personal *Logos* made it possible to emphasise the cosmo-

23 Cf. Barnard, 1967, *Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought*: 86–87. Barrett, C.K., 1955, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with commentary and notes on the Greek Text*: 128.

24 Here Barnard points at the Aramaic concept of *Memra* (*Logos*) e.g. in Gn 3:8 where it is employed as follows: 'They heard the voice of "memra" of the Lord God.' (86, n.4)

25 In the Septuagint Ex 34,28 the ten commandments are translated as *deka logia* and the reference to *Logos* in connection with *Nomos* is emphasised by Philo as well as by Josephus, see Trakatellis: 53–92.

26 On "logocentrism" see Derrida, 1976:10–18, also Ch. One, 1.1.

logical origin of Christ in terms of 'the personal Reason of God in which all men partake' (Barnard: 89) without losing Jesus as the basic historical figure calling to discipleship.

In the New Testament we can find three main ways of employing the concept of *Logos*.²⁷ These are connected with: (i) pre-existence, which, according to Trakatellis, calls on the Old Testament theophanic events (Mk 12:26–27; Lk 20:37–38; John 8:56–58, Acts 7:30–35; 1Cor 10:1–4) and gives them Christological interpretation;²⁸ (ii) the incarnation, where the authors are concerned with a transition from the pre-existence to the incarnation, with the virgin birth and with the humiliation element (Mt 1:18–25; Lk 1:35; possibly also Hebr 12:2–3; and Acts 21:23);²⁹ and (iii) the exaltation, which brings together both previous usages. Here Trakatellis refers to the early credal–hymnic traditions found also in the New Testament (Phil 2:6–11; John 1:1–14, Hebr 1:1–12 and Col 1:15–20).³⁰

To conclude, while dealing with the notion of *Logos* in the Scriptures and also in the patristic tradition, one must be permanently aware of the roots of its use, namely the interaction of Greek and Hebrew thought as pointed out by Price.³¹ This prevents us from agreeing with Barnard's conclusion, that the early Christian apologists were biblical thinkers, no matter what their philosophical background.³² But the opposite position should also be avoided, that the conceptual framework of the early apologists demonstrates their being primarily philosophers without an equally strong grasp of the Scriptures.³³ The awareness that the biblical interpretative tools in the Hellenistic period did not make a

27 Trakatellis: 137–138.

28 Trakatellis: 54–57.

29 Trakatellis: 169.

30 Trakatellis: 173.

31 Cf. Price: 22.

32 'It must be emphasized that he [Justin] is a biblical thinker and, whatever the philosophical influences to which he was exposed, this remained a primary influence.' (Barnard: 91)

33 The exposition of the early apologists as philosophers 'hellenizing' Christianity remains in Harnack, A., 1886, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* : 372–422.

clear distinction between the Jewish, the Greek and the Christian,³⁴ represents an important starting point for *apologia*. Through the employment of the concept of *Logos* we can see how a tool of interpretation taken from philosophy, mediated by the contextual and personal language of the Scriptures, is given a theological orientation: *Logos* has become a man in Jesus, God's Christ, who by his dying and rising brought healing to humankind. The cosmic *Logos* (*Sophia*, *Nomos*) is fully (but not exhaustively) present in the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth.

1.3 Justin's Argument for the Reasonableness of Belief

Reason directs those who are truly pious and philosophical to honour and love only what is true, declining to follow traditional options, if these be worthless.
(Justin, 1867, 1Ap:7)

Justin Martyr (c.110–165) represents apologetical discourse in its early stages, when Christians were a persecuted minority in the Roman Empire. Already then there were significant differences of attitude to Greek philosophy within Christianity, which have recurred until now. Justin stood on the side of a dialogical relation between philosophy and the Scriptures. In the Patristic period spite of Theophilus', Tatian's or Latin North African Tertullian's repudiation of philosophy, there were personalities like Athenagoras and Justin, the Alexandrians, Clement and Origen who did not accept the split, and thus contributed to the rise of a philosophical theology – a form of Christian *apologia* for the educated Hellenistic audience. The concept of *Logos* continued to play a vital role in the discourse. Above all, this is illustrated by Justin's *apologia*. His knowledge of philosophy together with his grasp of the Scriptures provided him with a conceptual framework in which he was able to express Christian belief and practice as a reasonable option within the

34 'Whatever things were rightly said among all men, are the property of us Christians.' Justin, 1867, 2Ap:83.

plurality which was tolerated by the Empire; and then to proceed to a vindication of the Christian way of life as something worth considering.

Justin was initially a travelling pagan philosopher³⁵ who converted to Christianity. He was baptised around 130 in Ephesus, later taught “Christian philosophy” in Rome and together with other Christians suffered martyrdom during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, because of his refusal to sacrifice to the state gods.³⁶ His philosophical education enabled him to employ the conceptual framework of Stoics and Middle-Platonists, like Albinus and Plutarch, as tools for constructing a defence of Christianity against persecutors. His knowledge of the Scriptures and of Judaic speculative interpretations, represented mainly by Philo, helped Justin in what he saw as his task: to communicate Christian belief as something intellectually respectable and attractive.

Justin uses the term *Logos* in two contrasting ways: as diffused *Logos spermatikos* and as the whole *Logos Christos*. *Logos spermatikos*, so Justin claims, is given to every person by creation. He says: ‘In the beginning He [God] made the human race with the power of thought and of choosing the truth and doing right’ (1867, 1Ap:31). This ability was not, according to Justin, completely lost after the fall,³⁷ people were born ‘rational and contemplative.’ (31) Thus, although a strong critic of the mockery of the intellectuals, the oppression of the state, pagan superstition in its myths and cult and the immorality of those who manipulate others through it,³⁸ he claimed that the great philosophers like Heraclitus and Socrates were ‘Christians before Christ’ (Küng, 1995:134). However, Justin added: ‘But since they did not know the whole of the Word, which is Christ, they often contradicted themselves.’ (1867, 2Ap:79) As the seed of *Logos* was claimed to be ‘implanted in every race of men’ (1867, 2Ap:78) the whole *Logos*, Christ, then, was not in Justin’s *apologia* presented as something alien or new, but as a fulfilment of what was already here, though only partly recognised.

35 Justin gives an account of his philosophical education in the ‘Dialogue with Trypho’, 1867: 88.

36 Cf. ‘The Martyrdom of Justin and Others’, 1867.

37 Justin, 1867, ‘On the Sole Government of God’: 329.

38 Justin, 1867, 1Ap:27–28.67.

The identification of Christ with *Logos* led Justin to include in his Christian belief a knowledge of philosophy, rhetoric and law, nonetheless in a limited fashion. Trakatellis points out that although Justin employs the abstract philosophical terminology of the Stoics and Middle-Platonists, he ‘transforms a universal principle, an abstract concept into a christological one.’ (182) And so it can be said that Justin’s *Logos* terminology, although it uses conceptual schemes borrowed from Greek philosophy and Hellenistic Judaism, breaks them in the end, using them to indicate their own limits. Speculative thought is then contrasted to the “personal” action of Christ’ (Trakatellis: 182).

Justin’s emphasis that the whole Word – *Logos Christos* – is not a principle but a person makes his understanding of the “fullness of truth” dynamic. In the *First Apology* Justin claims: ‘He [Christ] taught us these things for the conversion and restoration of the human race’ (1867:27). He also points out that Christ’s teaching significantly differed from the teaching of philosophers, e.g. of Socrates, as Christ taught by being the person He is, ‘since He is a power of the ineffable Father, and not the mere instrument of human reason.’ (1867, 2Ap:80) This point is extended when Justin gives an account of his conversion. He says that after leaving the philosophical schools he learnt about Christ from a simple old man who had no background in classical education. This man impressed him with the integrity of his personality, which Justin ascribed to his belief.³⁹ Justin’s claim that Christian belief is reasonable is thus different from saying that it relies on mere instruments of human reason.⁴⁰ Rather it is a claim to its integrity: the one who believes is healed and restored by the *Logos* incarnate.

There is also an element of universalism in Justin’s position. It has two sides. On one hand Justin includes within God’s saving plan the whole of universe, saying that ‘the seed of reason’ – the *Logos spermatikos* – was ‘implanted in every race of men’ (1867, 2Ap:78), and that ‘to God nothing is secular’ (‘On the Resurrection’, 1867:346). On the other hand, as it is the Christian God who is responsible for salvation, and therefore a privileged status accrues Christians, they embrace all

39 Justin narrates his conversion in, 1867, D:89.

40 Compare to the definition of rationalism in the glossary.

truth: ‘Whatever things were rightly said among all men, are the property of us Christians.’ (1867, 2Ap:83)

This is a difficult statement, which gave rise to two influential interpretations. One was simply that all truth belongs to Christians and, therefore, if people want to find the truth they have to become Christians.⁴¹ But this interpretation is opposed by Justin’s teaching on *Logos spermatikos*, which allows the truth to be also elsewhere. The second interpretation did away with the idea of Christians “owning” the truth and rather suggested that the truth “owned” Christians, which was particularly important in situations of martyrdom.⁴² But as it could not rely on the literal support of Justin’s text, it had to look for support elsewhere. It is vital for both interpretations to see the context in which this claim of Justin was made: the persecuted church raising her consciousness, and Justin’s *apologia* being centred on the figure of Christ and on the community of discipleship, as sources of hope in ultimate overcoming of the persecution. And even if it has to be said that the early universalist views contributed to building up the Christian metanarrative, rejected by the postmodern critique, we do not find this in Justin. When the church gained the position of power to persecute her opponents and stated that ‘Whatever things were rightly said among all men, are the property of us Christians.’ it had a very different meaning.

2. Vindication of Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis

The early Christ-centred understanding of *apologia*, as we saw in Justin, was challenged by two crises which confronted the church. One was the crisis of the rational, the crisis of knowing where the truth was presu-

41 This we still find in Swinburne’s and Hebblethwaite’s apologetics, see Ch. One, 2.1.2.

42 For a detailed contemporary study of martyrdom, see the doctoral thesis of M. Kirwan: *Friday’s Children: An Examination of Theologies of Martyrdom in the Light of the Mimetic Theory of Rene Girard* (1998).

ing one wished to know.⁴³ The other was the crisis of the community. While the early apologists sometimes drew a black and white contrast between the 'human kingdom' and the Christian community,⁴⁴ this was no longer possible in post-Constantine Christianity. When the church became the dominant force in the Empire, her inner divisions provoked a question: where is the Christ, who is to be followed? Yves Congar characterises the post-Constantine *apologias* as discourses 'looking for a sure rule to distinguish the Catholic faith from the falsehood of the heretics' (1966:44). The main attention was paid to what was the authoritative interpretation of the Scriptures and of tradition, with the hope that 'the same Spirit who spoke by the prophets and inspired the human authors of Scripture does not cease to animate the Church in which he lives or to guide the teachers, councils and pastors of the People of God.' (Congar, 1966:49)

However, the problem of authoritative distinction between the orthodox and heterodox traditions and thus orthodox and heterodox churches, is not removed by appeal to the Scriptures and the Church Fathers as their interpreters as we will see with the example of Augustine's *apologia* directed against heterodox movements of his time. Congar adds that a significant feature of this period was to define 'theological criteria' for 'elaborating the "*sacra doctrina*" or Christian teaching.' (1966:50) This emphasis on orthodoxy, nevertheless, had also its practical dimension, orthopraxis.⁴⁵ We find it already in the late Augustine, and then in medieval Christendom, where it becomes apparent

43 Compare to Justin's rational optimism, 1867, 1Ap:7.

44 Cf. Justin, 1867, 1Ap:43, 2Ap:77, where he even claims that the world was preserved for the sake of Christians.

45 The concept of orthopraxis is widely used in the Liberation Theology. It was introduced into European theological discussion in the early 1960s by Nikos Nissiotis and J.B. Metz and quickly became central in political and ecumenical theology. In my thesis it is used as a parallel term to orthodoxy in order to emphasise that the element of commitment and action is not secondary but symmetrical to the element of belief. See also Laishley, F.J., 1991, 'Unfinished Business', in *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After*: 215-239.

that the claims to orthodox doctrine⁴⁶ do not suffice for the church to live and communicate the reconciled life transformed by the love of God in Christ. Therefore Augustine's *apologia* of authoritative tradition is complemented by Francis of Assisi's emphasis on the practical dimension of living Christianity out.

2.1 Augustine's *Apologia of Authoritative Tradition*

Augustine of Hippo (354–430), philosopher and theologian, rhetor by education, represents *apologia* that concerned itself with how to rediscover a sense of Christian identity that could stand up to the heretical and sectarian movements of his time. His apologetical method is one of direct confrontation with differences in opinion, belief and practice: first as a young man he engaged in controversy with Christianity in a world which was already largely christianised; then, after his conversion, with representatives of his past: hedonists, sceptics, astrologers and Manichees;⁴⁷ as a bishop with the heresies endangering the unity of the church: Manichees, Donatists⁴⁸ and Pelagians;⁴⁹ after the fall of Rome with neo-pagans accusing Christians of being responsible for the defeat; and finally with his own life and works, before he died.⁵⁰

Within these controversies and conflicts we find Augustine's understanding of orthodoxy, that is to say the authoritative tradition of how to mediate Christ faithfully. It is assumed that conformity to such tradi-

46 'There can be no orthodoxy which does not issue in orthopraxis. Faith is not a mere verbal affirmation, but is about life, and if it is not lived out in a correct way, which concretely means in the service of God and the disinterested love of our neighbour, then it cannot claim to be the right faith.' Noble, T., 1997, 'Being All Things to All People: Faith, Practice and Culture in George Tyrrell and Liberation Theology': 406.

47 For Manichees, see glossary.

48 For Donatists, see glossary.

49 For Pelagians, see glossary.

50 M.I. Bogan in the Introduction to *The Retractions* summarises that Augustine takes back, as he says 'anything that offends me or might offend others.' (1968:xiii).

tion will prevent the great church from being divided by heresies. Augustine, recalling Cyprian, puts it even more strongly, orthodoxy is a condition for salvation.⁵¹ However, Augustine's position underwent development and bore different features in the three major periods of his *apologia*: (i) the early period (from his conversion in Milan to being ordained as bishop of Hippo (386–396));⁵² (ii) the middle period (from his appointment as a bishop till the defeat of Rome (396–410));⁵³ and (iii) the late period (from the fall of Rome to his death (410–430)).⁵⁴

i/ In his early period Augustine proposes that orthodoxy can be measured in terms of an attitude towards the Catholic Church. In *Of True Religion* he states:

religion is to be sought neither in the confusion of pagans, nor in the offscouring of the heretics, nor in the insipidity of schismatics, nor in the blindness of the Jews, but only among those who are called Catholic or orthodox Christians, that is, guardians of truth and followers of right. (1953:11)

Belonging to the Catholic Church is after Augustine's conversion taken as a criterion for orthodoxy.

51 Cyprian, 1924, *The Unity of the Catholic Church*: VI.

52 Augustine's notion of catholicity can be traced in his early philosophical dialogues composed in the winter of 386–387, in his retreat before baptism at the villa of Cassiciacum near Rome. His dialogues: *On the Happy Life, An Answer to Sceptics, Providence and the Problem of Evil, Soliloquies* and later *On the Catholic and Manichean Ways of Life* (388) as well as treatises: *Of True Religion* (c.390) and *On the Usefulness of Belief* (c.391) outline his demonstration of his early approach to the catholic faith.

53 Augustine's middle period is represented among other works by the dialogue *On Free Will* (c.395–396), the *Reply to the Letter of Manichaeus Called Fundamental* (c.397) and the *Confessions* (c.397–400).

54 Of his later works, *On Nature and Grace* (413–415), *The Trinity* (400–420) and the most significant, *City of God* (413–426) present Augustine's developed system of doctrine; nevertheless, they have to be balanced by his last work, *Retractions* (427), where he reexamines his previous positions.

ii/ In the middle period he defines orthodoxy in terms of following the teaching of the Catholic Church. A vital point is represented by relations between nature and grace within a framework of the Trinitarian and the Christological teaching of the Catholic Church as contrasted to the main heterodox movements of Augustine's time: Manichees, Pelagians and Donatists. Augustine as a bishop was confronted with a serious division of the church: on one side there were Manichees with their extreme determinism claiming that decision making and responsibility for moral evil are not in human hands, then Pelagians and Donatists saying to a church disunited after periods of persecution, that her holiness is dependent on the actual quality of her members, in other words, that only those who have not failed can call themselves a church and thus operate as means of salvation. When he succeeded to the bishopric of Carthage, the African Church was split almost in half: out of 570 African bishops meeting in conference in Carthage, 284 were Donatists and 286 were Catholic.⁵⁵ Leeming states that Augustine 'made every effort at conciliation, but finally owing to the violence of the Donatists, came to approve forcible measures against them.' (1960:145)⁵⁶ I will show that this controversy had a significant impact on Augustine's *apologia* both in the second and in the third period.

The Donatists recalled the authority of Cyprian who in *The Unity of the Catholic Church* stated: 'He will not arrive at the rewards promised by Christ who deserts the Church of Christ.' (1924: VI) In their interpretation it was the argument for maintaining that as the great church failed through her lapsed leaders, they alone constituted the true Catholic Church – the moral elite, and only their sacramental mediation of Christ was valid.⁵⁷ Augustine's apologetic task was to prove the falsity of

55 Cf. Kirwan, Ch., 1989, *Augustine*: 209.

56 R. A. Markus shows the ambiguity of the anti-Donatist controversy in relation to the two opposed assessments of the Roman state in fourth century theology, both of which Augustine tried to avoid: 'the one found in the current fashions of sacralisation of the Empire, the other found in the Donatist repudiation of the Empire as profane, if not diabolical' (*Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine*, 1970:166–167).

57 Cf. Leeming, B., 1960, *The Principles of Sacramental Theology*: 144–145.

the Donatist position. Augustine turned the initial authority of Cyprian cited by the Donatists against their own claims, as he refers to Cyprian's charges against schismatics.⁵⁸ In this controversy, however, we find also a starting point for a wider perspective on the church and on orthodoxy that stands in contrast to Cyprian's narrow understanding of the Catholic Church as the only means of salvation. This position, illustrated by Cyprian's famous statement: 'Who has not the Church for mother can no longer have God for father.' (1924:VI), is expanded by Augustine's recognition of ambiguities involved in belonging to the Catholic Church. Augustine says: 'But the Church, which is the people of God, is an ancient institution even in the pilgrimage of this life, having a carnal interest in some men, a spiritual interest in others.' (1872:I/xv/24) As was mentioned above, here Augustine signals his later views on the Kingdom of the City of God which is not identical with the Catholic Church as an institution.⁵⁹

We can say that in Augustine's *apologia* of authoritative tradition in this period conflict tended to occur when the church as an institution was made a substitute for the Kingdom of God.⁶⁰ This substitution Augustine found with the Donatists to be heretical as it attempted to lock Christ in the church of the elite. Nevertheless, his own tendencies to this substitution have to be recognised in terms of the use of coercion⁶¹ and

58 Nevertheless, as Augustine states, an access to salvation mediated by the church reappears 'whenever he [the one who severed himself from unity] desires to conduct himself as is customary in the state of unity, in which he himself learned and received the lessons which he seeks to follow, in these points he remains a member, and is united to the corporate whole.' (1872:I/i/2).

59 Markus points out that 'as Augustine's thought in this sphere took shape, it lent itself less and less to interpretations in terms of a "theology of the Constantinian (or Theodosian) establishment".' (1970:154) He ascribes Augustine's growing pessimism concerning church-state relations to the judicial murder of his friend, Count Marcellinus, who had presided over the Catholic-Donatist Conference of Carthage in 411, in Africa (Cf.154, n.1).

60 We find the emphasis on Christ as *autobasileia* (the Kingdom in person) already in Origen (Mt.tom.XIV,7 on Mt 18:23, in Kittel, G., 1964, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* I: 589).

61 Markus points out that for Augustine 'coercion was an act of the Church' (155); in relation to schismatics and heretics coercion was 'an exercise of pastoral care'

violent suppression of the violence of the heterodox, as well as his notion of predestination, determining who belongs to the Kingdom of God and who does not.⁶²

iii/ In the third period the notion of orthodoxy has stronger practical connotations than ever before. Augustine was confronted with a crisis not only of the church, but of the whole Empire: the defeat of Rome, believed by many to be the eternal city.⁶³ When violence is now turned against those who according to Augustine's early definition were 'guardians of truth and followers of right' (1953:11), Augustine is faced with accusations from the side of pagan Romans who blamed Christians for the loss of political certainties and nervous Christians who thought that the fall of Rome signalled the apocalyptic end of time.⁶⁴ Thus Augustine's *Apologia* turns into a theology of history based on an explanation of God's plan for humankind. In the *City of God* Augustine argues that the works of Divine Providence are independent of what we call prosperity and diversity.⁶⁵ Rome was defeated for her vices; never-

Continued from previous page:

(154). This conviction we find behind Augustine's decision to use power against the Donatists.

62 Peter Brown mentions a long letter Augustine wrote in depression to Paulinus of Nola from the time of the suppression of the Donatists, in which Augustine finally acknowledged: 'What shall I say as to the infliction and remission of punishment in cases where we have no other desire but to forward the spiritual welfare of those we have to decide whether or not to punish?... What trembling we feel in these things, my brother, Paulinus, O holy man of God! What trembling, what darkness! May we not think that with reference to such things it was said: "Fearfulness and trembling are come over me, and horror overwhelmed me. And I said: O that I had wings like a dove; for then I would fly away and be at rest."' (Ep.95.3, in *Augustine of Hippo*, 1967: 243).

63 Cf. Küng, 1995: 306.

64 Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* introduced the idea of the sacred Empire, which is taken up by Markus: 'The one true Empire, in his view, was the political expression of the one true worship of one true God, and the Empire thus assumed an important place in God's plan for the redemption of men and was the continuation of the sacred history related in the Scriptures.' (1988:410) The fall of Rome thus meant for the Christians who shared Eusebian political theology the end of the divine plan with human history.

65 Augustine, 1972, *The City of God*: I.8.

theless, God's plan for humankind continues. Now orthodoxy involves more of the personal side of Christ's presence in the church. As will be demonstrated later, now he fully expresses ideas which had already arisen in his second period, especially after the controversy with Donatists. In 'On Nature and Grace' Augustine writes, 'yet not all things which are wrongly done are done proudly – at any rate, not by the ignorant, not by the infirm, and not, generally speaking, by the weeping and sorrowful.' (1948:XXXIII) As P. Brown states, Augustine is concerned with the process of healing, and within this process: 'The Catholic church existed to redeem a helpless humanity' (1967:350). This strand of Augustine's thought, however, remained often forgotten by both his Catholic and Protestant followers.

The earlier dualism of Augustine making a black–white distinction between the unorthodox and the orthodox, is over. In *The Retractions* Augustine adds that the present church, with her infirmities and the ignorance of her members, is in a stage of preparation for becoming glorious. He says that 'its condition is such that every day the entire church says: "Forgive us our debts."' (1968:156)⁶⁶ Orthodoxy involves development.⁶⁷ Within Catholic belief, one progresses from more to fewer offences, according to Augustine. What offends is "falsehood": giving one's own opinion the authority of God's word.⁶⁸

To conclude, within the development of Augustine's position, as here presented, we find a similar driving force of *apologia* to Justin's *Logos Christos*. For Augustine it is Christ in his word and sacrament who gives a mission and strength to the church. His *apologia* remains christ-centred, but to be centred on Christ is for him an ecclesiological statement. The early Augustine, following Cyprian's thought, was convinced that the Spirit is not operative outside the Catholic Church.⁶⁹ But the experience of the Donatist controversy widened his horizon to the

66 Cf. Mt 6:12.

67 Augustine, 1968, *Retractions*: 4.

68 Augustine, 1968:4–5.

69 'He that holds not to this Unity, does not hold the Law of God, does not hold the Faith of the Father and the Son, holds not Life and Salvation.' (Cyprian, 1924, *The Unity of the Catholic Church*: VI)

extent that he is able to speak of those who ‘secretly belong to the new covenant’ (1872:I/xv/24), without explicitly saying that only the Old Testament Prophets and catechumens are intended. R.A. Markus shows the ambiguity of Augustine’s position saying that on one side, Augustine holds that ‘the Church would continue to bear witness to its Lord until the end. But the shape of this witness and the historical form of the Church’s existence, the human structures within which its life is carried on, were changeable.’ (1970:157) On the other side: ‘the Gospel continues to be betrayed in these “Christian times”, as it always must continue to be betrayed.’ (1970:157)⁷⁰

After the defeat of Rome, when the social certainties had gone, Augustine’s *apologia* of authoritative tradition is more than previously concerned with hope for others. As F.J. Laishley states, his ‘Apologia is about making space for divine inbreaking through a variety of limited human mediations but not equating it with any of those mediations exhaustively.’⁷¹ One of these mediations is human solidarity. Now Augustine is not so much concerned about who belongs to the right institution and holds the right teaching, but rather, how the hope of his fellow Christians may be sustained. This task becomes even stronger when Hippo is surrounded by the Vandals plundering Numidia. The latter were famed for their brutality, which made many of Augustine’s ecclesiastical contemporaries desert their flocks. Augustine, however, decides to stay.⁷² The last stage of Augustine’s *apologia* vivifies the perception of orthodoxy and authority from the period of controversies, as he stakes his life on what he believes the true church is here for: to redeem a helpless humanity.

So far we have seen in Augustine a number of discourse features of Christian *apologia*, which corresponds to the postmodern critique: development from ecclesiastical to theocentric realism; opposition to the Donatist exclusivism; struggle with attempts to propose a global expla-

70 Here we can identify traces of Augustine’s doctrine on predestination, according to which those eternally elected for salvation will have been scrutinised by those eternally chosen for damnation till the end of times.

71 Letter from F.J. Laishley, dated 30th July 1996.

72 Cf. Brown, 1967:406–407.

nation of reality (e.g. the fall of the Empire) and their limits; and wrestling with the otherness of non-Christians. This presented instance of *apologia* has differed from the foundationalist discourses, which I examined in the first chapter. Here *apologia* has appeared as a dynamic discourse, which has been exposed to on-going transformation by the issues it struggled with, as much as the *apologist* provided a challenge to them.

2.2 Francis's Embodiment of Orthopraxis

In this section I show how Francis' emphasis on Christian belief as the mystical and practical reality complements Augustine's *apologia* of orthodoxy. The notion of *apologia* thus moves far beyond being confined to a speculative discourse. Here we are not dealing with a philosopher or a scholastic theologian, intellectually comparable to Augustine, such as Anselm, Aquinas, Bonaventure, Occam or Scotus, who provided the theological frameworks of the period, but with a poet and a mystic.⁷³ As such, Francis communicates the difference between life without and with the living God, through prayers, meditations, preaching, exhortations and poetry, reflecting on his experience and making it available to others; and other important sources for understanding the apologetical value of Francis' desire to live Christian life to perfection are found in the early biographies written in legendary form by the members of Francis' community.

Francis of Assisi (1182–1226), the son of a rich Italian cloth merchant, was touched by the radicality of a Christ-like discipleship, and dedicated his life to prayer, preaching the Gospel and the service of the poor. He founded a mendicant order within a church which vied with the state for supremacy in political influence and which organised Crusades against Jews, Muslims and even against fellow-Christians not in accord with the Roman Church. As such, he represents *apologia* as a

73 See Rout, P., 1992, 'The Influence of Francis of Assisi's Experience of God in Bonaventure's Philosophical Theology – and Some Philosophical Questions This Early Franciscan Tradition Raises': 2.

practical discipline; in Francis we encounter a striving for orthodoxy, lived out as orthopraxis. The church and society are not perceived by Francis as separate realms. Rather the period of Christendom creates a mutual exchange: the society is Christian, the church is secular. The outwardly powerful church of his time is inwardly declining. Although Francis, like Augustine, addresses a baptised audience, his attempted re-discovery of Christian identity differs from that of Augustine: Francis finds himself in a Christianised Europe, with a fixed centralised Roman system kept together by orthodox doctrine and the rules of canon law, but, as Thomas of Celano says, many of her children have ‘nothing from the Christian spirit – either in their life–style or in their character, and so live Christianity only according to the name.’ (1982, FS, 1Cel: I/i.1)⁷⁴

Francis’ response to this crisis is indicated in his conversion experience, summarised by Bonaventure. In 1205, when Francis took part in a war expedition to Apulia, where he wanted to gain a knighthood, he was first attracted by an ideal of poverty which promised that his life could be different. This ideal never left him. He had to return from the expedition because of illness, but in the same year he made a pilgrimage to Rome, after which this attraction to an alternative life took a concrete form. During prayer at San Damiano Church Francis heard God saying to him: ‘Go, Francis and rebuild my house. – Do not you see that it is in danger of falling down?’ (Bonaventure, 1982, LMin:I/5)

Bonaventure says that Francis first obeyed it literally, by repairing the church building, and adds that it was much later that Francis realised that this voice called him to reform the church community. This interplay between the literal and the symbolic meaning lies at the heart of Francis’ *apologia* striving to communicate the transcendent dimension of belief. The early legends about Francis embody this *apologia*. They combine at least partly historical accounts of Francis’ life with an insight into the logic of Francis’ experiences. Their interpretation faces the background conflict between the formal religion of Christendom and the personal requirement to follow Christ, each creating a different model of the church and of society. As I said, Francis’ approach

74 Most of the translations will be taken from the Czech version of *Franciscan Sources* (FS), 1982.

emphasises the need for radical conversion, individual as well as socio–ecclesiastical. The Latin word *radix* (root) signifies that something which affects the roots of life is at stake. The notion of radical conversion on a personal level appears already in Francis’ two earliest writings, ‘Prayer Before a Crucifix’ and ‘Absorbeat’. Such conversion in Francis’ terms has two sides: a change of heart and a change of life–style. In the ‘Prayer Before a Crucifix’ he puts it as follows:

O high and glorious God,
enlighten my heart.
Give me unwavering faith,
sure hope,
perfect love, deep humility,
wisdom and knowledge,
that I may keep your commandments. Amen.⁷⁵

The search for the practical consequences of Francis’ conversion introduces another theme, namely Francis’ relationship to the Scriptures. Thomas of Celano as well as Bonaventure⁷⁶ illustrate this by Francis’ vocation to live an apostolic life as depicted in the Gospels. The key instructions for Francis’ life, and later for his companions are found in Mt 10:7–10:

And as you go proclaim the message: “The kingdom of Heaven is upon you.” Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out devils. You received without costs; give without charge. Provide no gold, silver, or copper to fill your purse, nor pack for the road, no second coat, no shoes, no stick; the worker earns his keep.

Celano and Bonaventure say that when Francis heard this Gospel being preached on in the Church of Portiuncula in 1209, ‘he was anointed by the Spirit of Christ that has given him such strength that recreated him

75 The translation is taken from Carretto, C., 1982, *Francis: The Spirit of St Francis of Assisi*: 148.

76 See FS, 1982, 1Cel: I/ix.22; LMin: II/1.

into that life–style not only through knowledge and love, but also through life and virtues.’ (Bonaventure, 1982, LMin:II/1) As I pointed out partly in connection with Francis’ conversion experience, Bonaventure’s interpretation of Francis addressed a tension between literalism and illuminism.⁷⁷ The illuminism Bonaventure makes a case for treats the words of Scriptures as normative advice and an example of how one’s life needs to be changed by the Holy Spirit in order to follow Christ rather than as a normative letter of doctrinal orthodoxy that has to be mechanically accepted. He shows that for Francis keeping God’s word does not mean stepping into religious legalism of any form. Francis’ vital dependence on God leads to independence from all other things. This position we find also in Francis’ own writings. In ‘Exhortations’ he writes:

By the written law they are killed who endeavour to know just words in order to be considered wiser than others and to gain a great wealth...By the written law killed the monks are killed who do not want to follow the spirit of the Scriptures, but desire only to know words and to explain them to others. On the contrary, those who are revived by the spirit of the Holy Scriptures, those who try to understand every letter, they know, even more profoundly without ascribing their knowledge to themselves, but through word and example give it back to God, the Highest Lord, to whom all good belongs. (1982, Ex:7)

This position ascribed to Francis is still more visible when his ideal of life developed into three core points: poverty, claiming that as we have received without pay we ought to give without pay, which included a demand to have absolutely no possessions; humility, which aimed at renouncing power and influence on behalf of obedience, where the greatest example was the suffering Jesus; and simplicity, making of all creation one’s brothers and sisters and treating them as partakers of the divine life.⁷⁸ Here Francis’ *apologia* of a Christian practice transcends

77 For literalism, see glossary.

78 Cf. Küng, 1995:410.

any complex literal definition of what may be called Christian behaviour. Poverty, humility and simplicity are treated as key symbolic concepts, what Paul Ricoeur introduces as the first definition of symbol. In *Life, Truth and Symbol* Ricoeur states: ‘Symbol lies on the boundary of desire and speech.’ (1993:161)⁷⁹ This can be shown by two examples: First, on Francis’ turning literalism on its head when he presents the rule to the pope, second on Francis’ own confrontation with the transcending of the fixed rules during a mission to the Sultan of Saracens.

The first story is told by Roger of Wendover and goes like this: When Francis went to the Pope Innocent III for the approval of his Rule, the pope was horrified by his appearance and despised him, saying: ‘Go, brother and search for pigs to whom you are more similar than to people. Then wallow with them in mud, turn to them as a preacher and give to them the rule that you prepared.’ (1982, CFH:962) Roger then shows Francis putting the case against literalism when he says:

Francis left with a downcast head immediately. It took him a long time to find pigs. And when he fell in with a herd of pigs, he wallowed with them in mud till he was muddy from his head to his feet. So disordered he returned to the consistory, saying to the pope: “Lord, I did as you commanded me, now I ask you to accept my application.” (1982, CFH:962–963)

As the story says, this example of obedience made the pope repentant, he acknowledged his application and as a privilege of the Roman Church allowed him and his followers to preach. Then he blessed him and dismissed him. There are two important points in this story: first, by literal acceptance of an obviously symbolic statement of the pope, Francis demonstrates its absurdity;⁸⁰ second, the ecclesio-political situ-

79 Paul Ricoeur proposes a distinction of three areas in which a symbol is employed: (i) psychological symbols that lie on the boundary of desire and speech; (ii) cosmological symbols with their natural as well as sacred dimensions; (iii) poetic symbols embodied in a language of imagination. (See 1993, *Life, Truth and Symbol*: 161)

80 Boff points out that besides the freedom to challenge church authority, as legends depict, Francis’s notion of obedience is also challenged either by the inter-

ation of the time of Francis and his early biographers still allows for the transcending of a literal obedience to hierarchy. Francis is not treated as an opponent of, but as an alternative within the church.

The other example points at a mystico-practical dimension of Francis' *apologia*: his desire to be united with the loving and suffering Christ. Francis decided to bring the Gospel to the Saracens who up till then had experienced the Christ of the Crusades. In 1219 he accompanied their army to Egypt. There he wanted to exemplify a different mission from the one organised with violence. At Damietta Francis took another brother and went across the battlefield without weapons to the side of the Saracens and reached the Sultan.⁸¹ Even though they managed to talk to the Sultan about Christ, their mission, to Francis' disappointment, did not bring about the Sultan's conversion from Islam. But the chronicles agree that it caused the Sultan to act differently: he acted against the law as presented by his counsellors; he listened to Francis and provided him with a safe return;⁸² and as August Franzen points out, 'When Christians were victorious at Damietta in 1219, they committed brutal murder, nevertheless, later when they fell into the captivity of the Sultan, he treated them with generosity and saved their lives' (1992:146).

The beauty of this account is that it does not leave the reader with coherent theoretical solutions. Francis' mystico-practical form of *apo-*

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vention of Cardinal Hugolino or by the Roman Curia. The articles on great spiritual freedom refer to the right of resistance that allowed brothers to disobey the ministers 'when they are asked to do something contrary to our way of life and contrary to the soul.' Boff summarises: 'If one felt it impossible to observe the rule purely and simply, he could go to his minister; and the minister had to help him find a solution, as he would want to be helped if he were in a similar situation. Francis wanted to guarantee to each one the right to fidelity to his own vocation. All this disappears in the definitive rule.' (*Saint Francis: A Model of Human Liberation*, 1982:144-145)

81 Even non-Franciscan sources testify to their mission. See: James of Vitra's 'Letter about gaining Damietta, from 1220' (FS:936), 'Ernoul's Chronicle' (FS:941-943), 'Gaining of the Holy Land written by Bernard the Cashier' (FS:943-944), 'History of Heracles' (FS:944).

82 See FS, 1982, 1Cel:I/xx.57; 2Cel:II/iv.30, LMa:9.

logia relies on the symbolic dimension of language and thus stands up to Derrida's critique of literalist approach. It does not form explanatory theories and therefore does not fall under Lyotard's criticisms of metanarratives. And with regard to Levinas's critique, besides Francis' desire to convert the Sultan and the Sultan's desire to keep Francis, finally there is a mutual respect for their otherness, and Francis' attention sticks to the conversion of the self.⁸³ Francis' *apologia* does not offer a defence, but rather an insight.

Belief in God, for Francis, also involves an integration of the negative aspects of life. Boff characterises this as follows: 'Behind the saint is hidden a person who has conquered the hells of human nature and the crush of sins, despair, and denial of God.' (1982:131) Reflection of these struggles prevents Francis from taking orthopraxis for a fiction – for a human made religion,⁸⁴ rather it strengthens the transcendent dimension of *apologia*, the element of mystery, of sacramental communication, of solidarity with the lowliest. Francis reaches the stage where he recognises the obstacles as a means of becoming more similar to the Crucified, and this fills him with joy. Boff summarises that attitude of Francis, which 'lies in welcoming with pleasure, every kind of symbolic violence that demoralises the interior convictions, and finally, in supporting with joy physical violence,' (1982: 138), concluding with the passage from 'Fioretti':

Above all of the graces and all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that Christ gives to his friends is that of conquering oneself and of freely out of love accepting work, injury, impropriety, and insult, because in all other gifts of God we cannot glory because they are not ours but God's... but in the cross of tribulation of each affliction we can glory in that which is indeed ourselves. (Boff, 1982:139)

Early legends testify that Francis' identification with Christ had a physical expression: stigmata.⁸⁵ They tell a story of the Seraph imprinting the signs of the cross on Francis' hands, feet and side. The mystico-practical

83 See Ch.One,1.

84 Compare to Cupitt, Ch.One, 2.2.

85 FS, 1982, 1Cel:II/iii.94, 2Cel:II/cliv.203, LMa:13, LMin:VI/9.

approach allows us to point at the event without having to explain it. Other parts of a human person than rationality are allowed to be addressed by Francis' embodiment of orthopraxis. Thus Francis' *apologia* complements Augustine's notions of orthodoxy and gives insight into the radically different practice of those who follow the Gospel of Christ. At the same time, it is signed by the crisis of reason, in which Francis did not trust. Bonaventure summarises this by quoting Francis in the 'Legenda Maior':

The one who desires to reach the top has to renounce not only worldly care, but to a certain extent also the knowledge of the Scriptures and science... The one who keeps the purse of his own reason in the secret of the heart does not perfectly renounce the world. (1982:7)

3. *Apologia* in the Crisis of the Ecclesiastical Authority

In the two following sections I examine how *apologia* responded to what Congar calls the 'exaggerated developments in the importance attached to the ecclesiastical element' (1963:97–98). The baptised audience remains at the centre of my attention here; *apologia* is dominated by the crisis of authority, which I approach from two sides: as a search for the right subordination to the mediated authority of Christ⁸⁶ (speaking of authority in a singular form); and as a search for criteria ordering Christian life (speaking of authorities in a plural form). I maintain a distinction between the external authorities of the Scriptures, the tradition and the church; and the internal authorities of reason and conscience. What could apologists offer when different authorities were forced into competition and the right subordination became a matter of power suppressing any notion of autonomy? In order to find an answer

86 This referred to Christ's subordination to the Father; see Mk 2:10; Jn 17:1–5.

I look at two exemplary figures, Jan Hus and John Henry Newman. This choice enables me to show the two different perspectives mentioned above: Hus mainly deals with the authenticity of a supreme authority, while Newman is more concerned with a combination of partial authorities one accepts as normative. Then, although each of them represents a different aspect of *apologia*, both contribute to the critique of the split between authority and autonomy.

3.1 Hus's *Apologia as Following Vita Christi*

Jan Hus (1371–1415), a Czech philosopher and theologian, is the church reformer who was accused of being a heretic and burnt in the Council of Constance, and ever since there has been a discussion involving Protestant, Catholic as well as Orthodox theologians, whether he was a heretic or a saint.⁸⁷ His form of *apologia* is directly related to a reform of the church, however, in a different historical situation than Francis'. The progressing crisis of the church at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries, faced by Hus, brought to the fore the problem of authority with a new urgency. In 1302 it was proclaimed that obedience to the pope is needed for salvation,⁸⁸ in 1378 there were elected two popes, Urban VI of Rome and Clement VII of Avignon, who were at war with each other and pursued each other with anathemas. In order to find a solution, the synod of Pisa (1409) suspended both popes and elected a new one, Alexander V (John XXIII, who was accused of criminal ac-

87 The dispute over Hus's place within the church history from the ecumenical point of view has been represented by a Colloquium 'Jan Hus among Epochs, Nations and Confessions' held in Bayreuth in 1993. It was preceded by the work of many theologians and historians, among others Stefan Swiezawski on the catholic side, F.M. Bartoš and A. Molnár on the protestant side. An interesting fact is also that in 1990 Pope John Paul II during his visit to former Czechoslovakia appealed to Czech theologians to prepare a reevaluation of Hus's case. The response of Orthodox theologians lies in the fact that the Orthodox Church in Bohemia holds a memorial of Jan Hus, martyr and saint, on July 6th.

88 This was claimed by pope Boniface VIII in his bull 'Unam sanctam'.

tions, including naval robbery at the Council of Constance). The two former popes did not resign, and so there were three popes demanding obedience and taxes. The papal schism lasted forty years, led Christians into wars and provoked strong criticism. Influenced by John Wyclif's "anti-nominalism", which was not willing to accept demands of unexceptional obedience of the mediating authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy⁸⁹ and by Conrad Waldhauser's and Jan Milíč of Kroměříž's appeal to understand ecclesiastical reform in moral terms,⁹⁰ Hus saw his early apologetical task in vindicating *lex Christi* (the law of Christ) as a foundation of true and just life of the church.⁹¹

There are three key concepts important for Hus's earlier notion of authority as *lex Christi*: knowledge, faith and truth. Their hierarchy, as will be demonstrated, leads Hus to an identification of the truth and Christ and to the subordination of belief and knowledge to it. Thus he speaks about knowledge in the 'Exposition to the Sentences', where he states that we can say very little about God without faith. He writes: 'How God is, is impossible to know.' (1904b, ES:1/37) Hus would not make a case for objective theism in Swinburne's or Hebblethwaite's terms, as for him there is no such thing as an objective knowledge of God, independent of our relation towards God in terms of belief or unbelief.

Then in 'The String of Three Strands' Hus takes a second step by distinguishing three types of faith: (i) belief that God is; (ii) belief that what is said about God is true; (iii) faith, loving God above all things.⁹²

89 John Wyclif (1329–1384) represented the second wave of anti-nominalist thought, reacting against Ockham and Scotus and against their scepticism about the employment of the direct transcendent authority of God in the life of a Christian.

90 Conrad Waldhauser was invited by the archbishop Arnošt to come to preach in Prague in 1363. His sermons, as well as influencing his followers (among others Jan Milíč of Kroměříž and Matěj of Janov) initiated reform in Bohemian Christianity. In Hus's time also Masters of the Prague University took part in public preaching. See Novotný, V., 1919, *Master Jan Hus, Life and Teaching I*, 41–47.

91 Cf. Töpfer, B., 1995, 'Lex Christi, Dominium and the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy in Jan Hus and John Wyclif Compared', in *Jan Hus among Epochs, Nations and Confessions*: 100.

92 Hus, J., 1985, *Small Czech Writings*, STS:149.

The first two types of faith remain on the level of rational agreement, without necessary consequences for one's attitude towards God and one's way of acting. Hus adds that neither of these types of faith bring salvation, or in other words, these alone are not authoritative for Christians, as 'both are affirmed by good as well as by evil people, even by devils' (1985, STS:149). They lack hope and love, and therefore, they are dead, concludes Hus. The third type of faith that is said to bring salvation, then, depends on what we might call today an existential relationship with Christ as the truth. Before examining the third type more closely, let us look at one problem, related to the distinction of three types of faith, namely how it is interpreted in relation to the fruitfulness of God's presence in the church.⁹³

As I said, for Hus a mere rational agreement to God's presence and activity in the world, in the church, and in one's life does not count as belief that brings salvation. Hus proposes a negative criterion for the existential relationship with God when he writes: 'Not as a cooper in a barrel, or as a cobbler in a shoe, God is in His creation' (1904b, ES:I/37), and distinguishes between "God is" and "God dwells". God is everywhere, but God does not dwell everywhere, according to Hus:

Everywhere, where God dwells, there He is, but not everywhere where He is He dwells... God dwells in some who do not have the knowledge as in small ones, born again, and in some who have the knowledge as in knowing holy ones, but he does not dwell in those who are evil philosophers (1904b, ES:I/37).

The distinction between "God is" and "God dwells" is in Hus's earlier philosophical *apologia* applied to the ecclesiastical situation: God is in the church, but the church has no power, no authority to force Him to dwell in the church, except by the power of love and faithfulness to Him, expressed in terms of justice.⁹⁴

93 For the distinction between validity and fruitfulness of sacraments, see Leeming, 1960:147.

94 Hus elaborates the criteria for justice later in the *Speech on Peace*, 1963: 51–70.

Bernhard Töpfer adds that Hus's position involves a rational argument, as in the *Sermo de ecclesia*. There, Hus, calling for obedience to the divine law, states that it can be understood by a '*non errans ratio*' (the infallible reason) (1995:101, n.11). Here we are encountering Hus's epistemology in which reason is perceived in a broader sense than in the conceptual logic of the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment epistemologies.⁹⁵ Although it is not clear exactly what Hus means by infallible reason, Ernst Werner shows that by employing this concept Hus 'excludes a contradiction between the holy Scriptures and reason' (1991:107), as well as introducing reason as a force that unites knowing and doing the truth – defined as *lex Christi*.

Limit situations provide Hus with a vital criterion for keeping the *lex Christi*: first, when in 1411 in the polemic against John Stokes he composes a defence of Wyclif. He writes that Wyclif in all his writings passionately tried to bring people back to the '*lex Christi*' and especially clergy, who were to put aside their '*pomposa dominatio*' and as apostles follow '*vita Christi*' (1966:63).⁹⁶

This understanding of the law of Christ as following the life of Christ became decisive for Hus's later *apologia* expressed mainly in his Czech writings addressed to a popular audience, and in his letters and small writings prepared for the Council. Here he deals with questions of what prevents the church from a Christ-like discipleship. In 'Books on Simony', Hus classified these obstacles in terms of heresy either in belief or in practice. He stated: 'someone keeps heresy against the Holy Scriptures in action, someone in words' (1985:193). In 'The String of Three Strands' he identified disobedience to the divine law with not loving God, as he wrote: 'No one truly loves God, who does not keep his commandments' (1985:154). Finally in the *Speech on Peace*, quoting Jn 21:15–17, he claims that such lack of love is destructive for the church, as the

95 For Hus's religious epistemology, see Dolejšová, 1998, 'Nominalist and Realist Approaches to the Problem of Authority: Pálec and Hus'.

96 Cf. Töpfer, 1995: 99; Molnár, A., 1985, *On the Boundary of Ages*: 19.

succession of Peter rests on love.⁹⁷ And loving and following Christ is in Hus's terms defined as living in the truth.⁹⁸ In the 'Exposition of Faith' Hus defines a Christian as a "truth fighter". He writes:

So, faithful Christian, search truth, love truth, speak truth, keep truth, defend truth even till death, because the truth will release you from sin, from the devil, from the death of the soul, and at the end from the eternal death, that is the eternal separation from the grace of God (1975:69).

A. Molnár concludes: 'The truth Hus talks about here is the truth of God, in its releasing aspect identical with the personality and work of Jesus Christ.' (1985:12) Similarly J.B. Lášek states: 'The truth is the truth of the living God, that is Christ Himself' (1991:17)

Hus's Truth–Christ resembles Justin's *Logos Christos*. In both cases we encounter a transition from a principle to a personal authority: the power of truth has been incarnated. The person of Christ gives fulfilment to other authorities. Following the life of Christ brings, according to Hus reconciliation and peace, that one cannot gain otherwise. Hus quotes Job 9,4 (in the Vulgate version): '*Quis ei restitit, et pacem habuit?*' (Who opposing Him [God] could retain peace?) (1963:31) At this point Hus's *apologia* rooted in the Scriptures and tradition anticipates the postmodern concern for putting theory and practice together,⁹⁹ reuniting mystical and political theology.¹⁰⁰ He emphasises that peace has to be accompanied by justice, when he states: 'The divine peace does not allow a reconciled man to live in crime' (1963:41).

This perspective can help us to understand Hus's final appeal to the authority of Christ, on being silenced by the church:¹⁰¹ 'I commit this my

97 Hus, J., 1963, *Speech on Peace*: 57.

98 Václav Havel in the *Power of the Powerless* employs an analogical concept to Hus's, when he emphasises the power of the 'living in truth'; see 1990:19–23.

99 This links in with the postmodern reunification of theory and practice; see Ch.One,1.1.

100 Compare to Metz, J.B., 1994, *Essays on Political Theology*: 32.

101 Hus wrote his final appeal to Christ in October 1412, when the pope pronounced an interdict on Prague until Hus left the city.

appeal to Jesus Christ, the most just judge, who reliably knows, defends and judges, makes visible and rewards the equitable cause of every man.' (1965:30.32) The extreme situation freezes discussion over the problem of selecting right criteria for Christian life. Hus is not given a public hearing. The Council, striving to bring back order to a church divided by the papal schism, is suspicious of any other authority except its own. Hus's *apologia* thus finally relies on the eschatological authority of Christ, similarly to apologists of the early period, when the church was persecuted.

3.2 Newman's *Apologia of Human Integrity*

The second figure representing *apologia* in the crisis of ecclesiastical authority is John Henry Newman (1801–1890), a theologian of Victorian England, an Anglican priest who converted to the Roman Catholic Church and was made a cardinal in his old age. His personal history from a first impression seems to contrast completely with that of Hus; however, there are also similarities. Although Newman did not face the extreme situations of persecution and of martyrdom, he experienced opposition, and in the controversies had to respond to the problem of right subordination. His main concern, however, was with the authorities in their plural sense, how they in their overlap provide normative criteria for Christian belief and practice, and what to do when the external and the internal authorities are forced into competition.

Newman believed that Christianity was as much a public enterprise in terms of religion being related to culture, politics, philosophy and science as a matter of an individual's intimate spiritual life. His form of *apologia* dealt with both of these realms. Newman asked questions of how Christianity could remain credible for educated people after the discoveries of natural science and history seemed to contradict what the church had taught for centuries to be infallibly true.¹⁰² On the personal level Newman sought to express the power of Christianity to make a

102 Cf. Chadwick, O., 1983, *Newman*: 78.

person fully alive, to integrate all parts of one's life–history. Thus, Newman's highlights two problems historically attached to the apologetical discourse: apology being a defence against accusations; and *apologia* being a narrative, a vindication of the integrity of belief and life–style, the integrity of belief and action. The advantage of Newman's *apologia* is that in both cases it does not make a split between the human or secular and the spiritual, but can be defined as an event–response to a particular situation.

In the scientific sphere when Darwin wrote *The Origin of Species*, and Colenso, the Bishop of Natal, showed with arithmetical exactness that the history of the earlier Old Testament was unreliable, the conflict with religion caught fire. The question of how it is possible that the church had been for hundreds of years teaching what was now found untrue, and how one can be sure that the rest of her teaching is reliable, unsettled the minds of many people. Newman's attempts to stand against any deepening of the conflict¹⁰³ led him to reevaluate relations between authority¹⁰⁴ and autonomy. As I will show, at the roots of his *apologia* there is an attempt to reconcile the growing conflict between the authorities of human reason and conscience on one side and ecclesiastical authority guarding a particular interpretation of the Scriptures and of tradition on the other side.

The Anglican Church, to which Newman initially belonged, attempted to meet the social challenge by what Newman called a theological liberalism: a protest against the claim that Christian dogmas are based on rationalist principles.¹⁰⁵ The Roman Catholic Church reacted

103 O. Chadwick offers the following summary of Newman's position: 'In its own sphere science is free, in its own sphere religion is free.' (1983:49) He points out Newman's concern with the loss of appropriateness when not only religion, but also science are acting outside of their limits.

104 The concept of authority in Newman usually stands for an ecclesiastical authority, however, he does not use it exclusively for it, as he is willing to speak about the authority of the Scriptures, the Tradition, conscience, reason, etc. As was previously defined, the concept of authority is here used in its plural form – as criteria for a Christian life and belief.

105 Newman deals with the problem of rationalism in the tract 'On the Introduction of Rationalistic Principles into Revealed Religion', collected in *Essays Critical and Historical*, 1901.

to the situation by strengthening demands for obedience from the faithful, which was fully expressed by the First Vatican Council with the Dogma on Papal Infallibility (1870) and by attempts to abandon the freedom of scientific research as endangering the stability of faith. Newman's position took the name of the "Via Media", first when Newman the Anglican took part in the Oxford Movement¹⁰⁶ which searched for the middle way between extreme Protestantism and extreme Catholicism; later, after his conversion to Roman Catholicism¹⁰⁷ the 'Via Media' expressed relations between religion, philosophy and political power within Christianity.¹⁰⁸

Newman sees his apologetical task in standing for a credible, intellectually arguable form of traditional Christianity, that does not give up its dialogue with general society. As O. Chadwick puts it, Newman dedicated his life to 'the single task of preserving the force of apostolic Christianity in a world which looked to be about to reject religion as behind the times.' (1983:4) Thus, according to Newman, preserving the force of apostolic Christianity, involves a careful listening to the authoritative statements of the church.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, respecting the authority of Christ within the church cannot be done without respecting one's conscience and reason. In *Apologia pro vita sua* Newman states that 'there are two great principles in action in the history of religion, authority and private judgment,' the authority, by which Newman means ecclesiastical authority, 'must ever profess to be guided by Scrip-

106 The Oxford Movement which was also called the Tractarian Movement, as it expressed its ideas in tractates, fought against rationalist anti-dogmatism as well as against treating orthodoxy as something static, isolated from social and scientific development. In the years 1833–1840 Newman together with Keble and Pusey stood as its principal figures.

107 For his account of his conversion see *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, 1955: 210.

108 In 1877 Newman published the two volumes of a work called *The Via Media*, where he reflected on his understanding of the middle way as he saw it while within the Anglican communion and elaborated it in relation to Roman Catholic ecclesiology.

109 Newman, nevertheless, points out that the visible church cannot be taken for the absolute measure, as it is 'possible to belong to the soul of the Church without belonging to the body.' (*Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, 1995: xxv, 71).

ture and the tradition. It must refer to the particular apostolic truth which is enforcing or... *defining*.' (1955:226.227) Here is the key to unlock the seemingly unsolvable conflict between authority and autonomy, which Newman wants to communicate in his apologetical discourse.

Conscience is the highest ruler for Newman, its authority is based on the sense of duty, which is believed to come from God. In *Parochial and Plain Sermons* Newman writes: 'Conscience immediately directs thought to some Being exterior to himself... for a law implies a lawgiver, and a command implies a superior.' (1901:ii,18) Human conscience is in Newman's terms fundamentally a religious conscience and it can operate properly only if it has as its 'first object' God's will.¹¹⁰ Besides a sense of duty directed to God's will, which Newman sees as rooted in conscience, he also speaks about clarity of thought rooted in reason. There is not a clear dividing line between them, as Newman admits: 'it is so difficult to know, whether it is a call of *reason* or of conscience. I cannot make out, if I am impelled by what seems *clear* or by a sense of *duty*.' (1955:210) For Newman's *apologia* of human integrity it is vital to recognise that neither reason nor conscience are infallible; Newman admits the possibility of error and mentions the problem of second confidence after one realises that in spite of one's best efforts one was misguided in one's judgments of conscience:

Certainly, I have always contended that obedience even to an erring conscience was the way to gain light, and that it mattered not where a man began, so that he began on what came to hand, and in faith; and that anything might become a divine method of Truth; that to the pure all things are pure, and have self-correcting virtue and a power of germinating. (1955:192)

Conscience plays a mediating role between the ecclesiastical authority and the general society, it makes it possible for an individual to relate to

110 See *Parochial and Plain Sermons* iv, 1901: 29–30.

Christ. Newman, even in his Roman Catholic period, sees conscience as superior to ecclesiastical authority.¹¹¹ He vindicates that freedom of conscience as well as of intellectual research are not destructive for ecclesiastical authority, but indispensable.¹¹²

There is not a single criterion for the “right” Christian belief and practice, according to Newman, but a number of interdependent criteria that build together what Newman calls the cumulative case.¹¹³ We are back to the two great principles of judgment: the authority ascribed to the Scriptures, tradition and the church, which is counterbalanced by the private judgment – the authorities of conscience and of reason. The truth is found in their overlap. Then, according to Newman, if there is a tension between them, the internal authorities are given priority, however much one can be misguided by them. Newman says: ‘I add one remark. Certainly, if I am obliged to bring religion into after-dinner toasts (which indeed does not seem quite the thing) I shall drink – to the Pope, if you please – still, to Conscience first, and to the Pope afterwards.’ (1874, ii:261)

Newman’s cumulative *apologia* aims at integrity and opposes both authoritarianism based on a single general rule, and relativism doing away with the rules as such, the two extreme positions of Newman’s time, which I still found in apologetics on the contemporary scene. Newman’s alternative is well represented by his applied *apologia* in which he was personally engaged when driven into a controversy with Charles Kingsley, who publicly attacked Newman in the ‘Review of Froude’s History of England’ and accused him of a lack of honesty and personal integrity:

111 Cf. Ker, I., 1990, *Newman on Being a Christian*: 102–103.

112 In 1909, when Pius X wrote the Encyclical *Pascendi*, Newman’s teaching was still fresh in the mind of the church (Newman died in 1890). In particular his ‘Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine’ exercised a great influence on Loisy and Tyrrell. But despite of the striking similarity in their approaches, Newman escaped condemnation.

113 Besides the notion of a ‘cumulative case’, Newman also uses an expression of ‘illative sense’, which represents an assent which turned the accumulation of probabilities (partial arguments or partial authorities) into certitude. See *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, 1985, 408.

Truth, for its own sake, had never been a virtue with the Roman clergy. Father Newman informs us that it need not, and on the whole ought not to be; that cunning is the weapon which heaven has given to the Saints wherewith to withstand the brute male force of the wicked world which marries and is given in marriage. Whether his notion be doctrinally correct or not, it is at least historically so. (vols. vii. and viii, in *Macmillan's Magazine* for January 1864).

Kingsley, drawing on Newman's sermon entitled 'Wisdom and Innocence'¹¹⁴ and on 'many passages of his writings', as he explained in the following letter to Newman, argued that Newman is an exemplification of how 'the Romish priesthood has been degraded'. Newman felt obliged to complain against Kingsley's insults, as they were directed not only against him personally, but against his church. This finally gave rise to his *Apologia pro vita sua*. In the first edition, which came out in 1864, Newman attempted to combine this particular need of response with his long term desire to write a spiritual autobiography.¹¹⁵ What Newman brought to the public realm was not a counter-attack, but rather he explored whether his opponent's arguments were well founded and opened to the reader his spiritual and intellectual development, that informed his ways of acting.

114 'Wisdom and Innocence' was published as No. XX of his 'Sermons on Subjects of the Day', 1844.

115 In the Preface to the second edition of *Apologia* (1865) Newman says: 'This was my state of mind, as it has been for many years, when, in the beginning of 1864, I unexpectedly found myself publicly put upon my defence, and furnished with an opportunity of pleading my cause before the world, and, as it is so happened, with a fair prospect of an impartial hearing. Taken indeed by surprise, as I was, I had much reason to be anxious how I should be able to acquit myself in so serious a matter; however I had long had a tacit understanding with myself, that, in the improbable event of a challenge being formally made to me, by a person of name, it would be my duty to meet it. That opportunity had now occurred; it may never occur again; not to avail myself of it at once would be virtually to give up my cause; accordingly, I took advantage of it, and, as it has turned out, the circumstance that no time was allowed me for any studied statements has compensated, in the equitable judgment of the public, for such imperfections in composition as my want of leisure involved.' (1967:2).

In the second edition, which came out in 1865, the context of controversy with Kingsley becomes less important as Newman wants the book to stand on its own right. His attention is driven to the problem of life's integrity, and the reader is led to what Dulles calls 'a dialogue between the believer and the unbeliever in the heart of the Christian himself' (1971:xvi). The element of commitment is vital and provides insight into Newman's gradual conversion. His account extends the problem of a change of denomination, which, indeed today is ecumenically problematic,¹¹⁶ and offers what Lonergan identifies in terms of integrity as self-transcendence:

Conversion is a matter of moving from one set of roots to another...it occurs only inasmuch as a man discovers what is unauthentic in himself and turns away from it, inasmuch as he discovers what the fulness of human authenticity can be and embraces it with his whole being. (1971:271)¹¹⁷

Newman's *apologia* of human integrity, thus, also in its application stands and falls with a referential practice. We do, though, find in it the need to conceptualise one's position, to give reasons for particular sets of belief that are held, to identify at least partial criteria which in their overlap preserve the force of apostolic Christianity. Concerning the external authorities, neither the Scriptures, nor tradition nor the church's authoritative pronouncements are treated by Newman as sets of unchangeable propositions. They involve development and development

116 Newman's description of his conversion experience oscillates between being personal and not universally valid: 'the simple question is, can *I* (it is personal, not whether another, but can *I*) be saved in the English Church? am *I* in safety, were *I* to die to-night? Is it a mortal sin in me not to join another communion?' (*Apologia*, 1955:210) and generalisation, in other words aspiring to be the objective interpretative authority: 'It [the Anglican Church] may be a great creation, though it be not divine,' (267) therefore, 'their [the Children of the Movement of 1833] duty at least was to become Catholics, since Catholicism was the real scope and the issue of the Movement.' (270)

117 Conversion, in Lonergan's threefold understanding: religious, moral and intellectual, is 'not a set of propositions that a theologian utters, but a fundamental and momentuous change in the human reality that a theologian is'. (*Method in Theology*, 1971:270)

involves change. In Newman's case it is not as much the content which changes, but the mode of expression which is to enter into a dialogue with internal authorities of reason and of conscience, and there the changeable nature of human integrity presents occasions for an ongoing conversion. In *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* Newman summarised this position, stating: 'In a higher world it is otherwise; but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.' (1973:40) The emphasis on human integrity prevents the building of a metanarrative in terms of an exhaustive explanatory theory providing an individual and the church with answers to the crisis of authority. Newman's *apologia* is more mature than that and it takes more seriously the otherness of both God and human life, that is not conceptualised, that is present as unknown. As Chadwick points out, this recognition can be traced already in Newman's early poetry, with which I conclude:

Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home –
Lead thou me on!
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene – one step enough for me.
(‘Kindly light’, in Chadwick, 1983: 78)

4. *Apologia* Facing the Crisis of the Rational

With Newman we have already encountered the modern period with its tensions between religion and science and his attempt to find a *via media* between these areas by means of proclamation of the freedom of each area in its own realm.¹¹⁸ However, this did not prevent a sharpening of the conflict concerning different understandings of reason and its

118 Cf. Chadwick, O., 1983, *Newman*: 49.

role with regard to belief. The First Vatican Council (1869–1870) establishes a definite relationship between reason and belief that is to be respected under anathema: ‘If anyone says that the one and true God, our Creator and Lord, cannot be known with certainty with the natural reason by means of things that have been made: let him be anathema.’ (*The Church Teaches*, 1954:28)

This statement, based on a particular interpretation of Rom 1:18–22, assumes that the faculties of reason contain authoritative epistemological foundations for belief. In other words, reason is prior to belief. But which idea of reason? *Apologia* found itself during the period of the First Vatican Council and after under double pressure: from one side it was the “rationalist” understanding of belief that can be defined and even proved by reason;¹¹⁹ from the other side the “rationalist” denial of belief by means of reason. Thus, here I examine responses to the crisis of the rational through the example of the modernist–antimodernist controversy, which brought up two conflicting notions of an apologetical discourse: *apologia* – making a case for traditional Christianity as compatible with the modern world; and apologetics – operating as a defence of the particular expression of tradition against modern world.

4.1 Charges against Modernism

Nicholas Lash (1977) starts his article ‘Modernism, aggiornamento and the night battle’ by quoting Newman:

Controversy, at least in this age, does not lie between the hosts of heaven, Michael and his Angels on the one side, and the powers of evil on the other; but it is a sort of night battle, where each fights for himself, and friend and foe stand together. (1887:201)

119 It is a paradox, as the First Vatican Council saw its role in building up a wall against ‘rationalism, naturalism, materialism, pantheism, and kindred errors’ by strengthening the schema *de fide* (See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1957, 1408).

Nevertheless, only 17 years after Newman's death the Holy Office published first a decree *Lamentabili Sane Exitu* (4 July 1907), a list of modernist errors,¹²⁰ and then the pope, Pius X, completed it with an encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (8 September 1907) making out of these errors a clearly defined system on which base the 'modernists' wanted to destroy the foundations of the church.¹²¹ The previous list of errors is now summarised by two principal ones: 'agnosticism' – which denies the validity of rational argument in the religious sphere, as defined by Vatican I; and 'immanentism' – which derives religious truth from the intrinsic needs of life.¹²² These decrees started a process of excommunication of the members of the "modernist movement" within the Roman Catholic Church that culminated with the *motu proprio Sacrorum Antistitum* (1 September 1909) in which Pius X required all the clergy to take the 'anti-modernist oath' (which was quietly withdrawn by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith only on 31 May 1967). On the surface the side of the 'angels' and of the 'devils' is clearly defined. However, the picture is much more complicated.¹²³

120 These documents were preceded by the joint pastoral letter of the English Roman Catholic Hierarchy, 'The Church and Liberal Catholicism' (1901); In 1903 most important writings of Loisy were put on the Index. 1905 brought a number of episcopal pastorals directed against Italian modernism. The decree *Lamentabili*, then, condemned sixty-five characteristic propositions of biblical and theological modernism, drawing mainly on sentences from Loisy's and Tyrrell's books taken out of context.

121 See 'Pascendi', in *The Doctrines of the Modernists*, 1937:7.

122 The Modernists themselves rejected its characterisation in the encyclical *Pascendi*. First, George Tyrrell complained: 'With all due respect to the Encyclical *Pascendi*, Modernists wear no uniform nor are they sworn to the defence of any system; still less of that which His Holiness has fabricated for them.' (Tyrrell, 1908, *Medievalism*: 106). Loisy reacted: 'The so called Modernists are not a homogenous and united group, as one would suppose if one consulted the papal encyclical, but a quite limited number of persons, who share the desire to adapt the Catholic religion to the intellectual, moral and social needs of the present time.' (*Simples Reflexions*, 1908:14)

123 For different definitions of modernism see R. Aubert in *Encyclopedia of Theology*, 1975: 969–974; A.E. McGrath in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, 1993: 383–384; M. Ranchetti in *The Catholic Modernists: A Study of the Religious Reform Movement 1864–1907*, 1969:3.

As Lash emphasises, a different picture appears when we examine modernism as a ‘theoretical system’, and when we perceive it as ‘a concrete movement of thought’.¹²⁴ The concrete movement of thought is represented by very different personalities, among others, in France by Alfred Loisy (1857–1940), Maurice Blondel (1861–1949), E.I. Mignot (1852–1918; Archbishop of Albi from 1899), L. Laberthonniere (1860–1932) and Edouard Le Roy (1870–1954); in Italy by Romolo Murri (1870–1944) and A. Fogazzaro (1842–1911); in Britain by Friedrich von Hügel (1852–1925), George Tyrrell (1861–1909) and Maude Petre (1863–1942). Their contribution to the intellectual and ecclesiastical climate of the time is not in building up a coherent “modernist” theory and an alternative “modernist” church structure but rather in a variety of implications stemming from the adoption of the critical view of the Scriptures and tradition.

The crisis of the rational affected the church of the modern age in two ways: firstly by means of rationalism reducing belief to the obedience of reason to ecclesiastical authority, as Catholic Ultramontanes proposed;¹²⁵ secondly by rationalism subjecting belief to methods of other discourses, typical for Protestant Liberals.¹²⁶

Ultramontanist rationalism rested on a literarist understanding of language. This could be best illustrated in the criticisms of the Modernists’ interpretation of dogma. *Pascendi* states: ‘But dogma itself, they [the Modernists] apparently hold, strictly consists in the secondary formulas.’ (*The Doctrines of Modernists: Encyclical Pascendi and the Decree Lamentabili*, 1937:16) According to Modernists, says the Encyclical,

124 This distinction is taken from R.D. Haight who states that ‘Modernism’ refers ‘at the same time to a theoretical position that is condemned and to a concrete movement of thought’ (‘The Unfolding of Modernism in France: Blondel, Laberthonniere, Le Roy’, *Theological Studies*, xxxv (1974), 633).

125 The term Ultramontanism comes from the 11th century and describes a tendency in the Roman Catholic Church to favour the centralisation of authority and influence of the papal curia, as opposed to national or diocesan independence. Later it is used to mark an opposition to claims of private judgment or the authority of an individual’s conscience.

126 By Liberal Protestantism is meant an anti-dogmatic and humanitarian reconstruction of the Christian Faith from the 19th century onwards.

To ascertain the nature of dogma, we must first find the relation which exists between the *religious formulas* and the *religious sense*.... These formulas therefore stand midway between the believer and his faith; in their relation to faith they are the inadequate expression of its object, and are usually called *symbols*; in their relation to the believer they are mere *instruments*.(1937:16)

The Ultramontane position claimed that dogmas were literal descriptions of reality and not mere symbols embodying living and changing belief. It wished to preserve both the identical content and the identical form of Christianity, being totally unaware of the limits of language.

Liberal Protestantism in this period is best demonstrated by Adolf von Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums* (*What is Christianity?*), which was first published in 1900 and within two years translated into English and French. With the precision of a historian, Harnack presents the problem: in what sense is 'original Christianity' normative for the modern church? According to him, no connection can be traced between the historical Jesus and the further development of the institutional church, and thus the claims of the church basing its authority on the Gospels are unjustified.¹²⁷

Loisy responded to Harnack by publishing *The Gospel and the Church* (1902).¹²⁸ Against the idea of the pure Gospel of Jesus, apart from tradition, he states: 'Whatever we think, theologically, of tradition, whether we trust it or regard it with suspicion, we know Christ only by the tradition, across the tradition and in the tradition of the primitive Christians.' (1976:13) He pointed out that not only Catholic Ultramontanes, but also Harnack conceive Christianity as static, identical from the beginning to the end. This a-historicity, put forward by a historian, insisting on the identity of Christianity as a religion of Jesus, put him out of touch with reality. Loisy summarised: 'Herr Harnack seems also to fear that his essence of Christianity might be spoiled if he introduced into it any idea of life, of movement and development.'

127 Harnack attempts to separate the Christian Gospel from ecclesiastical dogma already in 1889 in *Outlines of History of Dogma*, 1957:1.8.

128 For a detailed account of Loisy's position see the doctoral thesis of Patricia Kieran (1994) *New Light on Alfred Loisy? An Exploration on his Religious Science in Essais d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* (1898–1899).

(1976:14) Thus, both the Ultramontanes and Harnack are criticised by Loisy for employing some idea of an immutable essence of Christianity, which in the context of postmodern criticisms would offer a perfect example of a metanarrative.

However, Loisy also recognises that for Harnack the essence of Christianity is not an abstract knowledge. His “Gospel” is a living Gospel in the sense that it demands the following of Christ;¹²⁹ yet, it is not a living Gospel, because it does not grow, it does not change, but retains the same set of rules and examples for human life once given by Jesus to his apostles.¹³⁰

Loisy and Tyrrell, as I show in the second section, argued for the living tradition, for the living Gospel, which, as Lash concludes, was in the end an ‘heroic and in no small measure successful attempt to bring Catholicism “up-to-date” with the world that came to birth between the seventeenth and nineteenth century.’ (1977:76) Their *apologia*, however, also experienced this world being disintegrated and dominated by the powers setting their agenda. When the condemnation came down from Rome, the decrees were followed by the formal excommunication of Loisy on March 7, 1908, which Loisy learnt from the next day’s news. As a Modernist he was “to be avoided” in everyday contact as well as in Roman Catholic scholarship.¹³¹ There was a foundational certainty that the

129 ‘Gentlemen, it is religion, the love of God and neighbour, which gives life a meaning; knowledge cannot do it.’ (*What is Christianity?*, 1904:305)

130 Loisy states: ‘On the other hand he [Harnack] distrusts abstract essences, and has taken care not to give any theoretical definition of religion...although he maintains the Hegelian proposition that Christianity is the one absolute religion...[found] in a sentimental-filial confidence in God, the merciful Father.’ (*The Gospel and the Church*, 1976: 14.15)

131 In 1908 Loisy was excommunicated from the Church of Rome. Scott writes: ‘Loisy’s personal attachment to the church had received a severe shock. He realised that he was no longer in favor with the authorities and that his desires for the modernization of the church had been rejected. However, he refused to concede; he firmly believed in the task and the importance of the Church for the future of mankind....He had always resisted the advice of his friends to confine himself to the strictly scholarly pursuit of Assyriology. He felt compelled to develop a twofold agenda: an apology for Catholicism and a study of its history that would lay its basis for a reform of Catholic theology.’ (‘Introduction’ to Loisy’s *The Gospel and the Church*, 1976:xx)

authoritative voice possessed the true understanding of *fides Ecclesiae*. *Apologia* as represented by Loisy and Tyrrell, on the other hand, claimed that *fides Ecclesiae* did not need to rest on foundationalist assumptions concerning knowledge, and as the following section shows, in fact such assumptions killed the tradition of the 'living faith' they claimed to support. Therefore I turn my attention to examining possibilities of retaining the living *fides Ecclesiae* without perceiving a need to defend one single form of it as exclusive and exhaustive of reality.

4.2 Tyrrell's *Apologia of Plurality of Human Knowledge*

George Tyrrell was born in 1861 in Dublin, an Anglican by baptism, brought up with a conviction that Protestantism represented the only viable form of Christianity;¹³² that changed, with his early conversion to Catholicism, to a belief that he found only in the communion of the church. He entered the Society of Jesus and studied the scholastic theology, both of which in his later critical view represented an authoritarian form of religion. After ordination and a short period in a parish he taught philosophy and soon became known through his articles in *The Month*. His first interest in spirituality was accompanied by the new discoveries in historical and biblical criticism of Christianity, in which he saw a remedy for resolving the conflict between modern culture and Christian tradition statically conceived. From 1899 he was confronted with the conflicts with the Vatican and Jesuit authorities, first refusing to give the *imprimatur* to his writing, then dismissing him from the Society of Jesus, then from the ministry as such, forbidding him to preach and to communicate any of his religious ideas even in private correspondence, and finally, after the pronouncement of *Pascendi* excommunicating him *de facto*, by forbidding him from receiving sacraments, although his case was claimed to be reserved to the Vatican. He died in 1909, in the age of 48, conditionally given the last sacrament, but refused burial in a Catholic cemetery. Among his books, often published under a pseudonym, are: *Nova et Vetera* (1900), *Hard Sayings* (1901), *Lex*

132 See Leonard, E., 1982, *George Tyrrell & the Catholic Tradition*: 8.

Orandi (1903), *Lex Credendi* (1906), *Through Scylla and Charybdis: The Old Theology and the New* (1907), *Medievalism: A Reply to Cardinal Mercier* (1908) and *Christianity at the Cross-Roads* (1909).

In this part I look at the limits of the rational as pointed out by Tyrrell's approach, setting boundaries to the purely rationalist view by recognition that our understanding of reality, including religion, is always pluralist and never complete:

Truth can and ought to be approached from many sides; it is not different because these aspects and approaches are different. The same city will offer as many distinct views to the sketcher as there are points in the surrounding horizon; but by no summing together of these sketches can we bring the whole within the compass of a single inward gaze. Religion too can be set before us under different presentations, all true in their way, but none, nor all together, exhaustive of reality. We can recognise under various descriptions a face that we have once seen; but if we have never seen it, no description can bring its full individuality home to us. (1904: v)

The claim that the truth can be approached from many sides contrasts with the dogmatic apologetics of Tyrrell's time, that according to him represented 'the purely intellectual aspect of religion' (1904:vi). In *Lex Orandi* as well as in *Lex Credendi* he takes for his starting point a "sense of God" or "religious sense", that is assumed to be natural to every person.¹³³ This proposes a wider understanding of *apologia*, similar to Newman's, where the doctrinal element is seen within the context of the whole of human experience. From this perspective it is possible to understand Tyrrell's identification of the rule of prayer and the rule of belief without assuming that every popular devotion rests on a sound dogmatic basis. Religion is not seen as deprived of its rational aspect, in which terms Tyrrell sees doctrine, but neither it is allowed to be reduced to it.

Similarly to Hus, he emphasises the value of truth and a need to distinguish what is true from illusions. His pluralist approach to truth does not give space to relativism. As was said in the initial quotation, various

133 This position was later condemned as 'immanentism'. See *Pascendi*, 1937: 11–15.

descriptions of reality are valuable in so far as they correspond to our experience of reality, 'a face that we have once seen' can be brought to us in its individuality by means of several different descriptions, but not a face we had never seen. In other words, truth of a particular statement cannot be tested merely as a theory, but rather as a relationship between that statement and the whole of our experience of the reality the statement refers to. In a later work, *Through Scylla and Charybdis* Tyrrell claims: 'Life is the test and criterion for truth' (1907:196). According to him, it is an incurable disease of scholastic metaphysics¹³⁴ that it deduces its system from the realm of concepts and not from life as it is.¹³⁵ He recognises that as opposed to any theoretical system, in our life different strands, different types of knowledge and belief lie together.

But Tyrrell is rightly criticised for the broad categories he uses,¹³⁶ which are the result of his method of moving from the general to the individual, inherited from scholasticism. The web of our knowledge, including experience as a way of knowing, is one but differentiated, according to Tyrrell. Each part of it has its specific place and specific role, thus, e.g. 'Religion cannot be the criterion of scientific truth, nor science of religious truth. Each must be criticised by its own principles.' (*Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, 1909a:xv) Rationalism is thus excluded both as a defective understanding of the whole and as a methodological mistake failing to distinguish between different types of knowing.

What, then, is the specific place of Christianity? What part of life does it present – or is it an angle from which to look at life as a whole? Tyrrell addresses these questions in *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*. He gives up apologetics that would defend either Christianity or Catholicism. Instead he contrasts his understanding to the authoritative substi-

134 An incurable disease of scholastic metaphysics, according to Tyrrell, was that it ignored St. Thomas's critical spirit. 'Just as the spirit of Ignatius had been destroyed by his followers, Tyrrell considered that Thomas had suffered a similar fate. He recognised to do for the twentieth century what Thomas had done for the thirteenth century.' (Leonard: 14)

135 'Far from abandoning metaphysics, to deduce it from life and conduct, rather than from notions and concepts, is to place it for the first time on a firm basis' (Tyrrell, G., 1907, *Through Scylla and Charybdis*: 199).

136 Cf. Leonard: 3.

tution of religion as presented by Pope Pius X and his curia, but even more to Liberalism, which denies the specifically religious character of Christianity and of Catholicism and subjecting them to methods of other discourses.¹³⁷ Tyrrell insists that his or Loisy's Modernism is not the same as Liberalism. Modernism of his kind offers a criticism of categories: of the very idea of religion, of revelation, of institutionalism, of sacramentalism, of theology, of authority, etc; as well as the very idea that the power continually to revise these categories and to shape their embodiment is the power of growth for Christianity.¹³⁸

This permanent revision of religious categories does not oppose tradition, but, as was said, is a creative power of tradition. Tyrrell states: 'The Modernist believes in modernity, but he also believes in tradition... Of the two, his belief in tradition has a certain priority.' (1904:4) To be authentic with regard to tradition, one must take into account its development. So the task of an apologist is not to defend one particular expression of it, but rather to allow himself to be driven to the very roots of religion. This task leads Tyrrell to the field of religious epistemology (although he does not use this terminology). There are two main conflicting religious epistemologies analysed by Tyrrell: one relies on the "rule of implication",¹³⁹ the other on the "theory of development".¹⁴⁰

The first type of religious epistemology assumes that religion does not change. It defines truth as objective belief: what was believed *semper, ubique, ab omnibus*. It claims that there is no real but only a verbal difference between e.g. the actual Christology of the church professing the Nicene Creed and ante-Nicene church,¹⁴¹ that the actual belief of the

137 In the Introduction to *Christianity at the Cross-Roads* Tyrrell writes that 'the purpose of these pages is in no wise to make an apology for Christianity and Catholicism; nor yet to defend Modernism from the attacks of its prejudiced enemies; nor to defend it at all; but rather to save it from its friends – from those amiable Liberal critics, who welcome it for precisely the same mistaken reason as those for which ultramontanism condemns it.' (1909a: xvi)

138 Cf. Tyrrell, 1909a:xx.

139 The "rule of implication" claims that belief was always the same – not actually, but potentially; and that a potential belief implies an actual belief.

140 Cf. Newman, 1974, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*.

141 Cf. Tyrrell, 1909a:16.

Nicene church expressed in the Christological dogma is the same as the potential belief of the ante-Nicene church. Other church dogmas provide us with similar examples.

Tyrrell draws our attention to the dogmas on the Immaculate Conception (1854) and on Papal Infallibility (1870)¹⁴² and to the challenge they make to the principle *de fide* accepted as a criterion of faith by the Vincentian Canon.¹⁴³ This principle was used as a declaration against innovators concerning what the faithful (with the exception of an insignificant minority) had always, as well as everywhere believed. Pius IX, according to Tyrrell, used the principle *de fide*, while claiming that what we believe today, was implicitly *semper, ubique, ab omnibus* believed. Now, let us look at the problem of the ‘insignificant minority’ (1909a:17). Tyrrell raises a question of the status of the saints who belonged to the ‘insignificant minority’, such as Augustine, Bernard, Anselm and Thomas Aquinas – were they ‘heretics in good faith’ (1909a:17) as their actual belief in Mary’s ordinary conception involving the problem of original sin¹⁴⁴ was in opposition to the potential belief in her immaculate conception they were supposed to have? This first type of epistemology seems to rely on the majority as a decisive instance and does not mind paradoxes involved in the identification of a ‘potential belief’ and an ‘actual belief’: The fact that the saints were in opposition to the general belief of their time, does not rule out the possibility that they

142 The subsequent dogma on the Corporal Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven (1950) proclaimed by Pius XII also belongs to this category.

143 This was the threefold test of catholicity laid down by St. Vincent of Lerins (d. before 450) in his *Comminitorium*, stating that *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est* (what has been believed everywhere, always, and by all) is the criterion to differentiate between true and false traditions. This test of ecumenicity, antiquity and consent has been often misquoted by 19th century theology as an argument for a static understanding of the tradition. (See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1957:1423)

144 ‘From the first moment of her conception the Blessed Virgin Mary was by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of mankind, kept free from all stain of original sin’ (Bull ‘Ineffabilis Deus’ of Pius IX (1854) in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1957: 681).

‘while explicitly denying, implicitly believed in the Immaculate Conception of Mary.’ (1909a:21)

As the rule of implication assumes that belief never changes, the general belief of the time of Augustine, Bernard, Anselm or Thomas Aquinas is the same as the general belief of the time of Pius IX. Thus he can justify on this ground not only that an implication can be made from an implicit belief traced in the documents of the Christian tradition in the past to an explicit expression of this belief in the present, but also that an explicit present belief implies the same (at least) implicit belief in the past. Paradoxically the decisive arbiter of ‘majority’ does not have to be evident in the past: the concept of ‘implicit belief’ that required some evidence of indirect appeals to this belief in the majority of documents of the Christian tradition, is exchanged for the concept of ‘potential belief’, that does not require such historical evidence. It is a static philosophical concept. The Pope is in a position to make judgments concerning the past – and also concerning the future, as the declaration *de fide* demands *de fide definitiva*, the definitive belief that has never changed and will never change.

Tyrrell criticises the fact that under the rule of implication the old Christian tradition has been quietly substituted by the new one. He insists on the claim that a potential belief is not a belief at all. He points out that the expression *semper, ubique, ab omnibus* when used by the Fathers and the Councils to express a doctrinal immutability, did not remove all distinction between believers and unbelievers, as does the rule of implication in allowing the potential belief to consist with actual denial. Thus, unchangeable definitions arrived at by means of the rule of implication, according to Tyrrell, represent a ‘weapon in apologetic [sic] which simply murders the system it would defend’ (1909a:20). Tyrrell claims that the rule of implication is based on an illusory assumption: ‘To find our present theological system in the first century is as hopeless as to find our present civilisation there.’ (1909a:28)

The second epistemological position insists on the “theory of development”, that according to Lash, wants to prove from history that the highly centralised, authoritarian Roman Catholicism of the mid-nineteenth century does not represent the only possible expression of the

Christian ‘idea’.¹⁴⁵ It refers to Newman’s *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*,¹⁴⁶ emphasising the need for changes in history as well as in one’s personal life, the need for permanent adaptation to new conditions. Tyrrell speaks of the ‘process of becoming’ where the Divine is something actual and given (1909a:115). Schultenover points out that Tyrrell adopted the notion that the deposit of faith was a Spirit, an Idea, which was subject to growth and development according to a living organic model as opposed to a static architectural model.¹⁴⁷ Tyrrell is aware that the application of historical criticism to Christian origins and to the New Testament has to be done with a sensitivity to the transcendent dimension of religion throughout its development and criticised attempts to reduce Christianity to rational knowledge and moral obligation:

The whole tendency of Liberal Protestantism is to minimise the transcendence by establishing a sort of identity of form between this life and the other. So far as man’s life is moral, it is an eternal life. The moral life has mystical and transcendental roots. It postulates a spiritual principle and end in Nature which we may call God. Heaven and the Kingdom of Heaven is in our midst; they are the spiritual or moral side of life. (1909a:65)¹⁴⁸

Tyrrell tends to generalisations, nevertheless, despite this and despite his broad categories, he has a point to make. The spiritual cannot be reduced to the moral without losing the depth of the transformational element of Christianity.¹⁴⁹ Tyrrell asks: ‘How, then, must we, here and now,

145 See Lash, 1973, *Change in Focus*: 89.

146 ‘Those who have condemned this system in the Encyclical *Pascendi* should try to show that Newman never held it, and that he was one with scholastics in their purely dialectical idea of development’ (Tyrrell, 1909a:29).

147 Cf. Schultenover, D.G., 1981, *George Tyrrell: In Search of Catholicism*: 269.

148 In Harnack we saw that application of the historico-critical method to Christianity led to a conclusion that Jesus was a moral teacher and not the founder of the Church. Against this, Tyrrell claims that ‘the idea of the Church is the idea of Jesus.’ (1909a:90)

149 The moral life, according to Tyrrell, has mystical and transcendental roots. It postulates a spiritual principle and end in Nature which we may call God.

understand the apocalyptic and transcendental revelation of Jesus, so as to shape our spiritual life, feeling and action in harmony with His? How must we re-embodiment the same “idea” if it is to live for us?” (1909a:114) He opposes any literalistic understanding of language of belief. ‘Reembodying the idea of Jesus’ is not seen in terms of possessing the actual expression of what Jesus stood for, but rather as searching our own expression of it. Tyrrell is convinced that there is no such thing as a ‘universal language’ of belief, emphasising that even the language of Jesus was of a particular time and place and so is ours. This symbolic possessing of the Gospel has, then, a “universal validity”, as it appeals to the spiritual experience of all humankind, according to Tyrrell,¹⁵⁰ who states: ‘In the measure that symbols were taken literally theology was at war with reason when reason, excluding the literal acceptance of apocalyptic imagery, seemed hostile to faith.’ (1909a:215)¹⁵¹ Religion also cannot be based on a philosophical system, however transcendental it claims to be. It needs a religious symbolic imagery, insists Tyrrell, that may not be true to the facts on which it is founded, but is still true to the idea suggested by those facts, in a deeper sense truer than the facts themselves.¹⁵²

To conclude, Tyrrell’s *apologia* of plurality of human knowledge took into account a non-literal understanding of religious language; a pluralist religious epistemology willing to approach the truth from many sides, yet without falling into relativism where there would be no difference between a true and a false picture of reality; and, indeed, the theory of development with regard to changes in the core of the subject, without giving up the notion of continuity. Thus he brings a significant contribution to the problems of establishing criteria for a postmodern

Continued from previous page:

Heaven and the Kingdom of Heaven is in our midst; they are the spiritual or moral side of life. He emphasises that ‘Without this concession to transcendentalism, Liberal Protestantism would not be a religion at all.’ (1909a:66)

150 Cf. Tyrrell, 1909a:211.

151 Tyrrell expresses the inadequacy of some of the criticisms: ‘We blame the Church of the seventeenth century for not possessing the criticism of the twentieth’ (1909a:216).

152 Cf. Tyrrell, 1909a:216.

apologia, discussed in the final part of the book. However, it has to be kept in mind that he himself did not believe in the future of the subject, as he identified *apologia* with apologetics: a defence of a particular system of ideas, in his eyes represented either by the authoritarian Ultramontanes or by the rationalist Liberals.

5. Summary: the Continuing Story of *Apologia*

Chapter Two has looked at representative examples of *apologia* down the centuries and its main concern was to demonstrate the variety of its themes and methods as well as the struggle to maintain the dynamic historical continuity of the discourse and referential Christian practice. Now in the summary I look at two things: (i) as *apologia* did not end with the Modernist crisis, I offer a brief sketch of further developments that bring the story of *apologia* up-to-date; (ii) then I summarise accounts of knowledge, belief and practice as they emerge from the historical study in order to confront them with the postmodern critique in the Conclusion of Part One.

i/ Further developments

My short sketch¹⁵³ will be limited to Western *apologia*, where different developments, both of progress and of decline, took place in Protestant and in Catholic theology. It is also important to note that in the 20th

153 More complete accounts of recent developments of *apologia* are found in Dulles, A., 1971, *A History of Apologetics*; Ford, D.F. (ed.), 1997, *The Modern Theologians*; Jones, G., 1995, *Critical Theology*; Macquarrie, J., 1963, *Twentieth-Century Religious Thought (The Frontiers of Philosophy and Theology, 1900–1960)*; McBrien, 1994, *Catholicism*; Schoof, M., 1970, *Breakthrough*; Tillich, P., 1967, *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology*; Vidler, A., 1965, *20th Century Defenders of Faith*.

century we are dealing with a stronger antipathy to apologetical discourse, confusing *apologia* for apologetics.¹⁵⁴ There are theologians who see the apologetical discourse in terms of a distorted picture, of making a compromise between belief and unbelief (Barth) or a way of reasoning for a picture of Christian belief that is out of date (Bultmann), while significantly contributing to *apologia* as understood in this book.

There has been a divide in Protestant apologetical theology after Harnack: one group of authors, represented by Benjamin B. Warfield,¹⁵⁵ aimed at establishing ‘the truth of Christianity as the absolute religion’ (Dulles, A., 1971:229); a more moderate approach was offered e.g. by Charles Gore, who worked on rediscovering the biblical and traditional heritage’s ability to come to terms with the modern world;¹⁵⁶ and a mistrust towards apologetical discourse as such was spelled out by W. L. Sperry, who in his ‘Yes, But-’ *The Bankruptcy of Apologetics* calls it an ‘unsatisfactory compromise between the old faith and the new knowledge’ (Dulles:230). These three positions later developed in a more systematical way with the Dialectical Theology represented by Karl Barth and his circle.¹⁵⁷ They engaged in a polemic with Emil Brunner’s claim that in order to be able to receive God’s revelation, there must be a point of contact for the divine message in our human situation.¹⁵⁸ Paul Tillich introduced into *apologia* his “method of correlation”, showing the mutual dependence of people’s existential questions and Christian symbols, of philosophical asking and theological responding;¹⁵⁹ Rudolf Bultmann’s “demythologisation” and a split between a historical Jesus and

154 See the definitions of *apologia* and apologetics in the Introduction.

155 Cf. Barr, J., 1977, *Fundamentalism*.

156 In *Lux Mundi, The Reconstruction of Belief and Can We Believe?* Gore attempts to find a middle road between fundamentalism and modernism.

157 Barth, K., 1963, *Karl Barth’s Table Talks*; 1982, *Karl Barth – Rudolf Bultmann Letters*.

158 This can be found in Brunner, E., 1937, *The Divine Imperative*; 1939, *Man in Revolt*.

159 Tillich, P., 1955, *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality*; 1978, *Systematic Theology I-III*.

the kerygmatic Jesus,¹⁶⁰ was critically developed by Gerhard Ebeling, Ernst Käsemann, Gunther Bornkamm.¹⁶¹

With Karl Heim the secular interpretation of Christianity became a priority. He was convinced that 'God talk' had to be made meaningful for the modern secular mind and therefore used the concepts of Einsteinian physics in order to explain the notion of the transcendent in terms of a dimension of depth that lies hidden to objective thinking.¹⁶² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who studied under Heim, radicalised the emphasis on the secular form of Christianity by claiming that *apologia* has to do away with religious premises and make room for enabling people to grow into mature responsibility in the world in which they live.¹⁶³ The secular interpretation in the sixties produced two best sellers, J.A.T. Robinson's *Honest to God* and Harvey Cox's *The Secular City*, but at the same time reached its limits and raised the question, as to whether there is any difference between such secularised belief and an atheistic humanism.¹⁶⁴ A critical revision of the secular interpretation of Christianity can be found in movements like 'Gospel and Our Culture', represented e.g. by Leslie Newbigin and Hugh Montefiore¹⁶⁵ or in a revival of interest in the religious experience as we see e.g. in the works of Alister Hardy.¹⁶⁶ A renewed interest in anthropology is found in further developments of German Protestant *Apologia*, represented e.g. by Wolfhart

160 Bultmann, R., 1958, *Jesus and the World*; 1960, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*.

161 Ebeling, G., 1966, *The Lord's Prayer in Today's World*; Käsemann, E., 1974, *Kürchliche Konflikte*; Bornkamm, G., 1969, *Early Christian Experience*; 1973, *Jesus of Nazareth*.

162 See Holmstrand, I., 1980, *Karl Heim on Philosophy, Science, and the Transcendence of God*.

163 Bonhoeffer, D., 1962, *Act and Being*; 1971a, *Christology*; 1971b, *Letters and Papers from Prison*.

164 This problem reappears with Don Cupitt's account of Christianity, See Ch. One, 2.1, also Cowdell, S., 1988, *An Atheist Priest?*

165 Cf. *The Gospel and Contemporary Culture*, 1992, ed. Hugh Montefiore.

166 Research in the field of religious experience has been carried out by Alister Hardy's Research Centre based in Oxford, besides of Hardy's *Spiritual Nature of Man* taking its inspiration from Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* and William James's *Variety of Religious Experience*, on contemporary scene represented e.g. by David Hay.

Pannenberg.¹⁶⁷ Jürgen Moltmann proposes a philosophical theology that is not based on the ideological grounds of Kantian–Hegelian tradition, but on a critical theology of the cross, where once again faith seeks understanding and accounts of hope are given.¹⁶⁸

The Catholic apologetical discourse after the anti–Modernist controversy, more or less till the Second Vatican Council, had to operate under constraints of modern philosophical and scientific research, and was marked with the trauma of rationalism and authoritarianism. In a sphere limited by the church’s defensive policy, however, we find a number of apologetical approaches that work for a change from *anathema* to *aggiornamento*. In the second decade of the century in France a group of scholars, including people like Teilhard de Chardin, Y. de la Briere or Lebreton, was gathered around a project dealing with the main themes of fundamental theology, the *Apologetical Dictionary of the Catholic Faith*. After the revolution in Russia, *apologia*, reacting to the triumphs of atheistic communism, examines the social and the mystical dimensions of the church and of Christianity.¹⁶⁹

In the first part of the century we also find apologetical writers aiming at a “theology of life”, such as Romano Guardini, who stressed the personal involvement in faith¹⁷⁰ or Karl Adam, a successor of the work started by the Catholic faculty of Tübingen, with his renewed interest in Christ’s humanity and its implications for ecclesiology;¹⁷¹ and a French apologist, Henri de Lubac.¹⁷² However, at the same time there were

167 See Pannenberg, W., 1968, *Jesus, God and Man*; 1977, *Faith and Reality*; 1985, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*; 1991, *Systematic Theology I*.

168 See Moltmann, J., 1967, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications for a Christian Eschatology*; 1974, *The Crucified God: The Cross as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*; 1988, *Theology Today: Two Contributions towards making Theology Present*; 1992, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*.

169 In 1937 Yvan Kologrivov edited a project analogical to Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Contra Gentiles*, which was revised in 1950 and 1953 which included not only refutation of so called scientific materialism, but offered a broader picture of Catholicism. Among its contributors we find Henri de Lubac and Y.M. Congar.

170 Guardini, R., 1956, *The Lord*.

171 Adam, K., 1934, *Christ our Brother*; 1939, *The Spirit of Catholicism*.

172 de Lubac, H., 1962, *Catholicism*.

Catholic apologists who understood their task as defending belief against a modern Western culture, which was claiming to reject the divine authority of the church and thus was leading people to the abyss of nihilism and despair. Apologetics, restored on the principles of metaphysical philosophy, is proposed by two French philosophers, Etienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain.¹⁷³

Solid sociological and historical research that provided *apologia* with a new attempt at a pluralist understanding of theology as ‘humanly integrated faith’ (Schoof, 1970:103) into each new historical and social situation, was contributed by two other French theologians, Maria-Dominique Chenu and Yves Congar.¹⁷⁴ And *apologia* in dialogue with science was presented by Teilhard de Chardin.¹⁷⁵ This widening of horizons was made at personal costs. Although the forties brought a certain amount of relaxation of the antimodernist strictness, which was supported by the encyclical *Divine affante Spiritu* (1943), in which Pius XII accepted the literary principles of form criticism, in 1948 when one of Chenu’s works appeared on the Index, he had to leave the faculty where he taught and Teilhard facing difficulties had to promise to confine himself to science and not to publish theological works.

Since the World War II the dominant influence on Catholic *Apologia* was exercised by Karl Rahner and his transcendent anthropology.¹⁷⁶ Bernard Lonergan made an intellectual inquiry into a theological method that would enable people to live, understand and communicate Christianity as reasonable, experience based and cre-

173 Gilson, who was primarily a historian of medieval philosophy, formulated a notion of Christian Philosophy in *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* and later in ‘The Unity of Philosophical Experience’ he stated that an effort to revive philosophy is conditioned by its return to metaphysics. Maritain, whose field was Thomism, in *An Essay on Christian Philosophy* and *Integral Humanism* argued that Philosophy could survive only within a Christian atmosphere.

174 Chenu, M.-D., 1968, *Faith and Theology*; Congar, Y., 1966, *Tradition and Traditions*.

175 Teilhard’s initial field was paleontology and he came up with an evolutionary model of a theological response. His key works in this area are a memorandum *How I believe* and a book *Phenomenon of Man*.

176 Rahner, K., 1961, *Theological Investigations*; 1993, *Foundations of Christian Faith*.

ative.¹⁷⁷ Then, two younger contemporaries of Rahner and Lonergan, Edward Schillebeeckx and J.B. Metz elaborated what might be called a complete integration of spiritual and social life¹⁷⁸ and Hans Küng revived a controversial style of *apologia*, making a case for an open, dialogical and non-authoritarian belief.¹⁷⁹ *Apologia* gained from the Second Vatican Council and in particular from Pope John XXIII's 'aggiornamento' a freedom to search, 'scrutinising the signs of the times and... interpreting them in the light of the gospel' (*Documents of Vatican II*, 1966, GS:4). This task has been exercised in two best sellers of Catholic *apologia* of the 1960s and early 1970s, *The Proclaiming of Faith: Dutch Catechism* and Hans Küng's *On Being a Christian*.

A rich development of the apologetical discourse in the period after the Council was influenced with a detestation of the rationalistic apologetics that had occupied the field of fundamental theology during the preceding centuries. Thus, *apologia* was rather implicitly present than explicitly proclaimed as a programme for theology, with few exceptions, like Hans Urs von Balthasar, whose aesthetic, dramatic and logical concept of theology made explicit room for *apologia*.¹⁸⁰ A move from a Christological to a Trinitarian perspective for *apologia* has appeared in ecumenical theology, in particular influenced by the Orthodox tradition,¹⁸¹ in dialogue with other religions, where the exclusivity of Christ had to be re-examined and understood in relation to the other two persons of the Trinity¹⁸² and in theologies of liberation and

177 Lonergan, B., 1957, *Insight*; 1972, *Method in Theology*.

178 Schillebeeckx, E., 1963, *Christ the Sacrament Encounter with God*; 1974, *The Understanding of Faith*; 1990, *Church: The Human Story of God*; Metz, J.B., 1980, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*.

179 Küng, H., (1957) 1964, *Justification*; 1970, *Infallible?*; 1980, *Does God Exist?*; 1995, *Christianity: The Religious Situation of Our Time*.

180 von Balthasar, H.U., 1965, *Who is a Christian?*; 1981, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetic*.

181 Zizoulas, J.D., 1985, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*; Ware, K., 1979, *The Orthodox Way*; Lossky, V., 1991, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*.

182 See Tracy, D., 1990, *Dialogue with the Other: The Inter-religious Dialogue*; Wiles, M., 1992, *Christian Theology and Interreligious Dialogue*.

feminist theologies, where Trinitarian theology strengthened the notion of solidarity and a fully inclusive community.¹⁸³

This sketch of further developments in apologetical discourse in the West is far from being exhaustive, rather it gives an account of some representative authors and writings, which place also the first chapter: Postmodern Critique and Two Types of Apologetics in a wider perspective.

ii/ What has emerged

Christian *apologia* as depicted by Justin Martyr, Augustine, Francis of Assisi, John Hus, John Henry Newman and George Tyrrell showed different models of relations between knowledge, belief and practice and how these participate in responding to the needs of each time. The early *apologia* of Justin operated with a holistic picture of reality, where knowledge (participation in *Logos spermatikos*) was fulfilled by a Christ-centred belief (*Logos Christos*) that was at the same time the discipleship of Jesus Christ.

In the shift from ancient to medieval times, apologists were confronted with the need to strengthen the authoritative element of Christianity (*Nomos*) in terms of distributing justice.¹⁸⁴ Augustine's plea for orthodoxy responded to the crisis of a Christian community struggling with heretical movements within itself and tempted to leave behind the hope and the simplicity of the life-style present in the Gospels. His *apologia* raised questions of what held a Christian community together, in other words, what needed to be kept as authoritative, in terms of rediscovering the link between a Christian past and a Christian present. Alongside the authoritative *apologia* the emphasis on the mystical free-

183 For Liberation Theology see Boff, L., 1985, *Church: Charism and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*; Gutiérrez, G., 1988, *A Theology of Liberation*; for feminist theology see McFague, S., 1983, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*; Radford Ruether, R., 1983, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*; Schlussler Fiorenza, E., 1983, *In Memory of Her, A Feminist Reconstruction of Christian Origins*.

184 See the definition of *Torah (Nomos)* in Ch. Two, 1.2.

dom of being one with Christ emerged in Francis' embodiment of orthopraxis. His existential *apologia* fulfilled the *Nomos* with *Sophia* to the extent of transcending the authoritative with the personal.¹⁸⁵

When the crisis of the ecclesiastical authority culminated the authoritative and the personal *apologias* searched for a new overlap, which Hus found in the following of the life of Christ in terms of referential practice¹⁸⁶ as was found in the times when the church was persecuted; and Newman developed cumulative *apologia*, seeking for the accord of the internal authorities of conscience and reason with the external authorities of the Scriptures, tradition and the church. As Hus's and Tyrrell's history showed, the power of the conflict between various authorities could not always be harmonised, and the problems of reference and of integrity remained vital. A further move was made by Tyrrell towards a non-literalist understanding of religious language, and a symbolic *apologia* that allowed for the plurality of different ways of knowing. The narrative *apologia* of Newman and the symbolic *apologia* of Tyrrell succeeded in keeping together the transcendent and the immanent dimension of knowledge, belief and practice and thus overcame the one-sided rationalism and authoritarianism of the modern period, although at significant personal cost.

The critical historical analysis of *apologia* showed that postmodernity is not the first or even the strongest example of a cultural shift.¹⁸⁷ The historical experiences of the change from pre-Constantine to post-Constantine Christianity, the fall of Rome, or the disintegration of medieval Christendom, are sufficient evidence of that. We encountered already there the difficulty of 'transposing meanings and values from one cultural context to another.' (Lash, 1973:144),¹⁸⁸ which reveals also the weaknesses in the various *apologias*. Once Justin's holistic vision was realised by the powerful church, it has lost its source of inspiration (the crucified Christ, who opens the Kingdom first to the oppressed), it be-

185 See *Hokhmah (Sophia)* in Ch.Two, 1.2.

186 See Hus's transition from the authority of *lex Christi* to following *vita Christi*, Ch.Two, 4.1.

187 Compare to paradigm changes in Christianity as recounted by Küng, 1995:651.

188 See also, Vass, G., 'On the Historical Structure of Christian Truth', *Heythrop Journal* IX (1968), 130.289.

came oppressive, as we could see in the example of Augustine's controversies. Francis' freedom of the spirit was interpreted by the lesser spirits as the suppression of the rational; Hus's emphasis on the highest authority of Christ did not give satisfactory criteria for how to distinguish between a holy man and a fanatic; Newman's cumulative *apologia* did not work with its full harmony in the limit situations of others; and Tyrrell's notion of the plurality of human knowledge operated with vague concepts of this plurality.

The hermeneutical method enabled me to ask with Tracy, whether *apologia* disclosed any 'permanent possibilities of meaning and truth'? (1981:68) I found response in Newman and Tyrrell in particular, as they introduced the notion of change and of the living tradition as the bearer of historical continuity.¹⁸⁹ Simply said, with them neither truth nor meaning are exhaustively given by description. The permanent could be captured in a narrative or appear in a symbol, yet it was irreducible to a single theory.¹⁹⁰ There was a shared intention in the *apologias* I examined to communicate the vitality of the following of Christ in each different situation. Moreover, what it meant to follow Christ had to be adapted to these different situations. The diversity of responses converged in some themes and values, but never completely.

Most of the apologists presented their discourse as reasonable and were searching for some kind of belief involving an assent of reason,¹⁹¹ yet Francis' mystical-practical *apologia* argued for the renouncing to a certain extent even of the knowledge of the Scriptures and of science.¹⁹²

189 For a revised understanding of historical continuity see different theories of development: Vincent of Lerins' image of a plant growth, where from the seed of Christ's planting the church with all her doctrines and practices expanded (Lash, 1973:145). Schillebeeckx's 'development by demolition' and Lonergan's 'transcultural shift' (Lash, 1973:146).

190 This recognition corresponds to Lash's saying that 'the Christian attempt to preach the same gospel, and teach the same doctrine, is always a response to a challenge.' (1973: 152).

191 Most striking examples are Justin's claim that Christianity is the best philosophy (cf. D:96) ; and Newman's emphasis on the 'call of reason' (1955:210) or 'illative sense' (1985:408) which represents assent to partial arguments and authorities.

192 Cf. *Franciscan Sources*, 1982, LM:375.

For the reasons advanced here the apologists identified criteria for distinguishing between orthodoxy and orthopraxis on the one side and heresy on the other, criteria such as the Scriptures, tradition, the church, conscience and reason; and mostly they agreed that the criterion of conscience was decisive. However, they grounded their authorities differently. It was only with Newman that the notion of historical development came on the scene and strongly challenged the “divine point of view” of foundationalism with regard to the Scriptures and the early tradition in particular.¹⁹³ Implicitly we encountered also different notions of conscience; while for Hus it was the eschatological authority of Christ as the Truth speaking in one’s conscience, for Newman and for Tyrrell in particular, conscience was the immanent authority fulfilling human natural dispositions by the Spirit. Finally, *apologia* emerged as a committed discourse, focussed in a Christian practice and from there looking at principles which hold the living memory of the church together and offer access to its understanding in belief and action.

Although the second chapter was predominantly historical and theological, it has raised epistemological questions, while dealing with alternatives to treating Christianity as an unchanging mass of propositions, and as a ‘continuity of fundamental aims’ (Wiles, M., 1967:170–171). The examination of the representative historical examples of *apologia* has led to a recognition that we find there ‘in embryo’ concerns of the postmodern critique, namely cases against literalism, which eliminated immanent works of the Spirit, and against identifying Christianity with a grand theory, which eliminated the permanent challenge of practical discipleship. These concerns have differed *apologia* from a foundationalist apologetics as depicted in Chapter One. The traditional *apologia*, however, understood discipleship in a realist manner – the following of Christ referred to the transcendent God, and this deferred the discourse from the standpoints of the postmodern critique.

193 Cf. Newman, 1973, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*.

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CONCLUSION OF PART ONE: HOW TO OVERCOME FOUNDATIONALISM?

In this first part of the book I have identified and critically adapted three key points of the postmodern critique: the deconstruction of objective meaning and truth in language, the death of metanarratives, and the constitutive role of the Other for the self. Then I addressed them to two types of apologetical discourse: apologetics and *apologia* and found out that the postmodern critique undermines the foundations of apologetics as an universal explanatory theory – defined either as objective metaphysical theism (as in the case of Swinburne and Hebblethwaite), or as an antirealist substitution of the transcendent (as in the case of Cupitt and Moore).

Both kinds of apologetics made claims to be exhaustive representations of a meaningful apologetical discourse, but in the second, historical, chapter, I adduced strong reasons that they were not. In order to make this point clear, I kept the Greek word *apologia* for demonstrating that down the centuries the apologetical discourse developed into communicating an integrity of Christian belief and practice in a variety of different ways, which apologetics tended to harmonise into a single one. I showed that there was a sharp contrast between this harmonisation on which Swinburne's and Hebblethwaite's apologetics or Cupitt's and Moore's rejection of transcendent reference were based, and e.g. Tyrrell's claim that different pictures of reality can be 'true in their way, but none, nor all together, exhaustive of reality' (1904:v), yet at the same time holding onto the vital need for their referential nature: 'We can recognise under various descriptions a face which we have once seen;' (1904:v) in our case, the reality of being in relationship with God, which *apologia* talks about, is to be present. The differences between apologetics and *apologia*, as Tyrrell identified them, are grounded by

conflicting religious epistemologies,¹ and therefore in Part Two I turn my attention to this field.

Does this realist claim, which, as I documented, comes through the traditional *apologia*, have to be foundationalist? In other words, does the postmodern critique undermine just apologetics or *apologia* as well? Postmodern critique addressed to the historical *apologia* brings three insights and one question.

The first recognition is that while the apologists were reluctant to give up transcendent reference, they were aware that it was not the set of concepts that referred, but rather their following of Christ being put into practice.² Although most of them operated with a pre-critical understanding of language, they were well aware of the problem of literalism as of something “killing” religious symbolism and the freedom and dynamics of a relationship with God, with people and with the rest of creation.³ The second recognition is that theory and practice were for apologists usually two faces of the same coin, they were convinced that practice can never be fully captured by a single, however brilliant theory, which prevented them from falling into metanarratives. In the situation of crisis, in particular, apologists came to the conclusion that in the last analysis practice (in terms of faithfulness of one’s discernment in conscience)⁴ is referential, as it is the most reliable criterion (although not infallible) for distinguishing between what is real and what is unreal. This criterion of practice did not suppress other authorities, such as the Scriptures, tradition, and the church, but rather demanded interdependence between orthopraxis and orthodoxy⁵ and saw heresy

1 See Tyrrell’s account of the rule of implication and the theory of development, Ch.Two, 4.2.

2 See Justin’s “fulness of truth”, *Logos Christos*, being a person and not a theory, Ch.Two, 1.3; Hus’s transition from keeping *lex Christi* to following *vita Christi*, Ch.Two, 3.1; or Tyrrell’s emphasis on human immanence, where one encounters truth as symbolic, Ch.Two, 4.2.

3 See Francis’ opposition to literalism, Ch.Two, 2.2.; and Tyrrell’s reviving of the symbolic language, Ch.Two, 4.2.

4 See Augustine’s decision to stay in Hippo encircled by Vandals, Ch.Two, 2.1; or Hus’s and Newman’s responses to the crisis of the ecclesiastical authority, Ch.Two, 3.

5 See Hus’s definition of three types of faith, Ch Two, 3.1.

not only as falling away from Christian doctrine, but also from a Christ-like life-style. A disadvantage of the claim to practice being referential (as Tyrrell puts it: 'Life is the test and the criterion for truth' (1907:196)) is that its vocabulary is too broad, and quite often universal⁶ and with smaller spirits less engaged in the struggles of their time, than the examples examined in Chapter Two, it tends to phrases, with little content. The third recognition is that most of the apologists hoped for the conversion of others to their beliefs and practices, as they found them 'alone to be safe and profitable' (Justin, 1867, D:96).⁷ With regard to the constitutive otherness, they were capable of holding together God as both radically other than us and our world and incapable of being exchanged for any description, however excellent, and yet as also irrevocably present in every single part of it as Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. Yet they found it much more difficult to deal with the otherness of other people and to find the "trace of God" in those who hold different beliefs and practices. Thus, while the previous two points of postmodern critique revealed historical *apologia* in a favourable light, the third point shows also its weakness, which indicates a key problem for a contemporary *apologia*: Is it going to aim at conversion of others to Christianity – or is it going to search for discovering a 'sacramental presence' (Lakeland: 112) in their otherness?

In order to be able to explore possible answers to this question, which I will do in the conclusion of the book, a further epistemological study is needed. The third point of postmodern critique shows that the problem of how to overcome foundationalism cannot be resolved by a critical historical method. It needs to be said that foundationalism was not the theme of *apologia* up to modern times, and it would be a mistake to force our agenda on the past. This would mean relapsing to some form of the rule of implication; namely that our convictions, if they are valuable today, must have been valuable in the past as well. This was rightly criticised by Tyrrell. Instead, we need to look at where

6 See Justin's universalist concept of *Logos*, Ch.Two, 1.3; violent implications of Cyprian's notion of the ecclesial unity in Augustine's controversies, Ch.Two, 2.1; criticism of Tyrrell's generalisations, Ch.Two, 4.2.

7 See also Francis' mission to the Sultan, Ch.Two, 3.1.

foundationalism has become the theme, at the post-Enlightenment religious epistemology, because it has given a course to the postmodern critique and its analysis of: (i) attempts to establish fixed foundations of knowledge, belief and judgment; (ii) harmonising different approaches into one meta-theory, while leaving behind practical particularities; (iii) evidentialism, where ‘propositions are of two kinds, those which stand in a need of evidence, and those which provide the required evidence.’ (Phillips, 1988:xiii) This epistemological study will provide tools for testing, whether *apologia* that wants to maintain historical continuity and transcendent reference has to be foundationalist and therefore incompatible with the postmodern critique. And whether, and if so then in what sense, it may remain a committed discourse, yet without committing epistemological violence against the other.

PART TWO:

CHANGES IN RELIGIOUS EPISTEMOLOGY

In Part One I demonstrated that apologetical discourse is divided into two camps, *apologia* and apologetics, and pointed out that there are conflicting religious epistemologies at the roots of this division. In various pictures of *apologia* I showed an interaction between reflected Christian belief and the different needs of times and places in which this discourse took place. I demonstrated *apologia* as an open textual discourse, where language and speech were referential through the practice. This respected some of the concerns of postmodern critique with regard to religious language and distanced *apologia* from apologetics. Thus, I traced the origins of *apologia*, when Christians accused by persecutors presented their belief as reasonable as opposed to irrational, holistic as opposed to exclusive, and as being a means of salvation as opposed to being accused of provoking divine wrath. Then I depicted the struggle of *apologia* to revive Christian values when “Christian society” and the church were in crisis, and its reevaluation of what was authoritative for a Christian in order to be faithful to Christ. When the church entered modern times and was confronted with rising secular science and culture, I examined *apologia* facing the crisis of rationalism which with a new intensity, brought into question the foundations of Christian belief and divided the discourse into the two camps: one defending an authoritative image of the essence of Christianity which has to be handed to generations to come without changes; the other arguing for the legitimacy of growth and changes within the heart of Christianity, relying on the guidance of the Spirit throughout human history. The story of *apologia* did not finish there, although its later developments, as described in the summary of the second chapter, have not overcome the division.

Tyrrell helped me to identify that the split between apologetics and *apologia* is caused by conflicting religious epistemologies,¹ and therefore the task of the second part is to trace their roots in Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thought. If *apologia* is to have value in the postmodern context, it has to be specified what can and cannot be expected from such discourse, what its contribution is and what its limits are. The argument of this section is that religious epistemology can provide us with basic criteria for examining foundations upon which a dynamic postmodern *apologia* could rely, so that it does not plunge into apologetics based either on static certainties or on relativist ones, which prevent apologetical discourse from being taken seriously. This analysis will be particularly important for the conclusion of the book, where I construct possible methodological rules for a postmodern *apologia* within the discipline of practical theology.² There is a change of tone between Part One and Part Two. While in the first part I employed mainly critical historical analysis and hermeneutical method, the second part is predominantly concerned with epistemological analysis. It examines problems of foundationalism and reference in leading post-Enlightenment philosophers, yet with a theological interest: to explore the possibilities and limits of communicating Christian belief and practice in the culture of postmodernity. I look at the genesis of contemporary epistemological problems dealing with the heritage of rationalism, such as separating theory from practice and creating ground universal religious theories, which suppress alterity and exclude the different. However, I also argue that the post-Enlightenment religious epistemology offers alternatives overlooked by the postmodern critique, which separated itself from the “whole” of Western metaphysics.³ Thus, I show that there is a split in the post-Enlightenment epistemology stemming from Kant leading to an antithesis between Hegel and Kierkegaard. This antithesis, nevertheless, operates on criteria for certainty of religious knowledge

1 See Tyrrell's account of the two religious epistemologies, Ch.Two, 4.2.

2 Cf. Tracy, 1981: 56–58.

3 See Derrida's account of Western metaphysics in Ch.One, 1.1.

narrowly construed in terms of rational argumentation.⁴ Then I look at the challenge brought to the Hegel-Kierkegaard antithesis by Wittgenstein's distinctions between rules of knowledge and rules of belief, which gave new credibility in looking at religious forms of life from within. This opens new possibilities of associating *apologia* with referential practice, which is not foundationalist.

4 The concept of rational employed in Part Two differs significantly from claims to reason and reasonable belief as depicted by the traditional *apologia*. For the rational-reasonable distinction, see glossary.

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CHAPTER THREE: HUMAN AUTONOMY AND BELIEF IN THE TRANSCENDENT

The main aim of this chapter is to explore the shift in epistemology, when religious claims became subject to the principle of human autonomy. That is, when the freedom and moral maturity of an individual and of society provided a point of view from which belief in the transcendent was measured and challenged. In the second chapter I already examined responses of Newman, Loisy and Tyrrell to the loss of metaphysical certainties, when that on which the church had based her authority on for centuries was now found unreliable, and a growing number of people were, as O. Chadwick says:

Unsure about the Bible, afraid of Marx and class-war [we mustn't forget that the French revolution was still fresh in the minds of people not only as an example of brutality, but also as an example of how people can desert the religion of their fathers], agonised by evolution and the hostility of nature, hesitant over its moral foundations, struggling with slums and exploitation (1983:78).

This provoked serious questions about relations between transcendent authority and human autonomy. Can the transcendent change? Or is the transcendent approachable only as mediated through our changing and fallible human resources? And if so, what can one base one's life on: on what is above me – or what is within me? These questions were posed and answered by Kant's religious epistemology, which decisively influenced the following generations of both philosophers and theologians. Therefore in this chapter I consider the challenge he brought to religious epistemology by substituting the supremacy of the immanent for the transcendent, and I look also at further developments of it and critical responses to it.

1. Kant at the Crossroads

Choosing one figure in the historical flow of thought and demonstrating that this particular one started a new period or represented a turning point, always involves something artificial. Given that René Descartes (1596–1650) and David Hume (1711–1776) Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) chronologically precede, the question might be raised as to why begin with him? Descartes, with his emphasis on: ‘*Cogito, ergo sum*’, the only ground that cannot be doubted, started the enterprise of Western critical thinking, however, his attention did not go beyond clear and distinct ideas, pure and impersonal thinking. About Hume, Kant states that it was he who has woken him from a ‘dogmatic slumber’¹. Yet, in Kant we do not find a Humian undermining of rational principles for access to an extra-mental reality; but an empiricist-evidentialist account of objectivity: what is real has to be demonstrable, otherwise it is not real.² Starting with Descartes and Hume would suggest a different method, deviating from the primarily epistemological approach of the book with its emphasis on possibilities of evaluating truth-claims. They would lead us via Nietzsche to Husserl’s phenomenology and Heidegger’s hermeneutics, while the interest of the book is primarily epistemological. Although I refer to them on the way, the main attention is paid to the road stemming from Kant, as the road he takes provides us with a necessary link between belief and knowledge and knowledge and commitment. Kant moves from an emphasis on abstract reason to practical reason, which gives him an access (although an indirect one) to the real. Kant’s critique of speculative reason is not necessarily demolishing of theology and, therefore has more potential for a study that is oriented towards an underlying epistemology of a Christian *apologia*.

1 Cf. Copleston, 1960, *A History of Philosophy VI*: 186–187.

2 Cf. Hume, D., 1991, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*: 149.

1.1 Copernican Shift in Thinking

Kant's contribution to religious epistemology can be described as similar to the Copernican shift in astronomy. Prior to Kant the power of reason was directed to the outer world where it was expected that objective metaphysical truths might be found, Kant turned to the subject and used reason to criticise its own powers while proposing that 'metaphysical' truths are to be found within one's rational structure. Christine M. Korsgaard in *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* describes this turn as follows:

Kant began his critical work as the "All-destroyer," toppling the edifice of the Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy, along with its optimism that God has chosen everything for the best in the Best of All Possible Worlds. In its place he put a faith in human freedom, as the source of purely rational morality and the cornerstone of a metaphysics of practical reason. This freedom is not an object of knowledge, but of a rational aspiration: something for human beings to achieve, and thereby to realise the ideals of reason in the world... Optimism is restored, but it is an optimism based on a moral faith in humanity. (1996:35)³

Thus, we are dealing here with an Enlightenment thinker whose religious epistemology sought a way for people to become individuals, to think for themselves and to exercise their own responsibility. However, Kant's turn to the subject did not proposed individualism,⁴ but a community of free citizens.⁵ For him theology and the church⁶ were seen as being based on the principle of heteronomy. In his understanding human autonomy as well as moral duty were taken more seriously by philosophy and an enlightened state.⁷

3 J.Hare criticises Korsgaard for downplaying the vertical dimension in Kant, see 2000, 'Essay review: Christine Korsgaard: *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*'.

4 For the distinction between being an individual, individualism, see glossary.

5 For a summary of Kant's political thought, see Copleston, 1960:185.

6 For pietistic background of Kant, see Copleston, 1960:180–181.

7 Kant was enthusiastic about the American constitution and the French revolution, precisely the events of which the Churches of his time were frightened. See G. P. Gooch, 1965, *Germany and the French Revolution*: 276–277.

In this chapter I deal with Kant's ethical basis for religious belief as situated within his general project of employing the powers of reason to criticise its own faculties.⁸ Because in Kant, moral philosophy proceeds from practical reason,⁹ I look at the connections between reason, morality and belief in God. There is a problem as to whether belief is rational and if so, in what sense? This problem is analysed through two basic understandings of reason ascribed to Kant: one spelled out by Korsgaard: 'practical reason – in fact, reason – is not something we find in the world, but something we bring to it.' (1996:xv); the other one by G.E. Michalson, for whom 'rational' means 'constrained and shaped in ways that are independent of thinker.' (1990:21)¹⁰ Then I move to the principal question in philosophy, according to Kant: What should I do? and look at the limits of his principle of autonomy and the need for divine assistance, when one is confronted with the problem of evil. I show that there is a conflict in Kant's thought, which gave rise to two antithetical implications following from him.

1.2 *The Kingdom of Ends*

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within.* (*Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*, (CPR) 1963:260)

- 8 For works of Kant and his development of religious philosophy, see Copleston, 1960:180–210.
- 9 Kant gives the following definition of the practical reason: 'By a concept of the practical reason I understand the idea of an object as an effect possible to be produced through freedom.' (*Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics* (CPR) 1963: 148)
- 10 Chronologically it would be more appropriate to deal first with Michalson's interpretation, as his *Fallen Freedom*, the key book on the theme, was published in 1990, and then with Korsgaard's approach in the *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*, which came out in 1996. Nevertheless, from the thematic point of view, it will be better to treat the interpretations the other way round, as Michalson offers a critical view of Kant's optimism on which Korsgaard builds.

This is the famous quotation with which Kant starts the Conclusion of his *Critique of Practical Reason*. It proposes a twofold idea of metaphysics: metaphysics of nature and metaphysics of morals.¹¹ Kant elaborates his position into a system that treats the transcendent as something which is to be found within one's life. It is not among the stars, but within the human personality that the true and limitless life is revealed, according to Kant; so he continues in his conclusion:

I have not to search for them and conjecture them [stars] as though they were veiled in darkness or were in the transcendent region beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence. The former begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and enlarges my connection therein to an unbounded extent with worlds upon worlds and systems of systems, and moreover into limitless times of their periodic motions, its beginnings and continuance. The second begins from my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity, but which is traceable only by the understanding, and with which I discern that I am not in a merely contingent but in a universal and necessary connection, as I am also thereby with all those visible worlds. The former view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates, as it were, my importance as an *animal creature*, which after it has been for a short time provided with vital power, one knows not how, must again give back the matter of which it was formed to the planet it inhabits (a mere speck in the universe). The second, on the contrary, infinitely elevates my worth as an *intelligence* by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animity and even on the whole sensible world – at least so far as may be inferred from the destination assigned to my existence by this law, a destination not restricted to conditions and limits of this life, but reaching into the infinite. (1963, CPR:260)

The *Critique of Practical Reason* in its earlier parts explained freedom, immortality and the existence of God as the three postulates of practical reason, stating that one does not arrive at them by means of a chain

11 See Kant, 1963, CPR: 2.

of inductions,¹² but rather starts from them, without arguing where they come from. If it were not for freedom, neither of them would be at the roots of our experience, as Kant states: ‘Freedom, however, is the only one of all the ideas of the speculative reason of which we *know* the possibility *a priori* (without, however, understanding it), because it is the condition of the moral law which we know.’ (1963, CPR:88) Freedom, which is the base of the moral law, is not conditioned by the existence of God and by immortality: ‘The ideas of *God* and *Immortality*, however, are not conditions of the moral law, but only conditions of the necessary object of a will determined by this law: that is to say, conditions of the practical use of our pure reason.’ (1963, CPR:88) As conditions of our use of practical reason, the postulates of immortality and of God do not provide us with any other transcendent reality which our knowledge would have access to: ‘Hence with respect to these ideas we cannot affirm that we *know* and *understand*, I will not say the actuality, but even the possibility of them.’... as was said before, ‘their *possibility* is *proved* by the fact that freedom actually exists.’ (1963, CPR:88) Thus Kant says that the acceptance of the postulates does not give us ‘a transcendent knowledge of *supersensible* objects’ (1963, CPR:234) and therefore we have to move from knowing to believing, which is in Kant’s terms ‘the foundation of our further employment of reason... [and] has sprung from the moral disposition of mind’ (1963, CPR:244).

This takes us back to Kant’s first *Critique of Pure Reason*, where he says: ‘I therefore had to annul *knowledge* in order to make room for *faith*.’ (1996a:Bxxx) Faith belongs to the practice, according to Kant. In the conclusion to the ‘The Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals’ he speaks of the ‘*laws of the actions*’ (1963, CPR:83) in regards to which (exclusively!) the three postulates are necessary. Step by step, Kant shows that questions concerning freedom, immortality and the existence of God cannot be answered by means of a theory our pure reason construes.

12 ‘Metaphysics, however, cannot enable us to attain *by certain inference* from the knowledge of *this* world to the conception of God and to the proof of His existence,... I cannot prove these (God, freedom and immortality) by my speculative reason, although neither can I refute them.’ (1963, CPR:236.241)

From this angle Korsgaard interprets Kant's notion of the transcendent in terms of the practical having the upper hand over the theoretical, relying on Kant's emphasis in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, that the practical reason can reach the transcendent in the ways the theoretic cannot: 'and thus the application to the supersensible [e.g. God] solely in a practical point of view does not give pure theoretic reason the least encouragement to run riot into the transcendent.' (1963, CPR:147)

She then deals with the ethical basis for religious belief, recalling Kant's statement in the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, that 'man, and, in general, every rational being exists as an end in himself' (1959:424). The 'end in oneself' is taken as an antithesis to what may be called an end in the transcendent, an end that is placed beyond humanity. Kant elaborated the notion of the 'end in oneself' as follows: 'Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only... This principle of humanity and of every rational creature as an end in itself is the supreme limiting condition on the freedom of the actions of each man.' (1959:429-431)¹³ And in the *Critique of Practical Reason* he adds that 'humanity in our person must be *holy* to ourselves' (1963:229).

In Kant the notion of freedom and duty are interrelated. Against a heteronomously understood authority¹⁴ under which one is asked to conform to rules coming from outside, Kant emphasises the principle of autonomy, namely that as rational beings, people find the rules to obey within themselves.¹⁵ Korsgaard makes the following distinction between being motivated heteronomously and autonomously: 'When you are

13 A similar thing is said in Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*: 'Act so that the maxim of thy will can always at the same time hold good as a principle of universal legislation (1963:119). Korsgaard points out that there are four categories of duties of virtue in Kant: '(1) perfect duties to oneself, to preserve and respect the humanity in one's own person; (2) imperfect duties to oneself, to develop one's humanity, intellectually and physically; (3) duties of love for others, to promote their happiness; and (4) duties of respect for others, including respect for their rights.' (1996:21)

14 For Kant's conflict with "biblical religion", see Copleston, 1960:183.

15 Korsgaard summarises: 'There can only be one reason, why human beings must obey the moral law, and that is that we give that law to ourselves' (1996:23).

motivated autonomously, you act on a law that you give to yourself¹⁶; when you act heteronomously, the law is imposed on you by means of sanction – you are provided with an interest in acting on it.’ (1996:22) She uses as an example the paying of taxes; a heteronomous decision, if one does so in order not to be punished by the law; and an autonomous decision, if one is convinced that it is actually a good thing, because everyone should pay their share. An analogical application to religious practice is closely related: If one’s devotion or respect of God is based on fear, e.g. fear of damnation and of hell, one is not acting autonomously but heteronomously and in this way falls away from serving God. P. Guyer and A.W. Wood in the General Introduction to Kant’s *Religion and Rational Theology* comment on the theological application of the distinction as follows:

Kant was persuaded that most of what passes for the religious service of God was “counterfeit service” (*Alfterdienst*), “a pretension of honouring God through which we operate directly counter to the true service required by him” (1996b:xiii).

The true service of God consists in nothing but morally good conduct in life. ‘Ceremonial rituals, petitionary prayers, words of divine praise, penances, the observances of statutory laws prescribed by church traditions’, in Kant’s understanding do not have any ‘truly religious aim’, but they ‘only serve as illusory substitutes for doing what a truly good God would demand of us: namely our ordinary moral duty as human beings.’ (1996b:xiv)

Thus, Kant speaks of religious rituals as of ‘*fetishism*’ (1996b, 6:177) or a ‘superstitious delusion’ (6.194) trying to win an advantage from the transcendent without realising that the transcendent is within us.¹⁷

16 Korsgaard missed out an ‘internalised heteronomy’, when people accept rules coming from outside for their own.

17 P. Guyer and A.W. Wood in the General Introduction to Kant’s *Religion and Rational Theology* mention that ‘Kant did not attend religious services. Several times he served as rector of the University of Königsberg, but was always “indisposed” when his official participation in religious observances would have been required.’ (1996b, xv)

Korsgaard points out that in Kant true belief enables us to understand that ‘the Best of All Possible Worlds is the achievement of moral goodness by human beings’ (31).

Also, as we have already seen, Kant’s emphasis on the individual has strong social implications. The notion of the ‘end in oneself’ involves respecting the humanity of others and acting in such a way that the maxims of one’s will would be such that they could stand as principles of universal legislation.¹⁸ Kant does not propose a flight into an individualistic world where the transcendent within ourselves could be discovered. On the contrary, being autonomous, truly free, means being responsible towards others. Korsgaard expresses it in terms of two themes she finds dominant in Kant: a theory of value and a formula of humanity and argues that Kant’s conception of humanity as a source of value that does not need any other justification, as we understand it as an end in itself, presupposes the ability to make rational choices in terms of respecting the humanity of others.¹⁹

The social implications stand and fall with a notion of objectivity that is not placed into the realm of the transcendent in the sense of being exterior to us, but in the transcendent as being immanently present to us. To consider ourselves and other people to be rational, then, means not to regard people in phenomenal way – in terms of the fact that there are things that happen to people, but rather in noumenal way – that we are people who make choices what to do. Treating others as ends-in-themselves excludes regarding them as phenomena, objects of our knowledge, instead of respecting them as noumena, active rational beings, authors of their thoughts and choices.²⁰ Kant’s optimistic view of

18 Cf. Kant, 1963, CPR:119.

19 Korsgaard states: ‘According to Kant we confer value on the objects of our rational choices. He argues that the conception of ourselves as “ends-in-ourselves” is a presupposition of a rational choice. To chose something is to take it to be worth pursuing; and when we chose things because they are important to us, we are in effect taking ourselves to be important. Reflection on this fact commits us to the conception of our humanity as a source of value. This is the basis of Kant’s Formula of Humanity, the principle of treating all human beings as end-in-themselves.’ (ix-x)

20 Cf. Kant, I., 1959, *Foundations of Metaphysics of Morals*: 452.

humanity assumes a natural inclination to do what is right.²¹ For him ‘A free will and a will under moral law are identical’ (1959:447). This, however, does not solve the problem of evil.

Korsgaard’s interpretation of Kant’s optimistic rationality based on the statement, as quoted at the beginning, that ‘practical reason – in fact, reason – is not something we find in the world, but something we bring to it.’ (1996:xv) provokes questions of how to understand the evil things people bring to the world. Are holocausts or Hiroshima also a part of expression of perhaps “immature freedom”? And if not – how can a dictatorship be explained that is not represented by any transcendent power? What if evil is also found in human immanence? Is it within our powers to eliminate evil from ourselves? These questions are proposing a challenge to Kant’s notion of transcendence as a total autonomy, as Korsgaard interpreted it.

1.3 *The Problem of Radical Evil*

Gordon E. Michalson in his book, *Fallen Freedom*, offers an alternative view to Korsgaard’s optimism concerning the sufficiency of human autonomy. He deals with Kant’s problem of radical evil and moral regeneration, pointing out that the shift from the transcendence, or in Michalson’s terminology ‘otherworldliness’ of religion (1990:3) to the immanence or ‘this-worldliness’ of human autonomy (1990:3) is not so simple in Kant and that Kant is ambivalent about placing the transcendent totally within the realm of human capacities, especially when the problem of evil is involved. Similarly to Korsgaard, Michalson points out that there is one ‘unshakeable trust’ in Kant: ‘that the universe is not absurd’ (1990:6). Michalson’s interpretation also agrees that religion in Kant serves morality and not the other way round.²² However, when we

21 Immoral maxims, according to Korsgaard, involve the violation of ‘an unconditional value of humanity’ (1996:17). Cf. Kant, 1963, CPR:227.

22 ‘Nevertheless, the Christian principle of *morality* itself is not theological (so as to be heteronomy), but is autonomy of pure practical reason, since it does not make the knowledge of God and His will the foundation of these laws, but only of the attainment of the *summum bonum*’ (Kant, 1963, CPR:226).

are faced with the problem of evil, Michalson points out that Kant does not give an answer as to how to reconcile the principle of autonomy and the inbreaking power of God, how it is possible to hold that a person is an 'end in oneself' and yet within human inwardness, God's grace is operating.

Michalson summarises the questions present in Kant in the following way:

- i) What exactly is the difference between an 'original predisposition' to good and a 'natural propensity' to evil?
- ii) If moral evil is produced by human freedom, why does Kant say it is 'innate'?
- iii) If moral evil is 'radical' (radical in the sense that it affects the roots of our being), how can human freedom get rid of it?
- iv) Why does Kant talk about the need for 'supernatural co-operation' when he discusses moral regeneration?
- v) What exactly is the relationship between human freedom and divine grace in Kant's view of salvation?²³

According to Michalson, Kant is not capable of giving a coherent answer to those questions which remain ambivalent here. Michalson tries to analyse the reasons for Kant's instability in this area, and explains it by means of a conflict of language forms – Kant tries to reconcile his Christian language and his rational-enlightenment language; the instability in Kant's thinking, then, is according to Michalson, a result of Kant's divided cultural inheritance.²⁴ Michalson goes further in saying that 'Kant has not totally thrown off the habits of mind produced by Christian culture, yet these habits of mind are in many ways antithetical to his deepest philosophical instincts.' (9)²⁵ What Michalson means by

23 Cf. Michalson, G.E., 1990, *Fallen Freedom*: 8. The fifth question is not included in Michalson's summary, however, comes very strongly through the text, see 1990:10.

24 Cf. Michalson: xi.

25 A similar point is found in P. Guyer's and A.W. Woods General Introduction to Kant's *Religion and Rational Theology*: 'Yet much in Kant's conception of true

'habits of mind produced by Christian culture' is explained in the following way: 'Christian theological heritage continues to force "questions" on us which should no longer in fact *be* questions for us.' (135) As an example he mentions a question of the 'direction and meaning of history as a whole' (136), from which the idea of 'a hidden and purposeful intelligence behind the visible world' (136) follows, as well as answers using teleological forms of causality, in which the sequence of events is directed to a purposeful completion by the Christian idea of providence. Michalson is saying that Kant has not overcome the Christian framework of accounts of the world and ourselves, and this leads to the conclusion that his attempt to bring a new content – to put human autonomy in the centre – is incomplete and fragmentary.²⁶ The problem of radical evil and moral regeneration is made impossible to solve and leaves Kant holding contradictory views.

If the problem is put in terms of a decision for either the "otherwordliness" of religion or the "this-wordliness" of autonomy, Michalson says that Kant attempts to give a "this-wordly" account of religion, yet searches for an "otherwordly" roots of the moral, which represents the tension between human autonomy and transcendent assistance. Kant uses Christian language, concepts like "the Kingdom of God", "salvation", "rebirth", "new creation", whilst giving them a new content in terms of a rational religion of human autonomy.²⁷ In this sense Kant introduces Christ as the 'personified idea of the good principle' (Michalson:110). Thus, Michalson says, instead of a certain moment in history when God became a man, instead of the Crucified taking away the sins of humankind, doctrines that are constitutive for Christianity, Kant links together three expressions: 'the personified idea of a good principle'; 'the Son of God'; and 'the 'archetype' of moral perfection' that resides universally in reason (Michalson:113). Michalson emphasises

Continued from previous page:

morality and religion amounts to a rationally purified version of pietism?' (1996b:xii)

26 Cf.. Michalson: 140.

27 Compare to Loisy's controversy with Harnack, Ch.Two, 4.1; Tyrrell's critique of Liberal Protestantism, Ch.Two, 4.2.

that in Kant the process of redemption happens within human immanence; so he concludes, in Kant ‘We need... no empirical example to make the idea of a person morally well-pleasing to God our archetype; this idea as an archetype is already present in our reason’ (113).

The ambiguities in Kant’s using traditional Christian terminology and schemes of thinking, yet giving them a rational Enlightenment meaning, are held together by a metaphysical trust ‘that the universe is not absurd’ (Michalson:6). In our reason, we have, according to Kant, the disposition to regenerate our own moral structure.²⁸ The atonement of Christ gives us an example of how to built against radical evil, that affected the roots of our being and made us incapable of acting from duty. Michalson concludes that Kant’s rationalist Christology grows from difficulties of how to reconcile the principle of autonomy and the inbreaking power of God. This is why Kant produces the idea of ‘autonomous atonement’ (Michalson:114).

The three postulates of practical reason: freedom, immortality and the existence of God, provide us, according to Kant, not only with ‘subjectively satisfying’, but also ‘objectively valid’ belief, says Michalson (20). Such belief is rational, which means ‘constrained and shaped in ways that are independent of the thinker’ (21), and yet there is the paradoxical claim to a total immanence. Rational belief is seen at the roots of a harmony postulated between virtue and happiness – but besides Kant’s metaphysical trust, there is also a threat of radical moral evil.²⁹ Michalson insists that there is a limitation put to human autonomy by the bondage of one’s own decisions, from which one cannot release oneself, and thus in Kant’s system it is rational to hope for a divine supplement: if we strive to do our best, we can hope for God’s grace as an additional aid to secure the recovery from moral evil. But neither

28 ‘For if the moral law commands that we *shall* now be better men, it follows inevitably that we also *can* be better.’ (Kant, 1963, ‘The Philosophical Theory of Religion’, CPR: 358)

29 Kant tries to find a solution to the problem by stating that there is ‘the paradox of method in a critique of Practical Reason, namely, *that the concept of good and evil must not be determined before the moral law (of which it seems as if it must be the foundation), but only after it and by means of it.*’ (CPR, 1963:154)

Kant nor Michalson explain why the hope for a divine supplement is rational.

As was said already, for Kant, religion serves morality and not the other way round. At the centre there is a struggle 'to be better men' (Michalson: 80). According to Michalson, at one and the same time Kant is saying that 'some supernatural cooperation may be necessary' (97),³⁰ yet on the other hand he adds that 'man must make himself worthy to receive it' (97). We have to do our imperfect best in order to hope for some divine supplement. Michalson says that this is what Kant means when he says that we have to 'merit' God's grace' (97). God's grace, then, is present in the moral conversion. Michalson points out that Kant remains ambivalent in stating exactly what the divine grace is and how it is present in moral conversion. And yet the ambiguity concerns the relative balance of human and divine effort constituting the regeneration process.³¹

Korsgaard's emphasis on Kant's 'end in oneself' has an analogical expression in Michalson's interpretation, when he speaks of an ungrounded moral value in terms of moral duty as the ultimate that does not have any higher ground either in religion or in a philosophical speculation.³² In opposition to Korsgaard, Michalson shows that Kant's ungrounded moral value tries to integrate both rationalism and belief in some transcendent supplement, human freedom and supernatural action. According to Michalson, Kant does not succeed, because he does

30 Kant states: 'when he [a man] has used the original capacity for good so as to become a better man, that he can hope that what is not in his power will be supplied by a higher co-operation. But it is not absolutely necessary that man should know in what this co-operation consists; perhaps it is even inevitable that if the way in which it happens had been revealed at a certain time, different men at another time should form different conceptions of it, and that with all honesty. But then the principle holds good: "it is not essential, and therefore not necessary for everyone to know what God does or has done for his salvation," but it is essential to know *what he himself has to do* in order to be worthy of this assistance.' ('The Philosophical Theory of Religion', CPR, 1963:360)

31 Cf. Michalson: 122.

32 'Is our knowledge, however, actually extended in this way by pure practical reason, and is that *immanent* in practical reason which for the speculative was only *transcendent*? Certainly, but *only in a practical point of view*.' (Kant, 1963, CPR:231)

not give a sufficiently positive account of the transcendent. Against the traditional theological understanding of his time he holds that the transcendent is not a source of heteronomy, but he does not say what it then is, and yet his autonomous morality operates with the postulates of immortality and of God as well as of freedom. These are the inconsistencies in Kant, according to Michalson, that put into question his notion of the rationality of belief. This causes a split which will arise from his thought and become visible in a further development of religious epistemology, where one path will lead to Hegel's notion of the Absolute Spirit as a human construct, and the other to Kierkegaard's language of paradox making a gulf between reason and belief, the human and the divine.

Michalson's contribution helps us to clarify the epistemological changes in the post-Enlightenment period, that led also to the shift in Christian *apologia*, as described in section four of Part One: *Apologia Facing the Crisis of the Rational*. Michalson spells out that the split arising from Kant's thought puts into question the total identification of the transcendent with the immanent in regards to human autonomy, as emphasised by Korsgaard, and shows some unclear need for assistance from the divine transcendent once human autonomy is confronted with the problem of evil. Before we turn to examining the further development of this Kantian antithesis in Hegel and Kierkegaard, let us examine the approach of Reformed Epistemology, which tried to reconcile this tension between the transcendent account of morality and the immanent account of religion.

2. Reformed Epistemologists' Alternative

One of the key claims proposed in the book is that belief is reasonable. In the fifth section of the second chapter I showed that Newman's attempt to find a reasonable *via media* between authoritarianism (exaggerating the principle of authority) and liberalism (exaggerating the principle of private judgment) was forced out of the Catholic theologi-

cal scene dominated by anti-modernism. Yet this controversy revealed the difference between arguments of reason being taken seriously and being turned into a rationalist ideology, which claimed that belief can be either proved or denied by means of reason.³³ This distinction between “reasonable” and “rationalistic” accounts of belief helps us to differentiate between Kant’s claim that the transcendent reference is practical and opposes the rationalist demand to prove the existence of God, freedom and immortality by means of speculative reason:

Thus by the practical law which commands the existence of the highest good possible in a world, the possibility of those objects [freedom, immortality and God] of pure speculative reason is postulated, and the objective reality which the latter could not assure them. By this the theoretical knowledge of pure reason does indeed obtain an accession... because practical reason indispensably requires their existence... But this extension of theoretical reason is no extension of speculative, that is, we cannot make any positive use of it in a *theoretical point of view*. (Kant, 1963, CPR:232)

Thus, we have to keep in mind that Kant is unwilling to propose a speculative solution to the problem of the self-sufficiency of human autonomy and the need for divine assistance. He rather holds the inconsistencies of claims to total human autonomy and yet to a need for transcendent help together. Kant’s connections between reason-belief-practice contribute to a non-foundationalist framework for a postmodern *apologia*, which puts the practical first. But in order to explore alternative solutions, I now examine an attempt to reconcile the Christian and the Enlightenment heritage by claiming that belief is rational because it is a necessary part of our noetic structure.

2.1 “Saving” Christian Foundations

In the field of epistemology a new group appeared in the late 1970s in the United States called “Reformed Epistemologists”, arguing for the ra-

33 Cf. *The Church Teaches*, 1954:28.

tionality of belief. They originated from a seminar organised at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. The name “Reformed Epistemology” points out that the group linked itself to the Reformed tradition, notably to John Calvin, and his interpretation by the Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid. From Calvin they have taken the position that belief in God cannot be derived from other premises, as it is the basic one. They tried to prove that Calvin called such belief rational, and that his concept of rationality was more proper than the Enlightenment one built up on the assumption of evidence. We can say that the Calvinist standpoint has given them space for philosophical reflection as well as some sort of warning that philosophical speculation can never stand on its own feet, but is always subordinated to the Christian revelation that has to be accepted with obedience, whilst, paradoxically, still keeping the term “rational”. But the Calvinist focus on obedience as the alternative to speculation brought another whole area of problems. Revelation embodied in Scripture was taken to be the highest authority, but how to use this highest authority was not specified. It meant that nothing could prevent individuals, like Calvin, claiming to be proper interpreters of the highest authority and thereby demanding obedience for themselves. Therefore, freedom of thought could be marked as irrational, as the only accepted rationality was within limits offered by “the proper interpreters”,³⁴ whose interpretation demanded for itself the authority of revelation as such. Belief in this way suffered by being turned into ideological systems, called revealed and rational at the same time. Such pitfalls also left their traces on Reformed Epistemology, and it has to be mentioned when we discuss the influence of the Reformed tradition.

2.2 *Against Evidentialism*

Reformed Epistemologists addressed an intellectual audience which, in their view, relied on evidence and counter-evidence, a position inherited from Enlightenment epistemology, from Hume in particular. They

34 Compare to Tracy’s claim that the authenticity of an interpreter is given by his/her practice, cf. 1981:69.

opposed evidentialism which, according to them, was most clearly expressed by the 19th century British mathematician and physicist, W. K. Clifford, who in his work *The Ethics of Belief* stated: 'It is wrong in all cases to believe on insufficient evidence' (1947:184).

The evidentialists claimed that if belief were rational, it would have to rest upon evidence, as only evidence could constitute its foundations. If there was not enough evidence, there was no good reason for believing in God. The question of evidence was a question of proofs and counter-proofs, and so we can speak here about theistic and anti-theistic evidentialism. The former tried to regain credibility for the classical arguments for the existence of God based on the method of induction.³⁵ The theistic evidentialists did not advocate the ontological argument as they considered it anti-inductive and anti-evidential. As K.J. Clark in *Return to Reason* emphasises, Hume, Darwin, Clifford and Mackie took another step, that can be summarised in two claims:

- i) It is irrational or unreasonable to believe in God in the absence of sufficient evidence.
- ii) There is no evidence for the proposition that God exists.³⁶

Their counter-arguments were mainly based on the lack of design and on the existence of evil. The statements were posed very powerfully, that one would expect quite a different sort of world from a wise and benevolent Designer, as Christianity believes God is, and so there is a bad designer or none at all – or, as Hume in the *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* stated: 'Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent. Is he able but not willing? then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?' (1991:157)³⁷

35 See Paley's design argument in *A View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794); Taylor's defence of the cosmological argument in *Metaphysics* (1983) and Swinburne's probabilistic approach in *The Existence of God* (1991).

36 Cf. Clark, K.J., 1990, *Return to Reason*: 5.

37 In Kant we find quite a different position: 'Thus what the study of nature and of man teaches us sufficiently elsewhere may well be true here also; that the unsearchable wisdom by which we exist is not less worthy of admiration in what it has denied than in what it has granted.' (1963, CPR: 246)

Reformed Epistemology grew from criticism of both kinds of evidentialism and tried to prove that inadequate methods are used, saying that there is always evidence as well as counter-evidence, and that 'evidentialism is irrelevant to the discussion of the rationality of belief' (Clark:119); that none of these arguments as well as the counter-arguments employ universally accepted premises. The proofs have no power to move an unbeliever to believe (by accepting the conclusion), the disproofs similarly do not automatically lead a believer to give up his faith. Instead of arguing towards or against some "object", as the evidentialists did, Reformed Epistemologists claimed that belief in God has to use another method, namely arguing from belief and not towards it, accepting the belief grounded in revelation as a starting point, and the rational reflection as a subsequent one.

Clark calls the evidentialist approach a "scientific hypothesis" method and deals with three of its critics who address the issue from different perspectives: William James, C.S. Lewis and Alvin Plantinga, who represents the Reformed Epistemologists' position.³⁸ For James, to believe or not to believe is, in the end, a matter of decision, which has practical consequences. He does not see the question of evidence as being identical with the question of truth. The evidentialists' demand 'either call my theory true or call it false' is an avoidable option, because one can simply withhold judgment on the theory. James defines the 'dead hypothesis' leading to the 'forced option' (Clark: 104), which people do not in fact consider as an option, because it does not influence their lives in practice. There is a similarity between James's and Kant's approach in that religious questions which rest on the merely speculative-theoretical level can be regarded as dead hypotheses; the priority does not rest in 'what to think', but in 'how to act'. Lewis says that we receive both, contrary as well as confirmatory evidence for the belief, but the context of scientific hypothesis in judging the score is in-

38 See James, W., 1985, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*; Lewis, C.S., 1964, *Grief Observed*; Plantinga, A., 1967, *God and Other Minds*; Plantinga and Wolterstorff (eds.), 1983, *Faith and Rationality*.

appropriate in a personal relation – which he considers the God-relationship to be.³⁹

2.3 *Belief as a Fundamental Part of Our Noetic Structure*

Reformed Epistemology drew from those two critics of the Cliffordian method the statement that the question of evidence is not primary to belief. It was pointed out that demanding evidence in personal relationships – to which the God-relationship belongs – can take perverse forms, when it removes the notions of belief and trust. The Reformed Epistemologists did not take James' volitionist approach, but like Kant, claimed rationality of belief. According to Plantinga it is as natural to the human mind to believe in God, and not believing is a defect. In *Reason and Belief in God* he states: "The fact is, Calvin thinks, one who does not believe in God is in an epistemically substandard position – rather like a man who does not believe that his wife exists, or thinks she is like a cleverly constructed robot and has no thoughts, feelings, or consciousness." (1983:66)

Belief in God is natural to our minds. This premise takes us to the link with Anselm's ontological argument, which was not used by the evidentialists, and follows from Kant's postulates of practical reason. The difference, however, is that Plantinga treats the problem theoretically, by means of modal logic, which is based on an analysis of model situations. Plantinga develops the Kantian notion of the existence of all possible worlds and the problem of evil in the following way: He says that the essence of each individual suffers from transcendent depravity which is caused by the Fall. This opens even the best possible world to evil. The Fall is assumed to be an objective fact in which the freedom of each individual fully participates.

39 'To believe that God – at least this God – exists is to believe that you as a person now stand in the presence of God as a Person. . . you are no longer faced with an argument which demands your assent, but with a Person who demands your confidence.' (Lewis, C.S., 1963, *A Grief Observed*: 26)

Plantinga uses the following example – if Charles steals chilli here, he will steal chilli in every possible world, as it is not due to the lack of design of the world, but to the depravity of Charles, that he steals. Any other world cannot take away Charles's disposition to steal without taking away at the same time the freedom that is an essential part of his personhood. It is logically impossible, according to Plantinga, that God would cause a free decision of Charles, as then it would not be a free decision. If Charles's freedom would not allow him to make a bad decision, his freedom would be taken away and this would affect the essence of his personhood given by God's creation. Plantinga emphasises that freedom, although it involves the possibility of an individual's depravity, is not a defect of creation, but a basis for a personal relationship with God. He uses modal logic to argue for the presumptions of the ontological argument, belief in the best possible God and the best possible creation. Rejecting belief in God, he says, is closer to madness than to error.⁴⁰ Against the evidentialists' induction method Plantinga, similarly to Kant, proposes the deductive method, which can be summarised in four points:

- i) We argue “from” and not “towards” belief.
- ii) Belief is a “foundational part of our noetic structure”.
- iii) Belief does not need any further justification, as it is “properly basic”.
- iv) As such, belief is “rational”.⁴¹

According to Plantinga, belief in God is prior to all speculative arguments; it is the starting point, and therefore evidentialist claims to derive it from other premises are mistaken. We do not begin from a position of neutrality, but either from belief in God or from unbelief. As was stated already, unbelief is seen by Plantinga as a defect, while belief ‘is the natural human condition’ (1983:66). He accepts Calvin's view that our noetic structure is divinely designed and has not been distorted

40 Compare to Anselm's answer to the Psalmist's “fool” (Ps 14:1; 53:1) in ‘Proslogion’, 1990, in *Fides quaerens intellectum*, 1990:35.

41 Cf. Plantinga, 1983: 50–66.

completely after the Fall. Plantinga says that access to the divine foundation only occurs if our noetic structure is “structured properly”,⁴² which means grounded in belief in God. He does not give any criteria for why this way of looking at noetic structure is “proper” and starting from unbelief “improper”. Yet, belief in God is claimed to be “properly basic” as it lies at the bottom of all other non-basic beliefs and therefore, does not need any further justification. Plantinga concludes that as such the “basic belief” in God is rational. However, it is not exactly clear what he means by this. Here is one of the main weaknesses of Plantinga, the lack of criteria.

Within Plantinga’s system of noetic structure there is a distinction between “basic beliefs” and “non-basic beliefs”, the former being ones ‘that one holds but not on the basis of other beliefs that one holds’, and the latter to being ‘beliefs that are held inferentially, on the evidential support of other beliefs that one holds’ (Clark:126). Plantinga attempts to overcome the problem of the lack of criteria by using a number of examples of basic beliefs: perceptual beliefs (the sky is blue), memory beliefs (based on testimony and appearing in “certain circumstances” (in which is not defined), beliefs in other minds (that there are persons other than myself), mathematical beliefs (here surprisingly Plantinga doesn’t use the example that $1+1=2$, but $2+2=4$, claiming later that $572+382=954$ is nonbasic belief), moral beliefs and religious beliefs. However, his examples are ambivalent and therefore multiply the problems of the lack of criteria. As Clark points out, it does not suffice to say that the ‘majority of our beliefs are in fact basic’, and ‘all of the beliefs produced by reasoning, are nonbasic, inferential beliefs.’ (130–131). And the ambiguity of Plantinga’s position is even stronger when he claims: ‘We made no normative judgments and we avoided calling some beliefs rational or irrational, right or wrong, true or false.’ (Clark:132) Plantinga mentions that some beliefs that we take as self-evident, and as such basic, are in fact false. Error is possible. We can, for example, think that we see a tree in a foggy distant place, and there is in fact a person. Criteria for the distinction between basic self-evident beliefs and illusions is

42 Plantinga does not give a sufficient account of what it means to be “properly structured”, but he works with the term in further statements.

missing and instead Plantinga emphasises “certain circumstances” under which we are capable of discerning, but does not specify them.

At this stage Plantinga rejects the evidentialists’ demand of superior justification external to belief by stating that external justification is an illusion, as we have explained previously, and that belief does not need any justification. He constructs the term “properly basic belief”, that is somehow stronger than “basic belief” (the criteria are lacking) and says that ‘properly basic beliefs are beliefs that are justified’ (Clark:132).⁴³ The term “justified” is linked with Plantinga’s desire to justify the rationality of belief, not belief itself. Plantinga says that we are justified in accepting properly basic belief without justification.⁴⁴

Plantinga’s position is that rational belief in God does not require evidential support. The belief is at the beginning not at the end, it is not a result of our intellectual investigation, but the initial commitment to it. The commitment is claimed to be rational, but, as was said, it is difficult, to see what exactly Plantinga means by the notion of “rationality”. Possibly we could say that belief is rational as it includes reason and subsequently directs it, but still there is no reason why the belief should not be called “volitional”, as it includes an individual decision, or “experiential” or even “empirical”, similarly assuming that evidence is dependent on the first condition of belief and as such is secondary. But these arguments are missing in Plantinga. He keeps the term “rational” in iso-

43 A similar point is made by Cornelius van Till: ‘A God of whom it is possible to ask intelligibly whether he exists is not the God of Scripture... It is an insult to this God to argue for his possible existence. An argument for his possible existence presupposes the idea that he may possibly not exist.’ (*A Christian Theory of Knowledge*, 1969:263)

44 Here Clark uses Reid’s arguments, that can be summarised in the following way: our noetic faculties typically produce justified beliefs, and we have a sufficient reason for it – the cognitive equipment has been given to us by the Creator. The guiding stream of epistemology since Descartes: Accept only what is indubitable or what can be established by absolutely certain evidence, using the Cartesian method of doubt: reject any belief that can be possibly doubted, employs a “guilty until proved innocent” principle of rationality. However, the “innocent until proved guilty” principle is more proper, as we ought to trust our noetic faculties, unless reason provides us with substantial grounds for questioning that belief. (Cf. Clark: 146–147)

lation and gives it an insufficient content. He tries to reconcile the conflict of the Christian and the Enlightenment habits of mind by means of giving the Enlightenment terminology a Christian content. Michalson criticised Kant for doing the same but in reverse.

Although Reformed Epistemology offers constructive criticisms of the evidentialist position, and of treating the existence of God as a scientific hypothesis, their use of modal logic in order to establish the rationality of belief ignores the Kantian emphasis on practice as a starting point. Thus, the transcendent reference is assumed but not established. Although Plantinga's proposal that we do not argue towards belief but from it, as belief is properly basic, is attractive for *apologia*, because it rejects the demands of superior justification and criteria external to belief, the lack of criteria makes such a statement subject to arbitrariness. Thus, D.Z. Phillips rightly criticises Plantinga for bringing psychology and relativism into epistemology: 'The question of whether something is self-evident to a person is different from the question of whether a person can see what is self-evident. . . in the absence of a criterion of basicity, anything, for example, belief in a Great Pumpkin, could be a basic proposition.' (1988:27–28). Criteria for basicity of belief are absent, and so is the whole idea of referential rationality of belief, as in our context belief does not refer to an everyday experience of most of the people.

D.Z. Phillips finds fault not only with Plantinga's lack of the majority of people⁴⁵. Against Plantinga's assumption that God's reality can be taken for granted, Phillips points out that this is not how the majority of people today would understand it. To go on assuming that belief in God or the need for belief in God and immortality is sufficient without need of any justification, and yet claiming its objectivity and rationality, as Kant,⁴⁶ and subsequently the Reformed Epistemologists did, is classified by Phillips as foundationalism. As was stated already in the first

45 Phillips writes that 'for them [the people of biblical times], God was manifest in all things. . . In that world it may have been possible to speak of the inescapable reality of God. In a certain sense, God's reality was taken for granted; all things spoke of him. But that world is not our world.' (1988:10–11)

46 According to Kant the practical point of view makes it possible to assume the objective reality of the existence of freedom, from which follows also existence of God and immortality (See CPR, 1963, 89).

chapter, Phillips defines it as follows: 'Foundationalism is the view that propositions are of two kinds, those which stand in need of evidence, and those which provide the required evidence. The latter are said to be foundational, since they do not stand in need of further evidence.' (1988: xiii) Thus, foundationalism can have an evidentialist form, that was criticised by Reformed Epistemologists, but also a fideist form, criticised by Phillips.

According to Phillips, we can ask if the basic propositions of a madman are as equally valid – and therefore rational – as the propositions of any other person, and without criteria of basicity, we will not be able to make a distinction. There is no reason why belief in God would have to be taken as a supreme position over belief in something different or unbelief. Therefore, a mature believer, according to Phillips, has to give up any attempts to prove or demonstrate the referential truth of the existence of God and rather concentrate on the story of belief in God within a society sharing a particular religious grammar, rather like Cupitt or Moore proposed. He recognises difficulties in issues such as how belief appears to an unbeliever, who has his own criteria. However, Phillips's criticisms do not allow the taking of any truth-claims as foundational and thus as justified in treating one system as better or truer than another. As we are never in a position of a neutral observer or able to see things externally, from above or from the divine perspective, we can but live out our faith without any universalist claims. The point Phillips makes is that in order to be true to our faith, we have to give up looking for any transcendent foundations of our belief;⁴⁷ either evidentialist, trying to prove the existence of God by a chain of inductions that are claimed to be evident; or rationalist-fideist, claiming that our postulates of belief are rational.

Rationality of belief as proposed by Plantinga and criticised by Phillips, has one vital defect if compared to the rationality of belief found in Kant. While for Kant, who claimed that the existence of God, immortality and freedom were not only 'subjectively satisfying' but also 'objectively valid',⁴⁸ it was practice which gave access to such under-

47 For a distinction between belief and faith – *fides qua* – *fides quae*, see glossary.

48 Cf. Michalson, 1990:20.

standing,⁴⁹ Plantinga approached it from the point of view of a speculation based on modal logic and lost Kant's emphasis that transcendent reference is practical, and Phillips denied that the practical involved the transcendent.⁵⁰ In Phillips's understanding the 'distinctions between real and the unreal get their sense within epistemic practices.' (1988:xiv) The foundationalist perspective is criticised for its claims to referential rationality,⁵¹ but as the following quotation demonstrates, his position identifies foundationalism with foundations of belief:⁵²

Theological foundationalism can take many forms. For example, it is said that theism is the implicit foundation of religious belief. Others say that religious belief depends on the outcome of historical evidence. Alternatively, it is said that religious belief is grounded in "religious facts" or "religious history". Again it has been said that religious belief is based on religious experience; an experience given prior to all religious beliefs and theologies. (1988: xvi)

49 Cf. Kant, 1963, CPR: 231–233.

50 Phillips says: 'The foundationalist does not arrive at his commitment to his foundational propositions as a result of intellectual investigation. On the contrary, he takes this commitment for granted in his investigations. He trusts in his epistemic practices... Further, foundationalists and Reformed epistemologists regard epistemic practices as though they were descriptions of a reality which lies beyond them.' (1988:xiii.xiv)

51 Michalson's definition of rationality is at the centre of the dispute, as he says that 'rational' means 'constrained and shaped in ways that are independent of the thinker.' (1990:21)

52 Compare to the differences between foundationalism and foundations as pointed out in the Introduction.

3. Summary: Parting of the Ways

Chapter Three has dealt with the problem of how philosophy made sense of religious truth-claims in a context in which the general assumptions of belief in the God of the Christian Creeds⁵³ ceased to be taken for granted. I showed that Kant's shift in thinking towards the subject and its autonomy produced an alternative to metaphysical foundationalism, nevertheless with its own problems.

First, Kant half-maintained the continuity with the past by keeping a Christian language, while giving it an Enlightenment meaning.⁵⁴ Kant still spoke of the importance of Christ, since in his understanding, Christ personified the idea of good principle, and therefore provided for us a good example.⁵⁵ Thus, Kant became the father of Liberal Protestantism in holding that rationality of belief was a priority, however much the actual content of belief had to be shifted.

Second, Kant had to limit the sphere in which rational belief was referential to the realm of practical reason. Although he claimed that the moral law revealed freedom, God and immortality, this claim had no use once the speculative was separated from the practical.⁵⁶ This attractive approach, however, had one disadvantage, the moral law had taken the highest place and thus enjoyed supremacy over a religion of love with a personal, living and acting God. For Kant practice was a moral practice, the religious element was secondary. It had its place as long as it helped people to be autonomous, which meant moral.⁵⁷ But God, in the final analysis, was a "mere idea" (Kant, 1963, CPR:88).

Third, Kant's rationalist alternative involved a tension between the totality of human autonomy and the need for transcendent assistance, once human autonomy was confronted with the problem of radical evil. Kant recognised that not only good, but also evil affected the roots of

53 In particular, belief in that God became man in Christ or in a bodily resurrection, where some extra-human assistance is required.

54 Cf. Michalson: 140.

55 Compare to Cupitt's religious requirement, Ch.One, 2.1.

56 Cf. Kant, 1963, CPR:232.

57 Cf. Kant, 1963, CPR:88.

our being and that a “supernatural co-operation” was needed for moral regeneration. Nevertheless, as his God was a passive idea, the in-breaking atonement from God’s side was hardly possible. As Michalson points out, Kant made a construction of ‘autonomous atonement’ (114): if we try to do our best, we can hope for a divine supplement – but the divine supplement must be something which is already present in us, in our reason. Kant returned to what Korsgaard calls an “end-in-oneself”. The transcendent can be contemplated, both, as numinous (the starry sky)⁵⁸ and as practically necessary (the moral law);⁵⁹ but it is a passive transcendent, here and now entirely dependent on people, as in the revisionist apologetics of Cupitt and Moore, except that Kant is aware that we do not gain anything if we extend our practical postulates to the realm of speculation.

Kant is left with the unresolved dilemma which lies at the heart of his claim that belief is rational, while the tension between radical human autonomy and the need for transcendent assistance is theoretically harmonised in Reformed Epistemology. There the rationality of belief is even more questionable, as its claim operates against a background which did not recognise the disappearance of pre-Enlightenment culture in which people took belief for granted.

Phillips does away not only with historical evidence for religious facts, but also with the religious history as such and with religious experience, which seriously limits Christian practice based on the Creeds. A better solution to the tension between the referential and the practical was proposed by Tyrrell in *Lex Orandi*, which provides a critique of Kant and Reformed Epistemology (even if Tyrrell chronologically preceded Plantinga by more than half a century):

This truth of the Creed’s correspondence to the spirit of Christianity is only another aspect of its practical or “regulative” truth. It is by living in the light of these beliefs, by regulating our conduct according to them that we can reproduce and foster the spirit of Christ within ourselves. They furnish us with an effectual guide to eternal life. (1904:56–57)

58 Cf. Kant, 1963, CPR:260.

59 Cf. Kant, 1963, CPR: 88.

If we look back at Kant's epistemology, he subjected the religious to the moral, when "it is not essential, and therefore not necessary for everyone to know what God does or has done for his salvation,' but it is essential to know *what he himself has to do* in order to be worthy of this assistance.' ('The Philosophical Theory of Religion', 1963, CPR:360) He substituted rational religion for the continuous development of traditional belief, when he gave new meanings to old concepts, such as "the Kingdom of God", "salvation", "rebirth", "new creation". Yet, he was in accord with the tradition he was to leave behind, when he understood language as symbolic and criticised the turning of a 'symbol into a schema' (1963, CPR: 162). The difficulty for a Christian *apologia* in Kant is the degree to which one can change the meaning of symbols privately and give up their historical continuity and significance for the community, from which they come. But from examining the position of Kant and his critics, it also follows that the reasonableness of a Christian belief can be established other than by means of descriptive language, taking more into account the symbolic rather than the schematic.

Kant's emphasis on the practical avoided the problem of creating a gulf between reason and belief, between philosophy and theology. While as a philosopher he did not feel obliged to maintain the continuity of belief within a Christian tradition, he sought to make his beliefs consistent with knowledge in other fields. Kant's practical point of view does not split reality into different pieces. Although, as Michalson pointed out, Kant's epistemology involved inconsistencies that were vital for further developments, such as a claim to total human autonomy and the need for divine assistance or for transcendent morality and immanent religion, his practical point of view is capable of holding the opposites together. The problem arises when Kantian notions of reason and belief are treated theoretically. It is then, when the split between faith and reason appears, two ways held together by Kant, that we move to the antithesis between Hegel and Kierkegaard. Hegel's notion of the Absolute Spirit as a human construct and Kierkegaard's language of paradox creating a gulf between reason and belief, the human and the divine, are examined as the genesis story of

the modern conflict between philosophy and theology,⁶⁰ that has been, at least partly, passed on to postmodernity.⁶¹

- 60 'There is an important difference between the philosopher and the theologian. The philosopher is the guardian of grammar. His concern is to free us from the conceptual confusions which bewitch us. The theologian, however, is the guardian of Faith. He is not content with giving perspicuous representations of religious agreements and differences. He has the task of proclaiming, from among these agreements and differences, his own religious and theological perspective. The philosopher informs, but the theologian incites.' (Phillips, 1988:xvi-xvii)
- 61 Gillian Rose speak of '*a trauma within reason itself*', that grew from a failure to understand Judaism (and a similar claim can be made about Christianity) and Modernity. She says: 'Jerusalem against Athens has become the emblem for revelation against reason, for the hearing of the commandments against the search for the first principles, for the love of the neighbour against explanation of the world, for the prophet against the philosopher. When the common concern of Athens and Jerusalem for the establishment of justice, whether immanent or transcendent, is taken into consideration, these contrasts of form and method lose their definitive status.' (*Judaism and Modernity*, 1993:1)

CHAPTER FOUR: HISTORY AND IMMANENCE

The first stream of religious epistemology following from Kant is represented by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), who develops the immanent strand of the Kantian dilemma: the end-in-ourselves. His approach is purely objective and Kantian emphasis on the subject's autonomy is lost. Then, Hegel's "solution" does away with the transcendent reference completely and claims that there is nothing transcendent, but the immanent is absolute and as such exhaustive of reality.¹ Hegel concentrates on the history of religion, culture and society, which, according to him, provides us with explanations of why and how their ideas, belief and practices developed. Thus, in this chapter I first give a brief account of Hegel's method of immanence, then I look at his usage of Kant: how he 'abolishes' him and then emerges from his shadow. In the second part I examine Hegel's early understanding of Christianity as a positive, counter-natural religion, and his later insertion of Christianity into the development of humankind towards what he calls the Absolute Spirit. In the concluding discussion I consider further developments of the Hegelian solution to the tension between the transcendent and the

1 However, I am aware that there are alternative readings of Hegel, which contest the one followed in this book. They see the transcendent as challenged yet dialectically included into the Absolute. Among others, Hans Küng in *The Incarnation of God: An Introduction to Hegel's Theological Thought as Prolegomena to a Future Christology* points out that Hegel's dialectics makes it possible to speak of the God who is not separated from the world, but operates within it, as a contrast to an immovable, immutable and unhistorical (or suprahistorical) being. James Yerkes in *The Christology of Hegel* explores the sense in which Hegel sees incarnation as a symbolic event, which includes both the immanent historical and the transcendent cosmic and universal claims to truth. Jean-Yves Lacoste in *Expérience et Absolu: questions disputées sur l'humanité de l'homme* examines the phenomenology of liturgy in the light of an inclusive interpretation of Hegel's dialectics with an emphasis on its eschatological drive.

immanent as present in Kant. I look at the epistemological trend leading from Hegel to Phillips, whose critique of Reformed Epistemology I presented in the previous chapter, and ask whether the Hegelian system can stand as an alternative to the unresolved Kantian dilemma concerning total human autonomy and the need for transcendent assistance, and what impact the system has on a Christian *apologia*.

1. The First Option: Hegel

The method and criteria which build up Hegel's system of religious epistemology take a different shape within three main periods of Hegel's writing. First, the Frankfurt period (1795–1800) when he is emerging from the Kantian "shadow"² and searching for reasons why Christianity had been transformed into an authoritarian and dogmatic system that abolished human autonomy. (i) His first religious epistemology is found in his *Early Theological Writings*, in English collected under the title *On Christianity*, the two main parts of which are 'The Positivity of the Christian Religion' (PCHR) and 'The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate' (SCH). (ii) The middle period (1800–1808), when Hegel co-operated with Schelling in producing a *Critical Journal of Philosophy*, which occasioned his need for philosophical system, later expressed in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*,³ where he departs from Fichte's and Schelling's notions of monism and dualism, which he had previously found attractive.⁴ (iii) From 1808 onwards we can speak of Hegel's

2 Hegel was born in Stuttgart in 1770, he descended from one of the protestant families that fled from Austria during the recatholicisation period. He witnessed the time of the French Revolution, which occurred while he was still at the University of Tübingen. During his studies he was influenced by Greek philosophy, in particular by Heraclitus and his notion of the unity of opposites, by Kant, Fichte and Schelling, as well as by the poet Holderlin.

3 *Phenomenology of Spirit* was first published in 1807. Hegel had prepared a new edition just before he died of cholera in 1831.

4 For monism and dualism, see glossary.

later thought expanding Phenomenology into developed systems based on the notion of the Absolute Spirit. In 1808–1816, when he was a rector of the Gymnasium at Nuremberg, he worked on the *Science of Logic*. From 1816–1818 Hegel held a chair of philosophy at Heidelberg, from which period we have his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*, a compendium of his system consisting of Logic, Philosophy of Nature, and Philosophy of Spirit. From 1818–1831 Hegel held the chair of philosophy in Berlin, where he published his *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*. After his death his students published his lectures on Aesthetics, History of Philosophy, Philosophy of History, Philosophy of Religion and supplements to the Encyclopedia and the Philosophy of Right. My aim is to analyse some of the typical themes in his religious epistemology which develop from his early criticisms to a grand explanatory theory. Thus, I trace his moves from a morally based “general principle of all judgment” concerning religion⁵ (drawing mainly on *On Christianity*) to his concept of the Absolute Spirit, that guarantees his method of immanence, and in a challenged form includes his concept of Christianity (relying on his middle and later writings, in particular *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, *Science of Logic*, and *Encyclopedia*). This account claims to be faithful to the development of Hegel’s own thinking and yet sufficiently selective for my purpose. My ambition is not to give an overall picture of Hegel’s attitudes towards religion and their epistemological underpinning throughout different periods of his thought, nor to give a complete presentation of his philosophy.

1.1 Method of Immanence

Merold Westphal in *History and Truth in Hegel’s Phenomenology* defines Hegel’s philosophy as a refutation of Kant, arguing that Hegel’s method gives up any claim to a destructive dichotomy between the transcendent

5 As the following section shows, for Hegel the ‘general principle of all judgments’ concerning religion is rooted in human morality. See ‘The Positivity of Christian Religion’ (PCHR), in *On Christianity*, 1961:68.

and the immanent, and instead establishes a total immanence that exclusively gives access to an absolute knowledge:

In his first critique of Kant Hegel defines the task of true philosophy as the absolute overcoming of all oppositions. This is accomplished only in knowing the Absolute. The Kantian philosophy, however, takes as its task not the knowing of the Absolute, but the critique of our knowing capacity. Thus it remains in the realm of opposition and in the strictest sense cannot be called philosophy. In fact it mistakes the death of philosophy for its highest fulfilment. (1990:1)

In Hegel's enthusiasm Kant is overcome, as 'knowledge is no longer compelled to go beyond itself.' (Westphal, 1990:187) Instead of Kant's transcendental method of reflecting on the nature of knowledge, Hegel's philosophical project proposes the development of self-consciousness,⁶ both on the personal and on the social level and ultimately on the all inclusive level of the Absolute Spirit. A self-conscious person and a self-conscious society do not need any transcendent substitute for the divine which is claimed to be exclusively within them.⁷ It is interesting that Hegel's critique concentrates on Kant's first *Critique of Pure Reason* and leaves behind the second *Critique of Practical Reason*, which enabled Kant to claim transcendent reference as being embedded in the realm of practice. For Hegel, as later for Cupitt, any claim to transcendent reference is altogether an illusion: 'Nothing is hidden, everything is manifest, nothing is *wrong* with the manifest, faith chooses and embraces the manifest, and all nostalgia for any sort of Elsewhere or other-than-this is to be forgotten.... Such is, I believe, the final message of an incarnational religion.' (Cupitt, 1987:8) With Hegel we encounter this strict separation from the transcendent, and yet a strong critique of the

6 Merold Westphal in *History and Truth in Hegel's Phenomenology* identifies 'self-consciousness' in Hegel as achieving subjectivity (1990:188).

7 Westphal attempts to save the concept of transcendence in Hegel, therefore he speaks of a 'horizontal transcendence': 'Further, the primacy is given to the historical development of Spirit towards its absoluteness', which 'gives a horizontal transcendence in time which supplements the vertical transcendence of society to the individual.' (1990:201)

incarnational religion as something, which claims that our identity, although embodied, comes from outside.⁸ This critique as well as Hegel's use of the method of immanence once he establishes the theory of the Absolute Spirit, will be explored in the second part of this chapter. To characterise Hegel's approach as a refutation of Kant does not exhaust the problem of how Hegel understood Kant and whether or how he used some of his ideas. Therefore, before elaborating Hegel's own system, let me pause and look at different levels of Hegel's use of Kant. This will provide me with a focus for Hegel's method of immanence in the problem of how to relate knowledge, belief and practice together, which is one of the key problems considered in this book. Then, as Hegel does not separate the individual and the social dimensions, his method of immanence will be examined in the context of society, its history and the religious forms it has developed.

1.2 Hegel's Use of Kant

In spite of the difference between Kant's and Hegel's epistemological methods, which Westphal points out, there are two key areas present in Kant which Hegel took as starting points for his position, namely the strong emphases on reason and morality.

Hegel accepted from Kant the central position of reason and took it as an *a priori* presumption.⁹ However his understanding of reason and of something being rational differs from that of Kant. In *On Christianity*, where his departure from Kant becomes more visible, Hegel speaks of two capacities of reason: (i) 'Reason sets up moral, necessary, and universally valid laws'; (ii) 'reason is in a position to provide its law with motives capable of creating respect for the law or inclining the will to act in accordance with the law.' (1961, PCHR:143.144) Later, Hegel identifies Reason with his concept of Spirit, stating: 'Reason is Spirit when its certainty of being all reality has been raised to truth, and it is conscious

8 Cf. Hegel, 1961, PCHR: 116.144.

9 Hegel speak of 'the idea of *Reason*, of the certainty that, in its particular individuality, it has being absolutely *in itself*, or is all reality.' (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, 1977:§ 230)

of itself as its own world, and of the world as itself' (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, 1977:§438). The Reason-Spirit is seen as the actuality of the 'spiritual essence' and the 'ethical substance' in the self-consciousness (1977:§438–439).

While for Kant the meaning of the word "rational" was bound up with being 'constrained and shaped in the ways that are independent of the thinker' (Michalson: 21), for Hegel it is the thinker who imposes "reasonableness" on objects.¹⁰ Then, in the Foreword to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, J.N. Findlay shows the dialectic leading from an individual and a social understanding of 'reasonableness' to the higher spiritual stage, as Hegel understood it:

Hegel now characteristically moves from a reasonableness concerned to *discover* itself in objects to a reasonableness concerned to *impose* itself on objects through overt action. After a few initial moves...Hegel begins by discussing the hedonistic approach to the world, the reasonableness which makes everything in the world, including the body and soul of another person, minister to one's own satisfaction... This game, however, also interferes with the parallel quixotism of others... The dialectic then swings over from arbitrary subjectivity to the arbitrary objectivity of *Sachlichkeit*. A man identifies himself with a *Sache*, a thing or a task, which is his own, and which he pursues without regard to external success or approval. Everyone else is similarly supposed to be devoting himself to his own *Sache*. Such disinterested fulfilment of tasks rests, however, on self-deception... We therefore move to a universalism which is *substantial* as well as subjective, the universalism of the ethical life of an actual community, whose laws and customs clothe the bare bones of ethical prescriptions with living flesh, and make the universalising life genuinely possible. We pass from merely Reasonable (*Vernunft*) to the higher stage of the Spiritual (*Geist*). (1977:xix-xx)

10 Here a potential confusion in terminology should be noted, as Hegel's use of the concept of "reasonable" contrasts with its use in the rest of this book (see glossary). The English translation distinguishes between the concepts of "reasonable" and "rational", while in German both appear as *vernünftig*, being derived from *Vernunft* (reason, but also sense and judgment). Thus, when talking of "reasonableness" in connection with Hegel, we have to keep in mind that for him "reasonableness" is our imposed judgment on things.

Against the Kantian need to ‘Act so that the maxim of thy will can always at the same time hold good as a principle of universal legislation’ (1963, CPR:119), Hegel claims that testing alternatives in our decision-making as if against something transcendent is a sign that we are incapable of being reasonable and moral in ourselves and for ourselves. Hegel writes:

I could make whichever of them I liked the law, and just as well neither of them, and as soon as I start to test them I have already begun to tread an unethical path. By acknowledging the *absoluteness* of the right, I am within the ethical substance; and this substance is thus the *essence* of self-consciousness. But this self-consciousness is the *actuality* and *existence* of the substance, its *self* and its *will*. (1977:§437)

Thus, Hegel partly uses Kantian terminology, but in both cases, that of reason and morality, it radically changes its content. In Kant the categorical imperative transcends reason, something which can be seen in his understanding of the ungrounded moral value.¹¹ The early Hegelian understanding of moral law is based on duties, which are self-evident and therefore universally recognised; however, ‘The judgment that something is a duty cannot possibly be left to a majority vote.’ (1961, PCHR:134–135) As Hegel stated before, none of them ‘arise from the rights of others at all. I have simply imposed them on myself voluntarily, not because the moral law so requires.’ (1961, PCHR:96) Moral law is dependent on a subject: ‘The sole moral motive, respect for the moral law, can be aroused only in a subject in whom the law is itself the legislator, from whose own inner consciousness this law proceeds.’ (1961, PCHR:144) The subject not only recognises moral law, but gives it. This Hegel derives from his assumption that freedom is the essence of morality,¹² and concludes that each individual’s reason has: ‘The right to legislate for one’s self, to be responsible to one’s self alone for administering one’s own law’ (1961, PCHR:145). This conclusion appears again and again throughout his writings, which document the importance he ascribes to it: When he criticises Christianity, when he praises Greeks

11 See Ch. Three, 1.2.

12 Cf. Hegel, 1961, PCHR:69.

and Romans, he comes to the same point: 'As free men the Greeks and Romans obeyed laws laid down by themselves' (1961, PCHR:154). Thus, for Hegel, moral law is a product of the human mind.¹³

Hegel goes on to hold that the data in this world are not simply given, in any pure unmediated form, but it is always us who encounter them, they are thus always subject to categories we use in order to make sense of them. Stephen Houlgate in *Freedom, Truth and History* draws attention to the comparison between Kant and the later Hegel: 'In his philosophical Encyclopedia (1830) Hegel calls this framework of categories the "metaphysics" which informs all our experience.' (1991:6) This claim differs from the Kantian emphases on the non-speculative content of what comes *a priori* and the informative character of experience. Hegel is not prepared to give this status to our means of understanding, which subsequently in Hegel's followers opens possibilities of manipulating history¹⁴ or seeing the world as a set of fictions, as I demonstrated in the first chapter.¹⁵ Houlgate states:

Indeed, Kant is not simply an agnostic about the nature of the world in itself, he suggests very strongly that it is not organised in terms of our categories: the categories through which we comprehend the world allow us to see the world in a light that is particular to us, but they do not allow us to see things in the true light in which they themselves stand. (7)

This difference between Kant and Hegel vitally influences whether a transcendent dimension of religion is assumed or rejected. While Kant refuses the possibility of our categories reaching to the transcendent dimension, Hegel does away with the transcendent dimension completely, as, according to him, where our categories cannot reach, there is nothing to be reached.¹⁶ The transcendent is, in Hegel, fully substituted by the immanent developing itself in history, which, again, is one of the late Hegelian themes. Thus, Hegel opposes what he calls the constancy of

13 Cf. Hegel, 1961, PCHR:157.178.

14 Compare to the Nazi or the Communist interpretations of history, both referring to Hegel, the first *via* Nietzsche, the second *via* Marx.

15 See Ch. One, 1.1; 2.2.

16 S. Houlgate in *Freedom, Truth and History* sees this problem of doing away with the transcendent as related to the rejection of an unmediated experience of the

Kantian categories.¹⁷ According to him, there is a false opposition between the historical and the absolute. Once we bring the transcendent down to earth, history and the truth become inseparable.¹⁸ Houlgate summarises it as follows:

For him [Hegel] philosophical ideas, religious beliefs, aesthetic forms and political constitutions do not have a permanent, unchanging validity, but are the specific products of specific times and places and must be understood in the context of the time and place in which they emerged. (1991:13)¹⁹

As I showed, Hegel, while employing some of the Kantian themes, such as the importance of reason and morality, distances himself from Kant's language of the transcendent. In Hegel there is no dichotomy between the divine and the human, the absolute and the historical. On one hand the historical is presented as the real with flesh and bones, as opposed to the transcendent which is criticised for being a grand scheme of the past, now superseded. On the other hand Hegel's approach raises

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world: 'Hegel's philosophy is... challenging the claim that our experience of the world can ever be direct and unmediated.' (1991:5)

17 Houlgate points out that for Kant 'different scientists and philosophers may have propounded different theories about the world, but the fundamental categories of human understanding with which these scientists and philosophers operated – categories such as unity, plurality, possibility or necessity – have remained constant, in Kant's view, throughout history... In Hegel's eyes things are not so simple. Certain categories – being, for example – may well be universal; but others, such as cause and effect, or force and expression, are to be found, according to him, only in more advanced cultures.' (1991:8–9)

18 Cf. Houlgate: 26.

19 Hegel himself defines this relation as follows: 'The first thought that may strike us in connection with the history of philosophy is that this subject itself involves at once an inner contradiction, because philosophy aims at knowing what is imperishable, eternal and absolute. Its aim is truth. But history relates the sort of thing which has existed at one time but at another has perished, superseded by its successor. If we start from the fact that truth is eternal, then it cannot fall into the sphere of the transient and it has no history. But if it has a history, and history is only a display of a series of past forms of knowledge, then truth is not going to be found in it, since truth is not something past.' (*Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 1985:11)

a question as to how far his system represents a new grand theory with its own absolute rules. This question leads us to an examination of Hegel's position, first with regard to criteria employed for evaluating religion, and second to grounding his principle of total immanence in the dialectic progression of the Spirit towards the Absolute.

2. History, Religion and Spirit

In this second part I am going to demonstrate, that Hegel's criteria for evaluating religion are at the heart of the split between *apologia* and apologetics. His emphasis on the immanent and the historical were, in a moderate form, taken up by the *apologia* of Newman, Loisy and Tyrrell. His doing away with the transcendent was, in contrast, followed by the apologetics of Cupitt and Moore. Their approach, however, was anticipated by powerful interpretations of Hegel's notion of religion in Feuerbach, Marx, Freud and Durkheim, which have influenced scholarship as well as popular thought up till now. Ludwig Feuerbach in *The Essence of Christianity* states that in Hegel's view 'the object and contents of the Christian Religion are altogether human' (1957:14) and radicalises the relationship between religion and atheism as follows: 'What yesterday was still religion is no longer such today; and what today is atheism, tomorrow will be religion' (1957:32); Karl Marx identifies religion as "the opium of the people";²⁰ Sigmund Freud speaks of religion as a "wishful illusion" based on a father complex and a "obsessional

20 The full quotation goes as follows: 'Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of people. The abolition of religion as illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness.' (Marx, K., 1957, 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right' in Marx and Engels, *On Religion*: 42)

neurosis”;²¹ Emile Durkheim claims that religion is “something eminently social”;²² all of them develop Hegel’s theme of the death of transcendent grand stories. Similarly, Nietzsche’s claim of the “death of God”²³ as well as Derrida’s deconstruction and Lyotard’s announcement of the death of metanarratives²⁴ find their roots in Hegel. Therefore, while analysing Hegel’s approach to religion, we should be permanently aware of the impact it has had on religious epistemology and on shifting foundations of apologetical discourse.

2.1 Criticisms of Christianity

In *On Christianity* Hegel’s editors included the essay on ‘The Positivity of Christian Religion’, which begins with a definition of what Hegel calls the “general principle” by which religion can be measured:

I remark here that the general principle to be laid down as a foundation for all judgments on the varying modifications, forms, and spirit of the Christian religion is this – that the aim and essence of all true religion, our religion included, is human morality, and that all the more detailed doctrines of Christianity... have their worth and their sanctity appraised according to their close or distant connection with that aim. (1961, PCHR:68)

Everything else in religion is measured by this principle in Hegel’s early thought. Human morality has, of course, human roots, as was shown previously, and not transcendent ones. Still it is connected with another virtue, namely freedom. Lack of freedom is for Hegel one of the reasons why he despises Jewish and Christian positivity in religion.²⁵ He de-

21 For a ‘wishful illusion’ see Freud, S., 1985, *Civilisation, Society and Religion*: 212.226–227; for an ‘obsessional neurosis’, see Freud, S. 1955, *An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*: 61–71.

22 Cf. Durkheim, E., 1915, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*: 10.

23 Cf. Nietzsche, F., 1909, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*: 6.

24 See, Ch. One, 1.1.2.

25 This view with regard to Christianity later changes, and in *Phenomenology of Spirit* he proposes an alternative interpretation. Westphal summarised it as fol-

scribes the believer as a man, who 'is too humble to ascribe most of his moral disposition to his own virtuous powers...he is like an emancipated slave and knows no law at all...he could not regard his reason as free, as a master, but only as a servant' (1961, PCHR:79–80). In his criticism of Christianity we will see this suppression of the freedom of human reason, and since, in Hegel freedom of human reason means the superiority of human reason, this gives way to the acceptance of anything on the ground of authority. He points out that on this ground fights, murders, betrayals, stealing, etc. were accepted and justified.²⁶

Hegel's understanding of Jesus is similarly subjected to the general principle of human morality. Jesus was, according to him, a national reformer who failed in the end. Hegel oscillates here between two pictures of Jesus: one of them as 'a teacher of a positive religion' (what Hegel means by positive religion will be defined in the following paragraphs); another describes a man who had the pain of seeing the complete failure of his zealous attempt to introduce freedom and morality into his nation where the spirit of free religion had been killed; his successors then made out of him an object of their slavish service, and in this way Christianity become a positive religion.²⁷

Why Hegel introduces the concept of "positive religion" and what he means by that can be demonstrated through a distinction between "natural" and "positive" religion. He introduces the distinction by an *a priori* assumption that 'human nature is one and single' (1961, PCHR:167) and a conclusion following from it: therefore, 'there is only

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lows: 'Hegel's hostility towards orthodox Christianity has not lessened since the days just following his seminary education. The difference is that now he sees other possibilities in the Christian tradition. These other possibilities lie in the fact that Christianity is not only a religion of Father and Son, but also of Spirit. It teaches not only incarnation but also community. In the context of this community the immediacy and sensuous individuality in which the truth at first appears as an historical fact is replaced by the mediation and universality in which "God's individual self-consciousness [the incarnation expressed in Jesus] is transformed into something universal, into the congregation."' (1990:192–193)

26 Cf. Hegel, 1961, PCHR:163.

27 Cf. Hegel, 1961, PCHR:179–181.

one natural religion,... while there may be many positive religions.' (1961, PCHR:167) Then Hegel offers a detailed description of the rise and characteristics of positive religion, while natural religion is not explicitly defined. The fragmentary statements of Hegel on the "natural religion" propose the following picture: it is one, and it is bound up with human nature. It takes different forms according to the original imagery of distinct nations, it brings up different gods, angels, devils, sacred stories, public festivals, national games.²⁸ Natural religion is not merely a matter of an individual and god or gods, but is the religion of a community.²⁹ Natural religion grows from the security of immanence, namely that the eternal and self-subsistent is within the human heart,³⁰ that its moral law is not given in words, but rules the person invisibly, it is built up on freedom, reason and the universal recognition of values.³¹ The "positive religion" is defined by Hegel as follows, 'a positive religion is a contranatural or a supernatural one, containing concepts and information transcending understanding and reason and requiring feelings and actions which would not come naturally to men... obedience without any spontaneous interest.' (1961, PCHR:167) Religion becomes positive when it takes as its essence doctrines that are 'postulated, but not by reason, and... even in conflict with reason, or else such that it required belief on authority alone, even if it did accord with reason.' (1961, PCHR:74)

According to these definitions Hegel in his early writings defines Christianity as a whole, as well as Judaism, as a positive religion and offers detailed criticisms of its doctrine and practice. Before looking at these, however, it is important to note what idea of Christianity Hegel has in mind when he is criticising it. In agreement with Western Chris-

28 Cf. Hegel, 1961, PCHR:145.

29 Hegel most often uses as examples of natural religion the Greek or Roman religions, where he illustrates the communitarian element as follows: 'The idea of his country or of his state was the invisible and higher reality for which he strove, which impelled him to effort... Comforted by this idea, his own individuality vanished;... It could never or hardly ever have struck him to ask or beg for persistence or eternal life for his own individuality.' (1961, PCHR:154-155)

30 Hegel, 1961, PCHR:157.

31 Hegel, 1961, PCHR:134-135-155.

tianity he emphasises the central position of Christology. In ‘The Spirit of Christianity’ he writes: ‘Their religion, their faith in pure life, had hung on the individual Jesus.’ (1961, SCH:291) However, Hegel interprets Jesus in his own manner which, as with Kant, anticipates statements of Liberal Protestantism.³² This can be most clearly seen in his understanding of resurrection:

in their eyes their dead friend would not have remained just dead. Grief for the decaying body would have gradually yielded to the intuition of his divinity. The incorruptible spirit and the image of purer manhood would have risen for them out of his grave....his divinity is a deification of man (1961, SCH:291–292).

Christianity is, thus, characterised as a religion of the group that created its own God.³³ When we look at Hegel’s criticisms of Christianity, it is important to keep in mind the picture of Christianity with which he operates. His criticisms, then, can be summarised as follows:

- i) Christianity is unnatural and ignores the freedom of reason.³⁴
- ii) The place of reason was taken by masses of miracles, on the basis of which decisions were made and convictions adopted, and thus life was bound with objects and conditioned by something coming from outside.³⁵
- iii) Any possible belief in human potentialities was turned into a sin, laws were made dominant, while the sensuous side of an individual was suppressed.³⁶SCH:239.

32 See Ch.Two, 4.1.2.

33 Hegel states that ‘worship of this being [Jesus] is now the religion of the group’ (1961, SCH:292)

34 Hegel grounds this statement in the following two reasons: (i) it demolished the original religious imagery of distinct nations and forced them to accept the Jewish one, to which they have no natural relationship (cf. 1961, PCHR:145–146); apart from the nature of nations also the nature of individuals is suppressed and subjected to the command of faith (cf. 1961, PCHR:116).

35 Hegel, 1961, PCHR:163; SCH:221.

36 Hegel, 1961, PCHR:159–160;

- iv) Young people were educated not to use their own standards to judge as the Christian religion proclaimed that the moral law was something coming from outside of us and something given.³⁷
- v) While in Judaism, only actions were commanded, the church went further and commanded feelings, which was a contradiction in terms.³⁸
- vi) For keeping faithfulness, the dispositions of gratitude and fear were used.³⁹
- vii) The fear was of punishment and presupposed an alien being, the lord of reality, against whom it was a crime to refuse reverence.⁴⁰
- viii) The Kingdom of Heaven was not to be of this world, therefore this life was never complete in itself, and the chance to flee from this life was offered.⁴¹
- ix) There was a confusion between object and subject in sacraments, the spirit of Jesus, love, became attached to something which could be destroyed, i.e. in the Lord's Supper, the bread was to be eaten and the wine drunk; therefore they could not be something divine. As the intensity of feeling was separated from the intellect, worship was incomplete, something divine was promised and then it melted away in the mouth.⁴²
- x) Anything could be done on behalf of God, as there was no other criterion. Christians fought, murdered, defamed, burned others at the stake, stole, lied, and betrayed. Such perversion was easily and logically justified in theory.⁴³
- xi) Every church affirmed that its own faith was the *non plus ultra* of truth, it started from this principle and assumed that its faith could be pocketed like money. The faith was really treated like this: 'every church holds that nothing in the world is so easy to find as

37 Hegel, 1961, PCHR:116.144.

38 Hegel, 1961, PCHR:140.

39 Hegel, 1961, PCHR:136.

40 Hegel, 1961, PCHR:163; SCH:231.

41 Hegel, 1961, SCH:221.

42 Hegel, 1961, SCH:250-253.

43 Hegel, 1961, PCHR:163.

truth: the only thing necessary is to memorize one of its catechisms.’ (1961, PCHR:134)

- xii) The apostles lacked European intellectualism, and therefore were not able to arrive at the objectification of spirit, which was the aim of Hegel’s philosophy.⁴⁴

To what degree these criticisms of Christianity are based on Hegel’s own concept of it and to what degree they correspond to the pictures drawn in Chapter Two is a question which invites itself. However, it will not be answered here. But it should be noted that Hegel’s view strongly suggests actual forms of Christianity which have given birth to rationalist apologetics, which is the main target of critique in this book. For the purpose of my argument Hegelian criticisms of Christianity will be looked at as illustrations of what he meant by the general principle of all judgments concerning religion. Simply said, Hegel in his early writings criticises Christianity for not sufficiently developing human immanent morality. In his dialectics, then, he does not propose a complete denial of Christianity, but only to limit its validity.

He points out that Christianity conquered paganism when it was on the decrease, when the low consciousness of society gave rise to emphasis on the individual. As there was no longer any universal ideal for which one might live or die, Christianity put passive obedience in the place of such moral impotence. It introduced two concepts which in our sense of the word, Hegel says, the Greeks lacked, namely piety and grace. However Christianity did not built up a new universal ideal, it just expressed the ‘spirit of the time’ (1961, PCHR:165) and ended up as a ‘religion of a group’ (1961, SCH:292). These two aspects summarise the limit of the validity of Christianity as proposed by Hegel. It raises an important question, namely if the ‘spirit of the age’ changes, whether there is any place for Christianity – or whether “the group” practising it is condemned to isolation and to a slow and gradual disappearance. Hegel does not answer this question: nevertheless, he expresses his preference for Greek and Roman religion, being convinced that they provide a better response to the need of his time. An interesting develop-

44 Hegel, 1961, SCH:300.

ment, then, can be seen in the later Hegel, when he interprets Christianity more in relation to the Greek religion than to Judaism⁴⁵ and discovers in it the dimension of the Spirit, which I examine in the following part.

2.2 *The Absolute Spirit*

While dealing with Hegel's concepts of Christianity and the Absolute Spirit, it has to be noted that although the concept of Spirit (*Geist* in German, which is sometimes translated into English also as "Mind") comes from Christian tradition, Hegel gives it a different meaning. It is not the Holy Spirit of the Scriptures and mainstream Christian teaching, but rather a self-conscious "Idea", a "self-thinking Thought", an "actualised Logos" to use his language, whose absoluteness is given by the fact that it is not accountable to anything higher, but is sufficient in itself and for itself.⁴⁶ Also, in Hegel's later writings the notion of Christianity changes. Compared to his early essay 'The Positivity of Christian Religion' or 'The Spirit of Christianity' where he strongly criticised it as a counter-natural religion demolishing the Spirit, his later attitude is milder. In *Phenomenology of Spirit*,⁴⁷ his first big systematic work of the middle period, Hegel has a separate section which deals with religion. He draws attention there to Christianity as a religion of the community, and instead of calling it a positive religion, as in his earlier writings, he uses the notion of "universal" religion.⁴⁸ The universality is seen in the fact that it is shared by the community concerned. As such, religion had to abstract from immediate figurative thinking, typical for Judaism, and adapt to a more conceptual form which Hegel ascribed to the religion of

45 Cf. Westphal: 189.

46 Cf. Copleston, F., 1963, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. VII:195.202.

47 J. N. Findlay in his Foreword to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* mentions that Hegel, while preparing the *Phenomenology* for republication just before his death in 1831, writes of it as of a 'peculiar earlier work (*eigentümliche frühere Arbeit*) which ought not to be revised, since it related to the time at which it was written, a time at which an abstract Absolute dominated philosophy.' (1977:v)

48 Cf. Hegel, 1977, *Phenomenology of Spirit*: 471.

the Greeks and Romans. He draws a contrast between a particular picture-thought and a “universal self-consciousness”. While the first, according to him, belongs to the more primitive stages of human development, the second represents the highest level, where a community moves from the realm of religion to the realm of philosophy.⁴⁹

First, however, let us look at how Hegel develops a dialectical method that enables him to include Christianity into what he sees as the development of humankind towards the Absolute Spirit. This development is also called a “process of essence” or a “process of becoming”,⁵⁰ where the centrality of community overcomes every type of individualism⁵¹ and establishes ‘the certainty the congregation has of its own Spirit’ (Westphal, 1990: 193), where ‘the Kingdom of God is indeed “a nation of men related to one another by love.”’ (193) As Westphal emphasises, Hegel gives primacy to the historical development of Spirit towards its absoluteness, supplementing the vertical transcendence he had earlier rejected with a ‘horizontal transcendence... of society to the individual.’ (201) Thus, Westphal concludes that Hegel’s view of Christianity in the *Phenomenology* resembles that of Nietzsche as expressed in the *Genealogy of Morals*, namely that ‘all great things bring about their own destruction through an act of self-overcoming.’ (206)

This “process of becoming” embedded in Hegel’s dialectical method develops into three laws of reflection: (i) the law of identity – where a statement is considered; (ii) the law of variety – when we consider its negation; (iii) the law of contradiction – when we negate both and come by this way to a synthesis, which includes a new unity based on including and challenging both previous statements.⁵² The synthesis is to

49 Herbert Marcuse in *Reason and Revolution* says that ‘The *Philosophy of Mind*, and in fact the whole Hegelian system, is a portrayal of the process whereby “the individual becomes universal” and whereby “the construction of universality” takes place.’ (1963:90) In Hegel this is extended to the community, see *Phenomenology*, 1977:472.473.

50 See in *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, ‘The Logic of Hegel’:§112, quoted and commented on in Marcuse: 146.

51 Cf. Westphal, 1990: 193.

52 In the *Science of Logic* Hegel explains his dialectical method in analysing ‘being’ and ‘nothing’ (1929, Vol.1:94).

bring us to a higher stage and, thus, the dialectical process enables us to progress from what is relative to what is absolute.⁵³

In order to understand how Christianity is overcome in the “process of becoming”, let us look at how Hegel employs his dialectic when talking about the Philosophy of Spirit. Now I refer mainly to his late work, *Encyclopedia*. As was mentioned at the beginning of this part, Hegel’s concept of Spirit comes from a Christian tradition, but as will be now shown, has a different meaning from the Holy Spirit in orthodox Christianity.⁵⁴ Hegel’s system relies on triads, and therefore also in the Philosophy of Spirit we have three main parts or subdivisions. The first two parts treat Spirit as the finite Spirit, the third deals with what Hegel calls the Absolute Spirit, which is the highest stage of the Spirit that includes and challenges both former stages.⁵⁵

The first stage is called by Hegel the Subjective Spirit: (i) the spirit of an individual – namely the human soul, which, according to Hegel is a point of transition between Nature and Spirit. The human soul is a part of Nature, (ii) but once it is confronted with its own consciousness (iii) it acquires self-consciousness and the soul changes into Spirit (*Geist*), which is aware of its own powers and actions.⁵⁶

The second stage Hegel calls the Objective Spirit. The Spirit objectifies itself when an individual with its Subjective Spirit passes from an internal to an external sphere. The external sphere is, according to Hegel, threefold. It involves: (i) family, (ii) society and (iii) state. The state is the highest expression of the Objective Spirit because it includes and challenges both former expressions. In the state each national spirit is embodied and each of them is the actualisation of the World Spirit which is universal and is conceived as a dialectic of national spirits – of

53 Marcuse offers the following summary of Hegel’s dialectic: it is ‘the ability to distinguish the essential from the apparent process of reality and to grasp their relation.’ (146)

54 ‘Hegel...surely is a master at the techniques of persuasive (re)definition. Nowhere this is clearer than in the Phenomenology, where the Holy Spirit turns out to be the church and the incarnation means that man generically is divine’ (Westphal: 221).

55 Cf. Hegel, 1959, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*: 305ff.

56 Cf. Hegel, 1959:481.

finite states above whom the infinite sphere of the Absolute Spirit arises.⁵⁷

The third stage, the Absolute Spirit, exists only through the human spirit, but is, according to Hegel, conceived at a level which goes beyond the individual human spirit with its private thoughts, emotions, interests, purposes and their finitude. The Absolute Spirit is a synthesis of the Subjective and the Objective Spirit on a higher level, where both are included and both challenged. It is defined as “self-thinking Thought”, as the “Absolute knowing itself as the Totality”, as “identity-in-difference”.⁵⁸ The Absolute Spirit, then, has three spheres where it becomes actualised: (i) art, (ii) religion and (iii) philosophy. In art the Absolute Spirit is apprehended under a sensuous form of beauty.⁵⁹ In religion the Absolute Spirit is apprehended in the form of pictorial or figurative thought.⁶⁰ In philosophy the Absolute Spirit is apprehended purely conceptually – in the form of speculative thought.⁶¹

In order to explain this triad, Hegel uses the customary dialectics: art passes into the stage of religion and religion is transmuted into philosophy, which on a higher level includes and challenges both former stages. Thus, philosophy stands higher than religion in the Hegelian system. Religious thought being clothed in the imagery of stories and symbols is subjected to purely conceptual philosophy, and even if Hegel admits that both philosophy and religion participate in the Absolute Spirit, the following distinction is kept: the imaginative element of religious thought is dependent on the time and place where it was expressed and is always, therefore, a child of its time. When another time and mood arises, the story has to be changed. Speculative philosophy does away with the imaginative element of stories and symbols and therefore is not dependent on anything external and changeable. As such it is capable of including and challenging both former stages.

57 Cf. Hegel, 1959:503–540.

58 Cf. Copleston, 1963, VII:227.

59 Cf. Hegel, 1920, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, Vol.I: 154.

60 Cf. Hegel, 1920:142.

61 Cf. Hegel, 1962, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol.III: 546–553.

How does Hegelian dialectic, overcoming Christianity on its way to the final stage of the Absolute Spirit, influence relations between faith and reason? As was shown, Hegel insists that reason plays an essential part in the 'process of becoming'. The dialectical method stands and falls on speculative reason. Reason strives to understand faith, as much as to understand the negation of faith, so that finally it will include and challenge both on a higher level. Reason with its concepts substitutes the picture-thought, the narrative and symbolic imagery with which religion operates. Hegel's reason is, as he has shown, capable of including even fundamental Christian images, like the Kingdom of God, and doctrines, like that of on the Trinity, but then, justifying it as a dialectical process, he gives them interpretations that break with their past interpretations. As Copleston puts it:

Thus Hegel gives philosophical proofs of such doctrines as the Trinity, the Fall and the Incarnation. But when he has finished with stating them in the form of pure thought, they are obviously something very different from the doctrines which the Church believes to be the correct statement of truth in human language. In other words, Hegel makes speculative philosophy the final arbiter of the inner meaning of Christian revelation. (1963, VII:240-241)

Copleston identifies the fact that Hegel's overriding zeal to interpret Christianity so as to fit into his own patterns of thought does not take into account its own inner consistencies, to the extent that he ignores or violates them. Hegel's understanding of the superiority of speculative philosophy over religion, or of reason over faith, as well as his abolishing the idea and practice of vertical transcendence and establishing the method of total immanence (as demonstrated in the previous section), represents one extreme solution of the Kantian dilemma, where the transcendent and the immanent were in tension. Hegel's position elaborates on how the realm of human autonomy can be expanded and established so that it can be once for all self-sufficient. To do so, Hegel introduces his language of the absolute, proposing that there is no other authority that can relativise human decisions, no other power to be accountable to, to fear or to expect to intervene.

Throughout his life Hegel showed a great appreciation of the historical and the contextual, and the theme of development of thought dominated his last writings.⁶² As we have seen, from his early writings he opposed any transcendent grand theories as violations of history and of human immanence and autonomy. It is a paradox that at the same time he creates another grand theory which is not transcendent but claims to be “absolutely” grounded. Thus, the Hegelian system opened the door to different forms of ideological abuse: to Nazism, which claimed to take its inspiration from Hegel via Nietzsche; or to Communism, which claimed to take its inspiration from Hegel *via* Marx, each making up their own history, either of the Aryan race⁶³ or of the working class,⁶⁴ to create a “historical” fiction by which their speculations were to be justified. Both dialectically overcome Christianity to include from it only what is fitting for their “higher” stage. Hegel’s philosophy can thus be rightly called absolute idealism. As was mentioned while tracing the differences between Hegel’s philosophy of Spirit and mainstream Christianity, Hegel’s absolute, the *Geist*, is rather an “Idea” a “self-thinking Thought”⁶⁵ than a personal presence, the “Breath”, the “Wind”, *Ruach* of God, the divine person comforting and challenging us from within. The *Geist* as the absolute Idea is cut off from any other reality it is not conscious of or does not have under its control. Thus, the Idea has no corrective in Hegel, neither in the transcendent nor in the practical as it does with Kant.⁶⁶ This creates an epistemological problem for apologetical discourse, which will be looked at in the following part, dealing with the trend from Hegel to Phillips.

62 See his lectures on History of Philosophy and Philosophy of History edited after Hegel’s death by his pupils; Houlgate writes: ‘Like Wittgenstein, therefore, Hegel wishes us to eschew abstract generalisations and to attend to forms of life in their particularity.’ (17)

63 Cf. Poliakov, L., 1977, *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe*.

64 Cf. Leonard, W., 1957, *The Child of Revolution*.

65 See n.43.

66 Compare to Kant, Ch. Three, 1.2.

3. Summary: from Hegel to Phillips

Hans-Georg Gadamer in *Hegel's Dialectic* offers a more positive appreciation of Hegel, as he looks at his works from a hermeneutic perspective. He states: 'Hegel defines reason as the unity of thought and reality' (1976:56), by which he means that Hegel reinterprets 'the opposition of appearance and understanding' (56) as an invalid one. He qualifies the notion of 'unity' of thought and reality by using concepts like 'reflected unity' (59) or 'spiritual unity' (63). Through these he describes the aim of Hegel's dialectic: to show that the oppositions are to be overcome. Here Hegel includes as well the transcendent-immanent dichotomy and as was said previously and Gadamer repeats, 'Hegel seeks to bring the transcendent philosophy initiated by Kant to its conclusion' (76). His 'new foundation', 'self-knowing spirit' (78) guarantee his epistemological method of total immanence. Gadamer points out that Hegel in the *Science of Logic* is concerned with the 'content' of thought and how its determination develops, and there he concludes that 'Logic obviously cannot include belief' (88), as it is a private element foreign to thought, and thus thought has to be purified of that. Then the concept of transcendence can be revived as horizontal transcendence ascribed to the 'logical instinct of language' (88), as Gadamer says.

Bearing in mind this positive appreciation of Hegel in hermeneutics, I deal with the practical difficulties pointed out in the last section, namely that Hegelian epistemology lies at the roots of at least two quasi-religious dictatorships of this century, nazism and communism, where perhaps, the 'unity of thought and reality' as Gadamer proposed, was overshadowed by different elements present in Hegel's thought.

Hegel raised two important epistemological problems for Christian *apologia*: (i) whether the method of immanence, once it becomes exclusive of the transcendent, inevitably leads to the Idea, which does not have a corrective even in practice and subjects faith to reason and religion to speculative philosophy; (ii) whether a fluid use of a Christian language in order to support one's system of ideas is epistemologically adequate; in other words, whether it does not demolish the "how" (*fides*

qua) and the “what” (*fides quae*) we know and believe about Christianity (or other religions) and how we put it into practice.

The first problem is bound up with the fact that Hegel’s epistemology is intrinsically ideological. It treats Ideas as absolutes. We can perceive ideology in the positive sense as a recognition that all our thinking needs to be structured, nevertheless, recognising that structures or systems are always provisional; or we can perceive ideology in the negative sense as a closed system. My criticisms of Hegel are that he tends to a closed system of absolutes, however much he emphasises history, development, and the process of becoming.

J.B. Thompson in *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* identifies the negative meaning of ideologies as ‘ways in which meaning serves to keep the relations of power’ (1984:4). On the one hand, when Hegel speaks of the Subjective Spirit, he proposes a mature development of human autonomy – as opposed to the heteronomy relying on transcendent divinity; on the other hand as soon as he arrives at the Objective Spirit, he excludes the sphere of the private and subjects it to the community (such as family, society or state). The exclusion of the private thoughts, emotions, interests or purposes is, then, made definite at the level of the Absolute Spirit. The ‘Absolute knowing itself as the Totality’, as Copleston expresses it (1963, VII:227), does not have anywhere else to go. It is the end of Hegel’s dialectic, while any claim to transcendence has been excluded, as well as anything immanent which would not be a part of the system. By means of exclusion the power of the system is maintained, both at the theoretical and at the practical level.

Only the method of total immanence, that excludes any claims to authority coming from outside of the system has, according to Hegel, access to absolute knowledge. Knowledge is the means of controlling power, as knowing involves subjection: of the private to the objective (family, society, state), of faith to reason, of religion to speculative philosophy. Thus, although Hegel’s contribution to hermeneutic can be praised, his epistemology as long as it involves the totality of a particular version of immanence inevitably tends to totalitarian ideologies subjecting everything else to their closed systems.

The second problem, namely whether a fluid use of a Christian language in order to support one's system of ideas is epistemologically adequate, is connected with Hegel's treatment of symbol and narrative. They are, according to him, second-rate expressions, which are waiting to be overcome by the dialectical arrival of the abstract ideas. Hegel's approach allows us to use Christian symbols and stories with unlimited creativity, as e.g. Cupitt does, so that they would fit into our higher system of thought. But is any interpretation of Christian symbols and narratives good as long as it fits into our own pattern of thoughts? And, indeed, is any belief and practice good as long as it fits to the patterns of community, of society or of state that guarantee their objectivity? A range of examples of injustice and violence already considered in the book opposes such fluidity. *Apologia* needs to maintain that e.g. Hitler's ideas concerning the Jewish genocide were in no way a "creative" extension of Christian imagery, or that the classless dream of society proclaimed by Marx and enforced by Lenin could not substitute for the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus.

Although Hegel's epistemology shuts the door against any claim to referential practice, and thus, finally, makes such distinctions hardly possible, it has had a wide following. Similarly to Hegel, Phillips proposes that 'concepts are constitutive of the situation. Without the concepts, the situation does not exist even for you.' (1988:197–198) For the moment I leave aside a question of the difference between a situation that 'exists' and one that 'exists for you' and concentrate on the power of concepts to be constitutive of a situation. When language is the final stance and we can do with it whatever we like, relativism has no boundaries. As I claimed, this is connected with Hegel's treatment of figurative thought as a lower stage of expression, that was overcome by the speculative thought of pure ideas. Such attitude tends to a black and white account of alternatives: either, as Phillips argues,⁶⁷ one is left with a hermeneutic without epistemological boundaries of how knowledge, belief and action could go wrong, which left not only religion, but also other dimensions of life open to dismissal as fiction; or one is forced

67 Cf. Phillips, 1988:225–237.

back to rely on foundationalist certainties. The problem at stake with Hegel as well as with Phillips is the claim that our language does not correspond to any 'extralinguistic realities' (Phillips:216)⁶⁸ or in a broader sense, the relationship of our language with the real world.⁶⁹ Such an extreme epistemological solution is found at the roots of the apologetics of Cupitt and Moore, and their defence of a theology without the transcendent, which I find unsatisfactory. Whether a counter-claim to this antirealist epistemology based on Hegel, developed by Phillips and applied in apologetics by Cupitt and Moore has to be foundationalist will be examined in the chapters on Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein.

68 Cf. Lindbeck, 1984: 65–69.

69 Against Lindbeck's emphasis on a religious experience, which should be seen as a corrective to the meaning we ascribe to the language we use, Phillips states: 'Religious experience does not stand to language as a melody stands to a song. We can take away the words of the song, and we are still left with the melody. But we cannot subtract the language and behaviour, in the case of religion, and say that we are left with the experience.' (1988:207)

CHAPTER FIVE: THE TRUTH WHICH EDIFIES

The second stream of religious epistemology following from Kant is represented by Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855). Against Hegel’s absolute idealism, which abolished transcendence and proclaimed the totally immanent realm of the absolute, Kierkegaard, in his epistemology, emphasises the interaction between the transcendent dimension and human subjectivity. The language he employs leads to the key notion of truth, which has the power to edify us.¹ Similarly to Hegel, Kierkegaard starts with the Kantian concepts of reason and morality, but as I show later, his approach is constructed in opposition to them. Therefore, in this chapter I consider Kierkegaard’s transcendent method – as opposed to Hegel’s method of immanence. I look at why Kierkegaard finds Kantian and Hegelian philosophy inadequate, and I examine what kind of solution to the tensions between reason, belief and practice Kierkegaard offers with his notion of God as the “Unknown” and the role of the paradox. The second part complements Kierkegaard’s position with a variety of contemporary theories of truth, which are relevant to the next step, a re-examination of how truth, belief and experience are interrelated. This step leads from Kierkegaard to Wittgenstein. I conclude with the same question as in the previous part, whether Kierkegaard’s approach can stand as an alternative to the unresolved Kantian dilemma concerning total human autonomy and the need for transcendent assistance.

1 At the end of *Either/Or* he writes: ‘for only the truth which edifies is truth for you.’ (1944 II:294)

1. The Second Option: Kierkegaard

As with the section on Hegel, it is important to recognise that we are dealing here with a thinker whose numerous works show his development as time goes on. His first work, the master's disputation on *The Concept of Irony, with Continual Reference to Socrates*, already shows that his line of thought aimed at challenging Hegelianism, the established philosophy of his time. Kierkegaard's inner development, then, can be summarised by a series of events: he abandoned the course of studies which would have led him to ministry in the Lutheran Church; he broke his engagement to his fiancée, Regina Olsen, and absorbed himself in showing the difference between established religion as he experienced it in Denmark, and what he thought it was to be a Christian. From 1842–1846 Kierkegaard wrote his main writings under pseudonyms, which guaranteed him at least some anonymity. Among them are: *Either/Or* (written under the pseudonym Victor Eremita), *Fear and Trembling* (Johannes de Silentio), *The Concept of Anxiety* (Vigilius Haufniensis), *Stages on Life's Way* (Hilarius Buchbinder), *Philosophical Fragments* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (Johannes Climacus). After the Corsair affair² in 1845, which ended in Kierkegaard becoming a public figure of fun and disrespect, he, now more openly published theological writings under his own name, among others: *Works of Love*, *Edifying Discourses* and *Christian Discourses*, *Sickness unto Death* (under the pseudonym Anti-Climacus), *Practice in Christianity* and *Attack upon Christendom*. From 1849 till the end of his life he maintained his distance from any public worship in

- 2 'In December 1845 he was involved with a public and very bitter dispute with the *Corsair* – a rather scandalous newspaper which defied the strict censorship of its time and relied heavily on gossip about the wealthier classes – which he decided to attack and which in turn attacked him. The upshot of this was that in early 1846 he was made into a figure of fun in Copenhagen, with the *Corsair* producing caricatures of him and making fun of his bandy legs so that he could no longer walk the streets without being mocked. Kierkegaard continued his writing, but with a change in style and approach, and his books became more obviously religious.' (Vardy, P., 1996, Kierkegaard: 6)

the Danish Lutheran Church, as in his words this was “treating God as a fool”.³

1.1 *Transcendent Method*

Kierkegaard’s transcendent method develops as a reaction to Hegel’s immanent method, which in Kierkegaard’s eyes substituted absolute rational construction for the religion of revelation, sustained Christendom, which he radically contrasted with Christianity, and instead of developing mature individuals demanded conformity to the crowd. Thus, Kierkegaard’s religious epistemology points to the limits of the rational and analyses the roots and consequences of claims to the supremacy of reason.

In dealing with Kierkegaard’s religious epistemology we have always to be aware of its anti-systematic nature with regard to philosophy. Titles of works like the ‘Philosophical Fragments’ or ‘Concluding Unscientific Postscript’ show a strong antipathy to any notion of complete philosophical treatises, on the other hand titles like ‘Works of Love’ or ‘Practice in Christianity’ propose a different system underlying Kierkegaard’s anti-systematic philosophy, namely that of theology building up a Christian life as documented in the New Testament and in early Christian teaching.⁴ My claim that in Kierkegaard there is an underlying theological system, nevertheless has to be seen in the context of Kierkegaard’s dislike of labels. He would by no means call himself a theologian, however much he used theological argumentation, and he was even reluctant to call himself a Christian, because he was convinced that his life did not measure up to it⁵. What is important for the sake of

3 Kierkegaard explains the problem as ‘a question of conscience’ in the article ‘Is this Christian worship, or is it treating God as a fool?’ collected in the *Attack upon “Christendom”*, 1972: 26–28.

4 Cf. Plekon, M., 1992, ‘Kierkegaard the Theologian: The Roots of His Theology in Works of Love’: 3–14.

5 “‘The individual – I am not a Christian,’” a thing which quite certainly has not occurred in the eighteen hundred years of Christendom, where everything is

this book is to bear in mind that his transcendent method interweaves two discourses: philosophical criticisms of self-enclosed epistemological systems and theological argumentation for his own epistemological conclusions. Both will be examined in the following part.

1.2 *Criticisms of Kant and Hegel*

In this section I document that although Kierkegaard is dissatisfied with Kantian and Hegelian philosophy, he also reintroduces some of their themes and techniques in his own thinking. His main criticism of Kant and Hegel is directed to their attempts to find the absolute within this world, within human reason, and within moral conduct, since other critical points follow from this.

With regard to Kant, Kierkegaard's critique is milder and consists of two main points: first Kant's account of religion within the limits of reason alone (not only in one particular writing, but in his conduct) puts morality above religion; second his concept of the transcendent is passive, and does not communicate itself.

Kierkegaard objects to Kant's placing morality above religion.⁶ In his pseudonymous writings he offers a different perspective, already in *Either/Or* and later in *Stages on Life's Way*, where he develops the argument. He describes three stages of life, whose hierarchy contrasts with that of Kant: (i) an aesthetic stage: a life concentrated on pleasure; (ii) an ethical stage: a life concentrated on moral duty; (iii) a religious stage: a life concentrated on believing in God. Merold Westphal in 'Kierkegaard's Teleological Suspension of Religiousness B' elaborates this triad by distinguishing three phases of the religious life, so as to take into account Kierkegaard's later writings. Thus Westphal speaks of: Religiousness A, that is identified as ideology, as it 'can filter out all those putative divine voices that do not echo the voice of the people'

Continued from previous page:

branded, "Congregation, society – I am true Christian" (*Attack upon Christendom*, 1972:285).

6 Cf. Kant, 1960, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*: 158.

(1992a:115); he says that it 'is capable of intense subjectivity. But the epistemological immanence in which it operates blurs the distinction between a genius and an apostle as well as the difference between the voice of the people and the voice of God (Reason)' (1992a:116).

Religiousness B is the repudiation of this religious ideology. Kierkegaard, according to Westphal, sees it as 'the attempt to be honest about the nature of biblical faith', which in its very heart is to be 'the object of offence' to reason and to 'all attempts to make Christianity reasonable by removing the offence', the paradox that God has become a man. Westphal sums up by saying that here 'we cannot preside over our truth but in humility must accept as a gift the truth we cannot discover or even recognise apart from God's grace. Christianity is doubly supernatural. The Incarnation is itself a miracle, and the faith by which I acknowledge it is also a miracle.' (1992a:116)⁷ Religiousness C is that for which, finally, 'Christ is not merely the Paradox to be believed but the Pattern to be imitated.' Here God's truth and joy is seen as a way of life, which involves sharing in the suffering of the master, as 'the world wishes to be the source of its own truth' in Christ's time as much as in our own. This, then, is Religiousness C, which is identified with discipleship. (1992a:116–117)

The moral is inferior to the religious and can be suspended by the religious, according to Kierkegaard, who thus opposes what Kant stated in *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 'even though something is represented as being commanded by God... yet, if it flatly contradicts morality, it cannot, despite all appearances, be of God' (1960:81). In *Fear and Trembling*, where Kierkegaard offers a detailed analysis of the biblical story of Abraham being tested by God through the command to sacrifice Isaac, he expands this theme by emphasising faith as the 'absolute duty to God' (1985:108).

Then, from seeing faith as "duty" Kierkegaard in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* moves to an understanding of it as "relationship":

Now when the problem is to reckon up on which side there is most truth, whether on the side of one who seeks the true God objectively, and pur-

7 Cf. Kierkegaard, 1962, *Philosophical Fragments*: 65.81.

sues the approximate truth of the God-idea; or on the side of one who, driven by the infinite passion of his need of God, feels an infinite concern for his own relationship to God in truth (1974:179).

This brings about further criticisms of Kant: against his claim to an immanent religion and transcendent morality Kierkegaard states that it is no good to have transcendently-based morality if the transcendent does not communicate itself. According to Kierkegaard, knowing about the transcendent involves a relationship with the transcendent which has to be based on some kind of communication, and as Kant rejects this, his notion of the transcendent is an empty concept. Or in other words, the need for divine assistance, which Kant accepts, as it does not imply divine revelation, limits the transcendent to the realm of silence: nothing can be said about it, no meaning can be ascribed to it, it has no practical use.

Compared to Hegel, Kierkegaard treats Kant with respect and in spite of being convinced that his philosophical system does not work, he does not deny his intellectual honesty. Criticisms of Hegel are much more stringent. It is partly due to the fact that in his time Hegelian philosophy was understood as the philosophy to be taught at the universities, both in Denmark and in Germany, and created, according to Kierkegaard, a false impression that it was a Christian philosophy. In fact, Kierkegaard sees Hegelian philosophy as one of the contributors to making Christendom out of Christianity, emphasising conformity to a system instead of the search for truth. There are three main points of criticism addressed to Hegel – or rather to the outcome of Hegel’s philosophy, Hegelianism: first, that it claims to be Christian; second, that it takes speculation to be more important than existence; and third, that it is suppressive of an individual’s conscience.

First, Kierkegaard claims that it is unjust to call the Hegelian system Christianity: as it gives an account of Jesus who could not be God in any unique sense, it denies any transcendent revelation, and instead it stands on the principle of immanence and speaks of human divinity being actualised through history, and its dialectical approach towards religions leads to confusion:

For a man to prefer paganism to Christianity is by no means confusing, but to discover paganism as the highest development within Christianity is to work injustice both to paganism and to Christianity; to Christianity, because it becomes something other than it is, and to paganism, which doesn't become anything at all, though it really was something. (1974:323)

This accusation, however, can be fully applied only to those Hegelians who proclaimed that their speculative interpretation of Christianity was essentially Christian. Nevertheless the confusion of Christianity with something else can be found even in those who did not claim to be such, even in Hegel himself, as I demonstrated previously.

Second, Hegelian thought takes existence as an object of speculation: the truth is mixed up with objective knowledge and the subjective affirmation of truth is neglected, existence (including Christian existence) is intellectualised and taken as a scholarly affair and its inward dimension is forgotten:

My principal thought was that in our age, because of the great increase of knowledge, we had forgotten what it means to *exist*, and what *inwardness* signifies, and that the misunderstanding between speculative philosophy and Christianity was explicable on that ground. (1974:223)

Third, Hegelian thought puts social practice higher than an individual's conscience: the demand to conform to a social practice suppresses an awareness of being an individual and leads to an unreflected life. Kierkegaard criticises it for a lack of freedom as well as responsibility, and for forgetting that each person's life is unique, and not just an anonymous part of a greater construction. He points out that Christianity is thus faced with another misunderstanding – it is taken as something which happens automatically just by being born into a so called “Christian country” or by performing a ceremony of baptism. Kierkegaard calls this not Christianity but Christendom.

All these three points come back to the main one, that the transcendent is ultimately placed within the limits of human reason. Therefore, it is not just a question of singular mistakes, but of the whole approach of Hegelianism and its basis, against which Kierkegaard makes a stand. Hegel absolutises ideas and socio-ecclesiastical systems of this world, as

they stand on a claim that there is nothing else; while Kierkegaard's claim to transcendence, as I show later, relativises our ideas and socio-ecclesiastical systems. Kierkegaard finds Hegel's philosophy an idolatry of reason, which creates its own categories and claims them to be first subjectively recognised, then objectively valid (= valid for the church and society) and finally absolutely valid, which means that there is no space left for the New Testament God.

On this last point criticisms directed at Hegel and Kant coincide. Both represent for Kierkegaard systems which are built up on the following foundations: namely human reason, its ability to conceptualise, and on human morality. In relation to Hegel Kierkegaard emphasises more the side of reason, while in relation to Kant reason is represented by morality. This seemingly small difference may mirror a different appreciation of these two philosophers. The problem with Kant comes as he turns his back on the Absolute, which, according to Kierkegaard, is honest, but wrong. Hegel, for his part, uses this very concept for describing something else.

However strong Kierkegaard's criticisms of Kant and Hegel, there are traces of their themes and methods running throughout Kierkegaard's writing: the relation between the moral and the religious;⁸ the immanent as rational and the transcendent as going beyond reason; there is a methodological similarity between Hegel's triadic stages of the Absolute Spirit and Kierkegaard's triad of the stages of life, including dialectic which in Kierkegaard suspends the aesthetic and the ethical in order to include what is authentic in these in the higher religious stage;⁹ language of the absolute, where Kierkegaard opposes Hegel's notion of the Abso-

8 Kierkegaard oscillates from what is stated in *Stages on Life's Way*: 'Anyone who, when he is twenty years old, does not understand that there is a categorical imperative – Enjoy – is a fool' (1988:72); to the position in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*: 'The ethical constitutes the temptation; the God-relationship has come into being; the immanence of ethical despair has broken through' (1974:234).

9 This can be documented in the development of Kierkegaard's notion of love, which, according to him is the key test of where one stands. So his dialectic goes as follows: self-love directed to pleasure stands in conflict with love directed to other people in terms of duty; both are suspended as they, according to Kierkegaard, miss the eternal: 'Love cannot be just between people – that would

lute Spirit with a notion of the Absolute Paradox. However, the paradox is still absolute. Besides Kierkegaard's firm theological claims his epistemological position has its weaknesses: the emphasis on human subjectivity does not avoid developing into subjectivism, and the notion of transcendence which separates itself from reason can lead to fideism. While reacting against exaggerated roles for reason and morality in Kant and Hegel Kierkegaard undervalues both the reasonable and the communal dimensions of Christianity. This brings back to Christian *apologia* an old tension, namely between reason and belief, which then influences how Christianity is practised and which authorities it can rely on. Both the advantages and the disadvantages of Kierkegaard's approach to religious epistemology will be looked at in more detail in the following part, where I analyse Kierkegaard's use of paradox regarding Christianity and philosophy.

1.3 *The Absolute Paradox*

The concept of the Absolute Paradox represents a key point of tension between philosophy and theology in Kierkegaard, where the Christian message is step by step confronted with limits of the philosophical vocabulary. Phrases like the "unknown to reason" or "encountering the absurd" attempt to give an account of what is meant by the Absolute Paradox, yet, as will be shown, they succeed only to a degree; and they give no more than a negative account of what cannot be apprehended and that about which we have to remain silent. In this section I look at three

Continued from previous page:

merely be Eros or friendship. Christian love must be between three for God is always the middle term.' (*Works of Love*, 1994:46). Love when treated as an absolute duty 'can lead to what ethics would forbid, but it can by no means make the knight of faith have done with loving' (*Fear and Trembling*, 1985:101). Then a conclusion is proposed, where loving oneself as well as loving other people is included, but on a higher level: 'A Christian view means this: Truly to love oneself is to love God; truly to love another person is with every sacrifice (even to become hated) to help the other person love God as well.' (*Works of Love*, 1944:119)

things: first, how the Absolute Paradox functions in Kierkegaard; second, at reasons for the paradoxical use of language and its limits; third, at the concept of truth as an alternative to reason with regard to our belief and understanding. An analysis of the function of the Absolute Paradox in Kierkegaard begins by introducing God as the Unknown to human reason: Reason, according to Kierkegaard, can go as far as reaching its own limits. In the light of them another reality might appear, which is of a different character from the rational one. The other reality cannot be described in the same way as we are used to describe human reality (what we approach by our senses, what we grasp by our reason, what we push forward by our will), and therefore Kierkegaard in the *Philosophical Fragments* speaks of the “Unknown” – in terms of God:

But what is this unknown something with which the Reason collides when inspired by its paradoxical passion, with the result of unsettling even man’s knowledge of himself? It is the Unknown. It is not a human being, in so far as we know what man is; nor is it any other known thing. So let us call the unknown something: the God. (1962:49)

For Kierkegaard human reason is unable to determine either who God is or whether such a reality as God exists.¹⁰ While with Hegel the divine otherness was converted to our thisness, here human reason is confronted with the otherness of the concept of God. Here we encounter the first function of paradox in Kierkegaard: for human reason “God” is the “Unknown”. The “Unknown” is the limit concept of what we do not know. It so transcends our reason that it is no longer a part of our reason, claims Kierkegaard.¹¹ It is beyond reason – if it is at all. To ask the question: What or who is the Unknown? and to expect a rational answer, then, would be self-contradictory. The answer would appear as circular: The Unknown is the God. The God is the Unknown. And hu-

10 For Kierkegaard’s opposition to any attempt to prove the existence of God, see *Philosophical Fragments*, 1962:49.

11 Cf. Sylvia Walsh, S. 1994, ‘Echoes of Absurdity: The Offended Consciousness and the Absolute Paradox in Kierkegaard’s *Philosophical Fragments*’: 37.

man reason will not be able to read its meaning.¹² As we will see later, only faith can do this. Once the otherness of God is established, we encounter the second use as we are introduced to the concept of the Absolute Paradox – namely, something that is most unlikely: ‘The supreme paradox of all thought is the attempt to discover something that thought cannot think.’ (1962:46) That ‘something that thought cannot think’ Kierkegaard relates to incarnation: the absolutely other God who has become man. And, as is strongly emphasised, when Kierkegaard moves to his Christological discourses, there are two basic approaches to incarnation: one is offence, the other is belief. In *Training in Christianity* he states: ‘Offence has essentially to do with the composite term God and man, or with the God-Man... The God-Man is the paradox, absolutely the paradox, hence it is quite clear that the understanding must come to a standstill before it.’ (1972b:83,86)

Philosophical Fragments identifies the attitude of ‘standing still’ before the Absolute Paradox as an acceptance that belief is based on ‘absurdity’ instead of on rationality: ‘The understanding declares that the paradox is the absurd, but this is only caricaturing, for the paradox is indeed the paradox, *quia absurdum*.’ (1962:52) Suspension of the rational is giving primacy to faith: ‘If I am capable of grasping God objectively, I do not believe, but precisely because I cannot do this I must believe.’ (1974:182) Then it is precisely the moment of belief which turns the initial absurdity into understanding.

This turning point of belief transforming absurdity into understanding will lead us to the reasons for the use of the language of paradox in Kierkegaard. These can be summarised briefly by saying that the use of the language of paradox prevents Christianity from becoming a religion without faith, which, as Kierkegaard emphasised over and over again, was the case with Christendom, into which one could be born without any personal contribution. However, once a claim to belief is made, we have to be careful not to argue Kierkegaard’s Absolute Paradox away too easily, in order not to fall back to rationalistic justifications.

12 ‘If a man is to receive any true knowledge about the Unknown /the God/ he must be made to know’ (Kierkegaard, 1962:57).

Sylvia Walsh points out that it is only in Kierkegaard's unpublished response to Magnus Eiriksson, preserved in the *Journals*,¹³ that Kierkegaard returns to the understanding of the absurd and the Absolute Paradox as present in the earlier pseudonymous writings, as well as in the later *Sickness unto Death*. Kierkegaard claims that neither of the previous "authors" claimed to have faith, and therefore have not reached the secondary understanding, the "higher rationality" in a nonspeculative sense.¹⁴ This "higher rationality" is placed within faith and contrasted to the absurdity, which lies without:

When I believe, then assuredly neither faith nor the content of faith is absurd. O, no, no – but I understand very well that for the person who does not believe, faith and the content of faith are absurd, and I also understand that as soon as I myself am not in the faith, am weak, when doubt perhaps begins to stir, then faith and the content of faith gradually begin to become absurd for me. (1978, 6:6598)

Thus, the later Kierkegaard concludes that claims based on belief, like the God-Man claim, are not understandable only if the condition of belief is missing.¹⁵ His use of the language of paradox, however, arrives here at its limit: the secondary understanding, the higher, nonspeculative rationality. In order to avoid a misunderstanding that in the end belief can be rationally justified, which Kierkegaard never claimed, let us examine the problem of understanding belief from yet another perspective. Already in his early writings Kierkegaard introduces the concept of truth as a key to understanding and as a test of belief. So let us look at the concept of truth as an alternative to reason in regard to our belief and understanding. As I said previously, Kierkegaard develops his notion of truth against the background of Kant and Hegel. Now, in the pseudonymous writings he makes three important points:

13 See 'Papier X6 B 68–82; JP, 1:9–12 [78–81]; JP, 6:6598–6601 [68–69,77,82] referred to in Walsh, 1994:39.

14 See Kierkegaard, 1978, 6:6598; Walsh, 1994: 39.

15 Walsh emphasises that the non-believing "authors" could 'illuminate faith only negatively, from the standpoint of an outsider', and that their approach 'should not be understood as describing the positive content of faith.' (1994:40)

i) In the last sentence of *Either/Or* he says: 'for only the truth which edifies is truth for you.' (1944, II:294) This statement alters the, in Kierkegaard's eyes passive, Kantian transcendence as it involves a stress on an active element in truth which has the power to challenge, to 'edify' us.¹⁶ Then it speaks of the 'truth for you', i.e. stresses the subject. Thus, using Kierkegaard's terminology, we can say that the 'edifying' truth is at the same time an inward truth, truth for and within an individual. However, Kierkegaard's notion of inwardness does not allow for creating one's own truths – or believing whatever comes to hand, as was the case with Hegel's notion of total autonomy. As will be shown later, Kierkegaard assumes that the truth is prior to an individual search for it, and it provokes such a search.

ii) Reacting in particular to Hegel, Kierkegaard distinguishes between the truth in the objective sense and truth as subjectivity. In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* he writes: 'The truth in this objective sense may mean, first, the historical truth; second, the philosophical truth.' (1974:23) Then he concludes that both of the objectively described truths are not based on evidence, as there is no such thing as evidence. As was said previously: 'If I am capable of grasping God objectively [on the grounds of evidence], I do not believe, but precisely because I cannot do this I must believe.' (1974:182) The lack of 'objective evidence' leads to an ambiguity of possible interpretations and leaves us always with approximations. Similarly we can speak of mathematical or scientific truths, which are bound to the conditions in which they are expressed and say nothing going beyond these limitations, nothing transcendent, nothing that challenges the life of an individual at its roots. The truth in an objective sense is rather put by Kierkegaard into a category of external knowledge.

iii) An alternative approach to truth is proposed, when he states: 'Subjectivity is the truth.' (1974:187) A contrast with Hegel's stages of the Subjective, Objective and Absolute Spirit is at hand, as Kierkegaard places subjectivity above objectivity and says that it is there where the truth is found. This means that the truth has always to include the rela-

16 Compare to Hus's identification of the Truth with Christ, Ch. Two, 3.1.

tionship of the one who sticks to it. It has to include the decision on which of the ambiguous interpretations one is going to build up one's life. His claim, however, goes further, as he identifies subjectivity and truth. Subjectivity as truth not only presupposes an individual with an ability to make decisions and to live by them, but it excludes the possibility of turning the truth back to any purely objective system, which obviously, according to Kierkegaard, is a degeneration of truth. Thus, only subjective, inward truth is, according to Kierkegaard, alive (active – as it edifies), only such truth opens up the space for communication with the transcendent, for belief which is not an illusion, and for non-speculative understanding.

In *Philosophical Fragments* another distinction is made, namely between the human and the eternal truth. Using the example of Socrates and Jesus, it is explained that even if Socrates was an exceptional person, he, as a human teacher, could teach us only human truths, and here Kierkegaard speaks rather as a systematic theologian than as a philosopher, affirming that Jesus, being ontologically different from Socrates, being a God-Man, teaches us eternal Truth. Socrates as a person was not decisive for the truth he taught, while Jesus as a person is decisive. Socrates was a “midwife”, helping the truth to be born in an individual, and if there were another midwife, the same sort of help might be provided. Jesus is the Truth. And no one else can be put in His place, as he is not just the Teacher, but also the Saviour. He gives the Truth (which means Himself) and also the lost condition for understanding it (salvation); this could not be given by Socrates, as he stood in the same situation as we do – namely, one in which he also needed to be edified by the Truth and to be saved by the Saviour.

Kierkegaard's theological argumentation finally puts belief and understanding in the context of salvation. As with Hus's *apologia*, the Truth that saves, the Truth which is Christ himself is something – or rather someone – given to us. To believe it leads to an understanding of it, when understanding is not a merely epistemological category, but has an existential dimension to it, since, according to Kierkegaard, to understand involves being in the condition of salvation.

While Kierkegaard in his theology defends mainstream Christianity, nevertheless his philosophy runs the dangers of subjectivism and

fideism. However much we may like a Christian doctrine to be presented as a solution to philosophical problems, it is important to recognise that Kierkegaard's assumptions are foundationalist. He does not argue why it is important to maintain Christological dogma, but not other explanations, stating instead that, if it is true then it is the decisive reality for your life; if you believe then you will understand. In the realm of epistemology Kierkegaard's approach stands and falls with a correspondence between "what is believed" and "what is the case". His claim to truth which edifies attempts to propose a correspondence from the side of the transcendent, the totally other from ourselves. Such truth is then claimed to be discoverable within human subjectivity as an inward truth. But as Kierkegaard tries to avoid any appreciation of human immanence, the truth cannot be traced as referential without the condition of belief. The one who does not have belief is left with a paradox.

The task of the following part will be to look at how the problem of correspondence is dealt with in contemporary theories of truth, which are relevant for resolving the extreme solutions to the Kantian dilemma presented by Hegel and Kierkegaard; Hegel standing for the method of total immanence, and Kierkegaard for the method of total transcendence, both in their extremes inadequate for the needs of Christian *apologia*.

2. The Problem of Correspondence in Contemporary Theories of Truth

Kierkegaard does not argue for the reasonableness of belief but instead concentrates on the claim of belief to be true. This invites the question as to how such truth can be established. As I pointed out, Kierkegaard sees the truth of a statement or of an attitude in terms of "what is believed" corresponding to "what is the case" and as he speaks of an "edifying truth", "what is the case" is seen as bringing into life "what is be-

lied”. In other words, if there is any referential truth to belief in God grounded in one source of reality, which Kierkegaard assumes, it must be divinely granted. Kierkegaard’s exploration of possibilities and the character of our knowledge, belief and commitment with regard to truth shifts from a philosophical to a theological argumentation. He leaves behind the philosophical issues, such as criteria for successful reference, and introduces theological themes of grace and revelation with an attempt to avoid as much of the theological language as possible.

In this section I take up the problem of how to establish correspondence and look at a current debate in the Anglo-Saxon philosophical scene, in particular with regard to different types of realism¹⁷ all of which share an assumption that for a statement or an attitude to be true is for it to be reality-depicting.¹⁸ I show that different theories arguing for a correspondence between “being true” and “being reality-depicting” operate with different notions of “being” ascribed either to statements or to people making statements; of “reality” involving tensions between transcendent-immanent or external-internal; and of “depicting” that can be either descriptive or non-descriptive. Differences in these notions, as I document, have fatal consequences for the apologetical discourse and contribute to its split into apologetics and *apologia*. Major positions covered under the heading of “realism” include: naive realism, critical realism, metaphysical realism and internal realism. Each of them puts forward at least a partially different theory of truth and therefore they will be examined separately. This section opens up a discussion which will be developed in the concluding part, where I re-examine the notions of truth, belief and reason, and look at relations between theories of correspondence and coherence.¹⁹ I ask whether they are mutually exclusive or interdependent, and this question leads back to the problem of extreme solutions to the Kantian dilemma. My aim is to search for a moderate approach, which would be more suitable for the needs of a Christian *apologia*.

17 For realism in ontology and in epistemology, see glossary.

18 The Latin concept *veritas* is translated as both truth and reality.

19 For coherence, see glossary.

2.1 Naive Realism

Naive realism, or in other words direct realism,²⁰ holds that we have a direct access to reality which is external to us, which exists independently of us. The phenomenal world that we perceive, and the noumenal world of things in themselves, are seen as united. It claims that in perception we have a direct and non-inferential awareness²¹ of material objects, of processes of nature and hidden entities, which exist independently of us. This basic statement puts on the same level material objects like stones or trees, processes of nature like storms, and even hidden entities like ideas of justice or beauty, love or God. Naive realists claim that the human mind is capable of a direct awareness of all these things. And even more, this is a non-inferential awareness, which means that what I perceive, the particular phenomenal world, cannot be reduced without its losing correspondence to the noumenal world. Thus, it is the direct correspondence of the phenomenal world to the noumenal world which makes a statement true, according to naive realism. The simplest version of naive realism assumes that e.g. my perception of a tree provides me with the evident truth about the tree. The appearance of a tree includes what the tree is in itself. Naive realism denies the possibility of perceptual error. A sane person capable of perception cannot be wrong in seeing things as they are, but the problem is, whether this applies only to material objects or also to processes of nature, to ideas, to love and to God.²² Anthony Quinton in *The Nature of*

20 Anthony Quinton sees the term “naive” realism as derogatory and points out that philosophers sharing this position prefer to describe themselves as direct realists (see *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, 1989, “realism, naive”: 726).

21 For non-inferential awareness, see glossary.

22 Ian Ramsey brings a defence of naive realism, saying that on the example of a theist’s truth-claims about non-observable reality, about God, we can see that their being cognitive depends on their being referential. He states that Christian assertions must be a clearer objective reference, and that they must encourage us to appeal to “what is the case” (Cf. *Models of Divine Activity*, 1973: 58). ‘We cannot be mistaken about that “something” which is other than ourselves’ (Ramsey, I., “Facts and Disclosures”, Address to the Aristotelian Society, 24 Jan 1972, reprinted in *Christian Empiricism*, ed. by J.H. Gill, 1974:174).

Things proposes that this problem is grounded in claims to “objective reality”, where the distinction of the observable and non-observable part of it is insufficient. He states that even a direct realist is usually aware of the fact that in perception we always capture only a small selection of what is true about material objects, and thus, we do not know the complete truth about things. The difficulty at this stage is to do not with claims to the knowledge of complete truth, but rather with the method employed, namely taking ‘sense-impressions to be the epistemological substances, on which knowledge is founded’ (1980:117).

More serious problems, according to Quinton, arise with a non-observable reality, such as universal entities and abstract propositions, if they are claimed to be objective. Their “objectivity” cannot be grounded in perception. A direct realist, according to Quinton, does not have to accept that e.g. mathematical propositions can be directly observed, as if someone could go and have a look at how prime-numbers are, could touch and smell them or hear what sort of noise they make, or discover if they taste nice. Nor does a direct realist claim to encounter an ontological substance of justice or beauty, as universals are considered to be objective abstractions, according to direct realism in Quinton’s terms. Yet, a direct realist holds that these can be known “objectively”. I have shown applications of this claim in our two examples of foundationalist apologetics in Chapter One, Swinburne and Hebblethwaite. According to Quinton, this claim to the objectivity of non-observable reality turns realism on its head, as in order to hold that we have access to things as they are,²³ direct realists project their ideas onto the transcendent screen.²⁴ But such reality is no longer independent of the human mind, and as Quinton summarises: ‘The only type of metaphysics that is closed to him [a direct realist] is idealist’ (1980:118).

J.M. Soskice in *Metaphor and Religious Language* maintains the name “naive realism” and concentrates on the problem of descriptive language. She states that naive realists view models as ‘providing a description of how things are in themselves’ (1985:118), where models can be seen as ideas and structures. She refers to Mary Hesse’s isolation of

23 Cf. Hebblethwaite, 1996:27.

24 Compare to Freud’s critique of religion, 1985:212.226–227.

two assumptions of naive realism: (i) true theories can be attained in practice; (ii) the hidden entities and processes of nature that are to be discovered by science are of the same kinds as observable entities and processes, and hence describable in the same descriptive vocabulary and satisfying the same laws.²⁵

Holding that true theories can be attained in practice implies that concerning one subject, there can be only one true theory. If a theory is true, it cannot change, unless it loses its truth-value. Naive realism's claim to reference in this case means escaping from contextuality. The principle of plurality as well as any principle of development are not part of the naive realist position. It is, instead, assumed that reference is something fixed, something given, which human beings may take or leave, but not challenge. On this ground, naive realism opens the way to an empiricist request for the same kind of justification for knowledge of non-observable entities and processes as in the case of observable ones. The traditional empiricist view, as Soskice emphasises, holds that 'meaning determines reference' (1985:125). But this version of meaning is assumed to be given by description. When applied to theological discourse, the naive realist is convinced that he/she can describe God as "He" really is. The univocal language of description provides him/her with meaning and meaning with reference. This position, nevertheless, comes into immediate difficulties, e.g. if one holds that God really is a Father in the same sense as physical fathers are, or that He gets angry or changes His mind as we do, then such a position reduces God to a created, finite, temporal and spatial being, like human beings, and this would end up with a caricature of God rather like the one Philo forces Cleanthes into accepting in Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*.²⁶

But does realism have to be naive? If one wants to say that there can be another kind of realism retaining a claim to reference to non-observable reality without speaking of proofs, as Swinburne did²⁷ or without

25 Cf. Hesse, M., 1974, *The Structure of Scientific Inference*: 285–286; Soskice, J.M., 1985, *Metaphor and Religious Language*: 118–119.

26 Cf. Hume, D., 1991, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*: 159.

27 See Ch.One, 2.1.

holding its objectivity in terms of the unified vision of the world, history and religion, as Hebblethwaite did,²⁸ then the following points will have to be challenged: (i) a direct access to non-observable reality, as if there was a “God’s eye point of view”²⁹ directly available to the observer; (ii) non-observable reality cannot satisfy the same laws as the observable and cannot be described by the same descriptive vocabulary; (iii) reference will thus have to be separated from giving descriptive definitions;³⁰ (iv) an alternative to descriptive reality-depicting will have to be found, including a satisfactory response to what kind of laws non-descriptive reality satisfies, if any.³¹

2.2 Critical Realism

Critical realism, also called scientific or reflective realism, represents a reaction against naive realism. It denies that in perception we have a direct awareness of the phenomenal and the noumenal world as united. Critical realists understand the existence of the noumenal world (things as they are in themselves) to be independent of the human mind, while the phenomenal world (things as they appear to us) is interrelated with the structure of our mind. Perception, then, may or may not provide an access into the noumenal world. Critical realism allows the possibility of error in perception (e.g. in the fog I thought that I was seeing a man, but then I realised that it was a tree). Similarly, critical realists do not claim a non-inferential awareness of objects in perception. Instead, they hold that induction and deduction participate in our seeing things as something. This means that we cannot have a mind-independent picture of the world, or in other words, we cannot have a theory which

28 See Ch. One, 2.2.

29 Cf. Putnam, H., 1992, *Reason, Truth and History*: 49.

30 ‘separation of referring and defining is at the very heart of metaphorical speaking’ (Soskice, 1985:140).

31 ‘the theist can reasonably take his talk of God, bound as it is within a wheel of images, as being reality depicting, while at the same time acknowledging its inadequacy as description.’ (Soskice, 1985:141)

would exist independent of human the mind.³²What then makes statements true for a critical realist? Surely utterances like “it was not true that there was a man,” or “it was true that there was a tree”, distinguish between what was and what was not seen. But again, even the closest possible observation must allow for a distinction between “what is seen as a matter of fact” and “what is a matter of fact”, as according to critical realists we perceive only the phenomenal world and this may or may not provide access into the noumenal world. From this standpoint, claims to truth can still be made, but the possibility of error has to remain open. To claim that a statement is true, means to claim that an observation of a phenomenon corresponds to a noumenal reality. To hold the possibility of error means that I can see things as something they are not, that my phenomenal world does not correspond to the noumenal world.³³Now, is it possible to describe noumenal reality? The reply of critical realism is no. Description belongs to our way of seeing things as they are for us. As no mind-independent picture of the world is available one can “only” describe the phenomenal reality and claim that it refers to the noumenal reality, which is not descriptive. While in the case of observable things critical realism allows a literal-descriptive usage of language, critical realism claims that non-observable things have to be communicated differently. Thus, a critical realist is left to solve the problem of how language participates in reference and what else is vital to it.

J.M. Soskice brings two distinctions responding to this problem: (i) between literal and metaphorical use of language, where she argues for an understanding of metaphor as possibly reality-depicting; (ii) between defining and referring, where she states that we do not have to bring about a description of how things are in themselves in order to claim that our theory is referential. Soskice emphasises that in the last analysis: ‘It is not words which refer, but speakers using words who refer’ (1985:136), and this makes the use of metaphor possibly reality-depict-

32 Cf. Quinton, A., “realism, critical” in *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, 1989:726.

33 The phenomenal/noumenal distinction has taken its inspiration from Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1956:265–266.

ing without claiming to have definite knowledge. In contrast to this Soskice supports a social theory of reference. This means that our use of words when we refer is always dependent on the social context, which is, however, not a constant, but something dynamic, something evolving. Soskice's account does not fall under Derrida's criticism,³⁴ as she does not speak of the "proper" context, but allows plurality to emerge. Referring and defining are separated in Soskice's approach. We do not have to bring about a description of how things are in themselves in order to claim that our theories refer. Models and metaphors provide us with an alternative – a framework without strict definitions, which allows for the revisability necessary for any partial account that aims to adopt itself to the world. She proposes that the metaphorical depiction of reality in science may find analogies in theology, however, unlike Kierkegaard, she keeps her attention on possibilities and the character of our knowledge, belief and commitment with regard to truth. The theological realist, according to her, maintains that although religious claims are made within a context of enquiry, that is within a particular believing community,³⁵ this does not deprive them of their referential value.

Christian metaphors come out of a long tradition and refer back to previous understandings of metaphor in both Christian and Jewish literature. In Soskice's opinion there is a mutual interdependence between an individual's experience and a sacred text; she says, 'we interpret texts and they interpret us' (1985:159), in other words, they relate to our experience, which is, in Soskice's terms, our causal relation to God.³⁶ A religious experience gives us the right to make the theist's claim to the transcendent God, and such experience is not seen just as a privilege of some individuals, but as something that belongs to the whole religious

34 See Ch. One, 1.1.

35 Cf. Jenkins, T., 1989, 'Review of Soskice's *Metaphor and Religious Language*', *Literature and Theology* 3 (1989), 226.

36 Soskice states: 'Since we take it as given that no eye has seen God, and no finger pointed Him out, the theological application must rest on the theist's claim that we are causally related to God' (1985:138).

community. It is religious experience that is testified by the Old and the New Testaments as well as by the Christian Tradition.³⁷

The strength of critical realism in comparison to naive realism is in the fact that critical realism avoids having to take on board the empiricist demand to prove its statements to be true. A claim to reference does not have to be grounded in direct empirical evidence. This freedom allows the critical realist an alternative understanding of reference: to be reality-depicting without describing, which is based on analogy and metaphor. A critical realist does not separate his/her referential claims from the context in which he or she operates, from assumptions created by one's community, from its models of thought and behaviour, all of which participate in making reference successful. A weak point of critical realism, then, is that successful reference does not involve a statement or an attitude being undoubtedly true. The possibility of error always remains open, and one's decision-making involves a significant element of trust. In the following section I look at whether such trust can be metaphysically or internally supported.

2.3 Metaphysical Realism

The controversy between naive and critical realism has been accompanied by another major discussion, namely between metaphysical and internal realists. While naive and critical realists argued about direct or indirect perception of the noumenal world, literal-descriptive or metaphorical reality-depiction, they agreed to the claim that a realist has the right to make truth-claims about non-observable reality, including truth-claims about the transcendent God. They both held that what makes such truth claims true is reference, although they diverged in whether observable and non-observable reality satisfies the same laws and can be communicated in the same way. What is at stake in the debate between metaphysical and internal realists is the possibility of making any truth-claims referring to a reality which is supposed to ex-

37 Soskice speaks here of the 'element of trust' (1985:152) involved in relying on others whose experience has been wider than our own.

ist independent of human beings. While within metaphysical realism we find positions that fall in many aspects under the headings of naive as well as critical realism, as I demonstrate later, internal realism attempts to offer an alternative answer to our question: what makes a statement true? It takes us from referential theories of truth to those relying on coherence, which are still claimed to be realist.

With metaphysical realism, we must keep in mind that it includes a variety of positions operating with different notions of “metaphysics”. This can be shown in two thinkers. A. Quinton attempts to identify a minimal agreement among most ordinary interpretations, stating that ‘metaphysics is the attempt to arrive by rational means at a general picture of the world.’ (1980:235) His starting point is simply that the picture of the world needs explanation. Copleston in *Philosophers and Philosophies* states that the human mind is by definition reflective, and in his opinion, ‘metaphysics can be looked on as man’s appropriation in reflection of his own orientation to the transcendent Absolute.’ (1976:62) As with distinctions between naive (direct) and critical realism, I look at metaphysical realism as (i) descriptive, and as (ii) non-descriptive.

i/ Hilary Putnam in *Reason, Truth and History* defines metaphysical realism as descriptive, claiming that there exists ‘some fixed totality of mind-independent objects’, as well as that ‘There is exactly one true and complete description of “the way the world is”’. Truth involves some sort of correspondence relation between words or thought-signs and external things and sets of things.’ (1992:49) A metaphysical realist operates, according to him, with a ‘magical theory of reference’, where reference itself becomes a ‘substantial form’ (1992:47). Simply, a metaphysical realist, according to him, assumes a supra-world independent of human mind, a world where ideal substances and ideal relations are changelessly dwelling, as Swinburne proposed.³⁸ The mind-independent supra-world is believed to be just one. Reference to such assumed reality, then, is fixed, and does not change with context. It is magical, because it relies on an assumed power of the supra-world to make its fixed totality visible. Fixed reference, then, according to Putnam, relies on fixed concepts being descriptions of how the transcendent reality is.

38 See Ch.One, 2.1.

Metaphysical realism thus concentrates on ideas, however much it claims to have access to the ultimate metaphysical facts. These are communicated by means of irrevocable descriptive propositions, e.g. God is always “He”, the “Father” or the “King”; if we changed the propositions, they would not refer. Nevertheless, even these fixed concepts allow a plurality of meaning ascribed to them. Thus, there is at least a theoretical possibility of a plurality of interpretations operating with different meanings of fixed referential propositions, which Hebblethwaite recognises,³⁹ allowing the possibility of a false interpretation and an inadequate meaning. This possibility, however, according to Putnam, does not affect the practice of metaphysical realism. He concludes that metaphysical realists ignore this possibility: ‘Note that *all* these infinitely many metaphysical theories are compatible with the same sentences being true, the *same* “theory of the world”, and the same optimal methodology for discovering what is true!’ (1992:48)⁴⁰

ii/ Non-descriptive metaphysical realism argues for the credibility of the right to make metaphysical claims while employing metaphorical language and grounding them in religious experiences. Soskice says that they open up talk about reality that has appeared in experiences as human mind-independent. It cannot be proved that such experiences are fictions, just as it cannot be proved that they are not. She argues not for a proof, but for a conceptual possibility of encountering human-mind independent reality, of encountering God.⁴¹ The intelligibility of religious experience, however, does not have to involve unrevocable knowledge. Non-descriptive metaphysical realism does not presume a direct access to “what is the case”. It treats metaphysical descriptions as illusory foundations, and opposes assumptions that the human mind can disclose in its conceptual schemes otherworldly words, sentences and theories that cannot be wrong.

39 See Ch.One, 2.2.

40 See Hebblethwaite’s claim to the unified vision of the world, history and religion, Ch.One, 2.2.

41 ‘Our concern is with conceptual possibility rather than proof, and with a demonstration that we may justly speak of God without claiming to define him’ (Soskice, 1985:148).

Copleston says that metaphysical claims about what is believed to be transcendent reality are not built on having seen it with our physical eyes or having heard it with our physical ears. A direct sensual experience, which we have in encountering stones, trees or people, is not available to us here, according to Copleston. He does not rule out the possibility of mystical experience, but emphasises that such experience, though it refers to the same reality, is of a different kind than an empirically-proved encounter with natural objects.

He proposes that positive affirmations about non-observable reality, like the human soul or God, are implicitly contained in the propositions of everyday speech. According to him, there is no other “metaphysical” reality distinct from ordinary reality. He says that a philosopher ‘does not enjoy privileged access to an occult entity; but he can reflect on the nature of man as revealed in human activities and in the concomitant awareness of those activities as “mine”.’ (1976:11–12) Another thing that cannot be done by a philosopher is to step out of his own context and become an external spectator of the whole world or of all time and history. He states: ‘What he sees is there to be seen.’ (1974:40) And although one’s perception is limited, it does not mean it is illusory.⁴² But now, unlike naive realists, Copleston claims that reference is not bound with a universal description. According to Copleston one can describe one’s own experience with reality, but generalisations always risk giving distorted views.⁴³ With metaphysical systems one al-

42 ‘The fact that his range of vision and experience is limited does not entail the conclusion that he is subject to hallucinations, or that what he claims to see is not objectively there to be seen’ (Copleston, 1974, *Religion and Philosophy*: 40).

43 Copleston uses as an example Schopenhauer’s account of evil and suffering in the world. He says that Schopenhauer cannot stand up to criticism, with his taking suffering and pain as positive features of existence determining the character of ultimate reality, while happiness is seen as being no more than a temporary cessation of pain. Schopenhauer’s exaggeration, nevertheless, reflects a dark side of the world, of human history, which was ignored or explained away in some other philosophical systems. Schopenhauer’s exaggeration may be seen as a reaction to dismissing the problem of evil and suffering. As it minimises other aspects of life, like joy, peace or happiness, and generalises the experience of suffering, it produces a distorted view. However, it can still refer to a particular aspect of reality, as Copleston emphasises: ‘this does not alter the fact that,

ways has to keep in mind that they may refer to some part of reality, but are never exhaustive of it. He says: 'I do not think that there can be a final, adequate metaphysical system. For it remains possible to focus attention on other features and to construct a rather different world-view' (1974:44) And so Copleston's position is in agreement with Putnam's, that there is no "God's Eye view of truth"⁴⁴ available to us.

Copleston makes this point still more clear when he speaks about asserting the existence of the Transcendent. He says that it is tautologically a logical impossibility to speak of the Transcendent and to attempt to transform it into clear conceptual knowledge.⁴⁵ However, in *Religion and Philosophy*, he still speaks of some statements 'which are necessarily true if there is a world at all' (1974:43), 'if we can speak of a world of finite things at all' (42). Such statements represent some logical features of the world. Thus, 'the Transcendent cannot be a member of the class of finite things, not at any rate if to say of a reality that it is transcendent means that it transcends this class.' (44) In contrast to Kierkegaard, Copleston emphasises a difference between philosophical and theological statements. Philosophical statements, according to him, represent rational reflection on the world, while theological statements rely on a belief-assumption of divine self-revelation. They do not have to exclude each other, as each of them occupies a different area. As a philosopher, he is aware of the limits of his discourse: 'God has not chosen to save mankind by philosophy. And if philosophy sets itself up as a way of salvation, it is going beyond its proper limits' (1974:37). He argues against the kind of metaphysics, represented e.g. by Hegel, that attempts to substitute for the Gospel its philosophical system. Philosophy, according to him, is in a sense parasitic:

Continued from previous page:

generally speaking, what Schopenhauer saw in the world was there to be seen.... For we can see his metaphysics as representing a possible way of seeing reality, if attention is focused on the phenomena of evil and suffering.' (1974:41)

44 See Putnam, 1992:49.

45 'And that which is really transcendent presumably transcends the conceptual web of human reason.' (Copleston, 1974:44).

It can examine different language-games; but it is debarred from itself initiating a language-game in opposition to or as a rival to the Christian language-game. It can examine other people's statements about the world and about human conduct. But it does not make statements of its own about reality in general or about the way in which human beings ought to behave. In a sense of course it can still trespass on the territory of the Christian theologian, but only by way of criticism, not by way of substituting other alleged truths for Christian truths, the truths of revelation. (1974:36–37)

Copleston's non-descriptive metaphysical realism represents human reflection on the world and human reflection on the transcendent, including questions as to whether there is any transcendent at all. He does not claim to have objective evidential support for his stand point, that the phenomenal world is ontologically dependent on an ultimate reality, but argues for the right to hold such positions as rationally legitimate.

As pointed out earlier by Soskice, a metaphysical realist is not obliged to accept the empiricist demand not to make any truth-claims that cannot be proved by evidence. Instead, he or she may insist that empirical and metaphysical claims belong to different species-groups, and therefore methods used in one (such as proofs or disproofs) cannot be applied in the other. The metaphysical realist can still refer to transcendent reality, without proving that it exists and without describing it. They can refer, but are submitted to the possibility of error, both ontological and epistemological.

2.4 Internal Realism

Internal realism arose as a reaction against descriptive metaphysical realism. It reflected a contrast of two perspectives, an external and an internal one, with the following distinction: externalists, those who maintain that reference to an external world independent of the observer is vital, claim: 'Truth involves some sort of correspondence relation between words or thought-signs and external things and sets of things.' (Putnam, 1992:49) Internalists see such a claim as illusory, because any talk of reality is, according to them, restricted to the reality *we* interact

with, and therefore a reality which is not external, but internal to us. In other words it can be said that internal realism is willing to talk of what is real only as apprehensible by means of human experience, claiming that we, as human beings, cannot claim to have extra-human apprehensions.

At this point, internal realism distinguishes between a linguistic construction and a form of being. Talking e.g. of possible worlds different from the one we live in, is according to Putnam a linguistic construction. Internal realism declines to count as possibly real any world of which we have no particular representation,⁴⁶ which M. Sacks classifies as Putnam's rejecting 'the idea of there being a noumenal world' (1989:38). This classification, however, does not take into account the distinction between linguistic construction and a form of being, which is vital for Putnam's position. An internal realist position holds that a linguistic construction has no standpoint from which it can be claimed to be true.⁴⁷

An internal realist is interested in '*what objects does the world consist of*' (Putnam, 1992:49) or in other words in forms of being. His/her position is called internal because objects are seen as '*internal* to the scheme of description' (52) and realist because it sees itself as dealing with reality and not with a construction. Nevertheless, what internal realists actually mean by reality is not so simply stated. Putnam says that 'world by definition includes everything that interacts in any way with the things it contains.' (50) Thus, in order to speak of reality, we must speak of the world we are familiar with (that is apprehensible to us), and this world, its objects and relations, is apprehensible through our conceptual schemes.

From this at least two interpretations follow: The first one calls on Putnam's saying: "Objects" do not exist independently of conceptual

46 Cf. Putnam 'Realism and Reason', 1978: in *Meaning and Moral Sciences*: 125.

47 Taking the hypothesis "all sentient beings are brains in vats" or "I do not exist", involves a problem: Who is in a position to consider the hypothesis? Putnam's response is "no-one" (see Putnam, 1992:50), we are dealing with a self-refuting argument, where there is no point of view from which the question whether it is true or not can be reasonably posed.

schemes' (52), and their being internal to the scheme of description is interpreted in the idealist way – objects are ideas present in our mind; reality consists of these objects.⁴⁸ The second interpretation operates on the suspension of any possibility of having a notion of objects without such a notion being already dependent on a conceptual scheme, within which the concept “objects” operates. Putnam’s sentence: “Objects” do not exist independently of conceptual schemes’ (52), therefore does not say more than that in our minds interaction with reality appears as a subject-object relation, where a point of interpretation (a theory of description) is already present. Our mind is not capable of a concept-free relation towards what it takes to be objects. This interpretation hears internal realism saying: we can perceive reality only through our minds; we can relate to it only within conceptual schemes (within theories of description).

Internal realism does not insist on one particular theory of description; a plurality of theories is entertained, provided they are ‘rationally acceptable.’⁴⁹ What is meant by this? Putnam classifies rational acceptability as ‘some sort of ideal coherence of our beliefs with each other and with our experiences’ (49–50). It is possible to say that by “rational” he means – through mind related to reality; by acceptable – respecting the structures of reality, of mind and of their interaction. This criterion of Putnam’s rational acceptability opposes descriptive metaphysical realism’s claim to correspondence with ‘mind-independent or discourse-independent ‘state of affairs.’’ (50) The internal perspective, in concentrating on coherent relations of our beliefs and experiences, has two sides: one is represented by what Putnam calls belief, the other by what he calls experience. Beliefs in this view are theories of description within which we look at the world and its objects, structures and relations, at reality. Experiences are means of contacts with reality, that, as Putnam says, ‘*are themselves represented in our belief-system*’ (50). Mutual dependence of beliefs and experiences, then, excludes either reli-

48 This interpretation, however contradicts Putnam’s argument with Brains in a Vat, where he refuses to treat any idea present in our mind (e.g. that I am a brain in a vat or that I do not exist) to be even hypothetically real.

49 Cf. Putnam, 1981:49–50.

ance on a “pure belief” or a “pure experience” as they do not exist in “pure forms” according to internal realism.

The question as to whether the internal position, by calling itself realist, means the same as other realist positions, still remains. Naive, critical, as well as both types of metaphysical realism focused on the problem of reference: how to refer successfully to reality independent of the observer, while internal realism, similarly to Kierkegaard’s notion of truth as subjectivity, holds in the very centre of its argument that reality is internal to us, but differs from Kierkegaard in concentrating on the problem of coherent relations of our beliefs and experiences in order to distinguish between reality and fiction.

There are two theological implications of internal realism. First, in accordance with critical as well as non-descriptive metaphysical realism, no immediate perception of God and divine reality is claimed to be possible; we can get to know God only via some effects.⁵⁰ The credibility of such accounts plays an important role. Putnam raises a question, *‘from whose point of view is the story being told?’* (50) And he says that we cannot speak directly from a ‘God’s Eye view of truth’ (50); such statements lack credibility, because we, being human beings, cannot claim any extra-human point of view. All we can talk about, according to internal realism, is mediated through our human experience of reality. Calling on a ‘God’s Eye view of truth’ means, as Putnam points out, presupposing a ‘No Eye view of truth – truth as independent of observers altogether.’ (50) Having denied any possibility of direct perception of divine truth, as it is in itself, internal realism, nevertheless, does not eliminate the possibility of perceiving the reality of God. What it takes issue with is the claim of “direct” perception. On this ground internal realism attacks the correspondence theory of truth, which it falsely identifies with direct perception.

The second and distinctive contribution of internal realism to theological discourse is the way in which Putnam’s criterion of “rational acceptability” operates. He employs a broad ancient understanding of rea-

50 ‘God is that which Moses experienced as speaking to him on Mount Sinai’ (Soskice, 1985:138).

son, similarly to the early Christian apologists like Justin Martyr,⁵¹ where its analytical and meditative faculties hold together. Putnam says that our experiences are themselves represented in our belief-system and in our ways of thinking.⁵² Thus, before we start thinking of God, the experience of God is already present in our mind, however, this experience is socially determined. Its social determination comes from the concepts in which experiences are shaped and expressed. Internal realism never speaks of pure experience. This understanding of “rational acceptability” of accounts of belief in God grasps the interdependence of our experience, belief and knowledge. What remains unresolved, is whether an experience of God is a part of every human mind, and if so, why then in some is it not recognised?⁵³

3. Summary: Reality or Fiction?

Putnam’s “rational acceptability” as a criterion for distinguishing between reality and a fiction, brought together our beliefs and experiences. It has shown that both are socially determined and that there was no set of ready made external state of affairs guaranteeing a possibility of correspondence between “what is believed” and “what is the case”. If we want to retain the function of correspondence, we have to examine more closely if the claim to a coherent relations of our beliefs and experiences includes relations of reference or not. In other words, whether correspondence and coherence are mutually exclusive or interdependent.

51 See Ch.Two, 1.3.

52 ““Truth”, in an internalist view, is some sort of (idealised) rational acceptability – some sort of ideal coherence of our beliefs with each other and with our experiences *as those experiences are themselves represented in our belief system* – and not correspondence with mind-independent or discourse-independent “states of affairs”.” (Putnam, 1992:49–50)

53 Compare to Plantinga’s solution, where belief is a fundamental part of our noetic structure and unbelief epistemologically substandard, which I criticised as unsatisfactory in Ch.Three, 2.3.

This question is not merely of theoretical interest, but as I showed in various approaches to a Christian *apologia* in the second chapter, it involves a series of practical issues: to what extent can a Christian belief be “explained” to an outsider, asked Justin;⁵⁴ how to find an authoritative tradition that would help to keep a Christian community together and yet would not be oppressive, a question addressed by Augustine,⁵⁵ Hus’s and Newman’s search for integrity while the authority of the church was in crisis and a new concept of human autonomy was finding its way into Christianity;⁵⁶ as well as the modernists aiming at a holistic, historical and creative grasp of tradition and authority.⁵⁷ All these issues were in one way or the other confronted with the question of realising our finitude and our being as a gift. There was also the problem of the degree to which the criteria they used for any authoritative account of knowledge, belief and practice were justified by claims to reference, like Justin’s conclusion of *Apologias*, that one can do only so much and the rest is left up to God,⁵⁸ or Hus’s reliance on Christ the final and most reliable judge;⁵⁹ and to what degree they were justified by a system in which they fitted together, like Newman’s cumulative *apologia* combining different authorities as criteria for a Christian life.⁶⁰ This ongoing task of *apologia* to make a distinction between a fiction and reality was in its practice costly: Justin suffered martyrdom, Augustine gave up a quiet community life he desired to become a bishop and stay with his flock through their “world” dying out, Francis learnt to love “Lady Poverty” and opposition, Hus was burnt as a heretic, Newman and Tyrrell suffered being strangers in the church they loved. Yet, it is only as a practice that this distinction between reality and fiction provided for us a standpoint

54 See Ch.Two, 1.3.

55 See Ch.Two, 2.1.

56 See Ch.Two, 3.1.2.

57 See Ch.Two, 4.1.2.

58 See Ch.Two, 1.3.

59 ‘I commit this my appeal to Jesus Christ, the most just judge, who reliably knows, defends and judges, makes visible and rewards an equitable cause of every man’ (*Hus’s Equipment for Constance*, 1965:30.32).

60 See Ch.Two, 3.2.

from which a relation between belief and experience could credibly be claimed to be “true”.⁶¹

On the philosophical scene relations between theories of correspondence and coherence are further explored by Donald Davidson who in his essay ‘A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge’ argues that there need not be a competition between a theory of coherence and a theory of correspondence. He states: ‘coherence yields for correspondence.’ (1990a:120) His argument tries to bring a justification for coherence theory within the realist position in a similar way to that which we saw in Putnam’s internal realism. The key question underlying his effort may be spelled out as follows: Whether coherence may operate as a test of referential truth-claims or not. He says: ‘My coherence theory concerns beliefs, or sentences held true by someone who understands them. I do not want to say, at this point, that every possible coherent set of beliefs is true (or contains mostly true beliefs).’ (121)

Beliefs are bound with meaning, which according to Davidson, is seen as ‘what brings truth and knowledge together’ (120).⁶² However, as Soskice pointed out, the mere fact that people find some meaning in their beliefs is not seen as implying that their beliefs are true. According to Davidson’s theory of coherence, some beliefs are true, while other are false. The possibility of error is not excluded. It is stated that there is a ‘potential gap’ between ‘what is held to be true and what is true’, where ‘mere coherence... can not guarantee that what is believed is so. All that a coherence theory can maintain is that most of the beliefs in a coherent total set of beliefs are true.’ (121) The possibility of error, he admits, is not related to all beliefs, but only to some. He claims: ‘But of course a coherence theory cannot allow that all of them [our beliefs] can be wrong.’ (123) This is similar to Copleston’s insistence on some statements ‘which are necessarily true if there is a world at all’ (1974:43). A problem immediately appears, namely, how to distinguish between beliefs that can be wrong and those which cannot. At this point Davidson argues for the criterion of coherence, saying that it is ‘in favour of the

61 Compare to Tracy’s demand of the authentic situation of the interpreter, see Introduction.

62 Cf. Davidson, D., 1990b, ‘The Structure and Content of Truth’:304–305;318–326.

truth of a belief that coheres with a significant mass of belief' (123). Thus, the Kantian dilemma concerning a total human autonomy or a dependence on a transcendent assistance is touched on from a different angle, namely, how correspondence theories (favouring the emphasis on the transcendent) and coherence theories (favouring the emphasis on the immanent) can contribute to a distinction between fiction and reality. The Hegel-Kierkegaard antithesis tried to resolve the problem by exaggerating either the role of the immanent, as in Hegel, or the role of the transcendent, as in Kierkegaard.

In the chapters on Hegel and Kierkegaard I demonstrated that their antithesis operated on a level of argumentation which either overemphasised or undervalued the roles of reason and practice. Each of the approaches tended towards a particular epistemological grand theory. With Hegel it was a dialectic moving from a "positive religion" such as Judaism or Christianity to idealism, a form of speculative thought where one does not need to dress ideas in figurative imagery but rather apprehends the Absolute Spirit through the rational reflection of philosophy, where the highest place is given to theoretical concepts.⁶³ Despite Hegel's establishing a grand theory and deviating from practice, however, there was an appreciation of the historical and of the immanent, which has exercised a significant influence on Christian *apologia* in modern times and contributed both to historical criticism and to religious pluralism.

In Kierkegaard I pointed out the gulf between reason and belief separating truth from reasonableness and exaggerating the "if an individual believes" at the expense of a socially determined experience.⁶⁴ I showed that his grand theory had a negative character, so one could speak rather of an anti-theory, suspending the systems of both Kant and Hegel, but nevertheless making totalising claims about the nature of our knowledge, belief and commitment, and making generalisations while proposing that the ethical was to be subjected to the religious, the objective to the subjective, and the immanent to the transcendent. In spite of that, Kierkegaard uncovered the existential and the personal di-

63 See Ch.Four, 2.1.

64 See Ch.Five, 1.3.

mensions of religion and contributed to the re-evaluation of a religious practice as a primary source of our epistemological reflection.

Then, an examination of different theories of truth provided me with a challenge in terms of turning from a correspondence between “what is believed” and “what is the case” to “what is believed” and “what is experienced”, where neither correspondence nor coherence were absolutised, but both treated as interdependent in the practical task of distinguishing fiction from reality. Now I take a further step, to explore Wittgenstein’s religious epistemology and to ask whether the Hegel-Kierkegaard antithesis is overcome there and in what sense, if any, it can provide notions of knowledge, belief and practice useful for a Christian *apologia* searching for a new epistemological framework.

CHAPTER SIX: ‘DON’T THINK: LOOK!’¹

In this final chapter of Part Two I look at how Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) combines rational analysis with a Kierkegaardian transition from the theoretical to the practical as a primary locus for our believing and knowing. First I examine Wittgenstein’s notion of language, starting with his method and looking at how his understanding of language with regard to logic, meaning and truth developed through different stages of his religious epistemology. Here I explore changes leading from his early logical foundationalism to later practical realism. I use J. Genova’s labels to summarise Wittgenstein’s moves “from thinking to seeing” and “from seeing to acting”.² In the second part, I then identify three types of certainty: of knowing, believing and acting, as these are, according to Wittgenstein’s analysis, present in our everyday conversation. This provides me with epistemological distinctions to reconsider the differences between understanding religion as a theory and as practice. I look at implications of this for *apologia*, while referring to Wittgenstein’s own attempt to find an alternative to theory-dominated religion: to “become a different man”.³

1. Wittgenstein’s Notion of Language

Wittgenstein’s main attention is given to language, which he sees as the means of communication in which our history, our culture, our habits

1 Wittgenstein, L., 1958b, *Philosophical investigations* (PI) 66. (While referring to Wittgenstein’s writings I use the convention abbreviations, without a colon followed by the number representing not a page, but a paragraph.)

2 Cf. Genova, J., 1995, *Wittgenstein: A Way of Seeing*: 57,129.

3 Cf. Drury, M. O’C., 1984, ‘Conversations with Wittgenstein’ (Con), R. Rhees (ed.), *Recollections of Wittgenstein* (RW): 190.

of mind and our values are embedded. His epistemological approach differs from hermeneutics.⁴ His primary concern is not with interpretation, but with the actual structures of language, that make it possible to carry meaning and truth. This can be illustrated by using F.J. Laishley's distinction: 'Put differently, my interest has mainly been in the "how" of communication, the method, rather than in the "what", the content as such. The latter seems to me to fall into place when the former is understood.' (1997:15) In this line, I examine Wittgenstein's turn to language not as a contemplation of concepts, but rather a practical effort to '[foster] understanding, which both deepens insight and empowers people to act' (Laishley, 1997:15), and which places an individual within a wider context of social communication.⁵

My examination of Wittgenstein's notion of language is bound up with two things: first, Wittgenstein's method, in which the "how" of what is said presents the reader or hearer with meaning; second, the development of his own attitudes. I take into account the differences, starting with the early Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, the only philosophical work of his published in his lifetime, where he treats logic as a foundation for all other discourses and links it closely to ethics.⁶ He was convinced that philosophical mistakes are signs of character defects⁷ and withdrew from academic discussion claiming that all fundamental problems of philosophy had been solved⁸

4 For hermeneutical method, see introduction, for hermeneutics, glossary.

5 'What do I mean by the term "communication"? Lacking a formal language, I speak more existentially. For me, the best model for communication is conversation. It is certainly not to imprint information on a tabula rasa, whether of one or many, but neither is it to let another create their own "hall of mirrors" where their sole conversation partner is themselves. More accurately, it is to partner another in a shared process of listening and learning.' (Laishley, F.J., 'A Preface' to *Passion for Critique*, 1997:15–16)

6 In a prisoner of war camp, after World War I, Wittgenstein finished the manuscript of the 'Prototractatus', which in 1921 he published under the title *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (TLP).

7 Cf. Wittgenstein, TLP 6.13; 6.421.

8 'We feel that even when *all possible* scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched. Of course, there are then no questions left, and this itself is the answer.' (TLP 6.52)

and what needed to be done was to live up to the solutions.⁹ A recognition that creative philosophical work could be a part of his lifestyle,¹⁰ as is demonstrated from his Cambridge period in several collections of his work, edited usually by his pupils or friends, and including *Philosophical Remarks*, *Philosophical Investigations*, *Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics*, *Philosophical Grammar*, and *Lectures on Philosophical Psychology*. There are also *The Blue and Brown Books* which Wittgenstein dictated himself. Among writings giving us access to Wittgenstein's later thought are: *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*, *Zettel*, and, for my book the most important, *On Certainty*, an unfinished work written during the last eighteen months of his life. Here, I claim, we find Wittgenstein's most mature attitude to language as communal and mythological, and as a means of expressing the active and reflective life.¹¹

1.1 *The Method and Development of Religious Epistemology*

Wittgenstein did not consider himself to be a religious thinker,¹² yet his perception of language, meaning and truth also provide a theologian with tools to evaluate how religious claims are made and whether their use of authoritative “knowing”, “believing” and “compelling to act” is epistemologically correct. Thus, while looking at Wittgenstein's method and at the different developmental stages of his epistemology, my un-

9 He carried with himself a copy of Tolstoy's edition of the Gospels and at the same time despised theology for its theoretical approach to religion (cf. Drury, 1984, 'Some Notes on Conversations with Wittgenstein' (Not), in RW:98) In order to break with the past, Wittgenstein decided on his return from captivity to give away all the property he had inherited from his father and to take the job of a teacher in the small villages of Lower Austria. Then, after an incident in a classroom he moved back to Vienna where he first worked as a gardener in a neighbourhood monastery and then designed a house for his sister.

10 This comes through very vividly in the last conversation of Wittgenstein with Drury: 'Just before the train pulled out he said to me, "Drury, whatever becomes of you, don't stop thinking."' (Con, in RW: 170)

11 Cf. Wittgenstein, L., 1969, *On Certainty* (OC) 96,97.

12 'I am not a religious man but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view.' (Wittgenstein in Drury, 1984, Not:79)

derlying question is what they contribute to Christian *apologia* and I return to them in the conclusion, where I construct epistemological rules for *apologia* that wants to maintain historical continuity, transcendent reference and yet wants to take seriously the postmodern challenge.

We must begin with the mistake and transform it into what is true. That is, we must uncover the source of the error; otherwise hearing what is true won't help us. It cannot penetrate when something is taking its place. To convince someone of what is true, it is not enough to state it; we must find the *road* from error to truth. (Wittgenstein, 1979: GB 1e)

This is how Wittgenstein defines his method of approaching religion in *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*. The process of transformation of what is false into what is true develops as Wittgenstein's thinking goes on; however, this basic intention present in his method from the beginning remains firmly in its place. Already in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein was preoccupied by "the" appropriate method for philosophy:

The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said...and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical,¹³ to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions... My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them – as steps – to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.) (TLP 6.53–54)

Wittgenstein mentioned in the conversations with Drury that one of the difficulties with following his ideas is to be able to see both the road by which a reader or a hearer is led and the goal which it leads to.¹⁴ As I

13 Compare to Derrida, Ch.One, 1.1. However, Wittgenstein's relation to metaphysics, as well as to theology and the church develops. Later in his life Wittgenstein marked his derogatory statements as 'the sort of stupid remark I would have made in those days.' (Drury, 1984, Not:98)

14 Cf. Drury, 1984, Con. in RW: 235. In 1931 Wittgenstein had written down a confession for Drury to read; in 1937 he came to Professor G.E. Moore and to Fania Pascal with the same request. There were apparently two subjects, as Malcolm summarises: 'first that he had more Jewish ancestry than his friends realised, and he has done nothing to remove this misapprehension; second that when he

demonstrate in this chapter, it is possible to say that the goal one is led to is truth and meaning, and the road is examining the web of our language, the “how” of our communication in different contexts. Yet in order to give any meaning to this saying, it is necessary to find out how Wittgenstein’s employment of these concepts developed. Judith Genova in *Wittgenstein: A Way of Seeing* characterises the development in Wittgenstein’s thought as follows:

In the early work, he speaks of his approach as a kind of Kantian “critique” delineating the boundaries of what can and cannot be said; in the later work, he refers to philosophy as a “therapy” aimed at disabusing people of their philosophical intentions. (1995:xv)¹⁵

While looking at Wittgenstein’s notions of language with regard to meaning and truth, we have to keep in mind that there are differences between the early and the later writings.¹⁶ As Genova points out, ‘The progression from the *Tractatus* to *On Certainty* is marked by a steady advance from thinking through seeing to acting.’ (1995:57)

1.2 Logical Foundationalism

In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein, influenced by the logic of Frege and Russell, identified philosophy with the logical analysis of propositions,

Continued from previous page:

was a schoolmaster in Austria in the 1920s he had struck one of his pupils in anger and later denied it.’ (Introduction to RW, xviii). Drury comments on it as follows: ‘When he [Wittgenstein] returned from Norway he told me that he had done no writing there but had spent his time in prayer. He had felt it necessary to write out a confession of those things in his past life of which he was most ashamed of. He insisted on my reading this.’ (Con. in RW, 120)

15 Genova concentrates on ‘Wittgenstein’s dramatic transformation of philosophy’s practices’ (1995:xvi). The theme elaborated in Hilmy, S., 1987, *The Later Wittgenstein: The Emergence of a Method*, Peterman, J.F., 1992, *Philosophy as Therapy*.

16 In contrast J.W. Cook minimises these differences, cf. *Wittgenstein’s Metaphysics*, 1994: xv.

being convinced that (i) ‘In logic nothing is accidental: if a thing *can* occur in a state of affairs, the possibility of the state of affairs must be written into the thing itself’ (TLP 2.012); and that (ii) ‘Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language.’ (TLP 4.003)

In the *Tractatus*, alongside “meaningful propositions”, Wittgenstein identifies also “pseudo-propositions”, which are mathematical equations that do not say anything about the world, but only equate equivalent signs, like construing $1+1+1+1$ as $(1+1)+(1+1)$;¹⁷ and “nonsensical propositions” of metaphysics, which, according to Wittgenstein, covertly violate logical syntax.¹⁸ Later, in the *Philosophical Investigations* (PI) he identifies it as a philosopher’s task ‘to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday usage.’ (PI 116) There is, nevertheless, another kind of metaphysics:

like the pronouncements of the *Tractatus* itself, try to say what can only be shown, the essential structures of reality, which must be mirrored by the linguistic rules for depicting reality but cannot be themselves depicted (TLP 3.324, 4.003, 4.12ff., 6.53f.). The only *expressible* necessity is that of logical propositions, which are analytic, that is, tautologies (TLP 6.1ff, 6.126ff). And they too say nothing about the world, since they combine empirical propositions in such a way (according to rules governing truth-functional operations) that all factual information cancels out (TLP 6.121). (Glock, 1996: 199–200)

In his early period Wittgenstein presupposes that names have meaning and elementary propositions have sense.¹⁹ As Glock points out, ‘there is no such thing as a logically defective language’. As ‘Logic is a condition of sense’ (1996:200). In the final parts of the *Tractatus*, as was seen previously, Wittgenstein nevertheless also shows the limits of these assumptions related to his own work:

17 Cf. Wittgenstein, 1990, TLP 6.232.

18 Cf. TLP 6.53a.

19 See TLP 5.552f., 6.12, 6.124, 6.13. In the *Tractatus* we find also expressions raising a question, whether Wittgenstein assumes that the meaning and sense are rooted in the transcendent: ‘Logic is transcendental’ (TLP 6.1312); ‘Ethics is transcendental’ (TLP 6.421(2)); ‘Ethics and aesthetic are the same’ (TLP

My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them – as steps to climb up beyond them (He must, so to speak, throw the ladder after he has climbed up). He must transcend these propositions and then he will approach the world on the right level (TLP 6.541.542).

Wittgenstein does not say what is ‘the right level’, whether approaching the world independently of him as a guru, or whether refraining from making of his thought yet another metaphysical system violating logical syntax. A theme that reappears is the logic of the language: ‘Logic [that] is not a body of doctrine, but a mirror-image of the world.’ (TLP 6.131) The concept of truth is peripheral in the *Tractatus*, compared to logic providing one with understanding: ‘To understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true. (One can understand it, therefore, without knowing whether it is true.)’ (TLP 4.024). Glock summarises:

Logic investigates the nature and limits of *thought* because it is in thought that we represent reality. But it does so by drawing limits to the “linguistic expression of thought” (TLP Pref.). These limits are set by logical syntax, the system of rules which determines whether a combination of signs is meaningful. Logical syntax antecedes questions of truth and falsity. It cannot be overturned by empirical propositions, since nothing which contravenes it counts as a meaningful proposition. (1996:199)

According to Wittgenstein, a conformity to the logic present in language makes the problems of philosophy disappear. The example of scepticism is used in the *Tractatus*:

Scepticism is *not* irrefutable, but obviously nonsensical, when it tries to raise doubts, where no questions can be asked. For doubt can exist only where a question exists, a question only where an answer exists, and an answer only where something *can be said*. (TLP 6.51)

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6.421(3)); ‘Feeling the world as a limited whole – it is this that is mystical’ (TLP 6.45(2)).

Then he moves on to saying: ‘What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.’ (TLP 7)²⁰ Even later, in the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein insists on ‘a complete clarity... [which] simply means that the philosophical problems should completely disappear’ (PI 133). We find again in the *Investigations* an example of the statement that ‘logical syntax antecedes questions of truth and falsity: To the *philosophical* question: “Is the visual image of this tree composite, and what are its component parts?” the correct answer is: “That depends on what you understand by ‘composite’”. (And that is of course not an answer but a rejection of the question.)’ (PI 47) The earlier Wittgenstein prefers logic to experience and assumes that ‘In fact, all the propositions of our every-day language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order’ (TLP 5.556) and also that: ‘The *application* of logic decides what elementary propositions there are.’ (TLP 5.557) In the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein criticises his own earlier logic which idealises idealising reality:

We want to say that there can’t be any vagueness in logic. The idea now absorbs us, that the ideal “*must*” be found in reality. Meanwhile we do not as yet see *how* it occurs there, nor do we understand the nature of the “*must*”. We think it must be in reality; for we think we already see it there (PI 101).²¹

To sum up, however much the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* despised metaphysics, he assumes ‘necessary propositions’ to rest on ‘infallible foundations’ (Glock, 1996:202) of logical necessity being derived from ‘metaphysical structures shared by language and reality’ (202).

20 ‘Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muß man schweigen.’ (TLP 7) D.B. Pears & B.F. McGuinness translation from 1961 says: ‘What we cannot speak about we must consign to silence.’ The German ‘*muß schweigen*’ can also be translated as has to keep quiet or has to remain silent or also has to keep a secret. Wittgenstein does not exclude claims to the existence of reality outside of language (as we found with D.Z. Phillips), but speaking in a private self-referential language about it, saying what cannot be said. See also Wittgenstein’s later argument against private language in Rush Rhees, 1996, ‘Can there be a private language?’, in *Discussions on Wittgenstein*, 55–70.

21 See also Wittgenstein, L., 1958, *Philosophical Investigations* (PI) 95, 103, 104, 114.

1.3 Language as a Game: From Thinking to Seeing

From 1930 Wittgenstein deals with analogies between axiomatic systems and games, in particular, chess,²² from which he develops the notion of “language-games”. Glock summarises the following similarities between language as a whole and a game: (i) both are rule-guided activities: ‘Like a game, language has constitutive rules, namely those of grammar... these... determine... what is correct or makes sense, and thereby define the game/language’ (1996:193); (ii) the meaning of most of the words is in their use, how they are associated with the rules governing a particular game/language;²³ (iii) a proposition is a move or operation in the game of language (within a particular system), without which it would be meaningless.²⁴ Along with these analogies Wittgenstein starts to put more emphasis on “seeing” than on “thinking”:

Consider for example the proceedings that we call “games”. I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all? -Don’t say “There *must* be something common, or they would not be called “games” – but *look and see* whether there is

- 22 ‘This analogy stems from the formalists, who treated arithmetic as a game played with mathematical symbols. It was castigated by Frege, who saw only two alternatives: either arithmetic is about mere signs, or it is about what the signs stand for. Wittgenstein rejects this dichotomy. Arithmetic is no more “about” ink marks than chess is about wooden pieces. But that does not mean that either numerals or chess-pieces go proxy for anything. Rather, the “meaning” of a mathematical sign, like that of a chess piece, is the sum of the rules that determine its possible “moves”. What differentiates applied mathematics and language from chess and pure mathematics is merely their “application”, the way in which they engage with other (linguistic and non-linguistic) activities ([Waismann], VC, 103–5, 124, 150–1, 163, 170; [Unpublished material following von Wright’s catalogue (*Wittgenstein*, 1982), reference used in Glock:] MS 166 28–9; [Frege, 1964, *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic*] Laws II 88)’ (Glock, 1996:193).
- 23 ‘For a large class of cases – though not for all – in which we employ the word “meaning” it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language.’ (PI 43; See Glock, 1996:193. 376– 381)
- 24 See PI 23, 199, 421; *Philosophical Grammar* (PG), 1974, 130.172; *The Blue and Brown Books* (BB), 1958, 42; Glock, 1996:193.

anything common to all. – For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: Don't think, but look! (PI 66)

So, the remedy for philosophical ignorance proceeds from the logic of language to removing prejudices by looking at how things are: 'One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to look at its use and learn from that. But the difficulty is to remove the prejudice which stands in the way of doing this.' (PI 340)

Wittgenstein also recognises that a word functions differently in different language-games, which gives a space for: (i) particularity, as each language is assumed to be bound up with a particular form of life, within which one accepts certain values, attaches particular meanings to particular concepts and is led to learn its rules and judgments; and (ii) plurality of discourses, recognising that there are different language-games, different forms of life, in which different concepts and different rules have their place. Both of these emphases are vitally important for a Christian *apologia*. The fact that language-games vary both in grammar and vocabulary means, in other words, that the rules by which they are governed as well as the signs they use differ. Also language-games are not set down once for all. Language-games develop, change, some of them may lose their importance, while others become important. And concepts and meanings change with them.²⁵

In this shift from thinking to seeing, Wittgenstein addressed the question as to whether there is anything in common to all language-games. This may be of importance for dealing with different forms of Christian *apologia* down the centuries: do they have anything in common – or "must" there be something in common when they are called a Christian *apologia*? Wittgenstein responds by making the problem disappear, or at least, changing the angle of perception: '*look and see* whether there is anything common to all. – For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: Don't think, but look!' (PI 66).

25 'When language games change, then there is a change in concepts, and with the concepts the meanings of words change.' (OC 65)

1.4 Words as Deeds: From Seeing to Acting

Wittgenstein's thought then proceeds from seeing to acting. Language-games, first explained as 'ways of using signs' (*The Blue and Brown Books* (BB), 1958: 17), are expanded to the idea of a language-game as a 'system of communication' (BB 81).²⁶ As linguistic activities are interwoven with, and embedded in, our non-linguistic practices, the analogy of a language and a game is only partial. In 'A Lecture on Ethics' Wittgenstein states: 'Our words used as we use them in science, are vessels capable only of containing and conveying meaning and sense, *natural* meaning and sense.' (in RW:82–83) Glock summarises: 'Our language-games are embedded in our form of life, the overall practices of a linguistic community' (1996:197). Genova puts it even more firmly: 'Words ought to dissolve into the attitudes and actions from which they came' (1995:129), referring to Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*: 'In this way I should like to say the words "Oh, let him come!" are charged with my desire. And words can be wrung from us, – like a cry. Words can be *hard* to say: Such for example, as are used to effect a renunciation, or to confess a weakness. (Words are also deeds.)' (PI 546); and to *On Certainty*, where Wittgenstein quotes Goethe's *Faust*: '*Im Anfang war die Tat.*' (In the beginning was the deed). (OC 402). And Genova concludes: 'As deeds words do things.' (1995:129)

So, besides language-games having their grammar-giving rules of how the concepts are employed, and their vocabulary, that is, concepts meaningful in their employment, in the *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology I*, we encounter sentences like 'words have meaning only in the stream of life' (1982:913).²⁷ Wittgenstein's attention is now more focused on the contribution of an inherited and personal experience. In the realm of learning a language, it is emphasised that not only are rules

26 Wittgenstein distinguishes between a 'primitive language', in which all words are names of objects (See PI 3) and language that recognises that a relation between words and objects is symbolic rather than mechanically descriptive (see *Zettel* (Z), 1967, 99; MS 165 94–6).

27 Wittgenstein addresses this issue already in the *Tractatus*, where he writes: 'Instead of, "This proposition has such and such a sense", we can simply say, "This proposition represents such and such a situation"'. (TLP 4.031)

needed, but also examples of how the rules are used. The description of a language belongs to the logic, but examples help to form empirical propositions. The contact with reality can to a certain degree be described by logic (the degree is given by a language-game), but logic is not capable of forming it, as it is by definition reflective. So there is to be something else that is constitutive for the contact of a language-game with reality. In relation to the ability to form empirical propositions, Wittgenstein speaks of “the human frame of reference”.

“Human frame of reference” is not a concept of logic, it does not belong to the description of a language game, it is a part of being human. Here Wittgenstein deals more explicitly with the concept of truth, when he says: ‘The *truth* of certain empirical propositions [like I am in pain] belongs to our frame of reference’ (OC 83), which refers back to ‘The *truth* of my statements is the test of my *understanding* of these statements. That is to say: if I make certain false statements, it becomes uncertain whether I understand them.’ (OC 80.81) The human frame of reference, that includes the capability of experience and of judgment, is seen as constitutive for our relation to reality. Without it we would not be able to make empirical judgments. However, Wittgenstein still keeps the following distinction: ‘What counts as an adequate test of a statement belongs to logic. It belongs to the description of the language game. The *truth* of certain empirical propositions belongs to our frame of reference.’ (OC 82.83) It means that in a strict sense, the truth of a certain empirical proposition (like ‘I am in pain’) cannot be tested. What can be tested is understanding of the proposition, and the truth tests the understanding, and not the other way round, that the understanding tests the truth. If we apply this to a Christian *apologia*, it helps to grasp e.g. Justin’s or Hus’s Christ-centred notion of truth, which cannot be tested, but can be understood, and is itself (or rather Himself) a test of understanding.²⁸

Wittgenstein distinguishes between something being “evident” and something being “true”:²⁹ ‘Giving grounds, however, justifying the evi-

28 See Ch. Two, 1.3; 3.1.

29 ‘If the true is what is grounded, then the ground is not *true*, nor yet false.’ (OC 205)

dence, comes to an end' (OC 204),³⁰ and 'It would be nonsense to say that we regard something as sure evidence because it is certainly true.' (OC 197) Instead he emphasises what will be the subject of the following section, namely that assertions we make about reality have different degrees of assurance. Judgments are, according to him, a part of our language, of our system. Wittgenstein holds that 'it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false.' (OC 94) To sum up: 'Really "The proposition is either true or false" only means that it must be possible to decide for or against it.' (OC 200)

No sharp distinguishing line can be drawn between what is constitutive for our frame of reference and what is a product of it, what is the capability of experience and of judgment, and what are their expressions. Both are expressed in propositions; and there is no better way of expressing them. Both propositions are part of a kind of "mythology". Wittgenstein uses here an analogy with riverbed and water, saying that some of our propositions, empirical by form, were hardened, and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions that were not hardened, but fluid. However the relation altered with time; some of the hardened ones became fluid, and some of the fluid ones were hardened.³¹

This image that Wittgenstein proposes resonates with the notion of development which we encountered with Newman and with Tyrrell³² as well as with the notion of the symbolic as represented by Soskice's criti-

30 'Die Begründung aber, die Rechtfertigung der Evidenz kommt zu einem Ende,' says the German text, and it also can be translated: 'The justifying of the evidence, however, comes to the end' (Tim Noble's translation).

31 'The propositions describing this world-picture might be part of a kind of mythology. And their role is like that of rules of a game; and the game can be learned purely practically, without learning any explicit rules. It might be imagined that some propositions, of the form of empirical propositions, were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions hardened, and hard ones became fluid. The mythology may change back into a state of flux, the river-bed of thoughts may shift. But I distinguish between the movement of waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is not a sharp division of the one from the other.' (OC 95-97)

32 See Ch. Two, 3.2, 4.2.

cal realism,³³ where both emphases, on development and on symbol, opposed foundationalist statements doing violence either to history or to language. Similarly to them, Wittgenstein emphasised a particularity and a plurality of discourses, without reducing reality to a number of unrelated fictions, while he is exploring the nature of belief, knowledge and commitment without making generalisations leading to a grand theory.

Wittgenstein's analysis of language, its logic and meaning, and of truth, raised the question of how language makes contact with the world. Wittgenstein stated that the assertions we make about reality have a different degree of assurance. This statement leads to a key concept of the later Wittgenstein's epistemology, which I examine in the next section, namely the concept of certainty. He claims that it is "certainty" or a lack of it, which makes people think, talk and act in given ways. He then distinguishes between the certainty of knowing, believing and acting, and points out that the hierarchy and roles we ascribe to these certainties also significantly influence our religion.

2. Three Types of Certainty and Their Hierarchy

'If you do know that *here is one hand*, we'll grant you all the rest.' (OC 1)
With this sentence Wittgenstein begins his notes, published after his death under the title *On Certainty*. While in the previous section the main attention was given to Wittgenstein's analysis of language, its logic, meaning and to the concept of truth as embedded in the human frame of reference, I now concentrate on the concept of certainty as such. According to Wittgenstein, the ordinary use of language examined in the last section, provides us with an important starting point: the ability to use words naturally. In our case if one "knows" that "here is one hand" – then s/he is able to grasp a basic certainty which cannot be proved:

33 See Ch.Five, 2.2.

When one says that such and such a proposition can't be proved, of course that does not mean that it can't be derived from other propositions; any proposition can be derived from other ones. But they may be no more certain than it is itself. (OC1)

The proposition "here is one hand" cannot be proved, as there is no sensible question which can put the statement in doubt in ordinary circumstances.³⁴ As Wittgenstein had already stated already in the *Tractatus*, it is nonsensical 'to raise doubts where no questions can be asked. For doubt can exist only where a question exists, a question only where an answer exists, and an answer only where something *can be said*.' (TLP 6.51) In *On Certainty* Wittgenstein makes a similar point: 'What we can ask is whether it can make sense to doubt it.' (OC 2) This basic certainty is, therefore, prior to doubt. Wittgenstein continues:

"I know that I am a human being." In order to see how unclear the sense of this proposition is, consider its negation. At most it might be taken to mean "I know I have the organs of a human". (E.g. a brain which, after all, no one has ever yet seen.) Can I doubt it? Grounds for *doubt* are lacking! Everything speaks in its favour, nothing against it. Nevertheless it is imaginable that my skull should turn out empty when it was operated on. (OC 4)

So, the basic certainty is neither a sort of scientifically-proved hypothesis, nor a probability that one finds most reliable. One does not come to it on the basis of an investigation. It is the starting point.³⁵ But what, then, is involved in being certain of something? Explanation? Description? Or the mere fact that we rely on it to be the case? As I demonstrate,

34 From "ordinary circumstances" would be excluded e.g. a situation after a car accident, when people are trying to identify pieces of dead bodies. Wittgenstein identifies "ordinary circumstances" as these in which our 'knowing' based on experience gives us the right to assume certain things, see OC 207.

35 Wittgenstein does not search for the origins of the basic certainty; it is not a question for him of whether it comes from God or from somewhere else, as was the case with the Reformed epistemologists (See Ch. Three, 2.3.) Yet he opposes the idea that this certainty would be 'merely a constructed point to which some things approximate more, some less closely' (OC 56).

Wittgenstein's analysis of certainty is threefold: it points out differences in knowing, believing and acting upon. It elaborates the problem of what kind of grounds we have for our certainties and presents us with a methodological "non-foundationalism" which will be very useful for constructing epistemological rules for a postmodern *apologia* in the conclusion. I argue that Wittgenstein presents us with a reversed hierarchy of the three types of certainty, where acting is the most important, since it gives credibility to believing, on which our knowing rests. This reversed hierarchy, again, strengthens my claim that it is practice, underlying belief and knowledge, which is the primary source of *apologia*.³⁶

Now, how does certainty relate to truth? It is worth reminding ourselves here of what was quoted in the previous section: 'The *truth* of my statements is the test of my *understanding* of these statements...if I make false statements, it becomes uncertain whether I understand them.' (OC 80,81) Thus, if I say "I am in pain" when someone visits me in the hospital after an operation, it is a perfectly understandable statement. While if I say it as a response to winning a Nobel Prize in literature, either I do not understand the proposition "I am in pain", and perhaps, being a foreigner, I assume that it also means "I am delighted" – or there are circumstances, which make the utterance meaningful, but as these circumstances are hidden from others the meaning is hidden to them as well. Wittgenstein also addresses the problem of unknown circumstances in regard to truth and he does it in a way that can be applied to appeals to a transcendent authority which change our ordinary circumstances:

If someone asked us "but is that *true*?" we might say "yes" to him; and if he demanded grounds we might say "I can't give you any grounds, but if you learn more you too will think the same" ... But mightn't a higher authority assure me that I don't know the truth? So that I had to say "Teach me!"? But then my eyes would have to be opened. (OC 206,578)³⁷

36 See placing *apologia* within the discourse of practical theology, introduction.

37 This point raises a question whether Wittgenstein's philosophy gives also space to some kind of affirmative theology, indeed, as a part of a different language-game, but of the same reality. This will be looked in more detail in the next section.

A significant feature of Wittgenstein's later method is its indirectness. The reader is not given any explicit solution to the problem, except that "his eyes have to be open" in order to understand. With this the reader is left to make up his/her own mind. Wittgenstein's method is to map a process that points to certain conclusions by excluding others, by giving examples and stating what lies in the surroundings of a possible solution. Nevertheless, he avoids forming a rule, which would operate outside the limited realm of logic, and reducing the empirical reality to it. An orientation is offered without a fixed system behind it. Let me document his method beginning with his analysis of the verb "know", which lies at the roots of the certainty of knowing.

2.1 *Certainty of Knowing*

"I know" is not enough. One has to establish objectively that one is not making a mistake about that. "I know" often means "I have the proper grounds for my statement." If the other person is acquainted with the language game, he would admit that I know and must be able to imagine how one may know something of this kind.³⁸ One cannot be wrong about certain statements (like 'I have two hands'), only in particular circumstances (such as after an accident). But can those circumstances be given by a rule? (e.g. that all people after an accident have only one hand) Might we not go wrong in applying it?³⁹

Wittgenstein goes on to examine different uses of the word "know", describing mathematical knowledge ($2+2=4$), sense knowledge (I have pain in my arm), the learnt knowledge of history (the battle of Waterloo was in 1815), concluding that the expression "I know" describes my relation to some fact, where the question "How do you know?" or "What makes you to be in a position of knowing?" is possible, even if in practical life in some situations it is nonsensical to ask (e.g. if a person who has just broken his arm and screams "I am in pain" is asked "How do you know?").

38 See OC 15,16,18.

39 See OC 25,26.

He shows that the proposition “I know” is grammatically linked with the mental state of conviction, but also that the state of mental conviction may be the same whether it is knowledge or false belief. To distinguish between knowledge and false belief is possible on the grounds of the relation to the fact. But what we are left with are not the pure facts, but projection of those facts to our consciousness – ‘Knowledge is in the end based on acknowledgement.’ (OC 378) This in fact presupposes as well as produces certainty. It presupposes it in that one needs a kind of basic certainty *by which* we know that ‘*here is one hand*’ (OC 1), and thus are able to play the game of knowing. And it produces certainty *of* our convictions. However, the question may be asked, whether the certainty of our convictions is *something* that lies at the bottom of them as a kind of a guarantee – or as a foundation? Wittgenstein states: ‘I have arrived at the rock bottom of my convictions. And one might almost say that these foundation-walls are carried by the whole house.’ (OC 248)

But as was pointed out in the previous section, Wittgenstein also says: ‘I make assertions about reality, assertions which have different degrees of assurance.’ (OC 66) How, then, do the different degrees come out and how are they to be recognised if not by separating some propositions and identifying them as grounds or foundations of our convictions? Wittgenstein is very careful, after leaving behind his logical foundationalism, not to fall into yet another one:

Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to the end; – but the end is not certain propositions’ striking us immediately as true; i.e. it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of our language-game. (OC 204)

But even if at the bottom of our language-game there is no proposition’s striking us as true, the language game is not groundless. Wittgenstein again provides us with an example, making a link between our language game of “knowing” and the reality we experience: “Strange coincidence, that every man whose skull has been opened had a brain!” (OC 207); but at the same time he makes clear that an example is not a proof of “how things are”: ‘So hasn’t one, in the sense, a *proof* of the proposition?’

But that the same thing has happened again is not a proof of it; though we do say that it gives us a right to assume it.' (OC 295) Wittgenstein's method, of examining the problem of what kind of grounds we have for our certainties, leads to a recognition that our certainties are groundless.⁴⁰ Yet we have "the right to assume them". Wittgenstein's method ends where it started: certainty is not something we arrive at in the end, but something from which we start. However, the process is helpful in clarifying different kinds of certainties, of which the certainty of knowing is only one, their roles and their limits.

2.2 Certainty of Believing

To say that I believe something does not mean that I know something, as Wittgenstein clearly said, for "I know" often means "I have the proper grounds for my statement", and as was stated earlier, it must be possible to imagine how I get into the position of knowing.⁴¹ Also, the fact that I do something does not have to mean that I "know" why or that I am able to spell out the "belief" on which my action rests. Yet, as Genova summarises, 'Our beliefs form a system which once acknowledged makes knowledge possible' (1995:198); and

Actions and assertions show that we are sure about something, not in the sense that we have tested it, but in the sense that we do not question it: "My *life* consists in my being content to accept many things" (OC 344). The first step is to acknowledge or trust this sureness, but not blindly. (Genova, 1995:197–198)⁴²

40 See OC 166,253.

41 See OC 15,16,18.

42 However, in the rest of her analysis of Wittgenstein's certainty Genova does not keep the distinctions as proposed in this book, between a certainty of knowing, believing and acting. See 1995:173–204. For the distinctions, see also Dolejšová, I., 1997, "Wittgenstein's Account of Religion as a Desire to Become a Different Man" in *Passion for Critique: Essays in Honour of F.J. Laisley*.

With knowledge, there are some statements we can explain and prove, but their range is limited, according to Wittgenstein. Among them belong mathematical truths: $2+2=4$; proof: $4-2=2$, as in ordinary circumstances we agree on a certain system within which these operations work. Wittgenstein speaks of a rule and an exception, which allows us to use the term “in ordinary circumstances”: ‘We just do not see how very specialised the use of “I know” is. – For “I know” seems to describe a state of affairs which guarantees what is known, guarantees it as a fact.’ As was said previously, one can claim “I know” that $2+2=4$ (mathematical knowledge) or that the battle of Waterloo was in 1815 (historical knowledge) or that my arm is in pain (sense knowledge) etc. That “I know” is related to the fact.

Yet, I can be wrong: ‘One always forgets the expression “I thought I knew”.’ (OC 12) My knowledge may turn out to be a false belief. E.g. I may “know” from my school days that “in 1968 the Russian army saved Czechoslovakia from a counterrevolution” and the only available text books of history from that time may approve of my being in the position to “know”, and yet a time may come when I recognised it as a false belief – or, indeed, a false belief produced by ideology.⁴³ Besides false beliefs Wittgenstein also speak of a stage of “mental disturbance”.⁴⁴ So, for example, if I either claimed that I spent the last 31 years of my life on the moon – or if someone asked me whether I was on the moon and I honestly answered “I don’t know”,⁴⁵ in ordinary circumstances this would count as a mental disturbance.

Wittgenstein also claims: ‘Not every false belief of this sort is a mistake’ (OC 72); and that one has a right to say: ‘I can’t be making a mistake about this’ even if I am in error.’ (OC 663) Genova comments on this: ‘With regular mistakes, falsity plays a role in what we thought we knew; but in systematic mistakes, true and false do not enter this picture. Not every mistake says something untrue. One can play faultlessly, make no mistakes, and still lose since one may be playing the “wrong”

43 For ways of implementing ideology, see Eagleton, T., 1994, *Ideology*.

44 See OC 71–73.

45 See OC 662.

game.’ (1995:195)⁴⁶ Her emphasis thus reintroduces the possibility of error into our knowing. To sum up, to be able to say something about something at all and to grasp, however partially, the world in which we live, we not only can, but have to be certain of knowing something (‘If you know that *here is one hand*, we’ll grant you all the rest’, says Wittgenstein in OC 1). Yet to be certain does not mean to hold “the truth”, even if, as was shown, in some circumstances it does not make sense to doubt the proposition.

“‘I know it” I say to someone else; and here there is a justification. But there is none for my belief.’ (OC 175) By limiting the sphere of what can be positively justified, namely knowledge, Wittgenstein defines the space of what can only be described, namely belief that cannot any longer be counted as knowledge. ‘At some point we have to pass from explanation to mere description’ (OC 189), where a distinction emerges between “knowing” and “believing”. Both are related to the notion of certainty, but neither of them is simply synonymous with it. Wittgenstein points out the difference: ‘If someone believes something, we needn’t always be able to answer the question “why does he believe it”; but if he knows something, then the question “how does he know?” must be capable of being answered.’ (OC 550)

‘What I know I believe’ (OC 177), but as was said already, it does not work the other way round: what I believe I know, a mistake often made by apologetics.⁴⁷ Wittgenstein attempts to compare these two certainties but from another angle: ‘It would be correct to say: “I believe...” has subjective truth; but “I know...” not.’ (OC 179). Here Wittgenstein echoes the Kierkegaardian relation between belief, which is subjective, and knowledge, which is objective, giving a strong preference to belief and stating: ‘Subjectivity is the truth’ (1974:187).⁴⁸ However Wittgenstein is

46 A comparison with structural sin comes to mind, as there as well it is not an individual act, that is wrong, but taking part in the sinful structures – the ‘wrong game’, see Gutiérrez, G., 1988, *A Theology of Liberation*.

47 Compare to the appeal of Vatican I to the natural reason, Ch. Two, 4.

48 Wittgenstein’s relation to Kierkegaard develops from ‘Kierkegaard was by far the most profound thinker of the last century. Kierkegaard was a saint’ (RW, 87), which he stated in 1929 or 1930, to ‘I couldn’t read him again now. He is too

not as radical as Kierkegaard. He is aware that there are also difficult cases for distinction, where there does not seem to be a clear distinguishing line between belief and knowledge.⁴⁹ And again with an example he demonstrates another turning-point: ‘Instead of “I know it” one may say in some cases “That’s how it is – rely upon it.”’ (OC 176) And this brings us to the third type of certainty, the certainty of acting.

2.3 Certainty of Acting

Since the time of the *Tractatus*⁵⁰ Wittgenstein is aware that language is not exhaustive of reality. This is shown, using his vocabulary, by ‘so limiting the sphere of ‘what can be said’ that we create a feeling of spiritual claustrophobia.’ (RW:84) This gives space for the third type of certainty, which reflects the fact that there are cases which can be recognised but not described. Similarly to the certainty of belief, the subjective element also plays a decisive role here: ‘I act with *complete* certainty. But this certainty is my own.’ (OC 174) Yet, through this certainty that is “my own” I interact with other people and it influences my relationships most decisively. According to Wittgenstein, the certainty upon which we act lies at the root of what we really believe and what we do not. He says: ‘we can see from their [people’s] actions that they believe certain things definitely, whether they express their belief or not.’ (OC 284) We act on

Continued from previous page:

long-winded; he keeps on saying the same thing over and over again. When I read him I always wanted to say, “Oh all right, I agree, I agree, but please get on with it”.’ (RW: 88)

49 In *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetic, Psychology and Religious Belief* Wittgenstein distinguishes between ‘religious beliefs’ and ‘scientific beliefs’ stating: ‘These statements would not just differ in respect to what they are about. Entirely different connections would make them into religious beliefs, and there can be easily imagined transitions where we wouldn’t know for our life whether to call them religious beliefs or scientific beliefs.’ (1966:58)

50 ‘What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.’ (TLP 6.51)

trust, according to Wittgenstein; it may or may not have the form of propositional belief, and even if it had such a form, that would not be enough to make one willing to stake one's life on it.

Thus Wittgenstein sees the certainty upon which one acts as a test and a decisive element of religious belief. It does not allow pretence and, therefore, gives currency to the certainty of belief and of knowledge. On Wittgenstein's scheme the further we go, the more we proceed from more to less grounded statements: 'What I know, I believe' (OC 177), but it cannot be said the other way round: What I believe, I know. "Believing" does not have a lower status than "knowing" in Wittgenstein, which is very important for a Christian *apologia*, as well as the fact that "believing" is understood as a very general term, not being restricted to religious belief. Again this helps us not to see religious belief as an epistemologically substandard position.⁵¹ Wittgenstein holds that believing is a necessary part of an ordinary life, as well as of science. And he shows why that is. According to him 'learning is based on believing.' (OC 170) E.g. to learn that World War Two finished in 1945 presupposes several beliefs: I have to trust that books or people which state that are not making a factual mistake, e.g. as was done in writing down the year when Christ was born and from which we count our calendar; then I have to trust that those who claim it have adequate information, e.g. that they know what was going on in Japan in that time, and then, that what they mean by the end of the war would correspond roughly to what I mean by that. These beliefs are necessary if I am to speak of knowledge at all. In the end Wittgenstein shows: 'At the foundation of well-founded belief lies belief that is not founded.' (OC 253) He demonstrates that when we come to the bedrock of our convictions, where the foundations stop, there is no infallible proposition, but an action,⁵² and here Wittgenstein gives space for that which cannot be described, but which still decisively influences our lives.

The hierarchy of certainties in Wittgenstein descends from practice to theory, where practice has a certain primacy. A.C. Thiselton in *Interpreting God and the Postmodern Self* points out that already in *The Blue*

51 See Reformed epistemologists' involvement, Ch.Three, 2.

52 See OC 284.

Book, where he analyses the connections between language and life, or in other words, what gives power to our words, Wittgenstein concludes that it is human behaviour which gives 'backing' for the paper currency of language.⁵³ If we apply it to a Christian *apologia* and try to look at its perspectives from this angle, it can be said with Thiselton that: 'In Wittgensteinian terminology the deeds of Jesus give transactional currency to the meaning and truth of his words. Hence he himself may be called "truth" (John 14:16), since the personal "backing" of his deeds gives meaning and credibility to his words.' (1995:36)

There are also interpretations of Wittgenstein, which have a less favourable influence on a Christian *apologia*, like such as that of D.Z. Phillips in *Faith after Foundationalism*. As we saw in the chapter on Hegel, Phillips claims that our conceptual framework is exhaustive of reality, 'concepts are constitutive of the situation. Without the concepts, the situation does not even exist for you.' (1988:197–198) He chose from Wittgenstein the emphasis on each language-game having different rules, but went further than that in assuming each language game to be a complete universe without anything independent of it to refer to; in other words, therefore, the language-game is constitutive of reality and not the other way round.⁵⁴ This is, however, something which Wittgenstein did not say. To the question whether different games have anything in common he replied:

Look and see whether there is anything common to all. For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: Don't think, but look! (PI 66)

Phillips goes with Wittgenstein as far as to say that different discourses are not really variations of the same one underneath, and in this sense both are post-foundational. However they depart in their understanding of what is real. For Phillips, fictions are real, as it is us who by our

53 See BB 48–55, Z sects 143,145.

54 Compare to Phillips's claim: 'Concepts are constitutive of the situation' (1988:197).

concepts constitute reality. Thus he opens the door for a reductionist apologetics such as those of Don Cupitt or Gareth Moore. For Wittgenstein, as he states in *Culture and Value*, ‘Nothing is more important for teaching us the concepts we have than constructing fictitious ones’ (1980: 74). There we see the difference and may recognise that we observe and make assertions about reality, but do not constitute it. Coming back to the question of certainties, they are not about talking oneself into a particular conviction, but about our relationship with the world in which we live.

For us, however, there remains the question of the degree to which Wittgenstein’s notion of certainties and their hierarchy progressing from acting to believing and to knowing allows *fides quae* and *fides qua*, to be recognised as interdependent in a Christian *apologia*; in other words, that not only how I act speaks of what I believe, but also that what I believe influences how I act. I revisit this point in the summary, where I look at theory and practice with regard to religion in Wittgenstein, and in particular at his rehabilitation of referential practice.

3. Summary: Rehabilitation of Referential Practice

It is important to note that Wittgenstein’s concept of religion is unorthodox. He never considered himself to be a theologian.⁵⁵ His perspective was that of a philosopher, though philosophy in his understanding was not just a way of thinking, but a way of arranging the whole of life, as he stated in *On Certainty*: ‘There is always the danger of wanting to find an expression’s meaning by contemplating the expression itself, and

55 Wittgenstein’s impact on theology is elaborated in Kerr, F, 1986, *Theology after Wittgenstein*; significant parts of the text in this section were published as ‘Wittgenstein’s Account of Religion as a Desire to Become a Different Man’, in *Passion for Critique: Essays in Honour of F.J. Laishley*, 1997, 219–233.

the frame of mind in which one uses it, instead of always thinking of the practice.’ (OC 601)

In this summary I am going to examine two main areas: one is precisely the question of the supremacy of practice over theory with regard to religion, the other is how this reversal of positions once applied to a Christian *apologia*, influences the relation between *fides quae* and *fides qua*, or said more simply, whether for an apologist using a Wittgensteinian epistemological method there is a way of expressing the importance of the “what” of a Christian belief. As these two areas are interwoven, I will keep referring to both in the text, without treating them separately. Concerning the material, in this section I will draw mainly on notes of dialogues with Wittgenstein taken by his friends, in particular M. O’C. Drury, on his letters and remarks from his notebooks, and other texts of his related to religion.

During one of the conversations with Drury about prayers, liturgies and ministry, and their ability to carry on the Christian tradition Wittgenstein stated:

For all you and I can tell, the religion of the future will be without any priests or ministers... we have to live without the consolation of belonging to a Church...Of one thing I am certain. The religion of the future will have to be extremely ascetic; and by that I don’t mean just going without food and drink. (Drury, Con in RW:114)⁵⁶

This comment Wittgenstein probably made in 1930 while lecturing in Cambridge, whose comfort filled him with restlessness and strengthened a desire to escape from the form of life Western civilisation offered to the middle class.⁵⁷ Organised religion in this period was seen as a part of such a comfortable life, and, in Wittgenstein’s eyes, had nothing to do

56 Drury adds: ‘I seemed to sense for the first time in my life the idea of an asceticism of the intellect; that this life of reading and discussing in the comfort of Cambridge society, which I so enjoyed, was something I would have to renounce.’ (Con. in RW: 114)

57 Fania Pascal in “A Personal Memoir” comments on Engelmann’s statement that Wittgenstein did not care particularly where he lived and accepted the most primitive conditions and lowliest social milieu (see L 60), stating: ‘Precisely: these he did accept. But from the conditions into which he was born and where

with the living God⁵⁸ and ‘the consolation of belonging to a Church’ prevented one from being religious. Wittgenstein was convinced that such a mechanical understanding of religion had no future, and instead, similarly to Kierkegaard, emphasised: ‘Make sure that your religion is a matter between you and God only.’ (Con in RW:102)⁵⁹ Besides these criticisms, however, there are two positive impulses present in the dialogue with Drury: first, his understanding of religion is not entrenched in the past but directed towards the future, so he does not look at it as at a dead discourse; second, his desire for asceticism is about changing of oneself and the ability to act upon one’s belief, not to contemplate the concept of it.

In conversations with Wittgenstein, Drury, as an undergraduate reading philosophy, mentioned his desire to become a priest in the Church of England. Wittgenstein’s reaction to this shows more extensively why he thought that the church had turned religion into a theory:

I don’t ridicule this. Anyone who ridicules these matters is a charlatan and worse. But I can’t approve, no I can’t approve. You have intelligence; it is not the most important thing, but you can’t neglect it. Just imagine trying to preach a sermon every Sunday: you couldn’t do it. I would be afraid that you would try and elaborate a philosophical interpretation or defence of the Christian religion. The symbolism of Christianity is wonderful beyond words, but when people try to make a philosophical system out of it I find it disgusting. At first sight it would seem an excellent

Continued from previous page:

- he “naturally” found himself, from these he was in constant flight – an attitude he shared with many contemporary intellectuals of Central Europe, except that in his case it assumed an extreme form. When Wittgenstein wished to flee from civilisation, no place was remote or lonely enough.’ (in RW:42). In the correspondence from the 1920s he mentioned a possibility of moving to Russia, but after visiting the country in 1935 he changed his mind. Nevertheless, two years later in his letter to Engelmann, he again considered the option.
- 58 In this period Wittgenstein was still greatly influenced by Kierkegaard, whom he considered to be ‘the most profound thinker of the last century’ and ‘a saint’. (Drury, Not., in RW:87)
- 59 His sharp criticisms directed against the church and theology mellowed as time went on. In one of the conversations he states that such statements were ‘the sort of stupid remark I would have made in those days.’ (Con. in RW:98)

idea that in every village there should be one person who stood for these things, but it hasn't worked out like that. Russell and the parsons between them have done infinite harm, infinite harm. (Not., in RW:86)⁶⁰

Why did Wittgenstein find philosophical interpretations or defences of Christianity so offensive? Is it a direct attack on *apologia*? To be able to answer these questions, we must first look at the kind of philosophical interpretations Wittgenstein had in mind. A good example is provided in his critical study *Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*, where Wittgenstein distinguishes between philosophical interpretations of Christianity and other religions he finds offensive, and his own philosophical method applied to religion, which I quoted already in the first section of this chapter:

We must begin with the mistake and transform it into what is true. That is, we must uncover the source of the error; otherwise hearing what is true won't help us. It cannot penetrate when something is taking its place. To convince someone of what is true, it is not enough to state it; we must find the *road* from error to truth. (GB 1e)

In order to avoid a first misinterpretation, namely that finding the way from error to truth is a straightforward process, a position that turned *apologia* to apologetics, Wittgenstein adds: 'I must plunge again and again in the water of doubt.' (GB 1e)

This methodological doubt has in Wittgenstein a different place than in Descartes⁶¹ or Hume.⁶² As was pointed out in the previous sec-

60 D. Berman, M. Fitzgerald and J. Hayes in the Introduction to Drury's *The Danger of Words and Writings on Wittgenstein* note: 'Drury probably did not know that Wittgenstein had himself considered taking orders in 1919 – at least, according to a fellow prisoner of war, Franz Parak.' (1996:xvii; referring to B. McGuiness, 1988, *Wittgenstein – A Life: Young Ludwig, 1889–1921*: 274.

61 Descartes' recognition "*cogito ergo sum*" is treated by him as a certainty at which one arrives after having doubted everything else (See *Principles of Philosophy*, I, 1.7).

62 Hume's "rational acceptability" and an "agreement of experience" as criteria for certainty treat it as a result of what cannot be doubted. In other words: doubt comes first, certainty, if at all, second (See *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 1991, 149). See also Monk, R., 1991, *Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, 322.

tion, in Wittgenstein doubt is preceded by certainty and works as its corrective and not the other way round.⁶³ Doubt is seen as a method that can help to recognise a false certainty. And this method is not applied to religion “in general”, but to Frazer’s interpretation of it. Here also Wittgenstein directs our attention to the difference between living religion and a theory claiming to describe what religion is about:

Frazer’s account of the magical and religious notions of men is unsatisfactory: it makes these notions appear as *mistakes*. Was Augustine mistaken, then, when he called on God on every page of the *Confessions*? Well – one might say – if he was not mistaken, then the Buddhist holyman, or some other, whose religion expresses quite different notions, surely was. But *none* of them was making a mistake except where he was putting forward a theory. (GB 1e)

What Wittgenstein finds offensive is the substitution of theory for a religious practice, as if religion was something to explain rather than to live out. As we saw earlier on, while examining Kant, the problems that seemed insoluble on the theoretical level, namely the dilemma of the claim to a total human autonomy over against the need for transcendent assistance, disappeared as problems on the practical level. Similarly here, Wittgenstein criticises the notion of “knowing”, that separates theory from practice, as Frazer applies it to religion:

I think one reason why the attempt to find an explanation is wrong is that we have only to put together in the right way what we *know*, without adding anything, and the satisfaction we are trying to get from the explanation comes of itself. And here the explanation is not what satisfies us anyway... But for someone broken up by love an explanatory hypothesis won’t help much. – It will not bring peace. (2e.3e)

Practice in Wittgenstein’s terms is not only that we “do” something, but also that we allow something to happen. This contemplative strand of

63 In *On Certainty* Wittgenstein states: ‘But what about such a proposition as “I know I have a brain”? Can I doubt it? Grounds for *doubt* are lacking!’ (OC 4). Instead of looking for grounds of certainty Wittgenstein is asking on what ground it makes sense to doubt propositions.

practice was present in Kierkegaard but also much earlier, Justin spoke of a contemplative reason and did not separate theory and practice; in Augustine, Francis, Hus as well as in Tyrrell we find some account of a silent giving space to the Other, which is very much a part of their “orthopraxis” or following the “*vita Christi*” or the “Sense of God”. Wittgenstein who in the *Tractatus* insisted that ‘what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence’ (TLP 7), now speaks about ‘someone [been] broken up by love’ and about practice as “what brings peace”.

Coming back to the conversation with Drury concerning ministry, it can be concluded that for Wittgenstein even prayers and services can be explanatory in the sense that they present religion as a theory and do not satisfy as they do not bring peace. Conversations on this theme continued. Later, when Wittgenstein saw Drury troubled about the issue, he stated:

But remember that Christianity religion is not a matter of saying a lot of prayers; in fact we are told not to do that. If you and I are to live religious lives, it mustn't be that we talk a lot about religion, but that our manner of life is different. It is my belief that only if you try to be helpful to other people will you in the end find your way to God. (Con. in RW:114)

Wittgenstein did not just speak of practising a “different life” but he tried to find it for himself. During his stay in Norway he grasped that an indispensable condition for it was honesty: if he were not truthful to himself, his writings would be deceitful. Therefore he reflected on the whole of his life and decided to confess his failures to those closest to him. Norman Malcolm in the Introduction to *Recollections of Wittgenstein* points out the importance of Wittgenstein's decision: ‘For Wittgenstein the importance of a confession was that it should produce a change in him. In 1931 he wrote in a notebook: “A confession has to be a part of the new life.”’ (in RW:xviii) Confession was to help him to ‘become a different man’ (xix). In a notebook of 1938 a similar theme emerges: ‘If anyone is unwilling to descend into himself, because this is too painful, he will remain superficial in his writing’ (xix); and in the following year: ‘The truth can be spoken only by one who *rests* in it; not by one who still rests in falsehood, and who reaches from falsehood to truth just once.’ (xix)

His very practical desire to become a different man is at the same time a desire to become more completely himself. The clarity he aimed at in his writings had to become one and the same clarity with which the whole of his life was perceived. Thus, when he speaks about descending into oneself and the pain it involves, it is seen as a parallel to the hard intellectual labour of recognising illusions and finding ways out of them in order to see and express things as they are. Wittgenstein's intellectual standards were extremely high and so were the moral and spiritual ones he applied to himself as well as to others. Wittgenstein often used the expression "intolerable", but what he found intolerable were not intellectual, moral, or spiritual failures, but when people made fictions about themselves and tried to appear as different personalities from those they were. Wittgenstein was convinced that unless there was honesty and integrity, there was no progress anyway. Fania Pascal in her "Personal Memoir" mentions Wittgenstein's intolerance:

Though he was a shrewd judge of character and free of self-righteousness, he applied to others the stern standards he applied to himself. If you had committed a murder, if your marriage was breaking up, or if you were about to change your faith, he would be the best man to consult. He would never refuse to give practical help. But if you suffered from fears, insecurity, were badly adjusted, he would be a dangerous man, and one to keep away from. He would not be sympathetic to common troubles, and his remedies would be all too drastic, surgical... If only he had been less imperious, less ready with prohibitions, more patient with another person's character and thought. Alas, he was no pedagogue. (in RW: 32.33)

Also, his notion of religion as a practice developed as a combination of ascetic strictness, of compassion and sensitivity. A good example is found in a letter that Wittgenstein sent to Drury working in St Patrick Hospital in Dublin,⁶⁴ when he mentioned being overworked and lacking peace. Wittgenstein writes:

64 Cf. Malcom, E., 1989, *A History of St. Patrick's Hospital*: 276.

The thing now is to live in the world in which you are, not to think or dream about the world you would like to be in....Look at your patients more closely as human beings in trouble and enjoy more the opportunity you have to say "good night" to so many people. This alone is a gift from heaven which many people would envy you. And this sort of thing would heal your frayed soul, I believe....I think in some sense you don't look at people's faces closely enough. (Not. in RW: 95-96)

Again, we find here the emphasis on looking, as in the previous section: "do not think, look". This does away with every possibility of living in a fiction out of which we constitute our private reality. Here Wittgenstein emphasises the healing need to live "in the world we are in" and not in "the world we would like to be in". For *apologia* it means not to concentrate on "ideals", but on "ways of life" which are real and can be communicated with all their ambiguities. This leads us back to the 'religion of the future', as Wittgenstein mentioned in the early conversations with Drury. Now it takes more and more the form of finding God in present events, where hope rather than strictness remains the driving force. The man who criticised religion as a matter of seeking consolation in belonging to a crowd, says later of himself: 'I am not a religious man but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view.' (Not. in RW:79)

Wittgenstein's practical approach to religion, we can say the approach of his practical philosophy, recognises four elements, which we found also in the accounts of a traditional *apologia*: a conversion of life (remember his return from captivity and his desire to break with the past, giving away his property, taking a much lower social status, etc.); giving some account of his conversion that produces analogical effects in some of those who encounter it (not in terms of "giving a homily every Sunday" as he discouraged Drury from doing, but in dialogues with his friends and in his allowing them to have an insight into the deepest level of "certainties" upon which he acted, his doubts and fears); building up a community of disciples (of friends whose patterns of life overlapped and were shared to an unusual depth, involving a shared vision as well as practical support); and finally expressing the "new life" in terms analogical to virtues (emphasising the value of honesty, freedom, compassion, etc.) Similarly to the apologists and there does not seem to

be here a clear-cut distinction between the philosophical and the theological, as the Enlightenment proposed, what begins as an individual conversion has a communal element; indeed, the late Wittgenstein is much less critical of the public ecclesial expression of religion, though he points out that belonging to a church does not automatically make the person better,⁶⁵ a standpoint not far from the experience of Hus or Tyrrell.

What remains different is Wittgenstein's silence in places where theologies speak of revelation. The closest he gets to this point is the quotation from *On Certainty*: 'But mightn't a higher authority assure me that I don't know the truth? So that I had to say "Teach me!'"? But then my eyes would have to be opened.' (OC 578). This, however, does not solve the problem for *apologia* of what Wittgenstein's epistemology can contribute to the relation between *fides quae* and *fides qua*.

To conclude, Wittgenstein revives the notion of belief and of certainty of belief, including religious belief, provided that one acts upon it. But the distinction between that "by which" we believe and that "in which" we believe does not come up clearly. As I said earlier, Wittgenstein's notion of religion is unorthodox. It needs, however, to be added that it shows a strong sense of "orthopraxis".

He is not a person for catechisms and for homilies justifying Christian belief. Yet he is able to appreciate the power of Christian symbolism to change one's life, the power of words to set free, being much more ready to say what it means to believe in God (our lives have to be different) than to list the "what" of belief (which is the content of every Christian creed). His extreme reluctance to approach life as a theory includes also a life of faith; he does not give any specific content to any transcendent belief. In another of the conversations he says 'If you accept the miracle that God became man, then all these difficulties [concerning the Scriptures] are as nothing' (RW: 164), recalling the central place

65 'Again at a later date Wittgenstein told me that one of his pupils had written to him to say that he had become a Roman Catholic, and that he, Wittgenstein, was partly responsible for this conversion because it was he that had advised the reading of Kierkegaard. Wittgenstein told me he had written back to say: "If someone tells me he has bought the outfit of a tight-rope-walker I am not impressed until I see what is done with it.'" (Not. in RW: 88)

Kierkegaard ascribed to the paradox that God became a man. Yet, perhaps, actions do have the power to speak. If we “look and see” the pattern of his own life, there are “similarities and relationships”,⁶⁶ as I pointed out, which do not leave the belief without content. In the realm of the immanent reality the content is very definite, as when, for example, Wittgenstein speaks of honesty, compassion, etc. He is also definite in stating again and again that this his grasp of reality is not exhaustive of it.

66 Cf. Wittgenstein, PI 66.

CONCLUSION OF PART TWO: REALISM WITHOUT FOUNDATIONALISM

In the second part of the book I examined the pre-history of the postmodern critique, and in particular relations between foundationalism and reference. I looked at the genesis of the conflict in religious epistemologies, one underlying apologetics, the other *apologia*, as I identified these in the first part. The main method was epistemological analysis and my interest was to discern whether there are tools to be found in the post-Enlightenment evaluations of religious claims that would help *apologia* to retain historical continuity and transcendent reference without falling into foundationalism, and thus turning religion into a self-enclosed ideological system.

As I have mentioned in the Introduction, foundationalism and foundations are two different things. While “foundation” (lat. *fundamentum*) plays the role of that on which a thing depends or is based and which is for this particular thing indispensable;¹ foundationalism is parasitic on foundations and turns them into universal dead schemes. I have defined foundationalism in three ways (i) as a defective picture of reality which claims to rest on fixed foundations of knowledge, belief and judgment;² (ii) as a defective system which harmonises different approaches into one meta-theory, while excluding practical particularities;³ and (iii) as a defective principle which divides positions into two categories: either they require or provide evidence with regard to (i) and (ii).⁴ I have identified that all these three aspects of foundationalism had a common root, namely a fideist conviction that their assumptions are ‘given’, universal and infallible. I also claimed that foundationalism pro-

1 Cf. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 1971:746.

2 Cf. Cahoon: 3.

3 Cf. Lechte: 250.

4 Cf. Phillips, 1988: xiii.

vides foundations for ideologies, including religious ideologies defended by apologetics. In the second part of the book I revisited the theme of foundations and foundationalism and looked at the distinction between these two with regard to the problem of reference.

My examination started with the inconsistencies present in Kant's position: a shift towards the subject and its autonomy on one side; a claim to the necessity of divine assistance once we were confronted with the evil present in our roots on the other side. In the summary I pointed to three points relevant for a discussion of foundationalism: first, that Kant assumed that continuity with the past is kept by language alone divorced from its meaning (he kept Christian language and gave it an Enlightenment meaning);⁵ second, this change of meaning in language enabled him to claim that belief was rational as long as it took the moral law to be the supreme authority over religion; third, that Kant in fact substituted the old metaphysical foundationalism for the new rationalist one, he went back to the desire for fixed certainties when he tried to arrive at a rationally consistent solution of the dilemma between the totality of human autonomy and yet the need of a transcendent aid.⁶ These three points support in Kant the tendency towards the 'end-in-itself'⁷ later developed by Hegel. The claim to rationality of belief was taken up by Reformed epistemologists who in reverse attempted to give Enlightenment language a Christian meaning, but did not overcome Kant's inconsistencies.⁸ In Kant himself, however, there were also strands which proposed a different path from foundationalist rationalism: first, with regard to language he was aware of its symbolic character and criticised turning a 'symbol into a schema' (1963, CPR:162), even if, as I pointed out, he did not mind changing the meaning of symbols privately; second, his emphasis on the practical prevented a gulf between reason and belief and also between philosophy and theology; third, his practical point of view even made it possible to hold together the theoretically contradictory claims to the totality of human autonomy and

5 Compare the problem of private language criticised by Wittgenstein, Ch.Six, 1.3.

6 Kant even developed a construction of 'autonomous atonement', see Michalson, 1990:113-114.

7 Cf. Korsgaard, 1996:ix-x.

8 See Phillips's critique of Reformed Epistemology, Ch.Three, 2.3.

necessity of divine assistance. These points were developed by Kierkegaard, critical, non-descriptive metaphysical and internal realism, and by Wittgenstein.

The splits between the transcendent and the immanent, between reason and belief, between philosophy and theology following from Kant, have been examined in two strands of religious epistemology, one initiated by Hegel, the other by Kierkegaard. Hegel brought Kant's tendency towards the 'end in oneself' to perfection. His 'self-knowing spirit'⁹ provided foundations for his method of immanence, which was claimed to be exhaustive of reality and exclusive of any type of transcendent reference. Thus Hegel laid the grounds for the ideological system. Once the method of immanence was separated from transcendent reference, the 'spirited' idea was put in charge of practice and the 'spirit' of the system was deprived of any corrective, any authority coming from outside. Language, then, was of service to ideology. Instead of continuity of symbolism present in language, which speakers use to refer,¹⁰ Hegel emphasised unlimited creativity in interpretation, as long as it fitted to the rules introduced 'objectively' by the community, the society or the state. I have concluded that in spite of Hegel's emphasis on the historicity and contextuality¹¹ his religious epistemology was foundationalist and as such intrinsically ideological. It provided tools for apologetics rather than for *apologia*. Hegel's absolute idealism anticipated Phillips's antirealism, which states that 'Concepts are constitutive of situation' (Phillips, 1988:197), that our language does not correspond to any extralinguistic realities. This finds an equivalent in Cupitt's claim to live by the stories which we make¹² or in Moore's: 'People do not discover religious truths, they make them' (1988:287).

The other side of the split after Kant was represented by Kierkegaard's method of reestablishing the transcendent as the Absolute. Against Hegel, Kierkegaard claimed that speculative philosophical

9 Cf. Gadamer's *Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*, 1976.

10 Cf. Soskice, 1985:136.

11 Cf. Houlgate, 1991:17.

12 Cf. Cupitt, 1994b:63.93.

thought could not reach the Absolute – the Unknown. He held that whenever philosophy tried to explain the paradox present in Christianity, it made a distorted picture of it, as with Kant and Hegel, since there was a gulf between reason and belief, between socially-based practices and the call to be an individual and to be in a relationship with the Truth which edifies.¹³ In the last analysis, for Kierkegaard, to understand was to believe, and to believe was to imitate the New Testament Christ and find salvation in doing so. However much Kierkegaard emphasised that he was not a theologian, his argumentation shifted from philosophical beginnings to theological ends, where his emphases on human subjectivity and an inward transcendent truth found their rich expression.¹⁴ On the level of philosophical argumentation, however, Kierkegaard's antithesis to Hegel operated on criteria for religious knowledge narrowly construed in terms of rational argumentation – and if Hegel excluded the transcendent, Kierkegaard excluded the immanent and put under suspicion the social and the historical dimensions of truth.

In order to complement the vital role Kierkegaard ascribed to transcendent reference with actual ways of establishing it (which we do not find elaborated in Kierkegaard), I have examined four theories of correspondence on the contemporary philosophical scene: naive, critical, metaphysical and internal realism. This has given me tools to identify conditions under which realism rests on foundationalism and to spell out alternatives. The naive (or direct) realism and the descriptive metaphysical realism embodied features of foundationalist approaches. They hold that: (i) there is a fixed totality of mind-independent objects and one true and exhaustive description of how these are¹⁵ – 'God's eye view of truth' (Putnam, 1992:50); (ii) we have a direct access to the objective reality in observation of the phenomena as well as to objectively real meanings of non-observable 'substances' like justice or beauty in our knowledge; and (iii) we can describe how things are in themselves and

13 Cf. Kierkegaard, the last sentence of *Either/Or*.

14 Cf. *Fear and trembling, Training in Christianity, Purity of Heart, Christian Discourses*, or *Works of Love*.

15 Cf. Putnam, 1992:49.

thus attain true theories both concerning observable and non-observable reality. I concluded that these claims, indeed, turned realism on its head, and as Quinton said, projected ideas onto the transcendent screen.¹⁶ These foundationalist features in fact turned realism into idealism. Alternatives were provided by critical, non-descriptive metaphysical and internal realism bearing the following features: (i) a mind-independent reality cannot be either proved or disproved and thus a conceptual possibility of it must be retained, including the possibility of encountering God; (ii) intelligibility of the mind-independent reality insight (including religious experience) does not mean arriving at unrevisable knowledge; (iii) we do not have a direct access to ‘what is the case’ – to refer does not mean to define; (iv) metaphysical claims can be made only in metaphorical language grounded in the occurrence of a plurality of experiences of the reality with which we interact (including religious experiences); (v) it is not words which refer, but people using words who refer¹⁷ in the plurality of evolving contexts; and (vi) reference is not a linguistic construction but a form of being.¹⁸ These non-foundationalist approaches maintain a distinction between reality and fiction on the ground of relating together experience, belief and knowledge, the transcendent and the immanent, methods of reference and methods of coherence. A possibility of error, however, remains open, as non-foundationalist realism does not claim to possess the truth.

In the final chapter of the second part I have examined the path from Kierkegaard to Wittgenstein in whose practical point of view I have found a reconciliation of the split following from Kant. In Wittgenstein’s development from thinking to seeing and to acting¹⁹ I have discovered a non-dualist method for distinguishing between reality and fiction based on a reversed hierarchy of certainties and their rules. First, Wittgenstein holds that as the concept of certainty occurs in ordinary speech, there is a meaning or several meanings associated with it, and that meaning in language was not a private artefact of our

16 Compare to Freud’s critique of religion, 1985:212, 226–227.

17 Cf. Soskice, 1985:136.

18 Cf. Putnam, 1978:125.

19 Cf. Genova, 1995:57,129.

phantasies, but a contact point with reality embedded in language and in the forms of life which the language carried.²⁰ Wittgenstein identified three types of certainty: of knowing, of believing and of acting; and demonstrated that although they were interdependent, each one had different rules. While in the certainty of knowing proofs and disproofs took place, this certainty rested upon the certainty of belief. People could prove that they knew when the battle of Waterloo was by pointing to the information printed in a textbook, but this act was grounded in their belief that textbooks give adequate information. The certainty of belief could be described, documented by examples, but not proved. It grew from the certainty of acting. Wittgenstein said that one recognised what people really believed according to their actions; it was deeds, which referred.²¹ His notion of deed had two sides, the active and the contemplative. Practice was not only what we did, but also what we allowed to happen. Wittgenstein's account of the desire 'to become a different man' (RW:xix) showed that referential practice, then, involved taking the otherness in our lives seriously, both in terms of acting unselfishly,²² and in exposing ourselves to truth in ourselves,²³ in the face of other people,²⁴ and in religious symbolism.²⁵

I concluded that Wittgenstein helps us to recognise that the assumptions on which we build our knowledge are not more certain than the conclusions at which we arrive in terms of a decision how to act. For *apologia* it is interesting that it makes sense to speak of the certainty of religious belief as long as one acts upon it. But there is also a problem. Although Wittgenstein's approach to religion is strictly anti-ideological, it is also unorthodox with regard to positive accounts of religion in the case of Christian creeds. He detests turning symbolic religious truth in stories and actions into explanatory theories, but also finds it difficult to accept any specific content associated with these truths, in spite of its

20 See Ch.Six, 1.3.

21 Cf. Wittgenstein, OC 284.

22 Cf. Drury, Not. in RW: 94.

23 Cf. Malcom, Introduction to RW:xviii-xix.

24 Cf. Drury, Not. in RW:96.

25 Cf. Drury, Not in RW:86.

being shared by the religious community.²⁶ He has recovered a strong sense of the practice-based apophatic way of faith, plunging ‘into the waters of doubt’ (GB 1e) to purify understanding, being concerned with the ‘how’ of Christian belief, rather than with the ‘what’ of its content. When a pupil of his wrote him to thank for taking part in his conversion to Catholicism, Wittgenstein replied: ‘If someone tells me he has bought the outfit of a tight-rope-walker I am not impressed until I see what he is done with it.’ (Not. in RW:88) This opens a question for *apologia*, which will be addressed in the general conclusion : can it simply adopt a supremacy of practice over theory without renouncing the “what” of Christian belief? In other words, would it not end in saying it is not important what you believe, but how you act? Can we hold orthopraxis and orthodoxy together in a way that Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein did not manage to do? And if so, how can the “what” of belief be justified without finding ourselves back at foundationalism?

26 Wittgenstein says: ‘If you accept the miracle that God became a man, then all these difficulties...are nothing’ (RW:164).

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CONCLUSION

If you make my word your home you will indeed be my disciples; you will come to know the truth and the truth will set you free.

(J 3:31b-32)¹

This biblical quotation corresponds to two major questions arising from the two parts of the book: first, how can *apologia* retain the aim of conversion without causing violence to the other; second, how can orthodoxy complement orthopraxis in *apologia* without falling into foundationalism? In this general conclusion I first address these two questions, then evaluate the project of the book and its methods, and conclude with a set of criteria distinguishing *apologia* from apologetics in postmodern context.

1. *Apologia* and Conversion

In the Conclusion of Part One I pointed out that there were two types of way forward for *apologia*. One was to keep trying to convert others to our beliefs, values and practices – but this meant treating their ‘otherness’ as inferior to our ‘thisness’, which does not stand up to the third point of the postmodern critique.² The second approach was to give up the desire for the conversion of others and concentrate on the ‘sacramental presence’ (Lakeland:112) in them as they are. While the first path runs dangerously close to a superiority complex and of privileged ac-

1 The translation of *The New Jerusalem Bible*, 1985, Darton, Longman & Todd, London.

2 See Levinas’s notion of otherness in Ch.One, 1.3; and Swinburne’s notion of thisness in Ch.One, 2.1.

cess to truth,³ the second has to be careful not to lead to relativism, where all beliefs, values and practices would be equally good.⁴ But I also stated that if *apologia* avoided these dangers it would have genuine possibilities for overcoming the weak side of postmodern critique, namely its lack of criteria for saying e.g. that Hitler's or Stalin's practices were violent and evil, and thus in radical need of conversion. But what kind of conversion? Let me answer *via* an illustration once more from the Czech situation.

Václav Havel in the *Power of the Powerless* tells the story of an ordinary citizen, the greengrocer, who lives under the communist ideology and its demand that people conform to the lie, to the fiction they do not believe.⁵ For this man in the story it is symbolised by the regular request to put up the communist slogan 'Workers of the World Unite!' in his shop window. He does not believe in what he does, yet communicates what he does not believe as if he believed it.⁶ As Havel explains:

Because the regime is captive to its own lies, it must falsify everything. It falsifies the past. It falsifies the present, and it falsifies the future. It falsifies statistics. It pretends not to possess an omnipotent and unprincipled police apparatus. It pretends to respect human rights. It pretends to persecute no one. It pretends to pretend nothing. Individuals need not to believe all these mystifications, but they must behave as though they did, or they must at least tolerate them in silence, or get along well with those who work with them. For this reason, however, they must *live within a lie*. They need not accept the lie. It is enough for them to have accepted their

3 Cf. Lakeland: 113.

4 Lakeland found a middle term 'uniqueness', to explain that holding on to the uniqueness of our beliefs and practices does not have to be equivalent to a superiority complex, nor need it imply losing commitment to the real; see 113.

5 'None of us, either consciously or unconsciously, should allow a memory of justice and injustice, truth and lie, good and evil, the memory of reality as such to die away.' ('Right to History', a Document of Charter 77, in 'Nazism and Catholic Church', *Studie* 103 (1986), 9)

6 As M. Shore in 'The Sacred and the Myth: Havel's Greengrocer and the Transformation of Ideology in Communist Czechoslovakia' summarises, it is not harmless, 'For the statement 'Workers of the World Unite!' obscures the exclusion of nonworkers as well as the consequences of this exclusion. This conformity to tacitly prescribed ritual allows the greengrocer to live in peace.' (1996: 172)

life with it and in it. For this very fact, individuals confirm the system, fulfil the system, make the system, *are* the system. (1985:31)⁷

Then Havel explores the possibilities of what we may call conversion: what if one day the greengrocer were to take down this slogan – what would happen to him (the lie-conformers would persecute him) and what would happen within him (he would start to live in truth)? These thoughts document the vision of Charter 77 and other independent organisations, to raise people’s consciousness to the conversion from the ‘life in lie’ to the ‘life in truth’.

But what about religious conversion? In Havel’s parable the greengrocer did not start to go to church and to recite creeds. What we see is a human conversion, *metanoia*, the change of heart. This leads me to the second question raised in Part Two, whether *apologia* should insist on the content of Christian belief as a part of the intended human conversion. And it is here where problems with the respect for referential (i.e. non-relativist) plurality of approaches to truth emerge once again. Let me use another example.

When Gorbachev’s *glasnost* lightened the political oppression in Czechoslovakia, Christians called for religious liberty and a vital revision of church/synagogue-state relations. The most significant document of this was a 31-point petition from December 1987, which set forth among its primary demands that:

- the faithful be granted the right to create free lay associations;
- all male and female religious orders be allowed to function freely;
- religious instruction take place outside State schools, on Church property and completely under Church supervision;

7 As Shore identifies, Havel makes a distinction between a classical totalitarian system and a post-totalitarianism, which, as he says, ‘does not imply that the Czechoslovak communist system is no longer totalitarian, but rather that it embodies a new form of totalitarianism, perhaps best expressed by the frequently used metaphor that while all unanimously express their admiration for the emperor’s clothes, everyone is more or less cognizant of the fact that no one can see them.’ (175)

- believers have the right to be in contact with other Christian organizations throughout the world;
- the copying and distribution of religious materials be regarded as lawful activity;
- the government cease jamming Radio Vatican;
- the government return confiscated Church buildings;
- construction of new churches be permitted, as needed; and all valid laws and binding legal strictures affecting directly or indirectly the sphere of religious life be made to harmonise with the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. (*Prague Winter*, 1988:52)

The petition was signed by over 500,000 Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, as well as non-believers. After the collapse of communism Christians attempted to add a 'religious' aspect to the newly developing society and developed the 'absolutist' strands of Christianity in order to 'convert' secular – or even non-Christian society to the content of their belief: in Prague the churches took part in a decision to ban the building of a mosque;⁸ at the beginning of the 1990s there were proposals from the churches to re-introduce compulsory religious education in schools, which usually stalled at the question of which denomination's teaching would be represented; in the mid 1990s petitions appeared in churches 'against Jewish Masons', who were alleged to be invading the church and endangering the faithful with spoiled Western thinking. A senior church figure publicly disagreed about democracy in the church, saying that 'it is impossible to vote about truth', and another during a discussion on religious education defended the position that 'the church does not need people who think for themselves, but those who reproduce what they are given'; in front of his church I passed several times a slogan, which declared 'You are the temple of the Spirit'. These rather gloomy examples of the contemporary Czech religious scene are not exhaustive, but have a frightening aspect: some of the exemplars were former dissidents who had previously worked for religious and political

8 At the beginning of the 90s the Czech Muslim community applied to the Council of Prague for permission to open the first mosque in the country. The state consulted the church representatives, who did not recommend it.

freedom.⁹ And thus we return to the question of conversion. Can conversion have its positive and its negative side? The changing of one's roots for better or for worse? Can conversion be enforced by the demands to conform – including the conformity to 'right' Christian teaching? Bernard Lonergan in his definition of conversion closed down these possibilities:

Conversion is a matter of moving from one set of roots to another....It occurs only inasmuch as a man discovers what is inauthentic in himself and turns away from it, inasmuch as he discovers what the fullness of human authenticity can be and embraces it with his whole being. (1971:271)

Lonergan acknowledges different aspects of conversion (religious, moral, intellectual),¹⁰ but not different conversions. Conversion happens at the roots of our humanity, where one can be edified by the encounter with the living God,¹¹ but not with dead religious descriptions. Coming back to the problem of the 'what' of belief, of *fides quae*, of orthodoxy, *apologia* has to bear in mind that it is not a life-giving and truth-bearing faith when it stands on its own, without being carried by the 'how' of belief, by *fides qua*, by orthopraxis. To put this more positively, *apologia* needs to treasure the apophatic element,¹² revived by Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein and their emphasis on the purification of our claims to knowledge with regard to the Unknown, as Kierkegaard puts it; a purification which helps us to concentrate on the 'how' of Christian belief, on *fides qua*. This apophatic element is, then, complemented by the kataphatic¹³ element present in the philosophy of language which accompanies epistemology. Kant criticised the turning of symbols into schemes, and in Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein we found another stress

9 Before 1989 one of the senior church figures I mentioned in my examples worked as a window cleaner and the other in the iron works, both had lost the state permission to be parish priests because of their involvement.

10 Cf. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 1971:270.

11 See Soskice's argument for the possibility of occurrence of religious experience, Ch. Five, 2.2.

12 For apophatic way, see glossary.

13 For the kataphatic way, see glossary.

on the germinating and healing power of religious symbolism; yet it was the nature of this symbolism that it could not be replaced by simplified explanations. Soskice pointed out the differences between ‘referring’ and ‘defining’ and demonstrated why any conceptualisations needed to be complemented by a permanent conversion from the idolatry of conceptual schemes, a realisation that God is both radically other and yet present to us. *Apologia* has to resist the temptation to ‘save’ others by the grand religious schemes advocated by apologetics, and retain the freedom and humility which the desire for conversion in Lonergan’s or Havel’s terms requires and which always starts with the conversion of ourselves.

2. Evaluation of the Project

In the Introduction I offered two reasons why I was interested in *apologia*: first, it has fascinated me as a hopeful act capable of communicating Christianity as a way of maintaining the integrity of human life (both on an individual and a communal level). Its transcendent dimension and historical continuity (which hold together knowledge, belief and practice) gave strength to people to live in conformity to the Gospels, when the state communist ideology demanded that people ‘lived in the lie’ (Havel, 1990:11). The second interest was more methodological, looking at the epistemological roots of the conditions under which belief turned into an ideology; in particular, when insights into the life of prayer, the logic of actions and the religious symbolism present in the worship and teaching of the church hardened into an exclusivist system with ambitions to ‘convert’¹⁴ others to it. This interest has grown out of my experience of a growing religious fundamentalism in the post-com-

14 In the previous paragraph of the conclusion I have argued that this act has to be called something other than conversion, as conversion involves neither pressure from outside nor a change towards conformity.

munist Czech churches.¹⁵ The aim of the book, then, has been to identify points of conflict between postmodern culture (ignored or demonised by religious fundamentalists) and apologetical theology, and to employ them as a catalyst for the non-ideological tradition of *apologia*, for which this book has argued. The project was divided into two parts employing different methods; the first part: Apologetics and *Apologia* mainly comprised a critical historical analysis and a hermeneutical method; the second part: Changes in Religious Epistemology, an epistemological analysis. Now I will bringing Part One and Part Two together.

In the first part the critical historical and the hermeneutical methods gave me tools to deal with the problem of foundationalism invading apologetical theology and turning apology into apologetics – a grand theory¹⁶ or a grand fiction¹⁷ of Christianity, treating it as closed ideological system based on sustaining relations of power. I identified three basic problems connected with foundationalism in the method of apologetics: (i) of objective meaning and truth ascribed to language (deconstructed by Derrida); (ii) of turning Christian narratives into universal descriptive theories (identified by Lyotard as dead metanarratives); (iii) of killing the otherness of the Other, both human and divine, as soon as it does not fit into our schemes (the otherness that Levinas claimed to be constitutive of the self). My aim was to demonstrate that apologetics was not exhaustive of the discourse, and with these criticisms in mind I examined different historical facets of *apologia* and documented that they did not form a monolithic system. Rather, there was a developing pluralist movement, which embodied the meaning and truth of Christianity, as Tyrrell put it:

15 The theme of Christian fundamentalism in the Czech Republic after 1989 has not yet been systematically reflected, and it may still be too early to do so. However, there are some case studies available, mainly from a Roman Catholic background: Hanuš, J., 1997, *Dreaming in Full Awakening: Dialogues with Odilo Ivan Štampach*; Jandourek, J., Halík, T., 1997, *I Have Asked the Ways*; Jandourek, J., Malý, V., 1997, *A Journey to the Truth*; Konzal, J., Frieder, B., 1998, *Confessions of a Secret Bishop*.

16 As in the case of Swinburne and Hebblethwaite, see Ch.One, 2.1.

17 As in the case of Cupitt and Moore, see Ch.One, 2.2.

Truth can and ought to be approached from many sides; it is not different because these aspects are different. The same city will offer as many distinct views to the sketcher as there are points in the surrounding horizon; but by no summing together of these sketches can we bring the whole within the compass of a single inward gaze.... We can recognise under various descriptions a face that we have once seen; but if we have never seen it, no description can bring its full individuality home to us. (*Lex Orandi*, 1904:v)

Or as Wittgenstein said with regard to the question whether different approaches (different games) have anything in common:

Look and see whether there is anything common to all. For if you look at them you will not see something that is in common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: Don't think, but look! (PI 66)

Both Tyrrell's and Wittgenstein's points have been vital for the methodology of *apologia*, one emphasizing the plurality of ways referring to the 'face once seen', the other relationships and similarities of these ways, which Wittgenstein has taken even further in saying that 'Words are also deeds.' (PI 546) He has made explicit the referential dimension of practice of these ways – or more particularly, practised love, stating that it was a mistake to put forward religion as a theory,¹⁸ because 'for someone broken up by love an explanatory hypothesis won't help much – it will not bring peace.' (GB 3e)

Wittgenstein's insights have complemented that of Tyrrell in clarifying what a disclosure of 'permanent possibilities of meaning and truth' (Tracy, 1981:68) could mean for *apologia*, while taking into account that 'the Christian attempt to preach the same gospel, and teach the same doctrine, is always a response to a challenge.' (Lash, 1973:152) This has given me tools for interpreting the sketches of the 'city' of *apologia* in Justin's inclusive *Logos* terminology, which made it possible to relate Christianity to philosophy¹⁹ while witnessing to Christ to the point of

18 Cf. Wittgenstein, GB 1e.

19 Cf. Justin, 1876, D:96.

martyrdom; in Augustine's struggle for orthodoxy, which allows the entire church to say every day: 'Forgive us our debts' (1968:156); in Francis's focus on orthopraxis as becoming 'those who are revived by the Spirit of the Holy Scriptures, those who try to understand every letter, they know still deeper without ascribing their knowledge to themselves, but through the word and example give it back to God (1982, Ex: 7,37); in Hus's claim to Christ as the highest authority, who in the middle of confusion and violence is 'the most just judge, who reliably knows, defends and judges, makes visible and rewards the equitable cause of every man' (1965:30.32); and Newman's sense of developing human integrity, recognizing that 'obedience even to an erring conscience was the way to gain light' (1955:192). These pictures of *apologia* stood up successfully to the first two points of postmodern critique, concerning literalism and metanarratives, but a desire for 'conversion' of others was a significant part of them. This left me with the question whether this desire contained within itself 'in *nuce*' all the other features of a full blown religious ideology.

The second part searched for plausible alternatives to foundationalism in post-Enlightenment religious epistemology that would help *apologia* to maintain historical continuity and referential practice. The method of epistemological analysis helped me to identify a dichotomy starting from Kant's dilemma of how to reconcile total, human autonomy and a need for divine aid, where I found helpful his distinction between symbolic and schematic language,²⁰ but most of all his emphasis on practice, in which there was no gulf between immanent freedom and transcendent grace.²¹ I followed two diverging paths, one leading to Hegel's idealism based on the exclusion of the transcendent, the other to Kierkegaard's antithesis disregarding the immanent as a social and historical reality participating in 'the truth which edifies' (1944 II:294). Hence the need to understand meaning and truth as embodied in their context and as carried by the Spirit in time,²² as well as to appre-

20 Cf. Kant, 1963, CPR:162.

21 For the limits of Kant's contribution, see conclusion of Part Two.

22 In Hegel's understanding it would be rather carried by the Spirit of time, for although his emphasis on the Spirit pointed to the direction where the transcen-

ciate the transcendent power of the paradoxical truth²³ to change human life when an individual finds oneself in relationship – at home – with the truth.²⁴ Kant’s, Hegel’s and Kierkegaard’s religious epistemologies were placed in the context of contemporary debate, including Reformed Epistemologists, D.Z. Phillips’s antirealism, and four types of realist theories of truth. Their contribution was evaluated in more detail in the Conclusion of Part Two. Here it is just worth mentioning that the four realisms: critical, non-descriptive-metaphysical, and internal helped me to appreciate the symbolic nature of language employed in worship and in teaching, where symbols had to be grounded in experience. These realisms distinguished reference from unrevisable descriptive knowledge, and instead of ascribing reference to words, they held that people using words refer. In addition reference is seen as a form of being, which involves a possibility of error. Yet their contribution was rather to extend the notion of reference beyond direct claims to access to what is a ‘God’s eye view of truth’ (Putnam, 1992:50) In the last chapter of the book I looked at the development of Wittgenstein’s epistemology, where the dichotomy following from Kant was overcome, as Wittgenstein held to the supremacy of the practical and changed a hierarchy of certainties from acting to believing and only then to knowing.²⁵ This part, as I pointed out, brought another important question for *apologia*, namely, whether orthopraxis can be preserved without orthodoxy, or in other words, whether if we do away with the ‘what’ of Christian belief, we are not left empty-handed? However, to examine this problem was strictly beyond the scope of the epistemological method, and thus, as I did not want to avoid the issue, I returned to it at the be-

Continued from previous page:

dent and the immanent are undivided, his own idealist notion of the Spirit imprisoned it in human categories; see the critique of Hegel in Ch. Four, 2.2.

- 23 The difficulty with Kierkegaard lies in his holding on to absolute claims (e.g. absolute paradox) and conceiving reality as dualist; see Ch.Five, 1.3. and Conclusion of Part Two.
- 24 Compare with the quotation opening the conclusion:If you make my word your home you will indeed be my disciples;you will come to know the truth and the truth will se you free. (Jn 3:31b-32)
- 25 For the hierarchy of certainties see Ch.Six, 2.

ginning of this conclusion, where I brought the more philosophical and the more theological parts of the book together.

The historical critical method has shown that *fides quae* was a necessary complement of *fides qua* in the tradition of *apologia*. It also demonstrated that a separation of theory from practice took part in theological discourse in separating *fides quae* from *fides qua*, making *fides quae* foundationalist and turning it into articles of religious ideology advocated by apologetics. It also brought up the shadow side of this process, namely the growing incapability of taking *fides quae* as a positive creative force. This method identified the main problems, but gave no answers other than sets of examples. The hermeneutical method enabled me to approach the process of interpreting tradition with a sensitivity to the horizons of the authors of the texts I was examining; to their perception of meaning and truth; to the horizons of mediating interpretations including my own, with a desire to see their meaning and truth disclosing new possibilities for the contemporary situation. Yet, as I said in the Introduction, referring to Tracy, this method worked on the assumption that there are such things as classics, which can disclose permanent possibilities of meaning and truth.²⁶ The epistemological analysis distinguished between foundationalist and non-foundationalist models of thought, and identified a variety of relations between faith and reason, practice and theory, the transcendent and the immanent, the subjective and the objective, with regard to *apologia's* task to vindicate their integrity. It pointed to the necessity of conceptual and personal purification and of preserving figurative religious symbolism. Yet it lacked the tools for arguing why and how to do it, which *apologia* needs. Thus the methods employed established the book as a methodological preliminary to *apologia*, but not an actual instance of the discourse. It also opened up further theological questions important for the method of *apologia*, but beyond the possibilities of the book, such as (i) the interrelation of different aspects of religious dialogue; (ii) the interaction between the apophatic and the kataphatic way of faith, important for the reconstitution of the unity between the sacramental, the moral and the doctrinal elements of postmodern apologetical theology;

26 Cf. Tracy, 1981:68.

and (iii) a Trinitarian approach to *apologia* spelling out more explicitly the roles of the Father and the Spirit in *apologia* – making the Christ-centred Western approach more complete and more dynamic.

3. Criteria for *Apologia* in a Postmodern Context

The methodological distinction between *apologia* and apologetics, in spite of its artificial element, allowed me to distance *apologia*, as argued for in the book, from apologetics, understood as the rational defence of the universal truth and exclusive validity of particular systems. As I conclude with a set of criteria which distinguish *apologia* from apologetics in postmodern context, an important remark needs to be made. My aim is not to provide a framework, according to which a postmodern *apologia* could be constructed. What I offer are general retrospective criteria arising from the strands of apologetical theology examined in this book. They might help in a subsequent reflection on how our beliefs and practices are communicated to other people, and what fruits such communication brings.

To identify criteria for reading and presenting *apologia* may seem to be a contradiction in terms, as in the first chapter I documented that the scope of postmodern critique was against grand explanatory theories, against prescriptive univocal meaning and rules. But does this mean that no rules can be held at all? Edith Wyschogrod in *Saints and Postmodernism* addresses this problem and refers back to Lyotard,²⁷ saying: ‘Built into this mode of artistic shaping is a chronological skewing: the rules for creating the artwork are not foredisclosed, but come to light only after they have already been put to use.’ (1990:xvi) She applies

27 ‘The postmodern...puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself...[The] rules and categories are what the work of art is looking for. The artist and writer then are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of *what will have been done*...*Postmodern* would have to be understood according to the paradox of the future (*post*) anterior (*modo*).’ 1994:91

this recognition to defining saintly work '(post) anterior (modo)' (1994:81), to use Lyotard's vocabulary. I will now make a similar attempt in the field of *apologia*, to identify '(post) anterior (modo)' criteria that emerge from an examination of the tradition of *apologia* in the light of postmodern critique.

1. A postmodern *apologia* needs to hold on to the Chalcedonian principle with regard to knowledge, belief and practice, nature and grace, the transcendent and the immanent, and to preserve each as indispensable and fully real (just as Kant wanted human autonomy to be) yet united: without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.²⁸

2. Postmodern *apologia* benefits from operating with a referentiality based in practice, which prevents *apologia* from lapsing into ideology. Its own history comes alive as an interpretation 'of genuinely new possibilities for human life' (Tracy, 1981:67). This type of referentiality grows from the praxis of the following of Christ and from a life of prayer, it involves two elements, an active and a contemplative one.²⁹

3. *Apologia* needs not to lose sight of the historical dramas which create its living memory, and disclose a transformative power of the mysterious "what" of belief. It is there, in the particular events and narratives, that God does not appear only as the other without a positive content, but as self-revealing Father, irrevocably God with us in Christ and God within us in the Spirit.

4. *Apologia* does not employ a descriptive language, but operates symbolically; it is based on analogical and metaphorical accounts of the reality with which we interact. *Apologia* can avoid the trap of literalism if it recognises that it is not words which refer, but people using words who refer³⁰ in the plurality of evolving contexts, where the credibility of

28 Compare to the definition of the relations between the divine and the human nature of Christ given at the Council of Chalcedon (451).

29 In the Orthodox tradition, we find the word *theoria* as a synonym for contemplation.

30 Cf. Soskice, 1985:136.

those who refer (what they do with the words they speak) is a part of the process. Such language of *apologia* allows for a committed discourse, not however in terms of propagating metanarratives in Lyotard's sense.

5. *Apologia* has to beware that while metanarratives disclose ambitions to 'convert' or to exclude those who do not fit into them, it is at the expense of perverting the desire for authentic human conversion, as Lonergan identifies it, when 'a man discovers what is inauthentic in himself and turns away from it, inasmuch as he discovers what the fulness of human authenticity can be and embraces it with his whole being.' (1971:271)

6. *Apologia* needs to recognise the 'sacramental presence' (Lakeland:112) in the other, which does not eliminate the call for conversion, but is the call to human conversion in which we all share, the task of searching for the fulness of human authenticity in solidarity with others, something which has its religious as well as moral and intellectual aspects.³¹

7. While postmodern critique remains helplessly silent in the face of actual (past) and potential (future) catastrophe,³² *apologia* has to be an 'account of hope', an *anamnesis* which holds on to those resources in the Christian tradition that make it possible to act upon the belief that life will ultimately not be overcome by death, justice by injustice, peace by violence, and that in the meantime, there is the Lord's promise: 'And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.' (Mt 28:20)

31 Cf. Lonergan, 1971:270.

32 'Now, a new, postmodern paradigm is coming into being, one that emphasizes unpredictability, uncertainty, catastrophe (as in René Thom's work), chaos, and, most of all, paralogy, or dissensus.' (Lechte:248)

APPENDIX: GLOSSARY

aggiornamento: Making something contemporary, bringing it up to date.

agnosticism: The suspension of any possibility of objective knowledge.

alterity: Otherness, from lat. *alter* (one of two or the other of two); *alius* (other).

analogy: Speaking of one thing in a way that relies on some kind of resemblance with another (analogy uses general terms).

anthropocentrism: The treatment of reality as solely or primarily subjected to human needs and aspirations.

anthropomorphism: The understanding of any reality in terms of its possessing characteristics and attributes particular to human beings.

antirealism: (in ontology) The theory of being which does not admit any real existence of entities independent of the human mind; (in epistemology) the theory of knowledge which rejects any possibility of knowing that which is claimed to be independent of the human mind.

apologetics: The rational defence of particular systems of beliefs, ideas, attitudes and values, aiming to prove that these are exclusive expressions of the true Christian faith and seeking ways of how to 'convert' others to such systems .

apologia: The reflective vindication of the integrity of developing Christian knowledge, belief and practice, offering an insight into the life of prayer, the logic of actions and the religious symbolism present in worship and teaching.

apology: The discourse defending the integrity of Christian belief and practice against its accusers.

apophatic way: Negative theology proceeding by means of purification of our concepts about God, by demonstrating where they have hardened and become obstacles which usurp the place of spiritual realities (corresponding to *via negativa*).

aporias: Difficult points or contradictions present in a certain problem.

atheism: Belief that there is no God.

authority: Ability to perform an action, the right to do something or the right over something, where authority and power are not always separated; it also can be used in antithesis to law in the sense of self-asserted freedom. Thus derived meanings

such as an authoritative position, office-bearing or ruling have to be balanced with the freedom to act and with enabling to act.

autonomy: Right of self-government, freedom to act according to one's own principles based in freedom of the will.

conversion: The change of one set of roots for another of a different character, which involves a fundamental transformation of one's ways of acting, beliefs and values towards human and spiritual authenticity.

coherence: The way of fitting together different patterns of thought, beliefs and behaviour; theories of coherence are usually a core part of antirealism or idealism.

correspondence: (see also reference) An agreement between a statement or a speaker and their points of reference; theories of correspondence are a vital part of realism.

deconstruction: The method of demolishing the foundations of fixed systems of ideas, meanings and values, which turns attention to aspects that were ignored when such fixed systems are established.

deduction: Inference by reasoning from generals to particulars.

deism: The belief in an impersonal God as the first cause of the universe, one which does not take any further part in the running of the world.

Donatists: First arose in Northern Africa after Diocletian's persecution (303–305) as a schismatic movement, declaring invalid the ordination of priests and bishops who had collaborated, and accepting instead a rival bishop, Donatus. They were a major force in Africa, against whom Augustine struggled. Although orthodox in doctrine, they held rigorist views of the church, which led them into the position of a sect. Rebaptisms, exclusivist ecclesiology, apocalyptic rejection of the state and society were among their distinctive features.

dualism: A theory or a system of thought that claims two independent principles (of good and evil; of matter and spirit; of mind and body etc.) at war with each other.

empiricism: The theory of knowledge based on human experience, taking as a primary source of knowing observation and experiment.

epistemology: The branch of philosophy that studies the possibilities, limits and character of knowledge, and its relation to belief and practice.

essence: All which makes a thing what it is; its totality of properties, without which it would cease to be the same thing (in dualist theories, distinguished from empirical substance and usually claimed to be immaterial).

evidentialism: The theory of truth claiming that what is true can be proved by empirical evidence.

externalism: The approach maintaining that reference to an external world independent of an observer is vital, that truth involves correspondence between words or thought-signs and external things and sets of things.

fideism: The assumption that religious truth is accessible only through faith and not through reason.

fides qua creditur: Faith by which we believe; the act of faith; the first of the three theological virtues alongside with hope and love.

fides quae creditur: Faith in which we believe; the content of faith found in the Creeds, in the Scriptures, in the definitions of Councils, and in the teaching of doctors and saints.

foundationalism: A defective theory providing grounds for ideologies in three ways (i) as a picture of reality which claims to rest on fixed foundations of knowledge, belief and judgment; (ii) as a system which harmonises different approaches into one meta-theory, while excluding practical particularities; (iii) as an evidentialist principle, which divides propositions into two categories: either they require or they provide evidence for (i) and (ii); all these three aspects of foundationalism are rooted in a fideist conviction that their assumptions are 'given', universal and infallible.

fundamentalism: A rejection of the critical and historical apprehension of sacred texts and tradition, claiming for its own position a timeless relevance and a unquestionable authority.

hermeneutics: The discipline studying methods and principles of interpretation of language, texts or works of art, and the process of understanding; used in theology with particular reference to the question of mediating truth disclosed in authoritative texts.

heteronomy: Government by principles imposed on the self from outside, and acting in ways that eliminate the freedom of the will.

hylomorphic theory: The view that every material object is constituted of two principles: *hylé* (matter) and *morphé* (form); matter is seen as something potential, and form actualises the object.

idealism: (in ontology) The theory of being holding that what is claimed to be a reality external to the human mind is in fact a product of ideas; (in epistemology) the theory of knowledge stating that nothing can be known about what is claimed to

be the reality independent of the human mind; in both cases used synonymously with antirealism.

ideology: A set of ideas with ascribed meaning; in the negative sense, ways in which meaning is given in order to support or control particular relations of authority and power.

immanent: The indwelling of identity and value within observable reality and its rules; inherent in human experience and permanently pervading the universe.

immanentism: A position, which holds that identity and value are exclusively immanent and denies any claim to transcendence.

individual: A single, self-conscious existent.

individualism: Self-centred conduct splitting reality into number-less 'universes', each designed according to each individual's priorities.

induction: Inference by reasoning from particulars to generals.

internalism: The approach maintaining that any talk about reality is restricted to the reality with which we interact, therefore reality is not external but internal to human experience.

irrationalism: The theory of being and knowledge which rejects rational explanations.

kataphatic way: Affirmative theology proceeding by means of figurative language, metaphor and analogy (corresponding to *via affirmativa*).

Liberal Protestantism: Anti-dogmatic, anti-metaphysical and anti-hierarchical-church reconstruction of the claimed essentials of Christian faith in a humanistic manner, heavily relying on the contribution of natural and social sciences for the critique of traditional theology .

literalism: A strict adherence to the literal form, denying any figurative or metaphorical interpretation.

logic of identity: A theory ascribing a universal singularity of being or non-being to things: things either are or they are not, and there is nothing in the middle or outside of this statement.

Manichees: Followers of Mani's (215–275 AD) extreme version of Persian dualism spreading into the West. Their mythological doctrine spoke of the two eternal principles determining human life: the Power of Light and the Power of Darkness. The Light was believed to be imprisoned in matter, which was regarded as evil. Jesus was seen as an instance of suffering of imprisoned Light in matter. Manichees called

themselves the 'elect' or the 'righteous', and their religious practices were of strict asceticism and doctrinal obedience, by which they believed to enter into the process of gradual liberation.

metanarratives: Stories and explanations of society or a religious community, codifying their maxims and relations of authority and power as objective, universal and permanent, and thus assuming themselves to be superior to other stories and explanations.

metaphor: Speaking of one thing in terms suggestive of another (metaphor uses figurative terms of concrete speech).

metaphysics: The branch of philosophy that examines ultimate questions, the nature of things, and the meaning of existence; arriving at a picture of the world and of the transcendent Absolute by rational means.

mimetic: Of imitative nature; relating to things, people or God by means of *mimésis* (imitation of others).

modernism: The reform movement at the turn of this century practising dialogue between the Catholic tradition and modern intellectual, moral, social and cultural discoveries and needs.

modernity: The period of socio-cultural changes following from the Enlightenment and the scientific and technological revolution in Europe, leading to a general attitude of understanding itself as progressive, enlightened, free, while the preceding time is seen as superstitious, conservative, lacking understanding.

monism: A theory or a system of thought that reduces all to one principle and denies the duality of the principles of good and evil; of matter and spirit; of mind and body etc.

mysticism: The approach claiming direct experience or contact with the holy.

nonfoundationalism: An epistemological position avoiding dependence on assumed foundations, which grant undoubted certainty to our knowing, believing and acting.

non-inferential awareness: An insight or intuition of reality, without employing deductive or inductive faculties of reason in their process.

noumena: Things as they are in themselves, independent of human mind.

ontology: The branch of philosophy that studies "being" itself, its character and forms.

otherness: What makes the second, the alternate, the different from the same in terms of what they are.

paradox: A statement which is apparently absurd yet meaningful and true; a contradiction in conclusion which holds both premises as valid and yet logically irreconcilable.

Pelagianism: The movement founded by the British theologian and exegete Pelagius, who was active in Rome c.383–409, teaching in aristocratic circles, and whose influence later came into Northern Africa and Palestine. The main focus of Pelagian teaching was the belief that human beings were able to achieve their salvation by their own power. Pelagius aimed to establish a perfect church of the elite as an example to the sinful world. He praised free will and stood against any kind of determinism. The original sin of Adam was for him no more than a bad example, Christ's work, then, nothing more than a good example and motivation. Grace was seen in terms of the psychological break with the past. Pelagian teaching was condemned as heresy by councils at Milevis and Carthage (416 and 418), owing to the determined opposition of Augustine.

phenomena: Things as they appear to us, interrelated with the structure of the human mind.

phenomenology: The discipline studying phenomena.

Pietism: 17th and 18th century movement within Protestantism emphasizing personal piety as a means of recovering the initial spirit of Christianity.

pluralism: A theory or a system of thought that accepts the validity of more than one ultimate principle.

postmodernism: Movements in art, culture, philosophy, theology and social sciences reflecting the period of postmodernity.

postmodernity: The period of socio-cultural changes in Europe and the United States in the second part of this century, marked by critique of the abuse of scientific and technical achievements; of colonial and totalitarian regimes of power and their violent ideologies; of attitudes or practices of national or racial or social or religious exclusivism. A general attitude that the modern ideals of universal progress, rationality and autonomy are abandoned as incapable of fulfilment, so that we are left with a plurality of partial solutions.

poststructuralism: A critique of structuralism emphasizing that there are fields in texts where the signifiers have no determinate meaning, but provide the reader with a 'play of signifiers' to be interpreted in any number of ways; this is a wider term which includes deconstruction.

property: A quality or an attribute expressing belonging to something.

rationalism: The theory of being and knowledge assuming that the universe is rational and can be explored and known by means of human reason as the ultimate authority and the foundation of certainty.

reasonableness: The quality of a fair and sound judgment; the virtue of a moderate approach, avoiding absurdity by a readiness to listen both to reason and to intuition.

realism: (in ontology) The theory of being which claims the real existence of entities independent of the human mind; (in epistemology) the theory of knowledge which claims to be referential, i.e. knowing is seen as the discovery of what is here to be discovered, not limited to the monologue of the human mind.

reference: (in the broad sense) The claim to something other than ourselves, without, however, holding that we have a direct access to “what is the case”; (in the narrow sense) the claim to norms such as truth, goodness, beauty and rationality as independent of the process they serve to govern or judge.

relativism: A position holding that truth, justice or beauty are relative to the standpoint of the judging subject and that there are no better or worse standpoints.

revisionism: A position advocating the revision of established doctrines, yet sharing with them a common ground.

rule of implication: A claim that belief has always been the same – not actually, but potentially, and that a potential belief implies an actual belief.

scepticism: (in ontology) The suspension of any possibility of anything other than appearance; (in epistemology) the suspension of any possibility of objective knowledge (see also agnosticism).

semiotics: The theory and analysis of signs and significations (the ways that signs signify).

structuralism: A theory coming from linguistics holding that phenomena are intelligible only in the structure formed by their interrelations, where one unit receives meaning and identity through a network of relationships.

substance: All which makes a thing what it is; a permanent substratum of things, that in which accidents or attributes inhere (in dualist theories, distinguished from essence and usually claimed to be material).

thisness: (lat. *haecitas*) What composes an individual identity and its continuity over time.

transcendent: Going beyond observable reality and its rules, exceeding its limits; unrealisable fully within human experience; transcendence involves the twofold claim: that there is a reality other than human experience; and that this reality demands to be recognised precisely as other.

transcendental: Not derived *a posteriori* (from experience), but *a priori* (before experience).

Ultramontanism: First emerged in the 11th century, but is most familiar from 19th century Roman Catholicism as a tendency to favour the centralism of authority and influence of the papal curia as opposed to national or diocesan independence; in modern use, a standpoint of opposition to the claims of private judgment and the authority of conscience.

Vincentian Canon: A threefold test of catholicity laid down by St. Vincent of Lerins stating ‘ what has been believed everywhere, always and by all’ as criteria to differentiate between true and false traditions.

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